Dramatic Skills

And their use for breaking taboos in Ghana

A World School project

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**Introduction**

Ghana is a West-African development country. Not only is it in economic development, the political and social-cultural dimensions are changing as well. These changes bring forward social issues typical to less developed countries. In this research paper we will discuss the issue of taboos. Due to Ghana’s formal and closed culture, many social structures and issues are heavily oppressed.

In this paper we have researched where these taboos find their origin, how they have developed in Ghanaian culture and how they can be lessened via dramatic skills. Dramatic skills can provide an easy and light hearted beginning in bettering the communicational environment of Ghanaian teens. By boosting confidence and providing the skills necessary  to speak up about social issues, we hope to lower the communicational barrier fuelling these taboos.

Our hypotheses reads as follows:

***Hypotheses***

*Our paper focusses on the way dramatic skills can contribute to the communicative skills of Ghanaian teenagers. The main question is:  Where do these taboos come from and how do we resolve them? We expect that producing a lesson series will ensure the best results. The Ghanaian background and population are of course very complex, and for this we think creating a diverse method will result in effects for a bigger part of the teenage population.*

*Confidence is in our perception the most important factor in improving communicative skills. For that reason we want to put the focus of the lessons on creating and increasing the confidence of the participants. We think that the best way to do this is by creating awareness in the students; awareness of their body, body language, voice and use of language.*

*We expect that dramatic skills can be very effective for this goal. By producing assignments with the focus on these assets of confidence, we hope to create awareness of not only oneself but of people in general. Reading and portraying emotions in various ways will be a noticeable part of the lesson series.*

*By teaching and practicing these dramatic skills, we believe we can achieve an improvement In the communicative skills of Ghanaian teens. We think that in the long run taboos can actually be broken, but that dramatic skills alone won’t be enough to do such a substantial thing. A solid basis can however be achieved, and we think that dramatic skills can heavily contribute to that.*

Our main question is *‘In what way could dramatic skills contribute to the communicative skills which Ghanaian teenagers can use to start breaking taboos?’*

To answer this question we have drafted twelve sub questions, divided into four chapters: Ghana, taboos, communication, and dramatic skills. As a conclusion we have written a workshops series consisting of four different workshops all focussing on communicative skills.

**Chapter 1 - Ghana**

1.1

What historical factors influence Ghanaian culture today?

**Ghana and its people as developed before European expansion**

We start looking at the history of Ghana far beyond Mesolithic times. Over a thousand years ago, many different people developed in Ghana, for instance the Akan, Ewe and Ga speaking tribes. These developed communicative systems, adopted social and political institutions, went overseas and land to establish commercial contacts with people surrounding them, they started exploiting resources and at the time formed the next states.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ghanaian states along the coast | Fetu, Awutu and Accra |
| Ghanaian states in the interior | Adansi, Latebi, Equea and Kamana |
| Ghanaian states south of the Volta | Bono and Banda |
| Ghanaian states to the North | Dagomba and Mamprussi |

In these pre-colonial times farming and fishing were the main occupations of these African tribes. Polygamy, plural marriage, was encouraged. Especially for wealthy men. The bearing of children was the woman’s main purpose, more male children meant more social and economic security. The marrying off of children also gave fathers the opportunity to accumulate more wealth, because of the dowries they would acquire.

(Berry, 1994)

**Imperialism and slave trade in Ghana**

In the year 1471 Portuguese people set foot on Ghanaian land. Imperialistic times dawn upon the African land. Over the next centuries Ghanaian posts have been occupied by various western countries such as Portugal, The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and England. The latter colonised Ghana until it gained its independence on March 6,1957. (Gocking, 2005)

Until abolished in the early eighteen hundreds, slave trading was a pruning issue in Ghana. Slave raids and exploitive trade were common in this period of time.

Certainly, the Americans and Europeans were initiators of large scale human trafficking. However they weren’t alone in this trade. We need to acknowledge that during this period Ghana’s people were also involved with human trade with trans-Saharans. (Tengan, 2013)

In the eighteenth century the volume of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade increased throughout the years. There was economic rivalry between colonial powers in this period as well.

The influence of the European presence in Ghana is also coherent with the Ghanaian economy and politics. New classes appeared to have developed. There was a new class of Ghanaian traders, a new working class of artisans, canoe men, bricklayers, labourers and finally a class that the English referred to as “Company Messengers” that consisted of civil servants and diplomats. The imperialists gave cause for Ghanaian people to develop their working-sectors into a more elaborate system. (Boahen, 1966)

**Religious developments**

Throughout history trade and foreign occupation has been a means to transmit cultural aspects from one people to another. Religion is an important factor of these transmittable traits.

So it is not a coincidence that imperialists brought Christianity to Ghana, and sub-Saharan traders the Islam. Christianity developed roots in Ghana.

In the eighteenth century the Islam was renounced as a cult in three states. Leaders would try to oppress these pagan activities whilst Islamic communities were growing at the time. Its influence also started to become present in other states during this Golden age of economy in Ghana. (Boahen, 1966)

**The Rise and Expansion of the Asante Empire**

The expansion of the Asante Empire started around imperialistic times. In the eighteenth century the Asante people conquered all former states except for one, the Fante state. The ongoing struggle between these two was a political game. The Asante conquered the coastal states which granted them regular access to ammunition. By forcing other states to become tributary they also had a good economic position.

Trade blossomed under the Asante reign but it is also said to have been an oppressive system. Civil wars did break out. (Boahen, 1966)

**The Colonial government and the Anglo-Asante Wars**

In the nineteenth century various developments took place. It holds the final expansion of the Asante Empire and it’s fall.

Some western influences became only more prominent, such as western education but also intensified missionary activities and the important change that turned slave trade into legitimate trade.

Part of modern day Ghana and the Asante Empire belong to the so called African “Gold Coast”. This rich land was one of the areas that colonist were very interested in. The Dutch preceded the English and had a peaceful treaty with the Asante people concerning this area.

When the English came as successor they neglected and breached the treaty, which is why the first war between the British and the Asante broke out. The five wars took place in the nineteenth century. In this period of time the western world enjoyed industrialisation. They brought this to their colonies as well in ways of transportation e.g. roads and railways. To fulfil the needs of the industry, Europeans used their colonies to get resources from.

The Asante rebelled against the English who wanted to make the empire a protectorate, which it finally became in 1897. The last and fifth war was a cultural matter. The Asante had a sacred royal throne, the so-called Golden Stool. The Golden Stool symbolises the Asante people, the soul of the nation and it’s good fortune. During a meeting with Asante-Chiefs the British representative at the time, which was around 1900, insisted it belonged to him and he made a search for it. This enraged the chiefs and the Queen-Mother, resulting in a short-lived war that ended in the annexation of Asante.

(BBC, sd)

After the formation of the protectorate the British aimed to reduce the power the Asante. The Asante Empire took over large parts of Ghana, but there were still other ethnic groups such as the Akan states. Those states had been forced by the growth of the Asante to lose their independence. The British, trying to push the Empire back, allied with these states such as Denkyira and Akwamu. Because of this assistance the Akan states could quickly regain their autonomy when the Asante Empire was defeated. Today, the Akan language is the most popular language in Ghana, whilst English is also still frequently used in media. (Salm & Falola, 2002)

The Ewe people inhabit the south-eastern part of Ghana. They were originally part of German Togoland, but since World War I, that was divided between France and Britain. The Ewe got the option in a 1956 plebiscite to either join French Togoland or newly independent Ghana. They chose to belong to Ghana, and since then made up the Volta region.

The Ga-Adangbe people are suspected to have come from Nigeria. The Ga people settled on the Accra plains, whilst the Ada settled west of the Volta. The Ga are agriculturally centred with fishing and farming as their main purpose. They inhabit great parts of the coastal cities.

The Ga people were, like the Fante, open to political co-operation, hence they already had extensive contact with Europeans before the colonial era.

The Ga culture is very open to influences from other cultures and traits and hence why immigrants often become inhabitants of Ga-neighbourhoods in cities. (Salm & Falola, 2002)

After the war that ended in 1919 Ghana expanded, it consisted of English Togoland, the Northern Territories, The Gold Coast Colony and the Colony of Ashanti. Until the end of the Second World War it seemed as though the British didn’t feel the urge to reform their way of ruling in Africa. At the same time the War had significantly changed the African opinion. The Ghanaians started forming a sense of nationalism. A development that in Europe lead to the two world wars.

This spirit was carried out and sought expression in the form of riots and public resistance to the imperial rulers.

The political instability it brought can be seen in the number of times that the constitution was altered or rewritten entirely. The 1925 lasted around twenty-five years, whilst the 1946 constitution didn’t stand for five years. The new constitution which was written in 1950 seems to have made way for independence. Because of the new constitution the vast majority of the council members were elected. The elections in 1951 made the CPP, Convention People’s Party the largest.

