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**Doing (things with) Shakespeare in China: an  
ethnomethodological study of Shakespeare  
workshops at a Chinese university**

**by**

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the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education Studies and  
Applied Linguistics

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is an ethnomethodological study of a series of Shakespeare-themed workshops and interviews that I conducted with English majors at a university in southern China. Its overarching concern is to analyse how the participants – including me, as the teacher and researcher – made sense of, and through, Shakespeare during these educational interactions. It does so using detailed multimodal transcriptions and insights from Conversation Analysis (CA) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA), which together show how the workshops and interviews were practically, rationally achieved in interaction, as we drew on a range of linguistic, categorial and embodied resources. Pedagogically, it combines ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches (which teach Shakespeare as a collaborative, playful endeavour) with the principles of intercultural language education (through which learners actively engage in multi-layered processes of interpreting and negotiating meaning in interaction). By sharing its detailed transcripts and making its claims on the basis of what is analytically observable in the audio and video data, the thesis is able to arrive at four main findings. First, it argues that respecifying Shakespeare as an accomplishment of the participating students themselves reveals the variety of things ‘Shakespeare’ can be used to mean and do, and in the process sounds a cautionary note for (intercultural) educators in terms of the assumptions they might make about their students’ engagements with his work. Second, it shows that doing Shakespeare through ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches provides powerful opportunities for students to make sense of and through Shakespeare, and third, that despite being written more than 400 years ago in early modern England, Shakespeare can be used effectively as an ‘authentic’ resource for intercultural education. Finally, it argues that ethnomethodological analysis can provide educators and researchers with important insights into their own practice, in ways that will be relevant beyond Shakespeare pedagogy and language education.

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If you are reading this, then it means I have managed to finish my PhD thesis. And if that has happened, then it is in large part due to the help and support of a great many people.

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Liz Oakley-Brown and Nora Williams also continue to be scholarly and collegial models to look up to.

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### **Funding note**

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### **Declaration**

The work in this thesis was conducted and written by the author between 2016 and 2021. I declare that this thesis is all my own work, and that it has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

## List of abbreviations

CA	Conversation Analysis
CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DoL	Department of Literature
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EME	Early Modern English
ESL	English as a Second Language
FoE	Faculty of English
IRE	Initiation, Response, Evaluation
IRF	Initiation, Response, Feedback
IRT(A)	In Role Talk (and Action)
L1 / L2	First language / second language
LNFSU	Lingnan Foreign Studies University
MCA	Membership Categorisation Analysis
PLT(A)	Pedagogic/Logistic Talk (and Action)
PRC	People's Republic of China
RSC	Royal Shakespeare Company
SCT(A)	Socio-Cultural Talk (and Action)

## Selected transcription conventions used in this thesis

(.)	pause (micropause of less than 0.4 seconds)
(0.6)	pause (number in brackets indicates length in seconds)
-	sharp cut-off of the word prior to the dash
:	stretching of the sound or letter prior to the colons; the greater the number of colons the greater the length of the stretching
( )	unclear fragment on the recording
.	stopping fall in tone (not necessarily the end of a sentence)
<u>under</u>	speaker emphasis
↑↓	marked falling or rising intonational shift, placed immediately before the onset of the shift
EXAMPLE	a section of speech noticeably louder than the surrounding talk
°example°	a section of speech noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk
>example<	a section of speech noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk
<example>	a section of speech noticeably slower than the surrounding talk
=	latched / contiguous utterances
[	the onset of a section of overlapping talk
#example#	creaky voice
£example£	smiley voice / suppressed laughter
~example~	shaky voice (e.g. crying)
.hhh	inbreath (number of letters indicates duration)
hhh	outbreath (number of letters indicates duration)
.pt	lip-smack
((laughs))	laughter, or other notes added by the analyst

**Note:** more information about these conventions and the transcription process used in this thesis can be found in Chapter 4 (Methodology)

## Chapter 1: Introduction

In October 2015, a month after the then British Chancellor, George Osborne, had declared the start of a ‘golden decade’ of Sino-British relations during a trip to China, President Xi Jinping made a much publicised state visit to the UK. During a state banquet held in his honour, Xi was given a copy of Shakespeare’s Sonnets by Queen Elizabeth II, and in his speech referenced *Hamlet*’s ‘To be, or not to be’ soliloquy as he claimed Shakespeare had been an influence on his own political development (Wu & Li 2015). This was not merely a diplomatic compliment, but also an example of a dynamic relationship between China<sup>1</sup> and Shakespeare that stretches at least as far back as 1839, when Lin Zexu – a reformer best known for opposing the British opium trade – referenced him in a compendium of Western knowledge intended to help his countrymen resist European imperialism (Huang 2009). However, Shakespeare really achieved prominence after Wei Yi and Lin Shu’s 1904 *An English Poet Reciting from Afar* (英国诗人吟边燕语/ *Yīngguó shīrén yín biān yàn yǔ*), a loose version of the Lambs’ 1807 *Tales from Shakespeare*, which was China’s most influential – if not quite its first – early collection of translated Shakespeare (Dai 2019). Since then, his works have been appreciated, criticised and appropriated for a huge variety of local and national purposes in China (Huang 2009, Levith 2004, Yang 2010, Zhang 1996). In 2016, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare’s death was marked in China with commemorative events, tours by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) and Shakespeare’s Globe, educational initiatives by domestic and international institutions, and the British Council’s *Shakespeare Lives* campaign placing a special emphasis on China (Lees 2021, forthcoming).

I witnessed this flurry of Shakespearean activity first-hand, as in late 2016 the British Embassy in Beijing invited me to participate in a *Shakespeare Lives* tour of schools, universities and cultural institutions in the cities of Beijing, Jinan, Tianjin and Xi’an. In some respects, this marked the culmination of an unexpected personal journey involving Shakespeare, which had begun in 2004 when I took up a post teaching Anglophone literature at a university in southern China. Soon after starting that job, I was asked to help the students rehearse their Shakespeare performances for the upcoming Drama Night, a major annual event on campus that was organised by the Faculty of English (FoE). Being (then) young and

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, ‘China’ will be used to refer to the Mainland of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), where the university at which this study’s research was conducted is located.

freshly appointed, I felt unable to refuse – especially because I was afraid that my new colleagues would be unimpressed if I told them that the reason for my hesitation was that I had no interest in Shakespeare whatsoever. Their logic was that, as a British person with a degree in literature, I must surely know Shakespeare. I didn't have the courage to tell them – nor the heart to tell the students who were busy rehearsing – that I had not enjoyed Shakespeare at school, and had largely avoided him at university (preferring instead more recent, non-Anglophone writers such as Borges and Kafka). I knew that Shakespeare featured prominently within the faculty, as the Literature majors had to do a compulsory Shakespeare course, and his works featured on the British Literature course taken by all third-year undergraduates. However, it was not until I started helping the students to rehearse that I realised just how exciting many of them found doing Shakespeare – and, to my surprise, just how exciting I found teaching his work. Inspired by this experience, over the next few years I became increasingly involved with Drama Night, and with learning how to incorporate practical drama activities into my academic teaching – something that was then very unusual in the FoE. In 2014 I started a distance-learning Postgraduate Diploma in Shakespeare and Education with the University of Birmingham's Shakespeare Institute, and requested funding to bring Michael Corbidge, a British practitioner who had worked with the RSC, to run workshops for the faculty's students and staff. By 2016, when I was invited to participate in *Shakespeare Lives in China*, this involved flying back from the UK, where I had returned to begin the research for this thesis.

There were numerous reasons why I felt that the setting I had been teaching in merited extended scholarly attention. Olive et al. (2021) have noted that while the topic of 'Asian Shakespeare(s)' has become a vibrant area of research, Shakespeare education in East Asia is comparatively underexamined. This is certainly the case with regards to China, where a rich history of reading, translating and performing Shakespeare is accompanied by a rich tradition of Shakespeare education. This history could certainly be the topic of detailed study, but apart from the fact that there are people far more qualified than me to carry out that kind of project, my concerns lie more with the contemporary situation. Despite the challenges involved in teaching and studying a playwright from early modern England in twenty-first century China (some of which are discussed in Chapter 5), my former students and colleagues continue to bring an incredible combination of expertise, insight and enthusiasm to their engagements with Shakespeare and other Anglophone literature. Again, fascinating research could be carried out on how – and indeed why – they do this, all while having to navigate a context in

which political, economic and social pressures have challenged the importance and role of English education in China, and especially the part that literature should play within that (Sun, Hu & Ng 2017, Yin & Chen 2002, Zheng 2014). However, their work is not the subject of this thesis, and there are no doubt people better qualified to undertake that research than me. In 1.2 (below) and Chapter 3 I will return to the idea that I was both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’ when I went back to the FoE to teach the Shakespeare workshops that are the subject of this thesis. But despite enjoying this dual role I have always been reticent about putting myself in a position in which I might appear to be evaluating my former colleagues, many of whom have been teaching Shakespeare for far longer than me.

Instead, I was convinced that there was interest to be found in examining the kinds of educational interactions that I had personally taken part in. Tatlow (2001: 5) has claimed that ‘[e]very engagement with a Shakespearean text is necessarily intercultural’, suggesting that the occasional familiarity of Shakespeare’s language disguises how unfamiliar his early modern plays and poems can be in other ways. In many respects, it seemed that the Shakespeare teaching I had been doing in the FoE was especially intercultural, in that it involved a British teacher and Chinese students using English and Mandarin to explore dramatic texts written thousands of miles away, and more than four hundred years previously. At the same time, however, I had some reservations about the role that ‘culture’ was really playing during these interactions, and how this should be addressed in my research. I had always been uncomfortable about the fact that many of my students, and some of my colleagues, seemed to assume that because I was born in the UK I must know more about Shakespeare than they did – something that was often demonstrably untrue. I also had reservations about the idea expressed by some of the staff in the faculty that it was necessary to have a comprehensive grasp of Shakespeare’s biblical and classical allusions before it was possible to understand his work. Such a grasp was definitely not something I had developed during my education at Essex state schools in the 1980s and 1990s, and I felt there were alternative ‘ways in’ to Shakespeare, including the playful, exploratory techniques associated with what are called ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches (Gibson 1998, Winston 2015). And I was even more sceptical about the suggestion, sometimes heard within the FoE, that understanding this early modern English playwright was necessary for understanding the UK of today – or even the Anglophone West in general.

At the same time as being unconvinced by these assumptions about Shakespeare, I was also troubled by some of the stereotyping of Chinese students and their supposed reticence in the



classroom that I had encountered from some international colleagues, and certain types of nominally ‘intercultural’ research (Dervin 2011). In addition to reducing diverse individuals to a monolithic group, such stereotypes seemed to me completely unrepresentative of the far more nuanced and varied conduct that I had witnessed in my classes, workshops and rehearsal sessions. As a result, rather than speculating about cultural or social influences, or attempting to produce generalisations about Shakespeare teaching and learning in China, I wanted to investigate what was actually happening in my own workshops, in all its complexity and particularity. Having decided that I wanted to run a series of exploratory workshops that encompassed a broad range of approaches to teaching Shakespeare, I needed to find a methodological approach that would allow me to capture what was going on in these varied interactions. Initially I planned to use a qualitative case study approach that would allow ‘an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a “real life” context’ (Simons 2009: 21). However, as I explored the methods I could use within such a qualitative case study framework, I became increasingly drawn to ethnomethodology, and two types of analysis that are associated with it: Conversation Analysis (CA) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA). As will be discussed in 1.4, below, and Chapter 4, ethnomethodology – or the study of people’s methods – is concerned with how sense and social order are practically, rationally achieved through social interaction (Garfinkel 1967, Heritage 1984, Francis & Hester 2004). Taking an ethnomethodological perspective, and subjecting audio and video recordings of workshop and interview interactions to detailed scrutiny using CA and MCA, has allowed me to arrive at a greater understanding of how the students and I did, and did things with, Shakespeare. Furthermore, ethnomethodology’s emphasis on what is analytically observable (Francis & Hester 2004, Ten Have 2004), rather than on prior assumptions about the situation or the participants involved, means that this detailed examination has revealed to me a lot about my own teaching that will benefit my practice in the future. Ultimately I hope it will also shed light on aspects of the practical accomplishment of ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches to Shakespeare in language learning contexts that will benefit other educators too.

Having shared a potted version of the motivation for this study, in the rest of this introductory chapter I will give more details of aspects of the project that will prove useful in relation to the thesis as a whole. First, there will be a brief discussion of Shakespeare in China, including the place of Shakespeare in Chinese education, which will address the gap in the literature

that was touched upon above. Then, after a brief explanation of the understandings of ‘culture’ and the ‘intercultural’ that are being drawn upon in this study, I will provide a brief introduction to Shakespeare pedagogy, including the ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches to Shakespeare teaching that have greatly influenced this project, and which are explored in more detail in my Literature Review (Chapter 2). Following this I will expand upon the ethnomethodological approach I have taken, and share the Research Questions developed in relation to it. Finally, the chapter will end with an outline of the rest of the thesis, with a particular focus on what is contained in its three combined analysis and discussion chapters (Chapters 5-7).

### **1.1 Shakespeare and China**

As noted earlier, although the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 2016 gave Shakespeare particular prominence in China, a dynamic relationship between China and Shakespeare can be traced back to the early nineteenth century (Huang 2009). Since the upsurge of interest in foreign cultures and ideas associated with the end of dynastic rule in the early twentieth century, Shakespeare has occupied a paradoxical position in China, his works being variously praised for their ‘universal’ artistic achievement, appropriated in order to teach ‘Chinese’ values, and criticised as an instrument of ‘Western’ cultural imperialism (Zhang 1996, Levith 2004). However, as Yang (2010) has noted, despite the interest in Shakespeare that exists in China, there remains relatively little Chinese-language material on ‘Shakespeare in China’, and even less in English. In both languages, the focus has been almost exclusively on performance and adaptation, with education given very little attention, something also noted by Olive et al. (2021). Thus, while Zhang (1996), Li (2003), Levith (2004) and Huang (2009) have looked specifically at Shakespeare in China, and studies of Shakespeare in Asia by Brown (1999), Kennedy & Yong (2010) and Trivedi & Minami (2010) have considered the Chinese context, all have done so primarily or even exclusively in relation to performance and adaptation. Even the broader cultural surveys (Huang 2009, Levith 2004, Zhang 1996) mention the teaching of Shakespeare in China only in passing, and when they refer to Chinese universities the emphasis is on ideology and its impact on research, rather than on educating students. Lee & Yong (2014: 90) have applied this interest in ideology to performances by Chinese university students, but their focus on productions by ‘elite specialist drama academies’ results in the everyday experiences of Chinese students in the classroom being overlooked once again. Berry (1988) and Maillet (2001) are rare examples of studies that do explore Shakespeare in the non-specialist university context, in both cases

with reference to the authors' brief experiences as 'foreign teachers' (外教 / wàijiào) in China. This makes them relevant for my research, but Berry's speculation that such experiences might become 'commonplace' and of interest to 'Shakespeareans of all kinds' (1988: 212) has not been borne out by the literature produced in the three decades since his piece.

In fact, while the bias towards performance is particularly pronounced in the case of China, pedagogy remains underrepresented in Shakespeare scholarship in general. Joubin & Mancewicz (2018: 3) have argued that this special attention is merited, on the basis that performances are 'the primary venue where the general public encounters Shakespeare'. However, I would agree with Olive (2015) that, in many contexts, far more people encounter Shakespeare's works in an educational setting than in a theatre – especially if we think of 'the general public' that Joubin & Mancewicz (2018) refer to in an inclusive, international sense. Indeed, Ick (2012: 205) has highlighted the scholarly bias towards performance as being particularly problematic in work on 'intercultural Shakespeare in Asia', as it privileges professional / avantgarde productions from China, Japan and India, over engagements with Shakespeare that take place in amateur and educational contexts, and in other parts of Asia. In China's case, concentrating primarily on productions such as Lin Zhaohua's *Hamlet* – which was theatrically ground-breaking but seen by only a small, specialist audience when originally staged in Beijing in 1989 – overlooks, for example, the ways in which millions of junior high school students have engaged with Shakespeare through the teaching of the trial from *The Merchant of Venice* (Zhang 1996). Indeed, even the wide-ranging attempts to engage members of the public in China during *Shakespeare Lives* in 2016 illustrated the geographical and financial barriers that restrict access to screenings and professional theatrical performances – this was not so much Shakespeare 'for everyone', as Shakespeare for everyone who could afford it (Lees 2021, forthcoming). If then, as Yang (2010: 79) suggests, the history of Shakespeare in China 'provokes many questions that will be of broad interest to Shakespeareans worldwide', I would argue that a great many of these questions should relate to the study of Shakespeare in Chinese education. While not talking about educational contexts specifically, Huang (2009) posits that examining Shakespeare in / and China necessitates an interrogation of those terms: of the very notions of 'Shakespeare' and 'China'. Observing that '[t]he ideas of Shakespeare and China have been put to work in unexpected places', she asks: '[i]f meaning is shifting and debatable, what does "Shakespeare" do in Chinese literary and performance culture?' (2009: 2-3). This in turn has

inspired a similar focus in this study, albeit with a shift in emphasis towards examining education from an ethnomethodological perspective: how did the participants in my workshops *do* Shakespeare, and what did they do with and through him?

## 1.2 Culture, the intercultural, and education

Huang's (2009) work in particular raises important questions about how culture and nation are defined, but it is important to note that many of the aforementioned studies of Shakespeare in China deploy terms such as 'cross-cultural', 'intercultural' and even 'transcultural' somewhat inconsistently. Gudykunst (2002: 19), whose distinction has been cited by many scholars of communications and linguistics, posits that the '[c]ross-cultural involves comparisons of communication across cultures' while '[i]ntercultural communication involves communication between people from different cultures'. In practice, however, the two categories overlap: Maillet's (2001: 77) comparison of teaching Shakespeare at Canadian and Chinese universities in order to provide a 'broader account of the cross-cultural exchange inherent in any "global" pedagogy', for example, is based on *intercultural* interactions between a (Canadian) teacher and (Chinese) students. Similarly, Huang (2009) writes about innovative 'intercultural' productions, such as Ong Keng Sen's multilingual, pan-Asian *LEAR* (1997), which typically also involve *cross-cultural* considerations of artistic practices and cultural references from multiple contexts. Acknowledging the overlap, this thesis will focus on the 'intercultural' – and so it is obviously crucial to be clear about what this actually means. Influential on this study and my own understanding of the 'intercultural' has been the field of critical intercultural communications (e.g. Dervin 2011, 2014, 2016, Holliday 2011 and Piller 2011), and Dervin's (2016: 4) suggestion that 'the prefix *-inter* translates best what the "intercultural" could be about' – including 'interaction, context [and] the recognition of power relations'. But if the 'inter' in intercultural is something dynamic and interactional, what is this interaction *between*? What is meant by 'culture' in studies of the intercultural?

Breaking the term 'intercultural' into its constituent parts, Dervin & Liddicoat (2013: 4) note a growing consensus that intercultural education has ignored developments in other disciplines such as anthropology, instead 'surrender[ing] to the concept of culture as a fixed static entity, especially in terms of national culture'. A common reference in such critiques (see also Dervin 2011, 2016 and Piller 2011) is the understanding of culture found in Baumann's (1996: 11) landmark ethnographic study of Southall in London:

culture is not a real thing, but an abstract and purely analytical notion. It does not cause behaviour, but summarises an abstraction from it, and is thus neither normative nor predictive.

I found this understanding extremely productive when thinking about my own reservations about ‘cultural’ or ‘culturalist’ assumptions in the context in which I was working (Bayart 2005), and even more so after looking into how ethnomethodology and MCA treat culture and cultural identities as things that are not simply ‘there’, but that are achieved in interaction (Hester & Eglin 1997, Stokoe & Attenborough 2015a). On this view, attempts in my research to explain participants’ behaviour (including my own) on the basis of culture seemed likely to be insufficient and/or misleading. Furthermore, when based on broad, essentialised categories such as the nation, notions of ‘cultural difference’ could have exaggerated the differences between supposed groups and elided the differences within them. Accordingly, my ‘outsider’ status as a Briton in China was not absolute: I worked for 12 years in the faculty I conducted this project in, and have a good command of spoken and written Mandarin, as well as an elementary grasp of Cantonese. Similarly, the participating ‘Chinese’ students were not a single, homogenous group: they differed as individuals in countless ways, from their individual interests and their socioeconomic backgrounds, to the fact that some were Cantonese speakers who may or may not have defined themselves as ‘locals’ (本地人 / *bun<sup>2</sup>dei<sup>6</sup>jan<sup>4</sup>*). My participants’ identities (and my own) were far more complex than labels such as ‘Chinese’, ‘Cantonese’ or ‘British’ suggest, and one focus of the ethnomethodological perspective used in this study is on how such identities are invoked, negotiated and then used to do other things in interaction (Stokoe & Attenborough 2015a). Such a perspective also has important pedagogical implications. At a basic level, in ‘intercultural education [...] there is a need to pay more careful attention to how culture is understood for the purposes of teaching and learning and how it is represented to learners’ (Dervin & Liddicoat 2013: 7). ‘British culture’ and ‘Chinese culture’ – both commonly invoked in Shakespeare teaching in China – are not ‘fixed, universalistic, and sociohistorically invariant’ notions, let alone concrete ‘things’ that I as a teacher can simply pass on to my students (Weinberg 2008: 14). A corollary of rejecting what Piller (2011: 15) calls the ‘entity understanding of culture’, which ‘treats culture as something people have or to which they belong’, is exploring a ‘process view’ which ‘treats culture as something people do or which they perform’. To try to reflect this in my workshops, I drew not only on the active, participatory Shakespeare pedagogy that is introduced in the next section, but also

on the intercultural perspective on language teaching proposed by Liddicoat & Scarino (2013), which is described in detail in Chapter 2. Interculturality – in which the suffix -ality stresses ‘a process and something in the making’ (Dervin 2016: 1) – thus became an explicit concern (and not just an automatic or incidental consequence) of doing Shakespeare with this diverse group of students. In this light I found Abdullah-Preteceille’s (2006: 480) assertion that ‘[n]o fact is “intercultural” at the outset’ and that ‘only intercultural analysis [...] can give it this character’ extremely thought-provoking. On reflection I would agree with the idea that interculturality is something produced in analysis, but with the ethnomethodological caveat that the analysis in question is primarily that being done *by the interactants themselves* as they practically, rationally make sense of and in the world (Garfinkel 1967). Ethnomethodology will be explored further in 1.4, below, and in Chapter 4, but first I will turn my attention to the pedagogical approach taken in this project.

### **1.3 Shakespeare pedagogy**

Piller’s (2011: 5) ‘process view’ of culture ‘as something people do or perform’ is easily linked to drama, and especially what is known as *process* drama: ‘drama not as the rehearsal or performance of plays but as an interactive, participatory form of pedagogy that engages learners emotionally and playfully’ (Winston 2012: 2). A growing body of literature has advocated process drama and similar approaches for language learning and intercultural education (e.g. Byram & Fleming 1998, Kao & O’Neill 1998, Bräuer 2002, Winston 2012, Crutchfield & Schewe 2017, Piazzoli 2018). Liu (2002: 54-55) writes that:

Through the exploration of [process drama’s] dramatic world in which active identification with the exploration of fictional roles and situations by the group is the key characteristic, second- and foreign- language learners are able to build their language skills and develop their insights and abilities to understand themselves in the target language.

The claim is that actively identifying with deeply felt but still fictional roles and worlds helps students understand not only the technicalities of the target language but also ‘*themselves* in the target language [emphasis added]’. In process drama, students can ‘experiment safely with alternative identities and hence come to see and imagine themselves differently’ (Winston 2012: 3), creating spaces which echo Holmes’s (2015: 243) characterisation of intercultural communication as ‘a socially constructed affair, where ways of speaking, doing,

believing and hoping are displayed, shared and contested among interlocutors in the here and now’.

Many of process drama’s impulses and techniques are shared by the kind of participatory pedagogy for Shakespeare that has become increasingly prevalent in the UK, often under the banner of ‘active’ approaches (e.g. Banks 2013, Gibson 1998, Royal Shakespeare Company 2013, Stredder 2009, Winston 2015). Gibson, in his highly influential *Teaching Shakespeare* (1998: xii), defines these as ‘a wide range of expressive, creative and physical activities’ which emphasize the plays’ origins in performance and call for collaborative, drama-based responses (1998: xii). Although not always explicitly acknowledged, there is a link between many of these active, collaborative techniques and the constructivist pedagogy associated with figures such as Bruner and Piaget (Neelands 2009b), which espouses ‘[the] view that knowledge, meaning, and understanding are actively constructed by learners by a process of development, which builds on what they already know, causing them to change and adapt and invent ideas’ (Wallace 2015). While such conceptions of teaching and learning are obviously relevant for this thesis, as is explained in Chapter 4, the perspective being used here is not a *constructivist* focus on individual cognitive processes of sense-making, but a *constructionist* focus on intersubjective understanding as socially achieved and displayed (Sert 2015). In any case, numerous other arguments for the use of Shakespeare in language learning and/or intercultural contexts have been put forward, several of which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. For example, what Eisenmann & Lütge (2014: 7) call Shakespeare’s ‘infinite capacity for adaptation’ has seen his plays being appropriated and made relevant in a multitude of different contexts (Lima 2014). Citing Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital (2006), Cheng & Winston (2011: 545) argue that Shakespeare’s iconic status can be an additional source of appeal to English learners in places like Taiwan or Mainland China, as well as potentially legitimising his inclusion on curricula. At the same time, Shakespeare’s very iconicity and status within Anglophone societies can be seen as bringing its own problems of alienating or marginalising students whose identities and relationships with English are more complex (Espinosa 2016, Dadabhoy & Mehdizadeh, forthcoming). Finally, there are the words and stories of Shakespeare’s actual texts. Cheng & Winston (2011: 547), drawing on Cook (2000), argue that these allow students to play safely with precisely the kind of thrilling, even dangerous language and storylines that are absent from much of mundane, everyday life – and the language textbooks that attempt to mirror it. These sometimes controversial pedagogical issues will be returned to in Chapter 2, while the next

section will present an initial overview of the ethnomethodological perspective that has informed the design of this study, and its data collection and analysis methods.

#### **1.4 Ethnomethodology**

As touched on earlier, ethnomethodology is the study of the methods that people use in order to make sense of the world around them. Originating from Harold Garfinkel's dissatisfaction with mainstream sociology, it aims to recast humans 'as sense-makers or interpreters of the world rather than as vehicles for the operation of generalised norms (i.e. "cultural dopes")' (Hester & Francis 2000: 2). Crucially, this sense-making is a bidirectional social process, in which individuals not only need to make sense of the world around them and the actions of those they are interacting with, but also need to act in and upon that world in ways that others can make sense of (Hester & Francis 2000: 3). As a result, social order is something actively done by people, not simply something that is done *to* them. This includes the local, practical accomplishment of educational order within the classroom, and so ethnomethodology stresses that 'lessons', 'participation' and even 'teachers' and 'students' are not simply 'there' as educational facts, but are instead constituted by the participants themselves (Hester & Francis 2000). For this study, an important consequence of this perspective was that the 'expressive, creative and physical activities' associated with 'active' approaches to Shakespeare (Gibson 1998: xii) could not be taken for granted. Instead, detailed ethnomethodological analysis of what was observably the case – not just what I assumed or felt was happening – was necessary. This was done in particular through the deployment of the two aforementioned analytic approaches, CA and MCA. While the former is primarily concerned with sequential organisation (such as how turn-taking operated in the workshops), the latter looks at how descriptive categories (e.g. of people) are invoked, negotiated and oriented to in order to do various things during interaction. The adoption of an ethnomethodological approach and CA and MCA ultimately allowed me to respecify, from the perspective of the participants, the interactional business of the drama workshops and the interviews, as well as what 'Shakespeare' was actually taken to mean in this context.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

Informed by this ethnomethodological perspective and the data collection and analysis methods associated with it, I developed the following Research Questions:

- **RQ1:** How did the participants describe their experiences and perceptions of Shakespeare?



- **RQ2:** How did the participants do Shakespeare, and achieve the workshops as local, collaborative accomplishments?
- **RQ3:** How did the participants invoke, orient to and use different linguistic, categorial and interactional resources in order to make meaning of and through Shakespeare?

The development of these Research Questions is discussed in Chapter 4 (Methodology), while they are answered in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, respectively. Now, however, this chapter's final section will present an outline of the structure of the thesis as a whole.

## 1.6 Outline of the chapters

This thesis is divided into eight chapters, including this introduction. While these cover the ground expected in a conventional social science thesis – reflecting the disciplinary context of Education Studies and Applied Linguistics in which I am writing – they also include engagements with Shakespeare's work. This is typically done through the presentation of an initial quote from Shakespeare, which is then taken as a point of entry for what will be discussed in that chapter. I have done this for two main reasons. First, due to my interdisciplinary background, I find thinking through examples from literature an effective way of approaching and conceptualising social scientific topics – effectively my own personal ethnomethodology (Francis & Hester 2004). Second, I hope that this will also be a way of bridging the disciplinary gaps between the fields of Shakespeare pedagogy, intercultural language education and ethnomethodology that are brought together in this study. With CA's incredibly detailed methods of transcription and analysis often considered off-putting or even incomprehensible to those from other disciplines, I hope this will make engaging with my research easier for Shakespeare educators and language teachers who are not familiar with CA (Lamerichs & Te Molder 2011, Mann 2016). Equally, I hope that it will provide any ethnomethodologists or conversation analysts who are not familiar with Shakespeare with more of a sense of what examples from literature and drama can offer the study of educational and social interaction more widely.

Chapter 2, my **Literature Review**, provides a rationale for the project's approach to Shakespeare in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context within Chinese higher education, by concerning itself with literature in several senses. It presents a critical review of relevant literature on Shakespeare pedagogy and particularly 'active' approaches, covering pedagogical material and scholarly research, and work that both advocates and critiques this type of teaching. In doing so, it also considers other senses of 'literature', including how

understandings of Shakespeare's plays as texts to be read and/or scripts to be performed influence the ways in which they are taught, and debates over the use of 'literature' in language learning contexts. The chapter then discusses Shakespeare's language, its apparent difficulty, and different responses to this, before exploring the use of Shakespeare in EFL and ESL (English as a Second Language) contexts, including from an intercultural perspective (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013). It concludes with an attempt to synthesise this intercultural perspective with the rationale for the 'rehearsal room' approach to teaching Shakespeare outlined by Winston (2105), and in doing so describes the major pedagogical influences on this project's Shakespeare workshops.

In Chapter 3, I shift to consider various aspects and conceptualisations of **Context**. This chapter does provide certain elements of background information about the institution where this research was carried out, which is referred to pseudonymously as LNFSU (Lingnan Foreign Studies University), as well as the participants, and the way the workshops were run. However, it is also concerned with explaining how context is understood from an ethnomethodological perspective, including its emphasis on the haecceity or 'just thisness' of interactional situations (Garfinkel 1967), and the related idea that interactants actually 'talk a context into being' (Seedhouse 2004: 42).

This leads to Chapter 4, on **Methodology**. This begins with an in-depth discussion of the constructionist worldview that underpins this study, before giving a detailed explanation of the ethnomethodological perspective that was chosen in response to this. The rationale behind the development of my Research Questions is given, and then the chapter moves onto data collection (i.e. workshop data, written feedback and interviews). Following this, the chosen methods of data analysis are explained, starting with a detailed look at transcription, before the use of Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), the process of 'unmotivated looking' (Psathas 1995), and the specific analytic approaches of CA and MCA are described. The chapter concludes with notes on how the ethical integrity and quality of the study were assured.

Next comes Chapter 5, the first of three combined analysis and discussion chapters, which is titled **What we talk about when we talk about Shakespeare – respecifying Shakespeare in and through interaction**. As its title alludes to, this chapter focuses primarily on the research interviews (as well as the written feedback) as opportunities that allowed participants space for extended discussion of their experiences and perceptions of

Shakespeare. It addresses the first of my Research Questions, by treating the interviews (and feedback) as events ‘in which members use[d] interactional and interpretive resources to build versions of social reality’ (Baker 2002: 778). In this way, ‘Shakespeare’ and attendant assumptions about, for example, his difficulty and his value, are not treated as something whose meaning was automatically shared by all the participants, but instead as something that was locally occasioned and accomplished in the interviews. Accordingly, it aims to present an ethnomethodological respecification of Shakespeare (Stokoe & Attenborough 2015a), examining how understandings of him and his work were invoked and negotiated, and then used to accomplish various things by the participants.

As its title suggests, in Chapter 6, ‘**Action is eloquence**’ – **doing Shakespeare in the workshop room**, the focus shifts from the interviews to the workshops, as I answer my second Research Question by closely analysing how the participants actually *did* Shakespeare, and achieved the workshops as local, collaborative accomplishments. Just as Chapter 5 seeks to respecify how understandings of Shakespeare were invoked and negotiated in the interviews, Chapter 6 seeks to respecify the practical interactions that took place in the workshops, not as transparent evidence of other processes, but as topics of inquiry in their own right (Hester & Francis 2000, Stokoe & Attenborough 2015a). It does this by taking a ‘praxiological approach’ (Moutinho 2018) and conducting detailed multimodal analysis to reveal how various activities within the workshops were locally, practically achieved. It also critically engages with certain ways in which classroom interaction has been understood, from Sinclair & Coulthard’s (1975) influential concept of the IRF (Initiation, Response, Feedback) exchange structure, to Freebody’s (2010, 2013) categorisation of drama workshop talk into Pedagogic/Logistic Talk (PLT), Socio-Cultural Talk (SCT) and In Role Talk (IRT). The chapter makes the case that these should be extended to include an ‘A’ for ‘Action’, reflecting important ways in which participants use embodied, visible conduct alongside linguistic resources.

The final analysis and discussion chapter is Chapter 7: ‘**I could find out countries in [him]’? Making meaning and doing ‘being intercultural’ through Shakespeare**. This tackles the third and final of my Research Questions through a similar praxiological approach and fine-grained multimodal analysis to Chapter 6, but with a focus on how participants made meaning of and through Shakespeare. The sense-making activities analysed include examples of students ‘doing learning’, as they display and orient to what they or others do or not know, and use various resources to work through instances of potential trouble (Sahlström 2011,

Jakonen & Morton 2015). However, they also include examples of the participants going on to make meaning in a deeper sense, using Shakespeare as the basis of discussions that involved not just talking about social and moral issues, but actually *doing* practical and moral reasoning, and, in some cases, doing ‘being intercultural’.

Chapter 8 presents my **Conclusion**, which summarises the project’s key findings, with particular reference to the pedagogical principles discussed in Chapter 2. In doing so it also delivers recommendations for how the pedagogy and research methods employed in this study can be applied in other contexts. Next, it addresses both the strengths and the limitations of this project, before concluding with implications for future research that include remarks about the collection, analysis and dissemination of data, and further interdisciplinary collaboration.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

MISTRESS PAGE: Look where his master comes. 'Tis a playing day, I see. – How now, Sir Hugh? No school today?

EVANS: No. Master Slender is let the boys leave to play.

MISTRESS QUICKLY: God's blessing of his heart!

MISTRESS PAGE: Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in the world at his book. I pray you, ask him some questions in his accidence.

EVANS: Come hither, William, hold up your head. Come.

MISTRESS PAGE: Come on, sirrah. Hold up your head. Answer your master; be not afraid.

EVANS: William, how many numbers is in nouns?

(*Merry Wives of Windsor*, 4.1, 7-17)

More than 400 years before the RSC launched its *Stand up for Shakespeare* manifesto (2008), which advocated a 'practical approach' involving children doing Shakespeare 'on their feet' (2), it is possible to find an example of a young person doing just that. The young person in question is named Will Page, and he is 'doing Shakespeare' in the sense that, as he stands in front of his schoolmaster being grilled on his Latin in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (4.1), he is often seen as standing for Shakespeare himself. But whether or not this humorous scene is genuinely a self-portrait, it raises questions about pedagogy – in Shakespeare's time, and today – that are highly relevant for this project, and its focus on teaching Shakespeare in a language-learning context. Thus, while young Will happens to be on his feet, this incident comically illustrates an apparently passive mode of teaching through repetition and imitation, which seems the polar opposite of the 'active' emphasis found in both 'rehearsal room' approaches to Shakespeare (RSC 2013) and an intercultural perspective on language teaching and learning (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013). In the former case, under the broad banner of 'active methods' for Shakespeare, numerous physical, playful techniques have been promoted by academics, teachers and theatre practitioners as a way of helping students to appreciate and enjoy plays which could otherwise seem difficult and distant (e.g. Banks 2013, Gibson 1998, Stredder 2009). Similarly, taking an intercultural perspective on language teaching and learning, as proposed by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), involves shifting the focus of

language education so that the learner is not simply a passive recipient of linguistic and cultural ‘facts’, but an active, self-aware participant in processes of meaning-making and intercultural mediation. The ideal of empowered students, whose agency remains intact as they reach their own understandings and ownership of what they are learning – be it Shakespeare or a ‘foreign’ language – seemingly couldn’t be further from the figure of poor Will, reeling off different Latin cases in the hope of avoiding the displeasure of his schoolmaster.

Yet there is more to this scene than meets the eye – and not simply because young Will in fact turns out to be a better scholar of languages than his mother had expected (4.1.66). For a start, although this episode from *Merry Wives* is a brief bit of fun rather than a sustained indictment of early modern grammar schooling, it gives us a glimpse of what was, at the time, a new approach to language teaching and learning that saw itself as anything but abstract and passive. Indeed, as there is in the RSC’s 2008 manifesto, there was an emphasis in the early modern grammar school classroom on the importance of standing up and saying the words out loud – even if those words were Latin, rather than works of English dramatic literature. And even though this speaking was structured around translation and imitation, rather than interpretation and experimentation, Enterline (2012: 1) has highlighted the ‘theatricality of everyday life in humanist grammar schools’, which involved not only taking part in dramatic performances, but also learning how to use a full range of verbal, gestural and expressive resources to move your listener when speaking. As Enterline (2012: 3) goes on to argue, ‘translation’ in early modern England involved more than ‘moving from one language to another, or from one cultural context to another’ – it also involved ‘social, emotional, and bodily change’. Learning Latin was not simply about remembering the words of another language, but about realising the cultural capital and personal growth that such embodied learning could bring – even if, in Shakespeare’s case, this schooling was later put to somewhat subversive use in his plays. Here then, despite its supposed preoccupation with order and authority, was a pedagogy that saw language learning and the performance of drama as transformational. This perhaps unexpected side to early modern grammar schooling should also serve as a cautionary reminder that ‘innovative’ pedagogies – whether for teaching Shakespeare, learning a language or anything else – should never be taken at face value.

This is especially important when it comes to ‘active’ approaches to Shakespeare, due to the fact that many discussions of this pedagogy – both admiring and sceptical – revolve around

simplifications and generalisations. Advocates of ‘active’ methods, for example, have been criticised for too often setting up ‘a false dichotomy between “desk-bound” teaching (bad) and “active” teaching (good)’ (Coles 2009: 34), when distinctions between ‘active’ and ‘passive’ cannot be reduced to whether a student is seated at a desk in the classroom, or standing in the open space of a rehearsal studio. At the same time, critics of ‘active’ methods have often deployed a false dichotomy of their own: that between ‘playing’ (frivolous) and ‘learning’ (serious) – a distinction hinted at in the scene from *Merry Wives*, in which schooling and playing are treated as mutually exclusive. It is, therefore, important to examine critically what writing about ‘active’ methods reveals, and also perhaps what it can obscure or misrepresent about this approach to teaching Shakespeare. This is especially true for a project such as this, which involves using elements of ‘active’ Shakespeare not with schoolchildren in an Anglophone country, but with students of English at a Chinese university. In this latter context, it would surely not be unreasonable for students to assume that doing Shakespeare, in English, could be as difficult and intimidating as young Will Page’s Latin accidents – and potentially just as distant and disconnected from their everyday needs and interests. In other words, if Shakespeare is the ‘book’, how exactly will such students ‘profit’ from it? ‘Active’ approaches are often framed not only as helping to allay reservations about Shakespeare’s supposed difficulty and distance, but also as enabling the possibility of personal and even social transformation (Winston 2015). But if this is the case, how is this actually achieved in the classroom? And if doing Shakespeare – especially in an English as a Foreign Language setting – potentially offers the kind of cultural capital associated with Latin in early modern England, is this automatically empowering, or could it merely serve to exacerbate existing cultural and linguistic inequalities?

In light of such questions, this chapter will provide a rationale for my project’s approach to Shakespeare in an EFL context within Chinese higher education by concerning itself with literature in several senses. Most obviously, it will present a critical review of relevant literature on ‘active’ approaches to teaching Shakespeare, covering both pedagogical material and scholarly research, and work that both advocates and critiques this tradition. In the process, other senses of ‘literature’ will become salient – from how understandings of Shakespeare’s plays as texts to be read and/or scripts to be performed influence the ways in which they are taught, to debates over the use of ‘literature’ in language-learning contexts. The chapter begins, in section 2.1, with an introduction to what are variously called ‘active’, ‘rehearsal room’ or ‘creative’ approaches to Shakespeare. This will include an overview of

the pedagogical literature, written by academics and practitioners, through which these approaches have been disseminated to primary and secondary teachers of English and drama, in the UK in particular (see 2.1.1). Following this introduction, Winston's (2015) theoretical rationale for the RSC's brand of 'rehearsal room' pedagogy is illustrated, with reference to its connections to 'active' Shakespeare and drama education more broadly (2.1.2). Concluding this section is an examination of some important critiques of 'active' approaches, and a consideration of how they might relate to the current project (2.1.3). Next, in section 2.2, the chapter focuses on Shakespeare's language. It looks at the perceived difficulty of Shakespeare's Early Modern English (2.2.1), and then explores the use of Shakespeare in second and foreign language contexts (2.2.2). This brings the chapter to its final section, 2.3, which situates this project's approach to teaching Shakespeare within an intercultural perspective on language teaching and learning (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013). After considering the relationships between languages and different notions of culture, and looking at how Shakespearean texts might be considered 'authentic' materials for the purposes of intercultural language education (2.3.1), the chapter concludes with an attempt to synthesise the principles and practices of intercultural language education with those of 'active' approaches to Shakespeare (2.3.2). In doing so, it summarises the pedagogy underpinning the Shakespeare workshops that are the focus of what follows.

## **2.1 'Active' approaches to teaching Shakespeare**

As Banks (2013) and Olive (2015) have pointed out, 'active' techniques for Shakespeare involving performance elements were advocated at least as far back as the first two decades of the twentieth century. However, the pedagogy now known broadly as 'active' methods or approaches is most commonly associated with Rex Gibson (1998), whose Cambridge School Shakespeare project and *Shakespeare and Schools* newsletter had a huge impact on the teaching of Shakespeare within British education (Olive 2015, Winston 2015). In addition to his own 1998 book, *Teaching Shakespeare*, Gibson's influence can be seen in a number of other guides for teachers that have proved popular in the UK, especially Stredder's *The North Face of Shakespeare* (2009), *The RSC Shakespeare Toolkit for Teachers* (2013), and Banks's *Creative Shakespeare* (2013). These will be discussed in 2.1.1, below, but given the extent of Gibson's influence, it is first useful to quote his own definition of this approach:

Active methods comprise a wide range of expressive, creative and physical activities. They recognise that Shakespeare wrote his plays for performance, and that his scripts



are completed by enactment of some kind. The dramatic context demands classroom practices that are the antithesis of methods in which students sit passively, without intellectual or emotional engagement. (1998: xii)

Despite some variation in individual and institutional practices, and nomenclature – with the label ‘rehearsal room’ reflecting the RSC’s even more theatrical approach (Evans 2017) – all the aforementioned texts echo Gibson’s belief in the importance of enacting – rather than just reading – the plays. This does not, however, mean that the aim is always to produce performances that will be viewed by an audience beyond the classroom. Instead, various ‘expressive, creative and physical activities’ (Gibson 1998: xii) are advocated to help students engage with and understand Shakespeare as they play out, and play with, his texts. Finally, and most contentiously, all present this approach as an improvement on a generalised vision of deskbound, teacher-centred, literary critical teaching of Shakespeare, which is seen as reinforcing the idea that Shakespeare is ‘as indifferent and unscaleable’ as an icy mountain peak (Streder 2009: 3).

These shared principles translate into practices that emphasise the teaching of Shakespeare as a collaborative, playful, physical endeavour. Tables and chairs are often pushed back, signalling the transformation of the classroom into a rehearsal room (Banks 2013, RSC 2013), a stage, or even a ‘theatrical laboratory’ (Streder 2009: 8). Accordingly, students and teachers become more like actors and directors, albeit with an emphasis on learner-centred collaborative exploration. This sees the focus shift from the teacher-director, to the student-actors as ‘co-owners’ and ‘doers’ (Streder 2009: 11). The teacher thus becomes a knowledgeable ‘enabler and fellow explorer’ (RSC 2013: 9), allowing learners to ask questions and actively create meanings. Typically this is done through activities that put the text ‘on its feet’ to be explored using playful techniques, which borrow from the professional rehearsal room. As well as reimagining the classroom and the roles within it, this approach also implies a different attitude to Shakespeare. Gibson (1998: 7) insisted that Shakespeare’s plays should be presented to learners as ‘scripts’ rather than ‘texts’, because while the latter ‘implies authority, reverence, certainty’, the former ‘suggests a provisionality and incompleteness that anticipates and requires imaginative, dramatic enactment for completion’. It should be noted that this distinction runs counter to that made by Barthes (1986), who contrasted the closed, concrete ‘work’ with the more open-ended, incomplete ‘text’. Gibson, however, used the latter term to characterise a pedagogical approach that treated Shakespeare’s plays and poems as privileged literary objects whose meanings and

greatness were fixed and given. In opposition to this, for Gibson an emphasis on the use of ‘scripts’ restores the dramatic element to the study of plays that were written to be performed, in ways that more textual and/or historical approaches arguably do not. Such methods are ‘active’, therefore, not simply physically, but because they give students agency over the text, as they respond to Shakespeare emotionally, intellectually and imaginatively.

### **2.1.1 Overview of pedagogical literature on Shakespeare teaching**

Before addressing scholarly research that provides a rationale for and critique of ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches (in 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, respectively), this subsection will give an overview of the pedagogical literature through which this teaching methodology has been disseminated to teachers (and, to a lesser extent, to students and even parents). This has particular importance, because the extent to which ‘active’ and performance-based approaches have come to be seen by some as an orthodoxy for teaching Shakespeare has itself provoked criticism from Olive (2015) and others (see 2.1.3). Thus, while the intention here is not to present a comprehensive history or exhaustive survey of guides to teaching Shakespeare, it will be useful to situate the active approaches that have proved influential on my own teaching practice (including this project’s workshops) within the wider context of the pedagogical literature. Having consulted both scholarly databases and commercial channels, a list was compiled of titles that have been published, in English, in the twenty years since Gibson’s *Teaching Shakespeare*, and are still readily available either in libraries or for purchase. This twenty year period, giving a cut-off date of 2018, was also chosen because its end coincided with the final phase of my workshops, and so any books published after this were obviously not available for consideration when I was planning and teaching the workshops. While many guides to teaching Shakespeare have been produced in the UK, this literature also includes publications from non-Anglophone contexts, such as Germany and Hong Kong. It also includes publications that cover a wide variety of methodologies for teaching Shakespeare – in some cases explicitly avowing ‘active’ approaches, and in others sharing similar principles. As will be seen, some of the publications were targeted at educators within the tertiary sector, although it should be noted that because of its focus on *teaching* Shakespeare, the list excludes guides designed to introduce students to Shakespeare’s work and particular critical / interpretive traditions (e.g. Bickley & Stevens 2013, Hopkins 2005, Lopez 2019). The complete list of twenty-two publications is summarised in Table 2.1:

**Table 2.1 Pedagogical literature on teaching Shakespeare**

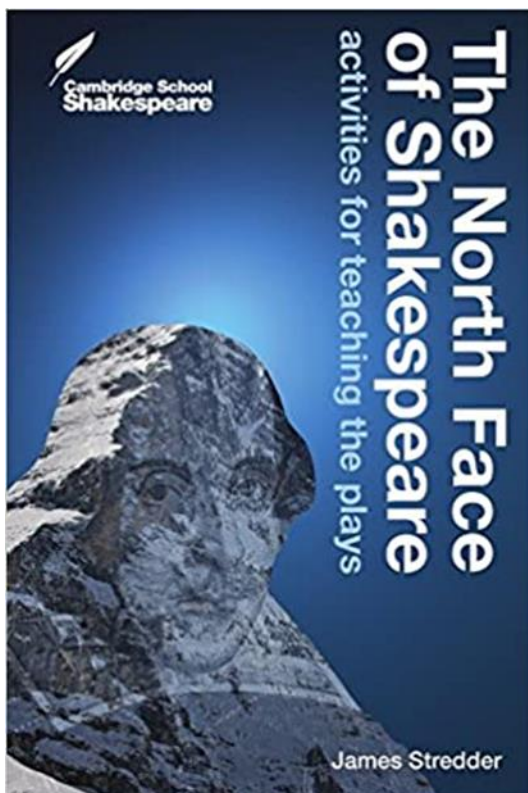
<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Context / subject(s)</b>	<b>Target educators</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Banks, F.	<i>Creative Shakespeare: The Globe Education Guide to Practical Shakespeare</i>	2013	UK, English and Drama	Secondary	‘[C]reative, active approaches’, based on sharing ‘Globe Education’s discoveries’ and ‘process’ (xi)
Cohen, R.A.	<i>ShakesFear and How to Cure It: The Complete Handbook for Teaching Shakespeare</i>	2006 (USA) / 2018 (UK)	USA and international, English	Secondary	Mixed methods for tackling the idea that Shakespeare is ‘synonymous with daunting academic challenge’ (ix) and ‘juggling three main areas of concern: the play as literature, the play as theatre, and the play as language’ (52); chapters on do’s and don’ts, student complaints, and individual entries for each play
Conroy, D. & Clarke, D. (eds.)	<i>Teaching the Early Modern Period</i>	2011	International, Drama, English, Film, French Studies, History	Tertiary	Emphasising ‘the interface between teaching and research’ and ‘the plurality and diversity of early modern teaching’ (3), unified by a central concern with ‘dialogic engagement with the past’ (4)
Eisenmann, M. & Lütge, C. (eds.)	<i>Shakespeare in the EFL Classroom</i>	2014	Germany and international, EFL	Primary, secondary and tertiary	‘[T]o provide new perspectives and innovative insights into current topics and approaches for teaching Shakespeare to all ages [...] by giving an overview of contemporary Shakespeare scholarship as

					well as practical examples that have proven successful in a wide range of classroom situations' (8)
Ellinghausen, L.	<i>Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's English History Plays</i>	2017	USA and international, English, Drama	Tertiary	An introduction to resources (editions, contextual and critical writings etc.), followed by essays on critical and practical approaches to teaching Shakespeare's history plays
Flaherty, K., Gay, P. & Semler, L.E.	<i>Teaching Shakespeare Beyond the Centre: Australasian Perspectives</i>	2013	Australia, New Zealand and international	Secondary and tertiary	'[C]hapters based on local history and practice, largely but not exclusively in Australia and New Zealand, raise questions and present diverse models for further exploration in the use, teaching and learning of Shakespeare in our schools, universities, and other institutions – anywhere Shakespeare is taught.' (2)
Gibson, R.	<i>Stepping into Shakespeare: Practical Ways of Teaching Shakespeare to Younger Learners</i>	2000	UK, English	Primary and secondary	Photocopiable lesson sheets 'to teach Shakespeare's plays in actively structured, yet flexible ways that engage [...] pupils in imaginative enactment of Shakespeare's language, stories and characters' (1)
Gibson, R.	<i>Teaching Shakespeare</i>	1998	UK, English	Secondary (and primary)	Active methods: 'treat[ing] the plays as plays, for imaginative enactment in all kinds of different ways' (xii)
Haddon, J.	<i>Teaching Reading Shakespeare</i>	2009	UK, English	Secondary	'[T]o give sustained attention to what is involved in reading Shakespeare', 'informed by literary-critical reading with a strong bias to performance' (ix)

Hiscock, A. & Hopkins, L. (eds.)	<i>Teaching Shakespeare and Early Modern Dramatists</i>	2007	UK and international, English	Tertiary	Guiding readers ‘through significant landmarks in the rich multifariousness of criticism’ on early modern drama (11); individual chapters on different genres and playwrights
Lau, L.C.M. & Tso, W.B.A.	<i>Teaching Shakespeare to ESL Students: The Study of Language Arts in Four Major Plays</i>	2017	Hong Kong and international, ESL	ESL	Exploring Shakespeare’s ‘immensely rich’ language ‘through the study of language arts in <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> , <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , and <i>Macbeth</i> ’ (xxix)
Ludwig, K.	<i>How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare</i>	2013	USA and international	Parents and teachers	‘[A] teaching primer for parents and a manual for making Shakespeare manageable and fun for kids’ (xv)
O’Brien, P. et al.	<i>Shakespeare Set Free</i> [Folger Shakespeare Library series of three volumes: <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i> , <i>Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth</i> ; <i>Hamlet and Henry IV, Part 1</i> ; <i>Twelfth Night and Othello</i> ]	2006	USA	Secondary	‘[A] set of intellectually stimulating and perfectly practical sourcebooks on the teaching of Shakespeare’ to facilitate ‘students and teachers actively engaging with text in ways that are intellectually sophisticated and stimulating <i>and</i> a hell of a good time besides’ (xi)
Royal Shakespeare Company	<i>The RSC Shakespeare Toolkit for Teachers</i>	2013	UK, English	Secondary	‘[A]n active approach to teaching Shakespeare in the classroom, inspired by the work that happens in RSC rehearsal rooms’ (8)

Royal Shakespeare Company	<i>The RSC Shakespeare Toolkit for Primary Teachers</i>	2014	UK, English	Primary	Adapted version of RSC (2013) for primary teachers
Sedgwick, F.	<i>Resources for Teaching Shakespeare: 11-16</i>	2011	UK, English	Secondary	Forty-one lesson sheets (teacher's sheets and task sheets) 'made up of exercises designed to reinforce learning' (xi), with an emphasis on language because '[t]eaching Shakespeare's stories is not teaching Shakespeare' (x)
Sedgwick, F.	<i>Teaching Shakespeare to Develop Children's Writing: Ages 9-12</i>	2014	UK and international, English	Primary and secondary	'[T]o help children to learn their language [...]; to combat a pedagogy that relies on the plots rather than the language; [...] to counter sentimental views of [Shakespeare] and his work [...] and] to show how Shakespeare's lines can give delight to teachers and children when they work together with him' (xix)
Stredder, J.	<i>The North Face of Shakespeare: Activities for Teaching the Plays</i>	2004 / 2009 (CUP)	UK, English, Drama, Theatre and Performance	Primary, secondary and tertiary	'[F]or those who want to explore how active approaches to teaching Shakespeare can help them in their work on the plays', how to 'create the conditions for the text to be experienced, intensely, as drama' (xi)
Thompson, A. & Turchi, L.	<i>Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose: A Student-Centred Approach</i>	2016	USA, UK, English	Secondary teachers / tertiary educators	To 'provide a bridge for students from appreciation to analysis without disavowing the fun'; an 'approach to active learning [that] is inclusive of, but not restricted to, performance-based pedagogies' (2); targeted at 'advanced learners' aged 15-20
Winston, J. & Tandy, M.	<i>Beginning Shakespeare: 4-11</i>	2012	UK, English	Primary teachers	'[P]ractical ways to teach Shakespeare' that will be 'rewarding' for teachers' and 'accessible, enjoyable and motivating' for pupils (1-2)

With Shakespeare being a compulsory author in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and still widely taught in Scotland (Elliott & Olive 2021), it is not surprising that a large number of the publications (eleven of twenty-two) were aimed in part or exclusively at educators in the UK. While seven of the texts covered approaches that were intended, or at least suitable, for use at tertiary level, the majority (thirteen) were targeted at school teachers, and especially those working at secondary level. Several of these publications proclaim their utility for teachers: two are collections of lesson sheets (Gibson 2000, Sedgwick 2011), two are called ‘toolkits’ (RSC 2013, 2014), another two are described as ‘practical’ guides (Banks 2013, Gibson 2000), and a further two call themselves ‘How to...’ guides (Ludwig 2013, Cohen 2018). Two of the publications have titles implying that Shakespeare might need to be approached tentatively (Gibson’s *Stepping into Shakespeare* (2000), Winston & Tandy’s *Beginning Shakespeare* (2012)), while the title of the Folger Shakespeare Library’s series (2006) is *Shakespeare Set Free*. Even more dramatic – and suggestive of what it is that Shakespeare might need to be set free from – are Cohen’s (2018) *ShakesFear and How to Cure It* (2018) and Stredder’s *The North Face of Shakespeare* (2009). This latter title’s sense that Shakespeare is difficult or intimidating is visually translated on the book’s cover (see Figure 2.1)



**Figure 2.1** The cover of Stredder (2009), presenting Shakespeare as a mountain peak

This features a reversed copy of the likeness of Shakespeare found in the First Folio of 1623, made to look like a rocky mountain peak – an image several Chinese students on Warwick’s Drama and English Language Teaching MA told me reminded them of Mount Rushmore. Stredder (2009: 3) explains this choice of title and cover in his introduction, writing that:

This stony imagery of awe-inspiring monuments and icy Alpine precipices is intended [...] to suggest what our culture has made of Shakespeare and what approaching his work is like for many people, not the actual difficulty of the plays themselves.

This idea – that Shakespeare is perceived as being difficult and that this perception can be off-putting – can obviously be seen in Cohen’s neologism ‘ShakesFear’, which is also recalled by the title of *No Fear Shakespeare*, a website and series of books that provide ‘modern’ English translations of Shakespeare. It is also echoed in most of the other publications targeted at school-teachers. Gibson (1998: xi), for example, starts by acknowledging that although some of his readers will be experienced, confident teachers of Shakespeare, many others will feel nervous, seeing ‘the difficulties of the play far more clearly than its accessibility’. While a number of the guides mention the challenge posed by cultural and historical references, Stredder (2018: 116) notes that “‘the language’ is the feature of Shakespeare’s drama most frequently cited as the biggest barrier to understanding and enjoyment’ – because of both its literary richness and complexity, and the fact that it was written four centuries ago. For Haddon (2009: 4) it is important to acknowledge that much of Shakespeare’s language is ‘very (sometimes astonishingly) difficult’. Strikingly, however, a number of the other publications insist that the difficulty lies less in the language itself than in the ways in which we approach it. Winston & Tandy (2012: 2), for example, suggest that a large part of the problem is the ‘pious sense of reverence’ with which Shakespeare’s language is often treated, by bad productions featuring actors ‘declaiming their lines’, and assessment-oriented tasks that involve over-analysing passages rather than experiencing and enjoying them. Of course, such a stance is still compatible with an acknowledgement that Shakespeare’s language can be difficult, but Cohen (2018) goes further, insisting that it is the *presumption* of linguistic difficulty and distance that is the major hurdle. ‘The worst of the barriers to your students’ enjoyment of Shakespeare’s plays is the belief that he wrote in another language’ he writes, exhorting educators to ‘help them destroy that myth’ (2018: 17). Questions and even ‘myths’ about Shakespeare’s language will be addressed from a linguistic perspective below (2.1.3), but as will be seen in Chapter 5, the perception of difficulty is one



shared by many of my participants. Indeed, irrespective of the actual challenge posed by the language, a number of the publications reviewed here stress the negative impact that Shakespeare's fearsome reputation has on students. Banks (2013: 11) writes that the image of Shakespeare as difficult and distant is something shared by students 'of all academic abilities' (11), who often see him as 'high art, a dead unapproachable cultural icon whose value and meaning is set in stone' (6). (This undoubtedly resonates with my early reservations about Shakespeare, as noted in Chapter 1.) Similarly, Winston & Tandy (2012: 1) identify a widespread assumption in the UK – and not just in schools – that Shakespeare is 'remote, difficult and irrelevant'. They explicitly link this to social class, quoting a schoolboy 'from inner-city Coventry' who told one of their colleagues that 'Shakespeare is for posh people, not for us' (2012: 1). This association of Shakespeare and cultural capital has profound implications for educators, theatre practitioners, cultural institutions and policymakers, which feed into debates in the UK over the consequences of unequal 'access' to Shakespeare (McLuskie & Rumbold 2014, Olive 2015). Certainly, some of the guides reviewed here frame the teaching of Shakespeare in terms of access and inclusion, including the RSC's *Toolkit* (2013: 9), which states: '[w]e firmly believe that Shakespeare belongs to everyone and that his work is an important part of our cultural inheritance'. Such claims take on a very different light away from the UK and other Anglophone countries, as I have written about (Lees 2021, forthcoming) in relation to the use of Shakespeare as an instrument of cultural diplomacy and British soft power, in China and elsewhere. As Chapter 5 will show, the association of Shakespeare with certain types of cultural capital was also something my participating students were well aware of, and something that I – as a white British man teaching Shakespeare in China – had to navigate carefully. For now though, I will concentrate on how most of the publications reviewed here treat Shakespeare's reputation as a practical problem: how do we teach Shakespeare, if students think he's too boring or difficult?

The solution, for most of the guides targeted at school-teachers at least, is to harness performance-related techniques. Even Haddon (2009) and Sedgwick (2014), whose guides focus on reading and writing, respectively, discuss the benefits of including dramatic elements – even if these are activities that can be done while students are seated at desks in Sedgwick's case. Thompson & Turchi (2016: 2), meanwhile, advocate teaching Shakespeare to 'advanced learners' aged between fifteen and twenty through an 'approach to active learning [that] is inclusive of, but not restricted to, performance-based pedagogies'. This is a reminder that 'active' approaches do not have to involve 'performance' per se, nor students

necessarily moving around an open space. However, while a number of the other guides here (e.g. Banks 2013, Gibson 1998, Stredder 2009) do advocate using a broad range of activities, they place the greatest emphasis on dramatic and performance-based techniques. As noted above (see 2.1), Gibson (1998) expressed the idea that because Shakespeare's plays were written to be performed, this necessitates some form of dramatic engagement in the classroom. One strand of this argument is that it is through such dramatic engagement that the plays are divested of their veneer of distance and difficulty, and instead become accessible and enjoyable (Stredder 2009). In fact, Gibson (1998: 8) specifically contrasts the engagement that accompanies 'active' methods with what he sees as overly textual approaches that have 'had a demotivating effect on generations of school and college students'.

A number of these publications also claim that it is through *doing* Shakespeare – and especially speaking his words – that students can overcome the difficulty of his language. Stredder, for example, argues that:

Using the qualities they appreciate, the language's playfulness and musicality, its strength of imagery, its style and sententiousness (all performable qualities), teachers of Shakespeare can find ways of outflanking the widespread alienation and sense of disempowerment. (2009: 117)

While Stredder emphasises here that it is the teacher's use of the language in performance that can achieve this breakthrough, some of the other publications attribute this effect to performance itself. Cohen, for example, comments that the emphasis on performance in his approach largely stems from 'the idea that *every word in Shakespeare's plays is transformed in the context for which it was chosen – the stage*' (2018: 6, emphasis in original). Banks, meanwhile, acknowledges that Shakespeare's language is 'alien in many ways to young people today', but argues that 'when they experience speaking it for themselves the rhythm and construction of the verse can make it surprisingly accessible'. Cicely Berry, the late RSC voice coach whose ideas 'inform much of what we all mean by "Active Shakespeare"' (Stredder 2009: xi) takes this even further, suggesting in her foreword to Stredder's book that 'you do not understand Shakespeare fully [...] until you have spoken the text aloud' (2009: viii).

This sense of performance revealing or unlocking something that is there in the words can also be related to another side of Gibson's argument that teaching Shakespeare necessitates

the inclusion of dramatic elements: that because Shakespeare's plays were written for the theatre, they are somehow incomplete without performance or enactment of some kind. This is an idea expressed forcefully by Banks, who writes:

Reading [Shakespeare's] plays without any form of active engagement, without his words in our mouths and emotions and actions in our bodies, is like trying to engage with a piece of music by looking at the notes on the page but not listening to the music itself, or like reading a television script without watching the programme that was made. (2013: 3)

Coming in the context of a publication that is devoted to Globe Education's methods for teaching Shakespeare, such a privileging of the theatrical is perhaps not surprising, and there is undoubtedly an element of branding involved in the educational publications of the Globe and RSC (and, in a slightly different way, the Folger Shakespeare Library in the USA). This can be seen when Banks (2009: 16) stresses the centrality of 'the three A's: Actor, Audience and Architecture' to the Globe's theatrical *and* educational efforts. Similarly, the RSC *Toolkit's* (2013: 8) emphasis on its educational methods being 'inspired by the work that happens in RSC rehearsal rooms', makes a direct link between its theatrical practice and its educational techniques – arguably also making a corresponding proprietorial claim over the latter in the process. Such claims have been heavily criticised by Olive (2015), not necessarily because of the 'branding' per se, but because of the way that prominent organisations such as the RSC could be seen as leveraging their cultural influence to promote their own pedagogy, to the detriment of other approaches. Indeed, Olive has memorably written that 'active methods has ceased to be a mere pedagogy', and that '[a]mong its adherents, it has instead become an epistemology for Shakespeare' (2015: 70). In addressing this and other critiques below (see 2.1.3) I will argue that part of the problem stems from a degree of rhetorical excess that surrounds 'active' methods, rather than from its pedagogical principles. However, before that, it will be necessary in the following section to explore in more depth the rationale that underpins these principles, and the extent and manner of their influence on the current project.

### **2.1.2 Theoretical rationale for 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches to Shakespeare**

As established in the previous subsection, a great deal of the pedagogical literature produced in the last two decades advocates elements of 'active' or performance-based approaches for teaching Shakespeare – whether explicitly or not – and shares an emphasis on engaging with

Shakespeare's language and addressing its perceived difficulty. It is important to note that many of the techniques found in this kind of pedagogical literature have been developed through years of artistic and educational practice, and so are typically based on professional and personal knowledge claims, rather than scholarly ones as such (Olive 2015). However, Winston (2015) has set out a theoretical rationale for the RSC's 'rehearsal room' approach, which is broadly applicable to the 'active' tradition as a whole, due to the significant role that performance-based techniques play for its main proponents. Winston organises this rationale around five areas of learning – *learning through playing, through experience, through the body, through beauty and learning together* – which will now be briefly elucidated with reference to the workshops and educational setting explored in this project:

- *Learning through playing*: Winston (2015: 76) notes that play is often dismissed, through its associations with children and leisure, as 'pleasurable and therefore not difficult or challenging', and as 'not serious and therefore not to be taken seriously' (2015: 76). He contrasts this with how scholars such as Huizinga (1970) and Schechner (2003) have emphasised play's importance as a fundamental aspect of life, which can be deeply serious and meaningful, as well as pleasurable. Significantly, Winston gives particular attention to Cook's (2000) work on language play, which argues that, far from being frivolous, play is central to how we learn, use and create meaning through language. Cook contends that for language teaching to engage with the full range of uses to which we put language, it needs to include far more 'nonsense, fiction, and ritual, and many more instances of language use for aggression, intimacy, and creative thought' (2000: 193). He also argues that if 'personal importance, psychological saliency, and interest' were accounted for alongside more instrumental understandings of relevance, then a far wider range of content would be used in language teaching – not just 'the ubiquitous discourse of business and polite conversation' (ibid). Shakespeare's texts clearly fit into Cook's expanded conception of language use and learning, and Winston (2015) adds that they exemplify the three interlocking levels – formal, semantic and pragmatic – at which Cook suggests language play works. Thus, as well as exhibiting the formal play of rhythm and rhyme, Shakespeare's texts work at the semantic level, offering the pleasure of stories and 'novel, strange or opaque uses of language', and the pragmatic level, whereby communal language play 'create[s] solidarity as well as competitiveness, and build[s] a feeling of congregation as well as intimate interaction'

(Winston 2015: 77). Shakespeare's dramatic language is thus a vehicle through which students can learn through playing, whether they are learning in a first or foreign language (Cheng and Winston 2011).

- *Learning together:* As a prerequisite for, and a consequence of, this playful approach, the RSC's educational work revolves around the theatrically-inspired idea of the 'ensemble' or 'company'. While Winston (2015: 87) notes that the RSC's model of 'ensemble' has sometimes rested on a utopian intention 'to embody a particular conception of the good society', the need for a trusting, collaborative atmosphere is common to 'active' approaches to Shakespeare in general. In this model, hierarchies are flattened, and teachers and students come together in a spirit of constructive, collective endeavour (Stredder 2009). This develops 'soft' social skills, and even more importantly establishes a space in which individual learners can be 'challenged and inspired to move beyond [their] comfort zone' (Winston 2015: 90). This can include tackling the supposed difficulty and strangeness of Shakespeare's language in a spirit of collective exploration, not competitive assessment.
- *Learning through the body:* 'Active' approaches achieve a trusting, cooperative atmosphere in part through a different conception of the physical in education. Open spaces are favoured, with tables and chairs absent or pushed aside, and circles take precedence over rows or squares. Movement is far easier within these spaces and is integral to the learning taking place within them, as Winston stresses the educational importance of embodiment, and asserts that physical activities can be used to analyse Shakespearean texts. Specifically, he references the philosophy of Johnson (2008), who, he writes, 'rejects the idea of a disembodied mind and situates bodily experience and higher propositional thinking along the same continuum rather than seeing them as fundamentally different' (Winston 2015: 84). In drama, as in life, meaning-making is an intellectual *and* physical endeavour, which is felt with and expressed through our bodies – something that drama can bring to language-learning (Piazzoli 2018), and that is reflected in this project's analytic focus on multimodality.
- *Learning through experience:* Experience is hugely important within this pedagogical tradition, in ways that often recall the ideas of Dewey (e.g. 1916, 1938). Neelands & O'Hanlon (2011: 240), for example, propose that engaging with Shakespeare's works should be a 'double entitlement' – both cultural and curricular – that opens possibilities for Shakespeare to be 'a source of pleasure' for learners, and 'a reference

point for understanding the complexities of their own and other lives'. Such possibilities, they stress, should be 'life-long and life-wide', as school should be about more than narrow instrumental aims related to assessment and employability. Here, 'experience' refers not merely to learners being taught about or discussing situations that commonly occur in everyday life (e.g. at work), but to the 'genuine situation of experience' (Dewey 1916: 167) they can encounter in meaningful educational interactions. Such experiences occur through activities that allow learners to actively engage in tasks that matter – aesthetically, emotionally, intellectually – and that they can bring to a satisfying conclusion through their own acts of experimentation and interpretation.

- *Learning through beauty*: Following Dewey's (1916) distinction between everyday experiences and those that are singular and significant, Winston (2015: 81) argues that '[w]hat turns *any* experience into *an* experience – into something memorable, intrinsically worthwhile, satisfying and rewarding in itself – is its aesthetic quality'. In *Beauty and Education*, Winston had already written that '[t]o engage with Shakespeare's dramatic poetry is to experience the expressive power of language at its most intense and beautiful' (2010: 102), but this is not simply about learners coming into contact with something beautiful and/or sublime in a Kantian sense. In 'active' approaches, the aesthetic and formal qualities of Shakespeare are not merely noticed, but actively played with and dynamically experienced. Here, Winston (2015) draws on Murdoch's (1991: 84-85) notion of 'unselfing', or the 'unpossessive contemplation' of artistic or natural beauty through an experience that 'alters consciousness in the direction of unselfishness, objectivity and realism'. Through physical, playful engagement in a cooperative atmosphere, self-consciousness and the hold of individual preoccupations can be lessened, marking the experience out from run-of-the-mill everyday life, as learners experience the power, beauty and strangeness of Shakespeare's dramatic language.

