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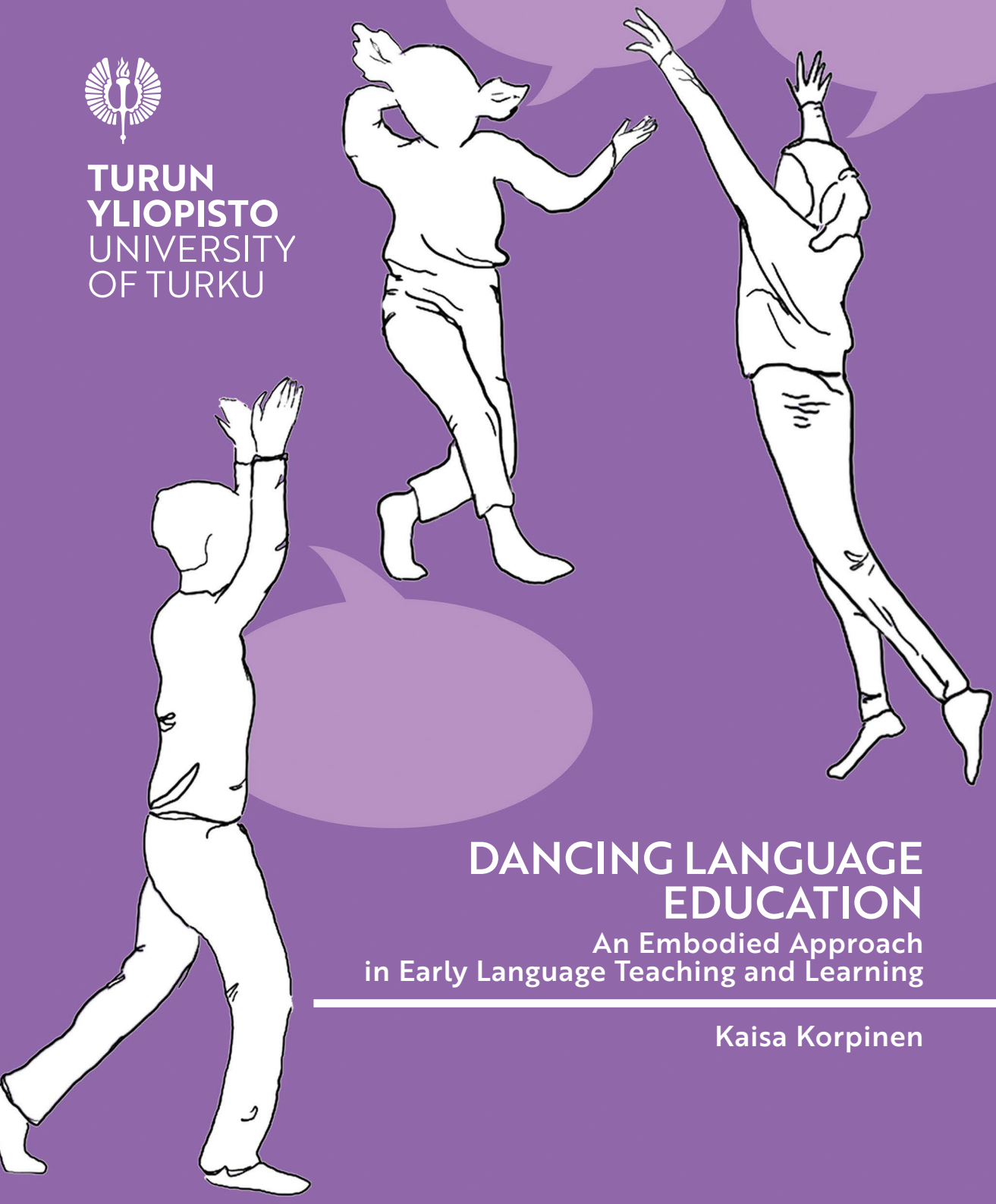

DANCING LANGUAGE EDUCATION

An Embodied Approach in Early Language Teaching and Learning

Kaisa Korpinen

TURUN YLIOPISTON JULKAISUJA – ANNALES UNIVERSITATIS TURKUENSIS
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University of Turku

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ABSTRACT

This doctoral dissertation explores how the integration of language and dance can be practiced and conceptualised as an embodied approach in early additional language education, addressing the urgent need for new pedagogical practices in teaching additional languages to children. Theoretically, the dissertation is grounded in embodied learning, a holistic conception that involves learners' active engagement with their social and material environments. It also draws on sociomaterial approaches to understand language learning as an embodied, material, and relational process, with teaching as an emergent, unpredictable practice.

Methodologically, the dissertation moved from educational design research towards arts-based and post-qualitative research. A multiprofessional team, including the researcher and dance and class teachers, co-designed activities that integrated creative dance in the early teaching of Swedish as an additional language at a Finnish-speaking primary school. An entire grade participated in these project lessons as part of their Swedish language curriculum in grades 1–2. Data assemblages included video recordings of lessons, audio recordings of team meetings, lesson designs, and embodied experiences and written reflections of team members. Arts-based and post-qualitative approaches were used to draw on multiple forms of knowing and expression, both in analysing the data and presenting the results.

The dissertation comprises three empirical articles and an overarching summary. Article I explores the collaboration within the multiprofessional team as they integrated dance into early language education, showing that co-designing language-and-dance-integrated pedagogical practices happened in events that crossed subject boundaries, during which the team members became an assembled team. Article II focuses on the team's experiences of integrating language and dance during in-person instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic, revealing that this integration allowed for alternative forms of communication and sustained dialogue, even when physical contact and shared materials were limited. Article III explores how language and dance integration created opportunities for embodied language learning, showing that language-and-dance-integrated activities activated children in 'languaging' and expanded their possibilities to act in the language-learning process.

Taken together, this dissertation shows that language and dance integration expands the embodied dimensions of language learning and teaching in early primary grades. Language and dance integration can create possibilities for embodied language learning through holistically engaging children, sparking their creativity, encouraging participation in diverse ways, and sustaining dialogue and communality. Moreover, the results highlight that multiprofessional, cross-sectoral collaboration can provide an entry point to embodied and arts-integrated pedagogies. The dissertation contributes both new pedagogical practices and a conceptualisation of language and dance integration as an embodied approach in early additional language education. More research on integrating language and dance is needed to establish these pedagogical practices and advance language education.

KEYWORDS: Embodied learning; creative dance; early language education; additional languages; languaging; sociomaterial approaches; arts-based; post-qualitative

TURUN YLIOPISTO
Kasvatustieteiden tiedekunta
Opettajankoulutuslaitos
Kasvatustiede
KAISA KORPINEN: Kielenopetusta tanssien: Kehollinen lähestymistapa varhaisessa kielen opettamisessa ja oppimisessa
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Marraskuu 2024

TIIVISTELMÄ

Väitöskirja tarkastelee kielen ja tanssin integrointia ja käsitteellistämistä kehollisena lähestymistapana varhaisessa kielenopetuksessa. Täten se vastaa tarpeeseen kehittää uusia opetuskäytänteitä kielten opettamiseen lapsille. Teoreettisesti tutkimus nojaa kehollisen oppimisen viitekehykseen. Tätä kokonaisvaltaista käsitystä mukaillen oppimisen ymmärretään tapahtuvan aktivoimalla oppijoita kokonaisvaltaisesti ja kytkemällä heidät sosiaaliseen ja materiaaliseen ympäristöön oppimisprosessin aikana. Tutkimus sitoutuu lisäksi sosiomateriaalisiin lähestymistapoihin ja tarkastelee kielenoppimista kehollisena ja materiaalisena prosessina ja opettamista kehkeytyvinä ja ennakoimattomina käytänteinä.

Metodologisesti väitöskirjatutkimus liikkuu opetuksen kehittämistutkimuksesta kohti taideperustaista ja postkvalitatiivista tutkimusta. Tutkimukseen sisältyneessä opetuskokeilussa tutkijan, tanssin- ja luokanopettajien tiimi kehitti yhdessä harjoituksia, jotka integroivat luovaa tanssia varhaiseen toisen kotimaisen eli ruotsin kielen opetukseen suomenkielisessä peruskoulussa. Kokonainen vuosiluokka osallistui hankkeeseen kuuluneihin oppitunteihin osana ruotsin kielen opetustaan vuosiluokilla 1–2. Opetuskokeilun aikana tuotettu aineisto koostuu aineisto-sommitelmista (assemblages), joita ovat oppituntien videotallenteet, tiimikokousten äänitteet, tuntisuunnitelmat sekä tiimijäsenten keholliset kokemukset ja kirjalliset pohdinnat. Tutkimuksessa käytettiin taideperustaisia ja postkvalitatiivisia analyysitapoja eri tietämisen tapojen ja ilmaisumuotojen hyödyntämiseksi aineiston analysoinnissa ja tulosten esittämisessä.

Väitöskirja koostuu kolmesta tutkimusartikkelista ja niiden yhteenvedosta. Ensimmäinen artikkeli tarkastelee moniammatillisen tiimin yhteistyötä tanssin ja varhaisen kielenopetuksen yhdistämisessä. Tulokset näyttävät, miten kieltä ja tanssia integroivien käytänteiden yhteiskehittäminen tapahtui hetkissä, joissa oppiainerajat ylittyivät ja tiimijäsenistä muovautui yhtenäinen tiimi. Toinen artikkeli kohdistuu tiimin kokemuksiin ja pohdintoihin kehollisen lähestymistavan toteuttamisesta lähiopetuksessa COVID-19 pandemian aikana. Tuloksista ilmenee, että kielen ja tanssin integrointi mahdollisti dialogin ylläpitämisen, vaikka fyysisiä kontakteja ja materiaaleja tuli välttää. Kolmas artikkeli tutkii, kuinka kielen ja tanssin integrointi voi luoda mahdollisuuksia kehollisille kielenoppimiselle. Tulokset osoittavat, että

kieltä ja tanssia integroivat harjoitukset aktivoivat lapsia kieleilyyn (languaging) ja laajensivat heidän mahdollisuuksiaan toimia kielenoppimisprosessin aikana.

Tutkimus esittää, että kielen ja tanssin integrointi laajentaa merkittävästi kehollisuuden osuutta kielen oppimisessa ja opettamisessa perusopetuksen alaluokilla. Kielen ja tanssin integrointi voi mahdollistaa kehollista kielen oppimista aktivoimalla lapsia kokonaisvaltaisesti, herättämällä heidän luovuutensa, kannustamalla osallistumiseen eri tavoin sekä ylläpitämällä dialogia ja yhteisöllisyyttä. Edelleen tulokset osoittavat, että sektorirajoja ylittävä moniammatillinen yhteistyö voi tarjota tulokohdan kehollisen ja taideperustaisen opetuksen toteuttamiseen. Pedagogisina sovelluksina väitöskirja tuottaa uusia pedagogisia käytänteitä sekä käsitteellisen ymmärryksen kielen ja tanssin integroinnista kehollisena lähestymistapana varhaisessa kielenopetuksessa. Opetuskäytänteiden vakiinnuttamiseksi ja kielenopetuksen kehittämiseksi tarvitaan lisää tutkimusta tanssin ja kielenopetuksen yhdistämisestä.

ASIASANAT: Kehollinen oppiminen, luova tanssi, varhainen kielenopetus, toinen kotimainen kieli; kieleily; sosiomateriaaliset lähestymistavat; taideperustainen; postkvalitatiivinen

Acknowledgements

Conducting this research has involved crossing boundaries between language and dance education, between research and arts. These boundary-crossings have been possible thanks to multiple collaborations and communities.

My sincerest thanks to my supervisory trio, Professor Emerita Heini-Marja Pakula, Professor Eeva Anttila, and Adjunct Professor Kaisa Hahl. Your kind guidance and insightful support – building on your respective disciplinary expertise and experience – has been invaluable in bringing language and dance education into dialogue in my research and becoming a researcher.

Special thanks go to the pre-examiners of my dissertation, Professor Karita Mård-Miettinen and Associate Professor Kerry Chappell. Your detailed, thought-provoking, and encouraging feedback helped me improve my manuscript. I am honoured that you both accepted the invitation to act as my opponents.

My deepest gratitude goes to the class and dance teachers of the *Dansa språk!* project team and the participating school children for joining me in the exploration of early language teaching and learning through integrating dance. These experiences have kept me motivated throughout this journey. I extend my thanks to the principals and other staff at the primary school Kiilan koulu and Hurja Piruetti Western-Uusimaa Dance Institute for the warm welcome and smooth collaboration. I also want to thank the Head of the Department of Teacher Education and the University's Faculty Services for the practical support in conducting the project. I gratefully acknowledge the University Communications for the opportunities to share my work with general audiences and Turku City Theatre for the valuable insights on how this can be done creatively. Thanks also to Linus Westerlund and Tero Kaunisvuo for the audiovisual contributions to the *Dansa språk!* material.

I have conducted my doctoral research project with financial support from the UTUGS Graduate School, OPPI Doctoral Programme, Faculty of Education, the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland, and the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland. The Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland has partly funded the dance institute's participation. Kone Foundation has supported my doctoral research as part of the broader research initiative *Embodied Language Learning through the Arts* (ELLA), coordinated by the University of the Arts Helsinki.

My warmest thanks to the ELLA team – Eeva Anttila, Niina Lilja, Sofia Jusslin, Mariana Siljamäki, Riina Hannuksela, Johanna Lehtinen-Schnabel, Angela Aldebs, Charlotte Svendler Nielsen, and Rose Martin – and collaborators. It has been a privilege to explore the intertwinements between arts, embodiment, and language learning with such an amazing interdisciplinary group of researchers and artists, who have made serious work truly enjoyable. Special thanks to Sofia for your inspiring example, encouragement, and support during this process.

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Moreover, I want to thank my language researcher-teacher colleagues Elisa Repo, Niina Kekki, and the 'lunch crew' for the warm welcome at the department and all the chats and laughs ever since. Thank you to Pauliina Peltonen for the invigorating lunch conversations and Anna-Kaisa Jokipohja, Nathalie Schümchen, and the rest of the Lilja team for the excellent conference company. Thanks also to the department reading circle and particularly Pilvi Heinonen as well as to the network poeda for thinking together on various perspectives on education.

Additionally, I wish to express my gratitude to my professors, lecturers, and mentors during my master's studies at Åbo Akademi University for instilling in me the courage to explore disciplinary crossings in research and teaching.

Finally, I am grateful to my friends, who have cheered me on and directed my thoughts to life outside academia. My sisters, Emma and Maija, I am lucky to be able to always count on you. My parents, Katri and Jukka, thank you for believing in me, encouraging me to believe in myself, and for taking me to Swedish-language day care and dance classes as a child – who knew where that would take me. And thank you, Marcus, for being my biggest supporter in this pursuit to combine my passions.

Turku, 12 November 2024
Kaisa Korpinen

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List of Original Publications

This dissertation is based on the following original publications, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

I Korpinen, K., & Anttila, E. (2023). The potential of multiprofessional collaboration in integrating dance in early additional language education in primary school. *Dance Articulated*, *Special Issue: Dance in Cross-Sectoral Educational Collaborations*, *9*(1), 50–79. https://doi.org/10.5324/DA.V9I1.5053

II Korpinen, K., & Anttila, E. (2022). Strange encounters in times of distancing: Sustaining dialogue through integrating language and dance in primary education. *Journal for Research in Arts and Sports Education, Special Issue: Post-approaches to Education and the Arts*, *6*(3), 45–62. https://doi.org/10.23865/jased.v6.3553

III Korpinen, K. (in press). "Wild" languaging: A practice of embodied language learning when integrating dance in early additional language education. *Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies, Special Issue: Arts and Embodiment in Language Education*.

Korpinen wrote Articles I and II with her supervisor, Anttila. As first author, Korpinen had the main responsibility for the data generation, analyses, and article writing. The conceptualisation of the articles, development of analytical approaches, and editing processes were collaborative.

Prologue

School gym. Start of the lesson. Children moving in a circle, performing a Swedish rhyme with movements. First, repeating after the teacher, then, they jointly enact the rhyme. There are growing movements and rising voices:

Figure 1. Performing a Swedish Rhyme with Movements.

With this comic strip, I seek to illustrate how the integration of language and dance is approached in this dissertation. The comic strip presents a snapshot of events from my doctoral project integrating dance into early Swedish language education in grades 1–2 at a Finnish primary school. The rhyme performed by the group is based on Østern (1992, p. 72).

1 Introduction: Dancing into a New Language

Combining language learning and dance might seem surprising. What could they have in common? Language learning is firmly situated within compulsory schooling, whereas dance exists on its fringes. In language education, the focus has typically been on verbal language skills, with body language, gestures, and facial expressions often seen as non-verbal tools. In dance education, the roles appear reversed: creative movement expression takes centre stage, while verbal expression is secondary. This raises a question: Can language learning and dance be combined? If so, how can they be integrated, and what can their integration contribute to language education?

During my language teacher training, I became curious about the potential of dance to push language education 'on the move'. Children learn their first language(s) through moving, touching, sensing, and engaging with their social and material surroundings, but when they enter formal education, language learning becomes more sedentary. Dance as a form of embodied, artistic activity seemed to have unrealised potential for holistically engaging learners during language lessons.

This curiosity about combining language learning and dance became the starting point of my doctoral research. Previous and ongoing work in Finland provided a foundation for this inquiry. I built on the research of my supervisor, Professor Eeva Anttila, who studied the integration of dance across school subjects in the project *Koko koulu tanssii!* (The entire school dances!) (Anttila, 2013, 2015; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019). Other inspiring examples included the *TALK* project by Zodiak – New Center for Dance (2014–2018), where dance artists and language teachers collaboratively explored movement-based methods for second and foreign language teaching (Kirsi, 2019). This work was extended in the *ArtsEqual* research initiative, focusing on newly arrived pupils learning a second language through artistic processes (Anttila, 2019; Nikkanen et al., 2019). In addition, I was inspired by a doctoral project on integrating dance into fifth graders' meaning-making in literacy education (Jusslin, 2020). In these projects, the emphasis was on creative dance involving movement improvisation and collaboration rather than learning specific dance styles and steps. This work added to international scholarship indicating that integrating dance can deepen conceptual understanding and foster

enjoyment in learning (e.g., Moore & Linder, 2012). However, empirical research on the topic was limited, with a need for more clarity regarding the pedagogical aims, approaches, contents, and structure of dance-integrated education (Anttila, 2013; Jusslin, 2020; Koff & Warner, 2001). This highlighted the need for further research to support the integration of dance into language classrooms.