On March 6 the independence of Ghana was recognized and Ghana became member of the British Commonwealth. (Smith, 1957)

In 1960, yet another constitution was implemented. This changed the parliamentary system in a way that gave the CPP President Nkrumah a very powerful position, for instance the president had the ability to scrutinize newspapers. A referendum in 1964 lead to Ghana becoming a one-party state. These characteristics warn for a dictatorial regime. (Ghana, A Living History, 2017)

1.2

What geographical factors influence Ghanaian culture today?

The natural aspects of a country tell us a lot about the structure of a country and its society. It can portray factors of for example poverty or wealth, as well as development and parts of the culture of a country. Other than that, it holds cause for problems in this culture. This is why it is important to study this thoroughly. For this we have researched a couple of important factors. For this we have used the Grote Bosatlas (referred to as GB from now on) as the main source. (Wolters-Noordhoff, 2007)

**Natural Dimension**

We shall briefly go over some rough data to set apart some geographical aspects of Ghana.

*Relief:*Ghana has quite a low altitude on average. There are a few very small higher parts, but overall it is a low coastal area. The altitude differs from 0 to 500 meters above sea level.  (GB 162)

*Geology:* The geology of Ghana consists of ancient Precambrian shields, with on several places a layer of young sediments. (GB 162A)

*Natural vegetation:* Ghana has several types of natural vegetation. It mainly consists of tropical rainforest, but also partly of savannah and Mangrove. (GB 163B)

*Weather:* The weather in Ghana is very dependent on the time of the year. Variation in precipitation stands out the most. This varies greatly between January and June, we shall now assess both.

January*:* In January the average temperature is about 25°C, and the precipitation is the north is less than 25mm, 25-50 in the middle and 50-100mm in the south. (GB 163C)

June: In June the temperature is around 25-30°C, and the precipitation is 100-200 in the north and 200-300 in the middle and south.(GB 163D)

*Climate:* To discuss climate we chose to go by the division invented by Köppen.

Ghana belongs to the climate zone ‘Savannah’. Which means it is quite warm and humid, but the heat and precipitation are not as extreme as in a tropical climate.

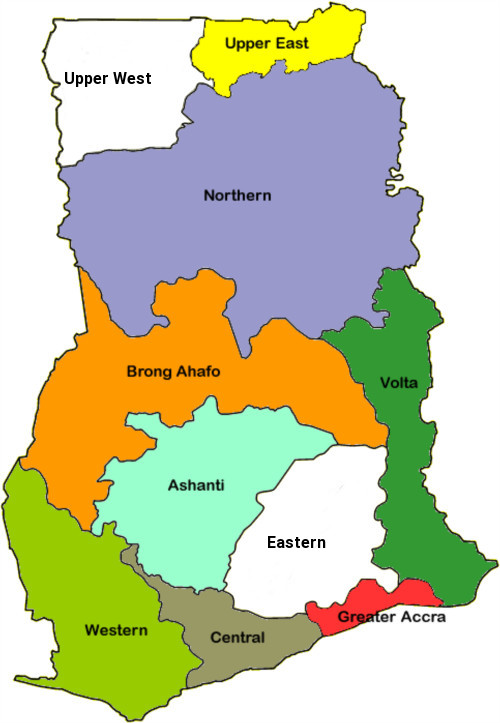
Savannah climates occur in places close to the equator, which have seasonal differences in high and low pressure areas. This often causes the differences in the amount of precipitation.

The period where a low pressure area dominates is referred to as the rainy season, as is also noticeable when looking at the weather *(previous factor)*.

The vegetation is mostly high grass, trees and bushes. Savannah is less dense than a forest, but not as open as a steppe. (GB 196)

The Ghana we now know consists of ten regions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Northern Ghana | Northern, Upper East and Upper west |
| Central Ghana | Brong Ahafo and Ashanti |
| South East Ghana | Western and Central |
| South West Ghana | Greater Accra, Eastern and Volta |



**Social geographic factors**

The structure of a society and culture, is usually predominantly based on the social geography. This includes economics, demography, politics and the culture itself. Whilst developing a project for a country, these factors have to be taken in consideration. What works in a western country might not do as well in an African country. That is why it is necessary to research this thoroughly.

**Demographical dimension:**

*Population:* Ghana counted 22.409.572 inhabitants in the year 2006.

*Population growth:* The population of Ghana will double in 34 years.

*Birth rate:* Per 1000 inhabitants, there are 31 live births a year.

*Death rate*: per 1000 inhabitants, there are 10 deaths a year.

*Population density:* The average population density is 94 inhabitants per km2.

*Life expectancy*: The average age of death in Ghana is 59.

(Wolters-Noordhoff, 2007)

1.3

What political factors influence Ghanaian culture today?

Political factors are of great importance for the development of a country, both on economic and social-cultural terrain. For this sub question we will focus on the contribution of political factors on the social-cultural development of Ghana.

Ghana is officially called ‘The Republic of Ghana’, which of course is an obvious hint to the political system of Ghana. What makes Ghana so remarkable, is that this system is indeed in official use; contrarily to other African states.

Ghana was officially declared a republic in 1960, after gaining their independence in 1957. However, this was the beginning of another rowdy time for Ghana.

The Republic of Ghana has evolved from a long line of one party republics and coups to an constitutional democracy in 1992. (Information services department Ghana, 2016)

The question is however, to what extent is this an honest and open democracy?

**The constitution**

At the start of the first term of president Rawlings in 1992, a constitution was written. A constitution is a very important document to officialise the liberty and rights of a people. Its cause of existence is to prevent the placement of the state above its people. For this, the exact wording of said document is vital. (Atupare, 2011)

The development of a constitution is of course an improvement; and the Ghanaian constitution is generally beneficial for the Ghanaian population. The constitution claims for example in article 3.1, that parliament has no power to restore the country to a one party republic.

However, in this same article, the human rights set up by the UN are violated. It is stated in article 3.3, that not conforming to article 1-3, is punishable by death, which is repeated throughout the constitution.

Another peculiar article is 14; which is generally an important one. It states that no person shall be deprived of their liberties. However, the exceptions named are slightly worrying. People who have been detained and ordered to court, is deprived of their liberties, as well as someone who is suspected of planning to commit crimes under the Ghanaian law. (RAWLINGS, 1992)

The constitution of Ghana is mostly a benefit to the wellbeing of its citizens, a part of a few articles, which could be seen as a violation of human rights.

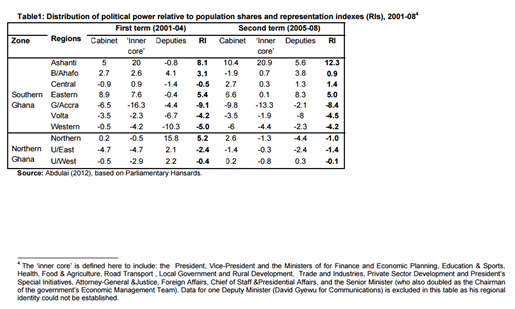
**Distribution of power**

Another important political factor is the distribution of power. A distinctive characteristic of democracy is that the power is evenly distributed over the country and its people.

Ghana is officially a multi-party democracy, but in reality it is more a two-party system. The two dominant parties are the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP).

The dominance of these two parties does lessen the power of the minorities, but are officially elected, and for that legally in charge. The power within these parties however, is not evenly distributed over the country.

The regional political inequality is particularly visible. As in many countries, the two parties have certain regions of big support. The NPP holds its reign in the eastern regions and Ashanti, whilst the NDC prevails in the north.

Even though this is most likely a natural result of diverse political necessities, it does heavily influence the location of the power per president; as we can see in the following table.

This is during the reign of president Kufuor who was part of the NPP.  We can deduce from this, that the regions who vote for the other party, have almost no say in anything that happens in a country. (Abdulai & Hulme, 2014)

**Elections**

The fact that there are elections in Ghana, is a big improvement from the one-party system they used to have. The presidential elections are held every four years, and a president can be elected for two consecutive terms. Every party can eventually have one presidential candidate, but in reality only the two biggest parties, the NDC and the NPP, have a legitimate chance. Other than organising elections, it is incredibly important that the elections are done fairly.

The Ghanaian elections are generally well performed and fairly done. The results are usually 50-55% vs 45-50%, which is in accordance with the division of voters across the country.

The next elections are set for the 7th of December 2016. (Electoral commission of Ghana, 2008)

**Human rights**

The universal declaration of Human Rights is a list of rights every human being should have. By determining how many of the treaties a country has signed, you can deduce how well developed a country socially and politically is.

According to the Ghanaian constitution, the only human right that is violated is the death penalty. Though, once looking at the signed treaties, and the ratification of said treaties, you will find that there are many more.