Encompassing learning through playing, experience, beauty and the body, as well as learning together, Winston's (2015) theoretical rationale describes an approach that is concerned with meaning-making in multiple senses, and with students' emotions, inner lives and transformative potential. The more 'dramatic' or performance-inspired elements associated with 'active' approaches have, therefore, formed an important part of the workshops carried out for this project (albeit in combination with other techniques and activities). As a result, it

will be important in the next subsection to address the critiques that have been levelled at ‘active’ and more broadly performance-based approaches to teaching Shakespeare.

### **2.1.3 Critiques of ‘active’ and performance-based approaches to Shakespeare**

While the playful, physical nature of ‘active’ approaches, as discussed through Winston’s (2015) rationale above, has helped to popularise it with many educational practitioners, it has also prompted various criticisms. In addition to Olive’s (2015) aforementioned critique of the RSC’s educational work, for example, McLuskie (2009) has suggested that ‘active’ approaches, while enjoyable, do not provide students with the tools or opportunities they need to engage with and analyse Shakespeare at higher levels (and especially in tertiary education). These critiques will be returned to, but first is important to address the issues raised by Murphy et al. (2020), which are especially pertinent for the use of Shakespeare in an EFL context, as is the case in this project. This article aims to investigate what it is that students find difficult about Shakespeare’s language, and advocates the use of corpus-based techniques in response. In doing so, it raises three main reservations about what it describes as ‘performance’ methods: that they are time-consuming, that they are often used to the exclusion of other approaches, and that they neglect the texts themselves. In responding to these reservations in turn, the critiques of Olive (2015) and McLuskie (2009) will also be addressed.

The first reservation expressed by Murphy et al. (2020) – that ‘performance’ methods can be extremely time-consuming – is undoubtedly true. This of course does not mean that they do not warrant the time that is spent on them, but it does mean that extracurricular or occasional ‘active’ Shakespeare sessions might be a more pragmatic option in highly time-pressured and/or assessment-oriented contexts (Coles 2009). This was certainly one of the reasons why I chose to run the Shakespeare workshops for this project on an extracurricular basis. However, it should also be noted that taking the ‘performance’ methods label that Murphy et al. (2020) use at face value risks overstating the amount of actual performance that is involved in ‘active’ Shakespeare sessions. Incorporating ‘expressive, creative and physical activities’, and even the ‘enactment’ that Gibson (1998: xii) refers to, does not mean requiring students to rehearse and then perform scenes for an audience – indeed, they may not do this at all. Instead, in many cases the ‘active’ element is more about playfully exploring the text than producing a performance. This point is also linked to the second reservation raised by Murphy et al. (2020): that ‘performance’ methods have become so popular that they

are sometimes seen as the *only* way to teach Shakespeare, echoing Olive's (2015: 70) allegation that they are sometimes treated as 'an epistemology for Shakespeare'. Here I completely agree with Olive and Murphy et al. on the need to balance different methods. Indeed, I would consider my approach to teaching Shakespeare in higher education contexts to resemble that of Thompson & Turchi (2016: 2), who advocate student-centred 'active learning [that] is inclusive of, but not restricted to, performance-based pedagogies'. However, it also needs to be acknowledged that using a variety of approaches is something that Stredder (2009), Gibson (1998), and Banks (2013) all advocate. When writing about assessment, for example, Gibson (2009: 236) states that the final 'product' does not have to be 'an actual staged performance' and could in fact be 'a traditional essay', while the 'process' leading to this could involve discussions, note-taking and the like – not just performance itself. Similarly, Banks (2013: 5) stresses that 'creative' approaches are 'active, physically and/or intellectually', and hence can involve deskbound as well as movement-based exercises. Indeed, she even opens her first chapter by stating that '[t]here is no right way to teach Shakespeare' (2013: 1) – even if her subsequent rhetoric, and that of Gibson and the RSC, implies otherwise. Nevertheless, while this might be a reason to critique the promotion of 'active' approaches, it is not a reason to reject its pedagogical basis.

The third criticism posed by Murphy et al. (2020) is that performance-oriented approaches neglect the texts themselves. McLuskie (2009: 131) makes a similar point about 'active' approaches in schools, claiming that they can 'produce exciting educational experiences', but ones that are only tangentially related to Shakespeare and that may be insufficiently rigorous at more advanced levels. For the purposes of this chapter, I will limit myself to two main responses to this critique. First, while there are some techniques associated with 'active' methods that deal only indirectly with text, these are easily outnumbered by activities in Banks (2013), Gibson (1998), the RSC (2013) and Stredder (2009) in which the play text (as a 'script') is central. Indeed, Banks (2013: xii) states that '[t]he purpose of all activities is ultimately to explore text'. McLuskie highlights the practice of 'hot-seating' ('in which a student steps into role and is questioned about their actions, feelings, thoughts and motivations' (Gibson 1998: 34)) as an example of a technique that is arguably unmoored from the text, and suggests it could even be used to avoid Shakespeare's complexities, rather than to confront them. However, properly employed, 'hot-seating' – like the related 'Stop. Think!' and 'Thought Tracking' techniques used by the RSC (2013) – is a way of enabling students to not only emotionally and imaginatively connect with a play's roles and situations,



but also to display and negotiate their understandings of them (thus making them observable for the teacher). These are, therefore, techniques that enable analysis, not replace it.

In this vein, a second rejoinder concerns the goals that such analysis might have. For McLuskie (2009), Shakespeare at tertiary level ‘requires that the dancing stalls while the thinking goes on’ (139). In other words, the supposedly easy pleasures of active Shakespeare in school need to give way to the hard work of higher education, and particularly ‘the difficult and alienating process of negotiating unfamiliar language or complex questions of historical difference’ (McLuskie 2009: 132). In addition to querying McLuskie’s use of Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* as a way of framing ‘dancing’ and ‘thinking’, Winston (2015) argues that this is a false distinction. As discussed in 2.1.2, above, he asserts that meaning-making is an inherently embodied endeavour, and that ‘active’ approaches offer techniques that do involve negotiating the unfamiliar and the complex – even if these expressive, often physical techniques look very different to those conventionally employed in the seminar room. Murphy et al. (2020) are less dismissive than McLuskie of performance-based approaches in higher education, but nevertheless stress that the play-text should be the primary object of analysis (which, in their case, is of the stylistic variety). While this argument may be pertinent for early modernists and Shakespeare scholars working within certain disciplinary contexts, educators working in language-learning contexts are under no such obligations. Anyone teaching Shakespeare needs to understand the language, literary devices and context of the extracts they are using, but a sustained literary and/or historical analysis of an entire play-text need not be the aim. Indeed, as is argued below (2.2.2), isolated extracts from Shakespeare can serve as ‘authentic’ materials within language education contexts, providing opportunities for learners to engage emotionally, physically and imaginatively with beautiful, dramatic and strange language. Accordingly, the next section turns its attention to teaching, and teaching with, Shakespeare’s language.

## **2.2 Teaching (with) Shakespeare’s language**

In the pedagogical literature examined above, including that associated specifically with ‘active’ approaches, Shakespeare’s language occupies something of a paradoxical position, commonly being seen as both the most powerful aspect of Shakespeare, and the thing that is most difficult or off-putting. Indeed, despite the relative closeness of the English of Shakespeare’s time and that of today, even those who speak English as a first language often perceive Shakespeare as archaic and alien – technically the same language, but experientially

foreign (Blank 2014, 2018). This perception, coupled with Shakespeare's high cultural status, can make his language a source of anxiety and bafflement for students in Anglophone countries – especially those whose cultural and linguistic backgrounds mean they already have a complex relationship with English (Espinosa 2016). For EFL students the challenge can seem even greater, and the rewards even less clear. With dominant modes of foreign language education emphasising instrumental goals related to communicative efficiency and employability (Ros-i-Solé 2016), studying centuries-old dramatic literature might seem impractical and counterproductive. If Shakespeare's English is strange for those who supposedly live in that language, why inflict it on students for whom English is already foreign? This section of the Literature Review will examine this question from two main angles. First, in 2.2.1, it will look at debates over, and responses to, the perceived difficulty and distance of Shakespeare's Early Modern English. Then, in 2.2.2, it will explore research on how Shakespeare can be used in second and foreign language contexts.

### **2.2.1 Shakespeare's Early Modern English**

The idea that Shakespeare's language not only merits special attention but also requires specialist knowledge to be fully understood has a long history. From Abbott's 1869 *Shakespearian Grammar* to more recent examples (e.g. Kermode 2000, Blake 2002, Crystal & Crystal 2002, Crystal 2008, Crystal 2016, Johnson 2014, Magnusson & Schalkwyk 2019), numerous books have offered everything from general explorations of Shakespeare's language, to guides covering grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. However, Culpeper & Archer (2020: 191) have argued that much of this writing exhibits something of a 'split personality', addressing linguistic and literary perspectives, but in practice often privileging one over the other. In historical terms, the basic biographical outlines of Shakespeare's life – he was born in 1564 and died in 1616 – position him as a user of what is now called Early Modern English (EME). However, when people today refer to Shakespeare's language they are typically referring to the language found in his plays and poems. If, as Culpeper & Archer (2020) argue, adequately addressing the linguistic and the literary is a challenge for scholars, it also seems a formidable barrier to using Shakespeare in EFL contexts. At its most instrumental, mainstream EFL privileges practical English, of the sort that is supposedly encountered – and therefore *useful* – in everyday situations (Cook 2000, Ros-i-Solé 2016). Defining the 'useful' and the 'everyday' can actually be very contentious, given the drastically different socioeconomic and cultural situations of the world's EFL learners. However, it is true that few learners will actively *need* to be able to write speeches or poems

in EME in their everyday lives. Fewer still will need to know what to say when confronted by witches (*Macbeth*) or fairies (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), let alone when announcing that they have baked their enemy's sons into a pie (*Titus Andronicus*). This fact is reflected in a question raised whenever I have taught Shakespeare sessions to MA TESOL students at Warwick: 'What's the point of teaching learners such out-of-date, impractical language?'.

But however understandable such reservations are, they make assumptions about both Shakespeare's language and EFL teaching that merit further examination. Certainly, the idea that Shakespeare's language is outdated – and therefore more difficult and less practical than today's English – needs to be explored. In strictly historical terms, and especially when compared to Old and Middle English, EME is technically not *that* different from the English of today. In light of this, Crystal & Crystal (2002) argue that there are many passages in Shakespeare in which the vocabulary is almost identical to that of today's English, and even more where unfamiliar terms are easily understandable in context. This is the view taken by Cohen (2018, 13) when he stresses that 'Shakespeare's language is neither particularly "old" nor particularly hard'. He attempts to illustrate this with a chart that shows the first independent clause in each of Shakespeare's plays – including *Hamlet's* 'Who's there?' and *Macbeth's* 'When shall we three meet again?'. Within these independent clauses he finds only ten words that he classifies as 'archaic', and concludes that 98.4% of the 624 words thus examined are 'current' (13-16). On this basis he argues, as noted in 2.1.1, that the real difficulty with Shakespeare's language has to do 'with attitude and perception' and not the language itself (2018: 12). Shakespeare's linguistic choices may surprise us, he continues, but this is usually for artistic and aesthetic reasons, not because of the use of archaisms. Indeed, Cohen even goes so far as to suggest that students now are almost in a better position to understand Shakespeare's language than playgoers in early modern England, due to the advent and availability of dictionaries, and the fact that many of the neologisms used by Shakespeare and his contemporaries have now become conventionalised in English.

However, while there might be good pedagogical arguments for presenting, and perhaps even surprising, learners with stretches of Shakespeare that seem easier and more familiar than they might be anticipating, it is necessary to acknowledge that there are legitimate reasons why students' experiences with Shakespeare's language will not always be so positive. Indeed, even within the openings that Cohen surveys, there is much that seems more obviously difficult and unfamiliar than is suggested by glossing them as being 'current'. Certainly, many of the things that Murphy et al. (2020) found that students, including EFL

learners, identify as difficult in Shakespeare – including archaisms, contractions and complicated lexis – occur in the extracts used in my project’s workshops. This can be illustrated using three of the best known examples that were employed: *Hamlet*’s ‘To be, or not to be’ soliloquy (8.57-89), *As You Like It*’s ‘All the world’s a stage’ speech (2.7.138-165), and ‘Sonnet 18’. The latter poem, for instance, uses EME forms of you (‘thou’ and ‘thee’), your (‘thy’), are (‘art’) and has (‘hath’), while Hamlet’s soliloquy contains several contractions (‘‘tis’ for it is, ‘o’er’ for over). Jaques’s speech uses items of vocabulary that are highly culturally specific (capon, pantaloons etc.), while ‘To be, or not to be’ features archaic terms such as ‘bodkin’ and ‘fardels’. It also features at least one word that, orthographically, does not look like English at all (dèspised), while the inclusion of ‘sans’ in Jaques’s speech led to a discussion with this project’s participants over whether this can be classed as a French word (see Chapter 7). And of course as the ideas being expressed in these examples stretch across multiple lines, the syntax becomes more complex – something not addressed in Cohen’s (2018) discussion of the openings of the plays. Therefore, although Crystal & Crystal (2002: xii) contend that there are ‘very few passages in Shakespeare where the combination of alien grammar and vocabulary makes the text comparable to it being in a foreign language’, this may be true in only a technical, rather than an experiential, sense (Blank 2014, 2018). This undoubtedly adds another dimension to the reception of Shakespeare by EFL learners, such as the participant in these workshops who wrote that ‘Shakespeare’s language is a foreign language in foreign language’ (5.2.2).

Faced with such a situation, the most obvious response might be simply to avoid using Shakespeare with EFL learners. And yet the student quoted above made their comment in the course of discussing how much they enjoyed tackling Shakespeare in English – which included enjoying the challenge this posed, and the satisfaction they felt at being able to rise to this challenge. Similarly, Murphy et al. (2020) do not conclude that students’ experiences of difficulty mean that Shakespeare has no place in EFL contexts. Instead, they recommend a ‘mixed pedagogical approach’ to teaching Shakespeare, which incorporates corpus-based elements alongside more common ‘textual, contextual and performance aspects’ (2020: 22). Crucially, they stress that the use of corpus-based activities in the classroom is predicated on the ‘active involvement of learners, treating language in a contextualised fashion and focussing on the language itself’ (2020: 2). It is this ‘active involvement of learners’ that is at the heart of the ‘active’ approaches discussed above, and that can also be seen running

through the literature on using Shakespeare in EFL / ESL contexts, which will be discussed in the following subsection.

### **2.2.2 Using Shakespeare in second and foreign language contexts**

Despite the challenges of and potential objections to using his work for language-teaching purposes, Shakespeare was ‘a staple in the history of teaching English’, and the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth in 2014 and 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 2016 appear to have sparked a resurgence of interest in using Shakespeare in EFL / ESL contexts (Seargeant & Chapman 2019: 22). Some of the material on using Shakespeare for language teaching is of the professional variety discussed in 2.1.1, above, including numerous pieces in the British Shakespeare Association’s *Teaching Shakespeare* magazine. In addition, in the last decade there has also been a steady stream of academic articles and chapters concerned with this topic. Winston (2012), in his introduction to an edited collection on using drama for second language (L2) learning purposes, includes Shakespeare in his argument that drama can be an effective tool across the different educational stages and in various situations, including English as an Additional Language (EAL), as well as EFL and ESL. Other scholars have targeted more specific settings. Lau (2016) and Lau & Tso (2017), for example, have addressed how to make the teaching of Shakespeare in secondary ESL settings in Hong Kong more rewarding, while Lee (2010) argues that using cultural reference points recognised by diverse groups of secondary ESL students in Malaysia can make Shakespeare more understandable. Marinaro (2020) and Carvalho & Briglia (2013) have also written positively about the use of Shakespeare in secondary EFL classes, in Italy and Brazil, respectively. In some of the above (Tso 2016 in particular), there seems to be an element of working to improve on or make the most of something that would be taught anyway. Cheng & Winston (2011, 2012), however, specifically argue for the benefits of including Shakespeare in EFL classes for Taiwanese senior high students. Recent examinations of using Shakespeare in ESL / EFL contexts in tertiary education include pieces on teaching his work in Greece (Logotheti 2020), Fiji (Anae 2013), Japan (Umeyiya 2021), Malaysia (Lin, Abdullah & Muhammad 2015) and Turkey (Öğütcü 2020), and a PhD thesis on staging Shakespearean comedies with EFL students in Sweden (Lindell 2012). More unusual examples include Maune (2015) on using Shakespeare with Japanese EFL students on a Content-based (CB) Life Science course, and Gillis (2018), who wrote about using Shakespeare productions in multiple languages in order to discuss empathy with Israeli medical students.

While digital methods are championed as a way of helping students connect with what might otherwise seem ‘distant’ works (e.g. Logotheti 2020, Öğütçü 2020, Seargeant & Chapman 2019, Tso 2016) in many other cases the emphasis is on harnessing Shakespeare’s dramatic texts and performance possibilities in the language classroom. Lin, Abdullah & Muhammad (2015), for example, claim that performing Shakespeare can help Malaysian undergraduates overcome their English anxiety, while Umeyiya (2021) has experimented with using Shakespeare to teach Japanese students English stress patterns. A more holistic argument is put forward by Cheng & Winston (2011), in an article that stresses the relevance for language-learning of several of the points later emphasised in Winston’s (2015) rationale for ‘rehearsal room’ approaches. Thus the piece argues for the potential benefits to Taiwanese EFL students of ‘learning Shakespeare through the pedagogic practices of educational drama’ (Cheng & Winston 2011: 542), and particularly the techniques of the RSC’s influential voice coach Cicely Berry. The piece presents what it calls Berry’s text-focussed but ‘intensely playful pedagogy’ (541) as a way of putting into practice Cook’s (2000) work on language play (which was discussed in 2.1.2). Through exemplifying the formal, semantic and pragmatic levels at which language play works, but which Cook (2000) suggests are often overlooked in conventional EFL teaching, Cheng & Winston (2011: 541) suggest that playful, participatory teaching of Shakespeare’s dramatic language and exciting stories can encourage ‘high levels of personal and emotional involvement’ with the language itself, and with the plays’ themes and ideas.

It is in this latter respect that Cheng & Winston (2011), as they similarly do in their closely related piece from 2012, move the argument from being one that is primarily about language, to one that also takes in potentially controversial cultural and political issues. So, while Cheng & Winston (2011: 541) are at pains to stress that what they describe as the mainstream Confucian-influenced pedagogy in Taiwan has various strengths, they also suggest that in addition to not being ‘culturally oppressive’, there is actually a ‘personally liberating’ potential in this apparently more open and playful, less hierarchical, approach to teaching and learning English. Their argument is partly based on a critique of current English-learning material in Taiwanese high schools, which they characterise as monotonous, highly sentimental and overly prescriptive. However, they more controversially suggest that ‘pedagogical resources that contain cultural capital are crucial for ESL learners who may be expected to use English in international settings where the kind of cultural knowledge shared by English-speaking communities is implicitly valued’ (Cheng & Winston 2011: 545). This

suggestion strays fairly close to the narrative, later critiqued by Olive (2015: 111), of Shakespeare as a ‘cultural catalyst’ who ‘unilaterally [confers] kudos onto individuals, corporations and other organisations that associate themselves with his person, life and works’. Cheng & Winston (2011) pre-empt this critique by linking the Bourdieusian concept of cultural capital to Bakhtin’s theory of ‘active double-voiced utterances’, in which they state that “[a]ctive” implies the significance of the language user consciously making an informed decision whereas “double” suggests the interplay of historical meanings being used for one’s own purposes’ (Cheng & Winston 2011: 544). Nevertheless, the suggestion that Anglophone cultural capital is necessary for learners of English, and that it can be attained through bringing playful approaches to Shakespeare into the language classroom, is a contentious one. It also raises the question of what the connections between culture(s) and language(s) are, and what an intercultural approach to language education might look like. These questions will be addressed next.

### **2.3 Intercultural language teaching and learning**

The connection between language and culture has attracted considerable debate in language education (Byram 1991; Kramsch 1993; Liddicoat & Scarino 2013). Byram & Fleming (1998) have noted that although a cultural dimension was integral to the post-war development of audio-lingual and audio-visual methods in Western Europe and the USA, in practice this often meant teaching languages as systems, and then separately providing information about countries where they were spoken. Today, such a separation appears less and less tenable. A view of the connections between languages, cultures and nation-states as fixed and discrete looks increasingly divorced from reality, and there is growing awareness of the sociocultural dimensions of language use and learning (Risager 2007). An intercultural perspective on language education attempts to address these complex interrelationships by making them a focus of how languages are learned and taught (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013). This does not mean abandoning what might be seen as the traditional foundations of language education: grammar and vocabulary are still taught, but with a more explicit focus on how sociocultural assumptions influence how we use language to make meaning (McConachy 2018). Accordingly, instead of merely being informed about other cultures, learners’ interpretive skills and reflexivity are harnessed and developed, as they are encouraged to (re)consider the influences of their understandings of language(s) and culture(s) (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013). In this way, language education with an intercultural orientation ‘focuses on languages and cultures as sites of interactive engagement in the act of meaning-making and

implies a transformational engagement of the learner in the act of learning' (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013: 49). Consequently, intercultural language education can be recognised as fostering a form of deep learning, which goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge, and helps learners to consider more deeply the processes involved in meaning-making, and question their understandings of language(s), culture(s) and themselves. The following subsections will discuss how Shakespeare's texts can be considered 'authentic' materials in the context of intercultural language education (2.3.1), and will then propose how, on this basis, 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches to Shakespeare can be synthesised with Liddicoat & Scarino's (2013) intercultural perspective on language teaching and learning.

### **2.3.1 Culture(s), language(s) and 'authentic' materials**

Some of the different perspectives about the relationships between language(s) and culture(s) noted in the introduction to this section can also be seen playing out in debates over what 'authenticity' means in connection with language-teaching materials. Cheng & Winston's (2011: 545) suggestion, noted earlier, that learners of English need access to 'pedagogical resources that contain cultural capital' implies that there is something about Shakespeare as a material that would be regarded as 'authentic' in Anglophone countries. But even if one agreed with the idea of cultivating 'cultural capital' in learners of English – as opposed, say, to challenging it – what would make Shakespeare 'authentic' in this respect? What does 'authenticity' actually mean when it comes to language education materials? In some cases 'authenticity' seems to mean 'not written for a language textbook' – something that is implied in a study such as Bacon & Finneman (1990), and explicitly reported by students in Gilmore (2011). In the past, the 'authenticity' of this kind of material might have relied on its having been created by and for 'native speakers' of the target language, but more recently there has been a recognition of the need for a more intercultural, less essentialist conception of who a language's 'authentic' speakers really are (Alptekin 2002). In any case, as texts written more than 400 years ago in EME, Shakespeare's works would surely not be considered examples of English as it is used globally today. However, Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) point out that, rather than thinking solely in terms of who has created the material, and for what purpose, another way of understanding authenticity is to consider what will be done with it. Indeed, they go on to argue that authenticity 'needs to be considered as a dynamic interaction between the resources, their use, and the learning that they are designed to produce' (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013: 95). They go on to give three other types of potential authenticity that are relevant to using Shakespeare in EFL / ESL contexts:



- *Authenticity of purpose*: in order to engage learners, the resource needs to have ‘intrinsic interest’ or an ‘extrinsic purpose’, which could be either a “‘real world’ purpose’ outside the classroom, or an intellectual one within it [Shakespeare’s texts could thus be seen as authentic in terms of their intrinsic interest, and their capacity for intellectual stimulation];
- *Authenticity of response or task*: ‘learners need to respond to the resource in an authentic way, thus what students are asked to do with a resource is at least as important as its origin’. However, it is important to consider how the learner is positioned in responding to the resource, and whether this persona is ‘congruent with or in conflict with the learners’ identities as learners and users of the language’ [Shakespeare workshops, involving performance, might be thought ‘inauthentic’ on this basis, but only if performance is seen as insincere – something that the participants’ engagements with Shakespeare as shown in Chapters 5-7 suggest is not the case];
- *Authenticity of conditions*: ‘the conditions for language use need to be reflective of the conditions for use of the resource in the “real world”’ – with this being understood ‘as the world of the intercultural language user, who mediates between languages and cultures as an inherent part of communication’ [as will be seen below, encouraging this kind of intercultural mediation is one of the goals of using Shakespeare in this study].

(adapted from Liddicoat & Scarino 2013: 95)

In light of these potential dimensions of authenticity, Shakespearean texts, as used in this project, could be considered authentic resources for the ways in which they are able to engage learners intellectually and affectively, specifically as *intercultural* language users.

In relation to this last point it is worth addressing the ways in which certain types of literary texts have been considered to offer particular benefits for intercultural language teaching and learning. For Pulverness (2014), a degree of estrangement is inevitable when encountering and learning (about) other languages and cultures. As a consequence, he advocates the use of literary texts as an effective way of working through this, by exploring the sense of estrangement in relation to the ‘foreign’ and challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about the ‘familiar’. Drawing on *ostranenie* (Остранение), the notion of *defamiliarization* developed by Russian formalist critics in the early twentieth century, Pulverness points out

that literature can render the familiar strange, so that we see things and our relationships to them in a new light. In intercultural terms, such literature can help learners to decentre their own perspectives when encountering a new text (or language or culture), as they explore and reflect upon the constructedness of both the ‘foreign’ and the ‘familiar’ (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013). For this purpose, Pulverness (2014: 133) recommends literary works that either directly represent contemporary ‘experiences of cultural estrangement’ – i.e. fiction that focuses on the stories of immigrants and minority groups – or genres such as fantasy and science fiction, which in some respects mimic these experiences. However, Shakespeare can also be highly effective in facilitating this kind of intercultural decentring – not least because of its beauty and strangeness. The fact that learners today – wherever they were born and whatever language(s) they speak – are engaging, in Shakespeare, with something from another time and another cultural milieu vividly illustrates that languages and cultures are dynamic and changing, not fixed and stable. But, just as importantly, experiencing the dramatic intensity of Shakespeare’s words through ‘active’ approaches’ unconventional methods can give heightened and unfamiliar situations a new immediacy and power, and help us see in a new light our assumptions about how we perceive and communicate in the world (Cheng & Winston 2011, Fleming 1998). This is one of the reasons why, in this study, I am proposing a synthesis of ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches to Shakespeare with Liddicoat & Scarino’s (2013) intercultural perspective on language teaching and learning, as will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.3.2 Synthesising intercultural language education and ‘active’ approaches to Shakespeare**

The ways in which an intercultural perspective can be applied to language teaching, as proposed by Liddicoat & Scarino (2013), share much with Winston’s (2015) aforementioned rationale for teaching Shakespeare. Both pedagogies place the learner at the centre, both stress the importance of taking a whole-person view of the learner, and both see learning as ‘not an abstract, but rather an embodied process’ (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013: 51). Indeed, Liddicoat & Scarino’s five principles for teaching and learning languages from an intercultural perspective – *active construction*, *making connections*, *social interaction*, *reflection* and *responsibility* – converge in multiple ways with the general principles of ‘active’ approaches to Shakespeare:

- *Active construction*: This principle refers to how learners make sense of languages and cultures they are encountering, through ‘purposeful, active engagement in interpreting and creating meaning in interaction with others’, in a process of ‘continuous development as thinking, feeling, changing intercultural beings’ (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013: 57). This echoes Winston’s (2015) emphasis on learning through experience, whereby, rather than simply receiving information, learners actively make meaning through their own exploration of texts and situations.
- *Making connections*: Liddicoat & Scarino (2013: 57) point out that learners do not learn (about) languages and cultures in isolation. They therefore need ‘to connect the new to what is already known’, both *intraculturally*, considering their own linguistic and cultural positionings, and *interculturally*, engaging beyond them. Again, this resonates with Winston’s (2015) discussion of learning through experience, in which active meaning-making incorporates, but goes beyond, what learners already know.
- *Social interaction*: This principle recognises that ‘learning is a fundamentally interactive act and that interaction with others is the fundamental purpose of language use’ (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013: 57). Intercultural language education needs to offer opportunities for using and exploring language, and negotiating understandings, in interaction with others, echoing Winston’s (2015) emphasis on learning together.
- *Reflection*: Being centred on active interpretation, reflection is a key principle for intercultural language education. Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) emphasise that this reflection has both cognitive and affective dimensions. Encountering ‘other’ people, languages or cultures can trigger emotional responses – positive and negative – that learners must recognise, before reflecting upon why they have reacted in a particular way. Emotional responses are also integral to learning through play in Winston’s (2015) rationale, as well as to how educational encounters become significant experiences, distinct from the unreflective character of everyday life.
- *Responsibility*: Just as a moral dimension is identifiable in ‘active’ approaches to Shakespeare that view the company or ensemble as modelling a way of being in society, intercultural language education is seen as helping to model an ethical way of ‘being in diversity’ (Liddicoat & Scarino 2010, 2013). In keeping with its learner-centred principles, this places a responsibility on learners to develop and act with intercultural sensitivity and understanding well beyond the classroom.

These five principles are put into practice through a series of interconnected processes: *noticing, comparing, reflecting* and *interacting* (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013). Elements of these will be apparent in the exercises featured in this project's workshops, but a key point to reiterate here is the role that interpretation plays in this view of intercultural language education, and of communication more widely (Crutchfield & Schewe 2017). Drawing on the work of Wittgenstein (1953), Liddicoat & Scarino (2013: 48) argue that learning and communication are language games that fundamentally rely on interpretation, and in which 'language is integrated with action in order to achieve local aims.' This emphasis on making, interpreting and negotiating meaning as being grounded in the social world finds another expression in McConachy's (2018) application of an intercultural perspective to the exploration of pragmatics in foreign language education. He stresses that a key part of a learner's development of an intercultural perspective on language use is their 'ability to view language use as a form of social action and reflect on the ways in which meanings and impressions are constructed and negotiated among speakers' (2018: 57). One method McConachy proposes for achieving this is an activity he calls contextual analysis, which involves learners collaboratively analysing constructed conversational dialogues, considering the speakers' linguistic choices, potential sociocultural influences on these choices, and the consequences of these choices in their interactional context. As such, this activity exemplifies Liddicoat & Scarino's (2013) practices for intercultural learning – noticing, comparing, reflecting and interacting – and their five principles for teaching and learning languages from an intercultural perspective. Consequently, it also exemplifies how intercultural language education can involve a form of deep learning that accommodates identities and understandings beyond the classroom, as learners actively engage in rich, multi-layered processes of meaning-making. In work on the uses of performance-based approaches in intercultural education, this learner-centred and deeply interpretive perspective is further enhanced through an emphasis on active physical and affective engagement (Braüer 2002, Crutchfield & Schewe 2017, Fleming 1998).

However, as the theatrical dialogues of Shakespeare's dramas are very different from, for example, those of McConachy's (2018) contextual analysis activities, it is important to address how Shakespeare is suited to intercultural language education. So, as discussed above, while Shakespeare is certainly not an example of everyday, contemporary language use, active approaches to Shakespeare for intercultural language education harness and respond to particular qualities of Shakespeare's texts in interactional, intercultural ways.

Thus, while Shakespeare's works are fictional and were composed at a historical distance, the integration of language and local action is fundamental to their use in active approaches. As Kao & O'Neill (1998: 4) have written in their influential work on process drama and L2 learning:

Drama does things with words. It introduces language as an essential and authentic method of communication. Drama sustains interactions between students within the target language, creating a world of social roles and relations in which the learner is an active participant.

Therefore, although Shakespeare's dramatic texts involve heightened situations that might be assumed to be historically and culturally remote, through processes of embodied enactment and interpretation learners explore many of the same elements they would in an activity such as contextual analysis. Specifically, the activities illustrated in Chapters 6-7 of this thesis involved active exploration of linguistic choices (of Shakespeare and the characters/speakers), potential sociocultural influences on these choices (in terms of both the dramatic context within the play, and the context in which it was written), and the consequences of these choices (for the characters, performers and spectators).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has been concerned with 'literature' in several senses. Most obviously, it has reviewed the relevant literature on Shakespeare pedagogy and intercultural language education, and especially 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches to Shakespeare, and Liddicoat & Scarino's (2013) intercultural perspective on language teaching and learning that have both proved influential on the project's workshops. In the process it has addressed questions about what can and should be done with (dramatic) literature such as Shakespeare in different educational contexts, arguing that the obligations of someone using Shakespeare in a drama workshop or language-learning context are quite different from those of someone engaged in literary/historical study. On a related note it has also examined how literature – including dramatic literature written more than 400 years ago – could still be considered an 'authentic' resource for intercultural language learning today. The chapter's aim has, therefore, been to set the stage for what comes in the rest of this thesis, by introducing some concepts that have informed my pedagogical approach, and that will be returned to when these workshops and other educational interactions are analysed and discussed. Before that, however, the next chapter will discuss the context of this project, by not only introducing the

setting and participants involved in the teaching and research, but also investigating the very notion of 'context' from an ethnomethodological perspective, as something that is talked into being (Seedhouse 2004).

### Chapter 3: Context – ‘The circumstance consider’d’

ORLANDO: Are you native of this place?

ROSALIND: As the coney that you see dwell where she is kindled.

(*As You Like It*, 3.2, 1428-1429)

BLUNT: The circumstance consider’d, good my lord,  
Whate’er Lord Harry Percy then had said  
To such a person and in such a place,  
At such a time, with all the rest retold,  
May reasonably die and never rise  
To do him wrong or any way impeach  
What then he said, so he unsay it now.

(*1 Henry IV*, 1.3, 395-401)

What is it necessary to know in order to understand what is happening in an educational setting? Put another way, how does a researcher decide which elements of context are relevant, and which are not? With regards to the current project, the most obvious place to start would seem to be to describe the site where I did my teaching and research. However, this site is not simply the place where I conducted this project. It is a place where I lived and worked for more than a decade; a place in which it was – and still is – tempting to think of myself as, if not quite ‘native’, then at least an ‘insider’. Consequently, it was also tempting to present this chapter as a catalogue of contextual information that insiders such as myself are privy to, but that general readers would not be. However, the above exchange from *AYLI* is intended as a cautionary reminder: Rosalind is *not* an insider, but rather is masquerading as one while disguised as a young man. The extent to which I was ever considered, or considered myself to be, an insider in my research context was always relative, and locally accomplished – over years as I worked there, and from moment to moment as that status was

invoked, negotiated and sometimes rejected. Similarly, whatever ‘insider knowledge’ I have cannot possibly be complete, and my understanding of it could easily differ significantly from that of other ‘insiders’.

Such concerns mean that deciding what contextual information is necessary and relevant in a chapter such as this is extremely difficult. Indeed, if part of my concern is to show how other ‘insiders’ – the participants themselves – understand the context, then, as Seedhouse (2004: 3) argues:

this cannot be achieved by analysts etically deciding which aspects of context *they* think are relevant, particularly as there are an infinite number of potentially relevant contextual details which could be invoked.

In response to this problem, ethnomethodology, the overarching perspective informing this project, sees ‘context’ not as innumerable background details that may or may not be relevant to an interaction, but rather as those details that are actually present, and which show context to be ‘both a project and a product of the participants’ actions’ (Heritage 1997: 164). Crucial here is the ethnomethodological principle of *indexicality*, which will be explained more fully in the next chapter. Indexicality concerns itself with how the intelligibility of actions (including talk) is dependent ‘on the local circumstances in which they are [produced] and/or those to which they apply’ (Ten Have 2004: 21). The example that opens this chapter, in which Sir Walter Blunt defends the earlier actions of the brash Lord Percy (Hotspur), nicely illustrates this. In arguing that Percy should not be criticised for what he had said earlier in a particular situation, ‘[t]o such a person and in such a place, [a]t such a time’, Blunt actually highlights the *haecceity*, or ‘just thisness’ of talk: that it is produced specifically in and for the particular context in which it occurs. So, rather than letting whatever is said in the moment ‘reasonably die and never rise’, this is the precisely the evidence that the ethnomethodological approach of Conversation Analysis (CA) looks for: answers to the question ‘why that, now?’ (Schegloff & Sacks 1973), in the form of examples of interactants observably orienting to what *they understand* to be the context, and designing their talk-in-interaction to reflect this understanding. It is in this way that, from an ethnomethodological perspective, interactants actually ‘talk a context into being’ (Seedhouse 2004: 42).

What follows in this chapter, then, is not a catalogue of background information that should be seen as explaining or having caused what is discussed in the analysis and discussion chapters. Instead, it is ‘insider’ information in the sense that it gives details of how I designed



and ran a series of Shakespeare workshops at a particular time, in a particular place, and with a particular group of people, based on my understandings of various aspects of that context, however imperfect some of them may have been. Specifically, I will give details of decisions relating to the location (and institution) where the workshops were conducted (3.1), the participating students (3.2), and, finally, the design of the workshops (3.3). These details have been provided with the intention of increasing the transparency and transferability of my project – in the former case, by enabling readers to see how the examples and episodes discussed in detail later relate to the workshops as a whole. In the latter case, I hope to give educational practitioners sufficient details about how I designed these workshops for this specific setting, to make it easier for them to experiment with and adapt some of the ideas and activities for use in the contexts in which they might be considered ‘insiders’.

### **3.1 Introduction to Lingnan Foreign Studies University (LNFSU)**

The Shakespeare workshops which form the basis of this case study were conducted at a university in southern China, which will be referred to using the pseudonym Lingnan Foreign Studies University / 岭南外国语大学, abbreviated to LNFSU in English and 岭外<sup>2</sup> (*lǐngwài*) in Mandarin. LNFSU is a large public university, spread over multiple campuses, with over 25,000 undergraduates, 3000 postgraduates and approximately 2000 international students. The original campus, where this study was conducted, is located on the outskirts of one of southern China’s largest cities, with good transport links to its major commercial areas. However, as almost all of the students live on-site in dormitories, they tend to stay on campus during term unless their family home is nearby. As its name suggests, LNFSU specialises in teaching and researching foreign languages and cultures, having been established as a language institute in the early 1960s to help meet China’s increasing need for personnel with the language and (inter)cultural skills to engage in international exchange and trade. Today it is recognised as being in the top ten of such universities in China. More than 20 foreign languages are taught at LNFSU, including Arabic, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Thai and Vietnamese in the Faculty of Asian Languages, and French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish in the Faculty of European Languages. English predominates, however, with several faculties and schools specialising in English for

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<sup>2</sup> This abbreviation of this pseudonym is a deliberate (if not necessarily subtle) play on words, as ‘岭外’ is homophonous with ‘另外’, which as an adverb or conjunction means ‘besides’ / ‘in addition to’, and ‘different’ / ‘other’ as a pronoun before a noun.

particular career paths (e.g. business, education, translation), in addition to the Faculty of English (FoE), where I worked for almost 13 years, and where this project was conducted.

This faculty is one of the largest at LNFSU, with over 1000 undergraduates and almost 200 postgraduates. While all undergraduates work towards a degree in English, they major in one of the specialisms offered by the FoE's six departments: Cultural and Communication Studies, Information Studies, Linguistics, Literature, Tourism, and Translation and Interpreting. Running through many of the classes taught in the FoE is a strong tradition of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). All undergraduate-level language skills classes, and most content classes, are (officially) taught in English, although many teachers also supplement this with varying amounts of Mandarin. (Strikingly, students and colleagues have regularly told me anecdotally that classes at postgraduate level involve more Mandarin and less student participation, due to the greater perceived difficulty of the material.) The FoE has around 90 full-time members of teaching staff, many of whom have studied and/or worked abroad at some point. In most years, the faculty also has between five and eight *wàijiào* (外教), or foreign teachers. These are mostly employed to teach English-language skills and cultural classes, although in recent years there has been a drive to hire experienced overseas academics to boost the FoE's research ranking. In my case, while I began by teaching mostly language courses, I was quickly moved into the Department of Literature (DoL) by a previous department head who recognised my background in English Literature. After this, I taught various literature and drama classes, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, launched a practical Drama Workshop course, and joined the team responsible for the British Literature course. This and the related course on American Literature were notable for being taught to all third-year students (not just Literature majors), with the result that all of the FoE's students continued to have some formal exposure to Anglophone literature, even if they were pursuing an unrelated degree.

### **3.1.1 Shakespeare at LNFSU**

Shakespeare featured (briefly) on a number of the DoL's courses, including the faculty-wide British Literature course. Aside from the notable exception of one postgraduate course entirely on Shakespeare, in most cases this was done through the use of selected extracts of plays, or individual poems. Typically, these were presented in a course textbook, together with a brief biographical / historical introduction, and selected questions to aid comprehension and prompt discussion (see Appendix 1 for an example, featuring the section

on 'Sonnet 73' from a second-year textbook). On the British Literature course, one week was devoted to *Hamlet*, primarily through a close reading of the 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy. This formed the first week of a section on the 'English Renaissance', and was followed by a week on Renaissance poetry, which featured 'Sonnet 18'. A small number of teachers would try to squeeze the study of longer sections from *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Merchant of Venice* into their classes for this course, but the view was often expressed that time and curriculum restraints made this difficult. However, despite the difficulties of including more than a cursory engagement with Shakespeare's works in their undergraduate teaching, my perception was that there was a consensus among the DoL's teachers that doing at the very least one or two extracts or poems by Shakespeare was a 'must' for students of English literature. Because of this, I was curious to see if and why the participating students held a similar view – something that is discussed at length in Chapter 5.

While a small number of the DoL's teachers would occasionally ask students to perform selected scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Merchant of Venice*, my impression over the years that I worked at LNFSU was that students and teachers in the FoE overwhelmingly treated Shakespeare as a text to be read, and not one to be performed. In keeping with this, classes on Shakespeare were typically taught from the front, with the students seated, primarily through teacher-led close reading, paraphrasing and discussion activities. However, in contrast to the almost total absence of performance in classes on Shakespeare and indeed other dramatic literature, the FoE as a whole has a longstanding tradition of extracurricular Shakespeare. Since the late 1990s, it has held an annual Drama Competition, which sees the entire third year divided into teams, which then adapt and stage abridged versions of English-language plays. The competition, started by a former dean, was first launched as a Shakespeare competition, and while the scope has broadened in recent years, Shakespeare plays are still regularly chosen. In 2014 I successfully pushed for that year's Drama Contest to be dedicated to Shakespeare plays once again to mark the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, and in 2016, the FoE's newly created Drama Society marked the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death by writing and performing an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Finally, a British touring theatre group that specialises in productions for international audiences generally visits the campus once a year with a production of a Shakespeare play (most recently *Twelfth Night* and *Romeo and Juliet*, the latter of which was performed during the first phase of my workshops). Both the FoE's Drama Contest and the visiting Shakespeare productions are major events on campus, which are staged in the university's large theatre and are typically attended by

upwards of 700 students and members of staff. As a result, I decided that researching extracurricular Shakespeare in this context was a rich and viable topic – first, because I knew there would be interest from students, and second, because this avoided the resistance I knew there would be (for reasons of time and curricular/assessment restraints) if I tried to introduce ‘active’ approaches in timetabled, credit-bearing courses.

### **3.1.2 Logistical considerations for Shakespeare workshops at LNFSU**

Having decided that two hours was the right length for the workshops (as discussed later in this chapter), one of the main challenges was finding a time when as many students as possible would be able to attend, and when the right kind of room would be available. It quickly became obvious that evening was the most practical choice, as the students’ heavy timetables would make it extremely difficult to find a two-hour period during the day when enough people could attend. Because almost all of the students were living on campus, attending evening sessions was not a problem, and for some seemed preferable – especially for the workshops held in April and May, when it was often very hot during the day. The other main reason for choosing evening sessions had to do with securing the right kind of room. Throughout my time working at LNFSU, and visiting other Chinese universities, location was probably the biggest recurring challenge I faced when trying to conduct drama workshops. LNFSU, like many Chinese universities, has several large auditoria, but no black box theatre or drama studio, and so workshops needed to be held in regular classrooms. Booking the right kind of classroom was easier in the evening when there were fewer classes being held, and when there was less chance of other students and teachers complaining about the ‘noise’ produced during certain drama activities – an added concern when there was often already scepticism about activities that were seen as merely ‘playing around’. Finally, holding the workshops at night also made it easier to find a location in which there were no classes immediately before or afterwards, allowing more time in which to prepare the room.

At LNFSU, as at many Chinese universities, certain pedagogical assumptions are built into the architecture of the classrooms. Many have fixed furniture, with the tables and seats attached to the floor in long rows facing forwards, making classes that do not involve teaching from the front, to students who remain seated and static, more difficult. It was therefore vital that I was able to book a classroom for the workshops that had moveable furniture, and was large enough to accommodate up to 30 students, moving freely.

Fortunately, through the contacts I had established while working at LNFSU, I was given access to such a classroom under the direct control of the FoE (shown in Figure 3.1 below).

**Figure 3.1 Photograph of classroom used for workshops, showing lectern (A), fan (B) and air-conditioning vent (C)**



However, even in a classroom such as this, in which the furniture could be moved, a certain model of teaching is still built into the design of the classroom in various ways. One example is a feature that is common to almost all of LNFSU's rooms: a metal lectern, equipped with a computer and microphone, which is fixed to the floor at the front, next to the blackboard and projector screen (A in Figure 3.1). Another example is also visible just above the lectern: a wall-mounted fan (B). This is fixed to the wall at an angle that provides maximum airflow when the teacher is seated at the lectern, but has little or no effect when the teacher is standing or moving around. Considering that the temperature in the part of China in which LNFSU is located ranges between the high 20s and mid 30s Centigrade for much of the year, this is not a minor detail, and it must be acknowledged that drama workshops in these conditions are often hot and exhausting (which can further dissuade sceptics from this kind of approach). It should be noted that the classroom I was given access to was particularly well-equipped in having working air-conditioning (a vent, labelled C, is visible in Figure 3.1). However, this was not necessary in November and December when the temperature was lower (several students in Figures 3.1, 3.3 and 3.4 can be seen wearing coats), and even when it was hotter in April and May, many students complained that the air-conditioning would

make the room too cold. As a result, for me it was necessary to accept that teaching this kind of workshop at LNFSU would often be a very sweaty business.

In classrooms like this, the moveable desks are typically arranged in rows, or in a large horseshoe arrangement. However, for language classes more associated with the CLT approach popular within the FoE, students are also used to sitting on nested tables. This configuration was used in Workshops 4 and 12, which featured desk-based activities (see Figure 3.2). However, in the majority of the workshops the desks were stacked at the back and sides of the room, with the chairs arranged in a large semi-circle (see Figure 3.3). Typically, my introductory remarks would be made with the students seated in this arrangement, before they were asked to form a circle or move around the room for warmup exercises, scene work and the like (e.g. Figures 3.1 and 3.4).

**Figure 3.2 Classroom arranged in nested tables to facilitate group discussion**



**Figure 3.3. Classroom arranged in horseshoe layout before a workshop**





**Figure 3.4 Students move into the centre of a room for script work in a circle**



This arrangement obviously increased the time needed to prepare the classroom before each workshop, and re-set it afterwards, which as noted above can increase the difficulty of finding the right room at the right time. However, as the students became used to this way of working they would often start to help without being asked, and I was rarely left to set and re-set the classroom by myself. Another advantage of moving the furniture and clearing the space before each workshop was that it sent a signal that we were going to be doing something ‘different’, and it was striking that a number of students expressed disappointment when they arrived at Workshop 4 and discovered the more familiar nested table layout.

### **3.2 Participants and recruitment procedures**

The first thing to stress about the students who participated in this study is that I have never wanted to treat them as collections of discrete variables to be chosen between, but as ‘social agents’ who invoke and negotiate understandings of themselves and how they would like to be, and be seen (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008: 139). Thus, while this section does include some broad demographic descriptions in the course of explaining who answered the call for voluntary attendees, these descriptions are not presented as causal or explanatory. Equally, what follows strives to avoid referring to these, or any, students as part of a homogeneous group of ‘Chinese students’ – a habit that a lot of research produced in Anglophone contexts falls into (Dervin 2011). Instead I have tried to preserve the individuality and agency of the participating students wherever possible, both in my approach to pseudonymisation (as described in 3.2.3), and in the ways I have attempted to let the students’ words and actions speak for themselves in the data presented in the analysis and discussion chapters.

#### **3.2.1 Recruitment of participants**

While the participants should not be viewed as a sample in any probabilistic or representative sense, the strategy used to recruit them was a form of what might be called volunteer sampling, in which participants selected themselves for inclusion by responding to a flyer advertising the workshops (see Appendix 2). This was not done because gaining access or identifying potential participants was difficult (Noy 2008), but because it was the most appropriate and ethical way to recruit participants for extracurricular sessions. Voluntary self-selection is of course how students get involved in extracurricular activities, and how I had previously run a number of Shakespeare workshops at LNFSU. Equally, the concerns that are sometimes raised about voluntary self-selection – for example that ‘volunteers may have a range of different [and potentially ulterior] motives for volunteering’ (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011: 160), or that, by virtue of self-selecting, volunteers might be ‘unrepresentatively’ keen – were not problems here, as they are inherent in the nature of extracurricular activities. Relying on volunteers also seemed a more ethical approach in this case. With each workshop lasting for two hours and no course credits or certification on offer, I did not want students to feel compelled to attend – something I had regularly seen happen with meetings and talks by visiting speakers while I was working at LNFSU. Being a former member of staff who had arranged the workshops by myself, rather than a visitor being hosted by the FoE, made it easier for me to avoid colleagues ‘helping’ by encouraging or even instructing students to attend. I also decided not to make contributing written feedback or attending interviews a condition of attending the workshops, and while there were 10 students who attended at least one first phase workshop without submitting any feedback, a far larger number of students completed one or several pieces. No students turned down requests for interviews.

To begin with, I designed flyers advertising the workshops in both Chinese and English (see Appendix 2). These referred to the first phase, in November and December 2017, as ‘Exploring Shakespeare’, or ‘探索莎士比亚’ (*tànsuǒ shāshìbǐyǎ*), and offered students ‘[a]n opportunity to find [their] own sense of Shakespeare’. The active, participatory nature of the workshops was made clear through the emphasis that attending would involve ‘actually *doing* some Shakespeare’. However, a note was added at the end to try to reduce any anxiety that the idea of performance might provoke, which stressed that all that was necessary was ‘a sense of curiosity, and in interest in undertaking a shared exploration of what doing Shakespeare’ might mean to them – not any acting or Shakespeare experience. My email address was provided for students who wanted to sign up or ask for more information. Some



hard copies of the flyers were put up in the FoE, but in the main recruitment happened online, with digital copies of both flyers being sent to selected colleagues and students by email and the WeChat social media platform. Recruitment for the second phase, which I called ‘Intercultural Shakespeare’, or ‘跨文化的莎士比亚’ (*kuàwénhuà de shāshìbǐyǎ*), proceeded in a similar manner, with me emailing all of the students who had attended phase one, and asking them to pass the information on.

In this sense, the volunteering process shared elements of what is often referred to as ‘snowball sampling’, which ‘relies on and partakes in the dynamics of natural and organic social networks’ (Noy 2008: 329). This approach resulted in the recruitment of students who I would have been unlikely to reach directly through my own efforts. For example, Xihong, a fourth-year student who I had done a lot of Shakespeare with previously, proved to be very good at encouraging students I didn’t know to attend the workshops. Two of these from outside the FoE – Daniel, from the Faculty of English Education, and Niki, who was studying on a joint Japanese and Korean programme – became regular attendees and key interviewees. It is unlikely that they would have attended the workshops had it not been for Xihong, who knew Daniel through the university’s Wǔshù (武术/ Chinese Martial Arts) Association, and met Niki while working as an interpreter at a trade fair. One thing that this underlined was that it was not only Literature majors, or even students doing English degrees in the FoE, who were interested in Shakespeare workshops – another reason for making them extracurricular and thus more accessible to such students.

By deliberately asking colleagues and students who I felt would be good at passing the message on to potential participants, the aim was to attract a suitable number of suitably interested students. The number of attendees I was aiming for was determined not by considerations of sample size (as this was not a sample), but rather due to how many participants would work best in the workshops. Based on previous experience, I initially capped numbers at 25 per session, to allow students the space to move in the workshop room, and to ensure that the activities were manageable from my point of view. Students were asked to confirm attendance (and later absence) by email, so that I had an idea of numbers. For the first two workshops it was necessary to operate a reserve list, as many students who had not emailed turned up at the last minute, in addition to the 25 who had confirmed their places. As time went by some students missed certain workshops or dropped out entirely, but they were

largely replaced by new participants who had heard about the workshops and wanted to attend.

### **3.2.2 Summary of participants**

In each of the two phases, 36 students attended at least one workshop. Within this number, 14 students attended workshops during both phases, bringing the total number of different students who attended a least one workshop was 58. Having previously got the impression that many postgraduates in the FoE perceived more ‘active’ approaches to Shakespeare as being less academic or less relevant to them, I fully expected almost all attendees to be undergraduates. This ended up being the case, with only five of the 58 students being postgraduates (four doing a Masters or PhD in Literature, and one an MA in Linguistics). However, four of these – Benny, Edward, Jacky and June – became frequent, and very keen, attendees. As mentioned above, a small number of students from outside the faculty had also attended. This was potentially awkward, as Vice Dean Wang Min and some members of the FoE’s administrative team had urged me to advertise the workshops within the FoE only, due, they said, to increased political sensitivities at the university surrounding ‘unapproved’ visits from foreign teachers. However, with the workshops being extracurricular and purely voluntary, I felt uncomfortable turning away students who had expressed a desire and made an effort to attend. Ultimately I decided that this would not be a problem as long as I was not actively promoting the workshops beyond the FoE, and I also knew, as the administrators did, that any criticism would fall on me rather than them, because the ‘unofficial’ nature of the workshops gave them plausible deniability. This decision turned out well in the end because, as mentioned above, two of these non-FoE students actually made some of the most valuable contributions to the project.

Two striking facts about the makeup of the attendees should be noted. First, while 10 fourth-year students attended several of the phase one workshops, only two attended more than one workshop in the second phase, as by April/May they were nearing the end of their degrees and some were already working. In contrast, comparatively few first and second years attended during the first phase. This did not particularly surprise me, as these were students who would have been new or not even started at LNFSU by the time I had left (because of this, almost all of my initial email and WeChat messages to students went to third and fourth years, with whom I was already acquainted). The second striking detail about the composition of the participants is how skewed it was in terms of gender: out of the 58

individual students who attended at least one workshop, 51 were female. This gender balance (87.9% female and only 12.1% male) is the inverse of the national situation in China, where in 2018 the population sex ratio (female/male) stood at 0.94 (World Economic Forum 2018). However, it *is* reflective of the situation in the FoE in general and the DoL in particular, where female staff and students massively outnumber their male counterparts. This is also something that can be seen nationwide, with a majority of female students choosing humanities subjects for their undergraduate degrees, and more than 70% of literature majors at Beijing universities, for example, being female (Xu 2018). This gendering of the teaching and learning of English literature was very pronounced at LNFSU, but something I had become accustomed to while working there. In many respects then I did not consciously design the workshops any differently to those I had previously taught, although when teaching *Measure for Measure* I was acutely aware that sexism and sexual harassment were very real concerns for LNFSU's female students, at a time when there was increasing state-sanctioned pushback against women's rights in China (Hong Fincher 2014, 2018).

Finally, it is important to provide some details about the participants' linguistic resources, and how they went far beyond simply being able to speak Mandarin and English. With almost all of the participants majoring in some form of English degree, it is unsurprising that their levels of spoken and written communication in English were high enough to allow the workshops, feedback and interviews to be carried out smoothly in that language. Of the non-FoE students, Daniel had noticeably weaker spoken English, which can be related to the fact that the Faculty of English Education has lower English entry scores than the FoE (despite the fact that it is nominally dedicated to training English language teachers). Niki, in contrast, had extremely good English, although she was studying Japanese and Korean. It should be noted that this kind of multilingualism is fairly common at LNFSU, as a foreign languages university, and English majors in the FoE are required to study a second foreign language (the most popular choices being French, Japanese and Spanish). In addition, because many of LNFSU's students are drawn from provinces in the far south and southeast of China, quite a few of my participants were able to speak Cantonese as well as Mandarin, and occasionally Hakka or other Chinese languages and dialects as well. It was, therefore, not uncommon for participants to be able to speak at least a small amount of two or even three languages *in addition* to Mandarin and English. In keeping with this project's intercultural perspective on language education (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013) I tried to encourage the use of these linguistic resources whenever appropriate, as will be seen in Chapter 7, for example. One workshop

even featured students reading translations of Shakespearean sonnets not only in Mandarin and Cantonese, but also in Japanese and Vietnamese. The connections between language use and identity, which are touched upon in the next section, also came through clearly in Workshop 2, when Niki (the Japanese and Korean joint major), introduced herself to the rest of the group in Japanese, which a number of the other students were able to understand and respond to.

### **3.2.3 Pseudonymisation and the treatment of names**

Due to my professional and publicly recorded connection with the university described here as LNFSU, it is impossible to guarantee that the location in which this research was conducted will remain completely anonymous. I have, therefore, instead tried to strive for the non-traceability of the participants (Punch & Oancea 2014), through avoiding the use of their real names, and any direct mention of locational terms that could automatically be used to search for them online. The conventional way of dealing with this is for the real names of participants and institutions to be replaced with pseudonyms (Simons 2009). However, despite its ubiquity, this practice – and especially the procedures through which pseudonyms are actually assigned – has received surprisingly little scholarly attention (Lahman et al. 2016). This is problematic in numerous ways, not just because the mere fact of pseudonymisation is insufficient to guarantee anonymity, but due also to the consequences that replacing participants' real names with ones chosen for research purposes can have for the integrity of a study's data. Walford (2005), for example, has argued that omitting real names and other information that could potentially identify participants means omitting precisely the sort of rich detail that is crucial for understanding educational settings in their depth and complexity, and Howe & Moses (1999) have argued that such omissions risk making 'thick' descriptions 'thin'. This is a particularly thorny issue when it comes to names, which are not only frequently used by people as the basis of assumptions and judgements (whether correct or not) about the identities and characteristics of others (Lahman et al. 2015), but which can also have important personal and cultural meanings for individuals themselves (Allen & Wiles 2016). A further complicating fact for this study was that many of the participants introduced themselves with, and asked to be referred to by, an 'English' name – a common practice amongst Chinese learners of English (Sercombe, Young, Dong & Lin 2014).

As a result of these factors, assigning pseudonyms to the participants risked omitting or obscuring potentially important contextual details, and even engaging in what might be seen as an act of paternalistic erasure of individual and cultural identities (Allen & Wiles 2016). Having come to the conclusion that pseudonymisation was an imperfect but necessary choice in ethical terms, I attempted to take as sensitive and nuanced an approach to the choice and use of pseudonyms as possible. Therefore, I attempted to reflect three elements of the participants' original names in the pseudonyms chosen to replace them:

- *Phonological characteristics*: In all cases, the number of syllables / characters contained in the original name has been reflected in the pseudonym. When possible, the new names also reflect other elements of the sound of the original name (e.g. reduplication). This was done in order to reflect aspects of the sound of the name that could be important when it is being produced in interaction (Hepburn & Bolden 2017).
- *Semantic characteristics*: While it was not always practical (or indeed possible) to pick pseudonyms that closely resembled the meanings associated with the original name, when the latter featured particularly pronounced associations an attempt was made to reflect this. This was most common in the case of names that are particularly associated with a specific gender (e.g. given names with feminine associations such as 晓丹/Xiǎodān and 美凤/Měifèng), but could also be used with names associated with particular cultural ideas or eras (e.g. the given name 建国/Jiànguó, which translates as 'building the country').
- *Participants' choices and contexts of usage*: While I had access to all of the participating students' full names in Chinese, many of them asked to be referred to by other names, including Chinese nicknames, English names and names reflecting other languages and cultures. When writing in English, some of the Cantonese-speaking students also chose to write their family names in romanisations that reflected their pronunciation in Cantonese rather than Pinyin, which is a romanisation of Mandarin (e.g. they wrote 'Chan' instead of 'Chen'). In the workshops and interviews, I referred to the students using the names they asked to be referred to by – whether they were English, Chinese or something else. Wherever possible I have also tried to select pseudonyms that reflect these choices, and the ways in which the participants were sometimes referred to by themselves or others with different names in different

contexts (e.g. a student using their Chinese name with their classmates, but an English name when communicating with me, as their non-Chinese teacher).

In the next chapter, section 4.5.1 on transcribing data contains more details about how and why Mandarin and Cantonese have been represented in particular ways in the transcripts and excerpts, but in many cases the shifting patterns of usage related to complex issues of individual identity, group membership and intercultural pragmatics. Some of these issues were directly explored in an activity in the second workshop ('What's in a name?') and also came up throughout many of the other workshops, interviews and pieces of written feedback.

### **3.3 Workshop design**

Having introduced the location in which the workshops took place and the students who participated in them, this chapter will conclude with details about the workshops themselves. On the basis of previous workshops I had run I decided that two hours per session offered the ideal balance between covering varied materials and activities, without placing too great a burden on the participants. This was especially important, because as this was to be an ongoing series of extracurricular workshops rather than a one-off event, I wanted to make it easier for as many participants as possible to attend regularly. I initially planned to run sixteen workshops, split into two phases of eight sessions. However, upon arriving at LNFSU to conduct the first phase, I discovered that one of the workshops would clash with a visiting production of *Romeo and Juliet*. With most of the students having full timetables and many other commitments it proved difficult to find another suitable timeslot, and so the first phase was cut to seven workshops. Similarly, student commitments led to one of the phase two workshops also being cancelled, resulting in the final schedule being fourteen workshops, split into two phases of seven.

#### **3.3.1 Overview of the workshops**

Appendix 3 gives an overview of the entire series, including a summary of each workshop. As extracurricular sessions at which attendance was voluntary, it seemed inappropriate to ask the students to read large quantities of text before or after the sessions. In addition, inconsistent attendance – always more likely with extracurricular sessions – meant that trying to cover plays in their entirety across multiple workshops would be difficult. As a result, I decided instead to focus primarily on short scenes and extracts from Shakespeare's plays, covering a range of comedies (e.g. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Much Ado About Nothing*), and tragedies (e.g. *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet*), as well as one history play

(*Richard III*). This allowed me to offer the students greater variety, including scenes and extracts from plays with which they would be less familiar (e.g. *The Comedy of Errors*) alongside plays such as *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Some plays were chosen for their specific topical or thematic relevance, such as the intercultural encounters of *The Tempest*, the discrimination found in *Othello*, and the sexual abuse in *Measure for Measure*, which was also discussed in terms of how we should respond to a problematic cultural product from one context, from our very different cultural standpoint(s) (see Chapter 7). I decided that, due to their length, Shakespeare's Sonnets would also fit comfortably into individual workshops, and picked 'Sonnet 18' ('Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?') and 'Sonnet 116' ('Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments') as well-known examples that could be productively explored using techniques that would defamiliarise the cultural assumptions about love and romance that are typically associated with them. In addition to selections from the above plays and poems, extracts from two non-Shakespearean plays were also included, to locate Shakespeare within the wider theatrical and sociocultural context of early modern London. The first of these was John Lyly's *The Woman in the Moon*, the Prologue of which was introduced in Workshop 9 as an alternative example of an equally evocative but very different style of early modern dramatic writing, which in turn appears to have influenced Shakespeare's own writing, and specifically the Epilogue to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Scragg 2011). Also chosen was John Fletcher's *The Island Princess*. As well as reworking elements of *The Tempest* (McManus 2012), this is a fascinating intercultural drama in its own right, appropriating English, French and Spanish sources (Nocentelli 2010) to tell the story of encounters between the residents of the Spice Islands of what is now Indonesia with merchants and colonisers from Portugal. As such it became the ideal text for exploring interculturality in Workshop 11, through a focus on translation as intercultural mediation (Liddicoat 2016).

### **3.3.2 Example lesson plan**

Without the space here to describe or explain all of the techniques and activities listed in Appendix 3, the outline of one session is provided in Appendix 4, to show the kinds of considerations that went into planning and running the individual workshops. Workshop 3 (1000 Hamlets in 120 minutes) has been chosen for this illustrative purpose for a number of reasons:

i) Content / material: Workshop 3 took the most famous of Shakespeare's soliloquies (*Hamlet's* 'To be, or not to be'), which is covered in the FoE's British Literature course, and explored it in a number of different ways. These included activities that I have used with previous groups of students during my own teaching of the British Literature course (i.e. the video-based Step 3), as well as activities and techniques that I have previously used in extracurricular workshops at LNFSU and other Chinese universities (i.e. Steps 5, 6 and 7). These activities were, therefore, relatively tried and tested in my own practice, as well as being quite different from the ways in which this soliloquy is typically taught in the FoE (although one of my colleagues has revealed in conversation that she now uses the activity described in Step 3 in her own teaching, after I shared the instructions and clips with colleagues several years ago).

ii) 'Active' / 'rehearsal room' approaches: Workshop 3 featured a broad range of the kinds of activities and techniques used throughout the series. These included both relatively 'standard' activities (e.g. the whole-group discussion in Step 2 and the small group work in Step 3), and more obviously 'active' or 'rehearsal room' techniques, such as the activities described in Steps 5, 6 and 7. However, as was discussed in the Literature Review, it is important to reiterate that even activities in which students remain seated can be conceived of and taught as 'active', in the sense that they involve students actively trying to interpret and make sense of images, videos or texts, rather than being passive recipients of knowledge transmitted by the teacher. To emphasise this, the fourth column of Appendix 4 classifies the method of teaching and learning of each step according to Stredder's (2009) use of the terms 'active', 'practical' and 'dramatic', and shows how the steps built up through active and practical activities towards the fully 'dramatic' Step 7. Screenshots from the video recording of the workshop and selected PowerPoint slides have been included as visual notes.

iii) Principles / practices for intercultural language teaching and learning: It should be noted that Workshop 3, like the series as a whole, was not intended as a language class per se. However, the location of the workshop and the identities of the participating students (described earlier in this chapter), and the fact that it was taught by a 'foreign teacher', primarily in English, meant that in many respects it offered students the kind of 'language experiences' found in more typical language classrooms (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013). Therefore, while some of the workshops were explicitly about employing an intercultural perspective on Shakespeare's language (e.g. Workshop 4 in the first phase, and most of the second phase, as shown in Appendix 3), Workshop 3 is an example of how I attempted to



incorporate Liddicoat & Scarino's (2013) principles and practices for intercultural language teaching and learning, as described in the Literature Review, into the design of the entire series (see the last column of Appendix 4). Overall, there was an emphasis on the text having been produced in a specific context (for performance in the early modern English theatre) and then interpreted in other contexts (be they the film and stage adaptations discussed in Step 3, or students' own interpretations in the workshop), which was also intended to give Workshop 3 an intercultural aspect, through treating the text as an opportunity for 'the engagement between the cultural worlds of the text and the language learner' (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013: 97).

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In presenting the above details concerning the location in which the workshops were conducted, the participating students, and the texts, topics and activities that the sessions covered, this chapter has attempted to set the scene for what follows in the remainder of this thesis. The focus has been deliberately subjective, introducing my personal understanding of a context in which I considered myself to be, if not as 'native' as 'the coney that you see dwell where she is kindled' (*AYLI* 3.2, 1428-1429), then at the very least someone with certain 'insider' insights. It has also, therefore, been primarily pedagogical, focussing on my professional judgements regarding how best to teach a series of extracurricular Shakespeare workshops to 'such a [group] and in such a place, / [a]t such a time,' (*I Henry IV* 1.3, 397-398). This has been done partly for transferability, to allow other practitioners to develop their own understandings of what I did, so that they can adopt, adapt or reject its various elements in their own practice. It has also been done in the interest of analytic transparency and rigour, to give broad background evidence of the kinds of 'recordable institutional achievements' that I was aiming for as a practitioner (Antaki 2011: 12), the practical accomplishment of which I will aim to account for as an analyst in Chapters 6-7. Before then, in the following Methodology chapter, I will outline how the educational project of carrying out these workshops was also conceived of as a research project, by specifying what was understood as the data to be collected/generated and analysed through an ethnomethodological approach incorporating CA and MCA.

#### Chapter 4: Methodology – ‘What observation madest thou in this case’?

ADRIANA: Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so?  
Mightst thou perceive austerely in his eye  
That he did plead in earnest? yea or no?  
Look'd he red or pale, or sad or merrily?  
What observation madest thou in this case  
Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face?

*The Comedy of Errors* (4.2.1072-1077)

Determined to discover what lies behind a sudden change in her husband Antipholus's behaviour, in Act 4, Scene 2 of *The Comedy of Errors* Adriana interrogates her sister, Luciana, about her recent encounter with him. Did he seem serious? Angry? Sad, happy? Drawing on an early modern analogy 'between microcosm and macrocosm' (Heninger 1956: 247), Adriana wants to know what Luciana could tell '[o]f his heart's meteors' – Antipholus's true feelings – from studying his face. If Adriana is to learn anything of value, she must be able to trust the veracity of both her sister's observations during the encounter, and her subsequent account of it. However, both are fatally compromised: the man Luciana met was in fact not Adriana's husband at all, but his long-lost (and understandably confused) twin brother. Fortunately, when making judgements about what is happening in a classroom or workshop, educational researchers rarely need to contend with the kind of implausible coincidences commonly seen in Shakespearean comedies. Nevertheless, knowing how to navigate the complexities of educational settings can sometimes feel just as perplexing. With so much going on in even the average classroom, let alone the kind of drama workshops seen in this project, researchers cannot possibly address everything of potential importance. So how can they know which details are crucial, which are irrelevant, and which have been missed altogether? How much can be inferred from what is observable in the classroom, when so much will inevitably be going on behind the scenes, and inside the participants' heads? And, to return to Adriana's micro/macro analogy, even if it were possible to discern the true thoughts or feelings of an individual student or teacher, what would that tell us about wider educational contexts and structures beyond that individual, and that setting? These questions relate to epistemology, which 'defines the nature of the questions we might ask

[...] as well as the methodology and methods that we think will help us to address these questions' (Hammond & Wellington 2010: 57-58). Therefore, as well as outlining the ethnomethodological perspective taken in this study and the methods of data collection and analysis chosen in relation to it, this chapter will also need to explicate the epistemological perspectives that underpin them.

Epistemological (and ontological) perspectives are commonly referred to as being the foundation of a research *paradigm* (e.g. Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba 2011; Zhu 2016), or *worldview* - 'a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study' (Creswell & Creswell 2018: 5). Such a philosophical worldview should be a fundamental part of any research project, informing every stage from the formulation of research questions to methods of data collection and analysis (Zhu 2016). Therefore, before discussing the design of this project, this chapter will introduce constructionism, the worldview that underpins it (see 4.1, below). Specifically, this chapter will present a basic definition and summary of the key ideas associated with this worldview, as well as the particular interpretation of constructionism that has been taken in this study. It will then introduce the ethnomethodological perspective (4.2) that informed the development of the project's research questions (4.3). After this, the chapter will outline the multiple methods of data collection / generation (4.4), which included workshop data (4.4.1), written feedback (4.4.2) and the use of interviews (4.4.3), and the methods of data analysis (4.5) – specifically CA (4.5.5) and MCA (4.5.6) – chosen to answer these research questions. Finally, the chapter considers how standards of ethics and quality were maintained throughout the study (4.6), before briefly introducing how all of this translates into the three analysis and discussion chapters that follow.

#### **4.1 Epistemological perspective: constructionism**

In some respects, the central ideas of constructionism are fairly easy to define. For Gergen, the 'basic proposal' of what he refers to as social constructionism is a simple one: that 'what we take to be the truth about the world importantly depends on the social relationships of which we are a part' (2015: 3). Holstein & Gubrium (2011: 341) more expansively describe this as the idea that 'the world we live in and our place in it are not simply and evidently "there," but rather variably brought into being', with 'everyday realities [...] actively constructed in and through social action'. For Crotty (1998: 42), meanwhile, constructionism assumes that:

all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.