At the time I began my doctoral research, a significant policy change was taking place in Finland's language education. Reflecting global trends (Enever, 2015; Johnstone, 2009), the introduction of the first additional language was moved to an earlier stage of formal education, that is, from grade 3 to grade 1 at the latest (Finnish National Agency for Education [FNAE], 2020). This shift required a rethinking of how additional languages are taught and learned in instructed contexts, as research and teaching have tended to focus on higher grades (Garton & Copland, 2018). While older learners can learn languages through reading, writing, and language analysis, younger learners approach languages in a holistic, multisensorial, and experiential manner (Keaveney & Lundberg, 2019; Pinter, 2017).

The early start presented an opportunity to focus on embodied and arts-integrated approaches in language education. Embodied learning is a holistic conception of learning, emphasising the active engagement of the entire person in their socio-material environment. Despite an increasing interest in activating approaches in language education, the connection between body and mind – and by extension body and language in learning – is still not broadly understood by teachers (cf. Hahl & Keinänen, 2021; Macedonia, 2019; Macrine & Fugate, 2021). Arts-based activities can support language learning by holistically engaging learners (Fleming, 2023; Jusslin et al., 2022). In my dissertation, I explore arts integration as a pedagogical approach that combines an art form, such as dance, with the teaching of a subject. My research aligns with forms of arts integration that seek to place equal weight on both the subject and the art form rather than approaching the arts solely as a tool for learning in other disciplines (Sanz-Camarero et al., 2023). I refer to *language and dance integration* to emphasise this goal of achieving an equal balance.[1] As such, my aim is to explore how language and dance integration can be practiced and conceptualised as an embodied approach in early additional language education. To achieve this, I draw on the frameworks of embodied learning and sociomaterial approaches to learning and teaching (e.g. Ennser-Kananen et al., 2023; Fenwick, 2015; Toohey, 2019). Together, these perspectives allow for an understanding of language learning as an embodied, material, and relational process and of teaching as an emergent and unpredictable practice.

[1] I use this notion interchangeably with integrating dance into early language education.

1.1 Contextualising the Research

Several contextual issues motivated my doctoral research, including Finland's shifting linguistic landscape and changes in language education alongside a growing emphasis on activating teaching and multidisciplinary learning in school. Finland has two official languages: Finnish and Swedish. The latter is a minority language, with 5.2% of the population as registered speakers (Official Statistics of Finland, 2022). Swedish is spoken primarily in southern and western coastal areas. Many other languages are also spoken in Finland, and contemporary Finnish society is becoming increasingly multilingual, with over 150 different first languages (Institute for the Languages of Finland, n.d.).

Language learning in Finnish basic education (grades 1–9) aligns with the European Commission's recommendation from the 2000's for children to learn two additional languages from an early age in addition to the mother tongue (Johnstone, 2018). Additional languages include the first foreign language and the second national language (Swedish in Finnish-speaking schools, Finnish in Swedish-speaking schools). One foreign language and the second national language are mandatory for all school children. Additionally, it is possible to choose to study two more foreign languages in basic education, if they are offered by the municipality.

However, Finnish language education is facing a somewhat challenging situation. There are concerns about the state of Swedish language learning in basic education. A recent report published by the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) revealed that ninth graders' Swedish language proficiency is limited, and their enjoyment of studying Swedish has decreased (Härmälä & Marjanen, 2023). The report calls for new pedagogical practices to boost enthusiasm for learning Swedish. Additionally, learner groups are becoming increasingly multilingual, but language choices less diverse (Pyykkö, 2017). Both the "numbers of learners and the languages learned" have been decreasing for two decades (Ennser-Kananen et al., 2023, p. 356). In response to this tendency, additional language learning was recently moved to an earlier stage of formal education (Vaarala et al., 2021).

Since 2020, all Finnish children have begun learning the first additional language at the latest in grade 1 of basic education rather than at the latest in grade 3. Since 2016, an increasing number of schools have offered additional language learning at an earlier stage (Inha & Kähärä, 2018). Although the goal of this early start was to increase the number of languages studied, most children still begin with English (Vaarala et al., 2021). Generally, Finnish-speaking schools only offer English as the first additional language, and this is also the case in bigger cities, with a few exceptions (Dervin & Hahl, 2024). However, in Swedish-speaking schools, Finnish is typically the first additional language (Vaarala et al., 2021). Swedish language learning in Finnish-speaking schools usually starts in grade 6, unless started earlier. Some municipalities offer Swedish from grade 1 (Education Statistics Finland,

2022). Internationally, an early start often means learning English (Enever, 2015), which explains the predominant focus on English in research (Nikolov, 2009). As a counterbalance, my research focuses on learning Swedish in grades 1–2 of basic education.

An early start to Swedish language learning in grades 1–2 can enhance attitudes, confidence, and early engagement with the language (FNAE, 2020). To support these goals, the national core curriculum promotes versatile, engaging, and activating approaches that emphasise spoken language development and align with children's interests (FNAE, 2020). These approaches include, for instance, playfulness, music, drama, games, motion, sensory engagement, and combining learning language skills with teaching other subjects (FNAE, 2020). Overall, the emphasis on activating teaching approaches in the national core curriculum for basic education aligns with research on the benefits of physical activity for learning (Kantomaa et al., 2018). This is particularly relevant since school children spend most of their school days sitting, and only around half of 7–12-year-olds meet the daily recommendations for physical activity (Kämppi et al., 2022). This challenge underscores the need to incorporate more physical activity throughout the school day, including in lessons.

Dance, as an embodied, artistic activity, holds untapped potential for developing activating pedagogical practices in school (Anttila et al., 2019). While dance is not a curricular subject in Finnish basic education, it is included in the national core curriculum for physical education in grades 3–9 (Finnish National Board of Education [FNBE], 2016). Children may also encounter dance outside of school. For instance, dance is among the most popular art forms in basic arts education, alongside music and visual arts (Luoma, 2020). Basic education in the arts is a Finnish system for extra-curricular arts education that is subsidised by the state and provided at licensed arts institutes, schools, and other educational institutions (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, n.d.). Basic arts education offers children and young people the possibility to explore different art forms, such as dance, in a goal-oriented manner, but it does not reach all (Anttila et al., 2017). Integrating dance into school curricula would allow more children in an age group to experience this art form, which is not otherwise present in their everyday school life (Koff & Wagner, 2001).

The focus on multidisciplinary learning through subject integration in the Finnish core curriculum for basic education (FNBE, 2016, see also FNAE, 2020) supports integrating dance into early Swedish language education. Arts integration aligns closely with the curricular approach, combining contents and approaches from different subjects into an integrated whole (FNBE, 2016). The national core curriculum also encourages cross-sectoral collaborations with local actors that transcend subject boundaries (FNBE, 2016). In my dissertation, I explored

integrating dance into early language education in collaboration with dance teachers from a dance institute providing basic arts education.

1.2 Presenting the Project *Dansa språk!*

My doctoral dissertation is based on the project *Dansa språk!* (‘Kieliä tanssien!’, ‘Dance languages!’), which I initiated as part of my doctoral research. This project integrated creative dance into early Swedish language education at a Finnish-speaking primary school over two school years. The goal was to develop innovative pedagogical practices to support children in learning and using Swedish in a bilingual environment. An entire grade participated in the project as part of their Swedish curriculum in grades 1–2, when they were around six to eight years old. As a doctoral researcher and language teacher, I collaborated closely with their class teachers and a dance teacher from a local dance institute to design activities that integrated creative dance into Swedish language education. This multiprofessional collaboration was crucial for crossing boundaries between language and dance, and for generating the insights and practices presented here.

The project began during a period of significant change in educational policy and practice. However, I could not have anticipated that my research would become caught up in a worldwide pandemic. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic transformed the everyday school reality in which the project teaching was embedded. This crisis presented substantial challenges, but also highlighted the importance of embodied approaches in early language education.

My doctoral research became connected to the broader research project *Embodied Language Learning through the Arts* (ELLA, 2021–2024),[2] a multidisciplinary initiative involving researchers and artists from Finland and other Nordic countries. The ELLA project sought to broaden understandings of language and learning, investigating how embodied language learning through the arts can renew pedagogical practices in diverse educational contexts. It also aimed to spark critical discussions on how educational structures could be more responsive to societal changes. My dissertation is particularly aligned with ELLA subprojects on embodied language learning through the arts in early language and literacy education and multiprofessional collaboration.

1.3 Outlining the Research

My dissertation comprises three empirical articles based on the *Dansa språk!* project, along with a summary. The articles explore arts-based and post-qualitative research

[2] https://sites.uniarts.fi/web/ellaresearchproject

approaches. In this summary, I introduce the topic, justify my methodological choices, present the results, and draw conclusions across all articles. This research brings the fields of language and dance education into a dialogue, and through this transdisciplinary approach, generates new insights on how dance can be integrated into early additional language education, how it can create opportunities for embodied language learning, and the pedagogical value of such an approach. It also examines the possibilities and challenges of integrating language and dance in an educational context where dance is not a formal subject, the role of embodiment is not yet broadly recognised, and multiple changes are unfolding. Notably, I have focused on exploring what happens when language and dance are integrated rather than measuring specific language learning outcomes.

While the research focus is specific, my dissertation contributes to broader ongoing discussions on how language can be taught in ways that attend not only to the verbal, but also to the embodied dimensions of language learning. I argue that integrating language and dance as an embodied approach radically[3] renews conceptions and practices of early language learning and teaching. This paradigm shift is connected to the roots of language and learning, which emphasise embodied, multisensory engagement with other human beings and the material environment. Underpinned by this conceptualisation, language and dance integration can push early language education 'on the move', even in radically transformed school realities. Such rethinking of language pedagogy is especially timely in light of current educational policy changes and developments in Finland and elsewhere.

This summary is structured as follows. Chapter 2 reviews previous scholarship on integrating creative dance in primary education, teaching additional languages to young learners, and activating teaching approaches in language education. Chapter 3 discusses embodied learning based on research on dance and language education, introducing sociomaterial approaches to language learning and teaching. Chapter 4 outlines the *Dansa språk!* project, while Chapter 5 defines the research questions. Chapter 6 details the methodological approach, participants, data, and analytical approaches, including reflections on ethical issues and my positioning as a researcher. In Chapter 7, I present the main results, with Chapter 8 relating them to prior research, summarising the theoretical and pedagogical contributions and implications, and proposing directions for future research.

[3] Radical stems from the Latin word for "root" and has been used for "[o]f, belonging to, or from a root", "[r]elating to or forming the root, basis or foundation of something", and in relation to change or action for "going to the root or origin"; "thorough" (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.).

2 Integrating Dance into Early Language Education

In this chapter, I focus on the literature on integrating creative dance into primary education and then on teaching additional languages to young learners. I also discuss contemporary activating teaching approaches in language education. Where relevant, I make connections to international language educational policy documents and Finnish core curricula.

2.1 Integrating Creative Dance into Primary Education

Arts integration involves combining the teaching of a school subject with an art form, such as music, visual art, or drama. Here, the focus is on dance. Previous studies have investigated the integration of dance across school subjects (Anttila, 2013; 2015; Sharma et al., 2020) and in different subjects, from mathematics (Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019; Leandro et al., 2018; Moore & Linder, 2012) to literacy education (Jusslin, 2020). For example, dance has been used to explore curricular concepts and contents (Leandro et al., 2018; Leonard et al., 2016; Moore & Linder, 2012) and literary genres (Jusslin, 2020). Overall, previous studies have indicated that integrating dance can be a valuable teaching approach for engaging learners holistically (Anttila, 2013), deepening and broadening meaning-making processes (Jusslin & Höglund, 2020; see also Leonard et al., 2016), deepening understanding of abstract concepts (Moore & Linder, 2012), and fostering enjoyment (Anttila, 2013; Jusslin, 2020; Moore & Linder, 2012). It has also been shown that integrating dance can foster dialogue between learners (Anttila, 2015), communality (Anttila, 2013), and quality of life (Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019).

Prior research on using dance in second and foreign language learning is limited but growing. Studies have shown that drama and dance can lead to modest gains in second language speaking skills, particularly among children in primary grades (K–2), supporting beginners (Greenfader et al., 2015). Creative movement has been found to support preschool children in producing foreign-language vocabulary and alliteration (Sila & Lenard, 2020) and facilitate immersion in language and culture

(Zhang et al., 2021). In the upper grades of basic education (grades 7–9), dance has been shown to facilitate embodied communication among linguistically diverse groups (Anttila, 2019). In upper secondary education, dance can encourage playful, creative explorations in language learning (Jusslin et al., 2024). Among adults, dance may foster subjective experiences of vocabulary learning and retention and potentially enhance emotional responses to learning (Hanks & Eckstein, 2019). Altogether, combining dancing and language learning has potential to support learning language skills while also supporting broader educational goals. These findings align with recent research on the use of arts-based activities in language learning more generally, which suggests that such approaches can create "integrated, holistic contexts for learning" (Fleming, 2023, p. 270) and promote lifelong learning by fostering engagement, participation, and peer and place relationships (Moore de Luca & Hawkins, 2021).

Most of these studies have focused on creative dance and movement, which I also emphasise in my dissertation. I approach creative dance as both artistic and embodied activity that encourages children's exploration of movement rather than memorisation of specific dance styles or steps (Anttila, 2013; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019). For example, creative dance may involve exploring body parts and movement in relation to oneself, others, and surroundings as well as in relation to time, space, and energy (Koff, 2000). It may also incorporate elements of play and storytelling, leading to the creation of small movement compositions with peers that can be performed in class or at school events (Anttila, 2013; 2015; Giguere, 2021). These collaborative creative processes can involve exploring different solutions, negotiating ideas, making decisions, and expressing ideas both verbally and through embodied action (Anttila, 2018; Giguere, 2021). Creativity emerges through entanglements between learners' bodies, material objects, and the environment (Chappell et al., 2019). As such, creative dance can start from movement games and creative movement exploration and move step by step towards embodied, creative expression, based on the idea that everybody can dance and that there is no single right answer or way to move (Anttila, 2013; Giguere, 2021; Jusslin, 2020).

Research on integrating dance into subject learning has approached dance as a tool to support language development (Greenfader et al, 2015) or as an emotional support in learning (Hanks & Eckstein, 2019). Other studies have sought to deepen the understanding in both subjects, such as when creating geometry dances to explore math and dance concepts (Moore & Linder, 2012). The use of dance as a learning tool has been criticised for instrumentalising the arts, but it can create opportunities for learning both about and through dance when each element is equally valued (Rhodes, 2006). Various models of arts integration approach the relationship between the subject and art form differently (Sanz-Camarero et al., 2023). My research aligns with approaches to arts integration that attempt to place similar

emphasis on both the subject and the involved art form. The art form and subject are considered equal partners, and the teaching weaves together "content, skills, expressions, and thought modes" of the integrated subject and art form while aiming to generate meaningful learning in both (Sanz-Camarero et al., 2023, p. 6, see also Bresler, 1995). This form of arts integration can be understood as a transcurricular approach that involves deep integration (Höglund & Jusslin, 2023; Mård & Klausen, 2023) of both the subject and the art form.

Integrating dance into subject teaching in school often poses challenges, such as limited time and space. A significant obstacle can be the limited time available for planning and implementing dance integration as a new pedagogical approach (Sharma et al., 2020), although external funding has made this feasible in some cases (Buck & Snook, 2020). In addition, adequate time is needed for children and teachers to become acquainted with the approach and make connections between dance and the school subject (Jusslin, 2020). However, artistic processes that involve elements of unexpectedness may be difficult to fit into fixed, lesson-divided schedules (Nikkanen et al., 2019). Moreover, there are not usually designated spaces for dance in school, and large spaces like school gyms or halls might not always be available (Anttila, 2013; Jusslin, 2020; Sharma et al., 2020). In previous studies, dance-integrated lessons have been carried out in and across different locations, including regular classrooms, music and visual arts classrooms, corridors, and the schoolyard (Anttila, 2013; 2019; Jusslin, 2020; Sharma et al., 2020). However, dance integration can also be resource friendly, as it originates from the learner's body and does not require any additional equipment (Leonard et al., 2016).

A further challenge relates to the conceptions of dance. Many generalist teachers may be unfamiliar with creative dance education (Richard, 2013), and that cultural conceptions of dance may act as an obstacle (Anttila et al., 2019). Referring to dance as 'dance' itself may help broaden these conceptions. In contrast to outcome-oriented school curricula, learning in the arts is characteristically unpredictable and emergent (Anttila, 2018), leading to unexpected learning outcomes (Fenwick et al, 2011). Hence, it can be difficult or even counter-productive to set specific learning outcomes in advance. Instead, arts-integrated teaching requires careful lesson planning paired with a readiness to divert from the plan and embrace unanticipated opportunities (Höglund & Jusslin, 2023).

Finally, questions arise about who should integrate dance into language education. In principle, teachers do not need to be artistically trained to use dance in subject teaching, but arts integration as a pedagogical approach may be new to teachers (Buck & Snook, 2020), and they might not feel prepared to incorporate dance into their teaching practices (Zhang et al., 2021). Dance professionals often lead dance-integrated school projects, but involving schoolteachers is essential for sustaining this approach in school contexts (Buck & Snook, 2020; Sharma et al.,

2020). Otherwise, arts integration risks being seen as an extracurricular activity rather than an integral part of learning (Buck & Snook, 2020). Previous studies have explored multiprofessional collaboration as a solution (Jusslin & Østern, 2020; Nevanen et al., 2012), and there is growing interest in collaboration between language teachers and experts in fields like dance (Anderson & Chung, 2011).

In summary, prior research has illustrated pedagogical benefits of integrating creative dance into primary education as well as the value of collaboration between schoolteachers and dance professionals. My dissertation seeks to expand this knowledge by exploring how creative dance can be integrated into early additional language education through multiprofessional collaboration.

2.2 Teaching Additional Languages to Young Learners

In general, an early start to additional language learning in schools is motivated by the widespread assumption that children learn languages easier and faster (Johnstone, 2009; Pfenninger & Singleton, 2019). However, this assumption is based on research on children's language learning at home and in immersion schooling settings (Enever, 2015; Nikolov, 2009; Pfenninger & Singleton, 2019). Language learning in regular classrooms differs in several respects. The groups are larger in terms of the number of children, children learn the language mainly from their teacher and textbooks rather than their peers, and the time and intensity of language learning is much more limited, resulting in modest exposure to the target language (Enever, 2015; Johnstone, 2018). In fact, older starters often achieve similar or higher language proficiency than younger learners in a relatively short period (e.g. Huhta & Leontjev, 2019; Jaekel et al., 2017; Pfenninger & Singleton, 2017, 2019).