The treaties that Ghana decided not to sign, are the ones that contradict the constitution, or are simply not applicable.  This is for example the treaty about the abolition of death penalty, the liberty of abortion, and the deprivation of liberties of suspected and/or convicted criminals. (an-Na'im, 2003)

The ones that they did sign, but aren’t ratified, are the subjects that are said to be illegal in the constitution, but do in fact, happen. These treaties include: *Optional protocol of the Convention against torture; conventions for protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;* and *the convention  on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography.*

We do need to take in account, that compared to other African countries, many human rights are ratified in Ghana. This includes the elimination of discrimination against women and race, the Rights of the Child, and the convention against torture. (United Nations, Department Human Rights, 2016)

Of course this does not mean, that in reality no human rights are violated. It does mean though, that the political measures that should be taken to prevent it, have been taken.

1.4

What economic factors influence Ghanaian culture today?

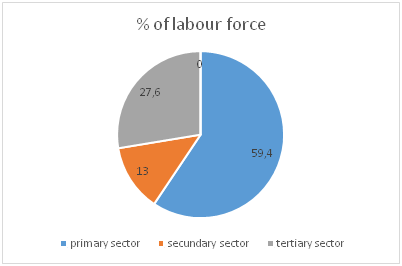
The economy of a country has a great impact on the culture of a country. It tells us something about the development of a society, both in economic and social-cultural aspects.

**GDP**

GDP is an often used method of measurement for the development of a country. It can be used to compare the incomes of countries and their inhabitants.

Ghana has a GDP of €2,238.- per capita, which is low compared to the Netherlands’ €29,371.-, however compared to its neighbouring countries, (f.e. Burkina Faso: €1,174.-) this is quite a reasonable amount. (Wolters-Noordhoff Atlasproducties, 2007)

We must not forget however, that the GDP on its own is not a reliable method of measuring wealth and economic development, due to some critical flaws in its measurement. The informal sector, for example is not taken into account, and neither is the economic inequality within a country.



**Working sectors**

The division of working sectors say a lot about the development of an economy and culture. Countries with a relatively big primary sector are usually less developed than countries with a relatively big secondary or tertiary sector. The way the culture of said country is constructed is influenced by the division of said sectors, agricultural societies require a different life vision than urban societies.

 As we can see in the diagram, the biggest part of the Ghanaian population works in the primary sector (agriculture, fishing & mining). This makes Ghana an agricultural society. This means that the economy of Ghana is still developing, but we can deduce from the reasonably big tertiary sector, that said process of development is in full swing.

**Trade**

Trade is not only an important asset to the economy of a country, but also to its culture. Next to profit, it imports foreign customs. Communication is a very important factor of the international trade, and this, together with the power of the (western) countries that import products, influences the native culture of said export-country.

(Wolters-Noordhoff, 2007)

**Chapter 2 - Taboos**

2.1

Which taboos are most pressing for Ghanaian teens?

**Menstruation**

In the Akan linguistic culture a topic that is often avoided directly is menstruation. Menstruation is a physical cycle that starts to occur in the female body around the teenage years. A woman's first menstruation period marks that she is from that moment onward capable of becoming pregnant.

When an egg is not fertilized the body sheds the egg, this process is called menstruation. The menstruation can cause several physical reactions like cramps, diarrhea, backache, headache and is characterised by the loss of blood and slime through the vagina.

Ways to get around talking directly about certain topics are called Taboo Avoidance Techniques (TAT). In the Akan culture the TAT that is often applied in the linguistic aspect of the Akan culture is the use of Euphemisms.

Menstruation is seen both positive and negative, and as time progresses it gets increasingly more positive, in relation to the position of women in the African society. The woman's’ fertility is a positive way of seeing the process of menstruation. However the messy, bloody circumstances give it a negative side that often occurs in societies where males still dominate, the Akan-speaking community being one of these.

It seems as though religion plays a part in the developments in the use of these euphemisms. (Agyekum, 2002)

**Abortion and contraceptives**

Research shows that, in Ghana, there is a stigma surrounding the issues of abortion and contraceptives.

Contraceptives are means to prevent pregnancies and some contraceptives also protect from sexually transmittable diseases and infections. Abortion is the termination of a pregnancy, which can happen in various ways.

Ghana has an abortion law that is quite tolerant in comparison to other African countries. To illustrate, abortion is legal when performed by a qualified doctor, when the unborn child forms a threat to the life of the mother or her mental and/or physical health, if the child is at high risk of being born with a life threatening disease or disorder, or serious physical abnormalities and at last abortion is also legal when the mother has been raped or if the pregnancy is the result of incest.  (Guttmacher institute, 2010)

The research also shows us that very little people in Ghana are aware of the legality and possibilities surrounding abortion. Besides that, there is a stigma that keeps people away from accepting abortion.

In contrary to other countries Ghana’s abortion law is lenient. However, in comparison to other African countries there are less abortions. It is important to take into account that women in Ghana do not want to be registered when it comes to abortion because of the consequences that it might have for them in their social environment. This is also one of the reasons why women in Ghana often go through unsafe, illegal procedures to terminate their pregnancy.

In the strong religious cultures that influence the Ghanaian ethics, abortion is not accepted. Research also showed that Muslim women are less likely to undergo an abortion than Christian women.

In an interview with young women from Accra it seems as though most women oppose abortion strongly, but agree that abortion is considerable and/or should be necessary under certain circumstances such as a lack of money for the mother to raise the child, or when parents are in an unstable relationship.

There also seems to be a need for contraceptives, also the need for education about these means to avoid unwanted pregnancies and finally abortion. There is an approximate of 35% of women in Accra that are married that need contraceptives for they don’t want pregnancies or at least not in the near future and aren’t met in this need. This percentage is in Ghana higher than in other countries in Africa, like the number of abortions. (Guttmacher institute, 2010)

**Homosexuality**

Article 104 of the Ghanaian criminal code states that it is punishable by imprisonment of 5 to 25 years to have unnatural carnal knowledge.

The definition given by the Ghanaian document is, quote; ‘Unnatural carnal knowledge is sexual intercourse with a human in an unnatural manner, or with an animal.’

Unnatural manner in this context means not between man or woman, so same sex intercourse. (Criminal code, act 29, 1960)

Homosexual activity proofs to be illegal in Ghana, despite upcoming movements to support LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) rights. There is not a law against expressing sexual preferences, for the law only addresses sexual intercourse. Notwithstanding the rights of the LGBT’s, homosexuality is commonly discriminated against. Also people are being attacked and arrested. Often there is little legal defense for these people. (Matthews, 2016)

The criticism and hatred towards this group originates mostly from religious sides. Methodists and Muslims strongly oppose homosexuality, because it doesn’t fit the holy scripts that many religions use to guide their behaviour during their lives.

Therefore being pro-homosexuality or associated with homosexuality is not something that is wanted by many in the Ghanaian society. The hostile attitude towards the LGBT community is being enforced by church, state and the media.

The stigmatized position of homosexuality prevents LGBT’s from being able to speak openly about themselves. The described attitude in society is a TAT that comes down to a don’t ask, don’t tell strategy, homosexuality is a subject that is altogether avoided in conversation and LGBT people don’t bring their sexuality up. (Khalel, 2013)

Many people are unaware of the rights they have, police officers aren’t aware of these rights either. There are a few initiatives on the rise that focus on these rights and legal training to raise awareness and help victims of attacks and arrests. (Matthews, 2016)

**The position of females in the Ghanaian society**

In pre-colonial times the Ghanaian society was dominated by men. The women had to borne children. Besides that, the traditional occupation for women was the caring for the offspring, the husband and the elderly in the family. (Klingshirn, 1973)

Marriages used to be arranged by families or powerful elderly members of a community to increase the wealth and social relationships between two groups. The marriage is sometimes arranged when the girl is still a baby or child. Women had to bear children. Ultimately, marriages weren’t fulfilled to ensure individual happiness.

To illustrate the superiority of men, in some Ghanaian communities, the wife was obliged to keep living at their maternal homes. She did have to cook for her husband, after which she had to carry the meals to the residence of her spouse. In plural marriage visiting schedules would be designed and the woman had to follow it.

Inequality for women in Ghana is still pressing. The women come from a background where the economic influence they had, came from working on the land and selling fish. Profit gained from these activities flow into the household or go to their husbands and their family. The Ghanaian men invest the money in their enterprises or that of their relatives. There was a subordinate position for females in the business world, and there was resistance towards female education. (Berry, 1994)

Nowadays there still is a reluctant attitude towards sending girls to school. Despite the education act that was instituted in 1960 which required for more elementary education, parents found they needed their daughters’ labour on the farms and around the house. Others fear it will have a negative influence on their prospects in future marriage and therefore withhold their daughters from going to school.