However, despite the clear commonalities in these three definitions, constructionism is in fact a contested and in some cases rather maligned term within the social sciences. While this section will introduce some key features and debates, the intention is not to produce a comprehensive overview of this worldview or paradigm, but rather to emphasise how constructionism is – and is not – being defined in this study. This specificity is especially important, because certain definitions of *social* constructionism in particular have been considered incommensurable with the ethnomethodological perspective taken in this project (Hester & Francis 2000). In opposition to this, I will argue that the precise sense in which constructionism is being understood here – a sense that owes much to Crotty’s (1998) definition – is not only compatible with, but is particularly well served, or even more fully realised by ethnomethodology (Lynch 2008, Seedhouse 2004).

#### **4.1.1 Terminological distinctions: constructionism and constructivism, social and otherwise**

As noted above, there is considerable debate about what actually constitutes ‘constructionism’. Constructionist researchers – whether self-defined or labelled as such by others – contribute a ‘mosaic of research efforts’ across a broad range of disciplines, from psychology and social psychology, to other social sciences and the humanities (Holstein & Gubrium 2011: 341). However, these are linked by a Wittgensteinian ‘family resemblance’ rather than any single coherent programme (Burr 2015), and there is therefore a danger of potentially quite different studies being equated with one another, and consequently evaluated on the basis of assumptions about constructionism that may not apply to them. Adding to the potential confusion is the fact that the similar-sounding term ‘constructivism’ can also be found in the literature, with the two sometimes being misleadingly used as synonyms. To clarify, the term ‘constructivism’ is commonly used within research on education, including drama education, to refer specifically to the approach of psychologists such as Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner, who challenged conceptions of education in which ‘a teacher transmit[ted] facts or knowledge to a class of passive recipient learners’, instead arguing that ‘knowledge, meaning, and understanding are actively constructed by learners by a process of development, which builds on what they already know’ (Wallace 2015). However, the term

constructivism is also used to refer to a paradigm or worldview that can sometimes, but not always, be equated with constructionism. Thus, while Burr (2015), Burr & Dick (2017), Crotty (1998), Danziger (1997), Gergen (2015), Hacking (1999), Holstein & Gubrium (2011) and Lock & Strong (2010) all refer to ‘constructionism’, Creswell & Creswell (2018), Denzin & Lincoln (2011), Howell (2013), Mertens (2010) and Zhu (2016) instead use ‘constructivism’. There is an element of disciplinary preference in this distinction, with constructionism being favoured in social sciences such as anthropology, sociology and certain branches of psychology, and constructivism in STEM fields and cognitive psychology (Gubrium & Holstein 2008).

However, despite a considerable amount of slippage in their use, the terms should not be used interchangeably: avowedly ‘constructivist’ research emphasises the cognitive work done by individuals as they construct meaning, while ‘constructionism’ emphasises the more social ways in which meaning is constructed through interaction and negotiation (Crotty 1998, Gubrium & Holstein 2008, Howell 2013, Zhu 2016). This study’s use of ‘constructionism’ has, therefore, been deliberately chosen in order i) to distinguish it from constructivist educational psychology, and ii) to place emphasis on the social, rather than individual/cognitive, nature of meaning construction. It is this emphasis that I consider to be entirely compatible with the concerns of ethnomethodology (see 4.2), and the attendant analytic approaches of CA and MCA (see 4.5.5 and 4.5.6, respectively). The ‘social’ prefix often seen before ‘constructionism’ has been deliberately omitted due to its redundancy: even if the construction of meaning refers to or is influenced by unambiguously *physical* phenomena, the fact that meaning is constructed in interaction, and especially through language, means that it is always necessarily *social* (Hacking 1999, Francis & Hester 2004).

#### **4.1.2 Key features and distinctions of constructionism**

Following the broad definition given above – i.e. that constructionism holds that meaning is constructed in and through interaction between humans, and between humans and the world – it is possible to identify certain key ideas and assumptions that link researchers working within a constructionist worldview. Lock & Strong (2010: 6) list five ‘expansive tenets’ common to what they describe as the ‘broad church’ of constructionism:

- i) a concern ‘with meaning and understanding as the central feature of human activities’;
- ii) ‘the view that meaning and understanding have their beginnings in social interaction, in shared agreements as to what these symbolic forms are taken to be’;

- iii) the view that ‘ways of meaning-making, being inherently embedded in socio-cultural processes, are specific to particular times and places’;
- iv) ‘an uneasy relationship with “essentialism”’, with the consequence that ‘social constructionism [...] is often characterized, pejoratively, for being relativistic’;
- v) ‘the adoption of a critical perspective’ that is concerned with ‘revealing’ how the social world, and especially power, operates.

This outline largely chimes with the list of constructionist ‘key assumptions’ found in Burr (2015) and Burr & Dick (2017), but of course none of these features should be taken for granted. In particular, the degree to which power should be emphasised (and perhaps even actively challenged) and the extent to which the construction of meaning is a social (as opposed to an individual, cognitive) process are points of significant contention for many nominally constructionist researchers. As a result, it is important to address these areas of contention in order to clarify the assumptions made by the present study, and the approaches taken on the basis of these assumptions.

The different varieties of constructionism that can be found within the literature are often framed through the use of the following binary oppositions (in which the first terms in each binary share certain similarities, which contrast with the similarities that the second terms in each opposition share):

- Weak / strong constructionism (Schwandt 2000, Howell 2013)
- Dark / light constructionism (Danziger 1997, Lock & Strong 2010, Burr 2015)
- Contextual / strict constructionism (Danziger 1997)
- Macro / micro constructionism (Burr 2015, Holstein & Gubrium 2011)

Contextual and weak constructionism focus on meaning construction at a broader (macro) level of discourse, often in a Foucauldian tradition, and are much more concerned with power and its effects. Consequently, Danziger (1997) characterises them as ‘darker’ and less optimistic, as they emphasise what is *done to* the individual through broad social structures. In contrast, strict and strong constructionism focus on meaning as it is constructed through everyday interaction in more local (micro) contexts, as exemplified by Discursive Psychology and CA (Burr 2015). Danziger (1997) sees these as ‘lighter’ and potentially more hopeful, in the sense that if people are actively involved in constructing their realities through interaction, then they can change them – a view also advocated by Gergen (2015), and that is implicit in much Applied CA work (e.g. Antaki 2011, Lester & O’Reilly 2019, Richards & Seedhouse 2005). Burr (2015) usefully suggests avoiding the more value-laden binaries (e.g.

weak / strong), while stressing that ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ are not mutually exclusive, and can productively be brought into dialogue with one another (see also Mann 2016, Seedhouse 2004). On this basis, and inspired in particular by Crotty’s (1998) definition of constructionism, this study will attempt to balance a consideration of the micro (the *hows* of meaning construction through interaction in a specific research context) and the macro (the wider social *whats* invoked as participants construct meaning with reference to existing social discourses, e.g. culture, Shakespeare etc.). The consequences of adopting this understanding of constructionism for all aspects of this study’s design will be returned to with regards to questions of quality in section 4.6, while the following section will explain the ethnomethodological approach that informed the development of my research questions, and the data collection and analysis methods chosen to answer them.

## 4.2 Ethnomethodology

To understand how Crotty’s (1998) explication of constructionism chimes with the concerns of ethnomethodology, it is important to emphasise what he means by the ‘construction’ of meaning:

According to constructionism, we do not create meaning. We construct meaning. We have something to work with. What we have to work with is the world and objects in the world. (1998: 43-44)

Meanings are not, therefore, created out of thin air, but are constructed in relation to a world that is already there. How meanings are constructed – socially, through interaction and especially through language (Francis & Hester 2004) – and indeed the fact that they are constructed in the first place remind us that the individuals doing this sense-making have some agency in the process. Social order is not simply something *done to* people, but something that they *do*. This is one of the points over which the founder of ethnomethodology, Harold Garfinkel, disagreed with the mainstream sociology prevalent in the mid-twentieth century. As a result, one of ethnomethodology’s main concerns has been to recast humans ‘as sense-makers or interpreters of the world rather than as vehicles for the operation of generalised norms (i.e. “cultural dopes”)’ (Hester & Francis 2000: 2). Crucially, however, this sense-making is not a one-way process, and is not a solely cognitive matter. Instead, sense-making must be understood in a ‘dual manner’, whereby individuals not only need to make sense of the world around them and the actions of the people they are interacting with, but also need to act in that world in ways that can be made sense of by others (Hester & Francis 2000: 3). Ethnomethodology is fundamentally concerned with this

socially situated sense-making, but it is important to stress that the project suggested by the two components of its name does not refer to the manner in which the analyst goes about studying what people do, but to the methodologies that people themselves use as they go about this dual task of making sense of, and in, the world.

More specifically, Garfinkel (1967: 4) himself described ethnomethodology's 'central topic' as 'the rational accountability of practical actions as an ongoing practical accomplishment'. Here, the idea that social order is something actively done and practically accomplished by people (rather than something that is done to them, or that happens because they are unthinkingly following external rules) is rooted in rationality. On this view, sense is made of the actions of others on the assumption that these actions have a rational basis and can be interpreted accordingly. Correspondingly, for one's own actions to be made sense of, they need to be designed and displayed in a way that makes them similarly interpretable. In other words, '[t]he process of making sense involves looking for the organized rationality of some action' (Freebody & Freiberg 2011: 80). Ethnomethodology uses a number of concepts to understand how this is done:

- *The documentary method of interpretation*: Central to ethnomethodology's understanding of how sense and social order are made is the idea that observable actions are treated as 'documents', or examples of previously encountered patterns (Seedhouse 2004). So, if somebody comes into a staffroom and utters the words 'Good morning!', the people already present will be able to interpret this as a greeting rather than just a statement of fact, based on their previous experience and prior knowledge. However, the same words, said loudly by a teacher standing at the front of a classroom, may be interpreted as not just a greeting, but a signal that a lesson is starting. Crucially, this awareness of patterns is iterative and constantly being updated, so that 'new' or 'unexpected' actions are interpreted in relation to what has already been encountered, as a new way of doing the same thing, or as a different action altogether.
- *Accountability*: The documentary method of interpretation relies on the principle of accountability, whereby individual actions and the wider activities that they contribute to are treated as produced in order 'to be accountable – recognizable and reportable – for what they are' (Hester & Francis 2000: 3). In a typical classroom setting, for example, it is often not enough for students simply to be paying attention. They will often have to *show* that they are paying attention, through their posture and/or the



direction of their gaze, in order to avoid being sanctioned by the teacher. In this sense there is a normative aspect to accountability, but in ethnomethodology norms are seen 'as *constitutive* of action rather than regulative' (Seedhouse 2004: 10, emphasis added). In other words, rather than simply following a prewritten script or series of rules, interactants draw on their awareness of what normally happens in similar circumstances, in order to interpret what is going on, and to design their own actions for this particular situation accordingly. Thus the same student may behave very differently in front of different teachers or on different days, on the basis of observing what kind of outward displays seem to be sanctionable or not. An important consequence of this is, therefore, that various 'facts' of educational interactions – 'participation', 'learning', and even 'teachers' and 'pupils' – are not simply 'there', but are practically accomplished by the interactants (Hester & Francis 2000).

- *Reflexivity*: Defined by Wilkinson (1988: 493) as 'disciplined self-reflection', reflexivity has become a fundamental expectation in qualitative research, where it can be considered a process that involves 'a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome' (Berger 2015: 220). In ethnomethodology, however, reflexivity has another, quite distinct meaning, which 'refers to the self-explicating property of ordinary actions' (Ten Have 2004: 20). This relates to accountability, and the idea of actions being recognisably and reportably what they are (Hester & Francis 2000: 3), but what ethnomethodological reflexivity highlights is how this accountability relates to the dual nature of sense-making. In this respect, reflexivity refers to how 'the same sets of methods or procedures are responsible for both the production of actions/utterances and their interpretation' (Seedhouse 2004: 11). Thus, to adopt Seedhouse's corresponding example, if a school-teacher stands at the front of the classroom and says 'Good morning!', in a raised voice, they are not only performing an action, but also creating a context in which this action can be interpreted. If the pupils respond by saying 'Good morning!' in unison, stopping fidgeting, and directing their postures and eyes towards the teacher, they have not only performed several actions, but also displayed their interpretation of the teacher's utterance as a signal to pay attention as the lesson is starting. Reflexivity thus allows for a certain educational order to be achieved through a reciprocity of perspectives, as both teacher and pupils display their similar understandings of the context, allowing the 'lesson' to proceed.

- *Indexicality*: Ten Have (2004: 21) notes that indexical expressions are ‘those whose sense depends on the local circumstances in which they are uttered and/or those to which they apply’. He then adds that this could of course be considered the case for all utterances and actions, but there are at least two ways in which ethnomethodology illustrates the particular significance of indexicality. First, it is not usually necessary, or indeed possible, for interactants to make every single element of what they are trying to say and do explicit. Instead, they rely on the documentary method of interpretation and the accountability of actions to enable those involved to understand what is going on, often on the basis of fairly limited but highly indexical utterances and actions (Seedhouse 2004). Thus, if a teacher says ‘Today you need to work harder than you did yesterday’, they will likely expect their pupils to understand that ‘today’ and ‘yesterday’ refer specifically to the schoolwork done in today’s and yesterday’s classes with that particular teacher, not today, yesterday and work in general. This relates to a second significance of indexicality: that ‘indexical knowledge is not just something in the environment, but also something talked into being by interactants’ (Seedhouse 2004: 7). Because interactants need to reflexively display which elements of context they are orienting to at a particular time, these also become analytically observable for the researcher. This emphasis on observability does place certain restrictions on the analyst, in that rather than just assuming that certain identities or social influences must be at work in a particular situation, they are required to *show* how these were made relevant and oriented to by the interactants (Hester & Francis 2000). However, the advantage of this is that the claims made by the analyst are therefore grounded in the emic perspective of the participants’ own practical actions and attempts at sense-making, rather than in the etic (outsider) perspective of the researcher.

Through its focus on these key concepts, ethnomethodology aims to demonstrate not only how people make sense of, and in, the interactional situations in which they find themselves, but also how, in doing so, they co-construct the character of those settings and situations. The following subsection will give examples of how the ethnomethodological perspective has been applied to education in previous research, as well as explaining how it was brought to bear on the Shakespeare workshops being investigated in this project.

#### **4.1.1 Ethnomethodological studies of educational settings**

As has been touched on above, instead of assuming that certain educational ‘facts’ – e.g. ‘lessons’, ‘engagement’, and the roles of ‘teachers’ and ‘students’ – are unproblematically

‘there’ to be investigated by the researcher (Hester & Francis 2000), ethnomethodology insists that the researcher investigates how these things are constituted by those who are actually involved. In other words, the central ethnomethodological question relating to educational settings might be stated as:

how are the familiar scenes and activities of educational life – what is observably the case – accomplished by the parties to them and what do persons use in accomplishing those events and activities? (Francis & Hester 2004: 115)

Returning to the examples given in relation to the key concepts above, one might look at how the beginnings of lessons are accomplished by teachers and students (e.g. Payne 1976), or how teachers determine and respond to what does or does not count as sanctionable behaviour (e.g. Macbeth 1990, 1991). Indeed, in the decades since the ‘proto-ethnomethodological approach’ (Lynch 1993) Kitsuse & Cicourel took for their 1963 book *The Educational Decision-Makers*, numerous studies have looked at the accomplishment of various events, activities and identities within educational settings. Several ‘broad themes’ have been outlined by Hester & Francis (2000) and Freebody & Freeberg (2011) in ethnomethodological studies of education. Of these, it is ‘[t]he production and organization of educational activities, including the organization of academic knowledge in interaction’ (Freebody & Freeberg 2011: 82-83) – which includes studies of how activities from reading (e.g. Heap 1991, 1992) to storytelling (Hester & Francis 1995) and academic presentations (Rendle-Short 2006) are done – that the present study’s concerns are closest to.

In the case of the kind of Shakespeare workshops involved in this project, a strength of this focus on the production and organization of educational activities is that it can identify practical details that are often overlooked in work that seeks to provide evidence of the efficacy and power of this approach to teaching and learning (Anderson 2011). For example, if we return to Gibson’s (1998: xii) definition of ‘active methods’ for teaching Shakespeare that was discussed in Chapter 2, how are the ‘expressive, creative and physical activities’ actually produced and organised in the classroom? How might the intellectual and emotional engagement they are intended to foster be analytically observable? And how might ‘doing Shakespeare’, or even just ‘Shakespeare’ as a body of knowledge and experience, be ‘respecified’ by the participants themselves, rather than being predetermined by the researcher (Ten Have 2004)? In order to answer such questions it is necessary to look at practical actions and practical reasoning, and especially ‘the methods whereby the rationality of scenic features (the visible social and material characteristics of a “scene”) is assembled’

(Freebody & Freiberg 2011: 80). This involves fine-grained analysis of the sequential, topical and categorial resources that are deployed and collaboratively used to accomplish the business at hand.

Two approaches for conducting this sort of ethnomethodological investigation are Conversation Analysis (CA), which is primarily concerned with sequential organization (e.g. turn-taking), and Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA), which focuses on how descriptive categories (e.g. of people) are invoked, negotiated and oriented to in order to do various things during interaction (Stokoe & Attenborough 2015a). CA and MCA will be explained in detail later in this chapter (see 4.5.5-4.5.6), but at this point it is useful to mention Freebody's work, which attempts to combine analysis of sequential, topical and categorial elements. As well as being a relatively rare example of an ethnomethodological treatment of drama education, Freebody's (2010, 2013) main contribution is the identification of three categories of talk used within drama workshops: Pedagogic/Logistic Talk (PLT), Socio-Cultural Talk (SCT) and In Role Talk (IRT). These are discussed at length in Chapters 6-7, but what is significant to note here is the way that Freebody shows how the three types of talk are characterised by different uses of sequential, topical and categorial resources, to different ends. Because Freebody's analysis was based on spoken transcripts only, it is unclear what roles visible conduct plays in all of this, and Anderson (2011) separately suggests that an inability to deal with multimodality is one of the drawbacks of an ethnomethodological approach. However, as will be seen below, CA and MCA have evolved to embrace the multimodal analysis of video data. This has led me to propose extending Freebody's (2010, 2013) categories of talk to include multimodal action (see Chapter 6), and more broadly the multimodal analysis of video data ended up becoming one of the central preoccupations and greatest challenges of this project. At this stage, however, having explained this study's ethnomethodological perspective, the next few sections will outline how this perspective fed into the project's implementation, from the development of its research questions (4.3) to the methods chosen for data collection / generation (4.4) and data analysis (4.5).

### **4.3 Research Questions**

In keeping with the constructionist worldview and ethnomethodological perspective outlined above, it was important to formulate research questions that would enable the educational interactions being investigated to be analysed in all their complexity and specificity. The questions also needed to reflect the fact that this analysis was not about trying to identify an

underlying ‘nature of people or society’, but was instead about exploring the processes through which ‘certain phenomena or forms of knowledge are achieved by people in interaction’ in this specific context (Burr 2015: 11). Finally, the research questions needed to accommodate the ethnomethodological insistence that the phenomena and forms of knowledge found in educational settings are never straightforwardly ‘there’, but are instead actively achieved through interaction. In an attempt to fulfil these aims, the following research questions were developed:

- **RQ1:** How did the participants describe their experiences and perceptions of Shakespeare?
- **RQ2:** How did the participants do Shakespeare and achieve the workshops as local, collaborative accomplishments?
- **RQ 3:** How did the participants invoke, orient to and use different linguistic, categorial and interactional resources in order to make meaning of and through Shakespeare?

The goals of RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3 are discussed in detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, respectively, while later sections of this chapter outline the methods of data collection / generation (4.4) and data analysis (4.5) chosen to answer them. Before that, however, the following subsection will share some notes about how these questions were developed.

#### **4.3.1 Notes on the development of the Research Questions**

Maxwell (2013: 73) describes research questions as being ‘at the heart of’ research design, in the sense that they are the aspect of a project that ‘most directly links to all of the other components of the design’ and that ‘will have an influence on, and should be responsive to’ all of the project’s other components. Consequently, particular attention was paid to the types of questions being posed, to ensure that they were suited to the constructionist worldview informing the project and the ethnomethodological approach with which it was to be implemented. In terms of the distinctions proposed by Maxwell (2013), which have been discussed above, the resulting questions could be classified as:

- *particular*, as befits an ethnomethodological study interested in understanding the specificities of this particular context (rather than *general*, as is often the case in more positivistic, quantitative research projects):

e.g. rather than referring to ‘Chinese students’ or just ‘students’, all three RQs referred to ‘participants’ – which included only those students who took part in these specific workshops, and me, as teacher / researcher;

- *process-oriented*, focussing on how things happen (rather than *variance-oriented*, seeking to determine or even measure the relationship between variables):  
e.g. RQ2 was worded ‘How did the participants do Shakespeare and achieve the workshops as local, collaborative accomplishments?’, rather than asking about ‘What factors influenced the participants’ engagement with Shakespeare in the workshops?’;
- largely *instrumentalist* in their wording, acknowledging that meanings and understandings are not simply ‘there’ to be straightforwardly observed, and that what participants report about what they think and feel cannot be treated as direct evidence of an interior reality:  
e.g. RQ1 asked ‘How did the participants describe their experiences and perceptions of Shakespeare?’ rather than ‘What do the participants think and feel about Shakespeare?’;
- but also *realist* in their implementation, acknowledging that the meanings and understandings that people reach in social collaboration are no less ‘real’ or meaningful for being co-constructed in interaction.

#### **4.4 Data collection / generation methods**

Because, from an ethnomethodological perspective, understandings are publicly displayed rather than being ‘private things locked away inside person’s heads’, they are available for analysis (Francis & Hester 2004: 212). But in order for them to be analytically available, they need to be observable in the data being used. As a result, ethnomethodologists typically look to sources of data that capture activities and understandings as they are being interactionally accomplished. Due to the centrality of talk in such accomplishments, audio recordings of spoken interaction have conventionally been privileged as a source of data in ethnomethodology, and especially CA (Antaki 2011, Francis & Hester 2004, Lester & O’Reilly 2019). However, video is increasingly also being used to examine those aspects of interaction that are not hearable, particularly in situations in which the environmental or embodied aspects of an interaction are salient (Ten Have 2007). In addition, in ethnomethodological workplace studies and Applied CA (which looks at talk-in-interaction in institutional settings), there is a growing acceptance of, and occasional insistence on, the use

of a wider variety of data, including text-based documents, which can shed light on the workings and co-constructed understandings operating in those settings (Antaki 2011, Lester & O'Reilly 2019). In this regard, the three main sources of data (video and audio recordings of Shakespeare workshops, audio recordings of interviews with students, and written feedback in digital form) and the supplementary material used in this study might not seem particularly controversial for an ethnomethodological study (see Table 4.1, below). Where they might be contested is in how they were collected, or even – as the title of this section suggests – how they were *generated*. Typically, ethnomethodological studies insist on the use of ‘naturally occurring’ data (Ten Have 2007, Lester & O'Reilly 2019). What this means in practice is sometimes explained with reference to Potter's (2002) so-called ‘dead social scientist test’, which asks whether the interaction would have occurred if the researcher had died on the way to work. In the case of this study, the answer would be a resounding ‘no’: if I didn't exist not only would there have been no researcher to conduct and record the interviews and solicit the feedback, but also no teacher to run the workshops. However, on closer inspection, the meaning and import of data being ‘naturally occurring’ is far less clear than this makes it seem – especially as it would relate to the educational setting examined here.

Discussing CA's particular preference for ‘natural interaction’, Ten Have (2007: 68) explains that ‘naturally occurring’ essentially means “‘non-experimental”, not co-produced with or provoked by the researcher’. By this standard, Ten Have goes on to explain, various popular methods of qualitative data collection would be regarded with suspicion. This would include interviewing people about things that the researcher has not witnessed, conducting field observations centred on notes and / or coding, and using simulated or role-play tasks. This makes sense from an ethnomethodological perspective, as the analyst should be looking for precise details of how various interactional accomplishments are achieved, rather than details of how people say, or imagine, they would carry them out (which may be very different). However, if strictly followed, the idea that data should not have been ‘co-produced with or provoked by the researcher’ would preclude any educator from being able to examine their own practice ethnomethodologically. As Chapters 5 to 7 show, analysing my conduct in interviews and workshops revealed many aspects of my practice that I was previously unaware of. Indeed, I argue in the conclusion of this thesis that the power of examining one's own practice from an ethnomethodological perspective lies in restricting the analysis to what is observably the case in the interaction, rather than relying on emotional responses to or

subjective assumptions about what was going on. In fact, Ten Have (2007: 69) goes on to acknowledge that what is ‘natural’ can actually depend on the analysis that is being conducted, and that even apparently ‘artificial’ data that has been provoked or co-produced may involve the participants interacting ‘naturally’ *within that context*. It is in this light that I consider my data sources to be not only appropriate, but also necessary for this study, as the workshops and written feedback involve students participating in what are perfectly ‘natural’ activities in a university context, while the interviews are treated not as transparent windows onto past behaviour or current interior states, but as educational interactions in their own right. The data collected through each method is summarised in Table 4.1, before each one is explained, in turn, in the subsections that follow.

**Table 4.1 Methods of data collection**

<b>Data collection method</b>	<b>Data collected</b>	<b>Associated Research Questions</b>
Workshop data (conducting workshops, recording/collecting associated audio, video, still images)	Approx. 34 hours of audio Approx. 26 hours of video 47 still images	RQ2, RQ3
Semi-structured interviews (audio)	35 interviews with students (approx. 21 hours)	RQ1, RQ3
Written feedback	123 pieces of written feedback	RQ1, RQ3
Research journal	36 entries	(Supplementary material)
Miscellaneous documents and other materials	14 lesson plans Materials produced for and in the workshops (scripts, posters etc.) Curriculum / course material Textbook extracts Flyers for workshops	(Supplementary material)



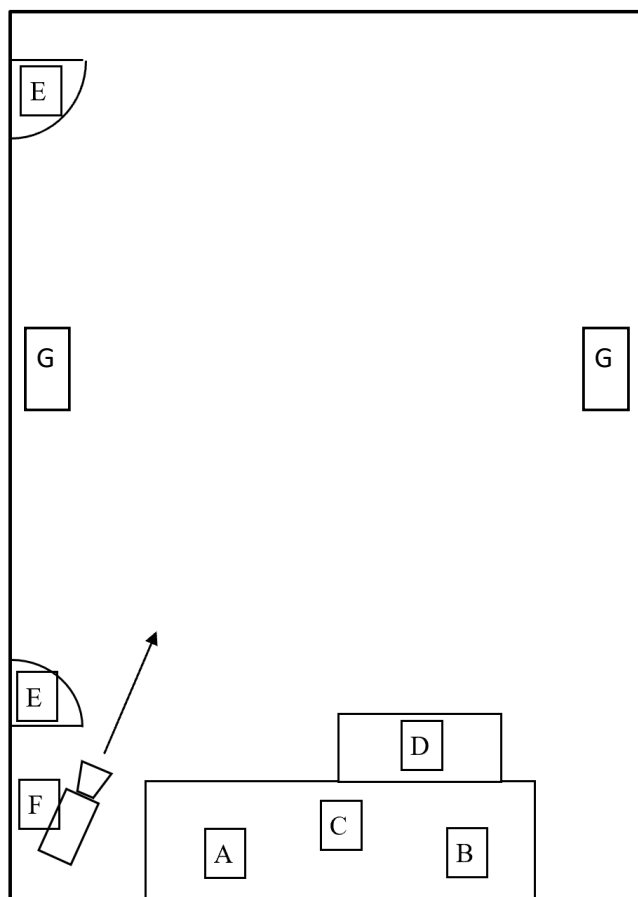
	Social media communication etc.	
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#### 4.4.1 Workshop data

While, as mentioned above, there has traditionally been an emphasis in ethnomethodology and CA on using audio recordings of spoken interactions, nonverbal aspects such as gesture, posture and gaze play a hugely important and inextricable role in educational interactions, being used in everything from classroom management to the creation of learning opportunities (Sert 2015, Kimura et al. 2018). Indeed, as Mondada (2014: 138) has noted, separating conduct into verbal and non-verbal – or audible and visible – creates a false distinction, when in fact many studies have shown that the various strands of multimodal conduct need to be integrated due to how ‘coordinated, synchronised, finely tuned [and] mutually adjusted’ they are. Kimura et al. (2018) argue that classroom settings in particular necessitate the capturing of visual conduct due to their very nature. First, there is often ‘a multitude of spatial arrangements’ found in the classroom, with each arrangement being connected to different types of interaction and participation frameworks (Kimura et al. 2018: 189). This was undoubtedly the case in my workshops, in which students might go from being seated at desks to standing in a circle and then moving freely around the classroom, all within the space of a single session. There is no way that audio-only recordings could capture the differences in interaction that accompanied such shifts. A second aspect emphasised by Kimura et al. (2018: 192) relates to the different ‘pedagogical projects’ at play within and across lessons, with the sequential and interactional organisation of the classroom potentially differing significantly ‘in view of the goal(s) at hand’. Again, this was undoubtedly the case in my workshops, with discussion and performance-based activities exhibiting very different interactional characteristics, and the emphasis on ‘learning through the body’ (Winston 2015) meaning that visible, embodied conduct often played a particularly important role during the sessions. As a result, it seemed obvious that I would have to make video recordings of the workshops in their entirety, so that any passages of interaction could be understood in their

sequential contexts, and because I would be unable to determine in advance which parts of the workshops might reward close analysis (Hall & Looney 2019).

A common objection or note of caution raised when using video is the problem of ‘reactivity’, whereby the behaviour of participants might change because they know they are on camera, even if this does not become obvious to the researcher (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018: 566). In Chapter 6 I share an example of the participating students directly orienting to the positioning of the camera during a performance activity in which they were aware I was moving it, and for the sake of accuracy and full disclosure it might be necessary to refer to the behaviour captured as naturally occurring in the context of a video recorded workshop. However, with each session lasting two hours and there being fourteen sessions in total, I considered the presence of the camera to have a fairly minimal impact – not least because the students were already in a classroom situation in which their conduct was observable by a teacher and other students, and so a certain degree of social desirability would already have been in play. In order to try to minimise disruption and maximise the visible conduct being captured, I placed a digital camera capable of producing high quality MP4 video recordings in a corner of the classroom between the door and the projector screen:



**Figure 4.1 Classroom layout**

- A:** Projector screen
- B:** Blackboard
- C:** Wooden platform
- D:** Lectern / computer desk
- E:** Door
- F:** Standard video camera placement
- G:** Audio recorder placement

This placement meant that most of the activities that took place in the sessions would be in view of the camera with little or no adjustment necessary, whatever configuration the students were standing or sitting in. On a small number of occasions I did take still photos at a closer range, to capture activities, such as freeze-framing, that would not have been so easy to view from the video camera's fixed position, but generally this worked well. However, as I have acknowledged in the Limitations section of Chapter 8, having only a single fixed camera, on a standard height tripod, meant that there were inevitably quite a few points at which potentially important elements of the interaction were obscured. This was especially the case when I moved to the front of the classroom to give the students extra room to move but stepped out of the frame as a result, or when we were working in a circle (see Figures 4.2-4.3).

**Figure 4.2**



*Screenshot showing the students visible, but only my arm in the frame*

**Figure 4.3**



*Screenshot showing a 'reading round the circle' activity, in which most of the participants' faces cannot be seen, while some participants are obscured completely*

Fortunately, the footage captured was extensive enough that it still offered more than enough examples worthy of close scrutiny for the purposes of this thesis, but in future experimenting with multiple cameras would undoubtedly pay dividends if the circumstances and funding allowed (Au Yeung 2021). In an attempt to avoid missing audible details that might be difficult to pick up from the camera's fixed position, in addition to an external microphone mounted on the camera itself, I also placed two digital audio corners at opposite sides of the room (see Figure 4.1, above). This undoubtedly helped during transcription, as it meant I could check between three different audio sources if I was struggling to make out what was being said – something that was relatively common when students were moving around the room. Because I was keen to avoid the MP4 files becoming too large and potentially unstable on my PC, the beginning and end of video recording tended to coincide with the 'formal'

beginning and end of the workshop. In contrast, I would start audio recording as soon as the room was ready and only stop when I was ready to leave. As a result, the audio recordings are a greater length than the video (see Table 4.1, above), and capture some interesting aspects of spoken interaction that occurred on the margins of the ‘formal’ sessions themselves.

However, as was noted earlier regarding the video, with additional funding in future it would be possible to deploy more advanced technology (potentially including multiple wearable microphones) so that it was easier to discern what was being said, and by whom, during activities in which all of the students were talking simultaneously in pairs or groups.

Nevertheless, between the audio and video recordings, the workshop provided very rich data for transcription and analysis (see 4.5, below).

#### 4.4.2 Written feedback

In order to provide the participating students with another opportunity to engage with the topics and approaches raised in the workshops, and to provide material that could be used to stimulate discussion in the interviews (see 4.4.3), after each session I emailed all of the students who had attended a feedback form. This followed a standard format (see Figure 4.4), with the initial invitations to give feedback written in Mandarin (translated from English and checked by colleagues at LNFSU), followed by a question in English, and then further prompts to email the form to me, and to write at least 200 words in Chinese or English:

**Exploring Shakespeare**  
探索莎士比亚 – 工作坊 3:  
**1000 Hamlets in 120 minutes**

反馈表格

姓名: \_\_\_\_\_ 年级/ 班级: \_\_\_\_\_

希望你喜欢本次工作坊。如果你能给我一些反馈建议，将会对接下来其他场工作坊以及我正在进行的博士研究工作都有极大帮助。如果你愿意，请根据以下问题的提示，就你对本次工作坊的想法和意见（正面的，负面的，或中肯的）写下至少 200 字以上的文字（中文或英文皆可）：

A well-known saying talks about there being 1000 Hamlets in 1000 peoples' eyes – but what about in their voices and bodies? Do you think exploring Hamlet's words verbally and physically can help you find your own interpretation of what those words might mean? Why or why not?

完成此表格后，请电邮至 [D.Lees.1@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:D.Lees.1@warwick.ac.uk)

非常感谢你的帮助！

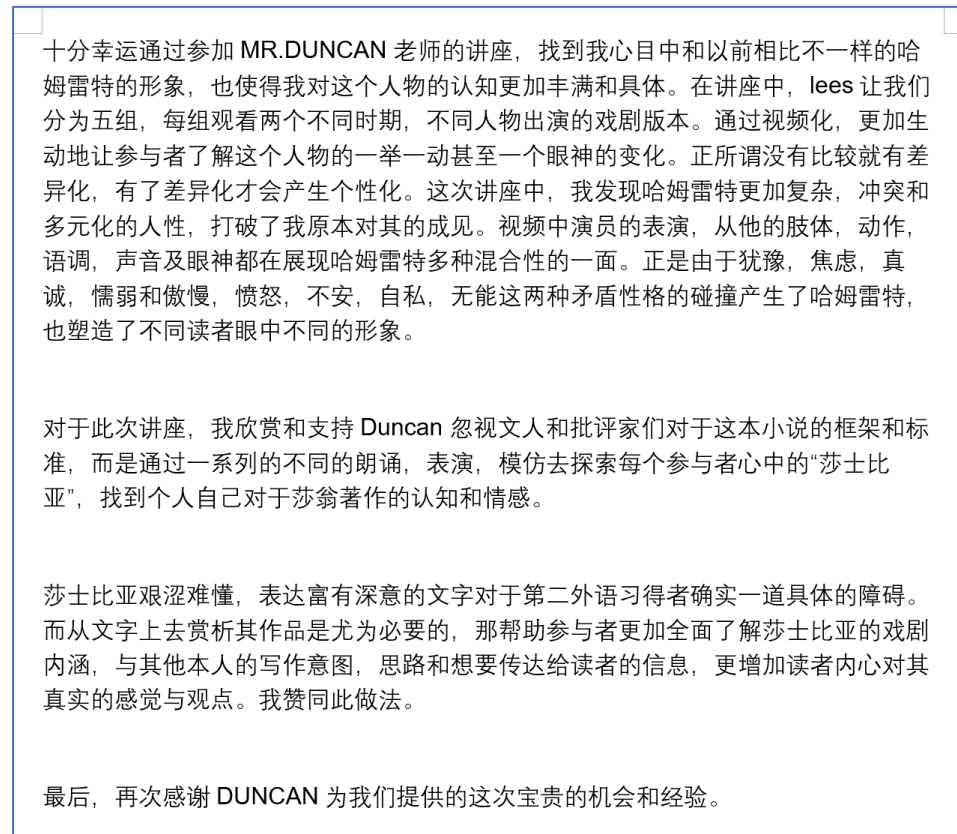
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请在此写下至少 200 字以上的文字（中文或英文皆可）：

**Figure 4.4. Example of feedback form**

While submitting feedback was not compulsory, it was common for approximately 50 percent of students to do so, with many of the responses being far longer than the 200-word minimum suggested. Some wrote in Mandarin, some in English, and some in a mixture, as can be seen in one participant's response to the feedback form shown above:

**Figure 4.5 Example of response to feedback**



As well as providing material that could be referred to during the interviews, it quickly became apparent that the written feedback was a very rich source of data in its own right, that could complement the audio and video data more commonly associated with ethnomethodology and CA (Antaki 2011, Lester & O'Reilly 2019). It was important, therefore, to treat the examples of feedback as situated accomplishments in their own right, and so rather than extracting quotes and integrating them into the body of my writing, I have instead presented feedback extracts as images, which show things such as font, size and layout. In the case of the feedback seen in Figure 4.5, for example, the fact that the participant (Daniel) is writing in Chinese characters but switches to English when referring to me – in the first instance calling me ‘MR.DUNCAN 老师’, or ‘Teacher MR.DUNCAN’ – is significant not only in terms of how he is addressing me, but also how he is orienting to this

feedback as an intercultural interaction. As a consequence, the feedback became particularly interesting data to examine from the perspective of MCA (see 4.5.6, below).

### **4.4.3 Interviews**

As noted earlier, the preference in ethnomethodological and CA studies is for ‘naturally occurring’ data, and an interview arranged and carried out by a researcher certainly would not pass Potter’s (2002) ‘dead social scientist test’. An additional objection is that interviews may involve asking participants about previous conduct that the researcher has not witnessed, or about what they might do in a hypothetical situation. This approach would not provide the kind of detailed, direct access to the conduct itself that ethnomethodologists are looking for (Ten Have 2004), and is something that Atkinson (1995) has identified as problematic in social science more widely. However, this does not mean that ethnomethodologists and even practitioners of CA cannot use interviews (Ten Have 2004). In the case of this project, the interviews became an appropriate and valuable source of data due to how they were conceptualised, conducted, and subsequently analysed. While the analysis, which involved CA and MCA, will be covered in detail below (4.5.5-4.5.6), it will remain relevant as I discuss the first two aspects: conceptualisation and implementation.

From the beginning I wanted my interviews to have a ‘dialogic quality’, in the sense of being more open interactional spaces in which the participants and I could have a genuinely bidirectional conversation about Shakespeare. However, I was aware that this ‘dialogic’ framing can downplay the asymmetries involved in interviewing (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015), and that establishing conversational intimacy can take on a manipulative aspect if interviewees are lulled into giving more ‘confessional’ responses (Duncombe & Jessop 2002). As a result, and in order to maintain consistency with the epistemological underpinnings of this study, I decided to take something closer to what Roulston (2010) describes as a ‘constructionist’ conception. This, states Roulston, stresses ‘both the importance of social interaction for the co-construction of interview data, as well as the focus on examining the resources people use to describe their worlds to others’ (60). In contrast to a ‘neo-positivist’ approach, which tries to minimise or eliminate the influence of the interviewer, a constructionist perspective treats interview data as being co-constructed between the interviewer and interviewee. Consequently, the contributions of both – not just the interviewee – are subjected to analysis. Meanwhile, in contrast to a ‘romantic’ conception of the interview, a constructionist approach does not view interviewees’ responses as being

‘authentic’ expressions of stable inner (or even external) truths, but rather as socially occasioned and situated displays of practical reasoning produced in and through a specific interaction (Roulston 2010).

In this way, the interview is treated less as a ‘research instrument’ and more as a ‘social practice’ (Talmy 2010, Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). This seemed appropriate for my research, as I wanted the interviews to be meaningful educational interactions in their own right, not simply instrumentalist undertakings aiming at generating decontextualised data. Related to this conception of the interview as an inherently interactional ‘social practice’, is the idea that interview data should be treated not as a ‘resource’ in which the responses are ‘reports’ that largely reflect the reality of the interviewee outside of the interview context, but instead as a ‘topic’ in which the co-constructed, interactionally occasioned ‘accounts’ are deserving of analysis in their own right (Seale 1998, Rapley 2004). Acknowledging and even encouraging this co-constructedness seemed especially important for my interviews. I was keenly aware that as the interviewer in this case I was both a researcher and teacher, while my interviewees were positioned as both research participants and students. As a result, being aware of and embracing a ‘sense of mutual shaping and bi-directionality’ was important in order to treat the interviews as less hierarchical, more dialogic interactions in which both parties would be able to make valuable contributions, and to learn from one another (Mann 2016: 14).

This constructionist conceptualisation, whereby the interview is seen as a social practice through which accounts are co-constructed in interaction, had certain implications for the ways in which I conducted the interviews. Having previously interviewed students and staff from LNFSU in classroom and faculty office locations, I felt that this tended to give the interactions a much more formal ‘institutional’ character, which some interviewees would orient to by treating the situation as one that involved giving a narrow range of ‘correct’ answers (Baker 2002). In contrast, when I had previously experimented with running interviews and focus groups in cafes and restaurants, the interviewees seemed to feel far more comfortable, and it seemed easier for me to encourage them to treat the interaction as a conversation in which they could play an active role in determining what was discussed. As a result, I decided to conduct my interviews in a quiet bakery and coffee shop just next to campus, as this was easy for students to access, but did not feel like an ‘institutional’ space.

After informally thanking the students for coming and seeing whether they wanted a coffee or anything else, I always began by stressing that the interview was not a test, as can be seen in the following extract:

#### **Extract 4.1 Interview with Sophie Li (SoL)**

13 Dun: Just a reminder this is not (.) a test  
14 SoL: (.) .hhh=[okay ((laughs))  
15 Dun: [There are no: there are no right or wrong  
16 answers=some people have asked me "What do I have to  
17 prepa:re? What-"=  
18 SoL: =Ah-  
19 Dun: There's nothing you have to [prepare. So  
20 SoL: [I (.) actually wanted to  
21 ask  
22 Dun: Mm  
23 SoL: But I (0.4) you know ho- hold that mind in my  
24 £mind£

Here, Sophie appears to respond to my remark that the interview is not a test with relief, not only inhaling before releasing her breath with an ‘okay’ followed by laughter (line 14), but also telling me that she ‘actually wanted to ask’ but had held onto that thought (lines 20-21, 23-34). Similar responses were given by several other students, just as there were quite a few participants who expressed (pleasant) surprise when I asked them, at the end of the interview, whether there was anything they wanted to add, or ask me. As the interviews were conceived as being towards the less structured end of ‘semi-structured’, to allow for a good degree of flexibility and to provide more scope for varied interviewee contributions, I prepared a rough interview guide (see Appendix 5) but treated this as something that could regularly be deviated from in terms of order and coverage (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, Mann 2016). While there were certain things I tried to raise with everyone (e.g. first memories) I was not attempting to strive for consistency and comparability, but rather to see what developed in the course of each interaction. As a result, rather than trying to maintain neutrality or distance, I tried to be an appreciate and attentive listener, regularly using continuers such as ‘mm’, and using various types of probes, including active silence, when I wanted interviewees to expand upon something (Mann 2016). I aimed for each interview to last around thirty minutes, but many of the interviewees indicated that they were happy to talk for longer and so it was not uncommon for the conversations to extend past the hour mark.



I made the decision to begin in English rather than Mandarin, whilst giving encouragement to the students, in both languages, that they should use Mandarin if they preferred at any point, for any reason. With most of the students' English being better than my Mandarin I felt that this would allow me to manage the ongoing interview interaction more confidently. In addition, because the relationship we had developed in the workshops had been largely conducted in English I was concerned that if I suddenly started using my (good, but far from perfect) Mandarin this might prove distracting. In arriving at this compromise I acknowledged that using a different language would result in a qualitatively different interview (Cortazzi et al. 2011), but because my interviews were conceived as inherently co-constructed and the accounts as interactionally occasioned, I did not feel I would be missing out on a hypothetically more 'correct' or 'authentic' version. Furthermore, because of the years I had spent working with Chinese learners of English at LNFSU, and the time I had spent in workshops with these particular students, I was confident that the particular features of L2 English in this context would not cause any major misunderstandings during the interviews or the analysis (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). While the interview guide in Appendix 5 gives a flavour of the deliberately more conversational language I was aiming for (Mann 2016), the interview extracts featured in Chapter 5 in particular are the best way for the reader to get an impression of how the interviews were conducted.

One important point that must be made is that, unlike the workshops, only audio of the interviews was recorded. To begin with, I was reluctant to use video as I had always felt that potential reactivity (see 4.4.1, above) was a far bigger concern with the interviews than with the workshops (in which forgetting the camera was much easier). In addition, doing the interviews in a location open to the public meant that it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to use video, for reasons of access and ethics (Lester & O'Reilly 2019). In response, I tried to do everything I could to ensure that the highest possible quality of audio was captured, by always picking a quiet table and a quiet time, and using two audio recorders (one closer to me and the other closer to the interviewee). However, inevitably background noise from staff or other customers has occasionally made things difficult to hear. In most cases, listening repeatedly to the audio was enough to overcome these issues, but there were a small number of points at which it was not possible to make out a word or short utterance.<sup>3</sup> However, on balance, although it was an imperfect solution, I decided that the gain in the

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<sup>3</sup> Thanks go to Christopher Strelluf at Warwick for help to digitally 'clean' one particularly troublesome extract.

interviewees' comfort that stemmed from conducting the interviews in the café outweighed the challenges with the audio, and the absence of video data (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008).

For recruitment I employed what might be termed 'criterion-based selection' (Roulston 2011). All students who had attended at least three sessions were sent a message by WeChat (微信 / *Wēixìn*), the ubiquitous Chinese instant messaging app, inviting them to attend an interview. No attempt was made at 'sampling', as this would not have been appropriate (or even possible) in this case. The participants had already self-selected by choosing to attend the workshops and so did not represent a random sample of any other population, and due to ethnomethodology's scepticism around predetermined categories I also had no intention of trying to select candidates based on different facets of their identities. In addition, with the interviews being treated as interactional events in their own right, in which individual accounts were co-constructed in and through that interaction, my focus in analysing and presenting the data was to be on showing the situatedness and particularity of each account, not treating them as representative of the interviewees or students in general. Related to this was the fact that it was important to preserve the interactionally situated nature of the accounts during analysis and presentation. Therefore, to avoid the 'deletion of the interviewer' (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015) I made sure that my contributions were subject to analysis just as the interviewees' were (Roulston 2011). Equally, wherever possible, extracts are presented in their interactional contexts, which include my contributions, rather than as decontextualised statements. After all, in this conception of the interview, 'how' talk is constructed is equally as important as 'what' is said (Roulston 2010), and in this spirit my interviews were conceived and analysed as interactions in which 'Shakespeare', 'education' and even the identities of myself and my participants were all open for negotiation.

#### **4.5 Data analysis**

Having followed the data collection / generation methods discussed in the previous section, I was faced with the challenge of analysing a large quantity of complex data spanning spoken, written and embodied conduct, and representing different aspects of the participants' engagements with Shakespeare, with me, and with each other. I broadly took what could be called, after Heap (1990), an applied ethnomethodology approach. In contrast to a 'pure' ethnomethodological or CA approach, which has a strictly 'analytically motivated' interest in the achievement of social order, I instead wanted to gain an understanding about 'the organization of valued activities', in the form of the Shakespeare workshops and other

interactions I had had with the students (Ten Have 2007: 196). Freebody & Freiberg (2011) advise that the first step in doing this is to analyse the practical, rational achievement of the activities, according to what Garfinkel (1967: 36) calls the ‘dimensions of social organization’: their sequential, topical and categorial arrangement. In order to do this, and thus arrive at warrantable claims about what is taking place, close analysis of each action is necessary in order to determine:

- its position in the local context (local sequential organisation, e.g. its location within the turns at talk)
- its position within the current social and/or institutional activity (extended sequential organisation, e.g. the activity’s position within a workshop)
- the task it performs for the development of the current topic of talk (topical organisation, e.g. starting a lesson, issuing an instruction etc.)
- its connection with categories relevant to the current interactional, social or institutional activity (categorial organisation, e.g. invoking terms such as ‘teacher’, ‘student’, ‘Chinese’, ‘British’ etc.)

(adapted from Freebody & Freiberg 2011: 83-84)

Two powerful means of carrying out this analysis are CA, which is primarily concerned with sequential matters, and MCA, in which categorial work is the focus. These are respectively explained in 4.5.5 and 4.5.6, below, but before that it is necessary to outline the detailed transcription procedures that were needed in order to carry out and communicate this analysis (4.5.1, 4.5.2) and the use of CAQDAS (4.5.3) in the process of identifying activities and actions within the data that merited further analysis (4.5.4).

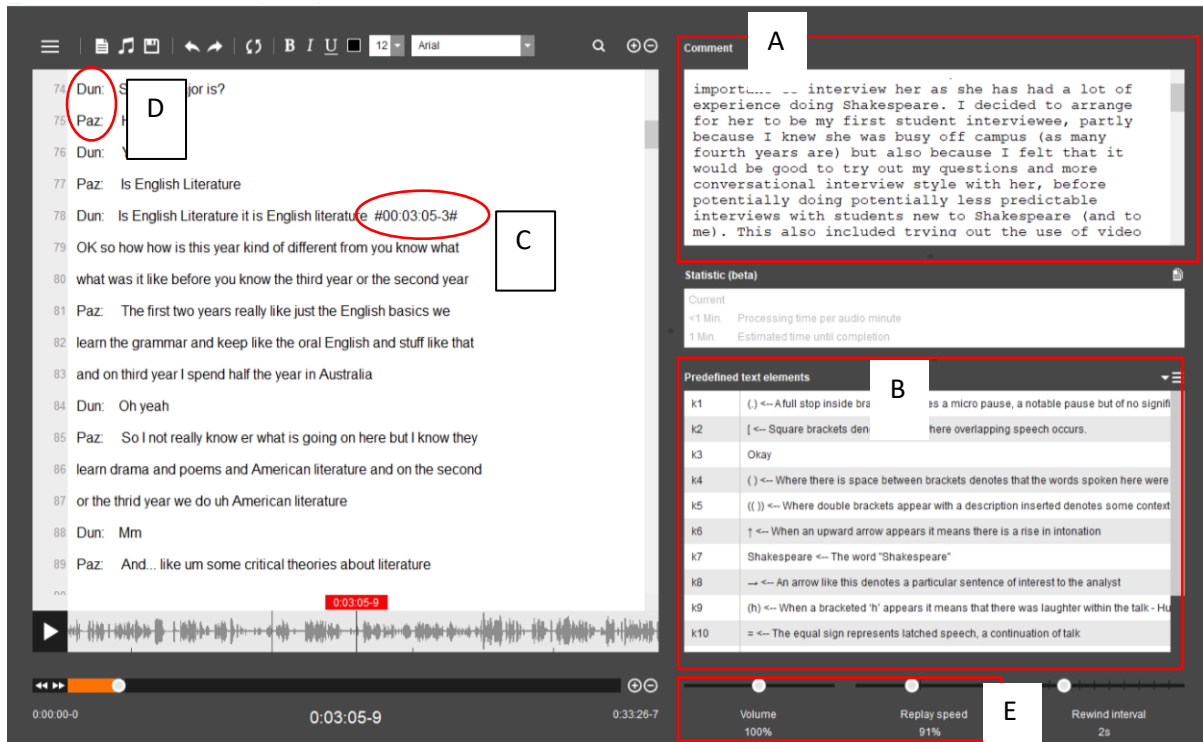
#### **4.5.1 Audio transcription**

Once the interviews and workshops had been recorded, it was necessary to begin the process of transcription. While this is typically (and justifiably) seen as a time-consuming task, it is important to recognise that it is not merely a mechanical one (Mann 2016, Roulston 2010). Rather than being a case of simply writing down what is heard on the recording, transcription should be seen as a detailed engagement with the data, which involves practical, theoretical and even ethical/political choices about how to represent what, and who, is heard (Roulston 2010). In this way, transcription is not merely a prerequisite of analysis when working from a CA perspective (Hepburn & Bolden 2017, Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008), but a fundamental stage in the analytic process (Mann 2016, Roulston 2010, Ten Have 2004). One of the

advantages of transcription is that it allows researchers to slow things down, and pay extremely close attention to features of interaction that might otherwise be missed (Hepburn & Bolden 2017, Mann 2016). This can even – or perhaps *especially* – be the case when the interactions being studied involve the researcher, and Chapters 5-7 include realisations about drama workshops, Shakespeare education, and my own teaching and research practice, that I simply would not have arrived at without having conducted detailed transcription. Another powerful advantage of taking the time to produce the detailed, robust transcripts associated with CA is that these in turn provide support for detailed, robust analytical claims, which are available for the scrutiny of other researchers (Hepburn & Bolden 2017). The principles of CA, as drawn on in this study, will be introduced in 4.5.5, below, but before then this section will outline how the transcription process was conducted, and why certain decisions were taken regarding the level of detailed being represented.

In this project, the process of transcription began with me familiarising myself with the data, by listening to the recordings at least once, before listening again in order to produce a simple transcript in standard orthography (Hepburn & Bolden 2017). These initial stages were undertaken using the F4 package for Windows, which is fairly easy to use and relatively affordable, while still offering powerful features. Most prominent among these is the use of the F4 key to pause the recording (hence the package's name), and the use of F3 and F5 to skip backwards and forwards, respectively – features that allowed me to easily navigate the recordings and re-listen to tricky segments repeatedly. The screengrab in Figure 4.6, below, also shows a number of other useful features, including a 'Comment' window (A, top right), which allows notes to be taken in addition to the transcript itself, customisable 'Predefined text elements' (B, bottom right), which allow hotkeys to be set up for frequently-used text elements (including, in my case, the words 'Okay' and 'Shakespeare'), and finally timestamps (C), which are automatically inserted when F8 is pressed. Speaker prefixes (D) can be inserted with further hotkeys, and additional controls at the bottom right (E) allow the volume and replay speed to be adjusted – both features I used a lot for more complex recordings.

**Figure 4.6 Selected features of F4 transcription software**



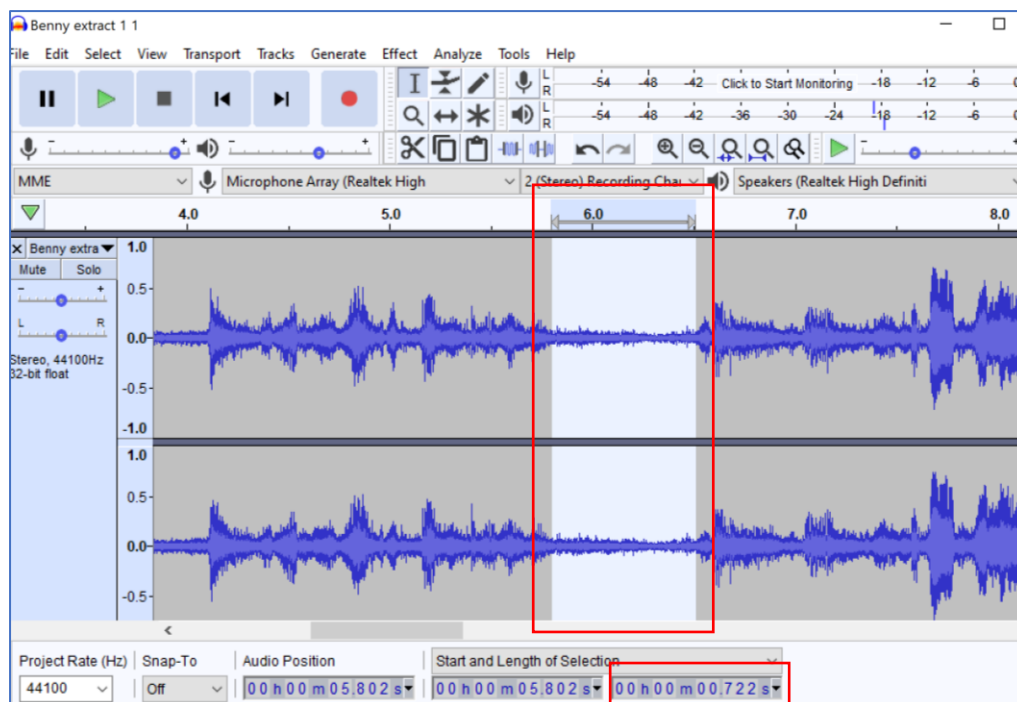
The initial aim was not to produce full CA transcripts, as this would have taken up too much time before it was even clear what my focus should be. Instead, the goal was to produce searchable transcripts (see 4.5.3), that were detailed enough to allow me to identify sequences that could later be selected for closer analysis (Hepburn & Bolden 2017). Once such sequences had been identified (see 4.5.4, below), the next stage was to produce more detailed transcriptions of those sections, using a version of the Jeffersonian conventions (after their creator, Gail Jefferson) that have become the standard in CA (Clift 2016). After attending several CA training workshops at Loughborough University and receiving feedback on work-in-progress at various data sessions, I felt confident about transcribing at the level of detail shown in the following extract:

**Extract 4.2 Interview with Ann**

833 Dun: So what (0.4) what do you think you can actually get  
 834 from do:ing (0.5) Shakespeare?  
 835 Ann: (1.0) mm:: (2.1) this is this is why I want to  
 836 know (0.6) through attending these lectures and °courses°  
 837 (0.7) umm .pt be↑cause↑ when I: (0.7) e:r#rrrr# (1.2) when  
 838 when I enter: our unive:rsity:?  
 839 Dun: Mm  
 840 Ann: I know some of my friends are ↓crazy about Shake[speare↓  
 841 Dun: [ ((laughs))

A list of the transcription conventions used in this study can be found at the beginning of this thesis, but a number of features can be highlighted here. These include transcribing what might sometimes be dismissed as inconsequential sounds, such as the continuer ‘mm’ (lines 835 and 839) and hesitations such as ‘umm’ (line 837), and the use of altered orthography to represent other elements of talk-in-interaction. The numbers in brackets indicate timed pauses – some short (e.g. line 833) and others quite long (e.g. line 835). These were measured using a separate software package called Audacity, which is free and makes it easy to time pauses by clicking and dragging the cursor over the visible gap between the relevant waveforms, with the interval indicated at the bottom of the screen (see Figure 4.7, below). The colons (lines 834, 835, 837-838) indicate that the speaker is stretching her words, while the question marks (lines 834 and 838) and arrows (lines 837 and 840) show differing degrees of intonational shifts. Elsewhere we also get examples of different qualities of vocal production, including emphasis (the underlining in lines 833 and 840), low volume (‘°courses°’ in line 836) and vocal fry or creaky voice (the ‘e:r#rrrrr#’ in line 837). The square brackets at lines 840-841 show where we both began speaking in overlap, while finally we also have the representation of non-speech sounds, such as lip smacking (‘.pt’, line 837) and laughter (noted within double brackets on line 841).

**Figure 4.7 Measuring a pause using Audacity**



At first the time, effort and level of detail involved in this type of transcription can seem excessive, especially given that many of the features represented in the extract above are precisely the kinds of things that many interviewers would dismiss as irrelevant or even distracting (Hepburn & Bolden 2017, Roulston 2010). However, as will be shown later, from a CA perspective ‘even the most minor or apparently irrelevant speech events may be interactionally significant’ (Wooffitt 2005: 11). This is certainly the case with Extract 4.2, above, in which these features are fundamental to how the interviewee characterises her friends’ admiration of Shakespeare – which she says she does not share – in certain ways, while orienting to the fact that she is saying this to someone who teaches Shakespeare (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed analysis of this interview). In this regard, the detail and precision found in CA transcripts is necessary to get anywhere near an understanding of what is being done interactionally by the interlocutors; as Wong & Waring (2020: 5) put it, ‘[t]ranscriptions are exacting in these minute ways because it is participants who are so exacting in talk-in-interaction’. However, it is important to acknowledge that CA transcriptions can be challenging not only for those that are producing them, but also those who are going to read them. For avowedly CA researchers the detail and features represented in Jeffersonian transcriptions are sometimes considered non-negotiable (Lester & O’Reilly 2019), but in more applied situations it is still possible to draw on the insights of CA without necessarily presenting transcripts in a form that will be unusable by those who may benefit from the research (Lamerichs & Te Molder 2011, Mann 2016). In the case of this project, for example, I decided to use the analyst’s note ‘((laughs))’ instead of the complex approach to transcribing laughter advocated by Hepburn & Bolden (2017). I did this because I did not feel that the full transcription of laughter was necessary for me to make the particular analytic claims I was making, and also because this was an element of my working transcripts that peers in Warwick’s Teacher Education and Development Research Group felt was confusing (more than one read the transcribed laughter as hiccoughs). As a result, I have tried to balance the level of detail necessary to support the analytic claims I am making with the legibility and utility of the transcripts for my desired audience – many of whom will be unfamiliar with CA.

One of the other challenges of transcribing and presenting the spoken data for this project was the fact that not all of it was in English. Aside from the occasional word of French, Spanish or Japanese, Mandarin and Cantonese were also used at different times by the participants. In situations such as this, multi-linear transcriptions are commonly used (Sidnell

2009), with separate lines typically showing the original talk, an English gloss, and an idiomatic English translation (Hepburn & Bolden 2017). A slightly different three-line approach was adopted for this study, due to some of the specific challenges involved in transcribing spoken Chinese data in English. As Kobin (quoted in Hepburn & Bolden 2017: 134) has noted, because of the nature of 汉字 (*hànzì*, or Chinese characters) ‘the orthography of Mandarin Chinese is fundamentally incompatible with the Jeffersonian transcription system’. (The same is true for the traditional/non-simplified characters used in Hong Kong for Cantonese). Because characters represent multiple distinct sounds within a single indivisible unit, they cannot be used to display the kinds of phenomena that can be indicated within an English word or sound (e.g. stress, stretching, overlap etc.). One response in CA work involving Mandarin (e.g. Wu 2016) is to transcribe using the Pinyin romanization system, which enables the analyst to use Jeffersonian conventions – but at the expense of the ‘semantic richness’ of Chinese characters (Kobin, quoted in Hepburn & Bolden 2017: 135). This is not a binary choice, however, and in this study I have included characters on a line between the romanization and the English gloss. This can be seen in the following extract, which features English, Mandarin and Cantonese:

#### Extract 4.3 Workshop 4

2717 Dun: But (.) that doesn't necessarily mean it has to be  
 2718 Pǔtōnghuà  
           普通话  
           [Mandarin]  
 2719 S??: Ah:!  
 2720 Dun: Okay  
 2721 Xih: Yuèyǔ (.) Cantone:se?  
           粤语  
           [Cantonese]  
 2722 Dun: Yeah (.) well (.) jau mou<sup>5</sup> jan<sup>4</sup> sik<sup>1</sup>gong<sup>2</sup> baak<sup>6</sup>waa<sup>6\*2</sup>  
                                   有冇    人    識講    白話  
                                   [Is there anyone who knows how to speak Cantonese?]

In this example, the Mandarin used by myself and Xihong at lines 2718 and 2721 is represented in the first instance using the Pinyin romanization system (which uses diacritic marks to represent Mandarin’s tones), followed by the simplified Chinese characters used in Mainland China, and then an English gloss. Where Cantonese is used in line 2722 I have used the Jyutping romanisation system (which represents Cantonese tones using numbers) on the first line, followed by the traditional / complicated characters that are used to write Cantonese in Hong Kong on the second line. As well as making it easier for me to disambiguate the



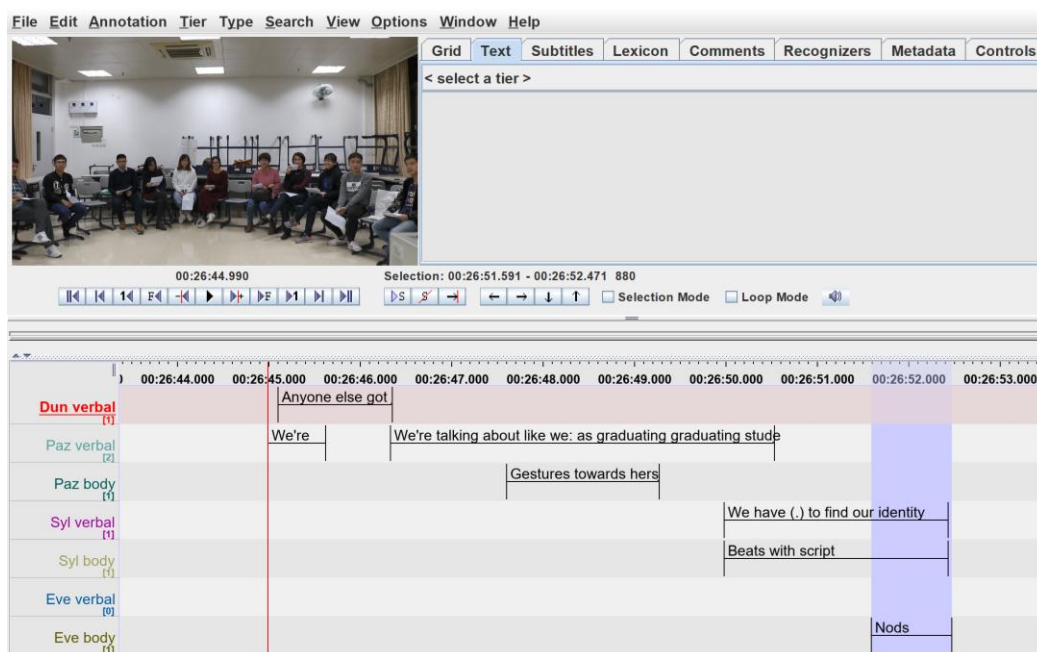
different characters being used by participants (something that would be difficult with the Pinyin or Jyutping alone, due to the prevalence of homophones in Chinese languages), this was also done in the interests of linguistic and epistemic representation. Three lines may be more cumbersome, and not every line will be accessible to all of my potential readers, but at least this approach allows Mandarin and Cantonese speakers – including my participants – to read Chinese-language utterances in the orthographic systems associated with those languages. As Roulston (2010: 105) argues, transcription reflects not just our theoretical assumptions, but also ‘ethical decision-making about how we represent others, and is a political act’.

#### **4.5.2 Multimodal transcription of workshop videos**

While CA transcription of audio data is a difficult, time-consuming task, easily the most challenging element of this project was the transcription of the workshop videos. The first reason for this is simply that the visual field of a video, and especially one of a drama workshop, contains within it vastly more phenomena than the many things an audio transcription already has to represent. However, a second reason is that, unlike the Jeffersonian conventions that have been widely adopted within CA for the transcription of spoken data, there is still no single ‘standard’ system for the transcription of visible conduct (Hepburn & Bolden 2017: 14). In social research in general, verbal and non-verbal behaviour has conventionally – and arguably misleadingly – been analysed separately, with the former being privileged in the discipline of linguistics (Mondada 2014). Within CA specifically, the pioneering work of figures such as Jefferson, Sacks and Schegloff was done using audio data such as telephone calls (Hepburn & Bolden 2017, Lester & O’Reilly 2019). This focus has persisted, with the result that the transcription of video data remains comparatively underexamined – even since the advent of the ‘embodied turn’ in research on language and social interaction (Nevile 2015). This can be illustrated by the fact that in even recent handbooks, the space devoted to transcribing visible conduct is a fraction of that given to spoken interaction. Transcribing visible conduct gets one 30-page chapter out of the 206 pages of Hepburn & Bolden (2017), for example, while transcribing multimodal interactions gets just five (of 296) pages in Lester & O’Reilly’s *Applied Conversation Analysis* (2019). Currently this leaves analysts with a wide range of multimodal transcription approaches to choose from, none of which yet has anywhere near the kind of recognition enjoyed by Jeffersonian transcription.

My initial response to this dilemma was to take an approach, which is fairly common in CA, of first doing an audio transcription of the spoken data in my videos (Hepburn & Bolden 2017). This meant that rather than getting bogged down in the impossible task of trying to represent every single element of conduct visible in the data (Lester & O'Reilly 2019), I was able to produce orthographic transcripts with which I could begin to generate some early analytic insights (Hepburn & Bolden 2017). With language being fundamental to many educational activities (Francis & Hester 2004) – and especially Shakespeare workshops in EFL contexts – it is not surprising that some potentially important instances could be identified from audio-only data. However, just as important was the fact that these initial orthographic transcripts were readily searchable and codable (see 4.5.4). As a result it was easy for me to identify stretches of hearable conduct to then inspect visually, or to watch segments of the videos and then easily find the relevant locations in the orthographic transcripts. I initially watched and re-watched segments of the video data using VLC, a free, open-source media player, as this software made it easy to slow down playback and to take screenshots of moments of particular interest. By doing this I was able to start adding notes and screenshots to segments of potential interest. For some particularly complex instances I employed ELAN, a software package that was developed by the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in the Netherlands and is commonly used in CA. As shown in Figure 4.8, ELAN allows users to create multiple tiers under the playback window in which annotations about the various different types of conduct displayed by multiple participants can be added.

**Figure 4.8 Multimodal annotations using ELAN**



Using ELAN made it easier for me to keep playing back a particular segment of interest until I had a better grasp of the often overlapping hearable and visual actions being produced within it. These could then be added to my working transcripts, but here I encountered another major challenge: how to represent these notes on dense, overlapping visible conduct in the transcripts I would actually present in this thesis? Early on I decided that I would use visual representations (i.e. annotated screenshots), as these are not only ‘more holistic in representation’ than specialised notation systems, but make things more easily comprehensible for readers (Hepburn & Bolden 2017). However, I was concerned that screenshots alone would not adequately convey the complex interplay of ‘sequentiality, temporality, projectability, and progressivity of action’ that needs to be considered when transcribing visible conduct (Mondada 2014: 154). Consequently, I experimented with combining screenshots with a slightly simplified version of Mondada’s transcription conventions (Mondada 2019), showing not the full preparation and retraction of each action, but at least its extent. However, the density and length of my extracts meant that the transcripts were very difficult to produce and even harder to read. As a result I abandoned these experiments, and in most cases simply prioritised annotated screenshots. I accompanied them with straightforward descriptions, and have tried to indicate the extent of actions through the placement of the corresponding figure number below the spoken line. In other cases, I simply included the relevant screenshots in the body of my analysis, using thin arrows to indicate gaze, thicker arrows to indicate movement, and curved arrows to indicate arcing or rotating movements, such as a participant turning their head (see Figures 4.9-4.10 for examples).