Although previous research results remain inconsistent regarding the benefits of an early start for language learning, young learners may have an advantage in learning a new sound system, experience less language anxiety, dare to take risks, and accept some uncertainty in communication (Enever, 2015; Halliwell, 1992; Johnstone, 2009, 34). Although prior research has generally focused on linguistic outcomes (Enever, 2015), the main benefits of an early start may not relate to language proficiency but rather to emotional and motivational aspects of language learning. Starting additional language learning early may contribute to a positive attitude towards language learning and an eagerness to use the language, helping maintain children's motivation and engagement in language learning over time (Enever, 2015; Hahl et al., 2020; Johnstone, 2009; Nikolov 2009). Additionally, early additional language education may support broader educational aims, including the development of cognitive, social, and intercultural skills (Johnstone, 2018, p. 26). Similarly, the Finnish core curriculum for additional language teaching in grades 1–

2 emphasises promoting a positive attitude towards language learning, strengthening confidence, and encouraging language use from the start (FNAE, 2020).

A successful early start to additional language learning requires quality early language pedagogy (Edelenbos et al., 2006), which considers the age of the young learners and leverages the advantages they bring to the language classroom. Since children in the first grades are only learning to read and write their first or school language, literature on early language teaching generally emphasises the development of oral language skills (e.g. listening and speaking) (Keaveney & Lundberg, 2019; Pinter, 2017). For this purpose, a holistic approach to language, focusing on meaning rather than form, is recommended to maximise target language exposure and encourage communication and interaction with peers (Bland, 2015; Keaveney & Lundberg, 2019; Pinter, 2017). Moreover, it has been argued that teachers should seek to move beyond single vocabulary items to prefabricated expressions and even to creative and spontaneous language use (Becker & Roos, 2016). Nevertheless, learning goals need to be realistic, as children's language learning tends to progress non-linearly, and early language learning is typically allocated only one hour per school week (Enever, 2015). For example, grades 1–2 in Finnish basic education average 45-minute weekly lessons (Finlex Data Bank, 2018).

Starting additional language learning at earlier stages of formal education has raised questions about who can and should teach these languages to young learners (Enever, 2015; Hahl et al., 2020). It has been argued that teachers need both an advanced level of spoken language fluency and expertise in age-appropriate teaching methods to grasp opportunities for spontaneous and informal communication with children and to create an engaging and motivating learning environment for them (Enever, 2015). In Finland, both class and language teachers can and do teach additional languages in grades 1–2 (Huhta & Leontjev, 2019; Vaarala et al., 2021), but most often it is the class teacher (Mård-Miettinen et al., 2021). Co-teaching can maximise class and language teachers' areas of expertise, but school structures make its practical implementation challenging (Hahl et al., 2020).

Recent studies conducted in Finland indicate that teachers teaching additional languages to young learners consider action-based activities, such as play, songs, and games, in combination with routine activities particularly suitable for this age-group (Hahl et al., 2020; Vahtola et al., 2022). Furthermore, teachers seem to find combining early language learning with everyday activities and other subjects meaningful (Hahl et al., 2020). Teachers report focusing on practicing oral language skills, learning vocabulary, repetition, and revision, mainly through teacher-led activities (Vahtola et al., 2022). However, while the teaching covers a range of topics, it rarely draws actively on children's interests (Mård-Miettinen et al., 2021; Mård-Miettinen & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2022). Teachers reportedly use the school

language, Finnish, as much or more as the target language in teaching (Huhta & Leontjev, 2019; Mård-Miettinen et al., 2021). A recent investigation of actual early language classrooms revealed that teachers employed engaging, multisensory activities that the children appeared to enjoy, but the teachers' target language use ranged from extensive to narrow, and children's target language use was limited and usually restricted to producing single words (Hahl et al., 2024).

Early language teaching can partly draw on similar pedagogical approaches as in bilingual education, including language immersion and language-enriched education where content and language learning are combined (Hahl et al., 2020; Skinnari & Halvari, 2018). Bilingual pedagogy and language immersion can create opportunities for children to learn a new language through natural interactive situations and playful actions (Bergroth, 2015; Palojärvi et al., 2016). Connecting language to concrete, familiar actions may support comprehension and encourage language use (Mård-Miettinen et al., 2023). Language showers, in turn, are non-formal, short-term activities that introduce additional languages to young learners through engaging, playful approaches (FNBE, 2016; Skinnari & Sjöberg, 2018). They can provide opportunities for children to engage with additional languages, for instance, in routine, everyday activities and through play, songs, rhymes, and stories (Bärlund, 2015). As in early bilingual education, such activities can connect to the entire physical learning environment and children's experiential worlds, even shifting learning outside the classroom and into the outdoors (Bärlund, 2015; Mård-Miettinen et al., 2023). Overall, approaches involving the combination of content and language learning[4] and the use of literature, drama, storytelling, picture books, or songs in early language classrooms extend beyond supporting learning language skills to creating meaningful learning experiences (Rixon, 2015).

In summary, there is a clear need for more knowledge on pedagogical approaches that activate learners and create opportunities for listening to and producing the target language in interactions with peers when teaching an additional language to young learners.

2.3 Activating Language Teaching

An early start to additional language learning has sparked interest in activating approaches that combine physical action with language learning, such as *Total Physical Response* (TPR; Pinter, 2017). Developed in the 1960's, the TPR method involves learners physically executing target language commands (Asher, 1969). The TPR method imitates first language acquisition by combining language learning

[4] For Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) with young learners, see for instance Bentley (2015).

with concrete actions. TPR is an established method for additional language teaching, which is particularly appropriate for beginner-level language learners. However, it has also been critiqued for its limited focus on communicative language uses and its lack of empirical research (Macedonia, 2019).

Contemporary language education frameworks also emphasise the role of action. For instance, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) promotes an action-oriented approach to additional language education (Council of Europe, 2018). The CEFR aligns with approaches to second language learning that draw on sociocultural and socio-constructivist theories (Council of Europe, 2018). It views language as a tool for communication, language learners as social agents, and the language-learning process as one that allows learners to "act in real-life situations, expressing themselves and accomplishing tasks of different natures" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 27). However, the CEFR focuses explicitly on action, while minimising the role of the learner's body. Although miming, gestures, facial expressions, and body language are all mentioned, they are presented as paralinguistic tools for supporting understanding and communication primarily at beginner levels (pre-A1–A2; Council of Europe, 2018). Echoing the CEFR, the Finnish core curriculum emphasises the use of activating approaches in the early teaching of additional languages and refers to gestures as non-verbal tools for deducing word meanings and coping in interactive situations (FNAE, 2020). The learner's body is seen as separate from and secondary to verbal language; a resource to resort to when words fail at the beginning of the language-learning process.

The pedagogical approach of action-based teaching focuses more explicitly on the sensory, embodied, and experiential aspects of language learning (van Lier, 2007). Building on ecological and sociocultural perspectives, it views language as multimodal, language learners as active and perceiving agents, and language learning as occurring in meaning-oriented tasks and projects (van Lier, 2007). In a recent Finnish survey study, most of the responding language teachers reported having used action-based methods, such as roleplaying or simple word games with movement and competition, and a majority of them did so on a regular basis (Hahl & Keinänen, 2021). The respondents believed that such methods could enhance learning, motivate learners, and create enjoyment. However, their conceptions of action-based methods were tentative in that they associated them with actions or movements rather than interaction or problem-solving (Hahl & Keinänen, 2021). In addition, it is evident that the actions and movements used by teachers do not realise embodied language learning, which involves the holistic engagement of learners' bodies in learning processes (see Chapter 3).

In general, movement can be incorporated in teaching for various purposes, from preparing for learning, creating so-called brain breaks from content learning, developing class cohesion to foster a positive learning environment, or revising and

learning content through movement (Lengel & Kuczala, 2010). Based on a Finnish report (Kantomaa et al., 2018), physical activity during the school day can benefit children's learning in various ways. For instance, activity breaks and movement integration are positively connected to learning outcomes in terms of school grades and standardised test results. Physical activity during the school day may also contribute positively to task concentration, behaviour, and school satisfaction, as factors enabling learning. According to the report, the benefits of physical activity for learning could be linked to the anatomical and physiological effects of physical activity on the body and brain, especially areas related to memory and executive functions. The connections between the development of motor and cognitive skills could also explain the benefits of physical activity for learning, along with the possibilities it creates for social interaction. The report recommended including movement in teaching and learning and acknowledged the need for more research on learning through action-based approaches (Kantomaa et al., 2018).

Overall, there appears to be an increasing interest in activating approaches to teaching additional languages among both researchers and teachers. Although the involvement of the learner's body in language education is not a new idea (Jusslin et al., 2022), its role in learning has not been fully recognised in contemporary language educational policies and practices. Therefore, it is important to develop concrete practices and knowledge regarding how learners' bodies and movements can be meaningfully incorporated into language teaching and learning.

3 Embodied Language Learning through Dance

In this chapter, I begin by discussing the notion of embodied learning as it has been articulated in research on dance education. I then explore how embodied learning approaches have been researched in language education. Finally, I introduce sociomaterial perspectives on languaging, learning, and teaching that emphasise the role of embodiment, and discuss how these perspectives can inform the integration of creative dance into early additional language education.

3.1 Embodied Learning when Integrating Dance

Embodied learning offers a holistic approach to learning that challenges conventional separations between body and mind, body and language, and body and environment in educational practices. The concept is supported by contemporary research, including theories of embodied cognition (Gallagher, 2018; Johnson, 2017; Macedonia, 2019; Macrine & Fugate, 2021; Rowlands, 2010) and sociomaterial approaches to learning and education (Fenwick et al., 2011; Fenwick, 2015). It is now increasingly recognised that cognition and affect "emerge from the body being embedded in environments that extend cognition, as agents enact situated action reflecting their current cognitive and affective states" (Barsalou, 2020, p. 2). There is also growing acknowledgement that both human and non-human bodies play an active role in learning processes and educational practices (Fenwick, 2015).

Dance education researchers have built on these frameworks to describe the learning that occurs in and through dance (Anttila, 2018; Giguere, 2021; Henley, 2021). Specifically, embodied learning is seen as a holistic process that activates learners' bodies and connects them to their environments (Anttila, 2018; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019). From this view, pedagogically framing learning as embodied involves making embodied activity a fundamental aspect of learning (Anttila, 2018; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019). Embodied activity can include actual bodily movement, but it can also encompass inner bodily sensations, experiences, and physiological changes (Anttila, 2018; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019). Accordingly, embodied activation, engagement and sensory experiences are

understood as "partners" in learning processes (Jusslin et al., 2022, pp. 2–3). The physical and social environment also plays an important role (Giguere, 2021) as learners relate to it through the different modalities of the body and bodily systems (Jusslin et al., 2022). For instance, material artefacts might become animated in dance and play (Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019). Overall, holistic activation and stimulation through embodied activity has the potential to foster learners' holistic development.

Critics have argued that "all learning is embodied, because the brain is part of the body", but this perspective misses the point that embodied learning entails the active engagement of learners' bodies with their environments (Jusslin et al., 2022, p. 2). In addition, embodied learning differs from other related pedagogical practices, such as kinaesthetic learning, which focuses on movement (Lengel & Kuczala, 2010). Embodied learning is different from learning motor skills, but bodily engagement may provide a way to holistically activate children in learning processes. However, not all bodily engagement may lead to embodied learning. Focusing only on specific and predetermined bodily gestures and movements does not seem compatible with the emphasis in creative dance education on multisensory processes, movement improvisation, and dance creation, which allow for some level of ambiguity and uncertainty (Anttila, 2018; Giguere, 2021; see section 2.1).

Social collaboration is essential in fostering embodied learning through dance (Anttila, 2018). Collaborating on movement compositions with peers encourages negotiation, decision-making, and expression through both body and language (Anttila, 2015; 2018; Giguere, 2021). Such activities are often followed up by reflection and evaluation, while strengthening connections between embodied creation, verbal language, and concepts (Anttila, 2018; Giguere, 2021). Performing is also crucial for facilitating embodied learning through dance (Anttila, 2018). Creative and collaborative processes can involve performing and witnessing others perform, fostering bodily and social awareness (Anttila, 2013, 2018). Performing is understood here in a broad sense, encompassing both performing movement compositions and various performative acts as actions that can have an impact and connect embodied, creative expressions and everyday actions (Anttila, 2018).

3.2 Embodied Learning in Language Education

Embodied learning has recently gained attention in research on language education, with an increasing number of studies published towards the end of the 2010's, especially between 2019–2020, when I began my doctoral research. Our literature review with the ELLA research team, covering studies from 1990 to 2020, highlighted the diversity of embodied learning and teaching approaches in first, second, and foreign language education (Jusslin et al., 2022).

The literature review revealed that an embodied approach can be implemented in various ways and at different educational levels, with previous research particularly focused on young and beginner-level language learners (Jusslin et al., 2022). In the reviewed studies, embodied learning was orchestrated, for instance, through physical activity, movement, or arts-based activities, but it was also observed in naturally occurring classroom interactions, for instance, when a teacher and a second grader used gestures and body positionings for meaning-making and problem-solving (Rosborough, 2014). According to the review, embodied learning activities involving physical activity and movement improved preschool and primary school children's recall of vocabulary in a foreign language (Mavilidi et al., 2015; Schmidt et al., 2019; Toumpaniari et al., 2015). Learning words with gestures was found to be more efficient than with conventional strategies, but embodying words through physical activity and gesturing was even more efficient (Toumpaniari et al., 2015), emphasising the importance of whole-body movement in children's additional language-learning processes. Similarly, combining movement and storytelling improved kindergarten and preschool children's learning of vocabulary, idioms, and narrative sequences in their first language (Duncan et al., 2019; Ionescu & Ilie, 2018; Marian et al., 2019). Overall, embodied learning through physical activity and movement was regarded as an easily implemented approach, especially with children (Toumpaniari et al., 2015), and an approach that children perceived more enjoyable than conventional ones (Schmidt et al., 2019; Toumpaniari et al., 2015). Arts-based activities, in turn, were found to foster subjective experiences of learning foreign-language vocabulary (Rothwell, 2011) and create meaningful, authentic contexts for additional language use (Cannon, 2017; Rothwell, 2011) in lower secondary education. While beyond the scope of our review, it has also been shown that using handclapping to highlight the rhythmical aspects of foreign-language words improved primary school children's pronunciation (Baills & Prieto, 2023).

Based on our literature review, we argued that the concept of embodied language learning could be used to encompass and conceptualise embodied approaches in language education (Jusslin et al., 2022). Embodied language learning provides a holistic approach to language education that actively engages learners, potentially enhancing both language skills and providing emotional and motivational benefits (Jusslin et al., 2022). These pedagogical potentials align with the central aims of early language education (see section 2.2).

In addition, we outlined the theoretical and methodological approaches used to examine embodied language learning in the literature review. Embodied learning through orchestration has primarily been studied through experimental designs and theories of embodied cognition, with a strong emphasis on vocabulary learning at the expense of other language areas (Jusslin et al. 2022). Studies on embodied

learning in naturally occurring language learning interactions have often employed conversation analysis and multimodal and/or sociocultural perspectives, although primarily focusing on embodied learning in classroom activities (Jusslin et al. 2022). In these contexts, bodily activation tends to be less holistic compared to learning experiences that integrate movement or arts-based activities.

None of the reviewed studies drew on sociomaterial approaches to pedagogy. These approaches, which also reject the division between body and mind, challenge other persistent dichotomies in educational practices, such as those between human and non-human bodies (Smythe et al., 2017). Sociomaterial approaches have gained increasing attention in research on applied linguistics and language education (e.g. Bangou & Waterhouse, 2021; Ennser-Kananen & Saarinen, 2022; Guerrettaz et al., 2021; Pennycook, 2018; Toohey, 2019), building on the work done in the fields of literacy education (Toohey et al., 2015; Toohey et al., 2020), early childhood education (Lenz Taguchi, 2010), and education more generally (Fenwick et al., 2011; Fenwick, 2015). In my doctoral research, sociomaterial approaches have proven productive for rethinking the relationship between embodiment and language, viewing language as an active doing – what is called languaging. However, research on children's additional language learning informed by sociomaterial approaches remains limited (Toohey, 2019). Consequently, I, like other early language researchers, have drawn on prior theoretical and empirical work in related fields, such as literacy and early childhood education (Bangou & Waterhouse, 2021) and general education (Guerrettaz et al., 2021).

3.3 Sociomaterial Approaches to Languaging, Learning, and Teaching

Sociomaterial approaches encompass perspectives that draw on theories and ontologies emphasising the relationship between the social and the material (Fenwick, 2015; Guerrettaz et al., 2021). I have opted for the term sociomaterial approaches following researchers in education (Fenwick, 2015) and language education (Guerrettaz et al., 2021). Given the novelty of these approaches in language education, my work also builds on contributions in the field that references new materialism (Toohey, 2019) and posthumanism (Ennser-Kananen & Saarinen, 2022; Pennycook, 2018), focusing on the concepts that have proven productive in my research.

Sociomaterial approaches broaden the scope of who or what are considered to be involved in pedagogical practices. More specifically, they foreground materials that are often positioned as "a backdrop for human action" or "tools subordinated to human intention" in educational research (Fenwick, 2015, p. 84). In doing so, they expand the focus from the human subject to a multiplicity of material bodies and

things, which can be both human and non-human (Fenwick, 2015). I use the plural 'bodies' instead of the definite singular 'the body' to highlight this shift. I also draw on the concept of assemblage that has become popular in sociomaterial approaches to highlight the shift in emphasis from individual learners and teachers to collectives including material, bodily, spatial, linguistic, affective, and other elements (Fenwick, 2015; Guerrettaz et al., 2021). For example, learners can be considered both assemblages of human and non-human bodily systems and part of larger assemblages (cf. Guerrettaz et al., 2021, p. 7).