Figures point out that uneducated girls have substantially bigger families than those who are educated and working. (Berry, 1994)

Organizations are setting up actions to help girls stand up for their rights, for instance to overcome their fear to address violence in school, on the street or at home. Also to reduce these crimes and more, such as sexual abuse, the mutilation of sexual body parts and to create economic chances and break the wall that economically divides men and women. (Action Aid, sd)

**Alcohol and drug addiction**

Teenagers and adolescents are overrepresented when it comes to the abuse of narcotic substances such as alcohol, cannabis, cocaine and heroin.

The production and business in dealing these drugs is a upcoming and popular occupation for young people that have faced unemployment. The use of these drugs can lead to dangerous situations. Injections of means such as heroin are especially risky in African countries because it carries the possibility of spreading HIV through needles. (Asare)

Research shows that in a group of fifteen to twenty-four year olds the awareness of various types of these narcotic substances and their effects are high. It also shows that this age group has great difficulty in standing up to their parents and peers to create acceptability.

Children get into contact with the habits of cigarettes and alcohol for generally children are sent to run the errands for their parents. This has a normalizing effect on youth. Besides this, commercial advertising surrounding tobacco and alcohol aren’t prohibited, therefore youth comes into contact with a positive attitude towards these substances.

There also seems to be a need for rehabilitation facilities. Church could play a role in raising awareness about drugs and help keeping youngsters away from it as well as offering rehabilitation services. For now there is unacceptance in the Ghanaian society and the pressure this brings will keep the youth that is using these substances from addressing their issues and seeking help.

Institutions such as schools are a pressuring environment in which the taboo surrounding alcohol and drug abuse lives on actively. Schools could have a more prominent role in educating children about narcotic substances. (Asare)

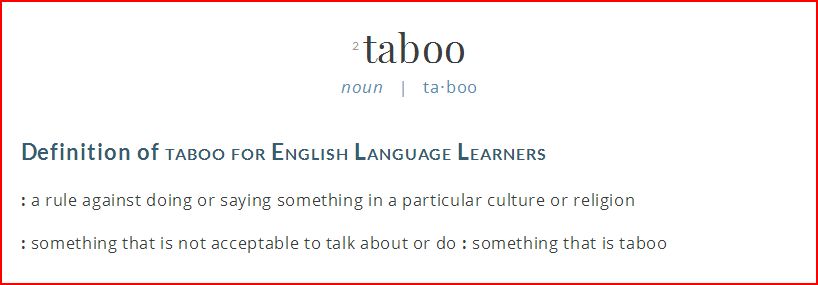
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Why is the breaking of taboos necessary to improve the communicative

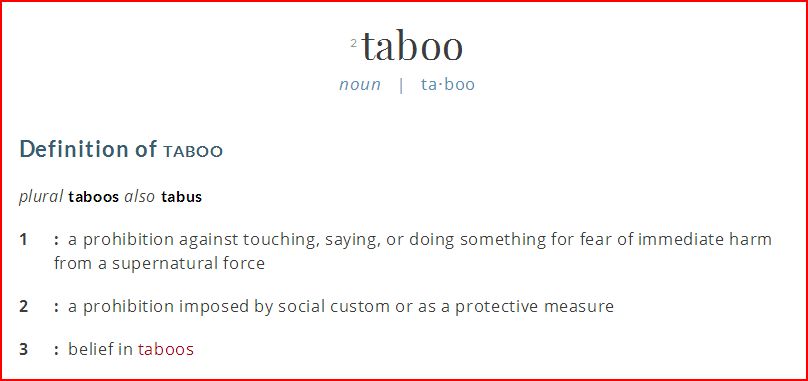
environment?

**Definition**

Dictionary defines the noun “taboo” as:

******

and also:

 (Merriam Webster, 1828-2017)

Subjects we previously discussed such as menstruation, abortion and contraceptives, homosexuality, the female position and alcohol and drug abuse are examples of taboos. They fit the definition for they are all subjects in Ghanaian culture that aren’t acceptable to bring up in conversation, sometimes related to religion or culture.

It is apparent that these taboos are closely knit with communication for they are all issues that exist and happen in Ghana. There are several unmet needs for teens in Ghana, about subjects which they cannot be open about, not to their peers, parents, family, community  and or the authorities. They fear for reaction or social unacceptance possibly leading to social isolation, violence, abuse, arrest or legal punishments.

When these taboos are broken the communicative environment is improved for breaking of taboos means a safer environment and a possible change in the social positions and relations where in this research social equality is considered as a positive phenomenon.

The issues we address as pressing taboos for Ghanaian teens have in common that the communicative environment pressurises the subjects to speak up. Giving these youngsters the tools to dare speak up might contribute to ignite the movement to give these children a voice, doing this we need to consider the culture, the current situation and ways that are approachable for everyone.

The age group we are dealing with are still easily influenced and might be more open to change as their adult counterparts. Addressing the issue to young people might lead the way for slow improvement for generations to come.

2.3

In which environments are strong taboos most likely to occur and which of these characteristics apply to Ghana?

Taboos are a problem in every country, culture and environment. This does not mean however, that we cannot locate environments of extreme taboos. In this sub question we'll discuss what characterises such environments.

**Locating pressing taboos**

The first step is to locate these areas of strong taboos. With that information we can decipher the reasons that precisely these environments suffer from this.

*Sexual socialisation anxiety by area.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sexual socialisation anxiety rating | Americas, Africa or Melanesia | Other areas |
| Above 10 | 18 | 2 |
| Below 10 | 7 | 12 |

*Menstrual taboos by area*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Menstrual taboos | Americas, Africa or Melanesia | Other areas |
| eleborated | 30 | 8 |
| restricted | 12 | 11 |

(Bock, 1967)

As we can see in these tables, the taboos were more pressing in the Americas, Africa or Melanesia. Some menstrual taboos in west Africa went as far as locking menstruating women up in special huts, until the menstruation has passed.

Now this is quite dated data, but it does give us a clear overview of the process of the breaking of taboos. In these areas, this will have taken a lot more time, and it might not even be close to being completely broken.

It is clear that many taboos have been lifted or eased in the western world, and also in many African countries sexuality and gender identity has partly lost its taboo status. However, due to research in North African countries, we can clearly see that many taboos are still very present.

In countries where shari'ah law rules, the taboos are most pressing. Abuse of women in sexual or physical manners is not seen as a human rights violation but as a crime against family property. In these countries there are extreme taboos on female sexuality, gender identity and sexuality. However, it must be said that not every country under Shari'ah law takes immediate action if a law concerning these taboos is lightly broken. (Amado, 2003)Furthermore, there are quite a few taboos concerning (feminine) sexuality, safe sex, child birth and abortion, in the sub-Saharan countries. These taboos lead to a high STD- rate, sexual abuse, lack of contraception and unsafe forced abortion. (Ecker, 1994)

**Homosexuality**

We also can determine the places where the taboos on homosexuality are most present, simply by researching the punishments for homosexuality. This shows us that many countries in Africa have a high punishment, which sometimes goes as far as execution. Some other countries do not allow marriage or cohabitation. From this we can conclude that Africa is full of taboos on homosexuality.  (Wolters-Noordhoff, 2007)

**Abortion**

In the same way we can determine where the taboo on abortion is most pressing. This tells us not only about abortion itself but also about the status of women. Abortion is not only about the foetus but also about women's safety, security and honour. From this we can conclude that the status of women and abortion is very low in the biggest part of Africa and parts of Asia and Latin-America.(Wolters-Noordhoff, 2007)

**Censorship**

Another important characteristic of taboo filled cultures is the rate of censorship. In countries with high censorship, many taboos are created and fuelled by the government. It is also incredibly difficult to break these taboos, just because of the censorship mostly in the press. Many countries in eastern Asia and the north and east of Africa have very high censorship. (Wolters-Noordhoff, 2007)

**Characteristics of taboo-filled environments**

As we now know in which areas the taboos are most pressing, we can identify the reasons for this. This is of course a generalisation, as every country a region has slightly different explanations. Still, a few general rules can be constructed.

**Male dominance**

The most obvious characteristic of countries with many taboos  is male dominance. In all countries with pressing taboos the male dominance is clearly visible. This is emphasized by the results of more emancipated countries. There are less taboos both on sexual socialisation and menstruation.

This male dominance is expressed in many different ways. We see it very clearly in the Islamic world. As we've discovered, countries with Shari'ah law now many taboos on (female) sexuality. The male dominance which historically was and is present in every culture, is still ingrained in the Islamic law.

However, this androcentrism does not only occur in islamic countries, but in almost every culture, in particular agricultural societies.  Even though many women in these societies play a big role in labour, on intellectual and sexual level, the dominance of the male is very present. (Sanday, 1981)

**Strict government**

As we have discovered whilst locating the strong-taboo countries, government plays a big part. Taboos on for example homosexuality and abortion are fuelled by the government itself. By illegalising such things, it will not be talked about openly. In countries with a more open government and law, there are less obstacles to talk about, for the biggest struggle is acceptance, not legal matters. (Wolters-Noordhoff, 2007, pp. 204 C,G)

**Education**

The level of education within a country makes a big difference in the harshness of some taboos. There are multiple reasons for this. Firstly, students will most likely be taught about the taboos in for example biology and history. By teaching and learning about subjects like gender, sexuality, nutrition and racism, the taboos will become less pressing.