**Figure 4.9**

(detail)

*Long Yuan looks to her left to check for danger*



**Figure 4.10**

(detail)

*Long Yuan turns her head and looks for danger to her right*

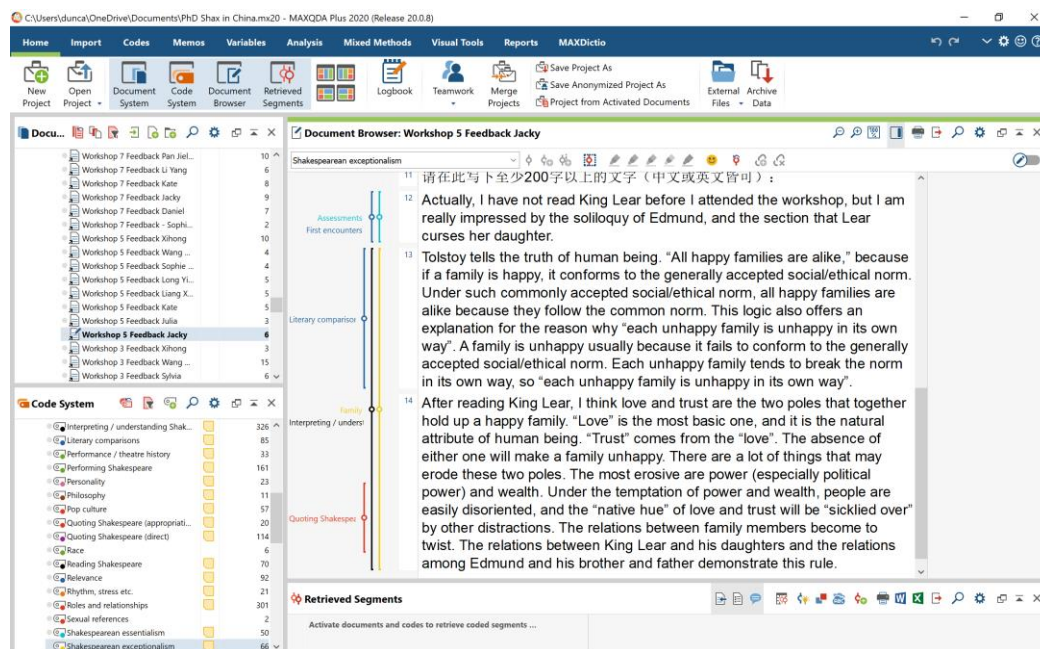
This approach undoubtedly involved a great deal of compromise, but as Mondada (quoted in Hepburn & Bolden 2017: 120) notes, dealing with the ‘conceptual, analytical and technical issues’ raised by attempts to adequately capture and document multimodal details depends on

‘how we treat the situated relevance of multimodal resources and their specific temporalities’. In the case of this project, which required me to analyse far lengthier sequences than are typically found in Mondada’s work, I ultimately decided that any additional analytic insights that might have been demonstrable through the use of Mondada’s conventions were outweighed by the length of time required to produce such transcripts, and the difficulty my desired readers (including teachers) would have had in reading them (Hepburn & Bolden 2017).

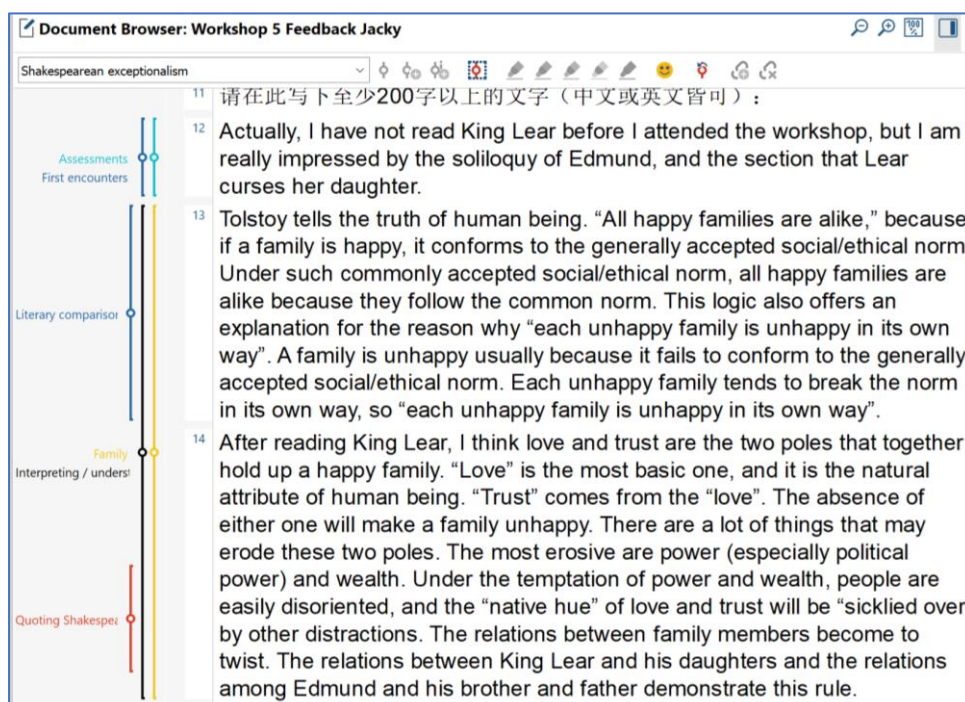
#### 4.5.3 Use of Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS)

Given the quantity of data collected or generated in this project (as summarised in Table 4.1), it made sense to use Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to store, arrange and navigate them (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018). I decided to use MAXQDA, for which I could get a free licence from Warwick’s Department of Applied Linguistics, and which seemed to offer a better balance of features and ease of use for my project than NVivo. MAXQDA is also compatible with F4, the transcription software I used, and so timestamps and line numbers worked automatically when transcripts were imported into MAXQDA. The multiple windows meant I was able to view individual documents or extracts, while still being able to visualise and select documents from the project as a whole (see Figure 4.11.).

**Figure 4.11 Example view of project on MAXQDA**



Another feature of MAXQDA that proved extremely useful was the ability to code selected sections of text simply by right-clicking on them, and either selecting an existing code or creating a new one. It is important, however, to state what this coding function was used for in this project, and what it was *not* used to do – especially given the controversial status of coding within the field of CA (Stivers 2015). The primary function for which I coded extracts was to make smaller segments of the transcripts and written feedback more easily searchable and retrievable (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018), in order to facilitate the identification of suitable extracts for analysis and presentation (see 4.5.4, below). In this respect the process was quite different from the ‘formal coding’ used in much social scientific research, whereby the behaviour observed in social interaction is transformed into categories, which are then counted or cross-referenced against other variables (Stivers 2015). Instead, I tried to take an approach that was as extensive and pluralistic as possible. To ensure that segments or instances within the data were not stripped of their interactional contexts, for example, I always erred on the side of expansiveness, very rarely coding less than two or three lines of a transcript or feedback document, and sometimes passages that were several minutes long. While being aware that *any* coding involves interpretation and transformation, I attempted to give the categories names that were deliberately quite general, rather than being specific and evaluative. These codes also frequently overlapped, as my goal was to make things searchable so that *then* they could be analysed in more detail if appropriate, rather than treating the codes as categories that became the basic of analytic claims in their own right.



**Figure 4.12**  
**Example of**  
**coding using**  
**MAXQDA**  
**(written**  
**feedback)**



In the example above (Figure 4.12), it is possible to see numerous broadly defined codes related to the business at hand overlapping with one another, in some cases referring to what was being discussed (e.g. 'Family', 'Literary comparisons', 'First encounters') and in others to what was being done (e.g. 'Assessments', 'Interpreting / understanding Shakespeare', 'Quoting Shakespeare'). Such codes were always treated as practical and provisional, and if necessary could be rejected altogether when I was identifying extracts for deeper analysis and presentation, as will be described now.

#### **4.5.4 Identification of activities and actions for close analysis**

While Freebody & Freiberg (2011) provide a clear outline of how to approach the sequential, topical and categorial arrangement of actions and the activities they form part of (4.5, above), in a data set as large as the one seen in this study it is impossible to analyse everything in such detail. In this light, the very loose, overlapping labelling of the data, as described above, formed part of a process of 'unmotivated looking' (Sacks 1984, Psathas 1995) in which I tried to familiarise myself with the data without deciding in advance what elements of it might prove interesting or important. In line with my interest in the organisation of 'valued activities' (Ten Have 2007) there were certainly elements of the workshops that I was particularly interested in investigating, such as the 'walking into a scene' and 'reading round the circle' activities that are examined in Chapter 6. However, as I rewatched and produced increasingly detailed transcripts of these sequences, I tried to keep as open a mind as possible about the (inter)actions involved in their sequential, topical and categorial achievement. Because I was not attempting to build a collection of instances of how certain interactional achievements were made (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008), this also meant that single instances (or cases) were considered legitimate objects of analytic interest, not as 'cherry picked' quotes used to (mis)represent wider claims (Ushioda, quoted in Mann 2016: 243), but as examples of situated interactional practices in their own right. Similarly, the commitment to 'unmotivated looking' also meant that something that was initially labelled as one thing using MAXQDA might turn out to be interesting as an example of something completely different after close analysis. The broad areas of interview talk labelled as 'First encounters', for example, which I applied to references to prior experiences of Shakespeare, often turned out to be interesting in ways that went well beyond their topical function. Categorially, then, some students did identity work and moral reasoning through discussing how they and others responded to Shakespeare (see 5.3.1 in the next chapter), while the unexpected ways in which some interviewees oriented to my questions and prompts sometimes proved enlightening in

sequential terms (see 5.1.1). While I deal with potential critiques around generalisability (and what might be seen as a lack thereof) towards the end of this chapter (see 4.6.2, below), I believe that the analysis and discussion of the examples presented in Chapters 5 to 7 in itself justifies their inclusion.

#### **4.5.5 Conversation Analysis (CA)**

It has been noted above that CA is primarily concerned with the sequential organisation of interaction, but this is a dramatic understatement of what it is able to achieve analytically. Initially developed by, and out of the work of, the American sociologist Harvey Sacks, who was himself partly influenced by Garfinkel, CA is ‘the study of how social action is brought about through the close organisation of talk’ (Antaki 2011: 1). Through unprecedentedly detailed analysis of apparently mundane activities such as phone calls, early CA was able to show that, far from being disordered or imperfectly formed, everyday conversation features intricately designed and highly organised turns at talk (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008). Furthermore, it is through such design and the resulting sequential organisation of talk that interactants are able both to display their interpretations of previous turns, and act upon them. In making sense of and in the world in this way, social order can be seen to be achieved through talk-in-interaction (Schegloff 1987). While ‘pure’ or ‘canonical’ CA (Ten Have 2007, Antaki 2011) is associated with the analysis of this order in and of itself, a large volume of CA-inspired studies have been interested in how this achievement of social order relates to institutional settings such as courtrooms, hospitals and schools. The focus in this kind of ‘Applied CA’ is not only on how activities within these institutions are achieved through talk-in-interaction – which could be the focus of any CA study (Ten Have 2007) – but also on how the specific institutional character of such settings is achieved in the process (Heritage 1997). This institutionally-directed analysis is arguably only one type of ‘applied CA’; Antaki (2011) lists five others, including communicational and diagnostic forms that look at communication problems and physiological or psychological disorders, respectively. However, institutional applied CA is the form most relevant to this project, and there now exists a large body of CA work that looks specifically at interaction in educational settings (Hester & Francis 2000, Richards & Seedhouse 2005). This includes the burgeoning subfield of CA-SLA (or sometimes CA-for-SLA), which ‘adopt[s] the epistemology and analytical techniques of CA to study how participants empirically do language learning in real time’ (Kunitz, Markee & Sert 2021: 6). Many of the insights drawn on in Chapters 6 and 7 for the

analysis of the workshops can be traced to this field, and particularly work by Seedhouse (2004) and Sert (2015).

In many respects, the analysis that CA conducts on the basis of its painstakingly detailed transcriptions (see 4.5.1-4.5.2) involves bringing certain key principles from ethnomethodology (i.e. the documentary method of interpretation, accountability, reflexivity and indexicality) to bear specifically on talk-in-interaction. For example, an understanding of the normative character of conversational organisation can be seen in the important examples of adjacency pairs and preference organisation (Drew 2005). Adjacency pairs, for example, are utterances that come in pairs – such as questions and answers – and that ideally are produced next to one another (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2008). This *ideally* relates to normativity, because typically a second pair part (e.g. an answer) will be expected to follow a turn that is hearable as a first pair part (e.g. a question). It does not have to, of course, and in some situations an interlocutor will insert other actions into the sequence before delivering the second pair part, if at all (e.g. requests for clarification before giving an answer). This is where the concept of preference organisation comes in, although it needs to be stressed that ‘preference’ has a particular meaning in CA. The ‘preferred’ response is one that the preceding turn is anticipating, and which can be produced quickly and without much elaboration – as when an invitation is issued, and the response is ‘I’d love to’ (Ten Have 2007). A dispreferred response – such as refusing an invitation – is one that is accountable, and will require extra interactional work (such as delaying the delivery of the dispreferred action, or accompanying it with an excuse or explanation). Of course, in real interaction, such sequential or structural arrangements are carried out using an extraordinary range of interactional resources, which, as noted in 4.5.1-4.5.2, span paralinguistic elements such as shifts in stress, intonation and volume, as well as pauses, laughter and the smacking of lips. In this regard, one of the most powerful aspects of CA is the way it can sensitise researchers ‘to apparently tiny features of interaction and explode their dimensions beyond all expectations, revealing delicacies of design and management that resist the assaults of clumsier instruments’ (Richards 2005: 1). As will be seen in Chapters 5 – 7, CA’s analytic orientation and vocabulary is fundamental to how the interactional architecture of this project’s Shakespeare workshops and research interviews is made visible.

#### **4.5.6 Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA)**



While CA has become a vibrant field that has in many respects eclipsed its ethnomethodological origins, MCA – which similarly originated in the work of Harvey Sacks – is far less well known (indeed, Stokoe (2012: 277) has light-heartedly referred to MCA as a ‘milk float’ in danger of being forced off the road by the comparative ‘juggernaut’ of CA). This relative lack of familiarity is unfortunate, because MCA offers categorial insights that are not provided by, and can actually complement, CA’s sequential focus. Specifically, MCA examines ‘people’s routine methods of social categorisation and local reasoning practices as a display and accomplishment of “doing” society’ (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015: 5). From this perspective, culture and identity are not ‘things’ at all, but rather local accomplishments, as even when seemingly straightforward identity categories (e.g. ‘British’ or ‘female’) are used, there can be considerable variation in who and what these categories refer to, what they mean to participants, and what they are being used to accomplish. Despite its low profile in comparison to CA, MCA’s categorial insights have been productively applied to a range of nominally intercultural contexts, some of them educational (e.g. Arano, 2019; Attenborough & Stokoe, 2015; Brandt & Jenks, 2011; Jenks, 2013; Mori, 2003; Nishizaka, 1995; Shrikant 2018; Zhu, 2015). MCA’s potential for use in researching drama education has also been recognized by Freebody & Freiberg (2011), and is integral to Freebody’s (2010, 2013) categorization of talk in the drama classroom, which is explored in Chapters 6 and 7. Freebody’s research recognises the importance of the moral reasoning that can be done through categorial work, something that is highlighted in Jayyusi’s (1984) groundbreaking work. This aspect of categorial organisation can be seen in the analysis of the workshops shared in Chapters 6 and 7, but is also drawn upon in Chapter 5, in relation to how some of the participants orient to and negotiate categories such as ‘literature student’ as they discuss the implications of people liking or not liking, or understanding or not understanding Shakespeare.

Although Schegloff (2007) rather problematically accused MCA of a certain analytic ‘promiscuity’, the work contained in Fitzgerald & Housley’s (2015) edited collection, *Advances in Membership Categorisation Analysis*, and elsewhere has highlighted the systematicity and rigour with which MCA can be undertaken. Guiding principles for doing MCA have also been proposed by Stokoe & Attenborough (2015). While their suggestion that the first steps for studies combining CA and MCA could involve building collections of category uses risks the kind of categorial reification that Watson (2015) cautions against, the subsequent stages they propose offer a systematic template for applying MCA. They

recommend that analysts work to ‘[l]ocate the sequential position of each categorial instance’, ‘[a]nalyse the design and action orientation of the turn or text’ in which it appears, and finally ‘look for evidence that, and how, recipients orient to the category, device or resonant description’ (Stokoe & Attenborough 2015: 93, emphasis in original). As well as accepting or resisting incumbency in categories that are invoked, speakers or writers can also negotiate those categories, and negotiate the ‘activities, rights and obligations’ that may be related to them (Reynolds & Fitzgerald 2015). This will particularly be seen in Chapter 7, when the category ‘Chinese’ – which could be seen as conferring incumbency on the students, but not me – is brought into a discussion about whether the aspects of Shakespeare that today seem offensive should be adapted or censored. In applying it to the spoken interactions of the interviews and workshops, and the written feedback texts (Housley & Fitzgerald 2015), MCA offers a powerful way of examining how the participants, including me, invoked, negotiated and oriented to various categories, and then did things with them in interaction.

#### **4.6 Ensuring ethics and quality**

The sections above outline how this project was conceived and how and why its methods of data collection and analysis were chosen and then used. This section will add to this information a consideration of issues relating to the integrity and trustworthiness of the project. First, in 4.6.1, I will describe the procedures taken to ensure that each stage of the project was conducted ethically, taking into account the fact that the research involved an educational setting, and one in which the student participants were engaging with the project, and the researcher, in another language. Then, in 4.6.2, I will turn to the question of quality, and the efforts I have taken to assure myself that this research is robust and trustworthy, and to assure others of that as I communicate my findings in this thesis. As will be seen, this will involve issues surrounding the integrity of qualitative research on education in general, but also issues that are highly specific to the ethnomethodological perspective I have taken, and especially the use of CA.

##### **4.6.1 Ethical issues**

Ethics, which relates to ‘the study of what are good, right or virtuous courses of action’ has a crucial place at every stage of the research process, from the planning and implementation, to how the research is disseminated and followed up on (Punch & Oancea 2014: 58). As a postgraduate researcher at the University of Warwick specialising in education I had certain

institutional and disciplinary responsibilities when it came to ethics in this project. Most obviously, I sought and gained ethical approval from the university through my home department of Education Studies. In addition, in the process of preparing this ethical approval application I consulted and ensured I was complying with the ethical guidelines of the relevant educational body, the British Educational Research Association (BERA)<sup>4</sup>.

Much of this is reflected in the information sheet and informed consent form that I prepared for the participants (see Appendix 9). The information sheet, for example, clearly and concisely outlined what taking part in the project would mean for the participants (in terms of their involvement in active, participatory Shakespeare workshops and the invitation to write optional feedback and take part in interviews), as well as their right to withdraw at any time. It also made clear my commitments to maintaining the participants' confidentiality and anonymity through the use of pseudonyms, and maintaining the integrity of their information through the careful and responsible management of the data I collected. The informed consent form then put in concrete terms what the participants were agreeing to, with separate boxes needing to be ticked to indicate that the participants acknowledged and agreed to me being able to use the data in various ways, including in academic publications and presentations, and for teaching and training purposes. As there can be a danger that gaining informed consent can be treated as a formality by researchers and participants (Lester & O'Reilly 2019), I took two main steps to try to ensure that the consent of my participants was genuinely 'informed'. First, I asked colleagues at LNFSU to help me translate the information sheet and informed consent form into Mandarin to make it easier for my English-learner participants to read, and to avoid there being any confusion about the vocabulary being used. This was especially important given the multilingual and intercultural nature of the project, as I was well aware from having worked at LNFSU that the understandings of and approaches to research ethics and informed consent in the FoE were not always the same as those I was working with (Woodin 2016). This relates to the second step I took, which was to give the informed consent forms out in hard copy form, before the start of a potential participant's first session, and then ask the students to take some time to read through and ask me any questions before signing if they wished. I felt it was especially important to do this because a number of the students – and especially those I already knew – seemed happy

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that at the time I applied for ethical approval the most recent set of BERA's ethical guidelines was the third edition (2011). A fourth edition (BERA 2018) has since been released, and I have checked this to ensure that there are no ethical implications resulting from additions and changes to this newer document.

simply to trust me and sign the form without reading it. While all of the participants who read the form in detail agreed to give informed consent after doing so, one did ask not to be featured in any future academic publications, a wish that I will obviously respect in any journal articles or chapters that I may subsequently publish.

The process of explaining the project to the participants and obtaining their informed consent was of course only part of ensuring that this study was undertaken according to the highest ethical standards. While my project – which was conducted with adult participants, none of whom were apparently vulnerable in other ways – would not generally be considered to be a potentially risky one, it was still important for me to be aware of ethical dilemmas that might arise during the course of implementing and disseminating it. O'Reilly & Kiyimba (2015), for example, have noted that there are particular ethical considerations that relate specifically to qualitative projects. These are: depth (as a result of the in-depth data collected in qualitative projects such as mine), the degree and kind of researcher involvement (which in my case was as teacher and researcher), the iterative nature of the project (with ethical behaviour needed at all stages of the evolving lifecycle of a qualitative project), the increased visibility of participants (e.g. because of the use of audio and video recordings), and data management (specifically the care that needs to be taken with what might be the highly personal information that is collected). As I hope will be demonstrated in Chapters 5 to 7, I sought to be sensitive and respectful when conducting the interviews and teaching the workshops, and in the latter case I always tried to be guided by the principle of drama education being a non-coercive 'pedagogy of choice' (Neelands 2009b). I also hope that the care I have taken in terms of balancing the need for privacy and confidentiality with a commitment to fairly and respectfully representing the participants can be seen in the discussion about pseudonymisation (3.2.3 in the previous chapter) and my representation of different languages (see 4.5.1 above).

However, certain ethical responsibilities and choices are not visible when research is communicated in a thesis such as this, and so it is worth noting here that there were various occasions on which I chose not to record certain aspects of interaction, or not to use data that had been recorded. As discussed by Brinkmann & Kvale (2015), Mann (2016) and others, the level of rapport and trust that may be built up during interviews can lead participants to share highly personal details that might be damaging or distressing for them if published. As I was also a teacher in this project this was even more pronounced, and there were several occasions on which students asked if they could seek my advice about personal matters

unrelated to the project. On these occasions I made a point of turning off the audio recorders, and assuring them that anything we subsequently discussed would be off the record. On other occasions, the fact of comprehensively capturing interaction in the course of doing Applied CA research meant that participants sometimes mentioned highly personal information while we were recording, or opinions about other students or members of staff that I felt could negatively impact them or the people they were referring to if published (O'Reilly & Kiyimba 2015, Lester & O'Reilly 2019). In these situations, even though I had permission to use these segments of data I did not do so, in the interest of maintaining participants' dignity and minimising harm (BERA 2018).

Finally, special mention needs to be made of the ethical considerations surrounding the use of video. The most obvious concern relates to anonymity, as video makes it possible for participants to be identified in ways that pseudonymised verbal transcripts do not (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018, Lester & O'Reilly 2019). As a result, the multimodal CA research published in journals such as *Research on Language and Social Interaction (ROLSI)* commonly features screengrabs that have been altered with software that produces sketch-style images, thereby making the participants harder to recognise (Hepburn & Bolden 2017). However, Clark, Prosser & Wiles (2010) suggest that researchers should take a situated approach, judging the ethics of image-based research on a case-by-case basis. For this project, therefore, while I did consider using software to anonymise the screengrabs, I ultimately decided that this would be unnecessary, and even counterproductive. To begin with, while much Applied CA work that uses video involves sensitive topics and locations (e.g. healthcare and legal settings) and potentially vulnerable participants (e.g. children and hospital patients), this was not the case in my research (Lester & O'Reilly 2019). In addition, while the absence of recording restrictions in an educational establishment or other public place does not mean that it is automatically acceptable to record there (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018), in this study all of the participants were aware that the workshops were being filmed, and voluntarily attended after giving informed consent to this. Furthermore, it was important to consider what anonymising the screengrabs would actually achieve in this case. With complete anonymity being impossible to guarantee due to my professional connection with LNFSU being a matter of public record (as noted in 3.2.3), altering the images enough to ensure that the participants were unidentifiable would have rendered them useless for the purposes of demonstrating the fine-grained multimodal conduct I was trying to highlight (Clark, Prosser & Wiles 2010). As a result, with the full informed consent – and, in

a number of cases, the enthusiastic *assent* – of the participants I decided to use undisguised screengrabs in this thesis. Nevertheless, when presenting this research at conferences and data sessions I have never shared the video files themselves, and have always asked attendees not to make or share copies of any images featuring my participants, in order to reduce the risk of such images being disseminated without my control.

#### **4.6.2 Integrity and trustworthiness**

In one respect, the actual quality of research is an also ethical issue – due to responsibilities to participants, peers, and the wider research community and public, it is unethical for researchers to undertake work that they are not competent to do (BERA 2018). However, assuring others of this competence and communicating how it was maintained throughout every stage of the research process can be difficult to achieve. This is the case in qualitative research in general, and especially in projects involving CA, in which concepts such as validity, reliability and generalisability might operate differently or be less appropriate than in more quantitative work (Maxwell 2013, Seedhouse 2005). One possible response to this situation is to reject the arguably positivistic vocabulary of reliability and validity, and instead provide assurances of soundness and rigour through alternative terms such as trustworthiness and authenticity (Mertens 2010). However, an alternative approach is taken by Seedhouse (2005), who directly engages with general social science concepts relating to quality and rigour, and outlines how these relate to CA research. Specifically, I will here address Seedhouse’s comments on reliability, internal validity, external validity and ecological validity, as they are extremely helpful in explaining how quality and rigour have been maintained in this study:

- *Reliability*: This relates to issues of accuracy and replicability – ‘[f]or research to be reliable it must demonstrate that if it were to be carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context (however defined), then similar results would be found’ (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011: 199). In many respects it would seem impossible and inappropriate to apply the notion of replicability to a project such as mine (in which no two workshops or participants are the same), but, drawing on Peräkylä (1997) and Ten Have (1999), Seedhouse (2005) notes that reliability in CA studies can be related to the accuracy and quality of recordings and transcripts – issues dealt with in previous sections of this chapter. Furthermore, he points out that because in CA a researcher’s analysis is shared, in the sense that its claims are made

on the basis of transcripts that are shown to the reader, it is possible for other researchers to analyse the data and judge the analytical claims made on their basis. Therefore, the *analysis* done in CA (and MCA) is in fact repeatable by someone else – even if the actual interaction that it is analysing is not. In the case of my study, as well as discussing many of the extracts used in my analysis chapters with experienced CA researchers during various data sessions, the informed consent I obtained would allow me to share audio and video recordings with other researchers who had analytic queries.

- *Internal validity*: This ‘seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data’ (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011: 183). The fact that CA shows its workings, so to speak, has already been noted above, but Seedhouse (2005) also makes an important point about what practitioners of CA and ethnomethodology in general understand as evidence in the first place. As discussed above (see 4.2, 4.5.5 and 4.5.6), from an ethnomethodological perspective evidence is sought of participants’ sense-making activities from their (emic) perspective, on the grounds that interactants reflexively, indexically display their interpretations and orientations to each other. On this basis they become analytically available to the researcher, and Seedhouse (2005: 255) stresses that ‘CA practitioners make no claims beyond what is demonstrated by the interactional detail’. This also addresses a concern that Kitzinger (2008) has expressed about CA studies involving researchers analysing data in which they are also participants struggling to avoid bias and subjectivity. Roulston’s (2019: 12) response, that ‘undertaking the slow, pain-staking [sic], and deliberate analysis that is associated with ethnomethodologically informed approaches’ is in fact a way of countering such bias when analysing interviews, could also be applied to my ethnomethodological analysis of my own teaching, which Chapters 6 and 7 will show relied on what was observably the case, rather than my own speculations or feelings.
- *External validity*: This relates to ‘generalizability or the extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond the specific research context’ (Seedhouse 2005: 256). Due to their context-bounded nature this is another area in which qualitative research and ethnomethodological / CA studies in particular are often claimed to be weak. In one sense, this criticism seems misplaced. Neither Shakespeare workshops nor qualitative interviews can be replicated in the way that a laboratory experiment might be, and

with every student, every teacher and every class being different, generalisability in educational contexts is perhaps better thought of in how processes might be relevant or adaptable, rather than repeatable, in different settings (Maxwell 2013). However, despite their focus on the particularities of specific interactions, CA and MCA are able to bring together the micro and the macro levels, as it is through the micro-organisation of interactional contexts that participants accomplish local instantiations of macro-level culture and social order (Seedhouse 2005, Housley & Fitzgerald 2015). Thus, while the ways my participants described Shakespeare or used particular categories might not be exactly the same as what might take place in other contexts, the procedures they used to do so could be instructive.

- *Ecological validity*: This is an area in which the emphasis in ethnomethodology and CA on the ‘naturally occurring’ can be a distinct advantage, as ecological validity ‘is concerned with whether findings are applicable to people’s everyday life’ (Seedhouse 2005: 257). As discussed in various places above, while the situations recorded in this project – and the fact that they were recorded in the first place – were initiated by me as the researcher and teacher, there is nothing experimental about my data. The interviews, workshops and written feedback all show participants taking part in ‘natural’ behaviour in the contexts of those situations. Active Shakespeare workshops and research interviews of the kind examined in this project might not occur in everyone’s ‘everyday life’, but they are a perfectly typical, if exciting, part of my ‘everyday life’ as an educator and researcher. And, as I will argue in Chapter 8, they are also approaches that could and even should be used far more often for educational and research purposes in other settings.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the methodology used in this project, from its conceptualization in relation to a constructionist worldview and the adoption of an ethnomethodological perspective, to the formulation of its research questions and details of the data collection and analysis methods used to answer them. For each of these stages, social interaction is absolutely fundamental, as the vehicle through which people make sense of, and in, the world, and in doing so make their sense-making analytically available to researchers. In the three chapters that follow, the detailed, fine-grained processes of transcription and analysis described above are put into action. They will show how this study’s participants – including me – did various things as they talked about Shakespeare in the interviews, and how we



practically, collaboratively accomplished the Shakespeare workshops by drawing on various linguistic, categorial and interactional resources. The analysis and discussion in these three chapters is, therefore, highly specific, but in explicating the detailed processes involved my aim is also to shed light on how such processes might operate in other contexts, which may be more relevant for the reader. Indeed, despite their highly specific focus, showing how participants *do* social order in interaction should also prove instructive in understanding how social order is achieved in other settings and situations. After all, ethnomethodology reminds us that sense-making on the basis of observing and acting upon the others' displays of rational action is something we all have to do. In some respects, then, Shakespeare's Adriana is on the right track in this chapter's opening example, as she attempts to use empirical observations to underpin her understanding of her husband's apparently inexplicable behaviour. However, in the analysis chapters that follow I will be using a different model of connecting the micro and macro. Rather than looking at anyone's facial expressions as an external manifestation of their 'heart's meteors', or innermost feelings, I will instead look at how (micro) interaction displays the 'doing' of various aspects of (macro) social order (Seedhouse 2005). In the process, the research interviews and Shakespeare workshops examined in this project will be shown to be not set apart from 'real' life, but just another way of doing it.

## Chapter 5: What we talk about when we talk about Shakespeare – respecifying Shakespeare in and through interaction

CASSIO: Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost  
my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of  
myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation,  
Iago, my reputation!

IAGO: As I am an honest man, I thought you had received  
some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than  
in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false  
imposition: oft got without merit, and lost without  
deserving: you have lost no reputation at all,  
unless you repute yourself such a loser.

(*Othello*, 2.3, 1416-1426)

For the officer Michael Cassio, faced with demotion after his general, Othello, has caught him in the midst of a drunken brawl, a loss of reputation means the loss of something timeless and transcendent – the ‘immortal part’ of himself. Iago responds to Cassio’s lament by telling him that reputation is in fact something far more fluid, temporal and worldly, ‘oft got without merit, and lost without deserving’ (*Othello*, 2.3, 1417-1424). Iago understands this only too well, having deliberately engineered Cassio’s fall from favour as one strand of his plot against Othello. However, irrespective of his motives, Iago’s point resonates more widely: in reminding Cassio that reputations are got and lost, he reminds us that reputations are made (and destroyed) through social processes. In Shakespeare’s case, this is often forgotten, due to the ways in which he has frequently been portrayed using terms related to immortality – most famously in Ben Jonson’s elegiac claim that ‘[h]e was not of an age but for all time’. Even *Shakespeare Lives*, the British Council’s 2016 commemorative programme, was translated into Chinese as ‘Eternal Shakespeare’ (永恒的莎士比亚 / *yǒnghéng de shāshìbǐyǎ*). In reality, Shakespeare’s transformation from just one early modern playwright to a ‘National

Poet' and international icon (Dobson 1992) was the result of numerous critical, commercial and colonial processes. These are often obscured by the 'myth of universality' surrounding Shakespeare, which Joubin & Mancewicz have described as being 'built upon a discursive move that presupposes unchanging meanings of the same story to different cultures, an assumption that the plays are always locally relevant in the same way in aesthetic, moral, and political terms' (2018: 4). It was, therefore, important to challenge this 'myth of universality' at every stage of the current project. In designing and running the workshops, this meant addressing the relevant sociohistorical contexts, whilst encouraging students to explore Shakespeare interculturally, and arrive at their own interpretations of his work. But more broadly it also meant eschewing blanket assumptions about how the participants – whether defined as students, as Chinese, or as anything else – saw and understood Shakespeare.

To this end, this chapter focusses primarily on the research interviews, and to a lesser extent on the written feedback, as opportunities that allowed participants more space for extended discussion of their experiences and perceptions of Shakespeare than the workshops (which are examined as collaborative, practical achievements in the next chapter). Specifically, this chapter aims to address my first research question:

RQ1: How did the participants describe their experiences and perceptions of Shakespeare?

As has been discussed in the Methodology chapter, neither the interviews nor the written feedback were treated simply 'as techniques for getting at information' (Baker 2002: 778), nor as straightforward evidence of what the participants 'really' think about Shakespeare or anything else. The intention was not to take what Watson and Weinberg (1982: 57), in an early interactional treatment of interviews, called 'a truth-functional approach to the content of the interlocutors' accounts'. In other words, the aim was not to judge the veracity of what was said or written ('Was this *really* their first ever encounter with Shakespeare?', '*Exactly* when and where did this take place?'), nor to establish a list of definitive facts about the interviewees' prior engagements with Shakespeare. Instead, the interviews (and feedback) are treated as events 'in which members use[d] interactional and interpretive resources to build versions of social reality' (Baker 2002: 778). Indeed, rather than being merely 'follow up' or supplementary material, the interviews and feedback are seen as part of – rather than external to – the educational and social realities discussed within them, and are analysed as such (Baker 2002, Roulston 2019). This also means that 'Shakespeare' is treated not as something

whose meaning was automatically shared and understood in the same way, at all times and by all of the participants, but rather as something locally occasioned and accomplished in specific interactions. Accordingly, this chapter aims to present an ethnomethodological respecification of Shakespeare (Stokoe & Attenborough 2015), which examines how understandings of ‘Shakespeare’ were invoked and negotiated, and then used to accomplish various things in their specific interactional contexts.

Using the extensive, pluralistic approach to coding outlined in the Methodology chapter, three main areas of experiences and events discussed in the interviews and feedback have been collected for further analysis and discussion in this chapter, as shown in Table 5.1:

**Table 5.1 Outline of Chapter 5**

Section / Area	Associated questions	Associated codes
5.1 First encounters	5.1.1 How did participants describe their first engagements with Shakespeare? 5.1.2 What ‘counts’ as an engagement with Shakespeare?	First encounters, Shakespearean essentialism
5.2 Who / what is Shakespeare to the participants?	5.2.1 How did the participants describe, make relevant and orient to Shakespeare’s works, reputation and status? 5.2.2 How was the question of Shakespeare’s perceived difficulty discussed?	Adaptation/appropriation, Chinese Shakespeare(s), Difficulty, Early Modern English, Relevance, Shakespearean essentialism, Shakespearean exceptionalism
5.3 What does engaging with Shakespeare mean to the participants?	5.3.1 What, if any, connections did participants make between Shakespeare and their own lives, identities and positionalities?	Affective response, Interpreting / Understanding Shakespeare, Quoting Shakespeare (direct), Relevance, Roles and relationships, Students

The analysis and discussion of these areas should illustrate that while Shakespeare’s reputation and works are not ‘immortal’, as Cassio might have it, neither are they what Iago

would describe as ‘idle and most false imposition[s]’ (*Othello*, 2.3, 1417-1223). Far from being made up of inconsequential chatter with no bearing on the ‘real’ world, an ethnomethodological approach can show that interviews are interactional contexts in which social – and, in this case, educational – actions are practically, locally accomplished. A consideration of these social and educational actions has particular relevance for understanding how the participants actually *did* Shakespeare during the workshops (as examined in Chapter 6), and how they went about doing ‘being intercultural’ when engaging with early EME texts and a practitioner/researcher from the UK (which will be returned to in Chapter 7).

### **5.1 First encounters**

During my years teaching at LNFSU, my impression was that while almost every student in the FoE could name several of Shakespeare’s most well-known plays, this often seemed to be the extent of their familiarity with his work (Lees 2021, forthcoming). This did not necessarily surprise me, but what did was the level of enthusiasm shown by those students who expressed an interest in Shakespeare. Certainly, getting students to attend Shakespeare talks, workshops or performances had always seemed relatively easy at LNFSU, and at other Chinese universities I had visited. While the teaching of the trial scene from *The Merchant of Venice* at Chinese middle schools is frequently mentioned in writing about Shakespeare in China, both academic (e.g. Zhang 1966, Liu & Ruan 2012) and journalistic (e.g. Tsui 2016, Yang 2018, *Penta* 2020), it seemed to me that the students I met at LNFSU and elsewhere had more varied histories of engaging with Shakespeare. Many of them talked about having independently chosen to read Shakespeare’s plays or poems, in English and/or Chinese, to satisfy their own curiosity. Very few of my students appeared to have seen any Shakespeare on stage or performed any themselves before entering higher education, but quite a few talked about watching TV or film adaptations online. In most cases their introductions to Shakespeare seemed to have come during their school years, if not necessarily in school itself – although some students maintained that they had not come across any Shakespeare until university. When working at LNFSU, these kinds of working assumptions informed the ways in which I tackled Shakespeare in my teaching. However, conducting the present research gave me an opportunity to explore in far greater depth how the participants had previously encountered Shakespeare, and how this might relate to their subsequent engagement during the workshops.

Accordingly, one of the prompts I included in my initial interview guide (Appendix 5) was:

Can you remember when you first read or watched any Shakespeare? (What did you think about it?)

On reflection, one potential problem with this prompt was that it assumed that these first experiences necessarily involved reading or watching, rather than performing Shakespeare. This early assumption was perhaps not unreasonable given my aforementioned general impressions, but during the interviews a small number of participants talked about teachers at school or university asking them to perform short scenes or adaptations of Shakespeare in class. Such answers would presumably have been made less interactionally likely by my original prompt, but when I began transcribing the interviews two things became apparent: first, in practice, I had rarely used this prompt in precisely this form, and second, many students raised the topic of their first experiences of Shakespeare before I had felt a need to prompt them. Both of these points are relevant for the following analysis, as in addition to *what* the students said about their first encounters with Shakespeare and *how* they said it in interaction, it was also important to consider *what was being done* – the social actions that were being accomplished – through what was said (Roulston 2019).

Therefore, the following remarks, which are adapted from my research notes, are intended to give an idea of the initial sense I made as I navigated the accounts generated during the first batch of interviews, before I explored them in the kind of interactional detail that will be shown in the rest of the chapter:

When / how: The majority of the initial interviewees (12 of 18) described their first experiences of Shakespeare as having come during their school years, with only six saying that they did not encounter Shakespeare until university. In both groups, a large majority (10 of the 12 who said ‘school’, and five of the six who said ‘university’) described these first experiences as involving reading. Watching some form of TV or film version of Shakespeare was mentioned by four students, but only two talked about actually *doing* any Shakespeare: Michelle, whose teacher asked her to act out short scenes from *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and Yuanqing, who live-dubbed a scene from a film version of *Macbeth* in school. Whether or not participants’ encounters took place in school, as these two did, and whether they were compulsory or voluntary, are questions discussed in 5.1.1 below.

Language: Five of the six interviewees who traced their experiences to university said that they took place in English, with only one (Daniel) saying that he initially read Shakespeare in

Chinese, before tackling some in English. The picture was more mixed with interviewees who talked about coming across Shakespeare in school. Six of the 12 talked about these encounters as taking place exclusively in Chinese, with only one (Michelle) saying that her experience was solely in English. Five of the interviewees described some form of engagement with Shakespeare during their school years as taking place in both Chinese and English, either through the use of bilingual editions (Dinghui and Sylvia), or a mixture of reading and viewing separate materials in both languages (Kate, for example, talked about reading *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* in Chinese, and watching Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* in English). As will be discussed in 5.1.2, whether Chinese translations 'count' as Shakespeare became a matter of debate.

Works: The works mentioned were quite varied. 'Sonnet 18' was raised by five students, *Romeo and Juliet* by seven, and *Hamlet* by nine. *The Merchant of Venice* was mentioned by only three students as something they had read in school (Kate, Chen Shumin and Kiki), although others had read some of it at university. This might seem surprising in light of the scholarly references to *Merchant* being taught at middle school, and the fact that it was staged and screened so often in the twentieth century that it has been called 'China's favourite Shakespeare production' (Li 2003: 3). However, something similar has been noted anecdotally in recent interviews with university students in Beijing and Nanjing (Olive & Hughes 2018), and as the discussion below makes clear, just because a text is technically on the curriculum this does not mean students will have rich memories of engaging with it.

### **5.1.1 How did participants describe their first engagements with Shakespeare?**

As stated earlier, the brief descriptions displayed in Table 5.2 do not adequately reflect the extent of participants' first engagements with Shakespeare, nor the often complex ways in which they described them. What follows in this subsection are interview extracts – some of them extended – which give an indication of the range of descriptions of first encounters that were produced in the interviews. The emphasis is on examining what the participants themselves established as significant – or insignificant, or irrelevant – about their engagements with Shakespeare.

In many instances, the extracts show participants not necessarily treating my questions as requests for factual information, but orienting to the interview context itself by *accounting* for their answers (Baker 2002). For example, Michelle, a second-year who had chosen to major in Translation and Interpreting, talked about her early experiences of Shakespeare as a way of

justifying her attendance at the workshops, despite what she appeared to fear was a lack of relevant knowledge. This occurred when our initial discussion of a typical day (my standard warm-up topic) led to Michelle talking at length about how a particular teacher had inspired her choice of major. I then attempted to shift the topic from her typical day and this influential teacher, to why Michelle had decided to attend the workshops:

### **Extract 5.1 Interview with Michelle (Mic)**

64 Dun: Oh that's good (1.0) I'm sure she'd be very pleased to know  
65 that ((laughs)) okay cool (0.5) erm so you're going to be  
66 doing translation and interpreting  
67 Mic: Yes  
68 Dun: So: (.) what (.) what made you decide to come along to  
69 the: Shake#speare# (0.7) workshops  
70 Mic: Mmm how to say ah (1.4) coz I didn't I read I haven't read  
71 some books before I went to the workshop but I (0.4) when I  
72 was in high school I (0.4) watch a (0.4) some plays and  
73 ( ) [like the  
74 Dun: [Oh okay can you remember  
75 Mic: Romeo (.) Romeo and Juliet (.) it's the most classic

Rather than responding to my question at lines 68-69 with an answer such as ‘Because I’m interested in X’ or ‘Because I wanted to do Y’, from line 70 Michelle produces something that seems almost defensive. After what, in the context of her surrounding speech, is a long pause, Michelle tells me that although she hadn’t read any (Shakespeare) books before attending, she had watched some Shakespeare in high school. Therefore, while I might have glossed my question as asking something like ‘What were the reasons why you wanted to come along to the Shakespeare workshops?’, Michelle’s response suggests it was treated as something more interrogative, asking her to justify her participation. In this regard, Michelle’s response shows her orienting to certain aspects of the interview. First, in sequential terms, while I suspect that I was simply trying to conclude one section of the interview (lines 64-66) and move onto a new one (lines 68-69), the proximity of my turns means they could easily be interpreted as continuous. Indeed, together, lines 64-69 are hearable as the question: ‘If you’re going to be doing translation and interpreting, why did you decide to come along to the Shakespeare workshops?’ – setting up a contrast, to which Michelle’s explanation from line 70 onwards (essentially, ‘I haven’t read any Shakespeare, but I have watched some’) is a perfectly reasonable response (Licoppe 2015). This also relates to the second way in which Michelle’s response can be seen as oriented to the interaction, in that it provides accountability for her competence as a participant – both of the



workshops, and the interview (Baker 2001; Roulston 2018, 2019). My reaction – ‘Oh okay’, produced in overlap in line 74 – treats Michelle’s response as unexpected (Heritage 2012), but rather than repeating or rephrasing my ‘unanswered’ question, I immediately switched to ask Michelle if she could remember which play it was, and then went along with this discussion of other early experiences of Shakespeare for several minutes. In this way I was also orienting to Shakespeare as the organising topic of the interview, with the business at hand not being to secure definitive answers to specific questions, but to have a conversation about (and through) Shakespeare.

It is important to stress, therefore, that while in the following extracts some participants describe their early encounters with Shakespeare as highly significant, the emphasis on Shakespeare as the organising principle of the interviews risks inflating his importance. In many cases, participants actually portrayed their early encounters as having been compulsory and rather forgettable experiences during their school years. The account given by second-year student Chen Shumin is a good example of this, as her first encounter with Shakespeare at school appears to have been so cursory that she initially failed to mention it. The following exchange comes from early in the interview, just after I had asked Chen Shumin why she had attended the workshops. She said it was largely because one of her friends had suggested it, rather than due to any particular interest in Shakespeare, and then made the point that she hadn’t read any Shakespeare before coming to the workshops. However, when I probed her on this, her account seemed to change:

### **Extract 5.2: Interview with Chen Shumin (CSM)**

160 Dun: Yeah okay hmm right erm (.) so (0.8) you said you hadn't  
161 really done any Shakespeare before (1.0) the workshops?  
162 (2.6)  
163 CSM: Mm-hmm  
164 Dun: Yeah? So had you but had you ever (0.6) had you ever read  
165 any or watched any  
166 CSM: Maybe <Wēinísī shāngrén>  
                    威尼斯商人  
                    [The Merchant of Venice]  
167 Dun: And was that in school  
168 (1.7)  
169 CSM: Err (0.8) what what do you mean  
170 Dun: Was that in school you did Wēinísī shāngrén  
                    威尼斯商人  
                    [The Merchant of Venice]  
171 (1.6)  
172 CSM: School you mean high school=





211 because it puts a lot of ah! very (0.7) very (0.8)  
 212 beautiful language [in it  
 213 Dun: [Ah okay (0.4) so it didn't feel like  
 214 people would talk  
 215 CSM: Yeah  
 216 Dun: So we're not talking in that way now  
 217 CSM: Mm-hmm  
 218 Dun: ((laughs))  
 219 CSM: And I  
 220 Dun: Yeah  
 221 CSM: I think it just (0.9) kind of waste my time

Chen Shumin first comments that what she read did not seem like a natural conversation because of its language, which, after pausing twice to find the right word ('very (0.7) very (0.8)' at line 211) she describes as 'beautiful' (line 212). This is not necessarily a positive evaluation, as after I ask whether this meant it did not feel 'like people would talk' in real life – including the interview we were conducting – she delivers the assessment: 'I think it just (0.9) kind of waste my time' (line 221). Next, she again mentions that she 'jump[ed] a lot of the conversation' in order to see what happened in the story, before we conclude this passage of the interview with the following exchange:

### **Extract 5.5 Interview with Chen Shumin**


226 Dun: Okay (.) okay (.) erm (.) so it sounds like you didn't  
 227 really enjoy it that much yeah  
 228 CSM: ((laughs)) but the story's interesting ((laughs))

Given all the reasons that Chen Shumin puts forward for this experience being rather frustrating, it is not surprising that she did not initially raise it as an example of an encounter with Shakespeare (whether she had genuinely forgotten it, or thought it better not to mention). Strikingly, when talking about reading an extract from *Merchant*, she presented the play's 'beautiful' language as a barrier to appreciating its story (something also noted in Murphy et al. 2020). Although she initially attributed this to a 'weird' translation, it can plausibly be understood as a reflection of the strangeness (and difficulty) of reading Shakespearean dialogue, with its extended turns and profusion of the kinds of literary techniques Chen Shumin mentioned. Her assessment that what she had read had wasted her time, her repeated references to skipping through the dialogue to find out what happened, and her final comment that 'the story's interesting' (even if the overall experience was

not) could be attributed to a personal preference for story over form. However, it could also suggest that the language and form of Shakespearean dialogue impeded a more instrumental goal: completing whatever task(s) she had been set in relation to the extract.

When I began analysing this passage, these comments prompted me to reflect on what I knew – or assumed I knew – about the kinds of Shakespeare experiences that my participants might have had at school. Specifically, it brought to mind an example I had seen of *The Merchant of Venice*'s trial scene in a middle school textbook (see Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1 Study prompts relating to *The Merchant of Venice*'s trial scene from a Chinese middle school textbook**



### 研讨与练习

- 一 仔细阅读课文，把握全篇的剧情展开想像，补充一些细节，把本文改写成一则故事。
- 二 鲍西娅是在什么情况下出场的？又是怎样解决这场冲突的？归纳一下她的性格特点。
- 三 《威尼斯商人》是一部诗剧，语言既富于个性化又生动优美，文采斐然。试从课文中找出一些片段，反复朗读，细心体会。
- 四 外国文学的人物画廊中，有四个著名的吝啬鬼，他们是法国戏剧家莫里哀笔下的阿巴贡，法国小说家巴尔扎克笔下的葛朗台，俄国作家果戈理笔下的泼留希金，还有一位就是本文中的夏洛克。课外了解这几个人物形象，看看他们的吝啬各有什么特点与表现。

Note: A very rough gloss of these questions is that they ask students to 1) imaginatively rewrite the scene, 2) examine Portia's handling of the conflict, 3) appreciate the beautiful language, and 4) consider Shylock as one of the "four famous misers" (四个著名的吝啬鬼 / *sìgè zhùmíng de lìnshèguǐ*) in foreign literature (along with Harpagon from Molière's *The Miser*, Grandet from Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet* and Plyushkin from Gogol's *Dead Souls*).

Unfortunately, I did not have this example to hand during the interview, so I was unable to check if this was, or was similar to, what Chen Shumin had herself done. However, the treatment of Shakespeare's language in its own separate prompt is quite striking. Specifically, Prompt 3 tells students that *The Merchant of Venice* is a poetic or verse drama (诗剧 / *shījù*)

whose language is personalised (个性化 / *gèxìnghuà*), lively and beautiful (生动优美 / *shēngdòng yōuměi*), before asking them to find some examples, read them aloud repeatedly, and experience them carefully. Elements of this prompt – especially the latter two instructions – could easily form part of an activity that approaches *Merchant* in a more experiential way. However, my prior observations of Shakespeare in school settings in China – as well as what students had told me of their early educational experiences – led me to assume that this is not how the prompt would typically have been used. Just being instructed to ‘experience’ beautiful language is not the same as approaching a text in a way that encourages or facilitates an experiential response. Certainly, Chen Shumin’s listing of literary techniques presents Shakespeare’s language as something to identify and label, rather than to experience and/or enjoy, which is unsurprising given that the exercise came in the context of exam preparation.

Similar descriptions of being introduced to Shakespeare primarily as something to know about for instrumental purposes were produced by other interviewees. Niki, for example, did not mention *Merchant*’s trial scene, but described coming across Shakespeare as little more than a name and some related facts:

#### **Extract 5.6 Interview with Niki (Nik)**

152 Nik: We just learn Shakespeare in our (.) Middle School  
 153 Dun: Mm  
 154 Nik: Which means ah which famous (0.4) plays (.) of Shakespeare  
 155 do you know we (.) seldom read it but we know the name it's  
 156 the (.) test (0.7) you have to test you have to write the  
 157 name  
 158 Dun: Yeah  
 159 Nik: I know (0.4) Romeo and Juliet I know King Lear I know  
 160 Macbeth  
 161 Dun: Mm  
 162 Nik: And then some other thing which is the comedy and which  
 163 the tragedy four four [(0.8) the most famous four of them  
 164 Dun: [Oh okay (1.1) so kind of  
 165 facts about them but not really the (0.6)  
 166 Nik: Yes I only know the name know what's the story about  
 167 mainly about abstract but I didn't know um the (.) details  
 168 and some other thing so (.) maybe I should (.) mm (0.4)  
 169 have more dig further into Shakespeare

Here, Niki describes her only engagement with Shakespeare prior to university as taking place at middle school, and essentially involving memorising the names of his most famous plays, their genres (tragedy or comedy), and a vague understanding of the plot. She then goes on to present this as a positive reason for wanting to ‘dig further into Shakespeare’

in the workshops (lines 168-169). However, this extract comes after a lengthy exchange in which she talked about having initially attended the workshops due to a chance meeting with another student, Xihong, and a general desire to expose herself to English. (Niki talked about being keen to grasp *any* English-related opportunity due to such chances being limited on her joint Korean-Japanese degree programme.) From other interviews it was clear that Xihong – a fourth-year student who I had worked with on Shakespeare for a couple of years and knew well – was instrumental in bringing Daniel and Sophie Li to the workshops as well. As noted above, Chen Shumin had also initially attended due to a friend’s encouragement. Therefore, as much as Shakespeare might be considered the big draw for some students (and a big deterrent for others), it was important to recognise that in other instances he seemed incidental or even irrelevant to their participation (see Extracts 5.17-19, below).

More broadly, this is a reminder of the importance of exercising caution when making assumptions about students’ prior engagements with Shakespeare on the basis of whether he is ‘taught’ in a particular location. Journalistic discussions of global Shakespeare often reference a survey conducted by the British Council and RSC between 2010 and 2012, which suggested that ‘approximately 50% of schoolchildren across the world, at least 64 million each year, are studying Shakespeare at school’ (quoted in Olive 2015: 89, original weblink broken). However, as Olive (2015) has pointed out, this statistic is potentially misleading. Does ‘studying Shakespeare at school’ mean that his works are compulsory, optional, or merely permitted? Does it mean a deep engagement with an entire play or plays, or just a passing mention? In China’s case specifically, claims that ‘more than 21 million Chinese 14-year-olds read a scene from *The Merchant of Venice* annually’ (Penta 2020) need to be treated with a certain scepticism given how cursory the experiences described by Chen Shumin and Niki appear to have been. One key way in which the British Council/RSC survey was used at the time was to argue that because Shakespeare *is* taught widely around the world, it is vital to pay ‘revitalised attention to *how* he is taught so that students’ early encounters with Shakespeare are positive’ (Olive 2015: 89, emphasis in original). However, experiences such as those discussed above, and those of Kiki and Sophie Li that are discussed below (Extracts 5.16-17 and 5.19-21, respectively), suggest that engagements with Shakespeare at Chinese schools might be far more cursory – and far more forgettable – than figures about the extent of Shakespeare teaching in China imply.

In contrast, the participants who described childhood and teenage encounters with Shakespeare as positive, and highly memorable, almost all reported these as having occurred

*outside* formal educational contexts. One, Sylvia, did talk glowingly about being taught Shakespeare at school by a foreign teacher, but as she attended a private school this is unrepresentative of other participants' experiences. However, before this, Sylvia apparently chose to read some Shakespeare for her own pleasure, as did Xihong and several other participants. Another such account was provided by Dinghui, a fourth-year Literature major who subsequently did a Masters in English Literature at a UK university, where she is currently doing a PhD on literary translation:

### **Extract 5.7 Interview with Li Dinghui (LDH)**

147 Dun: So er:m (.) obviously (0.4) from from what you've  
148 already said I can see (0.5) erm you're very (.)  
149 interested ~~in~~ Shakespeare you know it it you clearly find  
150 it quite stimulating (0.7) erm can you remember: your  
151 first (0.4) sort of encounter? With Shakespeare?=  
152 LDH: =Oh! er hhh it was in High School  
153 Dun: Mm  
154 LDH: It's it's about reading his Sonnets  
155 Dun: Okay  
156 LDH: Yeah [erm  
157 Dun: [And (.) was tha- in in English Chinese?=  
158 LDH: =Er com- (.) it's like both  
159 Dun: Okay [so comparing  
160 LDH: [So er one one page English one page Chinese  
161 Dun: Oh okay=  
162 LDH: =And and #aah# it it's quite interesting coz er first time  
163 I (0.5) I I strug- struggle with all the English coz it's  
164 really ancient and I was just ~~in~~ High School~~↓~~ so(hh)  
165 er I I would (.) start with the Chinese maybe (0.6) no! I  
166 would [start with the English but then I I would try to=  
167 Dun: [and (0.8) mm  
168 LDH: =understand everything I can (.) but if I don't  
169 understand I'll resort to the Chinese one (.) and ~~then~~ I  
170 may go back to the English one  
171 Dun: But that was: (.) that was you kind of being quite self  
172 disciplined and saying "I'm gonna try and do (0.5) the  
173 English first"  
174 LDH: Yeah because I think that's the only way (.) that I can  
175 do: (.) justice to the original (0.5) Shakespeare and  
176 which is actually kind of like great motivation for me [to=  
177 Dun: [Mm  
178 LDH: =study English literature later  
179 Dun: Okay  
180 LDH: It's all because of Shakespeare and (0.5) some other  
181 writers  
182 Dun: Mm  
183 LDH: Yeah yeah  
184 Dun: Okay (1.1) erm and so #ii# (0.6) was that something that  
185 was part of one of your courses? i[n High School or was=  
186 LDH: [Nonono it it



187 Dun: =that you chose to  
188 LDH: It it was (1.1) completely like my personal interest in in  
189 Shakespeare and English literature

Dinghui's account is slightly unusual in that she first read Shakespeare's Sonnets rather than any of his plays, and did this using a bilingual Chinese/English edition, rather than a Chinese translation. From lines 158-170 she talks about a process of starting with the English and only switching to Chinese if she couldn't understand everything (lines 166-169). However, like other participants, she describes trying to read Shakespeare in English as a challenge: at lines 163-164 she talks about initially 'struggl[ing]' with it 'coz it's really ancient and I was just ↓in High School↓'. As with Chen Shumin, we see an age-related category (High School) being invoked when accounting for Shakespeare's difficulty. Interestingly, whereas elsewhere in the interview Dinghui invariably referred to Shakespeare's language as 'Early Modern English', here she calls it 'really ancient'. Together with the lowered intonation in 'just ↓in High School↓' this emphasises her reaction (and relative lack of understanding) then compared to now. However, she links the struggle she went through trying to read Shakespeare's English with her subsequent choice to study (Anglophone) literature: at lines 176-178 she says this challenge was 'actually kind of like great motivation' for this choice, and then at lines 180-181 even claims that it was 'all because of Shakespeare and (0.5) some other writers'. (The pause before 'some other writers' amused me during analysis, as in a later (unrecorded) conversation, Dinghui was slightly apologetic when telling me that she wanted to do PhD research on translating modernist, rather than early modern, literature, as though this would offend or upset me.)

### **5.1.2 What 'counts' as an engagement with Shakespeare?**

What Dinghui's account does share with those of several other participants is the way she frames the languages through which she experienced Shakespeare. When she describes her approach of trying to read the English first, she says that if she didn't understand everything, she would 'resort to the Chinese' (line 169). The sense that this was not her preferred course of action is underlined when, after I comment that this was a 'quite self disciplined' approach (lines 171-172), she replies that reading in English was the only way to 'do: (.) justice to the original (0.5) Shakespeare' (lines 174-175). This was not necessarily the perspective on translation, or Shakespeare, that I tried to

emphasise during the workshops, and elsewhere in her interview Dinghui talked enthusiastically about the creative and interpretive possibilities of translation. However, several other students described a similar approach to reading Shakespeare. Literature PhD student Jacky even used the same word as Dinghui – ‘resort’ – when talking about consulting Chinese translations only if he could not understand the English and the footnotes first. In some cases, participants suggested that they did not consider translated Shakespeare to be Shakespeare at all. For Paz<sup>5</sup>, another fourth-year student whom I had known and worked with for two years prior to the interviews, reading Shakespeare in translation did not seem to count as a prior experience of Shakespeare. When I initially asked if she could remember the first time she had ‘read any or watched any Shakespeare’ she answered that she thought it was during one of my second-year drama workshops. I struggled to believe this was the case, but her response when I probed further was striking:

### **Extract 5.8 Interview with Paz**

161 Dun: So had you (0.4) #err# had you read any? (0.5) Shakespeare  
 162 before that? or seen any? or  
 163 Paz: No:  
 164 Dun: No? Even in [in Chinese  
 165 Paz: [I I read Romeo and Juliet in Chinese  
 166 Dun: Mm so you had (0.4) [but you'd done it in Chinese  
 167 Paz: [Yeah but in Chinese

To my question about whether she had read or seen any Shakespeare before that, Paz answers ‘No:’ (line 163). It is not until I probe again, specifying that this could include Shakespeare in Chinese (line 164) that she says, in overlap, that she had indeed ‘read Romeo and Juliet in Chinese’ (line 165). When I recap, beginning ‘Mm so you had [read some]’ (line 166) she again overlaps, stressing ‘Yeah but in Chinese’, presenting this as not counting in the same way reading Shakespeare in English would have done. We returned to this topic towards the end of the interview, when discussing the pros and cons of using Chinese surtitles for live performances of Shakespeare in English. After calling Chinese surtitles a distraction and saying she would prefer no titles if English ones were unavailable, I asked if she felt the same about reading Shakespeare. She said ‘Yes yes’, and then explained that she always insists on reading Shakespeare in English because ‘through the translation there is always something lost’. While this notion of things

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Paz’, as in the Spanish for ‘peace’.

being lost in translation has become somewhat clichéd, Paz and many of her fellow students at LNFSU – some of whom were Translation and Interpreting majors – demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the processes and decisions involved in translating Shakespeare and other literary works. This is something that I built into several of the workshops, and that also became a topic of discussion in the interviews and written feedback, as will be seen in Chapter 7.

In addition to discussions about the ‘original’ language (i.e. the EME text), there were other ways in which the participants made distinctions about what, for them, counted as Shakespeare. One was through discussing their experiences of reading or watching adaptations. In the case of Sylvia, who described herself as a fan of British actors such as Benedict Cumberbatch and David Tennant, watching film or TV adaptations seemed an important aspect of her experiences of Shakespeare. Nevertheless, she held up reading the ‘original’ texts as the highest form of engagement – and completely discounted the kind of abridged or simplified adaptations that she had read as a child. Fourth-year Linguistics student Kate also talked about film adaptations. However, she did not consider every adaptation to be equal, as became apparent when, after saying how much she had enjoyed Franco Zeffirelli’s 1968 *Romeo and Juliet*, she talked about not wanting to watch Baz Luhrmann’s 1996 adaptation (*Romeo + Juliet*, referred to here as the ‘Leo[nardo DiCaprio] version’):

### **Extract 5.9 Interview with Kate (Kat)**

364 Kat: And I only I only see that (.) version? (0.7) I  
365 kind of don't want to: watch the: ↓Leo version↓  
366 Dun: And why why not? ((laughs))  
367 Kat: Becau:se I thin:::k .pt ummmm (1.4) why (2.0) coz it's  
368 famous  
369 Dun: Mm  
370 Kat: Because I I love the: (0.7) classic at- atmosphere of  
371 the::: 19(.)68 one? yes?  
372 Dun: So you kind of didn't want to spoil  
373 Kat: Yeah  
374 Dun: Spoil that by seeing another version that was doing it  
375 different=and did it (.) did it bother you that (0.4)  
376 erm .pt like the Leonardo: (.) DiCaprio one was also a a  
377 modern. (1.1) ↑dress↑ version  
378 Kat: <Modern dress>  
379 Dun: Yeah so they were all dressed in like what it was like set  
380 no:w in (0.7) kind of felt like it was in America or  
381 somewhere did that (0.7) did that bother you=yeah!  
382 Kat: Yeah!  
383 Dun: You're nodding=

384 Kat: =Absolutely! (0.5) because I I I I think I love the: (1.4)  
 385 I love all the things in thei:r (0.4) original way  
 386 Dun: Ah  
 387 Kat: That's kind of my (0.7) <preference>  
 388 Dun: Okay (1.2) so you you >and would that< be the same with  
 389 like like Chine:se (.) erm literature you'd prefe:r  
 390 Kat: Absolutely

Kate initially struggles to explain her reluctance to watch Luhrmann's film, pausing and verbally hesitating at lines 367-368, before suggesting 'coz it's famous'. Then, at lines 370-371 she says it is because she loves the 'classic' atmosphere of Zeffirelli's film. I initially follow up by asking if she didn't want to 'spoil' the Zeffirelli by watching the Luhrmann version (lines 372-376), and then ask whether it also bothered her that the latter was in modern dress. This seems to throw her – at line 378 she slowly repeats 'modern dress' – but when I start to explain my meaning, she responds emphatically with 'Yeah!' and 'Absolutely!' (lines 382 and 384), nodding vigorously enough that I remark on it at line 383. She goes on to explain that she loves things 'in thei:r (0.4) original way' – a label she retrospectively applies to the period trappings of Zeffirelli's film, but not Luhrmann's modern relocation. While Kate's preference for things in their 'original' way apparently extends to Chinese literary classics too (lines 388-390), several participants expressed the idea that 'authentic' adaptations and stage performances of Shakespeare, specifically, are those involving some kind of period dress. Third-year Translation and Interpreting major Ann, for example, suggested there was something incongruous about performers wearing modern clothing but speaking early modern English.

In both cases, these personal preferences were expressed as precisely that: preferences, rather than artistic, cultural or moral imperatives about Shakespeare. However, the desire for a certain kind of authenticity – often in the form of period productions featuring conspicuously 'European' costumes and southern English or even RP accents – was something I had frequently encountered when working in the FoE. This was sometimes a complex, sensitive issue to navigate. With LNFSU being a foreign studies university there was a great deal of emphasis on understanding (and consequently representing) other cultures, and many of the students had worked for years to cultivate 'standard' (标准 / *biāozhǔn*) American or British accents, which they took great pride in. I certainly did not want to either diminish the students' sense of their own achievements, nor discourage them from exploring period settings if this is what they wanted to do. Nevertheless, I did try to challenge, albeit

diplomatically, the more prescriptive conceptions of authenticity throughout this project, not least because I felt that this kind of approach was limiting in terms of the participants' potential engagement with and agency over the plays. In addition, I was concerned that a logical conclusion of this kind of Shakespearean essentialism might be a certain culturalist essentialism, which risked entrenching fixed ideas about cultural and even racial differences (something illustrated by the incredulity with which some participants greeted images of black actors playing Hamlet and Romeo during one of the workshops).

## 5.2 Who / what is Shakespeare to the participants?

As discussed above, the participants gave very varied accounts of their early experiences of Shakespeare – some of them memorable and inspiring, others cursory and forgettable – and in doing so, gave highly varied descriptions of Shakespeare and his work. However, something that was common to most of their descriptions, whether they seemed positive, negative or neutral, was reference to what Cassio might describe as the 'immortal part' of Shakespeare – his fame and iconic status. This was especially the case in the Overall Feedback forms that were filled in after the first phase of workshops, which contained a section on 'Your thoughts about Shakespeare' (您对莎士比亚的看法). The following examples show participants responding to this section's first prompt – 'What did you think about Shakespeare before attending the workshops?' (在参与此次的系列工作坊之前, 您对莎士比亚有什么看法?) – by referencing Shakespeare's fame and reputation, but little else:

### Extract 5.10 Overall feedback: Kay

#### 您对莎士比亚的看法

在参与此次的系列工作坊之前, 您对莎士比亚有什么看法?

我之前认为莎士比亚是位很伟大的享誉世界的戏剧家。

[Trans: Before I thought that Shakespeare was a very great, world-renowned dramatist.]

### Extract 5.11 Overall feedback: Long Ying

#### 您对莎士比亚的看法

在参与此次的系列工作坊之前, 您对莎士比亚有什么看法?

古老, 作品广为传颂, 经久不衰。

[Trans: Ancient, widely-praised works, enduring.]

### Extract 5.12 Overall feedback: Edward

#### 您对莎士比亚的看法

在参与此次的系列工作坊之前，您对莎士比亚有什么看法？

Before this, Shakespeare is the famous playwright who wrote Romero and Juliet and so on.

In these three cases, Shakespeare is presented as someone whose fame participants have heard of (Kay calls him ‘world-renowned’ and Long Ying calls his works ‘widely-praised’), rather than someone whose plays and poems they have had direct experience of. Edward does name one of the works of this ‘famous playwright’, but the ‘and so on’ following his mention of ‘Romero [sic] and Juliet’ treats this oeuvre very vaguely. While the brevity of these comments can be taken as signalling a previous lack of familiarity with Shakespeare, some of the respondents were more explicit about this being the case. For example, elsewhere in her Overall Feedback, in response to a question about why she had decided to attend the workshops, Kay made explicit the fact that her long-standing ‘respect’ for Shakespeare was not based on any significant engagement with his work:

### Extract 5.13 Overall Feedback: Kay

#### 您在本次工作坊的经历

为什么您会参加这次的系列工作坊？

我虽未曾广泛阅读莎士比亚的作品，但对这位名作家一直抱有崇敬之心。常而此次工作坊提供了一个细读作品的机会，也很适合并无太多基础的我。同时，此次工作坊的形式也很有趣。

[Trans: Although I have not read Shakespeare’s works extensively, I have always respected this famous writer.]

Similarly, while second-year student Kiki located Shakespeare in the context of the Renaissance (a far more common periodisation in LNFSU’s teaching materials than the ‘early modern’ designation I used during the project), as in the previous examples she essentially presented Shakespeare and his works as names she was aware of, rather than things she knew much about:

### Extract 5.14 Overall feedback: Kiki

## 您对莎士比亚的看法

在参与此次的系列工作坊之前，您对莎士比亚有什么看法？

All I knew about him before the workshop was he as a great play writer in the background of Renaissance. I knew a few names of his plays, but not know much about him.

This abstract notion of Shakespeare also came out in the interview I did with Kiki a fortnight before she submitted her Overall Feedback. At one point, she talked about attending extracurricular memory training classes while she was in primary school:

### Extract 5.15 Interview with Kiki (Kik)

121 Kik: Some of the training is (0.4) you have to mention some  
122 (0.5) like four tragedies of Shakespeare  
123 Dun: Uh-huh  
124 Kik: In a very (0.8) in just a few seconds  
125 Dun: Yeah  
126 Kik: Err or: the: (0.6) .pt (0.5) heritage the world the  
127 heritage of the world  
128 Dun: Mm  
129 Kik The most (0.7) ↑some↑thing the most?  
130 Dun: Yeah  
131 Kik: Umm (0.7) .pt (0.7) in a [very few seconds  
132 Dun: [So like like the tallest (0.5)  
133 tallest [mountain  
134 Kik: [the tallest (0.4) ye:s

This is reminiscent of Niki's account (Extract 5.6), but Kiki's description of her memory training is a more extreme example of Shakespeare's works being treated as abstract pieces of information to be memorised and regurgitated, rather than plays and poems to be understood and/or enjoyed. She talks about being required to recall, in just a few seconds, things such as the 'four tragedies of Shakespeare', along with other facts about 'the heritage of the world' (lines 126-127) and various superlatives (from lines 129-133 we collaboratively determine that this included things such as 'the tallest mountain'). In effect, Shakespeare is here treated as one of wonders of the world, in an example of what I would describe as 'Shakespearean Exceptionalism', or a tendency to portray Shakespeare as different, above or apart from other dramatists or writers, and the period in which he wrote. Kiki's memory training struck me as an especially vivid example of this kind of Shakespearean exceptionalism, in its lumping together of 'the heritage of the world' (including Shakespeare) with natural wonders, such as the tallest mountain. In particular, this latter reference brings to mind the alpine imagery invoked by Stredder in *The North Face of Shakespeare* (2009), as discussed in Chapter 2.