Similarly to several contemporary language teaching approaches (see section 2.3), sociomaterial approaches emphasise action. Crucially, they place action in the sociomaterial world, understanding action as something that emerges from assemblages (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 166; Guerrettaz et al., 2021). The seemingly separate parts of assemblages are understood as inseparably entangled and influencing one another (Guerrettaz et al., 2021; Smythe et al., 2017). While other activating approaches generally position the learner as a social agent, sociomaterial approaches view agency as distributed across learners, teachers, materials, and places, attributing agency to both humans and non-humans (Lenz Taguchi, 2010) and their collectives (Murris & Zhao, 2022). Sociomaterial approaches also use the notion of intra-action that was developed by Karen Barad to indicate that individual agencies are constituted through entangled relationality (Barad, 2007, p. 33). Seen from a language pedagogical perspective, intra-action has been defined as "action involving emergent exchanges, influences, or engagements among interrelated entities or beings (e.g. teacher, students, classroom objects)" (Guerrettaz, 2021, p. 41). Crucially, all parts of assemblages are understood to have the potential to become active and change in the unfolding intra-action, indicating that material bodies and things are not considered mere tools that human beings use intentionally to mediate meaning (Toohey, 2019). It also indicates that materials are no longer considered a mere backdrop, as they can also act and affect human action (Fenwick, 2015). In other words, action is not completely controlled by individual human beings.

In relation to language, sociomaterial approaches encourage viewing learners' bodies, materials, and verbal language as entangled (Toohey, 2019). Moreover, they frame languaging as an active doing that involves the whole human being – vocal musculature, lungs, hands, fingers, eyes, faces, brains – as well as non-human elements, such as air, and various linguistic and semiotic resources (Toohey, 2019, p. 945). This perspective broadens previous work on language as an activity or process in language education research. For instance, the CEFR defines languaging as both the articulation of thinking and the creative crossing of language boundaries (Council of Europe, 2018). The first aspect aligns with a Vygotskian understanding of languaging as the use of language to mediate cognition in meaning-making

(Swain, 2006). The second relates to translanguaging, where the prefix 'trans' implies transcending boundaries between named languages, language varieties, and non-linguistic resources, such as gestures and facial expressions, while the root 'languaging' emphasises the activity rather than the product of language (Li, 2018). An enactive perspective, viewing language as enactments and language learning as encompassing not only vocabulary, skills, and rules but also novel ways of acting, being, experiencing, and participating (Di Paolo et al., 2018, p. 252; see Article II), also resonates with sociomaterial understandings of language and learning.

Sociomaterial approaches conceptualise learning as "expanded possibilities for action" (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 8) and as involving in situ participation, attunement, response, and intervention (Fenwick, 2015). As such, these approaches focus on action, influence, and engagement as they unfold (Guerrettaz et al., 2021). Following this line of thinking, I argue that a productive way of approaching embodied language learning is to focus on languaging as active doings involving embodied, material, spatial, and verbal elements. Embodied elements include, for instance, bodily movements, gestures, facial expressions, and sensations. Materialities of the space comprise both material objects and the material environment, even invisible non-human elements. In early language education, verbal elements of languaging relate mainly to spoken language and include vocabulary, phrases, and prefabricated expressions. Crucially, the boundaries between the different elements are blurry, as languaging occurs at the intersection between learners' bodies, senses, materialities, and verbal language.

While sociomaterial approaches have not yet been broadly explored in language education, they seem compatible with arts-integrated, transcurricular pedagogies (see section 2.1). Such pedagogies can foster new assemblages of children, teachers, and materials (Chappell et al., 2019), potentially generating "multiple and complex sets of intra-actions" that in turn may yield "multiple possibilities of understanding and knowing" (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 6). Moreover, sociomaterial approaches align with the emphasis on unpredictability in arts-integrated learning and teaching (Anttila, 2018; Höglund & Jusslin, 2023), embracing the complexity, messiness, and uncertainty of educational processes (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 167) as well as the unanticipated opportunities that can emerge in pedagogical events (Smythe et al., 2017).

4 Mapping the Course of the Project *Dansa språk!*

My dissertation is based on the project *Dansa språk!* (‘Kieliä tanssien!’ / ‘Dance Languages!’; 2019–2022), which brought together professionals in dance, language, and primary education. The multiprofessional team, henceforth ‘we’, co-designed activities that integrated creative dance into the early teaching of Swedish as the second national language at a Finnish primary school during two school years (2019–2021). In the third year (2021–2022), our focus was on disseminating practical outcomes. In the following, I describe the course of the project chronologically.

4.1 Composing a Team and Other Preparations (Orientation)

The main task of the orientation phase in the spring of 2019 was to construct the multiprofessional team. I reached out to the principal at Hurja Piruetti Western-Uusimaa Dance Institute[5] in Raseborg, Finland. The institute provides basic education in the arts (dance), and as a former student, I was aware of their participation in dance education projects in schools. The principal showed immediate interest in project collaboration, and one of the institute’s teachers joined the team. The teacher was a qualified, Swedish- and Finnish-speaking dance pedagogue with experience of teaching dance to children and in school projects.

I then contacted the principal at the primary school Kiilan koulu, Raseborg. The principal felt that the project would be an opportunity to foster positive attitudes towards learning Swedish in a bilingual growth environment. Raseborg is a Swedish- and Finnish-speaking municipality in Southern Finland in which all children begin additional language learning with the second national language, Swedish or Finnish

[5] The principals of the collaborating dance institute and school have given their permission to use the real names of the institutions for research purposes. The project and the names of the collaborating dance institute and school became publicly known already at the beginning of the project, affecting my choice to name them in the research. For ethical considerations, see section 6.5.

depending on the school's language of instruction. The municipality's schools had piloted the teaching of the second national language from grade 1 since 2016. As such, it was possible to start the project teaching at the school in the autumn of 2019, before the national reform was enacted in the spring of 2020. Based on the principal's request, an entire grade and their class teachers participated in the project. The project was carried out as part of the Swedish language curriculum in grades 1–2, when the participating children were between six and eight years of age. The class teachers were responsible for teaching Swedish to the first and second graders and were eager to gain support as they were uncertain about their language and language teaching skills. The groups initially consisted of 33 children, having included 37 children by the end of the project as new children arrived or changed schools. Of these children, 36 children took part in the research. According to their teachers, most children were starting to learn Swedish, but some may have had some language contact in a bilingual environment. Some had a bilingual family background or had participated in Swedish-immersion early childhood education, and some were learning both Finnish and Swedish as additional languages.

The dance teacher, the two class teachers in grade 1, and I – a doctoral researcher and language teacher – formed a multiprofessional team. All team members participated closely in planning, leading, and reflecting on the activities. In addition to myself, one class teacher participated throughout the project, but the other team members changed for reasons unrelated to the research. Ultimately, two dance teachers and four class teachers participated in the project. The dance teachers, who both had bilingual competence in Finnish and Swedish, brought their dance pedagogical expertise and ideas for activities and music. In the first year, the dance teacher also took the main pedagogical responsibility. The class teachers brought their knowledge of primary pedagogy and the groups, had the overall responsibility for the children, assisted individual children, and handled practical matters. They were supported either by an assistant, resource, or special needs teacher. In total, 11 substitute, assistant, resource, and special needs teachers took part in the lessons during the two years. My roles included project leader, researcher, and language teacher. I was responsible for bringing insights from language pedagogy and research and other literature in domains relevant to the project (see Chapter 2–3). In the second year, I shared the pedagogical responsibility with the dance teacher in the lessons. I am a qualified teacher of English and French (as foreign) languages with a bilingual background in Finnish and Swedish. Swedish has been my language of education from early childhood education to higher education. I have an extensive background in dance from basic education in the arts and I pursued basic studies in dance pedagogy (25 ECTS) at the start of my doctoral studies to develop my ability to carry out transdisciplinary research.

The team's composition matched recommendations for arts integration and early additional language teaching (see sections 2.1–2.2). Collaborating with a dance teacher was crucial to move towards an equal emphasis on language and dance while involving the class teachers was important for designing language-and-dance-integrated practices that are viable and can be sustained in a real-life school context. The collaboration between the class teachers and myself allowed combining the teachers' knowledge of age-appropriate teaching approaches and my expertise in language pedagogy. While I am not a Swedish teacher, my language pedagogical knowledge allowed us to design for additional language learning, and the dance teachers' and my advanced oral language fluency to speak Swedish extensively and spontaneously during the lessons.

We held a kick-off meeting with the team and the dance institute's principal in May 2019 to get to know each other, discuss the project, and schedule the lessons and meetings. Prior to the meeting, I discussed the school's expectations, project implementation, teacher compensation, and practical arrangements with the school principal. Additional preparations included reviewing previous research and other literature to frame the design and applying for funding to compensate teachers. Class teachers' work plan included limited planning time, and thus the co-designing took place outside of it. In addition, I observed children's dance lessons at the dance institute, and the dance teacher and I participated in TALK workshops (Kirsi, 2019) to learn about existing practices. The project teaching began in the autumn term 2019. Figure 2 presents the project timeline and main activities.

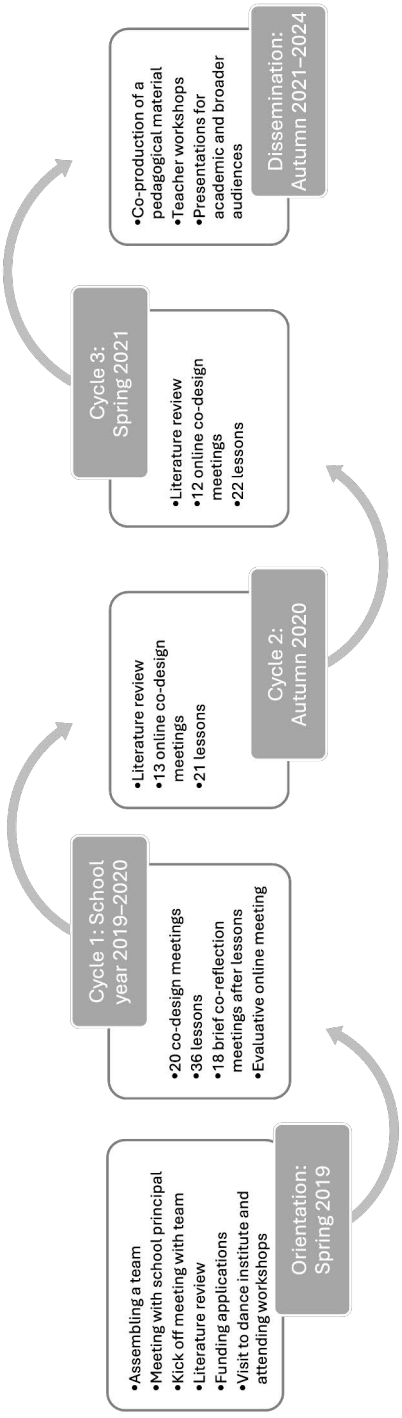

Figure 2. Project Timeline.

4.2 Designing Collaborative and Integrated Practices (Cycle 1)

We designed and carried out two pedagogical sequences in grade 1 during the 2019–2020 school year. The focus in cycle 1 was on developing collaborative and integrated practices. Table 1 presents an overview of the pedagogical sequences in cycle 1.

Table 1. Overview of the Pedagogical Sequences in Cycle 1.

	Cycle 1	
Time and duration	Autumn 2019 10 x 45 minutes / group	Spring 2020 8 x 45 minutes / group
Location	School gym	School gym
Teachers	Multiprofessional team (dance teacher, researcher, class teachers)	Multiprofessional team (dance teacher, researcher, class teachers)
Children	Grade 1 (two groups, classes mixed)	Grade 1 (two groups by class)
Themes	Greetings; introductions; body parts; numbers; colours; ways of moving	Weather; forest animals; seasons (winter, spring)
Structure	Routine activities, warm-up exercise, theme-related activities, feedback round, routine activities	Routine activities, warm-up exercise, theme-related activities, experience circle, routine activities
Materials	Seating pads, colourful scarfs, play parachute	Seating pads, wrist ribbons
Music	Children's songs in Swedish	Instrumental music

We designed the lessons in face-to-face meetings held at the school before the lessons. We held an additional design meeting at the beginning of each term. Our teamwork was non-hierarchical and dialogical. In designing the lessons, we built on our respective domains of expertise and experiences. I documented the lesson designs on a project platform on the school's online drive. I used the same research and literature that was presented in Chapters 2 and 3 to frame the co-design of activities, regularly sharing insights from my continuous literature review with the team. I explicitly presented studies and implicitly wove in insights from the literature during this process. Key principles included designing activities that integrated elements of creative dance and early language education and meaningfully incorporated embodied activities in the learning process.

We structured the pedagogical sequences thematically, addressing various themes related to both language and dance education, such as body parts and action verbs as ways of moving. In selecting themes, we used the local curriculum for teaching Swedish in grades 1–2 (Raseborg, 2016) and the school's teaching material, *Fram!* ('Go!'; Kanervo et al., 2018), to design verbal elements of the activities. The content aligned with the Finnish core curriculum for teaching Swedish in grades 1–2, emphasising, for example, oral comprehension and language production in communicative situations (FNAE, 2020). The structure of the lessons varied, but they typically included several relatively short activities to keep the children engaged. The lessons generally started with routine activities, such as introductions in Swedish and movements, followed by a warm-up exercise, such as theme-related or revision tag games in Swedish. The theme-related activities included tactile learning of body parts in Swedish, individual and small-group tasks involving bodily shaping numbers in Swedish, and small-groups movement compositions that combined numbers and action verbs. The lessons ended with a feedback round or experience circle, and routine activities, such as performing a rhyme in Swedish while clapping or moving. We started with low-threshold communicative movement activities that did not require previous experience in dance and built towards activities that sought to spark children's creativity and imagination, such as bodily enacting teacher-led narratives on, for instance, the weather and forest animals. The lessons generally involved both new and familiar elements. We used different materials and music to support and provide an impetus for creatively exploring movement and verbal language (see Article I).

We conducted 10 lessons for each of the two groups in grade 1 in the autumn term, but only eight lessons per group in the spring term due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in Finland in March 2020. The class teachers taught the remaining Swedish lessons during the year. For the project lessons, the class teachers mixed the two groups in the autumn of 2019, but subsequently the children participated in the lessons with their own group. A substitute class teacher joined the team in the middle of the autumn term. The lessons took place in the school gym, with class spaces divided by a curtain. Although the gym was echoey, the open space and empty floor seemed to facilitate creative movement exploration. The dance teacher was mainly responsible for leading the activities, but the class teachers and I also participated actively instead of merely observing from the sidelines. We used the same lesson design with both groups, but often fine-tuned our plans in situ or between lessons. Hence, the lessons were never identical.

After the lessons, the whole team met in the gym to share and reflect on our experiences and observations of the lessons as well as the children's feedback. Our co-reflection centred on what had worked and what had not, helping us to refine our plans. For instance, we developed our Swedish-language instructions by using

embodied and playful strategies. While the activities provided ample opportunities for listening to Swedish, we encountered difficulties in supporting children's language production and agency. Collaborating with peers was also challenging and required teacher support. After the pandemic outbreak, distance teaching continued for most of the remaining term. We discontinued the project teaching until the next school year but held a remote meeting in April 2020 to evaluate cycle 1, document ideas, and draft a schedule for the next year. We finalised the schedules for meetings and lessons, including the ones that had been cancelled, via e-mail.

4.3 Reconfiguring Practices in Changing Conditions (Cycle 2)

After the contact teaching was interrupted in the spring term 2020, I reviewed literature to develop the theoretical foundations of the design. During cycles 2–3, I increasingly incorporated insights from research on sociomaterial approaches (see section 3.3). This informed the shift towards a more emergent practice when resuming the project teaching in person in August 2020. However, the altered, constantly changing conditions during the pandemic significantly affected the design and implementation of the pedagogical sequence in cycle 2, and ultimately also in cycle 3. Table 2 presents an overview of the pedagogical sequences in cycles 2–3.

Table 2. Overview of the Pedagogical Sequences in Cycles 2–3.

	Cycle 2	**Cycle 3**
Time and duration	Autumn 2020 10–11 x 45 minutes / group	Spring 2021 11 x 45 minutes / group
Location	School yard, school gym	School gym
Teachers	Multiprofessional team (dance teacher, researcher, class teachers), resource/assistant/special needs teacher	Multiprofessional team (dance teacher, researcher, class teachers), resource/assistant/special needs teacher
Children	Grade 2 (two groups by class)	Grade 2 (two groups by class)
Themes	Nature; insects; robots; my day	Revision of and deepening contents in Cycle 2; animals; favourites and class dance
Structure	Routine activities, warm up, theme-related activities, routine activities	Routine activities, communicative movement exploration, theme-related activities, routine activities
Materials	-	-
Music	Instrumental music	Instrumental and Swedish-language music

In contrast to cycle 1, we held our weekly one-hour meetings remotely during cycles 2–3. We also held an initial design meeting at the beginning of each term. The new class teacher in grade 2 became a new team member. I continued documenting the lesson designs and shared them with the teachers on the project platform. They commented on the designs and added information about, for instance, music choices.

During cycles 2–3, the design of the activities followed the national and local safety guidelines, which involved avoiding physical contact and materials as key elements in creative dance. The children were not required to use face masks, but the teachers did from the middle of the sequence and onward. The continuation of the project was uncertain throughout the autumn term, but we were ultimately able to carry out the entire 11-week pedagogical sequence with these precautions, apart from one cancelled lesson.

During cycles 2–3, we revised, deepened, and broadened the curricular contents explored during cycle 1 (FNAE, 2020; Raseborg, 2016). Instead of relying heavily on the textbook, we incorporated various rhymes and songs. We designed for language learning by embedding more varied verbal elements in communicative, creative, and collaborative activities, while remaining responsive to themes and language learning opportunities arising from children's embodied actions and their encounters with peers and the material environment. The activities in cycle 2 included familiar routine activities and verbal elements, such as greetings and introductions in Swedish as well as rhythmical movements. The children's favourite warm-up exercise, tag, was replaced with movement exploration activities with communicative elements, such as moving along the lines to music and jointly enacting a verbal dialogue with the teacher when the music paused. Theme-related activities included teacher-led small-group work. The lessons ended with playful routine activities, such as a goodbye round in Swedish with movement.

Most of the 45-minute lessons were carried out in the school's big gym, except for two lessons that were held in the school yard. During these outdoor lessons, the teacher-led small group activity involved children in exploring the school yard, picking up an object, showing it to the group and naming it in Swedish, and creating statues and movements. These were then linked together into a movement composition, narrated in Swedish, rehearsed, and performed for the rest of the class. The outdoor lessons yielded the theme for the following indoor lessons: insects. Other themes explored during the sequence were robots and everyday activities (see Article II). Overall, we explored fewer themes during this pedagogical sequence, allowing opportunities for revision and encouragement of speaking Swedish.