Furthermore, the importance of girls in education should be stressed. By teaching boys and girls the same thing, not only will girls get a shot at climbing higher in the professional world, boys and girls alike are taught and will discover that women are equal to men. This is not only visible in schools but also later on in the professional world.

As women are regarded as inherently physically less strong, the primary sector is mostly led by men, therefore, if a country thrives on its tertiary sector, women will be able to take a lead or at least an  equal part in the labour. This will greatly benefit the status of women, as we can see in the development of the western world. This way, taboos concerning female status and sexuality will become less pressing.

From this we can conclude that regions with low education and little girls in education, will most likely have more pressing taboos than well-educated regions. . (Wolters-Noordhoff, 2007, pp. 211 A,C)

2.4

What methods have so far been used to improve the breaking of taboos?

The breaking of taboos has been a subject of research for quite some time. Several organisations of different origins have looked into the subject. As taboos can be a big restriction to the lives of millions of people, it is important to break or at least loosen them. By looking at previous project that serve this cause, we can determine what works and what doesn’t. This can provide some information on how to set up such a project, which can of course form a small base for our method.

In this sub question we will look at some projects that are currently running or ran in the near history.

**Breaking Taboos, Hiv/AIDS Alliance**

The International HIV/Aids Alliance has set up a big project on the breaking of taboos. The focus point of this project is India and Bangladesh, but can go international with the necessary alteration on the cultural background.

The most noticeable part of said project is the emphasis on youth. The complete project is designed to teach and help youngsters. The reason for this is that youngsters are often more open minded as they have less traditions in their lives and thought processes. Moreover, the breaking of taboos is of a greater importance for the youth of a nation. It is their future that is so heavily influenced by the pressing taboos.

For these reasons the HIV/Aids-Alliance has chosen to focus their project on youth. With this they have distinctly chosen for a cultural approach to the problem instead of a political or legal method. However, the HIV/Aids-Alliance makes an important point of the link with the government. They think it very important to include the government and its resources in the equation. For this they have ties with governmental departments like the health care department. The government can make sure that the substantial products are provided for the complete nation, in this case for example anti-conception. Furthermore, the legal matters must correspond to the teachings of the project. Taboos on for example homosexuality or STD’s can be broken in the minds of the people, but if the law of a country keeps restricting it, the results cannot be maximised.

The most important method of breaking taboos in this project is creating awareness. This is done in several different ways. The most important one is talking. Talking to youngsters and letting outspoken youngsters talk to older generations. By discussing taboo subjects like sexuality, protection, homosexuality and child marriage people become aware of the problems that these taboos inhabit. This knowledge is the first step to reaching a solution.

This awareness is enhanced by spreading the word throughout the country. This is done by for example posters, flyers, speeches and educational conventions. (International HIV/Aids-Alliance, 2013)

**Breaking Menstrual taboos, Dirk Gilson**

Another very recent project was executed by the German journalist Dirk Gilson. He wished to break the taboos and stigmas based around menstruation. He visited Nepal, Kenya and India where he interviewed women and girls about the taboos and problems with menstruation in their country.

Gilson had a different method on creating awareness than the HIV/AIDS-Alliance. Instead of creating awareness directly in the problematic regions, he decided to create awareness with a wider audience. He produced several tv-documentaries, a web-documentary and radio features.

He chose to do this because he wanted to create awareness internationally. Although the documentaries were originally in German, they have been translated to English, and it is currently being translated to Nepali. He opted for a more international approach because he thinks we can reach more with more support. By raising awareness in Europe he wants to increase the amount of projects that contribute to solving this problem.

The films will not only be released in Europe however. The web-series is available for everyone with an internet connection, as are the radio features. The Kenyan documentaries will be screened on one or multiple schools in Kenya, which hopefully endorses the breaking of taboos there. (Gilson, 2016)

**Breaking taboos on addictions, Wizarts Media**

Addictions on for example drugs and alcohol are a big taboo in Uganda. The local media barely speaks about it at all, even though it is quite a problem throughout the country. Wizarts Media decided to break this taboo in 2014. They released the documentary ‘Hooked’ which got broadcasted on national television, after which it was screened in communities like schools but also rehabilitation centres all across the country. The documentary had a huge impact, the taboo has become a lot less pressing.

The reason this documentary is this popular and successful is mainly because it is very open and personal. The twelve-part documentary depicts drug addicts, whom talk very openly about their addiction. Because the subjects talk so openly about their experiences, struggles and rehabilitation it becomes apparent that a drug addiction is not an uncommon thing. People might identify with it or see it as a warning that they should change their behaviour. Director Paul Kavuma has seen the effects very clearly himself. Sometimes after a screening people would stand up and tell about their own experiences. (Free Press Unlimited)

**SELF-project, hygiene taboos**

SELF is an organisation that focusses on hygiene in developing countries. They create communities in villages and cities, where they teach people about hygiene. Hygiene can sometimes wear quite the stigma in third world countries. Human excrements are a big taboo in some countries, so nobody is taught how to use the toilet hygienically.

SELF teaches this and other hygiene matters in these communities through lessons, songs, poems and theatre. By doing this they create an easy and comfortable atmosphere, which makes it easier to be open.

Another very important thing SELF does, is including the local population. Many locals lead these communities and go to schools or other public locations to teach other people about hygiene. By doing this the local population gets very enthusiastic, because they themselves can contribute. Moreover, it loses its ‘foreign’ status. Hygiene is not forced upon the population by white westerns, but is taught by locals and therefore part of the community. That way it is less forced and more approachable for the local population. (Welthungerhilfe, 2016)

**Solace Brothers Foundation, LGBT Rights Ghana**

The LGBT community is under extreme fire in Ghana. Even though there are officially no laws against homosexuality, LGBT-members are heavily discriminated and often arrested or even imprisoned. This goes against human rights and the laws of the country and should not occur.

To help with this problem, The Solace Brothers Foundation was founded, a special LGBT-rights advocacy group. Twenty paralegals have been especially trained in human rights, with a focus on LGBT rights. These paralegals can be reached directly or via a special hotline. They help with legal matters concerning the LGBT community in Ghana.

This project is focusses on making people aware of the rights they have. After thorough research, it was discovered that most Ghanaian citizens and officers do not know about many of the basic human rights. (e.g. One cannot be arrested for suspicion of homosexuality, one has the right to call on a lawyer, one may not be tortured or forced into confession in any way). It is shocking that such heavy rights are so unknown, and the mission of the Solace Brothers Foundation is making the people aware of these human rights.

Education is key in this project. Not only educating the LGBT-members but also police officers and judges make a great difference. Discrimination might not be ended at once, but a reduction in legal discrimination is a huge step forward. (Matthews, 2016)

**Chapter 3 - Dramatic Skills**

3.1

Why could dramatic skills help improve the communicative environment?

From a historical perspective, drama has been used since the human existence, it is an instinct and proven to be vital for the development of children. Rousseau highlights the importance of a child’s thought and feelings, and drama is a way of translating these.  (Özbek, 2014)

Research has shown in the past that using drama has a teaching method can reach children, and help them engage. It’s proven specifically efficient in case of people with any sort of social obstacle, in comparison to normal teaching methods.

Before creating a method we need to know how to reach teenagers that are dealing with the social obstacles that are taboos, but also their way of engaging in society, in conversation.

Using a creative method as opposed to regular “dry” ways might, in our case as well, lead to a more successful outcome.  (Taylor, 1996)

A research from Hacettepe University states that drama is a valuable form of communication, it gives children the tools to express themselves more effectively in daily situations. Moreover, it helps them learn to influence other and stand in someone else's shoes. Basically, drama is a way of helping children to think about and discuss  their personal and social issues (Üstündağ, 1997)

**The effects of role-play, improvisation and frozen image building**

By role-playing, problems can be addressed in a playful way, and previous research on creative education shows that you can empower children by using drama. As research shows role-play is an educative way of exploring issues involved in complex social situations.

Brock University, which uses drama as a methodology think it is a way to generate awareness and empathy towards others. German research also tells us that dramatic education will encourage empathy, contribute to the development of communicative skills and the aspects of the subject’s personality such as confidence, which will ultimately also lead to positive self-concepts. (Westlake-McCormick, 2010)

Learning with drama and improvisation techniques will allow participants to let their strongest feelings show, and give their ideas visible shape. A distinction needs to be made between theatre and drama that fits to entertain and drama that focuses on personal exploration and development. The latter is the purpose of using drama to help improve the communicative environment.