Kiki herself certainly did not seem overwhelmed by Shakespeare, and elsewhere in the interview described her own experiences in school as having a similarly cursory character to those described by Chen Shumin and Niki. However, like many of the participants, Kiki's perceptions of Shakespeare seemed to have been influenced more by an awareness of how Shakespeare is characterised in popular discourse than by any significant experience of his work. This distinction in participants' descriptions of Shakespeare – between direct experience and received preconceptions – will be discussed in this and the following section, and will become particularly important when considering Shakespeare's apparent 'difficulty'.

### **5.2.1 How did the participants describe, make relevant and orient to Shakespeare's works, reputation and status?**

This subsection will explore how the participants' descriptions of Shakespeare were situated within the context of interactional accounts through which interviewees (and myself as the interviewer) made Shakespeare, his works and his reputation (ir)relevant, and oriented to them in various ways. As seen in Extract 5.1, when Michelle responded to a question about why she had attended the workshops with an answer that addressed not her motives for attending but rather her credentials for doing so, the participants' attitudes to and descriptions of Shakespeare became accountable by virtue of the fact that the interviews were organised around 'Shakespeare'. However, in some cases it became clear that an awareness of discourses around Shakespearean exceptionalism itself led to participants treating their views of Shakespeare as accountable. Because I did not assign any weightings or polarities when coding, 'Shakespearean exceptionalism' has been used to tag examples that can be interpreted as positive, negative or neutral – or often as rather more ambivalent or complex. As will be discussed in 5.3, Shakespearean exceptionalism was invoked by some participants who presented a familiarity with his works as useful, important or even obligatory, especially with reference to their own lives, and their sense of identity as Chinese learners of English and/or literature majors. However, in other cases Shakespearean exceptionalism was invoked by participants who did not agree with or endorse this perception, or who did not feel they had sufficient direct experience upon which to base any judgement (see the example of Kiki in Extracts 5.14-15, above). In a number of instances, participants acknowledged the discourse of Shakespearean exceptionalism while presenting it as a matter of indifference or irrelevance.

One such example can be found in my interview with Chen Shumin, whose cursory experience of Shakespeare in middle school has already been discussed in detail (Extracts



5.2-5.5, above). When asked directly what she thought about Shakespeare, her response clearly illustrates that being aware of and referring to Shakespeare's fame and reputation are not the same as having any interest in him or his work:

### **Extract 5.16 Interview with Chen Shumin**

297 Dun: So can you remember what did you think of Shakespeare  
298 before you started these workshops (1.0) did you have  
299 any real (.) idea? or or (0.8) not very much  
300 CSM: You mean my (.) pre- (0.6) previous  
301 Dun: Yeah your previous kind of impression of Shakespeare  
302 or  
303 (1.3)  
304 CSM: Shakespeare? A ↑man?↑ (.) And  
305 Dun: ((laughs))  
306 CSM: He wrote a lot of thing  
307 Dun: Mm  
308 CSM: And have many (.) famous play (0.9) plays and (1.4) hh  
309 poems?  
310 Dun: Mm  
311 CSM: Literature? (1.1) erm (1.0) >yeah that's all<  
312 Dun: Mm  
313 CSM: ((laughs))

In this light-hearted exchange (note the laughter at lines 305 and 313), Chen Shumin's slightly incredulous response to being asked what she thought of Shakespeare before the workshops presents him as thoroughly *unexceptional* – after a pause, she says simply: 'Shakespeare? A ↑man↑?' (line 304). She goes on to add that he 'wrote a lot of thing[s]' (line 306), specifically many famous plays and poems. However, her hesitations and the rising intonation used for 'poems?' and 'Literature?' (lines 308 and 311) give the impression of answers being trotted out for the sake of form (and in response to my repeated use of the continuer 'Mm'), rather than because she has much to say on the matter. Indeed, at line 311, after tentatively suggesting 'Literature?', she hesitates (pausing either side of 'erm') before abruptly ending her assessment: '>yeah that's all<'. This reinforces Chen Shumin's aforementioned assertion that she had attended the workshops because of her friend's encouragement and stayed because she enjoyed the activities, rather than due to an interest in Shakespeare.

Another second year, Sophie Li, also talked about her main reasons for attending the workshops being unrelated to Shakespeare. In her interview, she ascribed her attendance to her love of drama and performance in general, and repeatedly voiced opposition to any suggestion of Shakespearean exceptionalism. Like Chen Shumin, she described her previous experiences of Shakespeare as having made very little impression on her, as when she gave

what I found to be an amusingly withering response to a question on what she had thought about watching Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* during her school years:

### Extract 5.17 Interview with Sophie Li (SoL)

118 SoL: It's j- (0.2) it's just it just a <sa::d story>? it's  
119 a [<love and> sad #story#  
120 Dun: [Mm  
121 SoL: .hhhh (0.7) ↑Not (0.5) very?↑ (0.3) erm didn't (0.4)  
122 .pt leav:e (1.0) very strong [impression on me

While here Sophie frames her response as specifically referring to one of Shakespeare's stories (albeit in cinematic form), a more extended and explicit example of her expressing opposition to Shakespearean exceptionalism comes in the middle of an exchange concerning Shakespeare's supposed difficulty:

### Extract 5.18 Interview with Sophie Li

356 SoL: The language is (0.4) .pt you know (0.4) er .pt a b-  
357 a little bit (0.2) diff- difficult [though (0.2)=  
358 [((car horn in  
359 background (4.3) )]]  
360 SoL: =because I (.) .hhh [haven(0.3)'t umm (2.7) .pt  
361 (1.0) err=  
362 Dun: =Coz you haven't done?  
363 SoL: I- I have[n't done it before yeah I haven't done it=  
364 Dun: [Stuff like this before. Yeah  
365 SoL: =before but (1.5) I:: think ↑Shakespeare (0.9) erm  
366 (0.2) .pt (0.7) is:: .hhhh er- please dot please do  
367 not be offended  
368 Dun: I I won't be [believe me  
369 SoL: [Er I think Sh- Shakespeare is just  
370 (0.4) one? kind of (0.3) dram#::a like#  
371 Dun: Yeah absolutely yeah yeah  
372 SoL: ↑It's it's just one kind of drama and there're (0.6)  
373 many other [kinds of #drama#  
374 Dun: [Mm  
375 SoL: (0.3) #in the world# um (0.3) the: (1.3) though the  
376 language is a (0.5) an a problem? for me  
377 Dun: Mm  
378 SoL: But I think? (0.6) er it's not (0.7) really?  
379 difficult. [to do that because I .hhhh  
380 Dun: [Mm so it's not a  
381 big problem  
382 SoL: It's not a big problem(0.2) yeah (0.5) er  
383 (1.1)  
384 SoL: You ju- you can? just (0.3) enjoying? Shakespeare  
385 (0.4) as::: (0.6) you enjoying any- any other [(0.6)=  
386 Dun: [Mm  
387 SoL: =drama  
388 Dun: So it's actually not (0.3) not that different  
389 [in that way yeah. (0.6) okay  
390 SoL: [<It's ↑not that diff↑erent> (.2) ah? ha ha

In this passage, Sophie twice describes Shakespeare as ‘just one kind of drama’ (at lines 369-370 and line 372) – something echoed in her Overall Feedback, when she wrote ‘It’s only a type of drama’. Although this might seem to be a neutral, factual statement, the way in which Sophie introduces the idea in the interview suggests she is treating it as a negative assessment, and potentially inappropriate or offensive in the context of this interview. At lines 365-367 she not only pauses three times, but also smacks her lips (.pt), stretches ‘I::’ and ‘is::’ and says ‘erm’ and ‘er’ – all before taking an inbreath ahead of prefacing her assessment with ‘please do not be offended’. I assure her at line 368 that I won’t be, but she still proceeds haltingly, pausing again as she delivers the assessment, at times with vocal fry (represented with #). This continues, even after my strongly affiliative response (line 371: ‘Yeah absolutely yeah yeah’), becoming especially noticeable as she tails off almost completely while saying that there are ‘many other kinds of #drama# (0.3) #in the world#’ (lines 372-375). The vocal fry here is particularly striking as Sophie rarely uses it elsewhere in the interview – although significantly she did when characterising *Romeo and Juliet* as just ‘a <love and> sad #story#’ (Extract 5.17, line 199). Such moves throughout the interview support the interpretation that Sophie is softening what she appears to be treating as negative assessments – or assessments that might be received as such by someone teaching Shakespeare.

All of this culminates in the question she posed at the interview’s end, when I asked if there was anything she would like to ask me:

### Extract 5.19 Interview with Sophie Li

458 SoL: Why (0.6) er for you: the [(0.6)  
 459 Dun: [Mm  
 460 SoL: Why Shakespeare  
 461 Dun: (0.8) .pt erm? (0.7) mm that's a big question  
 462 SoL: £Yeah£ yeah (0.3) the  
 463 (2.6)  
 464 SoL: Y- you know for me: the Shakespeare [is just (0.7)  
 465 Dun: [Mm  
 466 SoL: One (0.7) a dra- one kind of drama [but (0.4) why?=  
 467 Dun: [Mmm. (1) he he is?  
 468 SoL: ↑Mmm.  
 469 Dun: (0.7) hh the th(hh)ing is (.) he is for me as well

She begins asking the question, and then hesitates, prefacing it with the specification ‘er for you:’ (line 458), and when she then expands upon it following my failure to answer, she does so by saying ‘for me: the Shakespeare is just [...] one kind of

drama' (lines 464-466). She therefore frames her question not only as one which presupposes that I do not think Shakespeare is 'just one kind of drama', but also one that is potentially offensive to me (presumably as a Shakespeare researcher/teacher). Of course, Sophie need not have worried, as apart from the fact that I am not that easily offended, the reality is that, as I tell her in line 469, Shakespeare 'is [just one kind of drama] for me as well'.

Following this disclosure, I shared with Sophie some of the practical reasons for choosing to focus on Shakespeare in my teaching and research. In Chapters 1 and 3, and elsewhere (Lees 2021, forthcoming), I have discussed the practical advantages of Shakespeare's reputation as exceptional in China, for attracting students and providing a starting point for exploring other ideas and topics. However, there was also a potential risk involved, as although Shakespeare's status and supposed 'safeness' were a good way of getting my foot in the door to run the workshops, it is likely that this also put some students off attending in the first place. Indeed, as the following extract shows, for participants such as Literature fourth-year Long Ying, Shakespeare's popularity was in itself unappealing:

#### **Extract 5.20 Interview with Long Ying (LoY)**

249 Dun: Yeah okay (0.5) so erm (2.4) what did you think when  
 250 you when you did those in class did (.) were you  
 251 interested? not interested in Shakespeare (0.7) did you  
 252 find it easy? difficult  
 253 LoY: (2.7) .hh erm actually (.) mm in China [(.) the name=  
 254 Dun: [Mm  
 255 LoY: ="Shakespeare" [has been mentioned many times since I=  
 256 Dun: [Mm (1.3) yeahyeah  
 257 LoY: was a- very young [so .hh (1.7) erm when one thing was=  
 258 Dun: [Mm  
 259 LoY: =mentioned very erm (0.9) very frequently=  
 260 Dun: =Mm  
 261 LoY: I maybe lose my interest in it  
 262 Dun: ((laughs))  
 263 LoY: I thought ["it's boring" (.) "Everyone knows that" so=  
 264 Dun: [Yeah (.) yeahyeah  
 265 LoY: =hh maybe it's [no necessity  
 266 Dun: [that's how I felt in school as fwell  
 267 yeah£ ((laughs))  
 268 LoY: ((laughs))  
 269 Dun: I didn't like people telling me that I should (0.8) I  
 270 should appreciate this and  
 271 LoY: Yeah  
 272 Dun: People said "Ohhh it's Shakespeare" and I?  
 273 LoY: So in class I thought ["Yeah this is that guy" ((laughs))  
 274 Dun: [((laughs))

Just before this, Long Ying was telling me that, despite having loved reading since she was a child, she had read no Shakespeare before university, and only a little since. At this point, I ask what she thought of Shakespeare when she did it in class, suggesting two possible lines of response: ‘were you interested? not interested’/‘did you find it easy? difficult?’ (lines 249-252). Marking her answer with an initial ‘actually’, indicating a reorientation of emphasis (Clift 2001), she goes on to account for her response by explaining that while, as previously noted, she has not read much of his work, Shakespeare’s name ‘has been mentioned many times’ since she was young (lines 255-257), with the result that she ‘maybe los[t] her interest in it’ (line 261). She then reemphasises her point by saying that, at the time, she thought Shakespeare was ‘boring’ and that ‘everyone knows that’ so she felt it was not necessary (line 263-265). I respond very affiliatively with laughter and repeated ‘yeah’s (lines 262 and 264), and then, on reflection, perhaps *too* affiliatively, as I overlap at line 266 to begin explaining, over several lines, how I felt the same about Shakespeare in school. Noticeably, this passage features repeated voicing of hypothetical reported speech, both when Long Ying refers to her own views (‘it’s boring’ and ‘everyone knows that’ at line 263 and ‘Yeah this is that guy’ at line 273) and when I characterise the perceptions of other people (‘Ohhh it’s Shakespeare’ at line 272). As will be shown later in this chapter, this was something several interview participants did when giving accounts of personal responses to Shakespeare, especially in relation to different stages of life, or particular identity categories (e.g. student, teacher). For now however, it should be noted that while Chen Shumin and Sophie Li, in the extracts above, seemed to suggest that there was no basis for the commonly-held assumptions of Shakespearean exceptionalism, for Long Ying it was Shakespeare’s very ubiquity that was the problem.

More frequently, as in the earlier examples (Extracts 5.10-15, above), Shakespearean exceptionalism was presented simply as a fact, or at least a commonly-held belief that the participants did not challenge. However, this did not necessarily mean that it was being treated as positive, and a number of participants invoked ideas connected to Shakespearean exceptionalism in conjunction with more negative characterisations. The following examples show Shakespeare’s fame and reputation being linked to, and even presented as the cause of, the kind of difficulty and remoteness discussed by Stredder (2009):

**Extract 5.21 Overall Feedback: Chen Ting**

您对莎士比亚的看法

在参与此次的系列工作坊之前，您对莎士比亚有什么看法？

classic... must be very difficult to read or understand

### Extract 5.22 Overall Feedback: Benny

您对莎士比亚的看法

在参与此次的系列工作坊之前，您对莎士比亚有什么看法？

I had this feeling about Shakespeare, like he was too sophisticated and out-of-date to understand, and the language he uses is too archaic to read

### Extract 5.23 Overall Feedback: Li Yang

您对莎士比亚的看法

在参与此次的系列工作坊之前，您对莎士比亚有什么看法？

Old and difficult to understand languages. Very famous stories. A lot of people studied him.

In Extract 5.21 Chen Ting links the idea that Shakespeare and/or his works are ‘classic’ to the idea that they ‘must be very difficult to read or understand’. Benny does something similar in Extract 5.22 although instead of ‘classic’ he calls Shakespeare ‘out-of-date’ and ‘archaic’, recalling Long Ying’s description of Shakespeare as ‘古老’ or ‘ancient’ (Extract 5.11), while being more obviously negative. Benny is more specific than Chen Ting about what makes Shakespeare difficult, commenting that ‘the language he uses is too archaic to read’. Similarly, in Extract 5.23, Li Yang refers to ‘Old and difficult to understand languages’ (my judgement here is that ‘languages’ is an example of the kind of redundant plural ending often added by participants writing in L2 English, rather than a reference to Shakespearean texts being multilingual). Benny and Li Yang’s comments both echo Chen Shumin’s rather nonplussed account of reading the trial scene from *Merchant* (Extracts 5.2-5) in interesting ways. Just as Chen Shumin talked about Shakespeare’s ‘beautiful’ language being a distraction from or barrier to the process of reading and understanding his work, Benny talks about Shakespeare as being ‘too sophisticated... to understand’, in addition to the language itself being ‘too archaic to read’. Li Yang, meanwhile, separates the stories of Shakespeare’s texts from the language in which they are written, by describing the former as ‘[v]ery famous’ and then describing his language as ‘old and difficult to understand’ in a separate sentence.

## 5.2.2 How was the question of Shakespeare's perceived difficulty discussed?

This kind of division between (relatively accessible) story/plot and (less accessible) language was quite common in the participants' responses, and so next this chapter will explore how they discussed this perceived difficulty of Shakespeare's language. It should be noted that other possible areas of difficulty were mentioned during the interviews and feedback. Xihong, for example, claimed to have read 'all' of Shakespeare's plays apart from his histories, on the basis that she knows 'nothing' about British history and assumed it would be difficult to read 'those names and those titles'. In addition, we have already seen Chen Shumin talking about the unfamiliar form of early modern drama itself being difficult to read (Extracts 5.2-5). However, language was not only the most common difficulty mentioned, but also the one that most participants identified as the single biggest challenge when it came to engaging with Shakespeare. This did not particularly surprise me, given my own observations when teaching at LNFSU and elsewhere in China. My intention here is not to attempt to use the feedback and interviews to identify what it is about Shakespeare's language that seems 'difficult' (for this, see Murphy et al. 2020). Instead, I will examine how participants characterised Shakespeare's language as 'difficult', and used these characterisations in their own accounts of engaging with Shakespeare's work, from giving up because it was too hard (Extract 5.26) to claiming to relish the challenge (Extracts 5.28-30). In all instances, these experiences and perceptions of the difficulty of Shakespeare's language proved important for the pedagogical approach I took in the workshops themselves (as discussed in the next chapter).

One common feature of the interviews – whether the difficulty of the language was considered too hard or an enjoyable challenge – was how emphatic many of the responses were when the topic of Shakespeare's language came up. This, for example, is Dinghui, whose passion for literature and painstaking approach to reading has been documented above (Extract 5.7), discussing her attempt to find out which play would be easiest to read in English when she had some free time after finishing high school:

### Extract 5.24 Interview with Li Dinghui

189 LDH: Yeah so I have enough time to devour [some some English=  
190 Dun: [((laughs))  
191 LDH: =Erm plays of Shakespeare and then I ask "Which one is the  
192 easiest to understand" ((laughs))  
193 Dun: ((laughs)) [Okay  
194 LDH: [Hhhhh fit's like£ hhh yeah hhh I thought I





Again, as in some previous examples, ‘old’ language is presented as being necessarily – and perhaps *too* – difficult. This was something I tried to challenge by always referring to Shakespeare’s language as ‘Early Modern English’, in the hope that this would stress familiarity and closeness, rather than distance and difficulty. My use of this terminology was picked up on by some of the students, such as fourth-year Linguistics student Kate:

### Extract 5.27 Interview with Kate

534 Kat: I but I think a lot of Chinese people (.) erm do have  
535 that kind of impre?ssion because (1.2) um first not not  
536 a lot of people erm read ancient- not Early Modern  
537 £English£ ((laughs))  
538 Dun: Sure yeah yeah

Kate laughs after she self-repairs from ‘ancient [English]’ to ‘Early Modern English’ (lines 536-537), but elsewhere in her interview she characterized Shakespeare’s language as ‘absolutely difficult’. Here Kate is talking about Chinese peoples’ impressions and experiences of reading Shakespeare’s English, and several other participants talked about this specifically from the perspective of being Chinese learners of English. PhD student Jacky’s comments were striking in this regard:

### Extract 5.28 Overall Feedback: Jacky

#### 您对莎士比亚的看法

在参与此次的系列工作坊之前，您对莎士比亚有什么看法？

I have frequently heard the importance and beauty of Shakespeare’s work, but I am afraid of reading it, because it seems very difficult for a student learning English as a second language. I have very few chance to hear/watch a native speaker reading/performing Shakespeare’s works in front of me. I thought Shakespeare’s work is very far away from me, although I really want to learn it and read it.

### Extract 5.29 Feedback 3: Jacky

In summary, Shakespeare’s language is a foreign language in foreign language. Chinese students have to adopt all possible ways to approach it from different angles. Only by using different channels, we can have deeper understanding on Shakespeare’s plays.

In Extract 5.28, Jacky’s characterisation of his previous thoughts about Shakespeare resemble those of many others: he had heard about Shakespeare’s importance (and beauty) but assumed it must be very difficult ‘for a student learning English as a second language’. Noting that he had ‘very few chances to hear/watch a native speaker reading/performing Shakespeare’s works’, he adds that despite thinking ‘Shakespeare’s work is very far away

from [him]’, he really wanted to ‘learn it and read it’. Extract 5.29 (from Feedback 3, discussing the students’ interpretations of *Hamlet*) frames this distance and difficulty in striking terms: ‘Shakespeare’s language is a foreign language in foreign language’. However, when he raised this comparison in his interview, Jacky made it clear that he considers the challenge of trying to understand Shakespeare an enjoyable one, despite – or even because of – its difficulty:

### **Extract 5.30 Interview with Jacky (Jac)**

216 Jac: Yeah (.) it's just like er (0.5) to learn another  
217 foreign language  
218 Dun: Yeah! Yeah  
219 Jac: Er but er:: (0.8) at the end it will be very fruitful  
220 Dun: Mm  
221 Jac: You feel (1.0) when you appreciate the beauty of the  
222 language you you will feel "Oh (0.5) it's wonderful!"  
223 Dun: Mm  
224 Jac: It's a process of (0.5) first of all it's painful then  
225 you you you get fruitful  
226 Dun: Mm (0.7) so do you er er obviously as well as maybe erm  
227 obviously appreciating the: the poem or the (.) the  
228 speech  
229 Jac: Yeah  
230 Dun: Do you also feel (0.7) a kind of sense of achievement that  
231 you've (.) you've done something difficult you've  
232 managed to do it yeah  
232 Jac: [Yeah (0.7) it's a process that no pains  
233 no gains  
234 Dun: Yeah ((laughs))  
235 Jac: ((laughs)) It's a process  
236 Dun: ↑So I mean↑ that's (.) sometimes that that is good  
237 when you've done something difficult and you can feel "I've  
238 I've done [it I've succeeded"  
239 Jac: [Yeah I get more pleasure than just reading a  
240 very easy text

In this extract Jacky and I co-construct the idea that while understanding Shakespeare is a challenging process (a word he repeats three times, at lines 224, 232 and 235), it has its rewards. Although he describes it as difficult and even painful (lines 224 and 232), he says that ‘at the end it will be fruitful’ (line 219, with ‘fruitful’ repeated at line 225). Notably he does not present the reward as, or as only, being about comprehending the words – at lines 221-222 he describes as ‘wonderful’ the feeling when one is able to ‘appreciate the beauty of the language’.

The various ways in which myself and the students collaboratively explored and achieved such responses in the workshops are addressed in the next two chapters. Before then, however, it will be useful to highlight how Extract 5.30 shows the perceived difficulty of

Shakespeare not simply as something to be overcome, but – for some participants – as integral to Shakespeare’s appeal. At line 230 I begin to ask Jacky whether there is also a sense of achievement at having managed to do ‘something difficult’ (lines 230-232), and he agrees, summarising it as a process of ‘no pains no gains’ (lines 232-233). After I repeat/rephrase this idea at lines 236-237, Jacky suggests that he actually gets ‘more pleasure’ from reading something difficult like Shakespeare ‘than just reading a very easy text’ (lines 239-240). This put me in mind of several of other participants – including Benny, Dinghui, Paz and Xihong – who were similarly enthusiastic about Shakespeare, and also explicitly described themselves as enjoying a challenge. It also put me in mind of Kate, who, after acknowledging Shakespeare’s difficulty in her interview, suggested that ‘if you don’t try to understand’ and judge that ‘Shakespeare is far away [...] it just suggests that you are lazy’. It is important to remember that these attitudes are being expressed here by participants who volunteered to attend Shakespeare workshops in their own time, and who speak at least two (and in some cases four or five) languages. Nevertheless, this shows how commenting on Shakespeare’s difficulty can involve making claims not only about Shakespeare and his works, but also about oneself and others – claims that involve both identity work and moral reasoning, as will be explored in this chapter’s final section.

### **5.3 What does engaging with Shakespeare mean to the participants?**

As has been noted, the practical accomplishment of ‘doing Shakespeare’, in all its aesthetic, affective, physical, intercultural and interpersonal dimensions, will be addressed in the next two chapters. In some cases, this will involve examining the participants directly making Shakespeare and/or the workshop activities relevant to their understandings of their own lives – as happened, for example, when we explored Jaques’s ‘All the world’s a stage’ speech (*As You Like It*, 2.7) in the introductory session (see Chapter 7). Before then, however, it will be useful to have an initial look at how the participants discussed Shakespeare’s relevance to their lives before, or irrespective of, the workshops. Obviously, for participants such as Chen Shumin and Sophie Li (Extracts 5.2-5 and 5.17-19), Shakespeare was neither something that had much of a place in their lives before the workshops, nor one of the main reasons they attended. In contrast, for Benny, Dinghui, Jacky, Paz, Xihong and Sylvia and others, Shakespeare seemed to offer various ways of understanding and interpreting the world, and their roles within it. Consequently, the final section of this chapter looks at some of the ways

in which the participants established and used these relevances in the interviews and feedback.

### **5.3.1 What, if any, connections did participants make between Shakespeare and their own lives, identities and positionalities?**

In some cases, participants made straightforward connections between stories, events, or themes from Shakespeare's plays, and their own experiences or observations. Sometimes this involved commenting on an apparent resonance between a Shakespeare text and a wider social issue (such as when, in her interview, Long Ying compared the depiction of gender roles and marriage in *Much Ado About Nothing* to changing societal expectations in contemporary China). This kind of broad connection, and the idea that the exceptionalist discourse that positions Shakespeare as beyond his time and perennially relevant, has long been a commonplace in debates over his place in education and the arts, in the UK and elsewhere. It is also something that I regularly heard during my teaching career in China, with staff and students often suggesting that what Shakespeare's plays say about 'human nature' was one of the reasons why they were of global interest. However, in my teaching of Shakespeare in general and this project in particular, I have tried to interrogate these kinds of broad claims of relevance. To begin with, concentrating only on straightforward 'representational' relevances means potentially missing the very appeal of texts that seem different or strange, and the emotional, imaginative and intellectual connections that can be made in and through them. When asked what she thought about people suggesting Shakespeare is 'far from their lives', Paz, for example, said 'all the novels are very far away from my life', but argued that this is a good thing, because she reads literature 'in order to get into others' lives'. Putting too much stress on broad claims of Shakespeare's relevance also risks perpetuating the myth of Shakespearean universality discussed earlier (Joubin & Mancewicz 2018).

In Chapter 7 I will return to how the shift to 'salience' proposed by Dadabhoy & Mehdizadeh (forthcoming) is a useful way of reframing the debate around 'relevance'. Accordingly, that chapter will also feature some examples of students taking quotes from Shakespeare and using them to signal something about their own lives. Here, however, I will focus on students using a more general idea of 'Shakespeare' in order to position themselves in various ways in the interviews. Some of this chapter's earlier examples showed participants talking about how their understandings of Shakespeare have changed over time, such as when Dinghui

presented being in high school as an explanation for previously struggling to read Shakespeare, when she find it less difficult now (see Extract 5.7, above). A number of other students, such as Daniel and Kate, talked elsewhere in their interviews about how their evolving understanding of Shakespeare was not just a matter of linguistic or literary proficiency, but of their stage of life, as they felt they understood Shakespeare more fully as they became older and more experienced. However, in some other cases the identity work being done through ‘Shakespeare’ was far more extended.

The most in-depth discussion of this kind came in my interview with Sylvia, a fourth-year Literature undergraduate who, like Dinghui, Paz and Xihong, I had known for several years and previously done a lot of Shakespeare with. Sylvia was the most confident performer of all of the participants and had possibly the best English. She had also experienced a very different upbringing from most of her fellow students, having attended private schools by virtue of being from a Taiwanese family living in mainland China. Our prior familiarity effectively made this an acquaintance interview (Garton & Copland 2010), with a lot of basic contextual information taken for granted, and the conversation often becoming an in-depth discussion of the personal significance of Shakespeare and literature to our respective lives. Something of this can be seen in this first extract, in which Sylvia explains her view of why Shakespeare might be seen as difficult:

### **Extract 5.31 Interview with Sylvia (Syl)**

366 Dun: Oh Okay (.) so (.) it it sou:nds (.) >from what  
367 you're saying< it sounds like you ↑don't↑ (.) coz  
368 some people talk about Shakespeare as being very difficult  
369 (.) for example it sounds like you don't really think:  
370 Syl: I don't think it's difficult >I think< (.) if you think  
371 it's difficult it's because you cannot relate to it  
372 Dun: Mm  
373 Syl: You can't understand (.) the: depth (.) of it (.)  
374 when I was (.) at Middle School  
375 Dun: Yeah  
376 Syl: I read Hamlet but I don't understand Hamlet [(.) and  
377 Dun: [£Yeah£  
378 I'm=I'm gla:d actually ((laughs)) because it'd be a bit  
379 disturbing if y'know  
380 Syl: ((laughs and coughs)) It's just a (.) yeah it's (.) and  
381 then in High School I reread it again (.) and it's slightly  
382 different and then in: (.) university after I enter Lingwai  
383 and I read it again  
384 Dun: Yeah  
385 Syl: It's again different er I I think it's (.) a thing that's  
386 related to your personal experience? and [(.) if you're=  
387 Dun: [Mm

388 Syl: =not experienced enough you=you cannot [understand the=  
 389 Dun: [Mm  
 390 Syl: =full meaning of the (.) play  
 391 Dun: Oh okay so that that that might be what's difficult (.)  
 392 rather than (.) [anything else  
 393 Syl: [Yes! rather than the language (.) I think  
 394 I? think (.) personally

Given her English level it is perhaps easy for Sylvia to say that Shakespeare is not difficult or that any difficulty is unrelated to his language, but throughout this extract she is careful to present what she is saying as her personal opinion – note the multiple instances, sometimes stressed, of ‘I think’ (lines 370, 385 and 393-394). The view she expresses is that some people think Shakespeare is difficult because they ‘cannot relate to it’ and ‘can’t understand’ its depth (lines 370-371 and 373). Over several lines she gives the example of not being able to understand *Hamlet* when she first read it at Middle School (something I laughingly claim to be relieved about at lines 378-379), but finding that its meaning had changed by the time she read it at High School, and again at Lingwai (lines 381-383). She extrapolates from her experiences to argue that ‘if you’re not experienced enough [...] you cannot understand the full meaning of the (.) play’ (lines 385-390). This question of understanding the play is not merely a matter of comprehension though, as towards the end of the interview, she gives a more specific example about what it might mean to be able to understand the ‘depth’ or the ‘full meaning’ of a play like

*Hamlet*:

### **Extract 5.32 Interview with Sylvia**

648 Syl: I thin:k (.) the beauty of Shakespeare is how simple and  
 649 <how complex it can> he can be at [the same time with one=  
 650 Dun: [Mm  
 651 Syl: =single line (.) .pt take "To be or not to be" [for=  
 652 Dun: [Yeah  
 653 =example when I was in Middle School  
 654 Dun: Yeah  
 655 Syl: I was thinking about life and death  
 656 Dun: Yeah  
 657 Syl: Because that’s how teenagers think (.) they think about  
 658 dr:astic! things [like life and death  
 659 Dun: [Yeah (.) yeah yeah yeah ((laughs))  
 660 Syl: ((laughs))  
 661 Dun: Yes: ((laughs))  
 662 Syl: But later (.)  
 663 Dun: Mm  
 664 Syl: It's somehow different (.) erm ow: I have seen a Cee-Enn  
 665 -Cee production of Hamlet when I was [in er first grade?  
 666 Dun: [Oh okay (.)  
 667 Syl: Of=  
 668 Dun: =I think I saw that same [one yeah yeah

669 Syl: [↑Yeah? yeah?↑ I was in the front  
 670 seat? first row? very £close and£ (.) um (.) that "To  
 671 be or not to be" (.) has changed from (.) life and death.  
 672 Dun: M  
 673 Syl: To (.) <where I am>  
 674 Dun: Mm  
 675 Syl: To:: s:omehow the problem of existence  
 676 Dun: Mm. Mm mm.

After presenting her view that ‘the beauty of Shakespeare’ is its simultaneous simplicity and complexity (lines 648-649), from line 651 Sylvia gives the example of her shifting understanding of a single line from *Hamlet*: ‘To be, or not to be, [that is the question]’. First, she talks about her view of this line when she was at Middle School. She says that at that time she ‘was thinking about life and death’ (line 655), the stressed ‘was’ pre-empting, or being explained by, her subsequent reference to a category-bound feature at lines 657-658: ‘Because that’s how teenagers think (.) they think about dr:astic! things like life and death’ (Reynolds & Fitzgerald 2015). The emphatic ‘dr:astic!’ presents this former viewpoint as dramatic, at the same time as distancing it from her present perspective. This distancing continues in her recollection of seeing a visiting production of *Hamlet* (which I also saw) during her first year at Lingwai, as Sylvia uses seemingly self-deprecating rising intonation and laughs as she recalls her enthusiasm at the time: ‘I was in the front seat? first row? very £close[£]’ (lines 669-670). Suddenly, however, her speech becomes more restrained, and slower, as she explains that by the time of – or perhaps because of – this later production, the line had changed from being something dramatic or drastic, to something more pensive and philosophical – from ‘life and death. [...] To (.) <where I am> [...] To:: s:omehow the problem of existence’ (lines 670-675).

Over the next thirty or so lines Sylvia explains the difficulty of defining the personal significance of this quote from *Hamlet* (‘It’s in this very myster?ious grey area’). She then introduces another idea which links back to her earlier comments about her understandings changing over time: that Shakespeare’s work ‘grows’ and that ‘you can see yourself’ at different stages of your life. She illustrates this using *Romeo and Juliet*:

### **Extract 5.33 Interview with Sylvia**

705 Syl: Not only just in n’you may (.) you know when you’re in  
 706 teenager you might you know ado:re love stories and you  
 707 might love Romeo and Juliet [then (.) and when you’re=  
 708 Dun: [Yeahyeahyeah  
 709 Syl: =older and you’re concerned about (.) social  
 710 discrimina?tion or class difference: you may also

711 interested in Romeo and Juliet but it's in a different way=  
 712 Dun: =In a different yeah something different  
 713 Syl: Yes. (.) and so it grows on you (.) as an individual  
 714 Dun: Yeah  
 715 Syl: If you? (.) have grown (.) enough (.) to fully (.)  
 716 comprehend  
 717 Dun: Mm  
 718 Syl: The meaning behind? a play or a text or a Sonnet? (.)  
 719 then things will be very different and I don't think anyone  
 720 can deny that kind of epiphany

Once more, Sylvia contrasts the interests and outlook associated with an earlier stage of life with those of a more recent or even current one. Again, she does this by linking category-bound features to different readings of Shakespeare, proposing that while as a teenager you might 'adore love stories' and appreciate this aspect of *Romeo and Juliet* (lines 706-707), 'when you're older and you're more concerned about (.) social discrimination or class difference' then you might be interested in the play 'in a different way' (lines 707-711). While she characterises these stages of life as relating to people in general ('you'), she then switches to a more individualised perspective, summarizing that Shakespeare 'grows on you (.) as an individual' – but, she emphasises, only if you 'have grown (.) enough (.) to fully (.) comprehend' the 'meaning behind' his texts (lines 713-718). If this condition is met, 'then things' – presumably one's outlook and understanding – 'will be very different' she continues, before adding 'and I don't think anyone can deny that kind of epiphany' (lines 718-720). While people in general might find their understanding evolving through different stages of life, this posits Shakespeare as a vehicle through which individuals who have 'grown enough' can achieve a personal, philosophical or artistic 'epiphany'. Although participants such as Kate characterized Shakespeare's more philosophical aspects as 'obscure', several others, including Benny, Daniel, Dinghui, Paz, Sophie Huang and Lai Yuanqing, spoke positively about engaging with Shakespeare's works enabling or encouraging them to think about philosophical questions about human existence. Yuanqing, for example, notably remarked that Shakespeare allowed her to ponder such topics, whereas if she tried to talk to her family about them, they would think she was 'insane', 'thinking too much' or 'too unrealistic'. This can be linked to Sylvia's final remark in this extract, where although she states that she doesn't think 'anyone can deny that kind of epiphany', this seems to be normative rather than descriptive; she has already implied that not everyone is ready or able to 'fully comprehend [...] [t]he meaning



behind? a play or a text or a Sonnet?'. Shortly after this, Sylvia becomes even more explicit about why she thinks some people cannot relate to Shakespeare:

### **Extract 5.34 Interview with Sylvia**

750 Syl: Yeah like that I think and um (.) I <don't know> for  
751 sure? why people might say that they can s:-feel?  
752 that Shakespeare is beautiful  
753 Dun: Yeah  
754 Syl: But they (.) don't (.) really: (.) relate? to it  
755 Dun: Mm  
756 Syl: But I my guess is (.) that (.) they haven't looked  
757 deep enough (.)  
758 Dun: Oh okay  
759 Syl: On them!selves!  
760 Dun: Ah! (.) so it's not about the text (.) it's about (.)  
761 it's about [them maybe  
762 Syl: [Yes the person yes  
763 Dun: Oh okay  
764 Syl: ↑>Because<↑ (.) reading is a (.) y'know both side  
765 communication  
766 Dun: Oh yeahyeahyeah sure yeah  
767 Syl: The reader:'s response? Is a criticism right? (.) and  
768 narratology? So  
769 Dun: Mm  
770 Syl: Reading is (.) it cannot be devoid of thinking  
771 Dun: Mm  
772 Syl: Reading is a process of thinking and imagination so  
773 erm (.) by not relating (.) or not s:ens:ing (.)  
774 enough in (.) the text (.) it's not necessarily the  
775 author's? fault but (.) the reader's  
776 Dun: Mm  
777 Syl: Fault (.) I think

Although she hedges her claim – saying ‘I <don't know> for sure?’ at lines 750-751 and ‘But I my guess is’ at line 756 – the assessment that follows is very forceful.

At lines 756-757 she begins by saying such people ‘haven't looked deep enough’, which, after she pauses, I treat as complete, responding with ‘Oh okay’. However, she then emphatically continues, adding to and altering the finished assessment: ‘they haven't looked deep enough [...] [o]n them!selves!’ (lines 756-759). I respond by treating this as unexpected (‘Ah!’) and then rephrase her assessment ‘so it's not about that text [...] it's about them maybe’ (lines 760-761). Sylvia then links her suggestion that some people cannot relate to Shakespeare because they have not looked deeply enough at themselves to different literary theories that stress the bidirectional nature of interpretation (‘both side communication’, lines 764-765), before adding that reading ‘cannot be devoid of thinking’ (line 770) and ‘is a process of thinking and imagination’ (line 772). Using ‘so’, she then links these to an assessment: that ‘not

relating (.) or not s:ens:ing (.) enough' is 'not necessarily the author's fault but (.) the reader's [...] [f]ault' (lines 772-777). Taken as a whole, this extract sees Sylvia presenting not being able to relate to Shakespeare as a personal failing, from a lack of thinking, imagination and/or self-awareness. This, like Kate's aforementioned suggestion that people who can't understand Shakespeare are 'lazy', shows Shakespeare being used not only to do identity work on the part of the individuals who are speaking (I am the kind of person who can relate to Shakespeare), but also in relation to others (they are the kind who cannot). This identity work thus also entails a sort of moral reasoning, as it involves implicit or explicit judgements as to who is a good or bad reader of Shakespeare, or a good or bad student (Freebody 2010, 2013, Jayyusi 1984).

This aspect of moral reasoning in participants' uses of Shakespeare in identity work was addressed explicitly by Ann, a third-year Translation and Interpreting major. If Sylvia posited the idea that you need to be sufficiently insightful or imaginative to relate to Shakespeare, Ann examines its logical flipside: what does it mean to be an English student who *doesn't* like Shakespeare?

### **Extract 5.35 Interview with Ann**

833 Dun: So what (0.4) what do you think you can actually get  
834 from do:ing (0.5) Shakespeare?  
835 Ann: (1.0) mmmmm (2.1) this is this is why I want to  
836 know (0.6) through attending these lectures and °courses°  
837 (0.7) umm .pt be↑cause↑ when I: (0.7) e:r#rrrr# (1.2) when  
838 when I enter: our unive:rsity:?  
839 Dun: Mm  
840 Ann: I know some of my friends are ↓crazy about Shake[speare↓  
841 Dun: [(laughs)]  
842 Ann: yea:h? they=  
843 Dun: =So these (.) friends erm from here at Lingwai or were  
844 these friends from before?  
845 Ann: Er Lingwai?  
846 Dun: Lingwai [okay  
847 Ann: [erm yeah (1.3) but they they say "oh Shakespeare's  
848 °s:o good >I love Shakespeare"<° [but actually I don't=  
849 Dun: [(laughs)]  
850 Ann: =reall[y understa:nd I don't know why they li- they like=  
851 Dun: [y'thinking ↑"why?"↑  
852 Ann: =er like him?  
853 Dun: Mm  
854 Ann: A:nd (1.0) and at first when >when< I: (0.4) when I: e:rr  
855 (1.0) first know Romiet and Juliet  
856 Dun: Mm  
857 Ann: Er Romeo and Juliet or: (0.7) other shows  
858 Dun: Mm  
859 Ann: I I think "Oka:y? [the show's just ve:ry (0.7) dramatical?"  
860 Dun: [(laughs)]

861 Ann: And “~ohhhhh!~ (0.6) it’s really t- tragedy?” ((laughs))  
 862 Dun: bu:t? ((laughs))  
 863 Ann: But I I I I don’t (0.4) really think (0.5) “oh it’s my (.)  
 864 cup of cake” I I [I don’t I don’t I don’t really think=  
 865 Dun: [Oh yeahyeah  
 866 Ann: “O:h! I love! him” and (0.5) [so so I won?der  
 867 Dun: [so it’s kind of you can see  
 868 why: or you you (0.9) “Okay yes it’s very dramati:c” [and=  
 869 Ann: [yeah?  
 870 Dun: =”yeah it’s a tragic- but (0.6) .pt what’s the [big deal?”  
 871 Ann: [Okay: I I  
 872 just think “oh alright. Okay.”=  
 873 Dun: =Yeah ((laughs))=  
 874 Ann: =( (laughs)) >I’m not I’m not< (0.4) hate him er but (0.5)  
 875 but [do not really like  
 876 Dun: [But clearly not

Ann responds to my initial question by turning it on its head: she’s attending the workshops precisely to discover what she can get from them (lines 835-837). She then accounts for this response by explaining that when she entered Lingwai, some of her friends were ‘↓crazy about Shake[speare↓], dropping her voice and stressing ‘crazy’ to emphasise their fervour (line 840). The implication that this fervour might be excessive is then made explicit, as Ann ventriloquises their position and contrasts it to her own: ‘they say “oh Shakespeare’s °s:o good >I love Shakespeare”<° [but actually I don’t really understa:nd [...] I don’t know why they [...] like him?’ (lines 847-852). Similar use of hypothetical reported speech was seen earlier, for example, when Dinghui used it to present the common perception that Shakespeare’s language is difficult (Extract 5.24). Here, however, Ann is using it to characterise a view held by others that is completely contrary to her own position. She then presents this position, again using hypothetical reported speech, by voicing her initial response to *Romeo and Juliet* at lines 859-861 ‘I think “Oka:y? the show’s just ve:ry (0.7) dramatical?” [...] And “~ohhhhh!~ (0.6) it’s really t- tragedy?” ((laughs))’, recalling Sophie Li’s underwhelmed response to the same play (Extract 5.17, above). At this point I interject (‘Bu:t?’, line 862), prompting Ann to add the negative element of her assessment: that she doesn’t ‘really think (0.5) “oh it’s my (.) cup of cake”’ (lines 863-864, presumably meaning ‘cup of tea’). More damning through faint praise follows (‘I just think “Oh alright. Okay”’, line 872) before Ann clarifies that she doesn’t ‘hate’ Shakespeare – but does not ‘really like’ him (lines 874-875). At this point she returns to her purported motive for attending the workshops:

### Extract 5.36 Interview with Ann

877 Ann: So: so I won?deri:ng I I I want to figure out why they  
878 like him [and  
879 Dun: [yeah OK yeah  
880 Ann: And trying to say (0.6) "can °can I love him?°" ((laughs))  
881 Dun: ((laughs))  
882 Dun: £Because£ people: (.) usually say a (.) a English major  
883 student (0.5) should like £Shakespeare£  
884 Dun: Mmm.  
885 Ann: ((laughs)) because they e:r [((laughs))  
886 Dun: [((laughs))  
887 Ann: Like bury? themselves in Shakespeare's ↓o:cean↓((°laughs°))  
888 Dun: ((laughs)) so [what  
889 Ann: [((laughs))  
890 Dun: So what would that in Chinese? What would that  
887 Ann: erm (.) >bǎ zìjǐ zàng zài Shāshìbǐyà de hǎiyáng lǐ<  
把自己葬在莎士比亚的海洋里  
[bury oneself in Shakespeare's ocean]  
888 Dun: ((laughs)) (.) [Okay?  
889 Ann [((laughs))

Her reason for attending the workshops, she says, lies not only in wanting 'to figure out why they [her friends / fellow students] like him' but also in asking herself: "°can I love him?°" (lines 877-880). She frames this question as motivated by her awareness of a categorial association in popular discourse: 'people: (.) usually say' that English majors 'should like £Shakespeare£' (lines 882-883). She follows this with an expression that mordantly reflects this categorial assumption: that English majors will 'bury? themselves in Shakespeare's ↓o:cean↓' (把自己葬在莎士比亚的海洋里) (line 887).

While our repeated laughter shows that both of us were treating this concern light-heartedly at the time, this extract raises two serious points. First, Shakespeare is once again being compared to a monumental feature of nature: from a remote, forbidding mountain peak (Stredder 2009) to a vast ocean, in which English students should bury themselves. Ann's amusement as she describes this notion does not suggest she is particularly intimidated by it, but perceiving Shakespeare as monumental and/or exceptional can be pedagogically problematic in several ways. Not only could it deter some students from engaging with Shakespeare in the first place (as suggested by some of the participants' early assumptions in 5.2, above), but it could also accord him an exaggerated importance that could distort the study of English language and literature as a whole, and early modern drama in particular. This is something Ann touches on as we move to conclude this section of the interview:

### **Extract 5.36 Interview with Ann**

890 Dun: And so you want to know wh:y why [why would they fe:el=  
891 Ann: [mmm yeah  
892 Dun: =this yeah?  
893 Ann: And (.) actually I ↓don't ↓really ↓like the curriculum  
894 works £that£ ((laughs))  
895 Dun: Okay  
896 Ann: I don't like the (.) necessaries that (.) er the  
897 teachers force us to read  
898 Dun: Okay.  
899 Ann: A:nd (.) but I think "well (.) if he:s liked by so  
900 many people there are some reasons? and (.) maybe? I will  
901 have my choice after I: understandi:ng him [eno:ugh!"  
902 Dun: [Okay. (.)  
903 a:nd do you feel you have? got any answers?  
904 Ann: No?! no?  
905 Dun: Okay so you're sti:ll thinking "wh:y why are [the:y"  
906 Ann: [and and but  
907 I start to think "↑oh he's an interesting↑" (.)  
908 Dun: So at least we've got to [i:nteresting  
909 Ann: [((laughs)) yeah

In this extract, Ann says that she doesn't like the 'necessaries' that 'the teachers force us to read' (lines 896-897). Despite this, she still thinks 'Well (.) if he:'s liked by so many people' then there must be 'some reasons?', and that only when she understands him 'eno:ugh' can she make her own mind up about Shakespeare (note the emphasis on 'my choice') (lines 899-901). When I ask at line 903 whether she has got any answers (from the workshops), she says no, but then adds that she has started to think "↑oh he's interesting↑" (line 907), which I jokingly treat as a success of sorts: 'So at least we've got to i:nteresting' (line 908).

In one sense, these extracts show Ann wrestling with the weight of associations, assumptions and even imperatives that surround Shakespeare, in an attempt to engage with – or dismiss – his work on her own terms. Despite being a high performing student with a particular facility for literary translation, and despite having read and watched more Shakespeare than some students who professed admiration for him, Ann still treated her lack of interest as something that might be mistaken, and which she needed to explore further until qualified to make a decision. In contrast, for a participant such as Sylvia, Shakespeare appears to have an ongoing personal significance, both of as a kind of intellectual and imaginative stimulus, and as something around which identity work can be performed. This work involves presenting oneself as the kind of person who has the awareness and ability to understand and appreciate Shakespeare, in the face of others (fellow students, teachers, friends, family members etc.)

who may not share that appreciation, and may even be suspicious of it – as was the case with Yuanqing’s family, who it appears find her interest in philosophical themes ‘too unrealistic’ or even ‘insane’. For educators who bring Shakespeare into their classrooms or drama studios it is vital to be aware of this kind of identity work and moral reasoning – both on the part of students, and ourselves.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In rejecting both the ‘myth of universality’ and sweeping statements about Chinese students and how they understand Shakespeare, this chapter has attempted to respecify ‘Shakespeare’ in terms of how he and his works were invoked, negotiated and used, in context, in the research interviews and written feedback. In doing so, the chapter has shown significant diversity in when and how participants initially engaged with Shakespeare. While the majority of interviewees reported first experiences of Shakespeare as occurring during their school years, many of these did not take place in formal educational contexts. Indeed, the participants who seemed most enthusiastic about Shakespeare reported having come across his works independently, as self-described children who loved to read, or teenage film and TV fans. In contrast, most of the participants who reported their first engagements with Shakespeare as having occurred in school, described cursory and rather forgettable experiences. However, even those participants who had very little direct experience of Shakespeare before the workshops were aware of a discourse of Shakespearean exceptionalism, which positions him as a ‘great’, ‘classic’ writer, different to and more important than other artists or authors. Some participants repeated this discourse of exceptionalism. Others rejected it and said that Shakespeare had nothing to do with their attendance at the workshops, or suggested that his status and ubiquity was actually a deterrent for them. Still others implicitly endorsed Shakespearean exceptionalism on the basis of their own positive engagements with Shakespeare. But whatever their views on Shakespearean exceptionalism, participants often linked this notion to a perception that Shakespeare is difficult, primarily due to his language, which was variously described as ‘ancient’, ‘out of date’ and ‘archaic’, as well as (too) ‘beautiful’ and ‘literary’.

The responses to this difficulty – both experienced and perceived – varied wildly, from participants who said they had simply given up, to others who insisted on reading his work in English, only reluctantly ‘resorting’ to Chinese translations when this proved too hard. The accounts of these responses in turn contained certain claims – about Shakespeare, and about

the participants (including myself). In terms of Shakespeare, many participants expressed an essentialist view that privileged the ‘original’, through preferring Shakespeare in English over Chinese translations, to period productions over modern dress ones. In terms of the students’ identity work, Shakespeare was seen by some participants as providing intellectual and imaginative stimulation, around which they could understand and position themselves – particularly in relation to the more instrumental demands placed upon them in other areas of their lives. At the same time, however, it was sometimes suggested that not understanding and/or liking Shakespeare was effectively a personal failing, of effort, imagination or insight. For students who do not like or relate to Shakespeare, this moral reasoning means having to reconcile their personal experiences and interests with a discourse which holds that English students do, or even *should*, like Shakespeare.

In research and pedagogical terms, I feel that these findings – and the in-depth analytical process through which they were generated – have justified my decision to treat the interviews and feedback as part of, and not external to, the educational and social realities that are discussed within them (Baker 2002, Roulston 2019). Even within the highly specific contexts addressed in this chapter, it is clear that ‘Shakespeare’ is not ‘immortal’ as Cassio might have it – the meanings associated with him are not automatically shared and understood, even in the same educational setting. But neither are they merely what Iago might call ‘idle and most false imposition[s]’. Instead, the understandings of Shakespeare that the participants invoked and negotiated in the interviews and feedback were often matters of great importance for them, which had consequences not only for their views about their studies, but also their understandings of themselves and others. What we talk about when we talk about Shakespeare can differ wildly from person to person, and from interaction to interaction. Educators who bring Shakespeare into their classrooms or studios thus need to pay close attention to how Shakespeare, far from simply being ‘out there’ like an icy peak or a vast ocean, is in fact a context that is talked into being in and through interaction. The next chapter draws on the findings and spirit of this one, as it applies an interactional focus to how the participating students and I actually *did* Shakespeare in the workshops.

## Chapter 6: 'Action is eloquence' – doing Shakespeare in the workshop room

HAMLET: 'Seems', madam? Nay, it is. I know not 'seems'.  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, cold mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play;  
But I have that within which passes show;  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

*(Hamlet 1.2.76-86)*

VOLUMNIA: I prithee now, my son,  
Go to them with this bonnet in thy hand;  
And thus far having stretched it—here be with them—  
Thy knee bussing the stones—for in such business  
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th'ignorant  
More learnèd than the ears—waving thy head,  
Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart,  
Now humble as the ripest mulberry  
That will not hold the handling.

*(Coriolanus, 3.2.71-79)*

In addition to having rather complicated relationships with their mothers, Hamlet and Coriolanus both struggle to reconcile what their outer actions reveal of their inner feelings. For Hamlet, asked by his newly remarried mother why his grief over his deceased father seems 'so particular' (1.2.75), no outward display can ever convey the depth of his feelings. To him, the common 'forms, moods, shapes of grief' – sighing, crying, looking dejected and wearing black – are merely 'actions that a man might play', whereas what he feels inside



‘passes show’ (1.2.82-85). Coriolanus, however, has the opposite problem, as he seems unable to disguise his disdain for the common people of Rome, who have withdrawn their support for his role as consul as a result. In response, both men’s mothers implore them to stop wearing their hearts on their sleeves. Gertrude asks Hamlet ‘to cast [his] nighted colour off’ (1.2.68), and to start looking more favourably on his uncle Claudius – her new husband, Denmark’s new king, and, as it turns out, the murderer of Hamlet’s father. Volumnia, meanwhile, pleads with Coriolanus to present himself before the people with a humility he does not feel. She tells him to comport himself in a very specific way, with the dialogue suggesting that the person playing Volumnia should indicate certain gestures that Coriolanus is being asked to perform: doffing his hat and holding it in his outstretched hand, taking a knee, and nodding – perhaps lowering – his head before the tribunes of the people. In this way, Volumnia hopes that Coriolanus will cut a suitably contrite figure and regain the support of the people of Rome. Acting as though he is humble will be far more effective at winning over his audience than trying to persuade them with words, she explains, because ‘in such business / Action is eloquence’ (1.2.74-75).

Although the distinction between speaking and acting is potentially misleading, Volumnia’s description does chime with a fundamental principle of ethnomethodology, whereby actions are treated as ‘documents’, which display not necessarily (or certainly not straightforwardly) what a person is thinking or feeling, but the practical or social logic informing what they are doing (Seedhouse 2004). Thus, Coriolanus’s display of contrition and humility would be read as precisely that: as proof that he is trying to display these things, rather than that he necessarily feels them. In this respect, while Volumnia’s appeal to Coriolanus shares something of his snobbery – she comments that ‘the eyes of th’ignorant are ‘[m]ore learnèd’ than their ears (3.2.75-76) – it also touches upon the practical reasoning underlying how people interpret social actions. Accepting a display of humility from Coriolanus does not mean that the people of Rome would have been duped, nor that they would necessarily believe him to be sincere. Rather, they would have been taking part in a ‘process of making sense [that] involves looking for the rationality of some action’ (Freebody & Freiberg 2011: 80). Coriolanus’s actions would be read as displaying both his *reading* of the situation, and his attempts to *act* upon that reading (Seedhouse 2004). From an ethnomethodological perspective, for analysts and interactants alike:

actions are analysed as occasioned interactional moves, rational in that they are treated as morally adequate with reference to one or more of the dimensions of social

organisation that are central to the orderliness of the social activity under scrutiny.  
(Freebody & Freiberg 2011: 84)

Coriolanus is thus being asked not to be humble so much as to do ‘being humble’, while Hamlet’s problem is that although he believes that the ways in which he is doing mourning fail to reflect what he really feels, the people around him see them as inappropriately excessive. Indeed, it is suggested to Hamlet that his continued mourning, far from being simply a personal matter, goes against the established social and moral order, and particularly his role as prince; Claudius argues that it ‘shows a will most incorrect to heaven’ and is ‘unmanly grief’ (1.2.94-95). Of course, in this case the person counselling Hamlet to think of Denmark and get over it is the one responsible for his father’s death, but ethnomethodology’s point is not that such practical reasoning is necessarily good – just that it is how social order is achieved.

This is as true for how teaching and learning is conducted in a drama workshop as it is for how social and political machinations are done in the Danish court or the Roman senate (Sert 2015). Accordingly, this understanding is fundamental to the ways in which ethnomethodological studies of education investigate ‘how the “natural facts” of educational life, such as daily activities in school classrooms, are produced as such in the first place’ and are, in this way, constitutive of ‘local educational order’ (Hester & Francis 2000: 1). In this vein, this chapter takes a ‘praxiological approach’ (Moutinho 2018: 101), which focuses on the practical actions and reasoning used by participants (myself included), to address the second of my research questions:

RQ2: How did the participants do Shakespeare and achieve the workshops as local, collaborative accomplishments?

Just as the previous chapter sought a respecification of how understandings of Shakespeare were invoked and negotiated in the interviews, this chapter seeks to respecify the practical interactions that took place in the workshops, not as transparent evidence of other processes, but as topics of inquiry in their own right (Hester & Francis 2000, Stokoe & Attenborough 2015). While the previous chapter showed the participants verbally invoking and negotiating certain concepts to accomplish various things in the interactional context of the interviews, this chapter will look at the full range of embodied actions performed by the participants as the business of the workshops was achieved (Sert 2015). In particular, rather than assuming that educational ‘facts’ such as ‘learning’ or ‘engagement’ were straightforwardly available

for analysis, this chapter will take a very fine-grained, multimodal look at how these educational interactions were locally, practically accomplished through the taken-for-granted, seen-but-unnoticed work of practical actions and reasoning taking place within the workshops (Anderson 2011, Freebody & Freiberg 2011, Hester & Francis 2000, Kern & Ohlhus 2017, Seedhouse 2004). By doing so, and examining not only verbal actions but the full range of embodied resources being deployed in what, for me, seems the very familiar setting of the Shakespeare workshop, the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the establishment of local educational order within these interactions, and new perspectives on my own part in them (Freebody 2013).

Based on the iterative, progressive approach described in Chapter 4, which involved going from broad ‘unmotivated looking’ (Psathas 1995) to more structured analysis of the sequential, topical and categorial organisation of particular stretches of interaction (Freebody & Freiberg 2011), this chapter will look at a range of workshop activities, as shown in Table 6.1:

**Table 6.1 Outline of Chapter 6**

Section	Activities	Areas discussed
6.1 Warming-up and walking into a scene	6.1.1 Warm-up (Stop, go) 6.1.2 Walking into a scene	6.1.3 Sequential organisation and IRE/IRF patterns 6.1.4 Topical and categorial organisation – types of workshop talk
6.2 Encountering Shakespeare’s words	6.2.1 Reading round the circle	6.2.2 Analytic challenges posed by reading round the circle
6.3 Collaborative interpretation and performance	6.3.2 Concept checking phase 6.3.3 Development and performance phase	6.3.4 Collaborative concept checking and sensemaking 6.3.5 Collaborative development and performance

These have been selected in part because they correspond to a broad range of the different activities featured in the workshops, and my initial motivations in conducting them. As such, they include activities that were designed to encompass this project's practical and collaborative approach to Shakespeare, including the five types of learning outlined in Winston's (2015) rationale for 'rehearsal room' approaches. However, due to this chapter's 'praxiological approach' (Moutinho 2018), none of these elements or processes were assumed to be automatically or straightforwardly 'there' in the data to be observed or analysed. Instead, this chapter concentrates on the practical actions and reasonings through which the workshops were achieved, only returning to pre-existing concepts in the conclusion if and where this is warrantable on the basis of the findings of the analysis (Freebody & Freiberg 2011). As a result, just as Volumnia contends that '[a]ction is eloquence', my hope is that the following examination of a full range of embodied actions – both verbal and non-verbal – will demonstrate the utility of this kind of multimodal examination of how Shakespeare, and indeed drama workshops, are actually done.

### **6.1 Warming-up and walking into a scene**

In Chapter 5, it can be seen that much of the discussion about engaging with Shakespeare that took place in the interviews centred on his language. However, this chapter will demonstrate that the workshop activity not only did not always involve students directly speaking Shakespeare's words, but in some cases did not involve them speaking at all. This can be seen particularly clearly in the case of the warm-up activities that were typically used to begin the workshops, which were primarily physical rather than verbal. To demonstrate this, the chapter's first section will examine a two-phase warmup activity. The first part, 'Stop, Go', was designed to prepare the students for the emotional, physical and social work to come, while the second, 'Walking into a scene', aimed to help them step – physically and imaginatively – into the fictional world of the play we were to explore during the rest of the session. The first two subsections (6.1.1 and 6.1.2) contain detailed descriptions of the two phases of the activity, produced on the basis of detailed observations of the workshop video. Following these descriptions are two subsections that bring an ethnomethodological perspective to the question of how these two interlinked activities were conducted and collaboratively accomplished. In particular, they look at what a detailed multimodal analysis of drama workshops can offer in addition to existing accounts of the classroom, which focus primarily on turns and interaction patterns, and in which embodied actions play only a marginal role. Specifically, 6.1.3 contrasts an ethnomethodological examination of the

sequential organisation of the warm-up, with the widespread contention that classroom discourse typically follows a predictable pattern of Initiation, Response and Evaluation / Feedback (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975, Seedhouse 2004). This will illustrate the primarily physical ways in which the participating students collaboratively accomplished ‘Stop, go’ and ‘Walking into a scene’ as I issued instructions. Following this, 6.1.4 examines the topical and categorial organisation of those instructions by building on Freebody’s (2013) taxonomy of talk in the drama classroom, and extending her three types – Pedagogic/Logistic Talk, Socio-Cultural Talk and In Role Talk – to include non-verbal actions. In doing so, this section will show that a full account of the collaborative sensemaking that goes on in drama workshops needs to account for a wide range of embodied behaviour, including what will be referred to as ‘embodied enactment’ (Tai & Brandt 2018).

Before describing and analysing this two-phase warm-up activity, it is worth reiterating why warming-up is typically seen as indispensable for ‘active’ Shakespeare workshops in the first place. As my participants were drawn from different classes and grades, and most did not know each other, or me, in advance, I was aware that warming-up would be particularly important for this project. However, warm-up activities in drama workshops are not simply about breaking the ice. The emotional, physical and social nature of practical drama work is often seen as a potential source of anxiety or embarrassment for anyone unfamiliar with this approach, so warm-ups can help learners feel more comfortable and confident, and help teachers to gauge the group’s social dynamics (Stredder 2009). Describing activities used by RSC educational practitioner Miles Tandy, for example, Winston (2015: 57) notes that warm-up games and exercises can be employed to establish the kind of relaxed, but lively, collaborative atmosphere necessary for ‘communal and playful activities’ such as games and theatre making. Warm-up activities are also seen as helping to prepare participants for the collaborative, practical work that will be needed to create a fictional world or dramatic ‘elsewhere’ within the session, and helping them to take their first steps into that world (Kao & O’Neill 1998). This was the inspiration behind the warm-up activities explored below, which took place in the second workshop (Staging Shakespeare: ‘What light through yonder window breaks?’).

### **6.1.1 Description of warm-up (Stop, go)**

The warm-up began with an exercise called ‘Stop, go’, which involved students walking around the room and trying to use all the available space, while following certain commands

(stop, go, jump, clap etc.). This was used to get the students physically relaxed, and comfortable working in a collaborative, playful way, but the screenshots in this subsection show that some students needed literal warming-up, as they were finding it cold and were still wearing coats. There was also the more fundamental aim of helping the students feel more comfortable and confident about working in a different way within the space, and with each other. The session had already begun with an initial activity that was intended both to break the ice and increase group cohesion, and to get students thinking about the issue of what names can mean to different people, in preparation for working on *Romeo and Juliet*. However, this activity – which involved writing their names out and introducing the stories behind them – was conducted in a fairly standard group discussion manner, and ended with the students sat on chairs in a semi-circle (Figure 6.1, below). The two interlinked activities that followed were thus designed to get the students ready for the very different ways in which they would be engaging with *Romeo and Juliet*.

**Figure 6.1**



**Figure 6.2**



First, I asked the participants to place their name sheets from the previous activity on the lectern, and then to ‘push all the chairs back’. This was a signal that we were going to be doing something very different, but notably, after pushing their chairs to the side, and without any explicit instruction to do so, the students rearranged themselves in the same order, standing in a semi-circle where they had previously been sitting. I was also keenly aware that there were huge differences in the participants’ levels of familiarity and comfort with drama techniques. A hint of this can be seen as I began the exercise with the following preamble:

**Extract 6.1**

557 Dun: Right (.) what we're gonna do now is is (.) start  
 558 getting ready to erm (.) stage a little bit  
 559 of=Shakespeare? (.) erm so: I? need to get you warmed up  
 560 (.) I need to get you: (.) moving (.) so what I  
 561 would like you to do please is just (.) walk. (.) Around

562 the room. Off you go. (.) Walk!\_ (.)

As I was giving these instructions, students were visibly preparing themselves in various ways, with Dionne, for example, putting her phone in her jacket, and Kiki taking her coat off at the back of the room (see Figure 6.3). However, Xihong, who by this stage was very familiar with ‘active’ Shakespeare and drama workshops in general, started bouncing on the spot just after I said we were going to ‘start getting ready to [...] stage a little bit of=Shakespeare?’ (lines 558-560).



**Figure 6.3**

*L-R: Xihong bounces on the spot; Kiki takes her coat off; Dionne puts her phone in her pocket*

There were also very different responses to my initial instruction to begin walking around the room. Although two students began moving as soon as I said ‘just (.) walk.’ (line 561), Benny, for example, widened his eyes and smirked, before turning his head to look at his friend Edward, who was still looking at me (Figure 6.6).



**Figure 6.4**

*Benny turns to look at Edward as the first students begin to walk*

Benny and the three students standing around him were the last of the participants to begin



walking, almost four seconds after my initial instruction to ‘just (.) walk.’ (Figure 6.5). (Indeed, before Edward began moving, he shot Benny a glance similar to the one Benny had given him moments before, although by this point Benny was taking his first tentative step forward (also visible in Figure 6.5). Despite this apparent reticence, by the time I had stopped the group a couple of times and started issuing other instructions (i.e. clap, jump) all of the students were responding rapidly to the different commands (Figure 6.6).

**Figure 6.5**



**Figure 6.6**



The amount of laughter and chatter in the room increased as the warm-up went on, aided by the students’ amused responses to a couple of their peers’ phones being dropped onto the floor as they were jumping. As the students got more comfortable with the four basic commands I started to combine them (e.g. ‘jump, clap, jump’) and then reversed them, so that ‘stop’ meant ‘go’ and ‘jump’ meant ‘clap’, and vice versa. By the end of the warm-up there was a lot of communal laughter in the room, as students responded to ‘mistakes’ made by themselves and others (Figure 6.7).



**Figure 6.7**

*Students laugh after being told to ‘clap’ (which here actually meant ‘jump’)*

### **6.1.2 Description of walking into a scene (*Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2)**

Once I judged there to be a sufficiently convivial atmosphere, I moved to a second phase, which built on ‘Stop, go’ by asking the students to continue moving round the space, but now



as if they were somewhere, and someone, else. The aim was to gradually walk them into the role of Romeo, in the scene in which he sneaks into Juliet's house at night (Act 2, Scene 2).

This began with instructions to imagine a general scenario:

### Extract 6.2

```
644 Dun: Ve:ry good. Right now the commands are back as
645     normal (.) "go" really means "go" ["stop" really means=
646                                     [((giggling))
647 Dun: ="stop" (.) carry on going. (.) But ↑now_↑ what we're
648     gonna think about is: (.) you're not in this classroom?
649     you're actually somewhere else. (.) You're <outside.> (.)
650     ↑It's↑ da:rk.
```

At this point, Xihong extended her arms as if she couldn't see (Figure 6.8, below), before I gave more specific instructions:

### Extract 6.3

```
652 Dun: It's quite_difficult_ to see. (.) You've got to be
653     careful where you're walking. (.) In fact! you're inna
654     (.) an orchard. (.) There are tree::s around you? (.)
655     it's very dark so you've gotta watch where you're going?
```

By this stage the pace of walking had slowed down, and many of the students had altered their gait to something more tentative. Some were holding out their hands as though they couldn't see and/or were passing through vegetation (Figure 6.9, below). I then began to give more specific details about the scene that students were going to explore:

### Extract 6.4

```
659     (.) at night: (.) and in fact you're not supposed to
660     <be: there.> (.) You've s:neaked into that orchard. (.)
661     Why? have you ↑sneaked in↑ (.) it's be~cause~ (.) a
662     little whi:le_ ago:_ you spied a beautiful (.) [beautiful=
663 S?:                                     [((snort))
664 Dun: =girl. [(.) Called Juliet. (.) Your name is Romeo. (.)
665 Ss:     [((some muted giggling))
666 Dun: You are in the ↑orchard_ of her ↑father's_ house. (.)
```

Figure 6.8

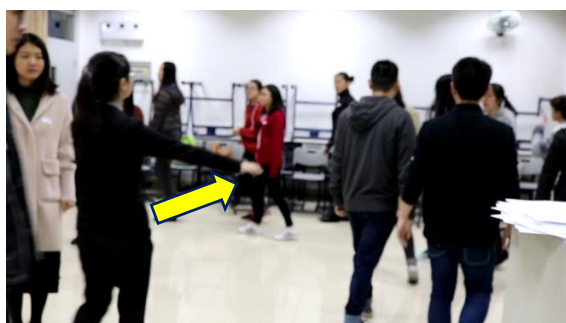


Figure 6.9



The announcement that the students had recently seen a beautiful girl called Juliet, and that

they were in fact Romeo, was greeted with some laughter (lines 663, 665), but I continued to add dramatic elements, telling the student-Romeos that they would be at risk of death if caught in the orchard. By this stage, more of the students were walking with exaggerated care. Shifting my voice to a stage whisper, I issued a sudden ‘Stop!’, at which the students froze – this time in complete silence. Several of them had their shoulders hunched and heads down (eg. Sophie Li, on the far left of the image in Figure 6.10), while Long Yuan noticeably turned her head as though looking out for danger (Figures 6.10-6.11).

**Figure 6.10**



**Figure 6.11**



**Figure 6.10**  
(detail)  
*Long Yuan looks to her left to check for danger*



**Figure 6.11**  
(detail)  
*Long Yuan turns her head and looks for danger to her right*

After telling the students-as-Romeo it was safe to continue, I carried on issuing instructions in a stage whisper, warning them several seconds later: ‘Hide!’. The group responded by dropping down and crouching or kneeling close to the floor (Figure 6.12). After again telling them it was safe to continue (‘It’s alright\_ he’s gone\_ carry on.’) I introduced the idea that they could see something – a light – and told them to look up, as it could be Juliet’s window. Many of the group were now on tiptoes, moving slowly towards the source of this imaginary light (which, as can be seen in Figure 6.13, appeared for most of the students to be coming from the rear righthand-side of the room).

**Figure 6.12**



**Figure 6.13**



Still stage-whispering, I asked ‘what do you say when you see: this light’, to which one of the students responded in a stage whisper: ‘Juliet!’. At this point I concluded the exercise by saying ‘let’s find out’, and then asking the students to form a circle in preparation for the next activity (reading Romeo’s soliloquy).