In contrast to cycle 1, the dance teacher and I shared the pedagogical responsibility during the lessons, allowing the dance teacher to take a step back and observe. The class teachers continued participating actively in the lessons with their respective classes, particularly supporting the children who needed assistance, and

co-led small-group activities. A resource, an assistant, or a special needs teacher also took part in the lessons with one of the groups to support individual children. Instead of face-to-face co-reflection sessions, as in cycle 1, the teachers recorded their reflections of the lessons in a shared teacher diary. We also discussed opportunities and challenges in our online meetings, which helped to refine the design of the activities. For instance, we faced challenges with restlessness, and substantial teacher support was still necessary for peer collaboration.

4.4 Pieces Falling into Place (Cycle 3)

In cycle 3, we welcomed a substitute dance teacher to the team and continued with the collaborative practices from cycle 1 and the remote practices from cycle 2. The design of the activities continued to be influenced by pandemic-time restrictions.

As in cycles 1–2, we structured the pedagogical sequence thematically, but covering fewer themes than before. We focused on revising, deepening, and expanding contents explored previously. We built on familiar tasks but developed them by incorporating new and more challenging verbal elements and placing more emphasis on children's ideas, desires, and creative collaboration with peers.

The initial lessons focused on revising and extending previously learned verbs and adverbs or ways of moving and directions. Animals, a theme familiar from cycle 1, seemed to engage children and became the main theme of the sequence, ultimately spanning six lessons. The lessons generally included routine activities, such as jointly performing a Swedish-language rhyme (see Prologue), greetings, and introductions in Swedish along with rhythmical clappings; communicative movement exploration; and theme-related activities in various group formations. To encourage peer collaboration, we designed teacher-led whole-group activities, which served as a basis for pair and small-group work. For instance, the animal-themed sequence included communicative movement exploration with animal figures in both whole-group and paired settings as well as creating movement compositions in Swedish within the whole group and in smaller groups (see Article III). The final lesson included some of the children's favourite activities, followed by co-creating a class dance in Swedish and filming it for the school's spring festivities (see Epilogue).

All lessons in the pedagogical sequence of cycle 3 were carried out in the school's gym, with each group in grade 2 participating in 11 lessons, each 45 minutes in length. As in cycle 2, the dance teacher and I co-led the activities, while the class teachers participated in the lessons with their respective classes and supported individual children. A resource, assistant, or special needs teacher continued participating in the lessons with one of the groups. We reflected on the activities through writing and in remote meetings. During the animal-themed sequence, the

class teacher and I, who had participated in the entire project, felt that the pieces had fallen into place. As such, the pedagogical sequence was an outcome of the two-year design work.

4.5 Sharing Practices (Dissemination)

The length of the project proved sufficient given the success we achieved by the end. However, we decided to continue the project for another year to disseminate its practical outcomes. I had presented our work to researchers and practitioners in seminars and workshops during cycle 1, but the Covid-19 pandemic made this more challenging. Hence, during the third project year (2021–2022), we collected activities and practices that had worked particularly well in our experience and shaped them into a video-based pedagogical material openly available in both Finnish and Swedish.[6] We launched this material at two teacher workshops held at the school and the dance institute in September 2022. The latter was open to all teachers in the municipality. Subsequently, I continued sharing practices and insights with both research and general audiences. For instance, in March 2024, I presented my research with a group of children from the dance institute in the co-production *Akateeminen vartti 3* ('Academic Quarter 3') between the University of Turku and Turku City Theatre.[7]

6 https://sites.uniarts.fi/en/web/ellaresearchproject/kieli%C3%A4-tanssien-
7 https://areena.yle.fi/1-68343539?seek=3351

5 Research Questions

In summary, the aim of this dissertation is to explore how language and dance integration can be practiced and conceptualised as an embodied approach in early additional language teaching and learning. The three empirical articles address this research goal from distinct perspectives, each guided by specific research questions shaped by the theoretical framing and experiences of integrating creative dance into early Swedish language education throughout the project.

Article I explores the collaborative process of integrating dance into early additional language education, emphasising multiprofessional collaboration to show how a language-and-dance-integrated pedagogical approach can be enacted in practice. Article II delves into the challenges and opportunities of sustaining an embodied pedagogical practice during the constantly changing conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is particularly relevant for designing embodied language pedagogy for early additional language education in complex and changing school realities. Lastly, Article III focuses on children's languaging as active doing in language-and-dance-integrated activities. This is important for understanding how language and dance integration can create possibilities for embodied language learning. Building on this, the following research questions guided my dissertation as a whole:

1. How can a multiprofessional team integrate dance in early additional language education to support children's learning holistically even in changing conditions? (Articles I–II)
2. How can children's holistic engagement through language and dance integration create possibilities for embodied language learning? (Articles II–III)
3. How can language and dance integration be conceptualised as an embodied approach in the early teaching and learning of additional languages? (Articles I–III)

6 Methodological Steps

My doctoral research began as an educational design research project but evolved towards arts-based and post-qualitative research due to its focus on integrating dance and sociomaterial approaches. Below, I discuss what combining educational design research with arts-based and post-qualitative research involved. I then describe the processes of generating and analysing data. Finally, I evaluate my methodological choices and consider ethical matters. I discuss my positioning as a researcher throughout the chapter.

6.1 Moving from Educational Design Research to Arts-Based and Post-Qualitative Research

Following McKenney and Reeves (2019), educational design research is iterative, theoretically oriented, and conducted collaboratively to develop innovative solutions for educational practice with practitioners and in real-life educational contexts. It aligned with my ambitions in my doctoral project – to develop new practical tools and theoretical insights – while providing a flexible structure for carrying out the research. Theory played an important role as it both framed my research and design and was a goal of my research. I also sought to have a positive impact on educational practice by designing and exploring a new practical solution: integrating creative dance into early additional language education.

According to McKenney and Reeves (2019), educational design research is conducted with practice rather than for or on practice, emphasising its collaborative element. I carried out the research in close collaboration with dance and class teachers. An ideal educational design research process starts with identifying a problem in educational practice alongside practitioners, but I formulated the problem and chose the approach (solution) while writing research and project proposals. I was also responsible for generating and analysing data and reporting the research. Nevertheless, my conversations with the team members and principals at the school and dance institute shaped the project. The designs were responsibly grounded, embedded in regular language lessons at the school and shaped by previous research and other literature, the team members' expertise, and children's feedback. I adapted the iterative structure of educational design research, including analysis and

exploration, design and construction, evaluation and reflection, and implementation and spread. The cycles of my doctoral project involved the following phases: (1) orienting to the collaboration, context, and conditions, with a literature review and practice exploration; (2) co-designing activities and documenting designs; and (3) collaboratively enacting and (co-)reflecting on activities, which could lead to the beginning of a new cycle (see Chapter 4 for a description of activities). The boundaries between the phases were fluid and overlapping. Analysing data took place mainly after the last pedagogical sequence. I shared emerging practices and insights with academic and broader audiences during the research process. This included co-creating a pedagogical material.

Early in the research process, I became interested in conducting research not only on the arts but also through the arts as a transdisciplinary approach (Bradley & Harvey, 2019). Arts-based research is increasingly recognised and expanding in applied linguistics and education (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2018; Pöyhönen & Paulasto, 2020). It involves crossing boundaries between arts and research to tap into aspects of processes that cannot be accessed with words only and could otherwise remain untouched (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2018a; Pöyhönen & Paulasto, 2020). My research became arts-based in that the research process was emergent, involved embodied, multisensory engagement, and explored creative, evocative forms of expression (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2018; Ellingson, 2017; Leavy, 2018a, 2020; Pelias, 2005; Pöyhönen & Paulasto, 2020). Rather than implementing a pre-designed intervention, we designed the activities as we went along to engage with the ideas that emerged through our increasing experience and understanding of practice. As such, the research did not involve iteration of the 'same' design but rather the enactment of different, constantly developing designs. In addition, I engaged bodily and sensorially with the research practice and explored different forms of expression in analysing data (see section 6.3) and presenting my research to academic and public audiences (see section 4.5). The resulting pedagogical practices, performances, and research stories, images, and drawings in the articles are thus outcomes of arts-based research.

Arts-based research is connected to qualitative research and, recently, to post-qualitative research (Jusslin & Østern, 2020; Østern, 2017; see also Bradley & Harvey, 2019). Drawing on sociomaterial approaches to understand language learning as an embodied, material, and relational process led to a "domino effect" (Article III, p. 57; MacLure, 2023, p. 213) in my research. This sociomaterial conception of knowledge posits that knowledge, knowers, and the known are inseparable, emerging from relations and activity, as knowledge "performs itself into existence" (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 8). This understanding guided me towards post-qualitative research, which explores practices, events, and phenomena as they unfold

within the research process, based on an understanding of practices of knowing (epistemology) and being (ontology) as entangled (Gunnarsson & Bodén, 2021) – an onto-epistemology (Barad, 2007). This is a performative orientation towards knowledge that broadens the focus beyond humans and languages to embodiment and materialities and embraces more-than-verbal ways of knowing to reveal what tends to be taken for granted (Bradley & Harvey, 2019). It is performative in that it both co-creates and is co-created by the researched phenomenon (Gunnarsson & Bodén, 2021). I was also inspired by a performative paradigm (Bolt, 2016; Haseman, 2006) oriented toward impact, focusing not on what something is but what it does, and generating something new in the world rather than researching something that already exists (Østern et al., 2023). In other words, the researched practice did not exist outside of the research; it was created through it. I did not observe the researched phenomenon at a distance as a disembodied researcher but rather engaged with it through moving, sensing, feeling, and thinking. Moreover, I did not keep the materiality and messiness in the background, embracing the reality that the material world "kicks back" (Barad, 2007, p. 215; Gunnarsson & Bodén, 2021, n.p.), shaping the research as much as the research shapes the world. This became concrete during the Covid-19 pandemic when a non-human agent, a virus, influenced the design of activities and research in unpredictable ways.

Thus, the methodological approach of my dissertation is best described as a methodological movement from educational design research towards arts-based and post-qualitative research. Elements of educational design research framed my project, including the collaborative development of pedagogical practices in a real school setting, the iterative, flexible structure adapted for the project, its theoretical basis combined with the goal of generating theoretical insights for domain-related teaching (Bakker, 2018; McKenney & Reeves, 2019). My research has specifically involved developing pedagogical practices, activities, and materials for language and dance integration in early language education and conceptualising it as an embodied approach. However, arts-based and post-qualitative research approaches aligned more closely with the theoretical perspectives I employed. This progression illustrates the development that can occur in educational design research (McKenney & Reeves, 2019) rather than being a limitation of the research project (see also Jusslin, 2020).

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that my methodological movement affected the process of generating knowledge and the knowledge generated. Whilst the theoretical understanding generated through educational design research is typically descriptive, explanatory, predictive, and prescriptive (McKenney & Reeves, 2019), the more familiar I became with the tenets of arts-based research, socio-material approaches, and post-qualitative research, the more uncomfortable I became with articulating fixed, static models, or "best practices" (Toohey, 2019, p. 950). Instead, I used arts-based and post-qualitative research approaches to map the

collaborative process of integrating dance into early language education and the possibilities and challenges it produced, attending to embodied and material dimensions of events while allowing complexity, messiness, and unpredictability to remain (see section 6.3). This transition towards arts-based and post-qualitative research involved an epistemological shift towards knowledge that is embodied, multisensory, situated, ambiguous, and uncertain (Fenwick, 2015; Leavy, 2020; Østern et al., 2023). Before discussing the analytical approaches, I will describe the process of data generation.

6.2 Generating and Assembling Data

Figure 3 presents the process of generating the data in relation to the research cycles.

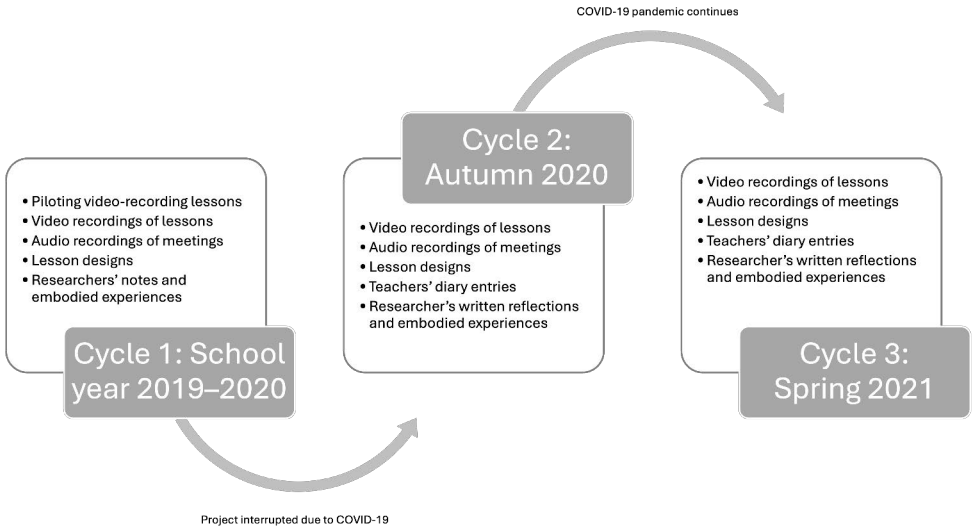

Figure 3. Data Generation Process.

Video-recording lessons was essential to document the embodied dimensions of language-and-dance-integrated pedagogical practice. I began piloting video-recording lessons in the autumn term of 2019 to determine the best way to film pedagogical activities that involved children moving and languaging in an open space rather than sitting still in a classroom. I used a handheld video camera to document the activities, following a dance educational research practice (Svendler Nielsen, 2012). Starting in the spring term of 2020, I filmed all lessons with the group in which all children also participated in the research (see section 4.1). However, the handheld video camera limited my ability to participate in the activities as a researcher and teacher, and thus I switched to a chest-mounted action camera in

the spring of 2020. This allowed me to record events in the middle of the action and at the level of children while moving, encountering children, and instructing more freely. In addition, I used a static camera, which I placed in one corner of the gym to capture an overall view of the lessons.

I documented the process of co-designing activities by audio-recording all team meetings and taking notes of our discussions. I wrote up our lesson designs on the project platform on the school's online drive. During the first project year, I audio-recorded the pre-lesson co-design and post-lesson co-reflection meetings and took notes on the topics discussed. During the second year, I audio-recorded the post-lesson online meetings, which focused on planning the upcoming activities and sharing experiences and observations to refine the activities. The reflection was continued in writing. The teachers documented their experiences and observations of the lessons in a teacher diary on the online project platform. Following an embodied research approach (Ellingson, 2017), I wrote reflections of my experiences and observations of the lessons and activities to document "fleeting moments of embodied knowing and sense making" (Ellingson, 2017, pp. 52–53). I particularly focused on the bodily, sensory, material, messy, and mundane dimensions of situations (Ellingson, 2017). The experiences shared by the other team members in the meetings and in connection to the lessons intermingled with my own, making it difficult to distinguish who had said what. Hence, I allowed their reflections and diary entries to merge with my own reflections, forming the collective voice of the team, which was nevertheless rooted in my personal perspective. Finally, I watched the video-recordings of the lessons to support my memory and expand my written reflections.[8]

Following arts-based research terminology, I refer to this process as data generation rather than data collection to highlight my active role in producing the data (Leavy, 2020, p. 307). From a post-qualitative perspective, the data generation process can be understood as an embodied and material process of assembling data, which involved the team members and myself as a researcher and teacher, the children, recording devices, other materials, and different locations (Ellingson & Sotirin, 2020). The process resulted in a data assemblage (Ellingson & Sotirin, 2020) of video recordings of the lessons, audio recordings and notes of meetings, lesson designs, teachers' diary entries, and my written reflections on the lessons as a researcher. In addition, the data assemblage includes my embodied and lived

[8] In addition, I interviewed the participating children twice and teachers once during the second project year, but, despite my original intention, I did not analyse these data in my dissertation articles. Instead, I focused on the team's experiences of the effects of Covid-19 pandemic due to the topic's urgency and relevance. I aim to return to the interview data in my future post-doc research to analyse participants' perspectives in depth.

experiences of the activities and the collaborative design process. The team members' audio-recorded reflections of their embodied experiences are similarly part of the data assemblage. My co-author of Articles I–II also attended once the lessons and subsequent co-reflection in the spring of 2019, and her experiences and responses are woven into the data assemblage. Crucially, as a researcher, I am entangled with the data (Ellingson & Sotirin, 2020), and I use the notion of data assemblage to describe how different data merged and blended, instead of being neatly kept separated (as would be the case in data triangulation[9]). These 'messy' data assemblages became generative (Ellingson & Sotirin, 2020) for focusing on the embodied dimensions of the language-and-dance-integrated pedagogical practice.

Collectively, the data assemblage encompasses audiovisual, embodied, material, and written documentation of the collaborative process of integrating language and dance. For each article, I have assembled – grouped and merged – the data relevant for addressing the specific research aim. Table 3 presents an overview of the articles, their research aims, the relevant research cycles and contents, and the data assemblages. I have numbered the articles according to the order of the cycles for clarity and to illustrate the development of practices and theoretical insights.

Table 3. Overview of the Articles' Aims, Cycles, and Data Assemblages.

Article	Aim	Cycles and contents	Data assemblages
I	Explore how a multiprofessional team collaborated in integrating language and dance in early additional language education	Cycle 1 (school year 2019–2020) Kick-off meeting 20 co-design meetings 36 lessons 18 co-reflections Evaluative meeting	Video recordings of lessons Audio recordings of meetings Lesson designs Meeting notes Researchers' embodied experiences
II	Explore how it is possible to sustain dialogue through language and dance integration in contact instruction in times of distancing	Cycle 2 (autumn 2020) 21 lessons	Video recordings of lessons Researcher's written reflections and embodied experiences Teachers' diary entries
III	Explore how languaging through language and dance integration can create possibilities for embodied language learning	Cycle 3 (spring 2021) 6 lessons (one group)	Video recordings of lessons Lesson designs Researcher's written reflections and embodied experiences

[9] Data assemblage differs from data triangulation, which is an established method in several research traditions and involves combining multiple types of data to enhance the understanding of a researched phenomenon (Ellingson, 2017).