From engaging in drama exercises the subjects will build self-esteem and awareness. In this process drama is a medium of self-expression. Combining these skills with challenging situations will give participants the tools to express their true emotions and desires. (Athiemoolam, 2004)

Improvisation will often come forth from a participant’s background and experiences, that could be political, geographical, social, etc. Drama will offer the open and safe environment for participants to get to know these things about one another and create a sense of respect.

However, in comparison, the backgrounds or settings in role-playing scenes are often common to all, which gives a great opportunity for group discussion. This will enable the subjects to both cognitively and emotionally examine and relate to specific situations. (Athiemoolam, 2004)

A different way of using drama is by frozen image building. Where participants need to create still images with their bodies, positions and expressions. This is a useful method for subjects to explore, but also comprehend and examine various (everyday) issues and problems that are challenging to put into words.

At first the images are still and mute, later words can be used as an addition to the portraits. This way subjects with a lacking confidence are gradually initiated in speaking about their personal issues. The communication needed to build these still images will push the subjects to talk about the situations they portray, which could develop normalization of taboo subjects. (Athiemoolam, 2004)

Besides this it also contributes to their presentational skills. Dissecting these skills, and making people aware of these separate dramatic skills could really make a difference in their personal presentation. Being able to use these in realistic situation in which social obstacles are present can contribute to changing the perspective of the communicative environment towards the subject of taboos.

3.2

Which dramatic skills fit this purpose best?

To proceed the research in a more narrow line towards creating a method we need to eliminate and pin down which dramatic skills can be used best to help improve the communicative environment.

In presentation and communication we have one complex tool that consists of different “instruments”, it’s the human body. By practising drama we should be focusing on creating awareness of these individual tools, and teaching how to use these in specific situations.

We can classify several communicational functions of the body:

*Attitude or Position:* The way we stand, walk and react with our body.

*Voice:* The way we use our voice, intonation, resonance.

*Expressions*: How we filter emotions and recognise these.

These three distinct function are those we use every day. They are what we use, but it is all about reaching awareness on how to use these consciously. For in drama, this is what we use. We decide that we want to play a role, a persona or type. The image we create gets its shape through the way we use these three aspects of our body.

To adapt to specific situations participants should be made aware of their unconscious use of their body. What does your image tell others, how would you approach them? When subjects are aware of this they can practise and explore other ways of using these tools. This way, they will develop dramatic skills which they can then implement in day to day life and their personal environment. Research shows that the educational environment should be constructed around personal emotions and feelings. And moreover that drama is centred on social and cognitive development. Hence why expressions can be seen as a distinct tool to discover. (Özbek, 2014)

Voice and attitude or position are basics, going back to these basics is important.

Drama overlooks race, age and ethnicity, therefore we must seek in the overlapping functions that we all possess, bearing in mind cultural differences but not building on those as a foundation. The way to deliver a message, the way to address the method to the subjects is a different matter, closely knit together.  (Savela, 2009)

From looking at different aforementioned dramatic exercises we can see that in role-play- improvisation and still image building we see that language, movement and emotions are intrinsic parts that are added or left away from exercises.  Which gives the sense that they are in fact individual tools, that cohere in drama, and social situations, but need to be mastered piece by piece. This is reached using theatrical games. (Athiemoolam, 2004)

**Chapter 4 - Communication**

4.1

What communicative factors need to be taken into consideration to ensure the best possible results?

The method and ways of communication are a very important factor of transmitting information. Especially on personal and controversial matters, a comfortable communication between participants is vital.

Every culture has its own traditions, customs and forms of respect. Not only is it socially respectful to follow these customs, for a project such as this it is vital. By creating an environment of openness and respect, difficult matters like the taboos we wish to break are more easily discussed. For this reason, we are going to research some communicational customs of the Ghanaian people.

**Formal culture**

Ghanaian culture tends to be very formal, although that differs between ethnic groups. Generally, hierarchical structures are very strongly preserved in Ghana.  It is considered very important to greet someone with the correct title and surname, unless specifically stated differently.

This hierarchy needs to be obeyed upon the first few meetings. One must greet the eldest male first, and a woman is expected to initiate a handshake. Furthermore, it is deemed respectful to avoid direct eye contact with someone of a higher status, however in more casual settings this is not necessary. Of course this project is intended to partially break such hierarchy, but for first meetings it is important to show respect in this way.

The formal culture is very noticeable in conversation. Not only will the Ghanaians address you with your proper title, they will also keep a good distance initially. At first meetings they tend to be quite reserved but good-natured. (Commiscea global, 2016)

**Gesticulative taboos**

Every culture has certain taboos within communication, for example hand gestures or body language. It is important to know these gestures to avoid insulting someone by accident.

Rude gestures may be an easy mistake to make, but also easy to avoid.

In Ghanaian (and many other African) culture, using your left hand to eat, touch or shake is considered dirty and rude. It is therefore advised to use your right hand for as many things as possible, just to be sure. Furthermore, pointing at someone is also considered disrespectful, instead it is custom to nod or purse your lips.  As mentioned before, making direct eye contact with elder or higher ranked citizens is considered disrespectful. Lastly, giving someone a thumbs up is considered very inappropriate. (Culture Crossing Guide, 2014)

**Verbal taboos**

The official language in Ghana is English, and this is for every citizen at least a second language. However, the English used differs quite a lot from the English we know here in Europe or in the United States. The lingual matters shall be discussed in further sub questions, but there are some taboos in the tone and vocabulary of Ghanaian English.

As mentioned before, Ghana knows a formal culture, and this is noticeable in language as well. Insulting someone is seen as a very disrespectful thing, even it is a little teasing. We can see this is in the difference of tone in simple words like: Silly, nonsense and foolish. In western English these words represent light teasing or slightly annoyed feelings. (Schwimmer, 2016)

Ghanaians will try very hard to not create an uncomfortable situation. For this reason they will try not to insult in anyway and not say things that might be a little harsh. This means they will often fall silent if they do not want to answer a question. This silence is not a sign of disrespect, rather of respect for not hurting ones feelings, and should be taken that way. (Commiscea global, 2016)

4.2

What lingual factors need to be taken into account to ensure successful communication?

Language is an important factor in communication. Not only is it the easiest way to transmit thoughts, it also sets the tone of a situation. Language is a complex system consisting not only of vocabulary and grammar, but also sub textual factors like formality, tone and meaning.

These assets of language are very important for the communicative environment. It influences the outcome of a conversation and partly determines the responses given. In this sub question we intend to research the language in Ghana, and its lingual customs.

**Ghanaian languages**

Language is a very diverse concept in Ghana. About 80 languages are spoken throughout the country. These languages can roughly be sorted into six categories, corresponding to the ethnic groups in Ghana. The following chart shows these ethnic groups:

(Ghana statistical services, 2002)

As clearly visible, we cannot speak of a proportional relation between languages and population, for within an ethnic group usually the same language is spoken. About seventy-five languages are part of the ‘All other languages’ category. (Ansah, 2014)

**Use of English in Ghana**

This incredible variety in languages is, though culturally fascinating, not ideal for setting up a project like ours. Luckily, Ghana has a supraregional lingua franca: English. Due to Ghana’s colonial history, its official language is English. This is used for all formal communication internationally and within Ghana. English-speaking institutions include: (inter)national companies, governmental authorities, information distribution (e.g. newspapers, books, television) and education. (Simpson, Anyidoho, & Dakubu, 2008)

Although English is not the first language for the big majority of the Ghanaian population, it is intensively taught in schools. Every school is obligated to use English as language of instruction, from primary year four and upwards. The first three years of primary schools have been a point of discussion throughout the years. Currently it is not obligatory to use English in the first three years, but this is only since 2007.

The level of English differs a lot. This is mostly due to the differences between schools. Many schools do not teach in English, or at least not fully even though it is compulsory. Consequently, some people are not able to speak or write ‘correct’ English. However, this mostly occurs in older generations. The teenage/adolescent generation we aim at is much better educated in English, as the law has become stricter since 2002. (Owu-Ewie, 2006) (Ansah, 2014)

**Ghanaian English**

Even though British English is taught at schools, it is quite immediately identifiable as non-native English. Although we can understand the English spoken in Ghana, there are quite a few differences between British- and Ghanaian-English. This occurs not only in casual or low-level English, but also during meetings and in official documents. To communicate effectively it is vital to know and understand these differences.

African-English\* knows a few harmless, but widespread grammatical errors. These generally find their origin in a direct translation of the mother-language. The most frequently made grammatical errors include:

1.   A disagreement between noun modifier (e.g. this few lines)

2.   Dis-/misuse of articles (e.g. I go to supermarket)

3.      Misuse of plural forms (e.g. moneys, furnitures)

4.   Incorrect insertion of pronouns (e.g. The guests whom I invited them have arrived)

There are also several mistakes/differences in vocabulary which find their origin in the African languages. These include:

1.   Over-/misuse of the word meet. This is due to the lack of (near) synonyms in the native African-language.  (e.g. find, encounter)

2.   Different translations of nouns and adjectives (e.g. one person: someone; real/whole person: adult; big somebody: important person)

\*For this sub question we have often made the generalisation to African-English, which will be further explained in the discussion.