### **6.1.3 Sequential organisation and IRE/IRF patterns**

With its emphasis on students physically and imaginatively using classroom space, this two-part warm-up might seem like a prototypical example of the differences between a drama workshop and, for instance, a conventional language class. However, Anderson (2011) has pointed out that while drama educators commonly claim that their practice is highly distinctive, it is important to consider whether any differences can be located at the level of the ‘deep rationality’ (Freebody & Freiberg 2011) of educational interaction, not just at a more superficial level. Anderson distinguishes between ‘scenic features’ – ‘the visible social and material characteristics’ of an educational ‘scene’ (Freebody & Freiberg 2011: 80) – and the underlying practical reasoning that assembles the rationality of these scenic features. In other words, while the classroom space and the movement of students look very different in drama workshops, are the interactions between participants and the practical reasoning informing them really that different from those found in ‘conventional’ classrooms? In this light, this subsection will look at what an ethnomethodological analysis of the sequential, topical and categorial organisations of this warm-up reveals in comparison to the widespread contention that classroom discourse typically follows the predictable pattern of the IRF / IRE sequence or cycle (Seedhouse 2004). This sequence was first proposed by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) as the IRF (Initiation, Response, Feedback) exchange structure, whereby classroom interaction was seen as overwhelmingly consisting of patterns featuring an Initiation by the teacher (e.g. a question), a student Response (e.g. an answer), and then further Feedback from the teacher. This can also be referred to as the IRE sequence, where ‘E’ stands for Evaluation, to emphasise the evaluative character of much teacher feedback or

follow-up (Walsh 2011). This subsection will examine how the sequential organisation of ‘Stop, go’ and ‘Walking into a scene’ does and does not correspond to this IRF cycle, while the following subsection (6.1.4) will focus on their topical and categorial organisation. However, as will become clear, these different dimensions of organisation cannot and should not be seen as discrete (Seedhouse 2004).

As my sequential analysis started, it seemed that, at a broad level, these interlinked activities were operating on the basis of cycles that recalled the conventional IRF pattern – the obvious difference being that the response was physical, rather than verbal. For example, I asked the students to walk, they walked, and I gave feedback on their use of space, and then new instructions. This extract, from when I first asked the students to stop after instructing them to spread out and use all the available space while walking, shows how the different moves that characterise the IRF would typically be identified:

### Extract 6.5

```

571 Dun: ↑STOP_!↑ I
      Ss: ((stop walking)) R
572 (3.4)
573 Dun: R:::ight let's 'ave a look (.) erm? (.) ↑it's not↑ F
574 ↑it's not↑ too bad there's a >bit of a space< down
575 here and over ↓the:re↓ (.) not too bad (.)
576 ((claps)) ↑carry_ on?↑ keep going? I

```

Here, turn allocation corresponds with the basic IRF structure: the cycle is initiated (I) by me (albeit with a command rather than a question), and the students respond (R) by stopping. As the teacher I then give explicitly evaluative feedback (F) on the students’ spatial distribution. Finally, I mark the initiation (I) of the next cycle by clapping, and saying ‘↑carry\_ on? ↑keep going?’ (line 576). The turns here appear to be allocated along the rigid lines of the IRF cycle, so although the students are actively walking around the room, they are not given any opportunity to take the floor in conversational terms. My utterances do not invite them to give feedback or initiate anything new, and at this stage none of them self-select to do so. Indeed, had any of the students taken it upon themselves to say ‘stop’ or ‘go’ or even a new instruction, I would likely have treated this as a source of trouble that threatened the order of the activity.

Characterised in this way, as comprising a series of IRF patterns, this activity might seem to be far more unidirectional and hierarchical than the collaborative, learner-centred approach championed by proponents of ‘active’ Shakespeare. However, as Seedhouse (2004: 58) has

pointed out, a danger of analysing what happens in classrooms predominantly through the lens of IRF cycles is that this ‘tends to homogenize and oversimplify the interaction’. Indeed, closer inspection of this two-part activity’s sequential organisation shows that it is actually achieved in a far more complex, collaborative manner than the example IRF cycle above would suggest. In context, the previous example (lines 571-576) shows that if any cycles are in evidence, then they involve multiple interlinked and overlapping moves. Indeed, the Initiation in the sequence above (‘↑ STOP\_! ↑’) is really a move towards delivering Feedback on a student Response that is already in progress as the students walk around the room – the act of stopping itself is not remarked upon. Instead, my Feedback (lines 574-575: ‘there’s a >bit of a space< down here and over ↓ the:re ↓’) refers back to the earlier instruction to ‘use a::ll of the space’. Furthermore, as the warm-up phase progresses, my comments become more minimal. In some cases they are directed at maintaining what is already happening rather than initiating anything new (e.g. ‘> ↑ WALK\_ WALK\_ WALK!\_ ↑ <’). At other times, they are not obviously either Initiation or Feedback, or certainly not *only* Initiation or Feedback – as when, just after a student’s phone falls to the floor after they’ve jumped, I comment: ‘↑ Cry:: ↑\_ (.) at the broken\_ [ ↑ pho::ne ↑\_ (.)’]. The fact that a single move can perform multiple actions will be explored in the next subsection on topical and categorial organisation, but here it is important to note that the organisation of ‘Stop, go’ is less linear and less singularly focussed than dividing it into IRF cycles would suggest.

The fact that only I, as the teacher, appear to Initiate anything also elides the individual and collaborative work students are doing to accomplish both ‘Stop, go’ and ‘Walking into a scene’. Close examination of the first two ‘stop’ instructions, and the subsequent checking of students’ spatial distribution, illustrates this. The first time, as mentioned above, I explicitly evaluate the group’s use of the space by saying ‘↑ it’s not ↑ too bad there’s a >bit of a space< down here and over ↓ the:re ↓ (.) not too bad (.)’ (lines 574-575). As I am saying this, most of the students move and/or turn their heads to look at the places I am indicating (Figure 6.14).



**Figure 6.14**



After I next ask them to stop, I pause for 3.4 seconds, during which time several students apparently anticipate my imminent evaluation, by turning their heads to look at empty spaces, and then turning back to me as I say '<Bet (.) ter>' (Figures 6.15-6.17).



**Figure 6.15**

Just after:

581 Dun: ↑STOP\_!↑



**Figure 6.16**

582 (3.4)



**Figure 6.17**

583 Dun:  
<Bet(.)ter>

Following this second instruction to ‘stop’, then, the students orient to the emerging activity by anticipating the feedback I am about to give. At other times, however, the students collaboratively manage certain aspects of the activity without me providing any feedback at all. On the first occasion I shouted ‘↑ JUMP! \_ ↑’, for example, while most of the students jumped once on the spot, Niki, Yuanqing and Andy all jumped several times. Consequently, more than 3 seconds passed between the end of my instruction and all of the students finishing their jumps. I either did not notice or did not think it necessary to comment during the workshop, but on the second and third instructions to jump, all of the students jumped only once, and had finished much more quickly – in both cases, approximately a second after my instruction ended. Later, when I first shouted ‘↑ CLAP! \_ ↑’, having previously issued the instruction ‘jump’ three times, Benny jumped instead of clapping. His response suggests that he had heard my instruction as an instruction, but was caught off guard by the fact that it was an instruction to clap. Just after many of the other participants clapped, and before he had even landed from his jump, Benny was already turning to look at his peers (Figures 6.18-6.19). While they were still walking, he remained stationary and looked further around (perhaps towards me), grinning, before turning his head back in the direction his body was facing, and setting off again (Figures 6.20-6.21).

**Figure 6.18**



*Benny jumps as other students clap*

**Figure 6.19**



*As he lands, he looks around at others clapping*

**Figure 6.20**



*He looks further round (perhaps to me), grinning, and remaining stationary as the other students continue walking*

**Figure 6.21**



*He turns his head back in the direction his body is facing, and starts walking*

In this case, without any teacher Feedback, Benny's realisation that he had made a 'mistake' was made observable by his reaction – something that may have been missed through a rigid application of IRF cycles, especially if it did not include multimodal analysis.

Finally, as well as individually and collaboratively responding and orienting to the actions of their peers – in addition to explicit instruction and feedback from the teacher – this two-part warm-up provides several examples of students actively contributing their own initiatives.

Waring (2011: 204) has defined a 'learner initiative' as involving 'any learner attempt[ing] to make an uninvited contribution to the ongoing classroom talk'. In this definition, 'uninvited' does not mean unwelcome, just that the learner's contribution has not been specifically invited. It could therefore occur somewhere other than the R position of an IRF cycle – i.e. if the student self-selects as the next speaker – or could simply not be quite the Response the teacher anticipated. Several examples of this can be seen in the 'Walking into a scene' phase of the warm-up. For instance, after I had instructed the students-as-Romeo to '°Hide!°', I started them walking again by saying '°It's alright\_ he's\_ gone\_ carry on.°'.

When I next issued a '°Stop!°' I added '°You can see something°', to which a student (which one is unclear from the video) responded with an urgent stage whisper: '°Someone coming!°'. I followed this initiative by saying that in fact they could see a light at a window, prompting another student to slowly stage whisper '°<Juliet>°'. In this case, both of these learner initiatives were creative, completely appropriate responses that added to the fictional world we were co-creating. They also demonstrate that while the IRF sequence tends to position the learner as a passive respondent 'who assists in implementing the teacher's pedagogical agenda' (Waring 2011: 201), even some activities in which the teacher



is doing almost all of the talking can still provide space for learners to take the initiative and work collaboratively.

#### **6.1.4 Topical and categorial organisation – types of workshop talk**

The previous subsection took a sequential perspective on the primarily physical ways in which students collaboratively accomplished ‘Stop, go’ and ‘Walking into a scene’, even as almost all of the talking was done by me, as the teacher. This subsection’s focus is that teacher talk, and especially its topical and categorial organisation. A useful point of reference here is Freebody’s (2013: 91) article, ‘Talking drama into being’, which explored ‘the particular ways in which students and teachers structure classroom work and share moral reasoning practices in the drama classroom’. Applying CA and MCA to a study of socially-themed drama lessons at Australian high schools, Freebody proposed that three types of talk were distinguishable in the drama lessons she observed:

- **Pedagogic/Logistic Talk (PLT):** concerned with managing in-school behaviour, lesson logistics, and discussions related to how learning activities should be conducted. PLT is ‘concerned with making the various activities into a “lesson” in “school”’ (Freebody 2013: 98);
- **Socio-Cultural Talk (SCT):** concerned with ‘the cultural, social and moral potential of the lesson’ (Freebody 2013: 97) and involving shared accounts and public reasoning, which are ‘generally oriented to the cultural/social/moral aspects of the drama as a socio-cultural event, rather than as an institutionalised classroom event’ (101);
- **In Role Talk (IRT):** ‘any talk-in-interaction that occurs while the participants are seen publicly to be in role as a character’ (Freebody 2013: 110).

It should be stressed that Freebody was observing process drama sessions, in which students improvised realistic scenarios relating to the social issues being discussed. These would have been very different from my workshops, with their use of Shakespearean texts. Nevertheless, Freebody’s three types of talk do find resonances in actions and situations that occurred in my workshops, including in ‘Stop, go’ and ‘Walking into a scene’. It will be useful, therefore, to compare my topical and categorial analyses of these activities with the ways in which their elements would be classified using Freebody’s typology – not least because of what is revealed by utterances that do not neatly fit within the three types.

Applied to ‘Stop, go’, the predominant and most obvious type of talk was Pedagogical/Logistic Talk (PLT). The transcripts show that a large proportion of my

utterances were instructions or commands, as I told students to form a circle, stop, go, jump or clap, and at certain points evaluated how they were doing (i.e. with their use of space). Here, PLT was being used, as Freebody suggests, to relay how the activities were to be conducted, and was in fact fundamental to their being recognised as rational (drama) activities – something that is not automatic, as the reticence shown by some students when first told to walk suggests. As will be seen, however, identifying what might count as PLT during ‘Walking into a scene’, and what it was being used to do, was rather more complicated. Freebody’s second type, Socio-Cultural Talk (SCT), was a feature of ‘What’s in a name?’, which preceded the warm-ups examined here and also featured heavily in other workshops, as we discussed issues such as misogyny, racism and family conflict in, and through, Shakespeare’s work. However, as neither ‘Stop, go’ nor ‘Walking into a scene’ involved any discussion, nothing that could obviously be classed as SCT was observed in these activities. Finally, In Role Talk (IRT) did feature, especially of course in the second part of the warm-up when participants began co-constructing a fictional world. Some examples of IRT have already been mentioned in 6.1.3, when students-as-Romeo whispered things (e.g. ‘someone’s coming!’) that made sense only in relation to their fictional roles, and not their identities as workshop participants. Something that became clear during analysis though, was that many of my utterances during this activity could also be classed as – or at least as something approaching – IRT. Indeed, just as applying the framework of the IRF cycle to educational interactions can oversimplify them, too rigid an application of Freebody’s (2013) typology can obscure instances in which single utterances perform multiple actions, and could therefore simultaneously be associated with more than one of her types of talk.

Looking at PLT first, the transcript of ‘Stop, go’ shows me using this type of teacher talk to manage a number of specific areas of pedagogical and logistical work identified by Freebody. The following extract, for example, which is taken from when I was moving from ‘What’s in a name?’ to ‘Stop, go’, shows me managing both ‘the positions and movements of bodies in the classroom space’ and ‘the use of materials’ (Freebody 2013: 99):

**Extract 6.6**

550 Dun: What I’d like you to do (.) can you just very quickly  
 551 (.) erm come and put you’re your names up here (.) and  
 552 then push all the chairs back please

As the students are walking, I continue to manage their positioning, at the same time as directing ‘the attention of the participants’ to their movements in space (ibid):

### Extract 6.7

563        please don't ↑stop↑\_ (.) don't ↑talk↑\_ (.)  
564        and please don't bump into anyone or any chairs.

The instruction 'don't ↑talk↑\_' here relates to the physical focus of the exercise, so could be seen as a way of managing 'topic relevance' – or more accurately *task* relevance – but it also helps manage 'the turns of talk' by reinforcing that I was the person in a position to allocate these (ibid). As 'Stop, go' progressed, I continued to manage participants' positioning and movements:

### Extract 6.8

594 Dun: Next\_ time\_ when\_ I\_ say\_ that\_ please\_ carry on walking  
595        after you've done it. (.) ↑JUMP!\_↑

Whereas the previous extract (lines 563-564) involved projecting how I wanted the activity to be carried out, in lines 594-595 I am trying to manage the ongoing activity, and specifically to deal with a source of trouble (i.e. the fact that the students stopped walking after they had jumped, rather than carrying on).

In these examples, the PLT managing various pedagogical and logistical aspects of the activity consisted of direct instructions and feedback (do *x*, don't do *y* etc.), worded using polite formulations ('please' occurs at least once in each of the three extracts above).

However, the transcripts show that the actions PLT was being used for were not achieved solely through verbal means. Although I was standing at the edge of the room to give the students more space and am hence largely offscreen (to the bottom left of the images in this section), during the activity's preamble I am briefly visible. An expanded version of the transcript already discussed in 6.1.1 can show the multimodal dimension at work in managing the pedagogical and logistical business of the workshop:

### Extract 6.9

557 Dun: Right (.) what we're gonna do now is is (.)  
          ((claps))  
558        start getting ready to erm (.) stage a little bit  
          ((rubs hands together))  
559        of=Shakespeare? (.) erm so: I? need to get you warmed up  
560        (.) I need to get you: (.) moving (.) so what I  
561        would like you to do please is just (.) walk. (.) Around  
                                  ((spreads ((swings  
  arms )) arms  
  downwards))  
562        the room. Off you go. (.) Walk!\_

In line 557, my attempt to get the students' attention and mark a new stage of the workshop is itself marked not only with my initial 'Right', but also a clap of my hands. Later, as I issue

the instruction to walk (line 561), I first raise my arms in a ‘ready’ gesture as I say ‘is just’ (Figures 6.22-6.23, below), hold for a moment, and then swing them downwards, crossing my hands to indicate ‘go’ as I say ‘walk’. In this respect, it seems appropriate to extend Freebody’s (2013) notion of Pedagogical/Logistic Talk (PLT) to Pedagogic/Logistic Talk and Action (PLTA). This would then cover not only the verbal means, but also the embodied means, such as gesture and body language, through which classroom business is managed in interaction.

**Figure 6.22**



561 Dun: [...] is just (.)

**Figure 6.23**



558 Dun: walk

Another important aspect of the use of what could be classified as PLT/PLTA that became apparent during transcription and analysis is the part that prosody plays in its delivery.

Noticeably, my one-word commands (walk, jump, clap etc.) were almost entirely delivered in the manner shown in the following examples:

571 Dun: ↑STOP\_!↑

587 Dun: (.) okay (.) ↑GO\_!↑

592 Dun: ↑GO!\_↑

610 Dun: ↑Oh↑ dear (.) ↑JUMP\_!↑ (.) ↑CLAP\_!↑ (.) ↑JUMP\_! JUMP\_!↑

In all of these instances, my one-word commands were produced at a higher volume and higher pitch than the surrounding speech, and in a flat tone. For ‘Stop, go’ to work properly as a warm-up that both focuses participants’ attention and creates a playful, collaborative atmosphere, the instructions need to be clear and urgent enough to be acted upon rapidly. The example given in 6.1.3 of Benny jumping when being told to clap (Figures 6.18-6.21) certainly suggests that my instructions were easily hearable *as* instructions. However, what was more unexpected was the fact that so much of the surrounding speech during ‘Stop, go’ was also produced in a similarly level tone, if at lower volume and pitch. This can be seen in the following examples:

578 Dun: Remember use a::ll that\_ space\_ don't\_ just\_ walk\_ in\_

579 a\_circle? Following\_ everyone\_ else?

601 Dun: keep\_ walkin'\_

608 Dun: Maybe\_ put\_ your\_ phone\_ on\_ the\_ side\_

All of these examples could easily be classified as PLT, as they explicitly relate to instructions about how the activity was to be conducted, and details such as positioning, movement and equipment (line 608, for example, came after a second phone had fallen onto the floor). More specifically, they were all instructions or comments I was making as the students were walking around the room. In contrast, the prosody when I was giving feedback on the spacing – i.e. when the walking was paused – were not marked at all in this way. I was not conscious of doing this at the time, but I was clearly marking a difference between feedback when the activity was paused, and more directive commands when it was ongoing, with the flat tone of the latter having its own ongoing momentum, in contrast to a falling intonation that might give an (English) utterance more finality. Not all PLT is the same then, and not all of the instructional work it does rests on its lexical content. This became even clearer when looking at a couple of other occasions on which I used the same level tone to deliver something that was not, or was not *only*, PLT. First, here is my response to a student walking perilously close to the video camera on its tripod:

#### Extract 6.10

563 for that? (.) ↑try↑ and space yourselves out (.) nice  
564 and ↑e:venly↑ (.) ↑°not\_ too: close\_ to\_ the\_ camera\_  
565 £please£°↑

Taken purely at the level of its topical content, lines 564-565 could be read as a simple instruction, or perhaps even a gentle warning or reprimand: ‘please don’t break my expensive equipment!’. This made it slightly different from my instructions that were related to the movements and positioning required for the activity itself, and yet my delivery featured the same level tone as the other ‘commands’. However, along with its level tone, ‘↑°not\_ too: close\_ to\_ the\_ camera\_ £please£°↑’ was produced relatively quietly and at a high pitch, as a sort of exaggerated whimper – I was audibly suppressing laughter by the final ‘£please£’, and as I finished many of the students also started laughing. Something serious – the possibility of my camera being broken – was therefore being addressed while simultaneously being treated as something we could laugh about together. This treatment of something potentially serious as an occasion for shared laughter can also be seen in the reaction to my comment after the first student dropped their phone while jumping. After this student (June) had picked up her phone – which, fortunately, I could see did not appear to be

broken – I said, with the same level tone and at a similarly high pitch to my utterance in lines 564-565: ‘↑Cry::↑\_ (.) at the broken\_ [↑pho::ne\_↑’. This, of course, was not a ‘real’ instruction – I clearly was not *literally* telling the student to cry – and it was greeted with laughter by June and the other participants. Delivered with the same prosody as my other ‘genuine’ instructions, this treated a potentially serious occurrence (again, damage to expensive equipment) as something we could laugh about together as the activity continued. Glenn (2009: 54) has noted that joining or following a first person’s laughter ‘shows responsiveness and mutual ratification of a comic or ludic frame’, and in this sense humour had a serious pedagogical purpose in establishing the kind of playful communal atmosphere the warm-up was intended to bring about (see also Figure 6.7 in 6.1.1 above).

The nuance and complexity involved in PLT/PLTA is also apparent through close analysis of the topical and categorial organisation of ‘Walking into a scene’. In this, it was necessary for me to shift from the playful atmosphere of ‘Stop, go’ to the dramatic tension appropriate for Act 2, Scene 2, in which Romeo is risking his life by sneaking into the orchard of Juliet’s family home. I began by explicitly signalling this shift:

#### **Extract 6.11**

647 Dun: [...] But ↑now\_↑ what we're  
 648       gonna think about is: (.) you're not in this classroom?  
 649       you're actually somewhere else. (.) You're <outside.> (.)  
 650       ↑It's↑ da:rk.

Here, as well as literally telling the students we were going to do something different (lines 647-648), my delivery changed. In contrast to the level tone seen so frequently in ‘Stop, go’, I switched to using much more final falling intonation (indicated by ‘.’ after words in lines 647-650). In this manner, I gradually fed in more details about the fictional situation in which the students now found themselves. When it came to the first ‘°stop! °’, this was issued as an urgent stage whisper, in contrast to the very loud, level delivery of ‘STOP\_! ↑’ used previously. Indeed, from approximately halfway through ‘Walking into a scene’, all of my instructions to the students were issued in this stage whisper. This is where PLT/PLTA overlaps with IRT in the drama classroom. In addition to managing the pedagogical and logistical work of the activity by implicitly directing the students to be quieter and more focussed, my use of a stage whisper meant that even if I was not technically ‘in role’, I was at the very least speaking *as though* I was a party to the fictional world we were co-constructing. This blurring of PLT/PLTA and IRT can be seen particularly clearly in the categorial organisation of ‘Walking into a scene’. Following the initial instructions starting at

line 648 above, I only ever addressed the students as Romeo, for example:

### Extract 6.12

```
654      (.) an orchard. (.) There are tree::s around you? (.)
655      it's very dark so you've gotta watch where you're going?
656      ↓°some of you are not watching where you're going?° (.)
```

Here, I am not telling students to pretend or imagine they are in a dark orchard, but directly saying that is where they are. In fact, line 656 shows something that could be understood as a concern of PLT – some students not doing the activity satisfactorily – being addressed in a manner much closer to IRT. A more explicit example of the fictional frame being used to deal with potential trouble in the conduct of the exercise itself can be seen after I had first stopped the students, and then said ‘°It's alright keep going!°’. At this point, there was some giggling that threatened to undermine the dramatic tension we were co-constructing, which I addressed in the following way:

### Extract 6.13

```
674 Ss: ((giggle))
675 Dun: You can't? you can't? ↑say_ ↑anythi:ng_you ca:n't lau:gh
676      they might hear you.
```

Here PLT and IRT were effectively combined, as behaviour that I considered problematic for the accomplishment of the activity was addressed as having consequences for the students-as-Romeo within the fictional scene, not just as something a teacher was telling their students not to do in a class.

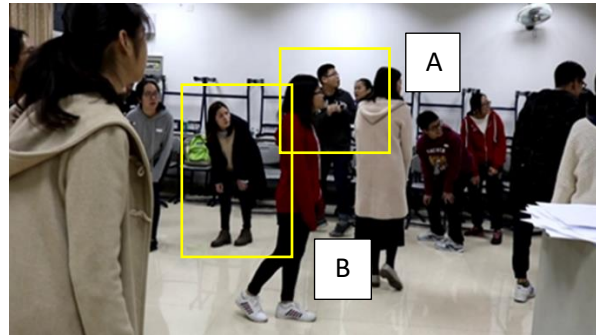
The ratification of this fictional frame was collaboratively achieved through in role work on the part of the students. Just as I earlier proposed expanding PLT into PLTA, it will be productive here to think not only of In Role Talk (IRT) but also of integrated In Role Action (IRTA). This was most obvious when the students-as-Romeo used embodied enactment (Tai & Brandt 2018) to display their actions in the fictional scene, as seen in Figures 6.8-6.13 earlier in the chapter, as students were visibly doing ‘walking at night’, and visibly doing ‘hiding’. Further examples are shown in the figures below. Figure 6.24, came just after I had told the students to hide, and then said ‘°It's alright\_ he's\_ gone\_ carry on.°’. When the students-as-Romeo started moving again, many were now keeping much closer to the ground as they walked. Similarly, when I said ‘°Stop!° (.) °You can see something°’, a student initiated an in role response, invoking the category of guards that I had previously mentioned by stage-whispering: ‘°Someone coming!°’. Figure 6.25 shows the students-as-Romeo starting to direct their attention to the rear right-hand corner of the

classroom, as they visibly do ‘looking towards Juliet’s window’. Here, again, a student responded in role, stage whispering ‘Juliet!’.

**Figure 6.24**



**Figure 6.25**



**Figure 6.25** (detail A)



**Figure 6.25**  
(detail B)

This section has shown how an apparently simple two-part warm-up of ‘Stop, go’ and ‘Walking into a scene’ was in fact a complex interactional accomplishment, in which the students were active participants despite the talk being dominated by me as the teacher. Although elements of (teacher-led) initiation, (student) response and (teacher) feedback could be identified, the sequential organisation involved far more interlinking and overlapping than the rigid application of IRF cycles would suggest. The contributions of both teacher and students – including learner initiatives – also made use of embodied, not just verbal, resources. Freebody’s (2013) division of talk in the drama classroom into Pedagogical/Logistic Talk (PLT), Socio-Cultural Talk (SCT) and In Role Talk (IRT) found resonances in the topical and categorial organisation of the activities, although it was shown that individual utterances often performed more than one action, and that PLT and IRT often blurred into one another in the dramatic context of ‘Walking into a scene’. Finally, it was proposed that PLT and IRT should be expanded into PLTA and IRTA (Pedagogical/Logistic



Talk and Action and In Role Talk and Action, respectively) to reflect the multimodal dimension of different actions, including the students' use of embodied enactment to ratify the fictional scene we were co-constructing. The next section of this chapter builds on these findings as it looks at what was involved when the students began to speak the words of Shakespeare's texts.

## **6.2 Encountering Shakespeare's words**

Once students were sufficiently prepared for the collaborative, physical and imaginative work to come, the next step was generally to introduce some Shakespearean text. Often this was done through an activity known as 'ensemble reading' (RSC 2013, Winston 2015), or, to use Stredder's (2009) more straightforwardly descriptive name, 'reading round the circle'. In this activity, an extract of text is passed around the circle by the participants, with each person reading aloud a short unit (i.e. a single word or line, or whatever comes before the next punctuation mark), before the following short unit is read out by the next person in the circle, and so on. Before addressing the pedagogical affordances of this activity for my workshops, it is worth restating the importance of the circle within 'active' approaches to Shakespeare in general. Stredder, for example, writes that the circle is:

the most basic form in practical work – efficient (for seeing, listening to and speaking to others), non-hierarchical, fluid, secure, yet full of anticipation, social change and the possibility of drama. People in a circle can quickly become performers and as quickly return to being spectators, or the whole area can be transformed, in a moment, into an active performance space[.] (2009: 38)

The balance between structure and fluidity, and safety and excitement, that the circle is seen as providing, offers additional benefits in the case of 'reading round the circle'. Distributing the words or lines around the circle is seen as making speaking the words of an unfamiliar and potentially intimidating piece of text a collaborative endeavour, taking the pressure off individual students whilst keeping them engaged as they listen closely to the entire extract, so as not to miss their next 'cue' (Winston 2015).

In my own teaching, I had found this exercise especially useful when doing Shakespeare with learners of English at LNFSU and other Chinese universities. In particular, it seemed an effective way of easing students into speaking Shakespeare's words, when some of them may have been rather daunted by their assumptions of his difficulty (see 5.2.1 in the previous chapter). While the RSC (2013), Stredder (2009) and Winston (2015) focus on participants reading to the next punctuation mark as a method of highlighting an extract's structural and dramatic organisation, in some cases I instead had participants read a single word at a time.

This approach had been demonstrated to me several years earlier by Michael Corbidge, a practitioner who had delivered voice and text training for the RSC, and taught Shakespeare in several East Asian contexts, including China. His contention was that reading just one word at a time put less pressure on participants in terms of individual language production, while encouraging them to focus even more intently (because reading one word at a time makes it more difficult for participants to skip ahead and work out what they will be reading next). I found this to work extremely well in my own teaching, and so during this project's workshops I would often mix things up, sometimes asking participants to read one word at a time, sometimes one line, and sometimes asking them to read to the punctuation. Reading round the circle in this way also meant that, as the teacher, I was able to hear anything that was causing students difficulties or being mispronounced. In many cases I felt that these 'mistakes', if they can be called that, did not need to be addressed. However, if the participants were struggling with something that was impeding the flow of the exercise, or that might cause problems with later exercises and with general comprehension, 'reading round the circle' allowed me to address these between or after rounds, rather than during them. This in turn meant that it was easier to avoid portraying them as 'mistakes' attributable to any individual participant.

Following the above rationale for my regular use of 'reading round the circle', the rest of this section will present a detailed description (6.2.1) and then some notes on the challenges involved in doing multimodal analysis of this kind of activity, especially in light of some of the limitations of the video data that I collected (6.2.2). Therefore, while I would argue that 'reading round the circle' is an efficient, exciting introduction to speaking Shakespeare's words, this section will necessarily have to treat this as an area that is still in need of further analysis (as acknowledged in the Limitations section of Chapter 8).

### **6.2.1 Description of reading round the circle**

'Reading round the circle' was used multiple times during the workshops, so in this subsection illustration will be provided in the form of examples from three sessions: Workshops 1 and 2 (when the activity was new to most of the participants), and Workshop 7 (when most of the attendees had done 'reading round the circle' at least twice before). To begin the activity, students were asked to move from wherever they were (e.g. scattered around the room after 'walking into a scene' in Workshop 2, Figures 6.24-6.25, above, or in a semi-circle in Workshop 7, Figure 6.26, below) into a close circle (Figure 6.27).

**Figure 6.26**



**Figure 6.27**



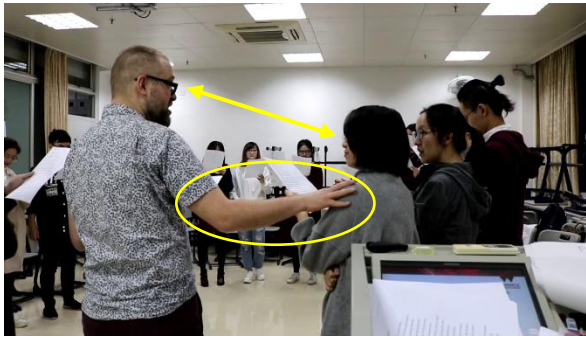
If the students did not already have a script from a previous activity (as was the case in Workshops 1 and 2) then they were provided with one each, and asked to hold them in their left hands, ready to pass the words of the extract around the circle to their right, in an anti-clockwise direction. (The three extracts, which can be found in Appendices 6-8, were speeches delivered by Jaques ('All the world's a stage', *AYLI*, 2.7.138-165, Workshop 1), Romeo ('But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?', *R&J*, 2.2.44-67, Workshop 2) and Emilia ('But I do think it is their husbands' fault if wives do fall', *Othello*, 4.3.78-95, Workshop 7)). In the first two workshops in which the activity was used, and was therefore new to most of the students, I stressed that we were not going to concentrate too much on the meaning of the text or its context at this stage, as this instruction from Workshop 1 shows:

**Extract 6.14**

```
1078 Dun: Erm what I'd like us to do is start going through this
1079         particular speech this soliloquy (.) but as I mentioned
1080         before! we're gonna do this in a way that we don't have
1081         to worry too much about what it mea:ns about what's going
1082         on in the play (.) we're just gonna kind of explore it.
```

Following this kind of initial instruction, we began passing short stretches of text around (initially just one word in Workshops 2 and 7, and reading up to the punctuation in Workshop 1), with me starting. As will be discussed in 6.2.2, below, I almost never intervened to 'correct' any pronunciation or stress, but did whisper prompts to any students who had missed their cues or were having trouble finding where they were. After one or two rounds, I would stress the importance of passing on the word or words as though they were something important, by making eye contact with the next person and gently touching their shoulder at the same time as speaking. Figure 6.28 from Workshop 1 shows me demonstrating this in the introduction to the activity, while Figure 6.29 shows two students doing this during a round in Workshop 7.

**Figure 6.28**



**Figure 6.29**



This activity would then go on for several rounds, as the reading became more confident and faster, with the starting point and direction of reading sometimes being changed (which would be preceded by the instruction for the students to swap their scripts into their right hands).

Although these will not be the focus of the following analysis, sometimes additional activities would be conducted in the middle of ‘reading round the circle’, or as an extension to it. In Workshop 2, for example, having noticed that the students reading Romeo’s ‘O’ sounds (i.e. ‘It is my lady, O, it is my love. O that she knew she were’ (2.2.52-53), ‘O, that I were a glove upon that hand,’ (2.2.66)) were reading them quite flatly, we took some time away from the soliloquy to play with passing different ‘O’ sounds around the circle. Similarly, in Workshop 7, my sense that some in the group were struggling to follow Emilia’s speech inspired two rounds of ‘deictic reading’ (Gibson 1998, Stredder 2009). In this additional exercise we clarified and physicalised who Emilia was referring to, by pointing to ourselves on each mention of ‘me’, ‘my’, ‘we’ and ‘our’ (i.e. women / wives), and then at a ‘No Smoking’ sign (to represent authority) on each mention of ‘they’ or ‘them’ (i.e. men / husbands) (Figure 6.30, below). The flexibility of ‘reading round the circle’ meant that it was very easy to slip into and out of these kinds of complementary activities, and once I had deemed the exercise to have generated enough interest in and familiarity with the sounds and rhythm of the text, I would move onto concept checking (see 6.3, below).



**Figure  
6.30**

### **6.2.2 Analytic challenges posed by reading round the circle**

As noted in the description above, when beginning a session of ‘reading round the circle’ I would always tell the participating students that in the first place the emphasis was on speaking the words, rather than understanding each and every one of them. From my perspective it was therefore vital that this activity was conducted in a way that created a sense of drama and excitement, helping the students to engage enthusiastically with the language before going on to explore it in other ways in subsequent exercises. Perhaps counterintuitively, this did not involve getting the students to speak the words in role as such – indeed, I would generally stress that I did not want them to ‘act’ the speech, because they did not yet know what it was about. (Here I would often also urge them not to do a stereotypical, booming ‘Shakespeare voice’.) Instead, the aim was to encourage the group to pass the speech around the circle in a way that was as fluid as possible, and exciting in and of itself.

As a consequence, my wish was to conduct a detailed analysis of this activity not with regards to IRTA, but PLTA – the talk and actions through which ‘reading round the circle’ was produced as a dramatic activity within the context of a drama workshop (Freebody 2010, 2013). Within this, aside from delivering my word(s) when it was my turn, I very rarely interjected during the rounds, and so most of my PLTA was restricted to the moments before and after rounds. What was particularly striking about this PLTA was that, in comparison to ‘walking into a scene’, which has been analysed above, ‘reading round the circle’ involved a far greater degree of embodied interaction on my part. This was in one sense unsurprising, as rather than being stuck in a corner as I had been in ‘walking into a scene’, I was in the circle



with the students, not only visible to all of them at all times, but also actively taking part in the reading. Before each round, however, I was involved in a lot of embodied work as I physically indicated the kind of person-to-person progressivity I was looking for (see Figures 6.31- 6.33 below), and performed various gestures encouraging the students to maintain the dramatic energy and excitement (e.g. Figure 6.34) or maintain their focus to enable a ‘clockwork-like’ passing of the text around the circle (e.g. Figure 6.35).

**Figure 6.31**



Dun: All the world's  
a stage

**Figure 6.32**



Dun: And all the men  
and women merely  
players

**Figure 6.33**



Dun: They have their  
exits and their  
entrances

**Figure 6.34**



*Gesture during request to ‘keep [the energy] up’*

**Figure 6.35**



*Clicking gesture indicating a clean, regular progression from person to person*

Unfortunately, as will probably be clear from the screengrabs in this section, the very fact that the students and I were in a circle that was open to each other, meant that we were in a circle that was *closed to the camera* (in its position in the corner). Although in hindsight there may have been other placements that would have been slightly more effective at capturing this activity, the reality is that without either multiple high angle or even ceiling-mounted cameras, or another form of 360-degree recording technology, this is an activity that it is extremely difficult to subject to adequate multimodal analysis. I have acknowledged this as a

limitation in my conclusion (Chapter 8), but in the interest of maintaining the reliability of the *transcripts* I have to acknowledge that this lapse in the reliability of the *recordings* means that a more detailed analysis than this would not be sufficiently robust (see Peräkylä (1997), Ten Have (1999) and Seedhouse (2005), and 4.6.2 in Chapter 4). Nevertheless, given the importance of this activity within the ‘active’ pedagogy that influenced these workshops, the notes above have been included in order to give the reader at least a sketch of what ‘reading round the circle’ involved, in lieu of the more systematic analysis that I hope I will be able to conduct in future.

### **6.3 Collaborative interpretation and performance: ‘All the world’s a stage’**

Once students had been introduced to a text by speaking the words – through, for example, the ‘Speaking in a circle’ activity described above – some form of concept checking was typically used to help them with any unfamiliar language that might cause problems in subsequent activities. In keeping with the learner-centred ethos of the workshops and their emphasis on active interpretation, the aim was to encourage students to make use of their own linguistic and interpretive resources as a first step, rather than automatically turning to a glossary or notes straight away. Typically, students would be invited to raise any words or expressions that they were unfamiliar with, or thought seemed important, interesting or surprising. Wherever possible, sensemaking was then undertaken as a collective exercise, with my role being to provide prompts to tap into students’ existing knowledge, and to respond to their spontaneous contributions as our discussions progressed. An example of this kind of collaborative concept checking and sensemaking is described in 6.3.1, below, showing how the students and I collectively dealt with unfamiliar or potentially misleading words and expressions in Jaques’s ‘All the world’s a stage’ speech from Act 2, Scene 7 of *As You Like It* (see Appendix 6 for full text). This led into an activity, described in 6.3.2, in which smaller groups of two or three students each performed their own interpretation of one of the ‘acts’ or ‘ages’ of the speech. As will be seen, both of these activities involved drawing upon students’ existing cultural and linguistic resources and the extensive use of embodied enactment, as we collectively negotiated understanding of the speech (see 6.3.3) before the students collaboratively developed and performed their own interpretations (see 6.3.4).

#### **6.3.1 Description of concept checking phase (‘All the world’s a stage’)**

The collaborative concept checking described here took place in the first workshop, after students had been introduced to the speech through ‘Speaking in a circle’. Listening to the

students speaking the words had given me an opportunity to listen out for anything that was causing problems, either in terms of pronunciation, or because the students' reactions suggested confusion or unfamiliarity. The concept checking phase gave me a chance to return to any of these that I felt needed to be addressed with the group, without needing to identify a 'mistake' or shortcoming attributed to any individual. However, as noted above, while there were words and expressions I wanted to discuss, the main aim was to elicit from the students the words they wanted to talk about. As we remained standing in our circle, I introduced this concept checking phase by saying:

#### **Extract 6.15**

1414 Dun: Now (.) in a moment we're gonna start exploring  
1415 this in groups (.) you might guess you're gonna  
1416 get an age (.) that you're going to kind of bring  
1417 to life (.) but any::: (.) comments about any words  
1418 in there that that jump out at you it might be that  
1419 seem interesting that seem strange

Almost immediately one of the students (Sylvia) asked 'what is pantaloon', kicking off our first collective concept check. In this speech, 'pantaloon' literally means 'old man, dotard' (Crystal & Crystal 2002: 315), but rather than giving a direct gloss immediately, I treated this as an opportunity to model how unfamiliar words can be approached in their context. I therefore began by reading out the sixth age (see Appendix 6), before we discussed several words and phrases found in it (e.g. 'lean', 'slipperd', 'youthful hose', 'shrunk shank' etc.). Once we had clarified these, I reiterated that as long as the students had an idea of these surrounding terms, they could start to understand what kind of old man Jaques is talking about in his description of the 'pantaloon'. This was followed by several more collective discussions of other words or expressions the students found interesting or strange (e.g. 'sans', 'mewling and puking' and 'sighing like furnace'). After going through these together, I concluded this part of the exercise by reemphasising the fact that students might be surprised at how much they could work out from the context, and by drawing on their existing cultural and linguistic resources:

#### **Extract 6.16**

1576 Dun: Exactly! (.) so there you've got it so (.) this is  
1577 what I mean you know a lot more- there may be a lot  
1578 of words here that you think "I don't know what this  
1579 means" but actually (.) you can work it out quite easily

### **6.3.2 Description of development and performance phase ('All the world's a stage')**

At this point, I divided the students into seven groups of two or three and gave each of them



slips of paper featuring one of the ages described in the speech. As the students were given their ages they began chatting excitedly in English and Mandarin; Benny's emphatic 'Wo:::' (喔) at my mention of them performing for the rest of the class was particularly clear on the recordings (line 1601). I therefore raised my voice intermittently as I gave further instructions:

**Extract 6.17**

```

1597 Dun: SO! WHAT I WOULD LIKE YOU to do? (.) I'm gonna give
1598     you a good ten minutes to do this AFTER TEN MINUTES
1599     you are going to perform your age for the rest of the
1600     class
1601 Ben: Wo:::
        喔
        [surprise / realisation marker]
1602 Dun: Now YOU DECIDE how you do this (.) you decide
1603     who's gonna be ↑speaking_ who's gonna be ↑moving_ ↑what
1604     they're gonna be ↑doing_ (.) [...]

```

The groups then worked to develop their performances and I circulated to provide help. After about 15 minutes (five minutes longer than initially planned) the groups all indicated that they were ready to perform. I explained that I would turn the camera in a semi-circle to capture each group where they were standing, with no breaks, applause or comments between acts. As I moved the camera in preparation, several students looked directly into the lens, and one even made V signs (see Figures 6.36 and 6.37). This direct gaze very rarely happened during the rest of this and other workshops, and marked this performance for the camera out as being quite distinct.

**Figure 6.36**



*Margot leans down and looks at the camera*

**Figure 6.37**



*Paz makes V signs at the camera*

After checking that everyone was ready I started the performance by saying: 'Action'. One image per age is shown in Figures 6.38-6.45, but more detailed descriptions of some of them can be found in 6.3.4, below.

**Figure 6.38** (the infant: ‘mewling and puking’)



**Figure 6.39** (the schoolboy: ‘creeping like snail [...] Unwillingly to school’)



**Figure 6.40** (the lover: ‘sighing like furnace’)



**Figure 6.41** (the soldier: ‘Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel’)



**Figure 6.42** (the justice: ‘Full of wise saws and modern instances’)



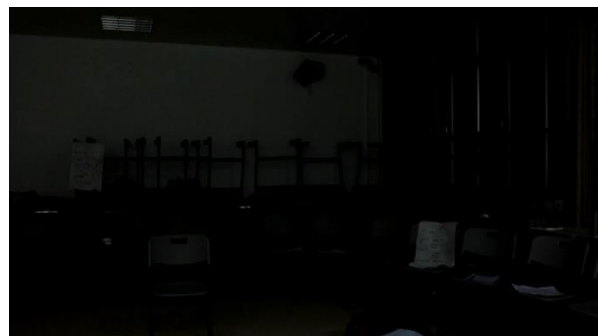
**Figure 6.43** (the ‘lean and slippered pantaloons’)



**Figure 6.44** (‘Last scene of all [...] mere oblivion’)



**Figure 6.45** (‘Last scene of all [...] sans everything’)



There was a lot of giggling during the performances of the lover and the soldier, and at the end of the final act – which culminated in the lights being turned out – several students let out an extended ‘wa:::’ (哇, or ‘wow’) and the group applauded. As the students returned to their seats, Zhao Ming, from the ‘pantaloon’ group, said emphatically to the pair who acted in the final age: ‘我要给你们角戏剧大赛!’ (roughly ‘I want to do you a Drama Contest!’).

### 6.3.3 Collaborative concept checking and sensemaking (‘All the world’s a stage’)

As noted above, my general approach to dealing with unfamiliar words and expressions in Shakespeare’s texts was to encourage students to begin by drawing on their own cultural, linguistic and interpretive resources before searching for definitions elsewhere, and then for us to work collaboratively to understand them. Chapter 7 looks at some of the ways in which the students’ multilingual and translation expertise was tapped into during processes of sensemaking, but this subsection will concentrate on the extensive embodied work that took place during this concept checking exercise. While a number of studies (e.g. Eskildsen & Wagner 2015, Sert 2017, Matsumoto & Dobs 2017) have shown the importance of gestural and other embodied resources in L2 contexts, the extent of this in my own teaching took me completely by surprise during the transcription and analysis of this concept checking phase in particular.

For example, I accompanied the discussion of the ‘pantaloon’ and related vocabulary with numerous gestures – some of which directly pointed at or referred to something (e.g. Figure 6.40, below), while others were linked more metaphorically to what was being discussed (e.g. ‘stage of life’, Figure 6.46). In the case of the ‘pantaloon’ discussion, several of these gestures were repeated at least once (see Figures 6.46-6.50).



**Figure 6.46**

Dun: what stage of life are we talking about

*(moves right hand up and down between face and upper body)*



**Figure 6.47**



‘pouch on side’

*Holds right hand at belt level, fingers curled*

**Figure 6.48**



‘spectacles on nose’

*Holds glasses with right thumb and index finger, other fingers fanned out*

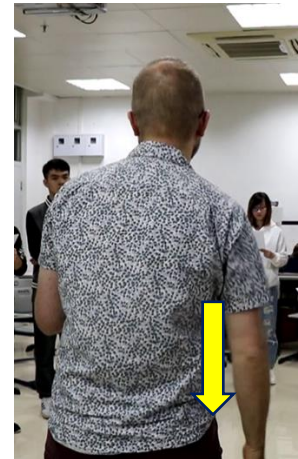
**Figure 6.49**



‘youthful hose [...] a world too wide, For his shrunk shank’

*Raises right arm and bends elbow...*

**Figure 6.50**



‘youthful hose [...]’ (continued)

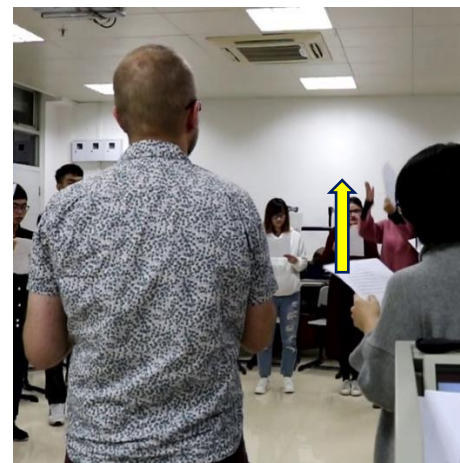
*... brings arm down straight in parallel with legs*

In many ways, these gestures seem fairly typical of the kind of embodied work found in L2 classrooms (Gullberg 2011). Figure 6.47, for example, shows what might be called an iconic gesture, in which my curled fingers represent a pouch, while Figures 6.48-6.50 are more deictic, involving me pointing at or gesturing towards the things I am talking about. Students not only oriented to such gestures, but sometimes also actively initiated them (e.g. Figures 6.51-6.55).

**Figure 6.51**

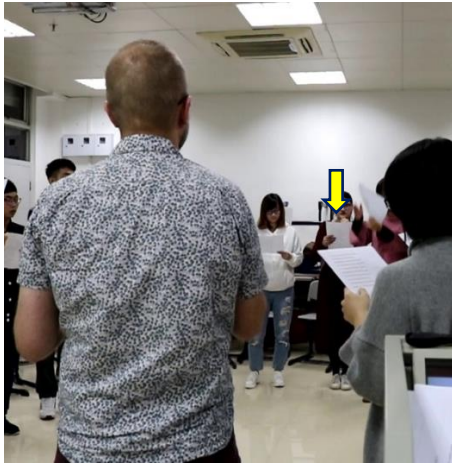


**Figure 6.52**



Dun: It's old age (.) so (.) the  
l:ea::n?

**Figure 6.53**



*Paz moves her palms downwards, in parallel*

**Figure 6.55**



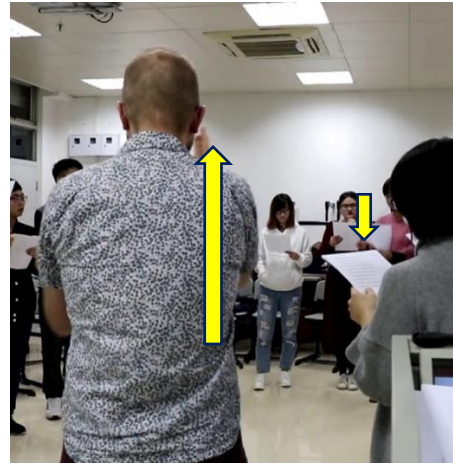
*Dun moves his palms downwards, in parallel*

Dun: Thin

Here, responding to my prompt concerning the word ‘lean’, Sylvia suggests ‘[b]ody?’, before I provide my own gloss in the form of the word ‘thin’. However, our collective sensemaking here also relies on embodied work. Before Sylvia has spoken, Paz raises her hands, with her palms facing one another, before bringing them down in parallel as though outlining a lean body (Figure 6.52-6.54). I then pick up on this iconic gesture, copying it at a more rapid speed, before I suggest the gloss ‘thin’. Eskildsen & Wagner (2013, 2015) have noted how what de Fornel (1992) called ‘return gestures’ – whereby a gesture produced by one speaker is repeated by someone else – can be used to display participants’ understanding of a speaker’s embodied actions. In this case, my uptake of Paz’s gesture can be regarded as an acceptance of her embodied contribution to the ongoing sensemaking activity, and is an

*Paz lifts her palms, in parallel*

**Figure 6.54**



Syl: Body?

*Paz finishes her gesture*

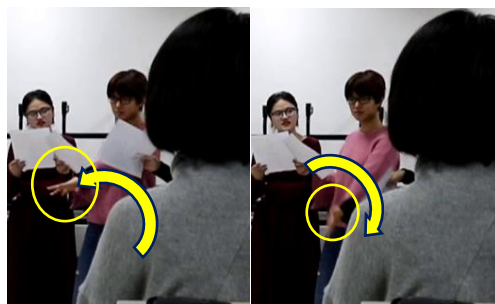
*Dun lifts palms, in parallel*

example of a return gesture being used as a ‘common communicative resource’ through which understanding is achieved (Eskildsen & Wagner 2015: 270).

Again, this might all seem typical in an L2 classroom, but during transcription and analysis, what surprised me was that several of the gestures related to lexical items I could safely assume the participants already understood (e.g. ‘pouch on side’, ‘spectacles on nose’). Taken in isolation they may therefore seem superfluous, but taken together they contributed to an extended embodied display of the kind of character represented by the pantaloon. In Figure 6.39 above, for example, my back is noticeably hunched, as I hold my glasses further down my nose as though straining to see something. It is possible to read this as just another example of an iconic gesture, which is serving as a fairly literal representation of the appearance of the pantaloon. However, the interactional nature of embodied work in the classroom means that such clear-cut categorisations can be an oversimplification (Eskildsen & Wagner 2015). This is especially true in L2 drama workshops, where the business at hand involves not only tackling linguistic trouble, but also the co-construction of fictional / in role contexts. This can be seen later in the concept checking phase, when a student asks about the description of the lover as ‘sighing like furnace’ (2.7.147):

**Extract 6.17**

1563 Dun: Okay (.) anything else  
 1564 Paz: "Sighing like furnace"  
 1565 Dun: "Sighing like f:urnace" (.) a fur[nace  
 1566 S?: [°Aiy[:::::°  
 1567 S?: [°S::::°  
 1568 Dun: Anyone know what a furnace is  
 1569 Syl: It's a (.) thing you use for heat  
 <- ((**Figs 6.56-6.57**)) ->



**Figure 6.56**

*(Paz moves left hand back and forth in an arc)*

**Figure 6.57**

1570 Dun: Yeah it's like so a furnace it's a bit like an oven  
 <- ((**6.58-6.59**)) ->





Figure 6.58

Figure 6.59

(Dun moves right hand in arc)

1571 kind of thing so very very very hot and you often  
 1572 think of having these bellows (.) with it that are kind=  
 <-((6.60-6.61))-> <-((repeats 6.60-6.61))->



Figure 6.60

Figure 6.61

(Dun mimics expanding and contracting bellows)

1573 =of [.hhh hhh .hhh hhh to keep it to keep it going and=  
 <-((repeats 6.60-6.61))->  
 1574 Ss: [Ah:::  
 1575 Dun: =of course the lover (.) "sighing like furnace" Romeo  
 1576 walking along going (.)  
 Dun: <--((Fig 6.62))-->



Figure 6.62

(Dun puts back of hand on forehead)

1577 Syl: Aiy::::  
 1578 Dun: °Hhhhhh° (.) Exactly!  
 <-((6.63))-> <-((6.64))->



**Figure 6.63**

*(Dun rotates head and hand right)*



**Figure 6.64**

*(Dun gestures towards Sylvia with open palm)*

This sequence begins with some fairly straightforward checking of the lexical item ‘furnace’ (lines 1568-1572), with students making both verbal contributions (Sylvia’s suggestion in line 1569) and gestural ones (Paz’s arcing motion, Figures 6.56-6.57). Again, this physicalised contribution becomes a ‘return gesture’ (de Fornel 1992), as I copy Paz’s arcing motion while expanding on Sylvia’s suggestion by saying ‘it’s a bit like an oven’ (line 1570, Figures 6.58-6.59). However, if this is an iconic gesture it is certainly rather vague, and in this regard it seems at least as affiliative as it is representational, displaying engagement in the ongoing sensemaking activity rather than adding anything that would directly solve this lexical trouble (Brouwer 2003, Gullberg 2011).

Indeed, as the sequence continues, more than lexical definitions are clearly at stake. My miming of expanding and contracting bellows (lines 1571-1573, Figures 6.60-6.61) is accompanied by pronounced inbreaths and outbreaths, which are then carried through as I link this back to the original line about the lover ‘sighing like furnace’. I do this by invoking the character of Romeo, with which I could assume many of the participants would be familiar (see Chapter 5). Rather than describing Romeo as making histrionic displays of his romantic ardour I instead try to convey this through embodied enactment, putting the back of my hand up to my forehead, and then rotating both my head and my hand while simultaneously exhaling exaggeratedly (lines 1576-1578, Figures 6.62-6.64). This display is preceded by the word ‘going’ (‘Romeo walking along going [gesture]’, lines 1575-1576) as though I’m quoting Romeo, or quoting behaviour typical of him. This ‘going’ also serves to highlight the move from the PLTA of my explanation to the IRTA of this performance. Strikingly, between the verbal introduction of the gesture and the gesture itself, Sylvia responds with a histrionic sigh of her own: the ‘aiy::::’ in line 1577, to which I in turn respond by saying ‘Exactly!’ (once I have finished exhaling) and gesturing towards



her with an open palm (Figure 6.64). In fact, two students – exactly who is unclear from the recordings – had already produced similarly extended sighs at the start of the sequence, after I had first taken up Paz’s inquiry about the meaning of ‘sighing like furnace’ (lines 1566-1567). Looking at the video after the event, I cannot be sure whether I simply missed these contributions at the time, or decided that the group needed a more thorough explanation.

Nevertheless, these contributions show students participating in our collaborative sensemaking not simply by providing candidate definitions that address literal meanings, but also by enacting embodied characterisations (in this case, of the lover and/or Romeo), which, as will be seen, can also become displays of participants’ interpretations and understanding.

#### **6.3.4 Collaborative development and performance (‘All the world’s a stage’)**

The last subsection showed that the concept checking phase involved a significant amount of embodied enactment, as the students and I went beyond mere lexical definitions, to display what characters might look and sound like, and even how they might feel. This became a central concern of the next activity, in which small groups collaboratively developed and then performed one of the seven ages from Jaques’s speech. An important way in which this was achieved was through the physical demonstration of possible performance choices to one another, within and between groups, with gestures being picked up, amended and expanded upon as the performances took shape.

A clear example of this can be seen when Benny and Daniel appeared to be struggling with the age they had been given (‘the lover’). By the time most of the other groups were visibly experimenting with ways of putting their respective age on its feet. Benny and Daniel were still standing around discussing, and glancing at the other groups. Unfortunately the chatter being produced as the other groups worked together makes it very difficult to hear exactly what was being said, but at one point Daniel taps Xihong (from the ‘schoolboy’ group) on the shoulder, and when she turns around Benny passes her his script, which she reads (Figure 6.65). Xihong returns Benny’s script, and mimes going down on one knee as though proposing marriage to Daniel, thus putting Benny in the position of a spectator watching this potential performance choice (Figure 6.66). After Xihong stands up, Benny wags his finger at her as he says ‘A kěyǐ!’ (啊可以!), which literally translates as ‘Ah, could!’ and in this context can be glossed as something like ‘Ah yes [that would work]!’ (Figure 6.67). Benny and Daniel try this out as Xihong returns to her group (Figure 6.68), and as already shown in Figure 6.42 above, this gesture of going down on one knee made it into their final performance. The pair did, however, expand upon Xihong’s gesture: when Benny (as the

lover) went down on one knee and said ‘Will you marry me?’, Daniel as the beloved slapped his outstretched hands away and walked off, causing Benny’s character to fall dejectedly to the floor (prompting a lot of laughter from the group). Here then is an example of one student proposing a performance choice in the form of a gesture, which is then picked up and repeated by other students, to become not merely a common communicative resource (Eskildsen & Wagner 2015) to accomplish understanding, but a common *performative* resource through which subsequent in role work is achieved and received.

**Figure 6.65**



*Xihong (schoolboy group) looks at Daniel and Benny’s script for ‘the lover’*

**Figure 6.66**



*Xihong mimes going down on one knee*

**Figure 6.67**



*Xihong stands up and hands back Benny’s script  
Benny wags his finger at Xihong as he says:*

Ben: A kěyǐ! (啊可以!)

**Figure 6.68**



*Xihong returns to her group  
Benny goes down on one knee*

During this activity the students not only helped one another when they were encountering trouble in devising their performances, but also helped me, as their teacher, when I was struggling to get the response I wanted. An example of this occurred when I went to check how the ‘soldier’ group were getting on (at a time when they appeared to be doing very little enactment). Again, the level of chatter in the room makes it difficult to hear everything being said on the recording, but I can be heard saying ‘how would you show me a soldier’ twice, and then ‘how would you BE a soldier’ without getting any obvious response from the group (see Figure 6.69). At this point, Benny, who was listening in with his partner Daniel, performed a military salute (Figures 6.70-6.71). This gesture was picked up by a member of the soldier group, Jacky, who performed a similar salute, albeit vigorously stamping his foot instead of bringing his heels together as Benny had done (Figures 6.72-6.73). Following this I noticeably straightened up as though standing to attention (Figure 6.74), before I reinforced my physical ratification of the gesture with a verbal assessment: ‘Very good’.

**Figure 6.69**



Dun: So how how would you BE a soldier

**Figure 6.70**



Dun: (.) be a soldier  
Benny turns heels outwards and begins raising right arm

**Figure 6.71**



Benny brings heels back together and bends arm to head in a salute

**Figure 6.72**



*Jacky (soldier group) raises his right foot and begins raising right arm*

**Figure 6.73**



*Jacky returns foot to floor with a stamp and bends arm to head in a salute*

**Figure 6.74**



*I bring my feet together, lower my arms to my sides and straighten my back and neck*  
Dun: Very good

As with the aforementioned ‘going down on one knee’ gesture, this salute was proposed by one student and then picked up and expanded upon by others. This is shown in Figure 6.75, which has Katie, the narrator, standing to the right of the image, while Doris and Jacky stand closer to the camera to the left. Both are saluting, but while Doris’s hand is making the same kind of open-palm salute seen above, Jacky has raised his clenched fist.



**Figure 6.75**

In China, this clenched fist gesture is strongly associated with the CPC, and especially with acts of pledging loyalty to the party and country. In this case, the students-as-soldiers performed this action just after their narrator had read ‘a soldier, full of strange oaths’, and followed this with patriotic slogans: Jacky proclaiming loudly and in a low register ‘↓ FIGHT FOR CHI::NA::!’, and Doris saying – through intervening laughter – ‘£Safeguard the



country£’. This localised, contemporary interpretation of the character of the soldier described by Jaques continued as they portrayed a pair of macho soldiers, interspersing the lines of the speech with comedic action of their own devising (see Figures 6.76-6.81, below, for highlights).

**Figure 6.76**



Nar: And bearded like  
the bar- pard  
*Jacky mimes shaving*

**Figure 6.77**



Nar: Sudden and quick  
in quarrel  
*Jacky points to his bicep*  
Jac: Muscle see?

**Figure 6.78**



Dor: But <I fight  
better than you>  
*Jacky mimes throwing razor  
away*

**Figure 6.79**



Jac: Wanna try?  
Dor: Okay!

**Figure 6.80**



Nar: Seeking the  
bubble reputation (.)  
even in cannon's  
mouth

*Jacky starts performing  
Chinese martial arts moves*

**Figure 6.81**



*Jacky mimes striking Doris and  
she moves off to her right as  
though propelled by the blow*

While all of the ages in Jaques's speech are gendered due to their framing as representing the many parts played by 'one man in his time' (2.7.141), the tongue-in-cheek portrayal of masculinity was particularly clear in the 'soldier' performance. This is perhaps unsurprising, but less expected was the way in which the group performing 'the justice' also highlighted

the display of masculinity in their performance (see Figures 6.82-6.85).

**Figure 6.82**



Nar: And then the justice (.) in  
↑fair round belly (.) with good  
capon lined

*Paz mimes eating*

**Figure 6.84**



Nar: Full of wise saws: and  
modern instances

*Paz mimes underlining verbal points with right  
hand*

*Gracie nods vigorously*

**Figure 6.83**



Nar: With eyes seve:re? and  
bea:rd? of >formal< cut

*Paz raises chin*

*Gracie mimes shaving the justice*

**Figure 6.85**



Nar: And so? he plays his part.

*Paz and Gracie bow to the camera*

From early in the development phase, Paz could be seen wearing a backpack on her front to

represent the justice's 'fair round belly' (2.7.153, see Figure 6.82). However, when it came to the mention of his 'beard of formal cut' (2.7.154), the group indicated this through miming the act of shaving – as the 'soldier' group had also done – rather than through any gesture, such as beard-stroking, that would suggest the presence of facial hair (see Figure 6.83). Notably, the justice was being shaved by someone else, whereas the soldier – of lower social status – had been shaving himself. The shaving mime also gave Paz-as-the-justice an opportunity to raise her head and look down haughtily, as the narrator was reading about the justice's 'eyes severe' (2.7.154). Finally, at the end of their performance, both Paz and Gracie bowed to the camera (Figure 6.85), and while it is difficult to hear this on the tape, I got the impression during the development phase that Sylvia had been encouraging Paz to bow in a more overtly 'masculine' manner. What is clearly visible is that during her performance, Paz-as-the-justice has her feet spread quite far apart, when sitting and standing, in what I interpret as a portrayal of 'manspreading'. This phenomenon of men disposing their bodies so as to take up more space in public places was something that had been examined in my drama workshops at LNFSU in a previous year, and was something Paz recalled in her interview as being, in her words, 'good to notice'.

Such broaching of social issues in and through Shakespeare will be discussed in relation to Freebody's (2010, 2013) notion of SCT in Chapter 7. However, the current section's close analysis of the students' development and performance of their respective ages has shown that the IRT/IRTA of a performance activity such as this can not only provide a basis for subsequent discussion (SCT/SCTA), but actually be an embodied form of it. Through collaboratively proposing, taking up and expanding upon various embodied enactments, which then became common communicative resources, the participants were able to display their interpretations and understandings both of Shakespeare's text, and of the world around them.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter began, in part, with reference to Volumnia's assertion in *Coriolanus* that '[a]ction is eloquence'. Through a 'praxiological approach' (Moutino 2018) enabled by close multimodal analysis, this has been shown to be correct in one important sense – as the apparently playful, freewheeling (inter)actions seen in the workshops have in fact been shown to reveal, and be constitutive of, a certain local educational order (Hester & Francis 2000). The range of 'expressive, creative [and] physical' activities examined in this chapter (Gibson 1998: xii), which owe much of their inspiration to 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches, have been shown to be accomplished on the basis of practical, rational and

thoroughly collaborative work by myself and the other participants. As such, their close examination has made empirically observable some of the ways in which kind of pedagogy can work, albeit in these specific interactional contexts. Indeed, recalling Winston's (2015) theoretical rationale for 'rehearsal room' approaches, there are a number of ways in which the types of learning he identifies can be observed, from *learning through the body* (exemplified by the importance of embodied means in the achievement of the various workshop activities), to *learning through play* and *learning through experience*, which can be seen in the participants' collective participation in imaginative situations as they acted in role, as Romeo, or as characters in one of the seven ages featured in Jaques's 'All the world's a stage' speech. Finally, the importance of *learning together* was paramount, as the participants worked with one another to accomplish warm-ups, text exploration and concept-checking activities, and performances-based activities of different kinds, with the latter requiring not just basic cooperation, but the collective ratification of a fictional frame of reference. The next chapter will examine how, by drawing on many of the same resources, the participants were able to go beyond the practical achievement of the workshop activities, to actually make sense of and through Shakespeare, in interaction.



## Chapter 7: 'I could find out countries in [him]'? Making meaning and doing 'being intercultural' through Shakespeare

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: She is spherical, like a globe. I could find out countries in her.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE: In what part of her body stands Ireland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: Marry, sir, in her buttocks. I found it out by the bogs.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE: Where Scotland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: I found it by the barrenness, hard in the palm of the hand.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE: Where France?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: In her forehead, armed and reverted, making war against her hair.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE: Where England?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no whiteness in them. But I guess it stood in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.

*(Comedy of Errors, 3.2, 111-124)*

Dromio of Syracuse's description of Nell's 'very reverent body' in *The Comedy of Errors* (3.2.90) is one of the play's best-known highlights (or lowlights, as some might prefer). Bawdy humour and national stereotypes are combined as master and servant enjoy a break from the play's headlong rush of chaos and confusion, to engage in extended conversation about 'the kitchen wench' and her bodily geography (3.2.94). After some initial back-and-forth about Nell's size, cleanliness and complexion, Dromio comments that as '[s]he is spherical, like a globe' he 'could find out countries in her' (3.2.111). This initiates a new passage of their questionable question-and-answer routine, which now begins to traverse cartographic as well as corporeal territory. Disparaging, pun-laden references to Ireland, Scotland, France, Spain, and even 'America and the Indies' follow. Only England is spared mockery: Dromio says that he 'looked for the chalky cliffs' of Dover in Nell's teeth, but 'could find no whiteness in them'. When Antipholus eventually asks 'Where stood Belgia,

the Netherlands?’ the routine is brought to its bawdy climax, as Dromio replies: ‘O, sir, I did not look so low!’ (3.2. 132-133). This exchange, which is typically played with broad physical comedy in performance, is crude on a number of levels, but deliberately and understandably so in the context of this early Shakespearean farce. No spectator or reader would today take Dromio’s suggestion that he ‘could find out countries’ in Nell to be a reliable guide to anything about the territories that he names, other, perhaps, than as examples of the stereotypes associated with them in early modern England.

In contrast, Shakespeare’s own ‘very reverent body’ – that of his work as well as his person – continues to be used and often abused in discussions about national identity, as part of a long tradition in which academic, educational and popular discourses have sought to ‘find out countries in [him]’. In Chapter 5, it was noted that Shakespeare’s transformation into a ‘National Poet’ and international icon came as a result of critical, commercial and colonial processes that are commonly obscured by the ‘myth of universality’ that so often surrounds his work (Dobson 1992, Joubin and Mancewicz 2018). As I have written about elsewhere, these processes were powerfully illustrated in the tensions apparent in 2016’s *Shakespeare Lives* campaign, which invoked Shakespeare as a shared, global icon while simultaneously co-opting him as a specifically national figure for British soft power purposes (Lees 2021, forthcoming). Such tensions were also apparent in Chapter 5 of this study, in the ways in which Shakespeare was described by participating students as both a globally relevant example of universal human artistic achievement, and a figure tied to a very specific cultural context. In some cases, students expressed a strong desire to access this romantic or exotic cultural context by engaging with Shakespeare’s work in what they saw as its ‘original’ form – whether this meant reading Early Modern English texts rather than Chinese translations, or eschewing modern dress productions or adaptations in favour of period settings. However, as was also discussed in Chapter 5, such engagement was seen as involving significant challenges and drawbacks. Chief amongst these were the perceived difficulty and distance not only of Shakespeare’s Early Modern English, but also of the historical and cultural references that are invoked within his works – of which, Antipholus and Dromio’s stereotype-laden conversation is a particularly striking example. A further pedagogical challenge for me was how to address the sociohistorical specificities of Shakespeare’s texts, without resorting to cross-cultural generalisations that could perpetuate essentialist understandings of Britain, the West or even China.

This chapter will look at what was involved as the participating students and I tackled these challenges. Whereas Chapter 6 looked at how the workshops were collaboratively achieved as local, practical accomplishments through the deployment of various sequential, topical and multimodal resources, this chapter will focus on how meaning-making was done in the workshops, and to a lesser extent, in the interviews and feedback. Specifically, it will address the third and final of my research questions:

RQ 3: How did the participants invoke, orient to and use different linguistic, categorial and interactional resources in order to make meaning of and through Shakespeare?

Answering this question will require employing the praxiological approach and fine-grained multimodal analysis used in the previous chapter (Moutinho 2018, Sert 2015). Some of the examples discussed will show participants ‘doing learning’ as it is conceived in CA-for-SLA research: by displaying and orienting to what they or others do or do not know (e.g. the meaning of an Early Modern English word), and then using various linguistic, topical and interactional resources to work through such sources of potential trouble (Sahlström 2011, Jakonen & Morton 2015). However, in other cases, the participants will be shown engaging in interactions that go beyond epistemics and the management of states of linguistic / factual knowledge, and move into meaning-making in a deeper sense. In these cases, Shakespearean texts, and the students’ engagements with them, are used as a basis for discussions through which understandings of culture, society and identity are negotiated and ‘the cultural, social and moral potential’ of the workshops are realised (Freebody 2013: 97).