6.3 Analytical Engagements

To address the aims of each article, I explored post-qualitative research approaches combined with arts-based research strategies, including embodied writing (Article I), performative writing (Article II), and creating comics (Article III). In post-qualitative research, analytical processes involve creative experimentation with data (Gunnarsson & Bodén, 2021), and writing is considered a method of inquiry in that it is not only about reporting research but also about discovery and analysis (Hohti, 2016; Richardson, 1994; Richardson & St Pierre, 2018; St Pierre, 2018). My focus on language learning as an embodied process led me to explore how the language used in writing and research practice could be made more alive and animated (cf. Richardsson & St. Pierre, 2018). Embodied, performative writing and comics creation proved to be productive ways to analytically engage with more-than-verbal data, address my entanglement with the data, and to present the results. Next, I describe the analytical processes in greater detail.

6.3.1 Embodied Writing (Article I)

Embodied writing is a post-qualitative research approach that involves "plugging the body into research and writing" (Guttorm et al., 2016, p. 424). This approach enables engaging with the bodily entanglements and materiality of language within research practice (MacLure, 2013) and facilitates dissolving the individual researcher subject ('I') into a suprasubjective position ('we'; Guttorm et al., 2016, see also Braidotti, 2018). I used embodied writing in Article I to explore how the multiprofessional team collaborated in integrating dance in early additional language education. More specifically, the article addressed the following questions: 1) How did multiprofessional collaboration evolve over the course of the first year of the project? and 2) How did language and dance become entangled as the multiprofessional team became an assemblage? Embodied writing proved to be a productive strategy for extending the focus beyond the individual team members to the multiprofessional team and from (verbal) language to the embodied and material dimensions of the collaboration (cf. MacLure, 2018).

I developed embodied writing as an approach for data analysis and presentation together with my co-author, building on her prior co-authored articles (Guttorm et al., 2016; Löytönen et al., 2014). After transcribing relevant situations in the audio-recorded team meetings that involved language, dance, and embodiment, I identified events where they became connected or resisted entanglement. I mapped out these events by focusing on their turning points and material, temporal, and spatial conditions (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). To deepen my understanding, I repeatedly listened to the audio-recordings while drawing on my embodied memories of these encounters in the material school space. I experimented with language, placement

on the page, fonts, and typography to bring forth the various elements – embodied, material, spatial, temporal, verbal – that choreographed boundary-crossing events between language and dance and the process of becoming an assembled team. Figure 4 illustrates this approach.

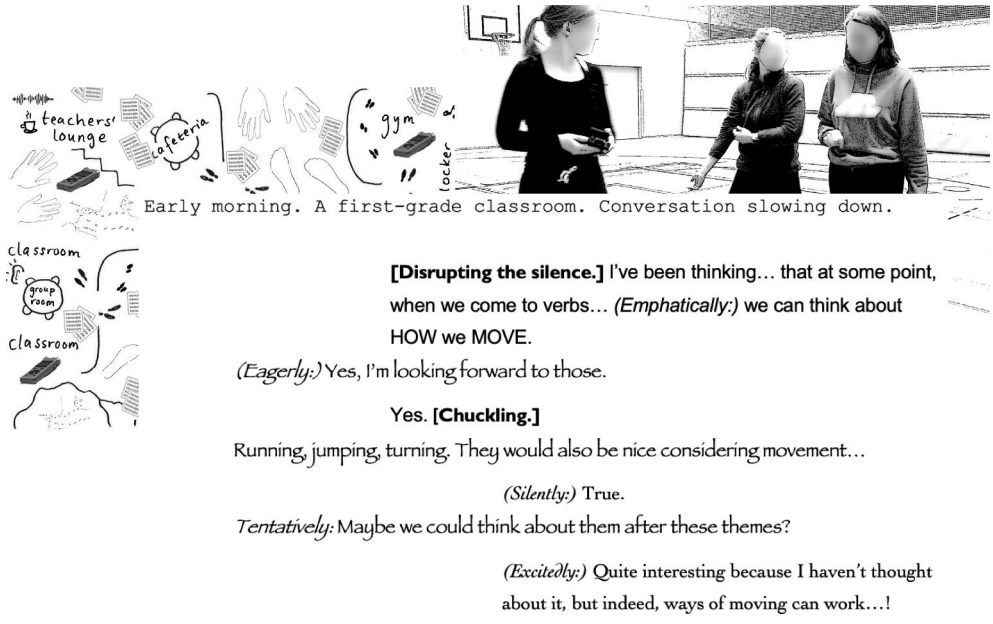

Figure 4. Example of Embodied Writing (Article I, p. 64, 69, 73).

During the analytical process, I incorporated bodily enactments of the events, drawing maps of the team's movements as a team in the school and mapping some effects of the collaboration on pedagogical practice using screenshots of video-recorded lessons. Tracing back (Lenz Taguchi, 2010) the collaborative process of designing language-and-dance-integrated activities in this way generated writings and drawings (see Figure 4). These outputs can be understood as constructed cuts of events that show the different embodied, material, verbal, spatial agencies that "mattered in what happened" (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 86). In enacting and analysing the cuts, I put to work the embodied, dance-related concepts of *crossing, balancing, bending, stretching,* and *blurring* literally and metaphorically. Some of these concepts emerged organically during the teamwork, proving valuable in analysing the collaborative boundary crossing between language and dance as well as the formation of an assembled team. I also employed these concepts to conceptualise the cuts in presenting the results.

6.3.2 Performative Writing (Article II)

Performative writing focuses on capturing moments of lived experience (Pelias, 2005). I used performative writing (Pelias, 2005, 2019) with a post-qualitative foundation (Gunnarsson & Bodén, 2021) in Article II to explore how dialogue could be sustained in times of distancing. Shaping the teachers' and my experiential accounts into a performative narrative involved several analytical steps. First, I focused on events and encounters that deviated from customary classroom practices. These unusual, strange moments, influenced by Covid-19, impacted pedagogical practice and could be both ordinary and extraordinary. The process of selecting the moments could be considered as making constructed cuts of events (Lenz Taguchi, 2010), although I did not conceptualise it as such at the time with my co-author. I then merged accounts of the same activities from different lessons to identify pedagogical practices that enabled sustaining dialogue in an altered school reality as well as their challenges and possibilities. In addition, I creatively experimented with language, structure, and visuals to give a sense of the pedagogical practices. For instance, I employed different fonts for events and encounters and narrated experiences, observations, and reflections and blurred snapshots from the videos. I also revisited the video recordings to enhance the narrative. My co-author acted as a critical reader during the process, and the teachers verified that they related to the final version and recognised the depicted events. The following extract is taken from the beginning of the narrative on strange encounters in times of distancing:

> *We create a big, big circle through extending our arms instead of holding hands. Bigger, bigger still!*
>
> The sense of intimacy, of closeness, that I so closely associated with dance was lacking. I remember feeling slightly overwhelmed. With physical distances, safe distances, the group of 19 children and four adults (the dance teacher, two school teachers, and myself) filled a big part of the open space, the gym, and came across as a big group. Seeing and hearing pupils and other teachers, communicating with each other across the floor in the echoing space became more challenging. (Article II, pp. 51–52)

The narrative is performative in that the aim is not only to report or describe but also to engage readers, evoke feelings, and invite dialogue (Gunnarsson & Bodén, 2021; Pelias, 2005; 2019). Once the narrative was finished, I elaborated on the theoretical framework. The final analytical move was distancing myself from the actual events and encounters, incorporating concepts to generate fresh insights.

6.3.3 Creating Comics (Article III)

Comics-based research involves using comics in different stages of the research process (Kuttner et al., 2018; Kuttner et al., 2021). In Article III, I combined a comics-based research strategy with a post-qualitative research approach to explore how languaging through language and dance integration created possibilities for embodied language learning. More specifically, the article addressed the following questions: 1) How did languaging unfold during language and dance integrated activities? and 2) In what ways did children's agency in languaging become performed in language and dance integrated activities? I was inspired by a previous article collaboration in the ELLA project (Jusslin et al., 2024) in which we used a comics-based approach to analyse entanglements between languaging and dancing in additional language learning practices in upper secondary education. Crucially, creating comics enabled displaying not only words but also the bodies, senses, sounds, actions, and contexts (Kuttner et al., 2021; Skedsmo, 2021) that were part of the children's languaging processes. Another advantage of creating comics as multimodal narratives was that it allowed bringing together multiple data, events, and perspectives both sequentially and non-linearly (Kuttner et al., 2021).

From a post-qualitative perspective, creating comics with data served as an analytical approach by making cuts into children's languaging processes. The final comic strips are constructed cuts (Lenz Taguchi, 2010) rather than precise records of events (Laurier, 2014). They display the various embodied, verbal, and spatial elements at play in the intra-actions that influenced what happened (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). In making the cuts and creating the comic strips, I read my written reflections, watched the video recordings of the pedagogical activities, considered my embodied memories, and made conceptual connections. While all these data informed the analysis, the resulting comic strips specifically illustrate only the video data to convey the unfolding of languaging, including its embodied, material, spatial, and verbal elements. I created the comic strips using software, incorporating video snapshots alongside typical comics-related elements, such as caption boxes, speech bubbles, text overlays, and motion lines. Sociomaterial concepts were used to unpack the comic strips when presenting the results. Figure 5 presents an extract of a comic strip.

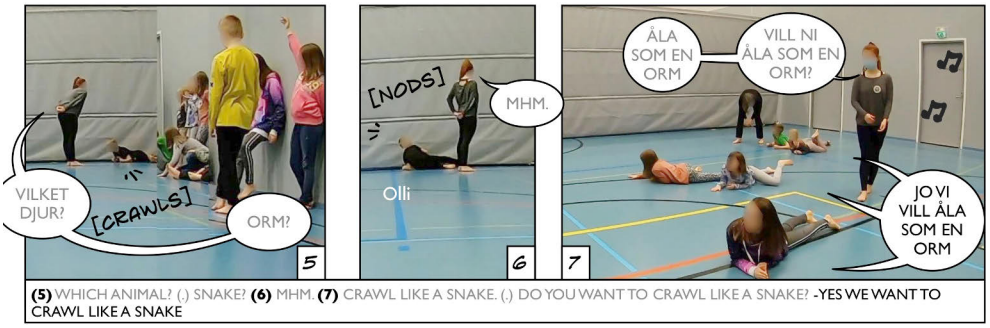

Figure 5. Extract of a Comic Strip (Article III, p. 14).

6.4 Evaluating Methodological Choices

The shift from educational design research towards arts-based and post-qualitative research proved to be a fruitful strategy for exploring the integration of dance into early language education in both practical and conceptual terms. I specifically explored embodied writing, performative writing, and creating comics in my analytical engagements with data. It has been essential to experiment with such approaches to generate knowledge that is embodied, multisensory, situated, ambiguous, and uncertain (see section 6.1). I evaluated my methodological choices based on core criteria in arts-based and post-qualitative research, including transparency and trustworthiness (Gunnarsson & Bodén, 2021; Leavy, 2018b; Østern et al., 2023).

I have described the methodological steps as transparently as possible, although carrying out educational design research within the time constraints of a doctoral project posed significant challenges (Goff & Getenet, 2016). The two-year empirical phase was long and intense but necessary for allowing the pieces to fall into place (section 4.4). However, educational design research produces large amounts of data (Goff & Getenet, 2016) and handling and analysing the data has been arduous. Additionally, I could not analyse all data within the scope of my dissertation. For instance, I did not include the interviews with the participating teachers and children, although I considered their perspectives through other data – the teachers' perspectives via audio-recorded co-design meetings and diary entries, and the children's perspectives through their reflections during video-recorded lessons.

Conducting research in a school context presented unique challenges, especially with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Collaboration with the schoolteachers was crucial to keep project running smoothly in a hectic everyday school reality, especially in such exceptional circumstances. Although team changes presented some difficulties, each team member brought new perspectives to the design of the

activities. Consequently, the whole team needs to be credited for the practical contributions, while I am mainly responsible for the theoretical contributions.

Sociomaterial, arts-based, and post-qualitative approaches presented enticing, yet complex perspectives on research. There is not yet much language education research drawing on sociomaterial approaches, requiring drawing on the literature in related fields. These theoretical perspectives provided productive ways to move beyond dichotomies such as body and mind but blurring subject and object boundaries and considering human beings and non-human bodies as emerging through intra-actions (Guttorm et al., 2016; Lenz Taguchi, 2010) was more challenging. Since my research focused on a pedagogical context, children and teachers remained in focus. However, experimenting with arts-based and post-qualitative research approaches, including embodied, performative writing and comics creation, supported broadening the focus from individuals to assemblages and from verbal language to bodily, material, and spatial elements in pedagogical events. Collaboration with a co-author (Articles I–II) and experiences from previous research collaborations (Article III) have been essential for exploring such creative, alternative ways of analysing the data and presenting the results.

Regarding trustworthiness, my active involvement in the project might have made critical distance challenging. However, my insights into the practices studied can also be seen as enhancing trustworthiness. The performative paradigm allowed me to view my researcher body as a "resource for understanding" (Østern et al., 2023, p. 281). To ensure trustworthiness, I sought to make visible how my participation influenced what occurred in the pedagogical events (Toohey et al., 2015) and how I selected the theories and methodological approaches to analyse those events (Gunnarsson & Bodén, 2021). The analyses have also been based solely on my engagements with data. Aiming for trustworthy research narratives (Pelias, 2005), I strove for resonance (Leavy, 2018b) and verisimilitude, or a sense of truth (Article II). The articles considered both challenges and possibilities related to language and dance integration. In addition, they engaged with the complexity and unpredictability at play, which as Østern et al. (2023) noted, can enhance trustworthiness.

6.5 Considering Ethical Matters

Conducting research as a multiprofessional collaboration in a school setting, with young children as participants, required careful ethical consideration. My research followed the ethical guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (2009/2019). The Ethics Committee for Human Sciences at the University of Turku reviewed the research project, and I obtained a research permit from the local education and culture committee in Raseborg. Project agreements were made

between the Department of Teacher Education (University of Turku) and the collaborating dance institute, and the collaborating primary school, respectively.

I considered ethical matters such as consent, confidentiality, and protection of identities during different stages of the research. I presented and discussed the research project with the principals and participating teachers at the school and dance institute before the research started. A consent form was used to obtain informed consent from the team members and other members of the school staff who participated in video-recorded lessons. The school informed the guardians of the children in the participating grade about the research project in spring 2019. I presented and discussed the research project with guardians at a meeting at the school before the start of the project in autumn 2019 and used a consent form to obtain informed consent for their children's participation. I separately requested consent for using visual materials in publications and only included visuals of the teachers who consented and children whose guardian's consented. I discussed the research with the children at the beginning of the first project lesson, presenting the research topic and its aims and explaining that participation was voluntary using age-appropriate language. The children had the opportunity to ask questions and orally consented to participation. I similarly discussed research participation with individual children who joined the project at a later stage.[10] Before recording video data, I showed the video cameras to the children and discussed filming the lessons with them. They were given the option to opt out at any time, but they quickly adapted to the presence of the cameras. On one occasion, a child requested not to be filmed, and I respected that wish. Occasionally, the devices piqued the children's curiosity. In those instances, I either allowed them to examine the camera or redirected their focus back to the activities (Svendler Nielsen, 2012). All information has been handled confidentially.

My methodological shift towards arts-based and post-qualitative research as emergent, experimental methodological approaches (Gunnarsson & Bodén, 2021; Leavy, 2018a) required paying close attention to ethical matters throughout the research process. My guiding principle was to act in the children's best interests and avoid doing harm. My starting point was inclusive in that all children in the participating grade took part in the project lessons, irrespective of their participation in the research. Adapting data generation to the school reality, rather than the other way around, was an ethical choice. In addition, my entangled researcher positionality involved continuous ethical negotiation during encounters with teachers and children (Gunnarsson & Bodén, 2021). For instance, I often had to choose between filming or attending to the children's needs, typically prioritising the latter when no other

[10] I discussed the research with all participating children anew when interviewing them in the second project year.

teacher was available. Moreover, continuing the project amid the exceptional circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic also presented ethical considerations. All project collaborators mutually agreed to resume face-to-face teaching when the school returned to contact instruction in autumn 2020, and I informed the children's guardians about continuing the project in writing. The team adhered to all local and national safety regulations in designing activities and regularly evaluated the situation, making changes when needed to ensure the children's safety. By taking all possible precautions, the project provided the children with embodied, playful, and joyful encounters with language and peers at a time when their physical activity and social contacts were restricted both at school and in their free time.

The close collaboration with the team members and involved institutions raised questions about attribution of credit, as anonymisation might not align with the interests of collaborators in arts-based research (Østern, 2017). In line with principles of arts-based research, I consulted with the principals about how to refer to the school and dance institute in my research. They expressed a desire and gave their permission in writing to use the real names of the school and dance institute. The use of their real names in research is consistent with previous school-based research projects involving the arts in Finland, which have referred to collaborating institutions by their names in research publications (Anttila, 2013; Jusslin, 2020; Lehtonen, 2021), giving them credit for their contributions. Crucially, I have carefully protected children's and other participants' identities in research publications by using pseudonyms and blurring their faces in visuals. The use of visuals has been necessary for analysing and presenting the results of the embodied dimensions of language-and-dance-integrated pedagogical practice. Overall, I have sought to be sensitive in portraying the participants (Leavy, 2018b).

7 Unpacking the Main Results

In this chapter, I present the main results of my dissertation by research question. More details can be found in the original publications (Articles I–III).

7.1 Crossing Boundaries and Sustaining Dialogue (Articles I–II)

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, a key principle of embodied learning when integrating dance is the holistic engagement of learners in their socio-material environment during learning processes. In relation to language education, embodied approaches can both enhance language skills and attitudes to language learning. Hence, it is important to consider how a multiprofessional team can design and carry out language and dance integration in ways that can support children's learning holistically, especially in complex, changing educational realities. This section addresses the first research question of the summary:

> *How can a multiprofessional team integrate dance in early additional language education to support children's learning holistically even in changing conditions?*

The results of my research underscore the potential of multiprofessional collaboration in integrating dance into early additional language education. They show that co-designing language-and-dance-integrated activities involves crossing disciplinary boundaries both in pedagogical practice and within the team. They also highlight the importance of sustaining dialogue through collective and creative reconfigurations of language-and-dance-integrated pedagogical practices amid a transformed school reality. Overall, the results indicate that crossing boundaries and sustaining dialogue in changing conditions are essential for supporting children's learning holistically when integrating language and dance as a multiprofessional team.