Both grammatical and vocabulary mistakes are just a small problem in communication. It might take some time to figure out what is meant, but it will not cause much trouble. However, there are also a few lingual factors that might cause some confusion or misunderstandings.

One of these things is the answering of negative questions. This often leads to misunderstandings, as the way an African English-speaker answers them is often different than a western English-speaker would. To illustrate, we will look at the different answers to a negative question:

‘Didn’t you go to the market yesterday?’

If a westerner were to deny this they would most likely answer with ‘No’, whilst an African would deny it with a ‘yes’. Even though the answers are contradicting, they both didn’t go to the market. As illogical of an answer ‘Yes’ may seem here, it is actually the direct way to deny this question. If a negative question is answered with a yes, it most likely means: ‘Yes, I didn’t go to the market yesterday’.

This is of course a small difference, but it can make communication a lot more difficult than necessary. (Kachru, 1992)

**The meaning of words**

Another big lingual difference is the use of metaphors. An African English-speaker will sound very poetic and philosophical to a westerner. This is because the African languages are filled with metaphors, similes and sayings. Whilst speaking English, this figurative speech is often used as well. However poetic it may sound, this makes it difficult to understand what is actually meant. (Kachru, 1992)

These metaphors are not just translated African however, often they are set sayings in Ghanaian-English. These are usually not literal translations, but derived from African languages. (e.g. bush of a person: unpolished person; passion week: week before payday; small boy: someone who has climbed up in society really fast) These sayings are called Ghanaisms.  (Bamiro, 1997)

**Formality and tone**

As discussed in previous sub questions, Ghana has a very formal culture and consequently a formal language. They tend to not take teasing lightly, especially not to or from a stranger. However, students and friends are usually light hearted towards each other and tease quite a lot. (Commiscea global, 2016)

**Chapter 5 - Conclusions**

1.1 What historical factors influence Ghanaian culture today?

The historic background of a country forms the basis for its culture. By researching Ghana’s history, we can decipher where the cultural habits come from, and how these have developed. By doing this we can find the origin of a culture and understand how the temporary culture is structured.

**pre-colonial Ghana**

Ghana used to exist of many different tribes with different cultures. The diversity in the country at that time is still very noticeable as the ethnic groups still live closely together and speak their own language and follow their own culture. Furthermore, the androcentrism is also derived from this time. As an agricultural society, the men used to work while the woman cared for the children. Polygamy and arranged marriages were status symbols for the males.

**colonial Ghana**

Ghana has been occupied by several western powers, and used to be an official British colony. This colonisation has had a great impact on the Ghanaian society and culture. Firstly, slave trade became a big export product for Ghana, which was very much ingrained in both western and African culture. However, since its abolishment it does not have a great impact on temporary culture. What does however, is the development of an agricultural-urban-society. Following their European motherland, Ghana developed their industry and service sectors which greatly benefited the economic and cultural development of Ghana. Next to that, the class society found its origin here. Of course there was a strict hierarchy within tribes, but due to the economic development, nationwide classes developed. (e.g. trading class, agricultural class, bourgeoisie). Last but not least, due to the western imperialism Ghana became a country, with an official language. Ghana still knows many ethnic groups with their own languages, but they are connected by state boundaries and English as their lingua franca.

**religious developments**

Due to the British occupation, Christianity is the main religion in Ghana. Currently, other religions are practised, but in lesser form. This is because for example Islam had been banned from several regions in history. or this, Christianity has been and remains to be the biggest religion in Ghana.

**The Asante empire and Ghana’s decolonisation**

The Asante empire began to grow at a fast pace during the beginning of the colonial era in Ghana. It covered almost the entirety of Ghana, short of one province. The British had however influenced Ghana greatly by installing their education system and working sectors. Due to the clash of power between both empires, a total of five wars have broken out. Eventually the Asante empire was defeated, but the Asante people remain the biggest ethnic group in Ghana, and Akan the most popular Ghanaian language.

Due to these wars and the European occupation of Africa many tribes came to live in the zone that is now Ghana. This diversity is still part of the Ghanaian culture.

After the Anglo-Asante  wars the rioting didn’t stop. The political instability that the ethnically divided country came across lead to the writing of many different constitutions and after the second world war Ghana achieved their independence in 1951.

1.2 What geographical factors influence Ghanaian culture today?

The geography of a country can say a lot about poverty and wealth, development and culture. The level of development and modernisation and the social geography is a big influence on culture. Therefore we have researched these topics.

**natural dimension:**

The natural dimension of Ghana is likely a factor of influence on the poverty and culture of the country. The climate and vegetation make it difficult to grow crop, which has a big effect on the wealth. This poverty and high need for a lot of manual agriculture, most likely influences the culture a lot.

**social-cultural dimension**

The social-cultural dimension is an important influence on culture. This dimension exists of economics, politics and culture. As these are broad subjects, we have decided to divide this dimension in multiple sub questions.

**Demographical dimension**

The demographics of a country tell us a lot about the development of said country. For Ghana, we can conclude it is currently in the second or third phase of the demographic transition. From this we can conclude Ghana is currently developing at a high pace, but is not yet fully developed.

1.3 What political factors influence Ghanaian culture today?

The political situation of a country has a great impact on its culture. In this sub question we have researched this impact and found several factors that influence Ghanaian culture quite heavily.

**Political system**

Ghana is officially a democratic republic. This form of government gives freedom of not only political views but also freedom of culture. According to the law, every citizen has freedom of speech, religion and other cultural aspects. This means there is a diverse culture in Ghana. The political system of Ghana has a big influence on the Ghanaian culture for these reasons.

**Political instability 1960-1992**

Due to a long line of one-party systems and coups, Ghana has known quite some political instability. This causes a strong government in today’s society, especially in the early days of Ghana’s democratic system.  This powerful government and political instability influences Ghanaian culture today, as it leads to a moderately submissive culture. However, as the education level increases, the political participation of the people increases as well. (Pinkney, 1997)

**The constitution**

The Ghanaian constitution is generally quite liberal. This enables a diverse and free culture. Furthermore, the existence of a constitution creates a sense of security on political terrain, which consequently creates more fearlessness culture wise. However, there are quite a few restraints. Even though most UN- treaties have been signed, many are not ratified. The legalisation of death penalty, combined with the use of torture (though this is illegal) creates fearfulness in a culture. The stripping of liberties and possibility of torture for someone even suspected of trespassing the law, creates a distance between government and citizens. So even though the liberal constitution creates a free and secure culture, the mishaps in said constitution also cause fears and distance.

**Power distribution**

The Ghanaian political system most resembles a two-party system, though officially it is multi-party. These two parties (NDC and NPP) have their biggest support in two different regions in Ghana. These are the regions of the biggest ethnic groups, and also deliver the biggest part of the government. Due to this fairly clean split, there are big differences politically for different regions, depending on the winning president-elect and their designated party. The reigning  and therefore dominant culture in the country differs for this reason depending on the government. The minorities do not have a big influence on politics as their parties are a lot smaller.

**Elections**

Ghanaian elections are held every four years and are generally fairly done, with a usual split of 45-55% between NDC and NPP. This means that the people do actually influence their government and therefore the culture, as it depends on the president-elect which region and culture is favoured by the senate.

**Human rights**

Most Human Right treaties set up by the UN have been signed and ratified. This includes the elimination of discrimination against women and race, and the Rights of a Child. This creates an equal society, at least in legal matters. However, there are a few that are not signed including the abolition of death penalty, and liberty of abortion. This shows that Ghanaian culture is not completely developed according to UN standards, and there are some inequalities and restraints, which hold the Ghana back in evolving into a completely free and equal society.

1.4 What economic factors influence Ghanaian culture today?

The economy of a country influences a culture strongly. Especially the development and international trade have a big impact. In this sub question we have researched the factors that influence culture the most.

**GDP**

The Gross National Product is a good indicator of the development of a country. The GDP of Ghana is compared to its neighbouring countries quite reasonable. This shows that Ghana is quite developed considering it is a sub-Saharan country. This development is important for its culture. The level of development and Ghana indicates that the culture is mostly small-scale, but is making transitions to a more national and international orientation.

**Working sectors**

The biggest part of the Ghanaian labour force works in the primary sector, which again enhances the small-scale and pre-industrialised society and culture. However, the tertiary sector is of a considerable scale as well, indicating that the transition to a bigger scale culture is in full swing. It also indicates that leisure is increasingly more important in the Ghanaian culture.

**Trade**

International trade is a big part of the national income of Ghana. They mostly export raw materials and import industrial products. The international trade of Ghana is as big as for example Germany. Due to this, not only products but also customs and cultural factors are imported. Because of the thorough international communication, the Ghanaian culture is adapting more and more to western cultures. This causes the Ghana to transform bit by bit in a developed, internationally focused country.