Using the extensive approach to coding outlined in the Methodology chapter and employed in Chapter 5, various instances were identified of the students and I engaging in a broad range of collaborative sense-making, from brief examples of concept-checking to extended discussions and debates. After beginning with the kind of broad ‘unmotivated looking’ (Psathas 1995) also used in Chapter 6, instances were chosen as representatives of what appeared to be several different types of meaning-making activity, as shown in Table 7.1:

**Table 7.1 Outline of Chapter 7**

Section	Subsections	Areas / activities discussed
7.1 Epistemics in interaction	7.1.1 Co-constructing learnables	Multilingual and topical resources in concept-checking activities

7.2 Making meaning with Shakespeare	7.2.1 Quoting Shakespeare	Making meaning through deploying, integrating and expanded upon Shakespeare quotations
7.3 Making meaning in relation to Shakespeare	7.3.1 ‘We have to find our identity’ – negotiating roles and relationships through ‘All the World’s a Stage’ 7.3.2 Offensive Shakespeare – the embodied negotiation of reasoning practices through ‘red and green statements’	The co-construction of meaning through SCTA in discussion activities; the use of categorial and interactional resources in practical and moral reasoning
7.4 Negotiating identity and doing ‘being intercultural’	7.4.1 Doing ‘being intercultural’ 7.4.2 Doing ‘being intercultural’ through Shakespeare?	The use of categorial and embodied resources in the negotiation of identity and intercultural interaction

As Table 7.1 illustrates, this chapter begins by looking at examples of epistemics in interaction, of understandings being co-constructed in response to potential linguistic and / or topical trouble (see subsection 7.1, below). As will be seen, this co-construction of understanding, in both teacher-led and peer-to-peer interactions, involved employing a range of multilingual, topical and multimodal resources. It will also be shown that while such episodes make observable moments of ‘socially distributed cognition’ and the identification and negotiation of individual ‘learnables’ (Sert 2015: 43), they also show how the co-construction of understanding extends beyond these, and can involve reference to the past and the projection of future action (Sahlström 2011). Building on this, the chapter then looks at how participants went beyond individual or topical ‘learnables’, to address wider sociocultural and moral considerations prompted by their engagements with Shakespeare. After looking at examples of students doing this by quoting Shakespeare in the interviews and feedback (see subsection 7.2), the chapter explores how this was done collaboratively through SCTA during discussion activities in the workshops (see subsection 7.3). Finally, the

issues of language, culture and identity raised in these discussions are carried into the final subsection (7.4). This considers the interculturality, or otherwise, of the participants' engagements with Shakespeare and one another as achieved through interaction, translation and other means of doing 'being intercultural', rather than as something that is given on account of the identities that might be ascribed to them. In this way, the kind of culturalist stereotypes seen in the exchange between Antipholus and Dromio, with which this chapter began, can serve as a useful reminder of the need to question the assumptions that are often made about what doing Shakespeare can tell us about either specific national contexts or supposedly 'universal' human experiences. Thus, the chapter concludes that, rather than attempting to 'find out countries' in Shakespeare, workshops of this kind can be used to provide opportunities for students and teachers to reflect more deeply on their understandings of themselves and others, and the processes through which they arrive at such understandings.

### **7.1 Epistemics in interaction**

As Chapter 6 showed, in many respects the Shakespeare workshops were locally, practically achieved through the ongoing co-construction of 'mutual understanding', as the business at hand and the roles and responsibilities of the students and I were shaped and reshaped through social interaction (Sert 2015). This chapter's focus is much more on mutual understanding as it relates to meaning-making: how the participants collaboratively made sense of Shakespearean texts, and then made further meaning(s) in relation to them. From an ethnomethodological perspective, understanding, learning and even knowing are approached not as solely cognitive processes that remain within the human skull, but rather as social processes that are achieved and therefore made analytically observable through interaction (Kasper & Wagner 2011, Jakonen & Morton 2015). Within the field of CA-for-SLA, such processes are investigated in terms of 'epistemics in interaction', or 'how participants display, manage, and orient to their own and others' states of knowledge' (Jakonen & Morton 2015: 73). These processes of displaying, managing and orienting to states of knowledge are achieved through the use of conversational and interactional resources, including multimodal resources such as gaze and body language (Jakonen & Morton 2015). In contexts such as L2 classrooms and the Shakespeare workshops being examined here, multilingual resources are also often drawn upon (Sert 2015). Such processes are most apparent when epistemic 'trouble' occurs – for example, when a potential knowledge gap is made apparent, and the participants respond to it by searching for or providing an answer. It is during these moments

of ‘socially distributed cognition’ (Markee & Seo 2009, Mori & Hasegawa 2009) that CA-for-SLA researchers can observe the production of ‘learnables’ – the things that are co-constructed as objects of learning, which in L2 contexts are typically words, expressions, or forms in the target language (Sert 2015). While the Shakespeare workshops examined here were not language classes in any traditional sense, the participating students were all learners of English as a foreign language, and the nature of the early modern texts being used resulted in various gaps of linguistic and topical knowledge. The following subsection analyses examples of how these linguistic and topical ‘learnables’ were identified and responded to by myself and the students.

### 7.1.1 Co-constructing learnables

In the Shakespeare workshops, knowledge gaps and therefore potential learnables were most obviously identified and responded to during concept checking phases of the type discussed in the previous chapter, which examined them in terms of how embodied resources, including gesture, were used when dealing within unknown vocabulary items (see 6.3.1 and 6.3.3). Here, another passage from the same concept checking phase will be examined, but with a focus on epistemics in interaction. In particular, the use of topical and multilingual resources, and the co-construction of learnables within the context of a Shakespeare workshop will be examined. As noted in 6.3.1, this concept checking phase followed a ‘reading round the circle’ activity in which the students began speaking the words of Jaques’s ‘All the world’s a stage’ speech (*AYLI*, 2.7) by passing them around the circle. After this, I invited the students to comment on any words that jumped out because they seemed ‘interesting’ or ‘strange’, with one of the students (Sylvia) almost immediately asking ‘What is pantaloon’. Subsection 6.3.3 analysed how embodied means were used to manage this query, and others about expressions such as ‘sighing like furnace’. The passage to be examined here begins with Benny asking about the word ‘sans’, which Jaques uses in his bleak description of the final age as being ‘[s]ans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything’ (*AYLI*, 2.7.165):

#### Extract 7.1

1486 Ben: What about the last line the (.) "sa[ns"  
 1487 Xih: [Sanz  
 1488 Ben: Is this the [French word  
 1489 Paz: [Sans (.) without  
 1490 Dun: Well that's a very good question so (.) if we say  
           +points at Benny+  
 1491 if we think it's that word (.) "second childishness and  
 1492 mere oblivion without teeth without eyes without taste"

*+ beats w. right hand on each "without" +*

1493 S?: A:!  
           阿!  
           [*surprise / change-of-state marker*]  
 1494 Dun: "With[*out* everything"  
 1495 Ss:           [Without everything  
 1496 Dun: That does make sense doesn't it  
 1497 Jac: Yes

From the start, Benny's individual query is dealt with collaboratively, and treated as an epistemic matter that concerns the group as a whole (Jakonen & Morton 2015). At line 1487, for example, Xihong echoes the word 'sanz', starting to produce it in overlap just a fraction of a second after Benny has started saying it. (Note that the spelling in the transcript reflects Xihong's pronunciation here, which is close to how the 'Sans' of 'Comic Sans' is commonly pronounced in British English, while Benny, Paz and some of the other students pronounce it more like the standard French 'sans'). Whether or not Xihong had also been wondering about the word 'sans' herself, this rapid alignment is facilitated by the fact that Benny has already flagged up the location of the term he's querying ('What about the last line', line 1486), and so Xihong's echoing of 'sans' reinforces it as an object of discussion. In line 1488 Benny expands upon his query, by offering a candidate answer for the meaning of 'sans' that draws upon his own multilingual resources, as he asks 'Is this the French word'. At this point, in overlap, Paz also aligns with Benny's query, echoing the word 'sans', and then providing the English translation of that term in French: 'without' (line 1489). In response to this multiparty construction of 'sans' as a word worthy of further discussion, I acknowledge Benny's initial query as a useful contribution to the activity, pointing to him as I say 'Well that's a very good question' (line 1490). Rather than directly answering it, however, I present this question as something that can be evaluated collectively. I begin by formulating this as a query for the group ('if we say/if we think', lines 1490-1491), and then repeat the line from the speech, substituting the candidate translation (without) for the word 'sans' (lines 1491-1494). One student (exactly who is not clear from the video) can be heard greeting the first part of this prospective version with a slightly stretched surprise / change-of-state marker (阿!/A:!), before a number of the students ratify this reading by joining in, only a split-second behind me, with the final 'without everything' (lines 1494-1495). When I then deliver an evaluation in the form of a rhetorical question ('That does make sense doesn't it', line 1496), another student,

Jacky, delivers his agreement (line 1497). Thus, in this brief but quite dense passage, a word queried by one student has been co-constructed as a ‘learnable’ for the group as a whole. This episode highlights two features of the interaction seen in this kind of workshop activity. First, although the activity remains teacher-fronted, with me both issuing the invitation to share ‘interesting’ or ‘strange’ words and fielding the students’ suggestions, this is less of a dialogue than a ‘multilogue’: ‘a communicative endeavour that is shaped by many, if not all, participants present’ (Schwab 2011: 4). A second, related point is that due to the multiparty nature of the interaction and the fact that the terms under discussion are being chosen by the students, the knowledge gaps raised, and the learnables co-constructed in response, are not always predictable (Jakonen & Morton 2015, Seedhouse 2005). While I would have assumed before the activity that a good number of the students might be puzzled by the word ‘sans’, I could not have predicted which, if any, of the students would actually raise this, nor precisely when. As a result, this kind of activity necessitates a certain amount of spontaneity and improvisation on the part of the teacher, to respond to knowledge gaps in the moments when they are raised, and in some cases to connect them to other learnables (whether planned or emergent). This can be seen in the following extract, in which I move the discussion from the meaning of ‘sans’ to how it, and other apparently French terms in Shakespeare, might be pronounced:

### **Extract 7.2**

1498 Dun: Now a question that often comes up is how to  
 1499           pronounce that  
 1500 Ben: Sans  
 1501 Paz: Sans  
 1502 S1?: Sonz  
 1503 S2?: Sans  
 1504 Dun: Now many of you here speak French and you would say:  
           + *gestures towards Ss* +   + *holds hand palm open* +  
 1505 Ss: Sans  
 1506 Dun: Okay (.) how would you say the name of the character  
   + *points to handout with right hand* +  
 1507           who's saying this  
 1508 Paz: J:acques  
 1509 Ben: Jacques  
 1510 Dun: Jacques  
 1511 Ss: Jacques  
 1512 Dun: Jacques Cousteau (.) okay? [...]

As in the previous extract, this is treated as a matter for the whole group. At lines 1500-1503, several students offer candidate pronunciations. In response I reference the fact – reinforcing it with a circular gesture indicating the group – that many of the participants speak French (line 1504). When I then elicit the French pronunciation, which I have already heard from





students responded, as they had done in lines 1526-1527, with ‘Jacques’. It should be noted that my use of ‘we’ at this point, as in ‘we would say’ (lines 1524-1525), is somewhat ambiguous. My earlier uses (‘if we say / if we think’, at lines 1490-1491 in the previous extract) had included the students, as they were part of an invitation to the group to try out a candidate answer (‘sans’ = ‘without’). However, in this instance ‘we’ could just as plausibly *exclude* the students, and instead be referring to myself and other members of the group of people who know how to say these words. This reading is certainly supported by the fact that immediately before this I had referred to the students as ‘you’ (lines 1516 and 1518). Nevertheless, whatever I thought I was trying to do at that moment, this underlines one of the benefits for teachers of analysing transcripts of our own classroom interactions: that it can alert us to uses of language that may not be deliberate, but which could be misleading, counterproductive or even inappropriate. In this case, the possible invocation of a group of people who know how to say these words (native English speakers? Shakespeare scholars?), but which excludes the students, potentially undermined the point I was trying to make – that the students should make their own interpretive choices:

#### **Extract 7.4**

```

1536 Dun: If you get that bit I would like you to do whatever
1537     you're comfortable with (.) okay (.) but here we see
1538     a- is this English (.) is this French (.) is this
1539     the English we speak today or the French we speak
1540     today (.) is this the English Shakespeare spoke (.)
1541     you know none of it's that clear cut so we need to
1542     make our own choices (.) about this

```

The above extracts have demonstrated a number of different aspects of epistemics in interaction in the concept checking phase of a workshop. First, while teacher-led, the concept checking actually operated as a multilogue (Schwab 2011), in which all of the students could (potentially) contribute questions, candidate answers and evaluations, and in which I attempted to use language, gesture and the circular layout to address my comments to the group as a whole. Second, a gap in knowledge (in this case the word ‘sans’) can be seen being co-constructed as a learnable, through the collaborative use of multilingual and topical resources. In this instance I, as the teacher, could also be seen spontaneously responding to the emergence of this learnable, to link it not only to another specific item that I wanted to flag up (the name ‘Jacques’), but also to a broader point about the multilingual and intercultural nature of interpreting Shakespeare (this area will be returned to in 7.4, below). This is a reminder of a third point: that although the analysis of epistemics in interaction

focuses on moments at which knowledge gaps and the construction of learnables become observable, these moments actually reveal ‘recognizable and oriented-to pursuits that extend beyond turn exchanges and episodes’, and relate to both the past and the future (Sahlström 2011: 61). Specifically, the students and I drew on multilingual resources that some had already developed and topical knowledge that I was aware they had previously covered, as well as projecting into future situations – both within this lesson and beyond – the idea of students’ making their own interpretive choices. How participants went beyond tackling gaps of linguistic or topical knowledge to actively make meaning through their engagement with Shakespeare will be the focus of the next two sections of this chapter, which will look at Shakespeare quotation (see 7.2, below) and Shakespeare-related SCTA in group discussions (see 7.3).

## **7.2 Making meaning with Shakespeare**

While the previous section looked at epistemics in interaction, and how participants worked collaboratively to understand the meaning *of* Shakespearean texts at a linguistic and topical level, this section moves to consider how participants made meaning *through* their understandings of Shakespeare texts. Such a distinction recalls Hawkes’s (1992: 3) well-known assertion that ‘Shakespeare doesn’t mean: *we* mean *by* Shakespeare’. While Hawkes was concerned with how particular cultures and historical moments use Shakespeare as a resource through which the meanings of various things – including literature, education and the nation – are generated, my focus here will be far narrower. In Chapter 5, it was shown how some of the participants used Shakespeare, as a body of work or even a broad idea, in order to do certain things, such as position themselves as good (or bad) students of English literature. This and the following section (7.3) will look at how participants displayed and negotiated their understandings of Shakespeare’s texts, in order to generate further meanings related to important topics such as family and personal relationships, culture and identity. The next subsection illustrates how individual students did this by quoting Shakespeare in the interviews and written feedback.

### **7.2.1 Quoting Shakespeare**

In Chapter 5 it was noted that the idea that Shakespeare is still – or even universally – relevant was something I had frequently encountered during my teaching career in China, as well as being something that was proposed by a number of the participants in their interviews and written feedback. As was also noted then, in order to avoid perpetuating the myth of Shakespearean universality, my approach has been to focus on the ways in which Shakespeare is *made* relevant by and for the participants. In pedagogic terms, this kind of

shift has been powerfully framed by Dadabhoy & Mehdizadeh (forthcoming) as the move from ‘relevance’ to ‘salience’. This idea of salience can also be translated into analytic terms by focussing not on which elements of Shakespearean texts might be assumed to resonate for a particular cohort within a particular context, but instead on which elements are specifically invoked and/or oriented to by participants. In the interviews and feedback, one particularly striking way in which the students invoked Shakespearean texts and then made them personally relevant was by taking part in the ‘evolving, living and global activity’ of quoting Shakespeare (Maxwell & Rumbold 2018: 1). Quotation was of course frequently used during the workshops, interviews and feedback, in order to discuss the meanings of specific lines or texts. However, in the interviews and feedback, quotations were often used by participants to signal different social or personal significances of, or even beyond, the texts themselves. In some cases, such uses of quotation occurred when students were responding to specific prompts. For example, Week 5’s Feedback asked students to write at least 200 words (in Chinese or English) in response to a question about *King Lear*:

#### **Extract 7.5 Overall Feedback (introduction)**

就你对本次工作坊的想法和意见（正面的，负面的，或中肯的）写下至少 200 字以上的文字（中文或英文皆可）：

Tolstoy wrote: “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way”.

Do you agree? Are all happy families alike, always and everywhere? And, having had an introduction to *King Lear*, what do you think has made that family unhappy?

完成此表格后，请电邮至 [D.Lees.1@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:D.Lees.1@warwick.ac.uk)

In the middle of her response (which, at 390 words, was almost twice as long as the minimum requested), Xihong quotes the words of Lear’s youngest daughter, Cordelia, as she explains to her father why she will not follow her sisters in making extravagant claims of daughterly love:

#### **Extract 7.6 Feedback 5: Xihong**

In fact, Lear usually reminds me of my own father, who shares some similarities with him. I often feel so angry about his words or actions and try to rebel against him. But on a second thought, I feel sympathy for him. Because he is old and lonely, and people under such circumstances usually wish someone especially their children could company them and say some sweet words to them like “oh father I love you with all my heart” instead of “I love you according to my bond”. It is human nature. As long as the parents and children could have a deep conversation, I think most troubles could be handled well.

Rather than merely quoting Cordelia’s words (‘I love you according to my bond’, *KL*, 1.1) in the context of interpreting that character’s actions in the play, here Xihong presents them as part of a creative and very personal discussion of how she herself has come to view her relationship with her own father in a different light. Similarly, when responding to the same prompt, Jacky also creatively quoted Shakespeare’s words – although this time they came from a different play:

#### **Extract 7.7 Feedback 5: Jacky**

After reading *King Lear*, I think love and trust are the two poles that together hold up a happy family. “Love” is the most basic one, and it is the natural attribute of human being. “Trust” comes from the “love”. The absence of either one will make a family unhappy. There are a lot of things that may erode these two poles. The most erosive are power (especially political power) and wealth. Under the temptation of power and wealth, people are easily disoriented, and the “native hue” of love and trust will be “sicklied over” by other distractions. The relations between family members become to twist. The relations between *King Lear* and his daughters and the relations among Edmund and his brother and father demonstrate this rule.

In this instance, rather than just commenting on the behaviour or lines of a character from the play under discussion, Jacky integrates phrases from another Shakespeare text into his argument. Specifically, he uses quotes from *Hamlet*’s ‘To be, or not to be’ soliloquy in order to argue that the “‘native hue’ of love and trust’ are “‘sicklied over” by other distractions’ such as wealth and power – in *King Lear*, and by extension also in society in general. It is worth noting that while the text from *Hamlet* that we had used in Workshop 3 had read ‘sicklied o’er’, Jacky has here used the non-abbreviated form ‘sicklied over’ – something we had discussed in that earlier workshop. Thus, while the quote may not be technically accurate – not that this should necessarily be a concern – Jacky has demonstrated his understanding of the linguistic meaning of ‘o’er’. More importantly, by applying words from one play in order to discuss the broader social resonances of another, he is displaying previous learning and connecting it to the text under discussion in order to make new meaning through it.

Another example of a student using language from this same soliloquy when discussing other Shakespearean texts can be seen in third-year Literature student Pan Jieling's comments on the comparison of different translations of Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" in Workshop 4:

#### Extract 7.8 Feedback 4: Pan Jieling

Then Duncan handed out some Chinese versions to us. When I read the C one and D one, to be honest, I found it hard to recognize some words in terms of both meaning and pronunciation. For example, I can read out loud 赫奕 but can not know its meaning if I did not put it into the context. And neither can I read out loud 蹀躞 nor I can have the idea what does it mean. Comparing these two versions, I prefer to D whose language is much more easy to understand. In other words, it is much more modern. Sonnet 18 is a poem in modern English so I think it better to translate it into modern Chinese. I felt shocked when someone said that the C one was describing a traditional Chinese beauty while the D one was describing a modern European beauty. Ay, that's the rub. I think translation is interpretation and every translator has his or her own interpretation of the verse. Then we can appreciate different "verses" after their efforts.

In this extract, Pan Jieling does not even use quote marks. Instead, she integrates into her own writing an approximation of the line 'Ay, there's the rub!' – used in the soliloquy to mark the point, or crux of Hamlet's dilemma – as she highlights the significance of different translators having different interpretations of Shakespearean texts. This issue will be returned to in 7.4 below, but again this quote shows a participant displaying learning by successfully integrating quotes from one Shakespeare text into wider arguments made on the basis of other texts.

Although the above examples are all taken from individual written feedback, they still involve an element of co-construction, given that the students' comments are written in response to my prompt, and written to be read by me – with one consequence being that no explanation is necessary for the inclusion of EME (e.g. 'Ay, [there's] the rub!'). This kind of co-construction through 'recipient design' (Garfinkel 1967) was of course more pronounced, and more immediate, in the ways in which quotations were used in the interviews and workshops. A striking example is Benny's use of a line from *Hamlet* (2.2) during his interview, after I had asked whether he thought a familiarity with Shakespeare was useful to him, beyond its importance in his literary studies:

#### Extract 7.9 Interview with Benny

471 Ben: Yes because (1.5) there are a lot of er (0.6) famous quotes  
472 in Hamlet like erm (0.7) ">I could be< boun:de:d >in a<  
473 nutshe:ll and count myself as an in[finite king"  
474 Dun: ["King of infinite spa-" yeah

475 Ben: Yeah that made me (0.6) ↓feel↓ (.) it kinda in it's  
 476 very empowering  
 477 Dun: Mm  
 478 Ben: In some sort of way  
 479 Dun: ↑Oh okay↑ and what (0.7) so (.) #errrr# and you mean in  
 480 your own life [that that makes you think of yeah  
 481 Ben: [Yes (.) yeah like  
 482 er I could be count myself an infinite king (0.6) er even  
 483 if I bounded in this Lingwai fyesf  
 484 Dun: ((laughs))  
 485 Ben: ((laughs)) That that kind of (0.7) that kind of comparison  
 486 ((laughs))

Although Benny describes the line he is referring to as one of many ‘famous quotes in Hamlet’ (lines 471-472), his use of it here is anything but rote repetition. His delivery is markedly different from the rhythm of his surrounding speech: speeding up on ‘>I could be<’ and ‘>in a<’, but stretching ‘boun:de:d’ and ‘nutshe:ll’ (lines 472-473). Jacky did something similar at one point in his interview, markedly stretching his words and lowering his voice when recalling one of his teachers reading ‘↓To be: or not to be: ↓’. However, in Benny’s case, his delivery of the quotation is not a representation of someone else’s performance, but a performance in its own right. As well as verbally marking the quotation, Benny interpretively engages with it, linking it to his own life without apparently feeling a need to explicate its context in the play (where Hamlet is discussing whether his perception that ‘Denmark’s a prison’ therefore makes it his reality). Benny describes this quote as being ‘very empowering [...] In some sort of way’ (lines 476-478). I receive this as unexpected (note the high pitch ‘↑Oh okay↑’ at line 479), and so prompt him to say more. His explanation is brief – that he ‘could count [him]self an infinite king [...]’ even when ‘boun:de:d’ within the confines of the university (lines 482-483) – but I respond with knowing laughter at line 484. By this stage of our acquaintance Benny was well aware that I had previously lived on the gated Lingwai campus for many years, and so there was no need to explain why this might feel constraining (especially for a student living in a small shared dormitory, just metres from the canteen and teaching buildings). But, as Benny had explained earlier in the interview, coming to Lingwai had exposed him to a world of new ideas and intellectual opportunities that contrasted with the less literary and intercultural atmosphere of his former university, and transcended the physical boundaries of campus life.

In the above examples, the participants were able to quote Shakespeare’s words – in writing and in speech – and deploy them in order to make points not only about the texts themselves,

but about broader personal, cultural and social issues. The next section will look at how this kind of meaning-making was done collaboratively through discussion activities in the workshops.

### **7.3 Making meaning in relation to Shakespeare**

Something that will prove particularly useful when examining how the participants made meaning in relation to Shakespeare during workshop discussion activities is Freebody's concept of Socio-Cultural Talk (SCT). As noted in Chapter 6, SCT is one of three categories of talk that Freebody (2013) identified in the context of process drama workshops, along with Pedagogic/Logistic Talk (PLT), which is concerned with managing classroom activities, and In Role Talk (IRT), or talk and behaviour displayed while participants are in role as characters. SCT, meanwhile, is related to 'the cultural, social and moral potential' (Freebody 2013: 97) of drama sessions, as achieved through discussions that are 'generally oriented to the cultural/social/moral aspects of the drama as a socio-cultural event, rather than as an institutionalised classroom event' (101). Whereas PLT is seen as generally being task-oriented and tied to achieving a predetermined outcome, Freebody characterises SCT as being 'more content-driven', and more open-ended and exploratory (2013: 101). She describes it as involving 'interactive engagement in the development of shared accounts' that are 'either prospectively or retrospectively relevant to the drama' as well as potentially being relevant to the participants' lives (101). This description of SCT resonates strongly with the discussions that were an integral part of the Shakespeare workshops being examined here, with at least one such activity built into each session. The following subsections will look at how various actions were accomplished during SCT episodes in the workshops. These actions include the solicitation and exchange of points of view relevant to Shakespearean texts and/or the participants' lives, the invocation and negotiation of various identity categories, and negotiations of moral reasoning (Freebody 2013). Just as Freebody's concepts of PLT and IRT were expanded in Chapter 6 into PLTA and IRTA – with the 'A' representing the addition of 'Action' – in the remainder of this chapter I will refer not to SCT but to SCTA. This is done to emphasise the fact that the students and myself were not simply *talking about* Shakespeare, culture, society and identity, but actually *doing* practical and moral reasoning, through multimodal resources that included but were not limited to talk.



### 7.3.1 ‘We have to find our identity’ – negotiating roles and relationships through ‘All the World’s a Stage’



**Figure 7.1** *Students seated in a semi-circle for discussion activity*

The first example of SCTA during a discussion activity is taken from the opening workshop. Occurring at the end of the session, it revolved around the participants’ responses to Jaques’s ‘All the world’s a stage’ speech, which they had, by that point, explored at length through ‘reading round the circle’, concept checking and performance (see 6.2-6.3 in Chapter 6, and subsection 7.1.1 of the current chapter). Seated in a semi-circle (see Figure 7.1, above), the participants were first asked to share what they had liked about the other groups’ performances of the ages identified in Jaques’s speech. I then turned the topic to whether or not they recognized or identified with any of these different ages or acts. Some students commented that the schoolboy’s attitude echoed their own reluctance to go to school during their primary and particularly secondary education, and, to a lesser, extent, their feelings about university life. However, with the consensus seeming to be that the ages described by Jaques were not particularly relevant to them, I asked which one(s) seemed particularly distant. This question received an immediate response:

#### **Extract 7.10**

2034 Dun: But is there ↑anything in here that you: think (.)  
2035 that really doesn't (.) resonate with me=that (.) I  
2036 don't identify with that=  
2037 Xih: The sol[dier  
2038 S1?: [The lover=  
2039 ZhM: =The soldier  
2040 Dun: The SO:L?DIER  
2041 S2?: The soldier  
2042 Dun: So of course=  
2043 Syl: =↓The lover↓ ((laughs))  
2044 Ss: ((laugh))  
2045 Dun: So: £I (.) I don't wanna get£ too personal and ask about  
2046 the lover (.) ↑but: any comments about that idea of the

2047 soldier [(.) why=why not the soldier  
 2048 Xih: [Because (.) because we do  
 2049 not ha[ve this experience as as soldiers  
 2050 ZhM: [Seems so distant (.) from u:s  
 2051 Syl: BUT we [do do that  
 2052 Dun: [And are you (.) are you? (.) are you likely to  
 2053 have that experience  
 2054 Ss: No:::  
 2055 Dun: Probably not no: (.) but of course=  
 2056 Eve: =I think the soldier is not necessarily [the rea:l soldier  
 2057 Syl: [A soldier (.) yes  
 2058 Eve: It (.)  
 2059 Syl: Ordinary people could be quarrel[ing and (.) with a temper  
 2060 Eve: [Yep yep yep (.) and can  
 2061 be jealous (.) jealous about (.)  
 2062 Syl: Other things  
 2063 Eve: Yeah  
 2064 Dun: Could this be perhaps a a young man who's very  
 2065 headstro:ng  
 2066 Eve: Ye[a:h  
 2067 Syl: [Yeah yeah

As can be seen from the transcript above, this was a dense, quite complex exchange, which featured contributions from multiple students that were often produced in overlap (so much so, that at lines 2038 and 2041 it is difficult to identify exactly who said what). In this respect, the exchange exemplifies Schwab's (2011) concept of the classroom multilogue (see 7.1.1, above), as well as various features of SCTA – including the fact that participants were not simply waiting to be selected by me as the teacher, but were self-allocating in order to make contributions (Freebody 2013). This occurred not only in response to my initial question – which was answered by at least five students (lines 2037-2043) – but also as the students responded to, (dis)aligned with and evaluated one another's reasoning. The potentially rather personal topic of the lover having been treated humorously by both Sylvia and myself (at lines 2043 and 2045-2046, respectively), I directed the discussion towards the figure of the soldier (lines 2046-2047). Although I then responded, or attempted to respond, to comments at lines 2052-2053 and 2055, most of this episode revolves around the students themselves moving to seize the conversational floor. They achieved this through various means, including by raising their volume (e.g. Sylvia's loud initial 'BUT' at line 2051) or by producing utterances that either rapidly latched onto the previous speaker's turn (lines 2039, 2043 and 2056) or actually overlapped with them (lines 2048, 2050, 2052, 2057, 2060 and 2067). On paper this may sound rather chaotic, but in fact this self-allocation allowed different viewpoints to be expressed without me as the teacher always needing to solicit or comment on them.

At one point, this self-allocation also allowed the students to redirect the discussion when it may have appeared that they were losing the opportunity to express an alternative idea. This occurred after the soldier had been discussed in literal terms. At lines 2048-2050, Xihong and Zhao Ming point out that they have not had any military experience, with the consequence that the soldier seems, in Zhao Ming's words, 'so distant'. Here, Sylvia interjects by saying 'BUT we do do that' (line 2051). However, it is not clear whether Sylvia is referring to the military training that all of the students were required to do when arriving at LNFSU or a more figurative reading of the soldier, because at this point I overlap with her as I take up the idea expressed by Xihong and Zhao Ming, asking if they are likely to have such an experience in future (lines 2052-2053). Several students answer in the negative, and I affirm this by responding 'Probably not no:' (line 2055). After a brief pause I move to introduce a presumably contrasting idea by adding 'but of course', but at this point Eveline enters the discussion to argue that the soldier does not necessarily have to be taken as literally representing a member of the military (line 2056). She takes the conversational floor and makes this contribution quite emphatically, accompanying her speech with pronounced beat gestures and stretching the word 'rea:l', as shown in Figures 7.2 – 7.6:

**Figure 7.2**



Eve: I think the  
+lowers script+

**Figure 7.3**



is not necessarily  
+beats three times with script+

**Figure 7.4**



**Figure 7.5**



Eve: the [rea:l soldier

**Figure 7.6**



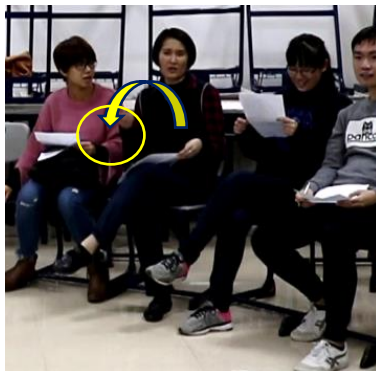
Syl: + beats with both hands +  
 [A soldier (.) yes

She is joined in expressing this idea that what the soldier represents ‘is not necessarily the real soldier’, by Sylvia, who turns to look at Eveline and latches onto her ‘is not necessarily’ by emphatically producing the words ‘A soldier’ (lines 2056-2057, Figures 7.3-7.5). It is important to stress here that while Sylvia’s contribution overlaps with Eveline’s, it should not be treated as an interruption, as neither of the speakers treat it as such (Sert 2015). Indeed, over the next few lines (2059-2063 in Extract 7.10), Eveline and Sylvia align verbal and physically as they collaboratively develop this idea of reading the soldier figuratively rather than literally. This can be seen in Figures 7.7-7.12:

**Figure 7.7**



**Figure 7.8**



**Figure 7.9**



Syl: Ordinary people could be quarrel[ing and (.)  
 ^ rotates r. hand outwards ^ ^looks at script^  
 Eve: [Yep yep yep(.)  
 + looks at script + + nods +

**Figure 7.10**



**Figure 7.11**



**Figure 7.12**



Syl: with a temper  
 ^ looks at Eve ^ ^ looks at Dun ^  
 Eve: and can be jealous (.)

(.) jealous about

+ looks at Syl +

Syl:

Other things

^ meets Eve's gaze ^

Here there is more evidence of overlap as alignment, rather than unwelcome interruption or even conflict, as Eveline nods vigorously and says ‘Yep yep yep’ while Sylvia is giving an example of how ‘Ordinary people’ can also exhibit the characteristics of the soldier (Figures 7.7-7.9). Eveline and Sylvia briefly continue to speak at the same time, with Eveline presenting her contribution as an addition or complement to Sylvia’s idea that ordinary people ‘could be quarrelling’, by latching onto it with a conjunction: ‘and can be jealous’ (Figures 7.9-7.10). Following this, when Eveline appears to be searching for what to say (note the repetition and the pauses in Figures 7.10-7.11), Sylvia actually completes her utterance by latching onto Eveline’s words ‘jealous about’ and adding ‘Other things’ (Figures 7.10-7.12). This verbal alignment is also accompanied by the alignment of gaze, as Sylvia and Eveline alternate between looking at their scripts and looking at me, and eventually looking at one another (Figures 7.10-7.12). Concluding this episode, I ask whether the soldier could therefore be read as ‘a young man who’s very headstrong’, and Eveline and Sylvia both accept this proposal with a ‘yeah’ (lines 2064-2067). In this way, through self-allocation, overlapping verbal contributions and the alternation and eventual alignment of gaze, Eveline and Sylvia are able to direct the discussion, and collaboratively put forward an alternative, figurative, reading of the soldier.

In this example, although the figurative reading put forward by Eveline and Sylvia implied that the soldier was not necessarily as distant a figure as Xihong and Zhao Ming had suggested, any connection that this reading might have with the participants’ own lives was not directly broached. As the discussion went on, however, I attempted to address the question of salience more explicitly, by asking the participants to think about what age(s) they would want to see in the speech if they had the choice. After they had discussed this briefly with the people sitting next to them, I asked if anyone could share their ideas. At this point Edward suggested the figure of ‘the student’, on the basis that being at university is ‘very precious’ and ‘a very important part of life’. When asked how the figure of the student would be different from the schoolboy, Edward responded:

### **Extract 7.11**

3007 Edw: Hmm the schoolboy it mean- I mean a schoolboy

3008           might be a: (.) very difficult time for- for us because as  
 3009           a Chinese? we have to take the College Entrance  
 3010           Examinations it (.) so a:ll our life is filled with  
 3011           homeworks tests (.) so it's really not a good time for  
 3012           me?  
 3013 Ss:       ((laugh))  
 3014 Edw: I don't know other people's opinion but I don't like that  
 3015           period  
 3016 Ss:       Yeah  
 3017 Dun: But did other people feel the same  
 3018 Ss:       Yeah / yes / of course!

One thing that is striking in Edward's answer, and my response to it, is the categorial work involved, which establishes a basis upon which his claim can be made, and negotiates for whom such a claim might be relevant. Edward begins by explaining the difference between school and university life through a negative assessment of the former period. He presents this as a collective experience, calling it a 'very difficult time for- for us' (line 3008). Edward then specifies who this 'us' refers to, by stating 'because as a Chinese? we have to take the College Entrance Examinations' (*gāokǎo*) and adding 'so a:ll our life is filled with homeworks tests' (lines 3010-3011). Having explained the difference between school and university on the basis of an experience that he could reasonably have expected all of the students in attendance to have shared, he concludes with a personal assessment: that it really was not 'a good time' for him (lines 3011-3012). At this point, a number of students can be heard laughing, and although it is easy to assume that this would be sympathetic laughter – especially with the benefit of being able to see what comes next in the transcript – Edward now slightly hedges the collective experience he has drawn upon by saying that while he didn't enjoy that period he doesn't 'know other people's opinion' (line 3014). Again several students can be heard responding to this, this time with explicit agreement (line 3016). Edward's designation 'other people' is elastic enough that it could plausibly apply to the broad category of all Chinese university students who have been through the *gāokǎo* in general, but I treat it as relating specifically to the students present at the workshop, by deploying the same words as I put the question to the group: 'But did other people feel the same' (line 3017). A large number of students respond to this in the affirmative, with one (possibly Paz, although it is difficult to be certain from the video) saying: 'of course!' (line 3018). Here then, Edward has grounded his explanation in a collective 'Chinese' experience that he presents as something that the



other students (but not me) will recognize, with this assumption eventually being ratified by other workshop participants.

This is followed, several lines later, by the invocation and quite complex negotiation of another category – which in this case is actually framed as involving a *loss* of identity. During the peer discussion period that had taken place a couple of minutes earlier, Paz, Sylvia and Eveline could be heard making quite emphatic references to the word ‘identity’ in English, although with all the students speaking at the same time it was difficult to make out the full exchange from either the audio or video recordings. When I next indicated an opportunity for a new age to be proposed, by asking ‘anyone else got one’, Paz initiated a contribution that was presented as the result of this discussion (which, due to its complexity, is initially presented with only selected multimodal annotations):

**Extract 7.12**

3033 Paz: We are talking about like we: as graduates graduates

**Figs. 7.13–7.14**

**Figure 7.13**



*Paz uses r hand to indicate herself, Sylvia and Eveline*

**Figure 7.14**



3034 Syl: We have (.) to find <our identity>

3035 Paz: Yeah it's like we are at the stage of (.) the lo[ss of=

3036 Syl: [LOSS

3037 Paz: =identity that we are (.) that we've got to identify

3038 ourselves (.) right now?=  
3039 Syl: =Yes

3040 Dun: So the the graduate or the:

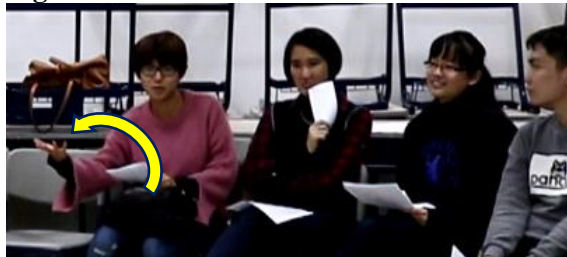
3041 Paz: Yeah we're looking [to: (.) whether we're going to (.)

**Fig 7.15**

3042 Eve: [°Chinese are all have this problem°

**Fig 7.16**

**Figure 7.15**



*Paz makes arcing gesture with r. hand*

**Figure 7.16**



*Eve turns to look at Paz and Syl, they turn to look at Eve*

3043 Paz: Build a caree:r or (.)  
 3044 Eve: People  
 3045 Paz: Go [on studying  
 3046 Eve: [People in their early twenties  
 3047 Syl: We have a a we have I think a:ll of us have (.) the same  
 3048 problem of concerning our identity we don't know where

**Fig. 7.17**

3049 we are? (.) who we are? where [we are at?

**Fig. 7.18**

3050 Eve:

[where we will go

**Figs. 7.19 - 7.20**

**Figure 7.17**



*Syl beats 'who' with l. hand*

**Figure 7.18**



*Syl beats 'where' with l. hand and turns to look at Eve, Eve raises l. hand*

**Figure 7.19**



*Eve turns and meets Syl's gaze, raises r. hand further on 'where'*

**Figure 7.20**



*Eve beats r. hand on 'we will go'*

3051 Dun: ((laughs))  
 3052 Ss: ((laugh))  
 3053 Syl: Where we will go? What we will do? We dunno whether we'll  
 3054 have "a fair round belly" or not (.) yeah we  
 3055 Dun: I mean I I suppose in er you might say twenty somethings\_  
 3056 Paz: Yeah

Whereas in the previous extract, Edward's uses of 'us' could be taken as referring to all of the students present, or even all Chinese university students in general, Paz is much more specific, making a gesture indicating herself, Sylvia and Eveline as she says 'we: as graduates' (line 3033, Figures 7.13-7.14). Sylvia then picks up on this categorial relevance that Paz has introduced, by stating the situation that the three of them, as graduates, are facing: 'We have (.) to find <our identity>', with the latter two words



emphasized through being produced more slowly, and accompanied by a pronounced beat gesture (line 3034, Figures 7.21-7.22).

**Figure 7.21**



*Syl raises script, Paz and Eve turn and look at Syl*

**Figure 7.22**



*Syl beats w. script, Paz turns to look at Dun, Eve looks down at script*

Paz expands on this by stating that they are ‘at the stage of (.) the loss of identity’, with Sylvia loudly emphasising ‘LOSS’ in overlap (lines 3035-3038). With the identity category that has been ‘lost’ presumably being the ‘student’ that Edward has just been discussing, I propose a name for this stage that picks up on Paz’s earlier category: the graduate (line 3040). Paz accepts incumbency of this category proffer (Stokoe & Attenborough 2015), by expanding on it further, explaining that as graduates they need to work out whether they are going to build a career or go on studying (lines 3041-3045). However, as she does this, Eveline proposes a broader relevance by invoking a national category, turning to look at Paz and Sylvia as she says ‘Chinese are all have this problem’ (line 3042, Figures 7.15-7.16). If this implies that this sense of a loss of identity is not only experienced by students who are graduating, she then specifies further that it could be relevant to ‘People in their early twenties’ (line 3046). Sylvia follows this by reiterating that the loss of one identity and the search for another is a collective experience – twice using ‘we’ before stressing ‘I think a:ll of us have (.) the same problem’ (lines 3047-3048).

While this ‘a:ll’ most likely suggests a broader applicability than to just the three of them, it is neither possible nor advisable for the analyst to try to be more specific about categorisations than the participants themselves (Edwards 2009, cited in Stokoe & Attenborough 2015). In this case, there is nothing that clearly indicates whether Sylvia’s ‘we’ and ‘us’ here refer more broadly to the category Paz and I had been orienting to (the graduate), or to Eveline’s wider suggestion (Chinese / people in their early twenties), and nothing like the kind of indicative gesture made by Paz in Figures 7.13-7.14 (as she is saying this, Sylvia is actually looking down slightly and rubbing her eye). However, she then looks

up and starts to give examples of the questions facing whichever ‘we’ she is referring to, beating with her left hand and with her fingers configured as though to enumerate the question words ‘where’ and ‘who’ (lines 3048-3049, Figures 7.27-7.18). As she is doing this, she turns slightly towards Eveline, who turns to look at Sylvia and aligns with her verbally and physically, making a similar beat gesture as she adds, in overlap, ‘where we will go’ (line 3050, Figures 7.19-7.20). Sylvia continues with her questions and beat gestures ‘Where we will go? What will we do?’ (line 3053) but then links them specifically to the Shakespeare text that was used to prompt the discussion. She does this by integrating words from Jaques’s speech into what she is saying – ‘We dunno whether we’ll have “a fair round belly” or not’ (lines 3053-3054) – looking at her script and then turning it over as she does so (Figures 7.23-7.24).

**Figure 7.23**



*Syl looks at script...*

**Figure 7.24**



*then raises and turns it over*

This quote is taken from the ‘justice’ part of the speech, which is the age that Sylvia and Paz (though not Eveline) had been involved in performing, and is a phrase that we had discussed during their rehearsal and briefly after their performance. The explanation we settled on was that ‘in fair round belly, with good capon lined’ (*AYLI*, 2.7, 153) referred to the justice enjoying a very comfortable material existence, most likely as a result of accepting bribes or other financial inducements. Here then, Sylvia’s use of this quote introduces a moral dimension to the personal quest for identity: as well as not knowing where they will go and what they will do after graduation, is there the possibility that involvement in corruption is something that they will have to negotiate? Unfortunately this was not something I followed up on, as at this point I moved to conclude this episode and elicit suggestions from other participants, by returning to Eveline’s earlier category proffer by suggesting ‘you might say twenty somethings’, which Paz received with a ‘Yeah’ (lines 3055-3056). Nevertheless, Sylvia’s use of this expression and the artifactual resource of the script (Jakonen & Morton 2015), demonstrates her not only displaying the quote as a learnable, but deploying it as a topical resource, taking a reference to a widely recognized issue in Shakespeare’s early modern England and making it salient for people in her situation in

contemporary China. In combination with the categorial and interactional resources used throughout this episode, she, Paz and Eveline could be seen participating in SCTA by collectively orienting to and expanding upon the ‘cultural/social/moral aspects’ of the speech, as having significance for their lives beyond its local performance as ‘an institutionalised classroom event’ (Freebody 2013: 101).

### **7.3.2 Offensive Shakespeare – the embodied negotiation of reasoning practices through ‘red and green statements’**

In the discussion above, which concluded the first of the workshops, participants can be seen co-constructing understandings related to their identities and experiences, with reference to the Shakespearean text being discussed. Although this involved the whole group – and there was certainly a lot of nodding from other participants as Paz, Sylvia and Eveline were talking – the contributions being made tended to be negotiated discretely, between me and the student(s) raising the ideas. In contrast, this subsection will examine a discussion activity that took place late in the second phase of workshops, in which the participants far more directly and extensively responded to and evaluated each other’s reasoning practices. Encouraging this kind of SCTA was one of the aims of this activity, as it was used to launch a workshop that centred on questions of how we can and should respond to what can be termed ‘Offensive Shakespeare’<sup>6</sup>. Specifically, the session was concerned with questions around the racist and misogynist language and depictions found in many Shakespearean texts, with a particular focus on the sexual violence of *Measure for Measure*. In order to facilitate a discussion that included the kind of active negotiation and evaluation of reasoning practices associated with SCTA, I made use of an activity that I will refer to as ‘red and green statements’, which was introduced to me by my colleague Sophie Reissner-Roubicek in the context of the University of Warwick’s intercultural training programme. As will be seen, ‘red and green statements’ relies on multimodal resources, encouraging and even requiring that the stimulation, modelling, negotiation, monitoring and evaluation of reasoning practices is achieved and made visible through embodied means (Freebody 2013).

This activity took place at the start of the workshop, after a brief introduction in which I raised the question of whether or not the slippery concept of ‘culture’ can be understood as

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<sup>6</sup> Thanks to Edmund King and Monika Smialkowska for the inspiring discussions that they facilitated at and in response to the ‘Offensive Shakespeare’ conference they organised at Northumbria University in 2017, and to Nora Williams for her *Measure (Still) for Measure* project and subsequent work, which the participants and I discussed in the final part of this workshop.

driving, explaining or even excusing language or behaviour that could be considered offensive. Once this introduction was complete, I told the students that I was going to get them ‘to make some decisions’, and handed each of them a red and green rectangle of cardboard. I then explained that these would be used to signal their agreement or disagreement with a number of statements that would be shown on PowerPoint slides displayed on the large screen at the front of the classroom. The participants were told to read each statement and then on my prompt (Three, Two, One, Vote) quickly hold up the green card if they agreed more than disagreed, or the red if they disagreed more than agree. As with various other workshop activities I emphasised that there was no right or wrong answer, but stressed that all of the participants must vote, and that holding up both cards was not allowed. We then began with a tongue-in-cheek practice statement: ‘Britain has the most sophisticated food culture of any country in the world’. While this was intended and introduced as a deliberately humorous example, when I asked Qing, the sole participant who voted green, why she had done so (see Figure 7.25), her answer actually demonstrated the potential for the activity to stimulate and display practical reasoning:

### Extract 7.13

200 Qin: Coz I have learned from (.) from class that (.) umm  
201 (.) when British people (.) uh (.) have dinner (.)  
202 they have (.) many manners they have to (.) like in  
203 Downton Abbey

**Figure 7.25**



*Jacky and Daniel lean forward and look at Qing, as she and other students laugh*

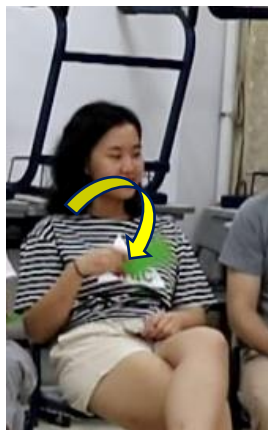
In fact, Qing was not the only participant to draw upon *Downton Abbey* (a British TV drama about a fictional country estate in early twentieth century Yorkshire) when making claims related to British culture in the workshops and interviews (see 7.4.2, below). In pedagogical terms this was actually quite a useful starting point for tackling essentialist conceptions of British culture and indeed of ‘national’ models of culture in general. At this point, however, the important thing to note is how ‘red and green statements’ makes participants accountable for their responses, and stimulates and makes visible the sharing of practical reasoning.

An important element of this, in addition to the deliberately binary choice (agree / disagree) given to the participants, was the embodied work done with the cards themselves. As soon as these were handed out, the students began to manipulate and move them in various ways, including using the cards as fans and flyswats (see Figures 7.27-7.29).

**Figure 7.26**



**Figure 7.27**



**Figure 7.28**



**Figure 7.29**



*Using both cards as a fan*

*Using a card to swat away a flying ant*

(For context, this workshop took place on a hot May evening when the temperature was approaching 30 degrees centigrade, and coincided with the emergence of large numbers of flying ants, which continued to fly around the room throughout the session.) Most importantly, the cards made the participants’ orientations to the statements visible to everyone else in the room. This was obviously useful for me as the teacher, as it gave me a rough idea of the group’s overall response when framing the discussion, as well as helping me to decide who could be called on for an explanation – on the basis of not only which cards individual students were holding up, but also the speed and manner with which they had raised them. Such displays of orientation to the statements were also treated as a resource by the participants, as they (dis)aligned with and evaluated the contributions made by their peers (note the students looking at the only participant who has voted green in Figure 7.25, above).



This included numerous occasions on which participants made use of the cards when self-allocating in order to share the fact that their point of view had changed in the course of the discussion. In the following extract, for example, Kate, uses the cards as she self-allocates and explains why her view has changed after she initially voted green (agree) in response to Statement 3 ('The words of a writer like Shakespeare are an important cultural record, so we should still include them when the plays are performed – no matter how offensive they are'):

**Extract 7.14**

516 Dun: Anyone any? (.) other comments

**Figs. 7.30 - 7.31**

**Figure 7.30**



*Kate looks towards Dun and raises l. hand*

**Figure 7.31**



*Kate raises green card in r. hand*

517 Kat: Well I I (.) kind of change my mind ((laughs))

518 Ss: ((laugh))

519 Dun: Ah (.) so you did you voted green and now you're going  
520 red? or red and now green

**Figure 7.32**

**Figure 7.32**



*Kate juggles cards in hands*

521 S1?: Red

522 S2?: Red

523 Kat: Just now I (.) um I I said we should still include

**Figure 7.33**

**Figure 7.33**



*Kate holds up green card  
in beat gesture, looks at  
screen*

524           them when the plays are performed  
525 Dun: Mm  
526 Kat: Now I think if they if they if (.) if the plays are  
527           going to be introduced into some special group  
528 Dun: Mm  
529 Kat: or other culture (.) err in order to? (.) yes in  
530           order to make Shakespeare more acceptable  
531 Dun: Mm  
532 Kat: Umm some (.) some part (.) som:::e (.) some part  
533           which might upset people (.) sh- (.) maybe? can be um  
534           maybe (.) modified (.) yes

At the start of this extract, Kate is making eye contact with me (offscreen) as she self-allocates by raising her left hand and then lifting the green card even higher (Figures 7.30-7.31, line 516). While my question about whether she is switching from red to green or vice versa and the subsequent verbal nudging of fellow students ('Red') at lines 519-522 seem to prompt some confusion (Figure 7.32), this gives Kate the opportunity to signal a shift in her point of view, from 'Just now I [...] said' to 'Now I think' (lines 523-526). While she is still not necessarily clear about which card relates to her previous and current alignments, this does not particularly matter. Kate not only uses the green card to self-allocate, but also makes a beat gesture with it as she shifts her gaze to the statement on the screen and begins to explain that whereas before she had said that offensive words should still be included when the plays are performed now she thinks that some parts 'which might upset people' could be 'modified' (lines 532-534).

Indeed, in many respects the colours of the cards themselves were not necessarily as important as the ways in which they made processes of alignment and reasoning embodied and visible to others. This can clearly be seen not long after the example above, as Chen Shumin is explaining why she voted red to disagree with Statement 4 ('We should remove or

change offensive language in Shakespeare's texts so that they are in line with modern views')

**Extract 7.15**

604 CSM: Like because (.) er h<sub>e</sub>: was supposed to be (.) a  
605 character that err have some discrimination? with the  
606 black people and you change that that's (.) this

**Fig 7.34**

**Figure 7.34**



CSM (left) talks, Sol (right) looks at her character will become a totally new one and it's not (.)

607

**Fig. 7.35**

**Figure 7.35**



Sol turns head and looks at screen

608

what Shakespeare (.) supposed to (.)

**Fig. 7.36**

**Fig. 7.37**

**Figure 7.36**



**Figure 7.37**





*SoL looks down and  
 picks up cards*
*SoL holds out red  
 card towards CSM*  
 609 SoL: Opposed to [you?  
 610 CSM: [Show us  
 611 (.)

**Fig. 7.38**

**Figure 7.38**



*CSM looks at SoL, raises and lowers red card*

612 Dan: (.) Yes  
 612 Dun: And I think that that is an important point [...]

**Fig 7.39**

**Figure 7.39**



*CSM looks towards Dun, SoL puts down card and turns to look at Dun*

Here, Chen Shumin argues that because characters' racist language is actually a part of how they are portrayed in the plays as racists, removing it will completely alter such portrayals. However, as she is talking, Sophie Li indicates her disagreement by searching for the red card and then thrusting it in Chen Shumin's direction as she says 'Opposed to you' (lines 608-609, Figures 7.36-7.37). Chen Shumin then turns to look at Sophie and briefly holds up her own red card in her direction (Figure 7.38), although it is not clear whether this is to question Sophie's use of the red card – the 'correct' card for the opposing view in this instance would be the green – or as an embodied reinforcement of her commitment to her own position. My first reaction when noticing this instance during analysis was disappointment over the fact that I did not pick up on this in the workshop itself: whether I was aware of Sophie's

intervention at the time or not, my next utterance was an evaluation of Chen Shumin's point (line 612), and I did not call upon Sophie to elaborate. However, on reflection, and viewed from a less teacher-centric perspective, what this incident also demonstrates is how 'red and green statements' allows participants to indicate their participation in the ongoing discussion and their evaluations of one another's reasoning, even when this is not verbalised and / or directly addressed by the teacher.

Indeed, as this and the previous examples show, through making (dis)alignment visible and providing conversational space for different viewpoints, this activity helps students to take part in the kind of display, monitoring, negotiation and evaluation of reasoning practices that can be associated with SCTA in drama contexts (Freebody 2013), and with how practical activities are conducted through interaction more generally (Jayyusi 1984). Specifically, these instances have involved not simply noticing *relevance* that is simply already there in Shakespeare, but arguing for and co-constructing the *salience* of various aspects of his work, and dramatic performance more generally (Dadabhoy & Mehdizadeh). Whereas in 7.3.1 personal connections were established more on the basis of different stages of life (the student, the graduate etc.), the next section will look at how relevance or salience was negotiated with regards to national or ethnic identity categories (e.g. 'Chinese'), and how, at times, the participants went about doing 'being intercultural'.

#### **7.4 Negotiating identity and doing 'being intercultural'**

As was noted in Chapter 4 (Methodology), MCA examines 'people's routine methods of social categorisation and local reasoning practices as a display and accomplishment of "doing" society' (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015: 5). What it reveals in the process is that culture and identity are not real 'things', but local accomplishments. This even applies to categories such as 'Chinese' and 'British', which might be thought of as being fairly straightforwardly applicable in the context of this project. However, what this section will show is that what such categories can refer to, what they mean to participants, and what they are being used to do are achieved in each interactional instance (e.g. Arano, 2019; Attenborough & Stokoe, 2015; Brandt & Jenks, 2011; Jenks, 2013; Mori, 2003; Nishizaka, 1995; Shrikant 2018; Zhu, 2015). It will first look at how, as the 'red and green statements' activity progressed, an intercultural frame was made relevant as attempts were made, and resisted, to bring certain identity categories to bear on the discussion (7.4.1). It will then look at how the negotiation of identity in the workshops and interviews was also something that I

became involved in, as a certain interpretation of my identity was made relevant to a discussion over what doing ‘being intercultural’ through Shakespeare might actually mean in practice.

#### 7.4.1 Doing ‘being intercultural’

As the ‘red and green statements’ activity discussed in 7.3.2 continued, there were further instances of participants explicitly acknowledging, (dis)aligning with and evaluating the contributions of other members of the group. For example, soon after the passage represented in Extract 7.15 (above) I nominated Qing to explain why she had voted a different way to Chen Shumin and the other participants, who had argued that offensive language in Shakespeare should not be changed or removed:

#### Extract 7.16

638 Qin: Umm because I think (.) it (.) the play of Shakespeare  
639 are (.) are performed in an (.) international stage  
640 (.) some of the words should be (.) err (.) should be  
641 changed mo:re (.) err (.) more gentle  
642 Dun: So that (.) so it doesn't give like a bad impression to  
643 (.)  
644 Qin: Because now?adays people are <sensitive> (.)  
645 sensi-tive to this kind of issue  
646 Dun: Mm  
647 (.)  
648 Dun: ↑But (.)  
649 (.)  
650 SoL: °Why do we care°

**Figure 7.40**

**Figure 7.40**



*Sophie Li turns her head and looks at Qing*

Here, Qing can be seen making an intercultural frame relevant to the discussion at hand. On the basis that Shakespeare’s plays are performed on an ‘international stage’, she argues that ‘some of the words’ should be made more ‘gentle’ (lines 638-41). When my continuer (‘Mm’, line 646) is not met with any response I begin to formulate a potentially

contrasting point of view ('↑But', line 648), only to trail off. After another brief silence, Sophie Li turns to look at Qing and very quietly says 'Why do we care' (line 650). She then looks back towards me (offscreen) and after presumably receiving some kind of gestural encouragement to continue, she expands on this intervention, now at the volume of the rest of the discussion:

**Extract 7.17**

652 SoL: Why do we ca::re if they're offen[sive=if if they are=

**Figure 7.41**

**Figure 7.41**



*Sophie Li tilts her head towards Qing and back*

651 CSM: [((laughs))]  
 652 SoL: =Sensitive or not? you choose to watch this show  
 653 you should accept this  
 654 Dun: So (.) it it's up to them if they get offended well

**Figure 7.42** **Figure 7.43**

**Figure 7.42**



*Sophie Li turns to look at Qing...*

655 they've gotta deal with it  
 656 SoL: Yeah  
 657 Dun: Basically yeah (.) o?kay

**Figure 7.43**



*then back to Dun*

Although she is facing me at this point, as she expands upon her earlier intervention she tilts her head towards Qing on the 'care' of 'why do we ca::re', which she stretches with a dismissive expression on her face (line 652, Figure 7.41). Sophie then looks directly at Qing with a smile, and then back at me, while I am restating her argument as 'if they get offended well they've gotta deal with it' (lines 654-655). With Sophie accepting this restatement with a 'Yeah' (line 656), I appear to move towards terminating this



particular this topic with an ‘o?kay’ (line 657), as is commonly used as a pre-closing in the classroom (Wong & Waring 2020). However, Qing now self-allocates by raising her hand and directing a further expansion on the topic directly to Sophie:

**Extract 7.18**

658 Qin: If if they if er (.) there are something (.) some

**Figure 7.44**

**Figure 7.45**

**Figure 7.44**



*Qing raises l. hand, Sophie Li turns head to look at Qing*

**Figure 7.45**



*Qing points to statement on screen, Sophie Li shifts upper body towards Qing*

659 something in the plays that insults Chinese will you be

660 (.) an[gry?

661 SoL: [There are £many plays£ insults £Chinese£

**Figure 7.46**

**Figure 7.46**



*Sophie Li places hands on chair and shifts body towards Qing*

662 CSM/Xia: ((laugh))  
 663 SoL: But we [have to accept that  
 664 Qin: [Just just pretend (.) (.) if there are something  
 665 insulting [Chinese will you be angry  
 666 Dun: [But I suppose (.) but I suppose the

**Figure 7.47**

**Figure 7.47**



*Sophie Li turns head to look at Dun*

667 question I would ask you then is (.) what is it better  
 668 to do if (.) coz th- China isn't mentioned very much in  
 669 Shakespeare  
 670 SoL: Yeah

Whereas in Extract 7.17, Sophie and I were using ‘they’ and ‘you’ to refer in a rather abstract manner to (other) people who might be offended by the language in Shakespeare, here Qing moves to make the topic personally relevant to Sophie. She does this through a combination of physical and verbal resources, by looking directly at Sophie and pointing at the statement on the screen (thus grounding the ‘something’ she is referring to), before invoking a category that could reasonably be assumed to be relevant to both of them: ‘Chinese’ (lines 658-660, Figure 7.45). Although Qing has asked a polar interrogative, Sophie takes issue with the premise of the question by producing a non-type-conforming response (Raymond 2003), stating, with laughter, that ‘There are many

plays£ insults £Chinese£' instead of giving the sequentially preferred yes / no answer (line 661). However, while she is undermining the thrust of Qing's question through her response, she is not actually rejecting incumbency in the category 'Chinese', and after a brief pause (during which Chen Shumin and Xiaohong both laugh), she adds 'But we have to accept that' (lines 662-663). When Qing restates her question after Sophie's deflection, she maintains the use of the category 'Chinese', but shifts the wording to try to get Sophie to engage with the hypothetical situation she is proposing (Just just pretend [...] if there are something insulting Chinese will you be angry', lines 664 – 665). By this point though, I am already trying to shift the topic back to Shakespearean examples, twice producing the words 'But I suppose' in overlap with Qing (line 666), before noting (with deliberate understatement) that 'China isn't mentioned very much in Shakespeare' (lines 668-669). Although Qing remains looking at Sophie for a few seconds, Sophie has already turned back towards me, and treats my comment as an evaluation to be agreed with (line 670, Figure 7.47), effectively closing this passage of the two negotiating and evaluating each other's reasoning practices on this topic.

Following this exchange I gave a brief summary of both sides of the dilemma we had been discussing, and moved onto the fifth and final statement. This shifted the focus from removing or changing particular items of language, to more drastic alterations, as it read: 'Adapting or rewriting Shakespeare is the best way of responding to the troubling / offensive material that can be found in his plays'. In response, eight students voted red (disagree), and only four voted green (agree) (Figure 7.48, below).

**Figure 7.48**



*Participants vote green or red in response to Statement 5*

To begin the next phase of the discussion, I invited one of the reds, Sammi, to explain why she disagreed with the statement:

**Extract 7.19**

719 Sam: Err (.) I think we shouldn't (.) adapting it or

720           rewriting it  
 721 Dun: Mm (.) be[cause  
 722 Sam:           [Because we need to (.) keep the original  
 723           text there  
 724 Dun: Because (.)  
 725 Sam: We need to face it  
 726 Dun: So we need to face up to it so (.)  
 727 Sam: Yes but err (.) the the (.) the (.) some (.)  
 728           sensitive. (.) er texts lines (.) we shouldn't be play  
 729           on the stage (.) in the performance you need to (.)  
 730           adopt it but in the text you need to keep it there  
 731           for research (.) for (.) people [reading it

With a little prompting from me (lines 721 and 724), Sammi expresses the idea that while the plays could be adapted (my reading of ‘adopt’) in performance, it is important to preserve the text for readers and researchers (line 727-731). When I then ask a green, Michelle, why she voted the other way, her response not only refers to Sammi’s contribution, but also back to the earlier discussion (Extracts 7.16 to 7.18, above):

**Extract 7.20**

744 Mic: I think that (.) adaption of Shakespeare may not be  
 745           the (.) ah (.) the: (.) one that people can blame for  
 746           (.) ah (.) ah because when you er in >especially in

**Figure 7.49**

**Figure 7.49**



*Mic turns head to look at Dun, motions towards Dun with r. hand*

747           China<  
 748 Dun: Mm  
 749 Mic: Coz er that p-((laughs)) er she: er when she mentioned in

**Figure 7.50**

**Figure 7.50**





*Mic turns and gestures towards Sam*

750 China (.) I think it's a (.) er it's a different  
 751 situation between er (.) in in maybe foreign countries  
 752 especially in the western world  
 753 Dun: Mm  
 754 Mic: Erm China £won't£ and its authority won't allow?  
 755 (.) somethi:ng (.) just you said like the something

**Figure 7.51**

**Figure 7.51**



*Mic turns to and gestures towards Dun*

756 insulting Chinese culture Chinese people (.) to to  
 757 be put  
 758 Dun: Mm  
 759 Mic: On the stage (.) so maybe an adaptio- er adap(.)tation  
 760 of the (.) plays (.) ah people can get mo:re familiar  
 761 and more comfortable and when they (.) recall (.) er  
 762 er go back to the original text of the Shakespeare they

**Figure 7.52**

**Figure 7.52**



*Mic motions with both hands as if placing sthg. to one side*

763 see the difference of (.) they can understand why the  
 764 er the: >people< (.) adapt it er because of the ((laughs))=  
 765 Dun: =But also maybe be shocked  
 766 Mic: Yeah but so

In this sequence, Michelle explains her vote not through general moral reasoning to do with adapting or changing potentially offensive material, but with specific reference to the political context in China. She argues that, unlike in other countries and ‘especially in the western world’ (lines 751-752), the Chinese authorities will not allow material deemed insulting to ‘Chinese culture [and] Chinese people’ on the stage (lines 754-758). Here then, there is still a moral dimension to Michelle’s reasoning, but whereas in Qing’s earlier contribution this moral aspect was related to whether Chinese people should take offence at perceived insults, Michelle is arguing that is not right to ‘blame’ productions that adapt sensitive material as a result of China’s political realities (lines 744-746). As she does so, she uses gesture and gaze to situate her argument with reference to both the points of view that have been expressed in the discussion, and the people expressing them. First, it is striking that as she goes from talking about the general situation to explaining the situation ‘especially in China’, she turns, from looking at the statement on the screen to looking at and gesturing towards me – not only the person leading the workshop, but also its only non-Chinese member (lines 746-747, Figure 7.49). She then links what she is saying to Sammi’s argument (Extract 7.19), gesturing at Sammi and laughing as she self-repairs from ‘that p-’ to ‘she:’, presumably because she doesn’t remember Sammi’s name (line 7.49. Figure 7.50).

It is important to remember that Sammi had in fact voted the opposite way to Michelle, but in picking up an aspect of Sammi’s contribution – that some sensitive material could be adapted for performance – and relating it to a more specific context, Michelle is demonstrating how

‘red and green statements’ stimulates reasoning practices without restricting discussion to the binary choices posed in the statements themselves. It is also striking that while this passage of the discussion did not have the confrontational air seen in the exchanges between Qing and Sophie Li (Extract 7.18), this is not because the categorial relevancies had been dropped. Indeed, Michelle maintains the intercultural frame as she delivers an assessment – that productions that change material due to China’s political realities should not necessarily be criticised – that she directs to me, not simply as the teacher in the class, but as the only non-Chinese person. This shows how finely-grained some categorial moves can be, but in the next subsection I will share an example in which my identity, and how it relates to the teaching of Shakespeare, becomes a much more sustained focus of attention.

#### **7.4.2 Doing ‘being intercultural’ through Shakespeare?**

While I had become quite used to being positioned as a ‘foreign teacher’ (外教/*wàijiào*) or simply a ‘foreigner’ (外国人/*wàiguórén* or 老外/*lǎowài*) during my years in China, there were nevertheless some instances during the interviews in particular when the invocation of certain categorial associations became slightly uncomfortable. One example, which is regrettably much too long to include here, occurred in my interview with Chen Shumin, as we got onto the topic of an email that she had sent, which she was concerned had been inappropriately informal for me, as a British person. After I said I hadn’t even noticed whether or not it was informal and certainly wasn’t offended, I gently tried to push back on the stereotype of the British as being overly formal. At this point, however, Chen Shumin brought up an uncomfortably personal example – one of the American teachers at LNFSU, who she said she could talk to as a friend, whereas talking to me and other British teachers was ‘kind of like talking with a (1.1) old generation people’. Perhaps picking up on the fact that I really did not know how to respond to this, she apologised by saying that she did not know many people from the UK and so had based some of her impression that British people were overly polite or formal on watching *Downton Abbey*. Fortunately, this led to an opportunity to discuss whether *Downton Abbey* – a fictional TV series, set in the past – was necessarily the best frame of reference for knowing how to respond when encountering a person from the UK today.

Although this is a lighthearted example, it does raise a serious point for a project such as this, which is, after all, trying to harness another famous British export – Shakespeare – but for non-essentialist, intercultural pedagogical purposes. As was argued in Chapter 2, Shakespeare

can be considered an ‘authentic’ resource for intercultural educational purposes due to the uses to which it will be put – but what if those uses are not the uses that students want? In Chapter 5, I noted that some of the participants expressed a strong desire for ‘original’ Shakespeare, with ‘original’ here potentially meaning everything from ‘period’ costumes and settings, to reading Shakespeare in EME, rather than in Chinese translation. This was something that came up in my interview with Benny. The following extract is from towards the end of the interview, when we were discussing a comment he had made about several translation exercises that we had done, which led him to say that his expectation (and preference) was for workshops that concentrate on Shakespeare in English. This fed into an extended discussion about what counts as Shakespeare:

### **Extract 7.21 Interview with Benny**

374 Ben: Yeah because my version of a of a workshop I think (0.5)  
375 the workshop will be something like (0.8) really exploring  
376 the Shakespeare  
377 Dun: Mm  
378 Ben: The original Shakespeare but (1.1) ↑not↑ er (0.8) the  
379 Chinese version of Shakespeare  
380 Dun: Mm (1.2) so but do you think then the Chinese version of  
381 Shakespeare is not (0.7) Shakespeare?  
382 Ben: Ss (0.8) it's the Chinese Shakespeare  
383 Dun: Mm  
384 Ben: But not the British Shakespeare I think  
385 Dun: But do you think that (0.5) do you think there's just  
386 one Brit↑ish Shakespeare↑  
387 (1.7)  
388 Dun: So do you think (0.5) do you think my Shakespeare? (.) is  
389 the same as maybe the Shakespeare (0.4) four hundred  
390 ↑years? ago?↑  
391 (2.4) No but you'll (.) help us to (0.5) understand the  
392 four hundred (.) years ago Shakespeare  
393 Dun: Mm-hmm  
394 Ben: Yes

Benny begins by explaining that his ideal workshop would involve ‘really exploring the Shakespeare’ (line 374), going further at lines 378-379 to define this, emphatically, as involving the ‘original Shakespeare’, and not ‘the Chinese versions of Shakespeare’. At this point I try, gently, to press Benny on this. First, after what is, for me, a long pause, I ask whether this ‘Chinese version of Shakespeare’ is not actually ‘Shakespeare’ too (lines 380-381). Benny replies, again emphatically, that ‘it’s the Chinese Shakespeare’ (line 382), which he then differentiates from ‘the British Shakespeare’ (line 384). I pick up on this phrasing to probe whether he thinks ‘there’s just one Brit↑ish Shakespeare↑?’, a question softened by the preceding pause and

repeat, and a rise in pitch at its end (lines 385-386). Benny does not respond immediately, so after a 1.7-second pause I rephrase my question (with further hesitation and softening) to ask if he thinks ‘my Shakespeare?’ is the same as ‘maybe the Shakespeare (0.4) four hundred ↑years? ago?↑’ (388-390). Once again Benny does not answer immediately. However, this time I wait, and after a 2.4-second pause Benny acknowledges my point, but turns the focus from his perception of Shakespeare to what he – and by extension his fellow students – may have expected from me and my workshops: ‘No but you’ll (.) help us to understand the four hundred (.) years ago Shakespeare’ (lines 391-392). This tension was something that was particularly pronounced during my involvement in *Shakespeare Lives in China* in 2016, when I was desperate to avoid coming across as somehow bringing the ‘correct’ or ‘authentic’ interpretation of Shakespeare to China simply by virtue of being British – at the same time as this was precisely the role I was cast in by the British Council’s framing of the campaign (Lees 2021, forthcoming). Here it is more implicit, as Benny’s comment about expecting me to help participants to understand the historical Shakespeare comes after Britishness has been made relevant by both him (in relation to Shakespeare, at line 384) and myself (in relation to my own interpretation of Shakespeare, at line 388).