I will further unpack these insights by referencing Articles I–II, which explored the collaborative process of integrating dance into early additional language education from different perspectives. Article I explored how we, as a

multiprofessional team, collaborated to integrate dance into early additional language education, focusing on our experiences and reflections as we combined dance with early teaching of the Swedish language. Article II explored how it was possible to sustain dialogue in times of distancing by weaving together our experiences and observations and presenting our reflections on an embodied pedagogical practice in contact instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Article I demonstrates that crossing boundaries through multiprofessional collaboration involved becoming an assembled team and developing professionally. Co-designing language-and-dance-integrated activities began with us – a group of professionals from different disciplines and institutions – coming together and creating collaborative practices. This included co-designing activities in meetings in various school spaces and co-leading and co-reflecting on activities in the gym on a weekly basis. As we moved through or 'crisscrossed' the school, we shared and learned from one another's professional expertise by verbalising aims, contents, and structures from our respective disciplinary perspectives, witnessing each other in action, and discussing events and pedagogical choices. Our increasing experience with integrating language and dance, with embodiment as a connecting point, gradually 'bent' and 'blurred' the disciplinary boundaries among team members. During this process, we evolved from individual team members approaching the design of practices from our own disciplinary perspectives into an assembled team that collectively crossed disciplinary boundaries in creative ways. The pedagogical thinking and design that our collaboration generated emerged from these relations.

Furthermore, Article I illustrates that language and dance became integrated in events that crossed subject boundaries. First, we designed communicative movement-based activities with a low threshold, such as presentation rounds and greeting tag, to cross potential barriers to dancing and learning Swedish. These activities yielded positive responses, as children's enthusiasm for movement seemed to feed into language learning and vice versa, leading to active participation irrespective of their language backgrounds. However, integrating multiple elements was also challenging, as demonstrated by moments of 'balancing' language and dance. Nevertheless, such moments encouraged (re)designing activities and lessons in a more integrated manner. Moreover, moving or 'bending' our bodies during the lessons generated ideas for activities related to, for instance, body parts and action verbs, connecting embodied action and verbal language and going beyond textbook contents. It also shifted or 'bent' our plans and conceptions of language learning, inviting children to 'bend' the rules and opening opportunities for more language production. In addition, we extended or 'stretched' our teacher talk and instructions in Swedish with embodied strategies, routine activities, and guessing games to support children's understanding. This also seemed to expand or 'stretch' children's engagement with Swedish. Ultimately, the boundaries between language and dance

became indistinct or ‘blurred’. Indeed, it became difficult to discern where the languaging ended and dancing started when collectively enacting a Swedish-language rhyme with movements. Article II similarly points out that playful activities such as tag facilitated the creation of ‘natural’ situations for communicating with peers that blurred the focus on language learning. Crucially, even though the designed activities and practices seemed simple, they involved holistic learning processes (Article I).

These collaborative and pedagogical practices laid the foundation for subsequent cycles. However, as Article II reveals, the Covid-19 pandemic made implementing an embodied pedagogical practice more challenging. We transformed this situation into an opportunity to reconfigure practices, leading to pedagogical practices that sustained dialogue even while avoiding physical contact and materials. These practices included new routine activities that recycled familiar verbal and bodily elements with a twist to engage children and create a safe environment. Moving the lessons outdoors made the process of co-designing activities more attuned to the unpredictable possibilities that emerged in sociomaterial relations. For example, a surprising encounter between a child, the dance teacher, a stone, and missing ants under the stone led to insects becoming the theme for the following lessons indoors. The theme was connected to leading and following exercises, following observations of a need to practice seeing and listening and be(com)ing heard and seen. As Article II illustrates, such practices became even more important the more ‘up-side-down’ the everyday school life and lessons became. We coped with challenges in facilitating communication without physical contact by designing structured activities that nevertheless created opportunities for embodied and playful encounters and actions with peers, allowing moments of dialogue and a sense of communality to emerge. Ultimately, collective activities that involved speaking and moving like robots reflected how the group navigated the changing conditions by literally be(com)ing up-side-down together. Although these practices came across as a stripped-down version of language and dance integration, they supported children’s learning holistically by creating opportunities for acting, encountering, and languaging with peers more spontaneously in an altered school reality with new embodied patterns and spatial setups.

7.2 ‘Wild’ Languaging in Strange Assemblages (Articles II–III)

Next, I examine how language and dance integration can engage children holistically and consider how such engagement can support embodied language learning. This section addresses the second research question:

How can children's holistic engagement through language and dance integration create possibilities for embodied language learning?

The results of my research indicate that language and dance integration can engage children in exploring different ways of communicating and languaging in assemblages that encompass their entire bodies, verbal elements, materials, space, and even strange non-human elements, such as an invisible virus. In addition, they demonstrate that children can be activated in languaging through holistic processes of transformation or becoming, combining repetition with variation, and embracing creative, 'wild' movements and sounds. Embodied and creative activities that involve collaborating and performing with peers can extend children's opportunities to act or perform agency in languaging. Collectively, these insights indicate that 'wild' languaging in strange assemblages can foster possibilities for embodied language learning.

To unpack these results, I draw on Articles II–III, which contribute different perspectives to the question. Article II highlights the role of languaging within strange assemblages in sustaining dialogue. The notion of strange assemblages refers to emergent collectives that encompass learners' entire bodies as well as various, potentially unknown non-human elements. Article III explores how languaging through language and dance integration created possibilities for embodied language learning, focusing on how children's languaging unfolded in language-and-dance-integrated activities and the ways in which their agency became performed.

Article II illustrates the challenges of communicating in contact instruction during periods of distancing. The group filled the large, echoing gym with physical distances, and the masks muffled speech and hid moving lips and facial expressions. Recycling familiar expressions and exercises with some variation encouraged children to explore different ways of introducing themselves and greeting one another both verbally and bodily, facilitating an interconnection between the two. Enacting a greeting dialogue in a shared formation and with a collective rhythm engaged children in a 'dance' that incorporated eye contact, gestures, movements, and verbal phrases. Moving along the lines to music while performing a teacher–children dialogue during the pause invited spontaneous actions, encounters, and negotiations among the children. A movement exploration exercise allowed for anchoring words and expressions in movement while tolerating any lack of comprehension. Teacher-led small-group activities that sparked children's imagination seemed to engage them in languaging with peers and the teacher. For instance, co-creating and performing movement compositions activated children to name material objects and explore them through bodily movements. Leading and following exercises in small, familiar groups seemed to facilitate interaction with peers, allowing children to be heard, encouraging movement and speaking, and

enabling them to make their own choices. These activities also invited children to attune and respond to their peers' actions, engage with all available verbal elements, and experiment with different movement solutions. Overall, languaging through language and dance integration involved children in exploring alternative ways of communicating and co-existing in strange assemblages that included human beings (children, team members, other teachers), verbal elements (mainly Swedish and Finnish), spaces (the school's big gym and yard), material elements (masks, objects on the yard), and invisible non-human elements (a virus). The role of embodiment in action and communication was heightened when maintaining physical distances and wearing masks. Working outdoors initiated a process that emphasised the role of materiality, particularly animals as non-human beings, in children's engagement with languaging.

The results of Article III show that children were activated in languaging through communicative movement exploration that involved transforming into or becoming animals. Adding a communicative task to creative movement exploration with animal figures seemed to engage children in languaging. Inviting them to suggest animals and actions was particularly engaging and encouraged participation in languaging in diverse ways, for instance, through bodily movement. The languaging also became more emergent and unpredictable. Moreover, the results of Article III demonstrate that languaging unfolded through repetition and variation. Children seemed to become engaged in repeating the activity with a partner by choosing various animals and actions for joint movement exploration. Additionally, languaging unfolded through sense-making with creative movements and sounds when co-creating an animal-themed movement composition in Swedish as a whole group. Such embodied and vocal elements emerged spontaneously and spread in unpredictable ways in the creative intra-actions. Finally, the results demonstrate that children's agency in languaging was performed collectively. Creating animal-themed movement compositions in Swedish in small groups appeared to encourage languaging among peers and allow their bodies, relationships with animals, and materialities of the space to become agentic in the process. Children's reflections on the activity revealed that they enjoyed 'being allowed to' make choices, explore different becomings, speak spontaneously, and perform with peers. Framed by curricular learning objects and requirements for participation, the languaging was 'wild' in so far that it sparked children's creativity by activating their bodies and entanglements with the 'wild' socio-material world in and beyond the classroom. It evolved in unpredictable or 'wild' ways during communicative and creative intra-actions, embraced creative or 'wild' movements and sounds, and 'allowed' inventing, experimenting, making choices, collaborating, and performing with peers. This 'wild' languaging may support the learning of words, longer expressions, and complex constructions while possibly fostering a desire to learn more words and

developing an emerging sense of grammar in activities that children seem to consider enjoyable.

7.3 Integrating Language and Dance as an Embodied Approach (Articles I–III)

So far, this chapter has unpacked the empirical results. In this section, I address the third, conceptual research question:

> *How can language and dance integration be conceptualised as an embodied approach in the early teaching and learning of additional languages?*

I approach the question by considering *who, what, when, where, how,* and *why*. Regarding *who,* a multiprofessional team can integrate language and dance as an embodied approach in early language education. Crossing subject boundaries can occur in entanglement with the process of individual team members becoming an assembled team (Article I). In this way, the team and the practices that they design can become more than the sum of its parts. The multiprofessional assemblage encompasses the team members and their entanglements with the children, pedagogical materials, curricula, and literature, held together by a shared goal and scheduled meetings and lessons throughout the project (Article I). Considering *who* the learners are, language and dance integration broadens the focus beyond talking heads and gesturing upper bodies to learners' entire bodies languaging through sociomaterial relations (Articles II–III). This shifts the focus from individuals to assemblages of children, their bodies, verbal elements, materials, and spaces. These assemblages are strange in that they encompass both human beings and (invisible) non-human elements (Article II). As such, language and dance integration can bring together elements that are usually considered unrelated (Article I).

What refers to the contents, that is, language and dance. I refer to language and dance integration to highlight the aim to place equal emphasis on both subjects by drawing on the aims, contents, and structures of each (Article I). Boundaries can be bent and blurred with embodiment serving as a point of connection. The emphasis on children's holistic engagement in sociomaterial relations establishes it as an embodied approach. Languaging as active doing also emerges as a key element. Specifically, 'wild' languaging in strange assemblages can be understood as a practice of embodied language learning when integrating dance in early language education under complex, changing conditions (Articles II–III).

Regarding *when,* language and dance integration as an embodied approach can be explored throughout the early language curriculum, both as the main (Article I) and complementary approach (Articles II–III). The element of temporality is

important because of its novelty (Articles I–III). Long-term implementation can be crucial in a pedagogical context where dance does not have curricular status, an embodied approach is not yet common practice, and changes are occurring.

Concerning *where,* language and dance integration can be carried out in various environments, such as in the school's gym or yard (Articles I–III). Different spaces have different (dis)advantages. The main point is to consider the possibilities and challenges that different materials, spaces, and non-human beings present for language and dance integration and how they can facilitate children's languaging. Activating children's relations to the material world in and beyond the school can foster engagement, participation, and creativity.

As to *how* language and dance can be integrated as an embodied approach, I highlight six key elements 1) embodied actions and becomings; 2) communication and dialogue; 3) the relationship between embodiment, communication, and language; 4) repetition with variation; 5) creative collaboration; and 6) performing. First, *embodied actions* encompass movements that can be seen, sensed, felt, and experienced (Article I–III) while *becomings* include holistic processes of transformation (Article III). For children, bodily engagement can act as an entry point to embodied language learning. It includes pre-choreographed movements, but the emphasis is on exploring movement in relation to body parts, peers, materials, space, and time. Creative movement exploration invites experimentation with various becomings, which may manifest as divergent movements (Article III). Such embodied actions and becomings extend beyond mime and imitation to creative movements and sounds that do not necessarily convey exact meanings.

The second element is *communication and dialogue*. Language and dance integration as an embodied approach involves creating possibilities for communicating with peers bodily and verbally in different configurations (Articles I–III). It can involve embedding communicative tasks in embodied and playful activities that blur the focus on language learning (Article II) and engage children in languaging (Article III). It can also include exploring different ways of communicating to sustain dialogue even in changing conditions (Article II). These communicative intra-actions encompass children, their bodies and senses, verbal elements, and the materialities of spaces (Article III).

The third element is *the relationship between embodiment, communication, and language.* Language and dance integration as an embodied approach positions children's bodies, movement, and (verbal) language as inseparably entangled. This becomes evident when performing a target language rhyme with movement (Article I). Verbal elements can be incorporated into embodied, communicative action to introduce these elements and model tasks (Article III) and emerge from action by designing activities with 'language glasses' (Article I) and seizing unexpected possibilities for languaging in situ (Article III). Crucially, language and dance

integration involves movement between structured and emergent languaging and embracing movements and sounds as meaningful parts of languaging (Article III).

The fourth element is *repetition with variation*. Creating routines and repeating familiar elements can create a safe space for languaging and allow children to become familiar with the elements of the activity (Articles II–III). Repetition is not only about repeating the same thing, as each enactment is a new event (Article III). Creating room for improvisation within the activity frames can engage children in revising and exploring new words and expressions, creating more variation in languaging (Article III). Combining repetition with variation can guide both the design of activities and the structuring of lessons and longer sequences.

The fifth element is *creative collaboration*. Creative processes can occur individually, but preferably they include collaboration. Children seem to enjoy collaborating with peers (Articles I, III). However, creative and collaborative processes can initially be led by the teacher to familiarise children with this sort of activity (Article II). Ultimately, facilitating creative collaboration among peers can allow children's bodies and materialities of the space to become active in languaging, extending children's opportunities to act or perform agency in language-learning processes (Article III).

Performing is the sixth and final element, which can range from performing, responding, and witnessing everyday acts, such as in a name game with movement (Article II) to creating, practicing and performing small movement compositions in the additional language (Articles I–III). Children seemed to enjoy performing with peers, and repeated opportunities to perform for peers and witness others perform seemed to nurture their willingness to perform (Article III). When introduced step by step, performing can become part of the learning process (Articles I–III).

Next, I consider *why* language and dance should be integrated as an embodied approach in early language education. I do so by delineating its potential performative effects. Article III specifically articulates what language and dance integration 'did' to early language education, while Articles I–II also provide insights into its effects. Based on Articles I–III, it appears that language and dance integration as an embodied approach can do the following:

- engage children holistically, spark their creativity, and activate their bodily entanglements with the sociomaterial world in and beyond the classroom;
- expand children's exposure to the target language and, at least to some extent, stretch their languaging;
- blur boundaries between languaging and dancing alongside the focus on language learning;

- sustain communication, dialogue, and communality in changing conditions;
- let languaging unfold in unpredictable or ‘wild’ ways; and
- expand children’s possibilities to act, encounter, invent, experiment, make choices, collaborate, and perform with peers during language-learning processes.

8 Discussion and Conclusion: Dancing Language Education

In this chapter, I first connect the main results of my doctoral research to previous research. I then discuss theoretical and pedagogical contributions, implications as well as the wider educational and societal relevance. In conclusion, I suggest directions for future research.

8.1 Connecting the Results to Previous Research

In my doctoral research, I have explored how language and dance integration can be practiced and conceptualised as an embodied approach in early additional language education. I have addressed this aim by exploring (1) how a multiprofessional team can integrate dance in early language education to support children's learning holistically even in changing conditions, (2) how children's holistic engagement through language and dance integration can create possibilities for embodied language learning, and (3) how language and dance integration can be conceptualised as an embodied approach in the early teaching and learning of additional languages. In response to the first research question, crossing boundaries and sustaining dialogue in changing conditions is key to supporting children's learning holistically when integrating dance in early additional language education as a multiprofessional team. In contrast to studies emphasising the easy implementation of embodied approaches in language education (Jusslin et al., 2022; Toumpaniari et al., 2015), my research reveals both pedagogical struggles and successes. It adds to recent research on multiprofessional, cross-sectoral educational collaborations involving dance (Jusslin & Østern, 2020; Nevanen et al., 2012; see also Anderson & Chung, 2011) by showing that disciplinary crossings or entanglements (Chappell et al., 2019) can occur as individual team members become an assembled team. These results are consistent with previous findings indicating that collaboration between schoolteachers and dance professionals can support professional development (Jusslin & Østern, 2020; see also Nevanen et al., 2012). They also align with prior research that has argued for the potential of arts-based activities in language education (Fleming, 2023) by demonstrating that integrating

dance in early language education can create holistic learning opportunities. Language-and-dance-integrated pedagogical practices can address challenges in early language teaching (Hahl et al., 2024; Huhta & Leontjev, 2019; Mård-Miettinen et al., 2021) by extending teachers' target language use in teacher talk and instructions as well as children's target language exposure and production. This is crucial, especially considering the limited number of hours assigned for early language learning during the school week (Enever, 2015). In addition, the language-and-dance-integrated practices enable embedding language learning in embodied, joyful, and playful encounters with peers and the material environment even during periods of distancing. Sustaining communication with peers is crucial for supporting early language learning (Keaveney & Lundberg, 2019; Pinter, 2017).

The results of my research also extend previous findings on dance and transcurricular pedagogies (Anttila, 2019; Chappell et al., 2019) by demonstrating that language-and-dance-integrated practices can strengthen the roles of embodiment and materiality in action and communication, linking language learning to dialogue and communality. Furthermore, these practices enable planning for and seizing the surprising, unexpected learning opportunities that arise in the moment, echoing previous research on arts integration and sociomaterial approaches to learning and teaching (Anttila, 2018; Fenwick et al. 2011; Höglund & Jusslin, 2023; Smythe et al., 2017).

In response to the second research question, the results indicate that children's holistic engagement through language and dance integration can create possibilities for embodied language learning. This research adds to existing literature regarding embodied language learning with children by showing how 'wild' languaging can transcend vocabulary acquisition (Jusslin et al., 2022; Mavilidi et al., 2015; Schmidt et al., 2019; Toumpaniari et al., 2015). It allows for bodily, creative, and playful explorations of verbal phrases, expressions, and constructions, potentially fostering an emerging sense of grammar in communicative and creative intra-actions. This is also important from the perspective of early language learning (Becker & Roos, 2016). The results further demonstrate that language and dance integration can encourage collective exploration of alternative ways of communicating bodily and verbally in strange assemblages and diverse ways of participating in languaging, including bodily movement. They expand current practices in early language education (Mård-Miettinen et al., 2021; Mård-Miettinen & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2022) by demonstrating ways in which language-and-dance-integrated practices can actively incorporate children's ideas and desires in the language-learning process. In addition, they indicate that repetition can be made meaningful when combined with variation, emphasizing the importance of revision, providing challenges, and connecting to children's interests in supporting their language learning (Hahl et al., 2020; Keaveney & Lunberg, 2019). Creative, 'wild' movements and sounds can

form a meaningful part of children's languaging in early language education. Collectively, 'wild' languaging in strange assemblages can propel early language learning beyond predefined contents set by teachers, textbooks, and curricula, which is essential for fostering engagement with the language also outside of school.