However, at this point, rather than picking up on this invocation of national categories, I effectively switch from interviewer to teacher, and from lines 395-411 the conversation becomes almost a monologue, as I explain my attempts to challenge ideas about the ‘original’ Shakespeare:

### **Extract 7.22 Interview with Benny**

395 Dun: (1.6) ↑Okay↑ (0.4) >but I mean certainly< one (0.9) one  
 396 thing I’m t::rying to get across is this idea that erm  
 397 (1.3) (sniffs) we have to be careful when we talk about  
 398 (.) the original  
 399 Ben: Mm  
 400 Dun: Because what does that actually: (0.4) #er# does that mean  
 401 the original as it was written? well (0.9) we don't have  
 402 (0.7) much of Shakespeare's original writing so the (.) the  
 403 punctuation is added? there are different versions (0.7) do  
 404 we mean the way it was performed then? we don't really  
 405 know everything about how it was performed  
 406 Ben: °Yeah°  
 407 Dun: S’obviously with (0.8) with performance each time it’s  
 408 being done (0.5) new you know it's being done again er:m  
 409 (0.5) so but >that <that’s< interesting that that (0.6) you  
 410 want (0.6) °#errr#° you want to get to kind of the original  
 411 in [some ways yeah

412 Ben: [Yes (0.8) because when we look at the: (.) Chinese  
 413 translation of the Sonnet Eighteen (0.7) if we (0.6) just  
 414 erase the ti:tle erase the author  
 415 Dun: Mm  
 416 Ben: They (1.5) for me it like it's like a: (0.4) <internet  
 417 poem>  
 418 Dun: £Hoh okay£  
 419 Ben: Yeah  
 420 Dun: So it doesn't seem specia:l it doesn't seem [(0.5) powerful  
 421 Ben: [Yes  
 422 Dun: †Okay†

This impromptu mini-lecture involves me mentioning processes of textual transmission (and specifically uncertainties surrounding punctuation, which were addressed in one workshop), and of performance, in the early modern period and since. Throughout, I appear to be trying to be sensitive whilst challenging Benny's preference for the 'original' – hesitating frequently, and at lines 400-401 even stopping to rephrase a potentially (face-)threatening question ('What does that actually [mean?])' as 'does that mean the original as it was written?'. However, this more directly instructional turn in the interview sees me dominating the conversation, with Benny only adding 'Mm' (at line 399) and a quiet 'Yeah' (at line 406). It is not until lines 409-411 that I shift back to Benny's preference for the 'original' Shakespeare, rather than my reservations about the idea. At this point Benny gives a striking example of how he has experienced the distinction between 'Chinese Shakespeare' and the (British) 'original'. Referring back to a workshop activity in which we compared different (initially anonymous) Chinese translations of 'Sonnet 18', he says that for him, without the title and the author, they feel like 'internet poem[s]' (lines 412-417). After receiving this with laughter, I probe whether this means that they don't 'seem special', to which Benny agrees in overlap (lines 420-421). Here, what is present in Shakespeare's 'original' English but lost in Chinese translation is described vaguely as something 'special': an aura without which the translated sonnet is characterised as being as anonymous and ephemeral as an internet poem – a stark contrast to the vision of the enduring work of the immortal artist evoked in 'Sonnet 18' itself.

## 7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at how the students and I went beyond the practical achievement of a local educational order that was examined in Chapter 6, to make sense of and with Shakespeare. This co-construction of understanding in interaction involved us employing a range of multilingual, topical and multimodal resources. In some cases, this involved dealing

with potential linguistic and/or topical ‘trouble’, leading to the identification and negotiation of individual ‘learnables’. However, it often extended far beyond this, with the participants using Shakespeare in various ways, to negotiate meanings in relation to themselves and others, and the world around them. In some cases this involved them doing ‘being intercultural’ – making an intercultural frame relevant, and then invoking, negotiating and orienting to various categories in relation to it. All of this allowed the students to actively interpret and negotiate meaning, but accordingly that meaning was not always what I, as a teacher and researcher, had anticipated.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

This project has brought an ethnomethodological perspective to bear on a series of Shakespeare-themed workshops and interviews that I conducted with English majors at a university in southern China. Through fine-grained analysis it has revealed how these educational interactions were practically, rationally achieved, as the participants – including me, as the teacher and researcher – collaboratively drew on a wide range of linguistic, categorial and embodied resources. In the process it has shown huge variety in the ways the participants made sense of, and through, Shakespeare in the workshops, interviews and written feedback. While my primary aim in this thesis was to conduct the kind of close study of these activities in their specific interactional contexts described above, this analysis has also illustrated and revealed things that I hope will be of interest and use to other teachers and researchers. This final chapter will, therefore, bring my thesis to a close by summarising what has been learned in terms of key findings and related pedagogical recommendations (8.1), discussing the project's strengths (8.2) and limitations (8.3), and, finally, identifying some implications for future research (8.4).

### 8.1 Key findings and recommendations

The ethnomethodological perspective and analytic approaches of CA and MCA used in this study have allowed me to generate a number of findings that relate not only to Shakespeare and intercultural language pedagogy, but also to methodological considerations of how educators can examine their own practice. Specifically, my key findings have been arranged under the following headings:

- **Finding 1:** Respecifying 'Shakespeare' as an accomplishment of students reveals the variety of things he can be used to mean and do
- **Finding 2:** Doing Shakespeare through 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches provides powerful opportunities for students to make sense of and through Shakespeare
- **Finding 3:** Shakespeare can be an effective 'authentic' resource for intercultural teaching and learning
- **Finding 4:** Ethnomethodological analysis can provide educators and researchers with important insights into their own practice



Each of these findings will now be summarised with reference to concepts discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 2) and Methodology (Chapter 4), and the analysis found in Chapters 5 to 7. Each will then be followed by a related pedagogical recommendation for teachers.

**Finding 1: Respecifying ‘Shakespeare’ as an accomplishment of students reveals the variety of things he can be used to mean and do**

Rejecting both the Shakespearean ‘myth of universality’ (Joubin & Mancewicz 2018: 4) and generalisations about Chinese students and their attitudes towards Anglophone literature, this study sought to respecify ‘Shakespeare’ in terms of how he and his works were invoked, negotiated and used by the project’s participants (Attenborough & Stokoe 2015). In the interviews and written feedback, it was shown that even students who had very little direct experience of Shakespeare before the project’s workshops could draw upon a discourse of what I have termed ‘Shakespearean exceptionalism’, which echoes the kind of perception described through Stredder’s (2009: 3) invocation of the ‘stony imagery of awe-inspiring monuments and icy Alpine precipices’. In this regard, students positioned Shakespeare as a ‘great’, ‘classic’ writer, but also one who is ‘difficult’ and possibly ‘out of date’. However, despite the perceived challenges of Shakespeare’s supposed remoteness and the very real challenges of his ‘difficult’ language (Murphy et al. 2020), many of the participants were able to engage with Shakespeare’s texts at a very high level, in English and Chinese. Strikingly, while language was typically described as the greatest challenge posed by Shakespeare, it was one that several participants presented as especially rewarding, despite or even *because of this*. Similarly, some students invoked different stages of their lives or educational careers, as they described Shakespeare as something that they found too difficult or were unable to grasp fully when they were younger. Indeed, breakthroughs in understanding Shakespeare were often described as personally revelatory, and in one case as an ‘epiphany’. The other side of this, however, was that some of the participants invoked Shakespeare’s presumed depth and difficulty in the course of suggesting that not understanding or liking Shakespeare could be seen as a personal failure of effort, imagination, insight and/or self-awareness. Accordingly, this kind of moral reasoning meant that students who did not like or relate to Shakespeare had to reconcile their own experiences and preferences with a discourse that suggests that English (literature) students automatically do or even *should* like Shakespeare. Educators, therefore, need to proceed with caution, not only in terms of the assumptions they might make about their students’ knowledge of and attitudes towards Shakespeare, but also

with regards to not reinforcing the ways in which the discourse of Shakespearean exceptionalism might position the (many) students who don't like his work.

The interviews, written feedback and workshop data also show students drawing on Shakespeare, by referencing or sometimes directly quoting his texts, to generate further meanings relating to important topics such as family and personal relationships, culture and identity. In these cases, rather than the 'relevance' of Shakespeare being a given or something that I as a teacher could have predicted, students actively signalled the 'salience' of certain aspects of Shakespeare's texts for them (Dadabhoy & Mehdizadeh, forthcoming). This demonstrates the benefits and importance of leaving space for students to draw on their own linguistic, topical and interpretive resources to make sense of Shakespeare, and should also remind educators to be aware of the situatedness of their own interpretations. In her critique of the ways in which discussions of Shakespeare's works are often framed as being distanced from current socio-political concerns, or even as politically neutral, Adams (2020) points out that:

More often than not, the lens through which we are asked to consider these plays is that of a white, cisgender, able-bodied, man who often vociferously insists that he embodies the universal interpretive mode for all conversations about Shakespeare.

As a white British male of a certain age, teaching these workshops to rooms of much younger and predominantly female students, it seemed vital throughout the project to stress that *all* interpretations of Shakespeare – including mine – must be understood within the relevant cultural, historical and political contexts. However, this worked both ways, as I also had to accept that my emphasis on anti-essentialism and my distrust of many of the trappings of supposed Shakespearean 'authenticity' were not necessarily appreciated by the students. A number of participants, for example, expressed a strong desire for 'original' Shakespeare – whether this meant preferring 'period' costumes and 'historical' settings in performance, or a strong preference for reading the early modern English texts over Chinese translations. In this light, even my eagerness to challenge the assumption that some accents are more 'correct' than others when it comes to speaking Shakespeare's words would not always be entirely welcomed – especially by those students who might have spent years cultivating, for example, a 'British' accent. Fortunately, the interviews, feedback and discussions before, during and after the workshops provided ample opportunities for these kinds of negotiations to take place.

**Recommendation 1:** It is vital for educators using Shakespeare, especially in nominally intercultural settings, to provide opportunities for extended, free-ranging discussion and reflection to take place, in spoken, written and potentially other forms. This will afford students the space to negotiate their own understandings of Shakespeare, and help teachers to gauge which aspects of his work are salient (or not) for the students.

**Finding 2: Doing Shakespeare through ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches provides powerful opportunities for students to make sense of and through Shakespeare**

Bringing an ethnomethodological perspective and the finely-grained lenses of CA and MCA to bear on these Shakespeare workshops has revealed that, far from being chaotic or unstructured, the kind of playful, participatory sessions associated with ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches are in fact highly ordered collaborative achievements (Hester & Francis 2000). In one respect, subjecting this kind of drama workshop to such detailed multimodal scrutiny is important in and of itself. Omasta & Snyder-Young (2014) have found that drama education research tends to stick within its ‘comfort zone’, relying on a relatively narrow range of qualitative approaches (such as narrative and phenomenological research) that are not necessarily seen as carrying a great deal of evidential weight outside the discipline. In this vein, Anderson (2011) has suggested that ethnomethodological approaches offer the possibility, in analytic terms, of going beyond the tendency of some drama education research to privilege advocacy over empirical evidence. This latter issue is especially relevant with regards to Shakespeare pedagogy, as Olive (2015: 9) has written that ‘educational research on Shakespeare specifically is characterised by the local, anecdotal, under-theorised and unreflexive’. The fact that this research project has arrived at and communicated its ethnomethodologically-informed claims on the basis of what is analytically observable in audio- and video-recorded interaction, should pre-empt the final three of Olive’s criticisms. But I would also disagree that ‘local’ is necessarily a bad thing when it comes to researching Shakespeare education. Olive’s objection is to studies that are based on the experiences of one teacher and small groups of students, but then unreflexively extrapolate these experiences to teachers and students in general. There can undoubtedly be problems with such efforts, but that does not mean that studies at the ‘local’ level have nothing to offer. In fact, it is at the ‘local’ level – in their particular classrooms, with a particular group of individual students, on a particular day – that educators always have to

act, and indeed it is through this local (inter)action that teachers and students actually achieve teaching and learning. Thus, while there is undoubtedly a place for large-scale, longitudinal research on education – including Shakespeare pedagogy – it is vital that this is complemented by detailed analysis of the ways in which teaching and learning are actually done in and through classroom interaction.

In this light, while my individual interpretation and implementation of Shakespeare pedagogy cannot stand for that of all Shakespeare teachers, and my students' responses cannot stand for those of all students, this research has made empirically observable ways in which 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches have worked in a specific setting. During a wide variety of the kind of 'expressive, creative [and] physical' activities that fall under the label of 'active' methods (Gibson 1998: xii), the playful aspect of these activities was shown as involving not directionless fun, or 'dancing' without 'thinking' (McLuskie 2009), but the practical, rational accomplishment of a certain local educational order (Hester & Francis 2000). In fact, taking Winston's (2015) rationale for 'rehearsal room' approaches, empirical evidence can be identified for all of the types of learning that he postulates. Specifically, we can consider:

- *Learning through playing*: Whether when playing during warm-up games or playing different roles during performance-based activities, participants who were initially reticent about, or resistant to, unfamiliar activities can be seen orienting to and ratifying 'playful' techniques and fictional frames through their spoken and embodied conduct;
- *Learning through experience*: In this study, 'doing Shakespeare' was not an idle expression. Adding 'Action' to Freebody's (2010, 2013) categories of talk in the drama classroom has helped to highlight the experiential aspects involved in actually *doing* Shakespeare through 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches. So, for example, the facilitation of lively discussions involving Socio-Cultural Talk and Action (SCTA) allowed students to draw upon and negotiate not only their experiences beyond the classroom, but also the powerful experiences they had during performance-based activities incorporating In Role Talk and Action (IRTA);
- *Learning through the body*: The analysis of workshop video shows extensive embodied participation during the sessions, which would have been missed if only audio had been used. It is not simply a matter of the students often being on their feet rather than at their desks (Coles 2009) – whether standing or sitting, they can be seen physically displaying their orientations to and understandings of the activities,

Shakespeare's texts, and one another. In various activities, embodied means are used to request and provide clarification, pass on ideas, and display alignment or disalignment with others (Sert 2015);

- *Learning through beauty*: While the participants often mentioned the beauty of Shakespeare's language, they actually observably oriented to and engaged with its aesthetic qualities by playing with quotes and lines from the texts, in ways they marked out from their regular speech by altering their delivery (e.g. pitch, speed, stress etc.) as they did so;
- *Learning together*: The collaborative ways in which the workshop activities were achieved has been highlighted throughout this study. The participants can regularly be seen working together by sharing and building upon one another's initiatives (whether verbally or physically), while certain activities – such as those involving the establishment of a fictional frame for IRTA (Freebody 2010, 2013) – could only be achieved collaboratively, rather than individually. While there is a danger that the emphasis on the supposedly more student-centred, non-hierarchical nature of 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches (e.g. Gibson 1998, Stredder 2009, RSC 2013, Winston 2015) can obscure the very real ways in which the teacher still often has tight control (e.g. over turn allocation) the physical arrangements of such classrooms facilitate learning together. In particular, the recurrent use of the circle (Stredder 2009) and semi-circle allowed these workshops to become multilogues (Schwab 2011), in which even those participants who were not speaking were able to use embodied resources to display their orientation to and understanding of what was happening, in full view of everyone else.

In this study, then, doing Shakespeare through 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches demonstrably provided powerful opportunities for students to engage with his work, and to make sense of and through his texts in the process.

**Recommendation 2:** On the basis of the quality of the participation in the workshop activities, and the level of complexity and nuance observable in the arguments put forward in the discussions, written feedback and interviews – in a foreign language – I strongly echo Stredder's (2009) view that 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches can appropriately and effectively be integrated into the teaching of Shakespeare at tertiary levels. This study also shows that if there are barriers or resistance to doing this within the curriculum, then extracurricular Shakespeare workshops can be a valuable alternative.

### **Finding 3: Shakespeare can be an effective ‘authentic’ resource for intercultural teaching and learning**

While it is hard to argue that dramatic texts written four centuries ago in early modern England are useful exemplars of English as it is used around the world today (Alptekin 2002), there are other ways in which Shakespeare can be seen as an appropriate resource in EFL / ESL and other language-learning contexts. As Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) point out, the ‘authenticity’ of a resource is not necessarily a matter of who created it, and why, but of the purposes to which it is being put. In this light, Shakespeare as used in the workshops for this project could be seen as exhibiting several different types of authenticity:

- ‘authenticity of purpose’ (through engaging the participants in exciting aesthetic and imaginative experiences, and helping them to think about matters beyond the classroom);
- ‘authenticity of task’ (based on the students’ enthusiastic engagement with the ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ activities through which the texts were being explored);
- ‘authenticity of conditions’ (in the sense that active interpretation, translation and mediation were integral to the workshops’ treatment of language and culture)

(Liddicoat & Scarino 2013: 95)

In light of these understandings of authenticity, and especially the final one, the very strangeness and unfamiliarity of Shakespeare’s language can be harnessed as a way of confronting and working through the sense of estrangement that can accompany intercultural interactions (Pulverness 2014). Indeed, through activities that were intended to help the participants experience the dramatic intensity of Shakespeare’s words through the heightened and unfamiliar situations created in ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches, one of my aims was to encourage them to question their assumptions about how they perceive and communicate in the world (Cheng & Winston 2011, Fleming 1998). In this light, the workshops for this project were significantly influenced by Liddicoat & Scarino’s (2013) intercultural perspective on language teaching and learning. And just as my analysis generated evidence supporting Winston’s (2015) rationale for ‘rehearsal room’ approaches, it also showed participants engaging in activities that exemplify the principles and processes Liddicoat & Scarino advocate for intercultural teaching and learning. Many of the activities involved interconnected processes of *noticing*, *comparing*, *reflecting* and *interacting*, and

during the extended SCTA sequences seen in the discussion activities in particular, the practices of *active construction, making connections, social interaction, reflection* and *responsibility* could be seen in the overlapping evidence for several elements of Winston's (2015) rationale (especially *learning through experience* and *learning together*). The analysis in Chapters 6 to 7, therefore, offers evidence not only of the pedagogical aspiration to make Shakespeare education and intercultural language education holistic, embodied processes, but of the participating students actually accomplishing this.

**Recommendation 3:** Using Shakespeare, especially when taught through 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches, is an effective, 'authentic' way of implementing an intercultural perspective on language teaching and education in EFL / ESL settings at tertiary level.

**Finding 4: Ethnomethodological analysis can provide educators and researchers with important insights into their own practice**

Mann & Walsh (2017: 4) note that reflection and reflective practice have justifiably come to occupy a central role in educational practice and development, and frame one of their book's contributions to this as being its emphasis on 'the role data and evidence play in triggering and fostering reflection'. This, therefore, is an incredibly important aspect of this project for my own practice, as both a teacher and a researcher. In the former case, learning to teach Shakespeare and especially to use 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches has been a transformative experience, which has boosted my confidence in my own practice, as well as my sense of professional identity as an interdisciplinary, intercultural educator. Evans (2017) has looked in detail at the personal and professional experiences and perceptions of Shakespeare teachers, but what I wanted to do in this project was to look for empirical evidence of what actually goes on in the classroom, while teaching and learning are taking place. The close analyses I was able to perform using CA and MCA have challenged some of my preconceptions and subjective impressions about how drama workshops in general – and 'rehearsal room' Shakespeare sessions in particular – actually work in practice. In addition, they have equipped me with what is a far more empirically-informed sense of how 'active' / 'rehearsal room' Shakespeare does – and does not – operate at the level of classroom interaction, which I hope to build into my research on Shakespeare, drama and intercultural education in the future. Similarly, using Jeffersonian transcription conventions, and CA and MCA to investigate my interviews in finely-grained detail has given me a far deeper

understanding of my own interview technique, and how interview interactions actually work. Taking a constructionist conception of the qualitative interview (Roulston 2010) necessitates not just acknowledging but actively *analysing* the role the interviewer plays in co-constructing interview accounts. In this vein, Mann (2016) notes several steps that researchers can take towards being reflective interviewers, including keeping a research journal and writing subjectivity statements. However, it is one of Mann's key suggestions – the use of transcripts – that I have found the most persuasive. In challenging Kitzinger's (2008) argument that analysing your own conduct is not good CA practice, I would agree with Roulston (2019), and argue that it is precisely through an ethnomethodological insistence on focussing only on what is analytically observable that this approach avoids the kind of subjectivity that might influence other types of reflection and reflexivity. As such, regular close analysis of my own practice has been highly instructive during the journey of my PhD, and I have no doubt that it will continue to influence my teaching and research practice in the future.

**Recommendation 4:** While the learning curve is initially steep, grasping at least the basics of CA and MCA provides teachers and researchers with a powerful tool for examining their own practice.

## 8.2 Strengths of this study

As discussed above, one of the strengths of this study is the fact that it has been able to produce incredibly close empirical analyses of an approach to teaching Shakespeare that has proved popular with teachers and students, but is sometimes criticised for being too time-consuming, impractical, insufficiently rigorous and only tangentially related to Shakespeare (Coles 2009, McLuskie 2009, Olive 2015, Murphy et al. 2020). While this fine-grained analysis was not conducted in order to refute these critiques – and time, space and practicality remain important reasons why 'active' and 'rehearsal room' approaches may not be appropriate in every setting – this study has made an original contribution to the field by introducing a different kind of evidence to the debate. Specifically, it presents an examination of Shakespeare education that is far from the type of anecdotal and under-theorised work that Olive (2015) alleges is all too common in the field, and as an ethnomethodological study one of its strengths is that its analyses are there for other researchers to examine for themselves (Seedhouse 2005). Successfully conducting this kind of study has involved a huge amount of



effort in terms of developing my own methodological expertise, but this can also be considered one of the strengths, or perhaps affordances, of doing a study such as this as a PhD project. In the context of case study research, Stake (1995) has noted that PhDs provide the time and space to produce sustained, in-depth qualitative analyses of particular settings, and pursuing a 4-year funded PhD programme has undoubtedly enabled me to develop as a researcher, and produce a project that would not have been possible otherwise. On a related note, I consider an additional strength of this research to be that I have been able to draw upon my interdisciplinary, intercultural experience and expertise, as one of a relatively small number of people who is competent in both drama education and ethnomethodological research (Anderson 2011), and who has had long-term experience of teaching Shakespeare in China as both an insider and an outsider (see Chapter 3).

### **8.3 Limitations of this study**

As noted above, in an ethnomethodological study such as this one, the fact that my analyses are on full display should help to establish the robustness of my research. However, if reliability in CA is understood as relating to the quality of recordings and transcripts (Peräkylä 1997, Seedhouse 2005), then the biggest limitation of my study lies in the former. While I have tried to make claims only on the basis of what is analytically observable in the recordings, as a result there are points at which I have been unable to make any claims at all, due to the relevant conduct being unclear or absent on the recordings. In the case of the interviews, this resulted from my choice of a more informal and less ‘institutional’ setting – a (usually quiet) bakery and coffee shop next to LNFSU’s campus. Aside from a few points at which the audio is unclear due to background noise, the spoken interaction seems to have been accurately recorded. However, because the interviews were not videoed there is a whole range of embodied conduct that is not visible. I still believe that the benefits of picking the bakery as an interview site outweigh this loss, but this is a compromise I will have to revisit when I next conduct research interviews.

More disappointingly, there are elements of the workshops that I have not been able to analyse properly due to limitations of the recording equipment I had access to. In terms of the video, because funding and logistical constraints meant that I could only use one digital camera, which was placed in the corner of the classroom on a standard tripod, there were activities that I have not been able to analyse in the ways I would have liked because not

enough of the conduct is visible on the video (e.g. see the note about ‘reading round the circle’ in 4.4.1). I have to acknowledge that multiple cameras, potentially placed at a higher angle, would have made a different level of interactional analysis possible for certain activities (Au Yeung 2021). Similarly, while I had an external microphone plugged into the camera and two separate audio recorders, when the students were working in pairs or small groups it was impossible to hear everything, and to distinguish who was saying what. As a result, I will have missed important details of peer-to-peer interactions (e.g. Markee 2005, Jakonen & Morton 2015) that could have been captured with more advanced audio technology or wearable microphones.

Finally, while I would argue (as I have done in Recommendation 2, above) that extracurricular Shakespeare workshops provide valuable educational opportunities for students, and are therefore worth studying, it is true that the participants in this study were necessarily self-selecting. This did not mean that they were all particularly interested in Shakespeare, let alone that they had the desire to ‘bury themselves in Shakespeare’s ocean’ (‘把自己葬在莎士比亚的海洋里’ in Ann’s words). Indeed some made it clear that they had attended because of wanting to practise their English with a 外教 (*wàijiào* / foreign teacher) or do something different with their free time. In this way, this study does provide evidence of how these approaches can work with even students who are uninterested in or wary of Shakespeare. Nevertheless, it is possible that teachers and educational leaders who are already sceptical about ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches, and/or using Shakespeare in EFL / ESL settings, will be harder to convince on the evidence of what they might see as a group of self-selecting ‘Shakespeare fans’. It is also true that while there are plenty of critiques of ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches, studies that explore what happens when such techniques go wrong or prove ineffective (e.g. Coles 2009) are quite rare. In this light Evans (2017) concluded that it is important to research practice where it is not working, and not just where it succeeds. Given the reservations that some of my colleagues had about using these techniques themselves, tackling the shortcomings of ‘active’ and ‘rehearsal room’ approaches is perhaps a challenge that I will need to consider in the future.

#### **8.4 Implications for future research**

This project has provided what I hope is an engaging, in-depth picture of how the participating EFL students and I did, and did things with, Shakespeare in a series of

workshops and interviews at a university in southern China. Through its ethnomethodological perspective and highly detailed multimodal analyses conducted using CA and MCA it represents a different kind of evidence in the field of research on Shakespeare education. In this regard, I hope it can be a starting point for future work that can build on this project in various, potentially interdisciplinary ways. As acknowledged in the limitations (8.3), the use of more extensive and sophisticated audio-visual recording equipment – which is becoming cheaper and more accessible all the time – would offer the possibility of studying not only whole group and teacher-led activities, but also peer-to-peer interactions. (A separate direction for potential research would of course be to look at online and remote iterations of this kind of teaching, but due to the influence of the global pandemic that is still ongoing as I complete this thesis in 2021, I suspect there will be no shortage of this type of study in future.) In addition to harnessing more sophisticated technology to produce a higher quality and more comprehensive record of hearable and visible conduct, another area in which innovation would be welcome in future ethnomethodological / CA studies of Shakespeare and drama workshops is in how to present findings to non-specialist audiences in a more user-friendly way. It is important to acknowledge that the transcription of spoken and other conduct is considered not only a technical act, but also an *analytic* one (Mann 2016, Roulston 2010, Ten Have 2004). Nevertheless, it is a little surprising that the primary means of disseminating the findings of CA and related studies remains digital articles and theses that more or less entirely resemble paper ones – rather than, say, annotated, interactive video. There are of course technical, data management and ethical issues that will need to be addressed for this type of approach to become more common in future, but it would certainly be worth exploring as a method of sharing analyses and explaining findings that would be relevant to non-specialists.

Such interdisciplinary sharing is itself something that will hopefully become more prevalent in the future, but it should not be a one-way process that merely involves ethnomethodologists taking their analytic insights to other fields. The ‘visual turn’ in the social sciences (Mondada 2013) and ‘embodied turn’ in CA (Nevile 2015) are still relatively young, and could undoubtedly benefit from input from other disciplines – including those such as drama education, in which there is an important, but qualitatively different, engagement with embodied conduct. While Mondada (2019) and others have developed highly complex transcription conventions that are powerful when representing the temporality and progressivity of embodied action, there is currently no system that comes

close to doing for visible conduct what Jefferson's conventions can do for speech. Having seen actors who do not share a common spoken language struggle to communicate verbally in the drama studio, but then easily display understandings and respond to one another through Laban's vocabulary of physical movement (Kennedy 2013), I have no doubt that ethnomethodology and related disciplines would benefit from more of an engagement with the arts. In the interest of such interdisciplinary sharing it might, therefore, seem appropriate to give the last word in this social science thesis to Shakespeare. However, Shakespeare gets to have the last word all too often, so I would like instead to share it between myself, and one of the students who participated in this project. Here, June, a Linguistics postgraduate who came to many of the workshops, does some interesting categorial work as she makes a distinction between how students of Literature and Linguistics participate in Shakespeare workshops:

### Extract 8.1 Interview with June

351 Jun: I can experience (.) er feel the difference between  
 352 Linguistics students and Literature students (0.5)  
 353 they're so: involved in the [(.) virtual world (.)  
 354 Dun: [(laughs)) (.) mm  
 355 Jun: For me [(.) I  
 356 Dun: [Yeah  
 357 Jun: You know (.) I think the author's just create a very (0.6)  
 358 virtual world (.) rather than a [(.) physical one (.)  
 359 Dun: [Mm  
 360 Jun: But they take it for (.) real so I'm really amazed at it  
 361 Dun: ((laughs)) (.) So that that's a really (.) so you you:  
 362 (.) you felt that in the workshops? you felt there was a  
 363 difference in (.) in view [and  
 364 Jun: [But I do appreciate [it  
 365 Dun: [Yeah okay  
 366 (.) but maybe:: (.) you appreciate it a bit more from the  
 367 ↑outside?  
 368 Jun: Yeah  
 369 Dun: Would you say yeah  
 370 Jun: Yeah [not ((laughs))  
 371 Dun: [And and (.) I mean you used the expression there like  
 372 "virtual world" so it kind of it's not real  
 373 Jun: Yeah but they take it just like it's real it's happened  
 374 it actually happens in our daily life (.) so I do  
 375 appreciate it

As a teacher and researcher working on intercultural Shakespeare education I am incredibly fortunate that this kind of collective immersion in imaginative worlds does actually happen in my daily life. I'm not sure I would describe this kind of activity as being any less real by virtue of being imaginative or 'virtual', but like June I too appreciate it.

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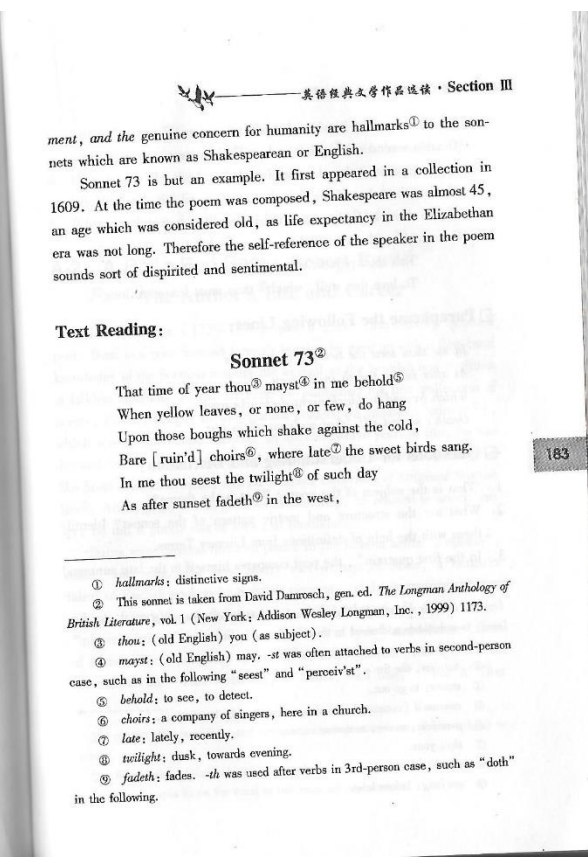
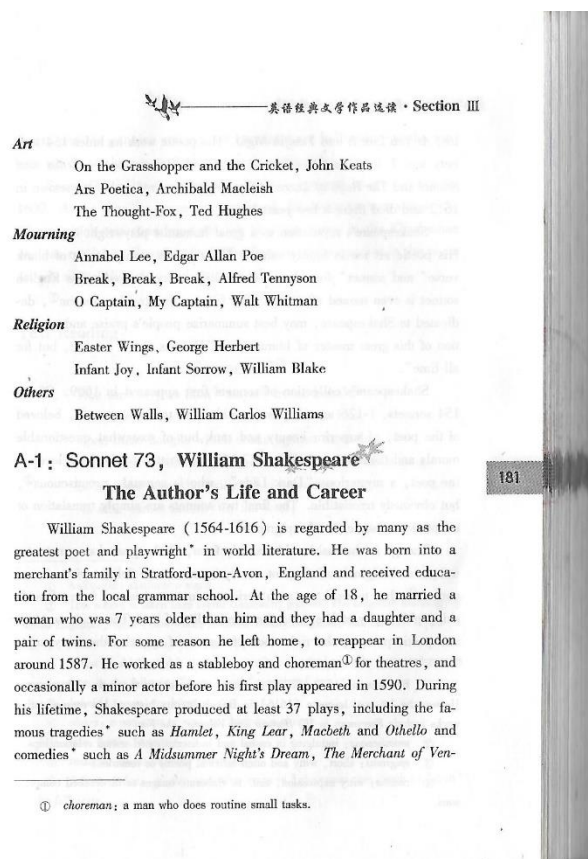
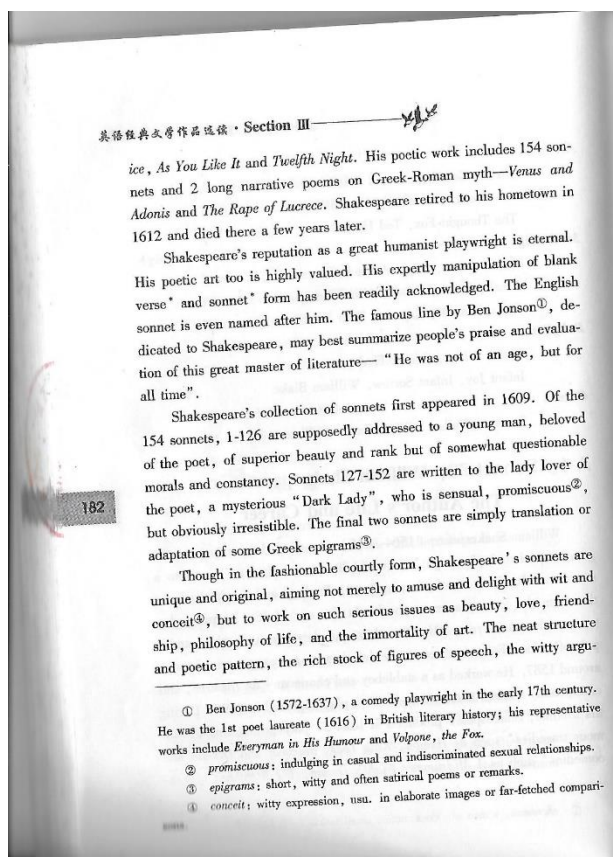
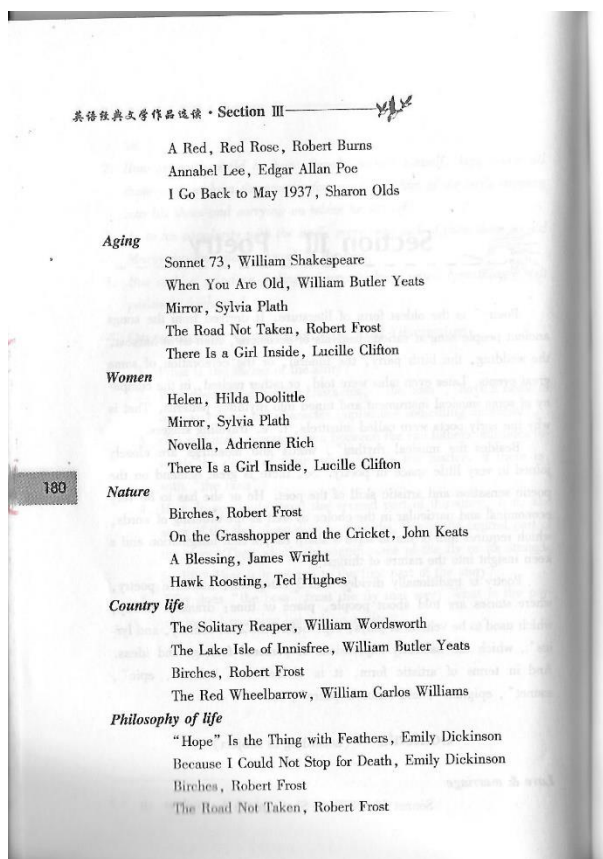
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## Appendix 1: 'Sonnet 73' textbook extract



Which by and by black night doth take away,  
 Death's second self<sup>①</sup>, that seals up<sup>②</sup> all in rest.  
 In me thou seest the glowing of such fire  
 That on the ashes of his<sup>③</sup> youth doth lie,  
 As the death-bed whereon it must expire<sup>④</sup>,  
 Consum'd<sup>⑤</sup> with that which it was nourish'd by.  
 This thou perceiv'st<sup>⑥</sup>, which makes thy<sup>⑦</sup> love more strong,  
 To love that well, which<sup>⑧</sup> thou must leave ere long<sup>⑨</sup>.

**Paraphrase the Following Lines:**

*In me thou seest the twilight of such day  
 As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
 Which by and by black night doth take away,  
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.*

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**Questions for Understanding and Discussion:**

1. What is the subject of the poem? What is the theme?
2. What are the structure and metric pattern of the sonnet? Identify them with the help of definitions from Literary Terms.
3. In the first quatrain\*, the poet compares himself to the late autumnal

- ① *Death's second self*: Night, which is the symbolic feature of the World of the Dead, is sometimes addressed in this way, esp. in literature.  
 ② *seals up*: shuts up (as in a coffin).  
 ③ *his*: its, the fire's.  
 ④ *expire*: to go out.  
 ⑤ *consum'd* (consume): used up, destroyed by burning.  
 ⑥ *perceiv'st*: to see, to notice.  
 ⑦ *thy*: your.  
 ⑧ *which*: whom.  
 ⑨ *ere long*: before long.

yellow leaves. What is the second metaphor? What parallels or connections make it especially fitting or expressive in the context<sup>①</sup>?

4. How do you like the fire metaphor in the third quatrain? How is one's life similar to the fire?
5. What conclusion does the final heroic couplet\* bring?

**A-2: A Red, Red Rose, Robert Burns**  
**The Author's Life and Career**

Robert Burns (1759-1796) was a great 18th-century Scottish poet. Born in a poor Scottish farmer's family, he grew up with a first-hand knowledge of the Scottish country life as well as the Scottish oral tradition of folklore and folk songs. In 1786 he published his first collection of poetry, *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Kilmarnock edition<sup>②</sup>), which was an immediate success. In his last twelve years of life, he was devoted to collecting, editing and writing songs for an anthology entitled *The Scots Musical Museum* and for *Selected Collection of Original Scottish Airs*<sup>③</sup>. Although he was in great need of money, he refused to accept any pay; he did it purely out of love and patriotism.

Burns wrote several hundred poems in the form of satire\*, epistle\*, ballad\* and song. His best poetry was written in Scots, a northern dialect of English spoken by Scottish peasants, and his favorite subjects are love, friendship, work, patriotism, and drink, etc. He is also called a "pre-romanticist" because of his fondness of lyric\* and folklore\* form and of the common language spoken by common people. Among his best-known works are "Tam o'Shanter," "Scots, wha hae," "For A' That

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- ① *context*: the conditions and circumstances relevant, here, to the subject or argument.  
 ② *Kilmarnock edition*: so named from the town in which it was first published.  
 ③ *airs*: simple tunes for vocal or instrumental performance.



## Appendix 2: Workshop flyers



### NOV / DEC 2017

# EXPLORING SHAKESPEARE

#### **An opportunity to find your own sense of Shakespeare through a series of workshops**

Whether you're a fan of the Bard or a complete beginner, this series of eight workshops aims to help you explore various different sides of Shakespeare, as part of a research project investigating what it means to engage with his work in 21st century China. As well as stepping into scenes from some of his most famous plays and actually *doing* some Shakespeare, you'll be introduced to a variety of innovative approaches that will help you make sense of Shakespeare not only on the page and on the stage, but also in the wider world beyond the classroom and the theatre. No experience of acting or Shakespeare is necessary – just a sense of curiosity, and an interest in undertaking a shared exploration of what doing Shakespeare can mean to you in \_\_\_\_\_ in 2017.

**Duncan Lees** is a doctoral researcher at the University of Warwick (UK), whose work explores Shakespeare and intercultural education. Until 2016 he was \_\_\_\_\_ and a keen supporter of the Faculty of English Language and Culture's annual Drama Night. He has given public talks and workshops on Shakespeare at venues across China, including Guangzhou Opera House and the National Center for Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing.

### **“EXPLORING SHAKESPEARE” WORKSHOPS:**

**Tuesdays +  
Thursdays**

**7pm – 9pm**

**November 21 –  
December 14**

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#### **WORKSHOP 1:**

**“All the world's a stage” – so what could that mean?**

**7pm – 9pm,  
Tuesday 21st  
November 2017**

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**Room 423,  
Building 7**

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#### **SIGN UP / MORE INFO:**

Email

[D.Lees.1@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:D.Lees.1@warwick.ac.uk)



## 2017年11月 - 12月 探索莎士比亚

有机会通过一系列的研讨会找到你自己的莎士比亚的感觉。无论您是吟游诗人还是初学者，本系列的八个研讨会旨在帮助您探索莎士比亚的各个不同方面，作为研究项目的一部分，研究在 21 世纪的中国参与其工作意味着什么。除了进入他最著名的一些戏剧的场景以及实际上做一些莎士比亚之外，还会介绍一些创新的方法，这些方法不仅可以帮助你理解莎士比亚的舞台，还可以在舞台上，在教室和剧院之外的更广阔的世界里。没有演员或莎士比亚的经验是必要的 - 只是一种好奇心，并有兴趣就 2017 年\_\_的莎士比亚对你的意义进行共同探索。

邓肯·利斯 (Duncan Lees) 是英国华威大学 (University of Warwick) 的博士研究员，他的工作是探讨莎士比亚和跨文化教育。直到 2016 年，他还是\_\_\_\_\_的助理教授，并且是英语语言文化学院戏剧大赛的热心支持者。他在广州大剧院和北京国家大剧院举办了莎士比亚的演讲和研讨会。



《探索莎士比亚》

研讨会:

每个星期二星期四

11月21号

- 12月14号

晚上7点 - 9点

第一个研讨会:

“全世界都是一个舞台”  
- 那是什么意思?

11月21号 (周二)

晚上7点 - 9点

地点和进一步的细节有  
待确认

注册/更多信息:

电子邮件

[D.Lees.1@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:D.Lees.1@warwick.ac.uk)

### Appendix 3: Overview of workshops

#### Phase 1: Exploring Shakespeare / 探索莎士比亚

No	Title	Play(s) / scenes	Topics	Selected activities	Feedback topic
1	“All the world’s a stage” – so what could that mean?	<i>As You Like It</i>	Act, play, stage? Theatrum mundi Playing a part / acting (naturally) in real life Seven ages of man and connections with own lives	Boal handshakes Names around circle Poster tour (act, play, stage) Physical Likert scales Circle work and group scene work ( <i>AYLI</i> 2.7 – Jaques: “All the world’s a stage”) Performances Discussion (performing roles)	What does “All the world’s a stage” mean to you?
2	Staging Shakespeare: “What light through yonder window breaks?”	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Cultural / linguistic / social / personal meanings of names Staging / bringing scenes to life	What’s in a name? Stop, go Walking into a scene Circle work, deixis / pointing and group scene work ( <i>R&amp;J</i> 2.2 – Romeo: “But soft! what light through yonder window breaks”) Performances	What are the differences between reading Shakespeare and staging Shakespeare? For you, what are the advantages / disadvantages of actually <i>doing</i> scenes from Shakespeare as we have done in this workshop?
3	1000 Hamlets in 120 minutes	<i>Hamlet</i>	Different interpretations of iconic character / soliloquy (Hamlet: “To be, or not to be”) How directorial / filmic factors influence interpretation Textual variations How delivery alters performance and influences interpretation	Comparing images (and 5 words about Hamlet) Comparing scenes on video ( <i>Hamlet</i> 3.1 – Hamlet: “To be, or not to be”) Textual comparisons Circle work, walking the punctuation etc. Individual soliloquy work Performances	A well-known saying talks about there being 1000 Hamlets in 1000 peoples’ eyes – but what about in their voices and bodies? Do you think exploring Hamlet’s words verbally and physically can help you find your own interpretation of what those words might mean? Why or why not?

4	“Shall I compare thee to a what?!” Translating / interpreting the Sonnets	Sonnet 18 Sonnet 116	Translating Shakespeare Culture and interpretation Comparison and equivalence	Video (Sonnet 18) Sonnet battle – romantic vs. unromantic readings Discussion (cultural / literary approaches to love and romance) Comparing Chinese translations of Sonnet 18	Is Shakespeare still Shakespeare when he / it is translated? Is there a Chinese Shakespeare... or Chinese Shakespeares?
5	Nature vs. nurture: environment, family and the individual in <i>King Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>	Different understandings of family relationships and roles Attributing responsibility and causality Nature vs. nurture	Stop, go Show me... (re families) Video ( <i>KL 1. 1</i> ) Circle work ( <i>KL 1.2 – Edmund: “Thou, nature, art my goddess”</i> ) Poster tour (nature) Dialogue work ( <i>KL 1.4 Lear vs. Goneril</i> )	Tolstoy wrote: “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way”. Do you agree? Are all happy families alike, always and everywhere? And, having had an introduction to <i>King Lear</i> , what do you think has made that family unhappy?
6	The course of true communication never did run smooth	<i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Romeo and Juliet)</i>	Understanding Shakespeare on stage Talk as action Performing misunderstandings	Discussion (campus performance of <i>R&amp;J</i> ) I accuse... Pair work, one-word dialogues, actioning etc. ( <i>AMND 2.1 – Demetrius and Helena</i> ) Performances	NA (Special rearranged class due to performance of <i>R&amp;J</i> )
7	Insiders and outsiders, inside and out of Shakespeare	<i>Othello</i>	Insiders and outsiders, identity and belonging Racism and other forms of discrimination in Shakespeare	Stories in a circle – part 1 (being an outsider) Context(s) of <i>Othello</i> Understanding in a circle: the word “Moor” Discussion: offensive terms Stories in a circle – part 2 (discrimination)	What does it mean to play the role of the insider or outsider?

				Circle work and performance ( <i>Othello</i> 4.3 – Emilia “But I do think it is their husbands’ faults”)	
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**Phase 2: Intercultural Shakespeare / 跨文化的莎士比亚**

No	Title	Play(s) / scenes	Topics	Selected activities	Feedback topic
8	“What country, friends, is this?” – Introducing Intercultural Shakespeare	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i> / <i>Twelfth Night</i>	Definitions of intercultural / cross-cultural / 跨文化 Performance and belonging Cultural contexts (now, then, inside and outside play)	Names around circle Discussion (definitions: intercultural / cross-cultural / 跨文化) Setting the scene (5 Ws) Circle work and pair work ( <i>TN</i> 1.2 – Viola / Captain dialogue: “What country, friends, is thus?”) Discussion (performance and belonging) Group work ( <i>CoE</i> 1.2 – Antipholus: “I to the world am like a drop of water”)	Do you agree that “Every engagement with a Shakespearean text is necessarily intercultural”? Why or why not?
9	Speaking Shakespeare’s Language(s)	Sonnet 116 / <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> / <i>The Woman in the Moon</i> (Lyly)	Early Modern / Modern English Paula Blank’s <i>Shakesplish</i> Original Pronunciation Names, language and culture	Discussion (what language(s) is Shakespeare written in?) Pair work (Sonnet 116) Video (Original Pronunciation) Shakespearean names quiz Approaching unfamiliar language (Lyly’s <i>WiM</i> – Prologue) Discussion (boy actors) Group work – setting the scene ( <i>R&amp;J</i> - Prologue) Performances	Do you think that asking “Are Shakespeare’s poems and plays written in English?” is a very “silly” question or a very “serious” one? Why?

10	“This island’s mine” – Intercultural encounters and theatrical travel	<i>The Tempest</i>	Intercultural encounters Definitions of culture (Cultural) settings of Shakespeare’s plays First encounters with characters (Caliban and Ariel)	Stories in a circle (intercultural encounters) Quiz / discussion (settings of Shakespeare’s plays) Comparing images (Caliban and Ariel) Walking into character (Caliban and Ariel) Circle work and pair work ( <i>Tempest</i> 1.2 – Caliban: “This island’s mine”) Performances Group reading / discussion ( <i>Tempest</i> 3.2 – Caliban: “the isle is full of noises”)	Raymond Williams famously wrote that “Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language”. What kinds of culture do you think are involved when you are engaging with Shakespeare?
11	“This island’s mine” – translating texts, contexts and stereotypes	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i> / <i>The Island Princess</i> (Fletcher)	Historical / contextual nature of stereotypes Translating culture / context (and stereotypes) when translating text	Mapping stereotypes ( <i>CoE</i> 3.2. Dromio: “she is spherical, like a globe”) Discussion (stereotypes) Group translation ( <i>TIP</i> 1.3. – Armusia: “We are arrived among the blessed islands”) Group reading (race and gender in <i>TIP</i> 1.1. – Pinheiro: “She is a princess and she must be fair”) Discussion: ( <i>The Tempest</i> and <i>The Island Princess</i> ( <i>TIP</i> 4.1. – Governor: “Beware these Portugals”))	Are stereotypes helpful or harmful when engaging with dramatic / literary works from other cultures? What about when engaging with <i>people</i> from other cultures?
12	Much Ado About Manners – Shakespeare and intercultural pragmatics	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> / <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Shakespeare as a foreign language (Keith Johnson’s <i>Shakespeare’s English</i> ) Multilingual / intercultural greetings Politeness and impoliteness	Stop, go (multilingual greetings) Montagues vs. Capulets (R&J 1.1. – “Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?”)	Is learning Shakespeare like learning another foreign language? Does doing (and not just reading) Shakespeare help with learning Shakespeare? Can



			Intercultural pragmatics	Asking someone to get up, politely (adapted from Johnson) Circle work and pair work ( <i>MAAN</i> 1.1. – Beatrice vs. Benedict)	this kind of “doing” help with learning other languages?
13	99 Problems – <i>Measure for Measure</i> , and what to do with offensive Shakespeare?	<i>Measure for Measure</i>	Shakespeare’s problem plays / problematic plays Adaptation, appropriation, and what to do with offensive Shakespeare #MeToo and Shakespeare Nora Williams’ <i>Measure (Still) for Measure</i> project	Discussion (What is culture (Geertz), and does it drive / explain / excuse actions?) Red and green statements (offensive Shakespeare) The chair game (persuasion) Pair work ( <i>MFM</i> 3.1 – Claudio and Isabella: “Now, sister, what’s the comfort?”) Group reading and discussion ( <i>MFM</i> 2.4. – Angelo vs. Isabella: “Who will believe thee, Isabel?”)	How should we respond to the aspects of a play like <i>Measure for Measure</i> that we find offensive or troubling? What advantages or disadvantages are there to adapting or rewriting the play? And does it make a difference whether we’re talking about something that’s considered “high” culture or considered “popular” culture?
14	“Our revels now are ended”?	<i>The Tempest / Richard II</i>	Review: culture and the intercultural Entity vs. process view of culture (Piller 2011) Intercultural performances / performing culture	Discussion ( <i>Tempest</i> 4.1. – Prospero: “Our revels now are ended”) Questions in a circle Discussion (intercultural performances / performing culture) Zip, Zap, Pow! Circle work and pair work ( <i>RII</i> 3.3. – King Richard: “We are amazed”) Performances	The ‘process view’ of culture treats it ‘as something people do or which they perform’, not something they ‘have or to which they belong’ (Piller 2011). Do you agree or disagree with the ‘process view’ of culture? Has anything we’ve done during the “Intercultural Shakespeare” workshops made you think about whether culture is a “process” or a “thing”?


**Appendix 4: Detailed breakdown of Workshop 3 (1000 Hamlets in 120 minutes)**


<b>Title</b>	1000 Hamlets in 120 minutes
<b>Date and time</b>	19:00 – 21:00, 28 November 2017
<b>Location</b>	Room 423, Faculty of English, LNFSU Main Campus
<b>Expected no. of students</b>	15 – 20
<b>Materials / equipment</b>	Name list, stickers, desktop computer and projector, workshop PPT slides, “To be, or not to be” handouts, 5 x USB drives with different versions of Hamlet’s soliloquy on them, clicker, laptops (provided by student volunteers), DSLR, tripod, external mic, 2 x voice recorders
<b>Rationale</b>	i) To explore different interpretations of the “To be, or not to be” soliloquy from <i>Hamlet</i> , by comparing different stage and screen versions, and then by speaking and listening to the words using a variety of “rehearsal room” techniques. ii) To explore the idea that there is no single “correct” version of a Shakespeare text, nor a single “correct” interpretation, and that it is our task as readers, spectators and performers to find our own interpretation by exploring the text in various ways.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Visual notes</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Method of Shakespeare teaching / learning (Stredder 2009)</b>	<b>Intercultural principles / practices (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013)</b>
Pre	<b><u>Prepare classroom and welcome Ss</u></b> - Move furniture (no desks, chairs in a horseshoe), position equipment, put PPT on desktop etc. - Ask Ss to sign name list when as they arrive, and write their name on a sticker.		18:40 – 19:00		



1	<p><b><u>Introduction</u></b></p> <p>- Brief introduction to workshop, through the Chinese expression referenced in its title: “一千个人眼里有一千个哈姆雷特” (“There are 1000 Hamlets in 1000 people’s eyes”). Stress that the emphasis tonight will be on Ss comparing different interpretations of <i>Hamlet</i>, and arriving at their own.</p>		19:00 – 19:05		<p>Principles: Active construction, making connections, reflection</p>
2	<p><b><u>First impressions</u></b></p> <p>- Show Ss pictures of four different Hamlets (David Garrick, Paapa Essiedu, Maxine Peake, Sarah Bernhardt). Ask Ss to discuss in pairs anything they recognise or that surprises them about these Hamlets.</p> <p>- Discuss Ss’ reactions to photos as a group. When appropriate, use Ss’ responses to bring out i) elements of plot (Garrick’s Hamlet is looking at his father’s ghost, Essiedu’s and Bernhardt’s are holding skulls, Peake is armed for a duel), and ii) differences in appearance of characters and identities of performers (e.g. gender, race, modern dress etc.). Stress that each is a different interpretation.</p> <p>- Ask Ss to think about their own ideas about who Hamlet is by writing down the first five words describing him that pop into their heads. Go round the circle with each S reading out one of their words, and the group discussing how similar / different they are.</p>		19:05 – 19:20	Active	<p>Principles: Making connections</p> <p>Practices: Comparing, noticing</p>

<p>3</p>	<p><b>Different Hamlets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tell Ss that they are going to watch and compare different interpretations of Hamlet’s “To be, or not to be” soliloquy. (If necessary, give brief context regarding where this comes in the play.)</li> <li>- Divide Ss into five groups, with one volunteer who has brought a laptop in each group.</li> <li>- Show the slide featuring the prompts, and introduce them to the Ss.</li> <li>- Give each S a copy of the text, and each group a USB drive containing two different interpretations of the soliloquy. Ask each group to find a space around the room (or in nearby rooms), and to watch each clip at least two to three times, thinking about the prompts.</li> <li>-When all groups have watched both of their clips at least twice, tell them they have 10 minutes to prepare their responses to the prompts.</li> <li>- Get Ss back into horseshoe layout for whole group discussion. Go through the clips one by one, sharing details about the productions and performers as necessary (using relevant slide).</li> <li>- Stress that these are different interpretations, and encourage Ss to argue for or against various aspects of them as they discuss their answers to the prompts. Note the differences between the filmed stage version (Burton) and the film / TV versions, and bring out different responses within / between the groups. Encourage Ss to reflect on how and why they and others reacted to the clips in the ways they did.</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Comparing “To be, or not to be” soliloquys</b></p> <p>1) Which version do you prefer? Was there anything you particularly liked or disliked about either?</p> <p>2) How do things like location, music and camerawork influence the presentation of the soliloquy? Are the words of the soliloquy the same in every version?</p> <p>3) What differences are there in delivery (speed, pauses, emphasis etc.)? Do these change the meaning and feeling of the soliloquy?</p> <p><b>Different Hamlets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Laurence Olivier, 1948</li> <li>▶ Richard Burton, 1964</li> <li>▶ Kenneth Branagh, 1996</li> <li>▶ Ethan Hawke, 2000</li> <li>▶ David Tennant, 2009</li> </ul>	<p>19:20 – 19:55</p>	<p>Active</p>	<p>Principles: Active construction, making connections, reflection, social interaction</p> <p>Practices: Noticing, comparing, reflecting, interacting</p>
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<p>4</p>	<p><b>Textual variations / no single “correct” version</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce the idea of textual variations by showing Ss the start of the soliloquy from Q1 (the First Quarto / “Bad Quarto”) of <i>Hamlet</i>: “To be, or not to be, I there’s the point, / To Die, to sleep, is that all? I all:”. See what differences they notice.</li> <li>- Explain that Q1 is just one of several versions, and show them Q1, Q2 and F1 side by side so they can easily spot the difference in length. Briefly explain the differences between Folios and Quartos by folding a piece of paper in half, and then in half again. Challenge the designation of Q1 and Q2 as the “Bad” and “Good” Quartos, respectively, and emphasise that there is no single, obviously “correct” text; we must decide what text(s) to use, and why.</li> <li>- Add that there is also no single “correct” way to say the lines, by briefly introducing Jonathan Slinger’s 2013 performance, which emphasised “is” (not “that”) in “To be, or not to be, that is the question”, and his justification for this.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Can we say there is a “correct” version of <i>Hamlet</i>?</b></p> 	<p>19:55 – 20:05</p>		<p>Principles: Active construction, making connections</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><b>Now it’s time for <i>your</i> Hamlets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tell Ss that it’s now time for <i>their</i> Hamlets. Ask them to push the chairs back and stand in a circle.</li> <li>- Warm up by passing a clap around the circle, then passing “To be, or not to be, that is the question” around the circle, one word at a time.</li> <li>- Hand out new scripts to anyone who needs a clean copy. Tell Ss they are going to try various ways of saying and exploring the words, to help with those interpretations. Note that, having heard</li> </ul>		<p>20:05 – 20:25</p>	<p>Active, practical</p>	<p>Principles: Active construction, making connections</p> <p>Practices: Noticing, comparing</p>

and read the soliloquy several times through in Step 2 (above), Ss may already be more familiar with the words than they realise. Emphasise that the following activities will not be about Ss trying to do a professional performance, but rather about exploring the text through speaking the words, and then making their own interpretations.

- i) Stamping out iambic pentameter: Briefly introduce iambic pentameter by having Ss stamp out “di-DUM di-DUM di-DUM di-DUM di-DUM”. Then try this with “But soft! what light through yonder window breaks” from the last workshop on *Romeo and Juliet*, and an everyday sentence such as “I need a cup of coffee right away”. Emphasise that the stress should not be exaggerated (e.g. by demonstrating how weird Romeo’s line would sound if this is done), and that it is there to help the drama, and sometimes the sense, of the words. Illustrate this by stamping out the first few lines of “To be, or not to be”, which have 11 syllables, not 10, and end on an unstressed syllable – which is often seen as making Hamlet’s uncertainty audible.

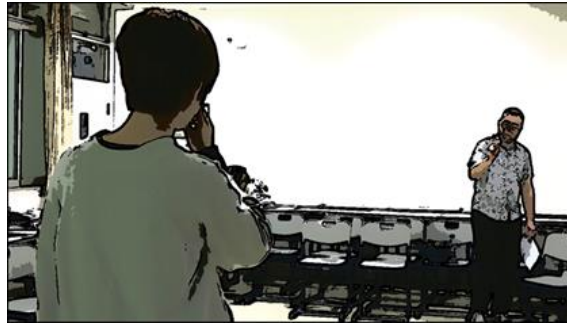
- ii) Whispered reading: Ask Ss to read the soliloquy through, listening to the words as they whisper it to themselves (not a stage whisper as was used in the last workshop).

- iii) Punctuation shift / walking the punctuation: Ask for five volunteers to “walk the punctuation”, to illustrate the journey that Hamlet’s thoughts take through the soliloquy. Note that while Ss





should not think of this as Shakespeare's own or "original" punctuation, this can be a very useful activity with the right bit of text. Ss are asked to walk as they read the soliloquy, turning 90 degrees when they reach a comma, and 180 degrees if they reach stronger punctuation (i.e. full stop, question mark, exclamation mark etc.). Demonstrate with the first couple of lines before starting the volunteers off, accompanying them if necessary.

- Afterwards ask what the volunteers and others Ss noticed about how the placing and type of punctuation change during the soliloquy, and how we might use this to interpret the trajectory of Hamlet's thoughts. (Compare with Romeo's "But soft!" speech, and especially the lengthy, free-flowing lines: "Her eye in heaven would through the airy region stream so bright / That birds would sing and think it were not night").
- iv) Varying the distance: Ask for a volunteer (or possibly nominate one of the more confident Ss). Stand at varying distances from the volunteer (more than 10 paces, 5 paces, right next to them) while they read out selected parts of the soliloquy. Ask them which bits felt right or wrong at the different distances, and ask them and the other Ss to comment on what this might tell us about the kind of thoughts, questions and actions being expressed at various points in the soliloquy.





<p>6</p>	<p><b><u>Exploring the soliloquy in pairs</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask Ss to find a partner to work with. Explain that they are going to explore the soliloquies together, using their choice of the techniques introduced in 5 (above). Stress that this is about trying different things out so that they can find their own interpretations of the soliloquy, not any predetermined answers. Add that this is an ongoing process, not something they need to rush to “finish”.</li> <li>- Move around the room while Ss work in pairs, noting any interesting discussions or uses of the techniques, and helping any pairs who seem to be struggling.</li> </ul>		<p>20:25 – 20:40</p>	<p>Active, practical</p>	<p>Principles: Active construction, making connections, social interaction</p> <p>Practices: Noticing, comparing, interacting</p>
<p>7</p>	<p><b><u>Ss perform their interpretations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bring Ss back into a wide semicircle, forming an audience. Ask for two or three volunteers to read out the soliloquy, or part of it, emphasizing that everyone’s interpretation will be slightly different. Remind Ss to listen carefully to the volunteers’ interpretations, as afterwards they will be asked to share what they noticed.</li> <li>- Encourage Ss to clap after each performance, and then ask them to comment on things they liked about the performance, anything they noticed that differed from theirs, and how they would interpret those interpretations. Ask the volunteers how these comments compared with what they were trying to do.</li> </ul>		<p>20:40 – 20:55</p>	<p>Active, practical, dramatic</p>	<p>Principles: Active construction, making connections, social interaction</p> <p>Practices: Noticing, comparing, reflecting, interacting</p>

8	<p><b><u>Final reflections, conclusion</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Briefly sum up what has been covered in the workshop, reiterating that there is no single “correct” version of a Shakespeare text, and no single “correct” interpretation of it. Add that it is up to us as readers, spectators and performers of Shakespeare to explore the text, and come up with interpretations based on what we find there.</li> <li>- Emphasise that the techniques introduced in this class are just some of the ways in which a Shakespeare text can be explored and interpreted, and that they have deliberately been chosen because they focus on exploring a text by speaking the words, rather than concentrating on vocabulary or imagery. Add that this is something that will be more of a focus in the next workshop, on translating and interpreting Shakespeare’s sonnets.</li> </ul>		20:55 – 21:00		Principles: Active construction, making connections, reflection
Post	<p><b><u>Clearing up etc.</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Return furniture to original positions and tidy up classroom.</li> <li>- Chase up any outstanding consent forms.</li> <li>- Add any new students to WeChat group.</li> <li>- Answer any additional questions from Ss.</li> </ul>		21:00 – 21:10		

## **Appendix 5: Example of interview guide**

1: Can you tell me, what's a typical day like for you as a student at LNFSU?

(Possible follow-up areas: major, stage of study etc.)

2: Why did you decide to come to the workshops?

3: Can you remember the first time you read or watched any Shakespeare?

(What did you think of it? etc.)

4: What do you think you can get out of doing Shakespeare?

(Benefits to life, study etc.)

(Follow-up area: were there any of the workshop activities that you found particularly interesting / useful / surprising / confusing / boring?)

5: Are there any challenges in doing Shakespeare?

(Follow-up area: Shakespeare's 'difficulty')

(How have you tried to overcome any of these challenges?)

6: Is there anything else you would like to add, or ask me?



**Appendix 6: 'All the world's a stage' handout**

*As You Like It (2.7)*

**JAQUES:** All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel,  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,  
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,

Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,  
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

**Appendix 7: ‘But soft! what light through yonder window breaks?’ handout**

**Romeo and Juliet, Act 2, Scene 2 (extract)**

**ROMEO:** But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

Who is already sick and pale with grief

That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.

Be not her maid, since she is envious;

Her vestal livery is but sick and green,

And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.

It is my lady, O, it is my love!

O that she knew she were!

She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?

Her eye discourses, I will answer it.

I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks.

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes

To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,

As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright

That birds would sing and think it were not night.

See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O that I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek!

**Appendix 8: 'But I do think it is their husbands' faults / If wives do fall' handout**

**EMILIA (4.3):**

But I do think it is their husbands' faults  
If wives do fall: say that they slack their duties,  
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,  
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,  
Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us,  
Or scant our former having in despite;  
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,  
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know  
Their wives have sense like them: they see and smell  
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,  
As husbands have. What is it that they do  
When they change us for others? Is it sport?  
I think it is: and doth affection breed it?  
I think it doth: is't frailty that thus errs?  
It is so too: and have not we affections,  
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?  
Then let them use us well: else let them know,  
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

## **Appendix 9: Information sheet and informed consent forms**

### **Information Sheet**

#### **University of Warwick (UK) PhD research project: Exploring Shakespeare**

20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ,

I (Duncan Lees) am currently researching Chinese university staff and students' experiences of teaching and learning Shakespeare as part of my PhD in Education / Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick. This letter and form are to ask if you are able to take part in the study.

#### **What would this mean for you?**

Participation in the project will involve taking part in a series of eight Shakespeare workshops that will each last 120 minutes. During these workshops you will step into scenes from some of Shakespeare's most famous plays and be introduced to a variety of innovative approaches that will help you make sense of Shakespeare, not only on the page and on the stage, but also in the wider world beyond the classroom and the theatre. No experience of acting or Shakespeare is necessary, just a sense of curiosity – and comfortable shoes and clothes, because we will be moving around. There is no required reading and no assignments or assessments will be set, but if you could provide some brief feedback after each session (approximately 200 words, in Chinese and / or English) this would be extremely useful. The workshops are intended as a series and it would greatly benefit the research if you could come to all eight, but participation is completely voluntary and so it will be possible to attend a smaller number of sessions if you cannot come to all of them. There will also be the option of participating in a follow-up interview (approximately 30 minutes) and focus group (approximately 90 minutes) if you wish to do so, but you are welcome to attend the workshops without participating in these additional activities.

#### **Anonymity**

The data that you provide (audio and video of the workshops, questionnaire responses, audio recordings of the optional focus group and interview) will be stored using pseudonyms. Any information that identifies you will be stored separately.

#### **Storing and using your data**

The raw data that is collected will be stored on a password protected computer and will not be given to anyone else. The data may be used for future analysis and shared for research or training purposes, but participants will not be identified individually. If you do not want your data to be included in any information shared as a result of this research, please do not sign this consent form.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time during data collection and up to two weeks after the data is collected.

### **Information about confidentiality**

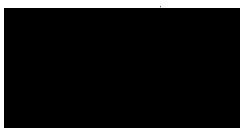
The data that I collect (audio recordings, photographs, questionnaire responses) may be used in different ways. Please indicate on the consent form with a  if you are happy for this anonymised data to be used in the ways listed.

I hope that you will agree to take part. If you have any questions about the project that you would like to ask before giving consent or after the data collection, please feel free to contact me by email (D.Lees.1@warwick.ac.uk).

If you are happy to participate, please complete the attached form and return it to me. I will send a scanned version of the form to you by email for your records.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours sincerely,



Duncan Lees

## **Consent Form**

**University of Warwick (UK) PhD research project: Exploring Shakespeare**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick ( ✓ ) each box if you are happy to take part in this research.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information given to me about the above named research project and I understand that this will involve me taking part as described above.

I understand that the purpose of the research is to explore Chinese university staff and students' experiences of teaching and learning Shakespeare.

I understand that data will be stored securely on a password protected computer and that only Duncan Lees will have access to any identifiable data. I understand that my identity will be protected by use of a pseudonym.

I understand that the data may be used ....

in publications that are mainly read by university academics

in presentations that are mainly attended by university academics

during the researcher's classes with undergraduate / postgraduate students at the University of Warwick and elsewhere

I understand that data could be used for future analysis or other purposes (e.g. other research and teaching purposes).

I understand that I can withdraw my data at any point during data collection and up to two weeks after data is collected.

## 说明书

英国华威大学博士研究项目：探索莎士比亚

2017 年 11 月 20 日

\_\_\_\_\_ 台鉴,

本人 Duncan Lees 正在从事有关中国大学教员及学生教学莎士比亚的体验的研究，此项目是我在华威大学教育/应用语言学博士研究工作的一部分。本说明书及同意书是为了征求你参与本研究的同意。

### **参与本研究我需要做什么？**

本项目的参与者将会参与到八场莎士比亚工作坊中去，每场 120 分钟。通过这些工作坊，你将走进莎剧中一些最著名的场景，并将学到许多创新方法，不但能帮助你读懂莎翁的文字，学会欣赏莎剧的演出，还会让你感受到课堂和剧院之外更广阔的世界。不需要表演经验，只需带着你的好奇心——以及穿上让你感觉舒适的鞋子和衣服，因为我们会常常走动。没有课前必读内容，也不会有功课或测验，要是你能在每场结束后提供一些反馈（大概 200 字左右，中文英文皆可），那将会十分有用。这次系列工作坊的设计具有连续性，因此如果八场你都全部参与，那是极好不过的。不过工作坊还是基于完全自愿的原则，即使你无法八场都参加，那敬请参加所有你能来的场次。工作坊过后还有访问环节（大概 30 分钟）和小组座谈（大概 90 分钟），属于非必选活动，可根据意愿参与，即使你两个都不选，也非常欢迎你参加到工作坊来。

### **匿名**

你所提供的数据（工作坊的音频和视频，问卷答案，非必选的小组座谈和访问的录音）会用化名储存起来。任何可以指明你的身份的信息将会被分开储存。

### **数据的保存和使用**

原始数据将会被收集并储存在密码保护的电脑上并禁止他人读取。此数据可能在将来被用于分析，或分享到其他研究或培训中，但数据提供者不会被单独辨识。如果你不想你的数据被应用于任何与本研究有关的信息共享中，请不要签署本同意书。



在数据搜集的过程中，以及在数据采集完成的两周内，你都可以在期间的任何时间撤回数据。

### 保密性相关信息

我所采集的数据（工作坊的音频和视频，问卷答案）将会应用于不同用途。请在以下的同意书列出的不同使用途径中选择你愿意你的数据被匿名使用的途径，并在该选项后的空格中打钩☑。

我希望你会同意参与本研究。如在同意前或数据收集完后，你有任何关于此项目的问题，敬请联系我，我的电邮是 D.Lees.1@warwick.ac.uk。

如果你愿意参与，请填好以下同意书并归还于我。我会扫描一份并电邮给你以作存档。

感谢你阅读本说明书。

顺颂

时绥

Duncan Lees

## 同意书

英国华威大学博士研究项目：探索莎士比亚

姓名: \_\_\_\_\_

电邮: \_\_\_\_\_

如你愿意参与本研究，请在以下项目后的空格里打钩（✓）。

我确认我已阅读完并理解所有提供给我的关于上述名称的研究项目的信息，我也明白如上述所言，我会参与到本次研究中。

我明白本研究的目的是探究中国大学教员与学生教学莎士比亚的体验。

我明白此数据会被安全地保存在有密码保护的电脑上，而且只有 Duncan Lees 有读取任何可辨识的数据的权限。我明白我的身份会被匿名保护。

我明白此数据可能会被用于……

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