Furthermore, the results of my research align with previous results indicating that integrating dance in subject education can expand children's opportunities to act, collaborate and perform with peers in enjoyable ways (Anttila, 2013; see also Jusslin, 2020; Moore & Linder, 2012). However, my research also revealed challenges related to sustaining concentration (Anttila, 2013). The experienced restlessness may not have been primarily related to dancing or language learning but rather to the newness of an embodied approach and the exceptional circumstances. During the pandemic, children had limited opportunities to act and encounter peers in and outside of school. Languaging in strange assemblages involves learning to sustain concentration while moving and encountering peers more freely, attuning to and engaging with multiple elements while potentially not comprehending everything.

Regarding practical implementation, my research reveals both similar and different challenges compared to previous studies (Anttila, 2013; Buck & Snook, 2020; Jusslin, 2020; Nikkanen et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2020). While negative conceptions of dance may present an obstacle (Anttila et al., 2019; Richard, 2013), in my research project, the attitudes of the children, schoolteachers, guardians, and principals seemed positive from the start. For instance, we were able to use the school's large gym for teaching, and it was possible to conduct some lessons in the schoolyard as well. Working in different material environments created different opportunities and challenges for languaging and learning. Although lesson-divided schedules in schools may be at odds with artistic processes (Nikkanen et al., 2019), the 45-minute lessons consisting of multiple, relatively short activities seemed appropriate for the children. The experiences of success at the end of the two years underscored the significance of long-term implementation of an embodied approach.

In addressing the third research question, I developed a conceptualisation of language and dance integration that emphasises equal significance for both. However, it is debatable whether such deep integration (Höglund & Jusslin, 2023; Jusslin, 2020; Rhodes, 2006) is possible in pedagogical contexts where they lack equal footing. My results indicate that the integration of language and dance is not always seamless or smooth; boundaries can be blurred by focusing on embodiment and languaging. This contributes new insights to the literature on integrating dance within subject education (Leandro et al., 2018; Moore & Linder, 2012) for embodied learning (Anttila, 2013; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019; Jusslin, 2020).

Moreover, my research illustrates that key elements of embodied learning in dance education also apply when integrating dance into early language education,

including embodied action, creative collaboration, and performing (Anttila, 2013; 2018; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019; Giguere, 2021; see also Jusslin, 2020). The role of embodied communication and dialogue has also been highlighted in previous research on dance- and arts-integrated education (Anttila, 2015; 2019; Chappell et al., 2019). Additionally, this conceptualisation aligns with the emphasis on revision in early language education (Hahl et al., 2020; Vahtola et al., 2022), linking it with variation. New dimensions include the entangled relationship between embodiment, communication, and verbal language and experimenting with different becomings, consistent with sociomaterial conceptions of learning as entangled with becoming (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). Finally, my research outlines what language and dance integration can 'do' in early language education, although mapping all potential effects is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Emphasising emergence and unpredictability in learning and teaching is crucial (Anttila, 2018; Fenwick, 2015; Höglund & Jusslin, 2023; Smythe et al., 2017). It is also possible that some effects may not manifest until later. By nurturing holistic engagement, participation, and dialogue, language and dance integration "may have sown seeds" that can potentially "bear fruit" in future language-learning processes (Moore de Luca & Hawkins, 2021, p. 115).

8.2 Presenting Theoretical and Pedagogical Contributions

My dissertation contributes to the conceptualisation of language and dance integration as an embodied approach. This conceptualisation aligns with sociomaterial approaches to learning and teaching in several ways (Fenwick et al., 2011; Guerrettaz et al., 2021; Smythe et al., 2017; Toohey, 2019). The pedagogical contributions include new pedagogical practices and activities that provide concrete examples of how creative dance can be integrated into early additional language education. They illustrate how language and dance integration can be practiced in a pedagogical context where dance lacks curricular status, embodied learning is not yet common, and multiple changes are unfolding.[11]

In conclusion, I argue that language and dance integration as an embodied approach radically renews conceptions and practices of early additional language learning and teaching. Conducting this research on the integration of dance into early language education has involved a paradigm shift in understanding language and learning, connecting them to their foundational roots: embodied, multisensory

[11] The practices and activities are illustrated in the original publications (Articles I–III) and in this summary. A selection is also presented in the online pedagogical material (https://sites.uniarts.fi/en/web/ellaresearchproject/kieli%C3%A4-tanssien-).

engagement with other human beings and the material environment. In this view, children's bodies are no longer seen as separate from or subordinate to verbal language; instead, they are entangled (Smythe et al., 2017). Language becomes an active doing, occurring through intra-actions among children's bodies, materials, spaces, and verbal elements (Toohey, 2019). Children's bodies are not mere non-verbal tools that are intentionally used to support verbal communication but "active and changing parts of assemblages" (Toohey, 2019, pp. 940–941). In these contexts, both children's bodies and materialities of space can act and affect the unfolding languaging (cf. Fenwick, 2015, Lenz Taguchi, 2010). In such events, language can emerge and spread in surprising, unpredictable ways between children's bodies, materials, and space. Blurring boundaries between languaging and dancing can strengthen the embodied, material, and relational dimensions of early language learning (cf. Jusslin et al., 2024). This shift allows us to reconceptualise language learning as occurring through children languaging with their whole bodies in changing assemblages rather than merely between talking heads or gesturing upper bodies. Learning becomes materialised as extended opportunities to act (Fenwick et al., 2011) through communicative and creative intra-actions.

Grounded in this rethinking of the relationship between embodiment, materiality, language, and learning, language and dance integration can propel early language education 'on the move', creating opportunities for embodied language learning. Through embodied, communicative action, the additional language can become rooted in children's bodies and senses and in embodied encounters with peers and the material environment. Facilitating children's embodied, creative, and collaborative processes can let children's bodies and their languaging 'loose' (Article III, cf. Jusslin et al., 2024) during the language-learning process. Moving language learning into different environments and making connections to the material world in and beyond the school can activate children holistically, spark their creativity, and open surprising opportunities for learning.

Overall, language and dance integration as an embodied approach offers an age-appropriate way of teaching additional languages to children in an instructed context. It complements activating, multisensory, and experiential approaches that emphasise spoken language development in early language education, as highlighted in the Finnish core curriculum (FNAE, 2020) and in previous research and other literature (Hahl et al., 2020; Hahl et al., 2024; Keaveney & Lundberg, 2019; Pinter, 2017; Vahtola et al., 2022). Language and dance integration can be situated along a continuum of existing teaching approaches in early language education that mimic first language acquisition by incorporating physical action, such as Total Physical Response (TPR; Asher, 1969), combine language with the learning of another subject, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL; see Bentley, 2015), and make use of arts-based activities, such as literature, songs, picture books,

and storytelling (cf. Rixon, 2015). Language and dance integration also shares similarities with pedagogical activities in bilingual education, language immersion, and language showers, where language learning is linked to concrete action, naturally interactive situations, children's experiential worlds, and the physical learning environment through rhymes, play, stories, and routine activities (Bergroth, 2015; Bärlund et al., 2015; Mård-Miettinen et al., 2023; Palojärvi et al., 2015).

Language and dance integration as an embodied approach further extends contemporary activating teaching practices in language education (Hahl & Keinänen, 2021; van Lier, 2007). It demonstrates how bodily engagement can be meaningfully integrated into additional language learning practices and how children's agency can be collectively performed in relation to their bodies, materials, and space. This integration offers conceptual and practical tools for developing activating language teaching approaches that promote embodied language learning. Meaningful bodily engagement during language lessons is important to increase children's physical activity throughout the school day (cf. Kantomaa, 2018; Kämppi et al., 2022). Crucially, an embodied approach can provide strategies for meaningfully combining physical activity with language learning, addressing a significant challenge for teachers (Hahl & Keinänen, 2021).

The novelty of language and dance integration lies in its embodied framing. These activities are consistent with an embodied approach that holistically activates young learners' entire bodies and connects them to their learning environments during the learning process. Teachers can adapt these activities as a complementary approach in early language education or implement them as part of multidisciplinary learning modules in basic education (FNBE, 2016). In concrete terms, implementing language and dance integration in early language classrooms can involve dancing a target language rhyme, exploring creative bodily and verbal greetings, exploring vocabulary through creative movement, and creating movement compositions in the target language. If the children are unfamiliar with learning language in an embodied manner, they may need time and repeated opportunities to explore embodied language learning. Teachers can start with familiar, communicative movement-based activities, before introducing creative, collaborative activities. The activities can be adapted for regular classrooms by pushing desks to the sides or changing locations to create more space for embodied, creative expression. Different materials and music can be used to invite embodied, creative explorations of language. Teachers can use their voice, gestures, bodily movements, material objects, visuals, and space in instructing to support comprehension and encourage children's languaging. Instead of relying heavily on textbooks, language can be connected to and allowed to spontaneously and organically rise from embodied, creative, and playful activities. Artistic moments may occasionally surface through children's embodied actions and creative encounters with peers and the material environment.

In this context, my dissertation addresses the urgent need to rethink language pedagogies. Specifically, it addresses the need to develop new pedagogical practices for the early teaching of additional languages, responding to recent policy changes in Finland (FNAE, 2020) and globally (Enever, 2015). As my doctoral research concludes, it becomes evident that the goal of diversifying the languages taught in Finnish basic education has not been realised (Dervin & Hahl, 2024; Vaarala et al., 2021). My dissertation presents new insights on early language teaching and learning in a context where the first additional language is the second national language. In this way, the research expands existing studies and pedagogical practices in early language education, which have predominantly focused on English (e.g. Enever, 2015; Nikolov, 2009). Accordingly, it also responds to the call for pedagogical practices that enhance enthusiasm for studying Swedish as a second national language in Finnish basic education (Härmälä & Marjanen, 2023). By embedding language learning in enjoyable and meaningful activities, language and dance integration offers a potential way to inspire children to study Swedish.

While my research focused on Swedish, the pedagogical contributions can potentially be adapted in the teaching of various languages and for younger and older learners. The exploration of activating and joyful language teaching approaches initiated by an early start may also enliven pedagogical practices in higher grades (Hahl et al., 2020, see also Bärlund et al., 2015). Furthermore, language-and-dance-integrated pedagogical practices seem to have the potential to reach children from diverse linguistic backgrounds (see also Anttila, 2019; Greenfader et al., 2015; Jusslin et al., 2022). These practices enable children to approach language learning with and through their bodies and senses while participating in languaging with peers in diverse ways, including through bodily movement.

Based on my research, language and dance integration can be practiced even in radically transformed school realities. It can create embodied and joyful encounters with peers and the material environment as part of the language-learning process despite – or especially due to – changing conditions. Exploring alternative ways of communicating bodily and verbally can support language learning holistically while connecting learning to broader issues, including dialogue and communality. This has pedagogical value for early language learning at a time when multiple changes and crises are unfolding in school and in the world at large.

Overall, the results of my research emphasise the importance of considering embodiment and materiality in early language education. Initiating embodied language learning early allows teachers to build on children's experiences of learning their first language(s) before they are socialised into sedentary learning practices (Macedonia, 2019). It also facilitates building bridges between learning in early childhood education and in basic education, potentially laying a foundation for engaging in holistic learning processes in higher grades. Leveraging the heightened

awareness of embodiment and materiality in communication that emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic can help advance embodied language learning in complex and changing school settings. However, for an embodied approach to gain footing in early language education, an understanding of language learning as an embodied, material, and relational process needs to be articulated in the national core curriculum (FNAE, 2020) and in international language educational policy documents such as the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018). Arts integration should also be recognised at the curricular level as a way of facilitating embodied language learning.

Based on my research, multiprofessional, cross-sectoral collaboration can offer an entry point to enact embodied and transcurricular pedagogies in early language education. This collaboration should extend beyond class and language teachers to include local artists and dance teachers, which requires supporting teachers in engaging in such partnerships. Currently, schoolteachers' schedules limit their opportunities to develop and explore new pedagogical practices with external collaborators. Additional resources, including time and compensation for co-planning, are necessary (Koff & Warner, 2001). This could support participants' professional development by expanding their pedagogical thinking and practices. It is also important for teacher education to create opportunities for pre-service class and language teachers to learn about and gain experience from versatile and activating pedagogical approaches, including embodied learning and arts integration, preparing them for multiprofessional, cross-sectoral dialogue with dance pedagogues and artists.

8.3 Evaluating the Contributions and Proposing Directions for Future Research

In my dissertation, I have focused on the integration of language and dance as an embodied approach in early language education, although I recognize that it only addresses specific aspects, leaving other areas for further exploration. Additionally, considering the limits of the contributions informs possible directions for future research (see section 6.4 for a methodological evaluation).

Regarding the research context, it is important to acknowledge that the conditions at the school were favourable for integrating dance into early language education in several ways. The school principal had a positive attitude towards the project and the teachers participated willingly. Collaboration with the dance institute, which is well known in the area, may have had an influence. Qualified, bilingual dance teachers with prior experience of teaching dance to children and school-based projects were also available. Moreover, the teaching was planned and led by a team of professionals, with access to an assistant, resource, or special needs teacher when

needed. The collaborators were also committed to sustaining the project even during the pandemic.

Hence, multiple elements came together to enable successful integration of dance into early language education. The result was an educational reality generated by a specific research assemblage (Jusslin, 2020); one way of integrating dance in early language education. Changes in this research assemblage would have yielded different outcomes. Hence, my dissertation does not present a fixed, static model, or "best" practices (Toohey, 2019), but a conceptualisation and practices that are in movement, continuously transforming (Østern et al., 2023). The knowledge contribution is not generalisable nor directly transferable to other pedagogical contexts. Instead, teachers should adjust, adapt, and further develop the practices and insights in relation to the particularities of the sociomaterial realities of their own pedagogical contexts (Jusslin, 2020; see section 8.2 for concrete suggestions for practical implementation).

The arts-based and post-qualitative research approaches enabled 'zooming' in on the process of integrating dance into early language education within a specific educational team and context. However, it is important to stress that my research has not measured language learning outcomes. It does not reveal whether language and dance integration improved children's learning of, for instance, vocabulary or structures, as this would require a different research design. Instead, my research demonstrates that integrating language and dance can support holistic engagement, participation, dialogue, and a positive relationship with language, as aspects that are not easily measurable. The significance of these aspects may reveal themselves only later during future language-learning processes. A follow-up study could explore such effects from the participants' perspectives.

Additionally, while the participating children seemed to enjoy learning an additional language in an embodied manner, I did not investigate their perspectives in depth. Future studies could use interview data to explore how children experience and view embodied language learning through dance. It is important to gain more insight into children's perspectives on the opportunities and challenges of language and dance integration to further develop the embodied approach and encourage its implementation in early language education. It is also important to better understand how children experience starting additional language learning with Swedish, instead of English or another foreign language, through language-and-dance-integrated activities. Moreover, my research suggests that an embodied approach has the potential to engage children from diverse language backgrounds, offering varied ways of approaching new languages. Future studies could look more closely into the opportunities and challenges of an embodied, arts-integrated approach in linguistically diverse early language classrooms. Furthermore, it is important to investigate how an embodied approach can be implemented in additional language

education in higher grades as well to establish a consistent continuum in language learning within and across educational levels. This is especially important given the research gap on embodied language learning in secondary education (Jusslin et al., 2022).

In my research, language and dance integration involved multiprofessional, cross-sectoral collaboration. While I explored teachers' experiences and reflections through various data, analysing in-depth interviews with them could reveal additional insights about the practical implementation of an embodied approach in early language education. The teachers reported continuing to adapt the co-designed activities and practices in their teaching, and one possible direction for future research is to explore how teachers' participation in multiprofessional collaboration affects their pedagogical practices and thinking in the long run. However, the collaboration was contingent upon external funding. Hence, future studies should examine how multiprofessional, cross-sectional collaboration can be sustained beyond individual projects and what resources and structural changes might be required for others to be able to initiate such collaboration. This also raises a question about how individual teachers can practice language and dance integration. It is crucial that schoolteachers are engaged in exploring arts integration for it to gain foothold in school settings (Buck & Snook, 2020; Sharma et al., 2020), but not all teachers may feel prepared to work with the arts and specifically dance in language education (Zhang et al., 2021). This highlights the need to investigate how teacher education can prepare pre-service teachers to teach in embodied and arts-integrated ways (see Jusslin et al., in press) and engage in transdisciplinary dialogue. It may also be necessary to develop in-service teacher training to equip teachers with practical and conceptual tools for implementing embodied, dance-integrated approaches in language education. This can involve addressing teachers' conceptions of language and dance, while fostering understandings of their entanglements in learning, with embodiment as a connecting point. This could be accompanied by practical explorations of ways to facilitate embodied language learning through dance as a creative, emergent, and unpredictable practice.

In summary, this dissertation contributes both new pedagogical practices and a conceptualisation of language and dance integration as an embodied approach in early additional language education. It shows that integrating language and dance expands the embodied dimensions of language learning and teaching in the early primary grades. This approach creates opportunities for holistic engagement, sparks creativity, encourages diverse forms of participation, and fosters dialogue and a sense of communality among children. Multiprofessional, cross-sectoral collaboration can provide an entry point to practicing embodied and arts-integrated pedagogies. As such, the dissertation provides new insights into the under-researched yet growing area of integrating dance into language education and

advances embodied language learning as a contemporary trend in language education research. Nevertheless, further research is needed to establish these pedagogical practices and advance language education. Emerging theoretical and methodological approaches – such as sociomaterial, arts-based, and post-qualitative research – have proven productive for rethinking the roles of embodiment and materiality in early additional language education. It is my hope that this dissertation will reach researchers and teachers across disciplinary boundaries, fostering renewed conceptions and practices in early additional language education and beyond.

Epilogue

The gym. Final project lesson. The whole group is creating a Swedish-language movement composition based on what they enjoy doing. First, the children practice the phrases with movements. Then, they propose actions, verbalising them in Swedish and linking them into a class dance with teacher support. After rehearsing, the class teacher films the performance for a school event.

Figure 6. Co-Creating a Class Dance in Swedish.

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