2.1 Which taboos are most pressing for Ghanaian teens?

To be able to start breaking taboos, it is vital to know which taboos are most pressing . By knowing this it is easier to develop a method especially for these taboos. Therefore we have researched the most pressing taboos in Ghana.

**menstruation**

Menstruation is a big taboo in many cultures, including the Ghanaian culture. Due to the messy nature of this biological process, people, mostly men,  are often thoroughly put off by it. The only reason the taboo seems to be lifted somewhat is because it shows the fertility of a woman, which is again a benefit emphasised by strong androcentrism. The topic of menstruation is not discussed directly, only via euphemisms, but is usually avoided all together.

**abortion and contraceptives**

Abortion is illegal in Ghana, except for special cases of illness, rape, incest or disabilities. However, the taboo is much more pressing in society than in law. Women and men alike oppose abortion strongly, though women are usually a bit less strict on this moral. Citizens are often not aware of the laws surrounding abortion, and as women do not want their abortion to be known it is often done in unsafe and harmful ways in secret.

Contraceptives are another taboo concerning childbirth. Even though quite some women would want to wait with bearing children, they do not have access or are not allowed the use of contraceptives. Both the taboo on abortion and contraceptives find their origin mostly in religion.

**homosexuality**

Even though being homosexual is not illegal, sex between same sex couples is. However, in reality, LGBT people suffer from far more than just persecution for sex, which in itself is a big indicator for a strong taboo. LGBT members are heavily discriminated against and often persecuted and punished for simply being homosexual. Ghanaian citizens are not aware of the exact laws, or the human rights they have. Furthermore, the Ghanaian society outcasts LGBT people, which causes the rate of openly LGBT people to be extremely low.

**the position of women**

Women are significantly less valued in Ghana. This stems from the pre-colonial times where women were simply to bear children and care for the family. Even though this idea has become less extreme, it is still there. Often women do not work, and if they do the payment goes directly to their husband. The education for girls is also not as good as needed. The law might obligate it, but many families don’t send their girls to school. Women are also often victim of forced arranged marriages, sexual, physical and emotional abuse and genital mutilation. Talking about such topics is incredibly hard and personal, and most of all tabooed.

**Alcohol and drug addictions**

Due to the normalisation and positive media attitude to alcohol and tobacco, children begin using these substances at a young age. Drugs are generally easy to get in Ghana which causes great problems. Talking about addictions to these substances is very much tabooed. There are few rehabilitation centres, and going to them is harshly frowned upon. There is no education about addictions in schools, and it is not talked about within families, which leads to many heavy addictions as there is no-one to help. This is a big problem as many young people struggle with addictions.

2.2 Why is the breaking of taboos necessary to improve the communicative

environment?

A taboo is a subject that is prohibited to talk about, ingrained in a culture. It is important to break these taboos for multiple reasons. To achieve an open communicative environment, all subjects should be discussable. Due to taboos, this is not the case, as taboos are undiscussable subjects. The taboos are often biological subjects like sex, drug and alcohol abuse, and menstruation. By not discussing these things, serious harm can be brought to the health of the Ghanaian population. Other more political taboos like homosexuality and the female position can bring serious harm to both mental health and social development.

Breaking these taboos would have a great impact on the development of Ghana, and the creation of a more open environment. Not only would breaking taboos help this generation, but also the generations to come.

2.3 In which environments are strong taboos most likely to occur and which of these characteristics apply to Ghana?

By researching the environment of strong taboos, we can determine where these taboos come from, which we can benefit from to find a solution to them. In this sub question we have researched the taboo-filled environments, and will determine whether Ghana is one of these environments.

**Locating pressing taboos**

·      The areas where most taboos used to be are America and Africa. The taboos discussed are (female)sexuality and menstruation, which use to be very bad in these regions. They have bettered now, but are still pressing in some places.

·      Countries with Shari’ah law are the most taboo-filled environments concerning (female)sexuality and gender identity.

·      Many sub-Saharan countries have taboos on sexuality, contraception, abortion and childbirth.

·      Taboos on homosexuality are occurring in every country in the world, but are most pressing in countries where there is an actual penalty and/or marriage/cohabitation is prohibited. These countries are mostly located in Africa.

·      Abortion is another easily spotted taboo. The countries without the liberty of abortion clearly do not condone it. These countries are located mostly in Africa, Asia and Latin-America.

·      Censorship is a clear indicator of a taboo-filled society. A country with strict censorship will have taboos created and fuelled by the government, and will be ingrained in everything in the culture and society. Countries with strict censorship are mostly in the north and east of Africa, and eastern Asia.

**Characteristics of taboo-filled environments**

·      Male dominance (or androcentrism) is the biggest cause of taboos, especially concerning female sexuality, homosexuality, gender identity and menstruation. This male dominance is most noticeable in Islamic countries, as the traditional way of living is more ingrained in that culture. However, it is also very noticeable in agricultural societies.

·      A strict government is another characteristic of most taboo-filled environments. Governments that illegalise for example homosexuality, abortion or even freedom of speech are very obviously creating and fuelling taboos.

·      Lastly, the low level of education and small amount of girls in education is a characteristic of a taboo-filled environment. This is because of the values taught in schools, and because of the rise to equality education can give women. Furthermore, a transition to a industrialised country is caused partly by improved education. This gives women a bigger opportunity to equalise the society.

**Is Ghana an example of a taboo-filled environment?**

Ghana does have many taboos in its culture, however it is not the most taboo-filled environment. It is an agricultural sub-Saharan country, with strong androcentrism and some strict laws on for example abortion. However, it does not have Shari’ah law, as it is a mostly Christian country, and has no official penalty on homosexuality, it does not have censorship, and endorses quite good education.

2.4 What methods have so far been used to improve the breaking of taboos and how can we use this information in our method?

In this sub question we have researched a couple of projects with more or less the same structure as we intend to use for our method. We have done this to take the beneficial assets of these projects and apply this to our project.

**Breaking Taboos, HIV/Aids alliance**

The most important thing we can take away from this project is putting the focus on youth. Youth is the future of a country, and therefore benefits most of the breaking of taboos. Furthermore, due to modernisation and internationalisation, youngsters are often more open minded. Other things we can learn from this project is the importance of including the government. They can supply necessary products, and clear the way for the start of breaking taboos. Lastly, awareness and transparency are the most important factors. Knowledge, education and openness create a safe and open minded environment in which breaking taboos is easiest.

**Breaking Menstrual taboos, Dirk Gilson**

The most important idea we have gathered from this project is the role of international influence. Our project is aimed for local situations, and we do not intend it to go viral necessarily. However, creating international awareness can have huge benefits on local scale as well. International media is a huge influence for youth around the world, and awareness can also trigger international support. Secondly, we foresee that teaching the method on schools is a wise idea. This way we reach students and teachers alike, as education forms the basis of a society.

**Breaking taboos on addictions, Wizarts Media**

What we can take from this project is the importance of the personal approach. By keeping things personal, open and comfortable the best possible results can be achieved. We intend to trigger confidence and an important part of this is self-awareness and security. Talking about personal experiences, showing people the taboo subjects are not weird and steering away from any sort of judgement is vital. This creates a comfortable environment and confidence in the subjects.

**SELF-project, hygiene taboos**

This project has shown that inclusion of the local population can be very beneficial. By letting locals take control of a project the enthusiasm increases and the idea of western imperialism decreases. This is vital, as we do not wish to impose our western worldview, simply better the local situation. For this, we think it would be an excellent idea to let natives teach this method and lead the project in local settings. This to emphasise the necessity of the project and to achieve better results by creating a comfortable environment. Furthermore, the SELF-project stresses the importance of informal ways to achieve goals by games, art, songs and of course theatre.

**Solace Brothers Foundation, LGBT Rights Ghana**

This project again stresses the importance of awareness and education. There is so much unknown to both citizens and officials, which should not be the case. By explaining these things and raising awareness about effects, consequences and solutions we can achieve great things. Our project is not set up to necessarily solve legal matters, but it ís set up to help break and solve taboos. For this the subjects must know about the taboos and the misunderstandings surrounding them. This is vital for creating confidence and enabling breaking said taboos.

3.1 Why could dramatic skills help improve the communicative environment?

Dramatic skills have been used as a teaching method for social development for the entirety of the human existence. It is proved to help people with social obstacles , more so than conventional teaching methods.

Dramatic skills can help engaging youngsters in the social obstacles that taboos are. Furthermore, it gives an insight in their ways of communication and enables them to learn how to improve this. It gives them the tools needed to improve communication, develop confidence and increase empathetic skills.

**Effects of role-play**

Role-play is an important method of teaching communicational skills. It empowers participants, shows them different ways of reacting and their outcome, and teaches empathy. By sketching situations participants are able to practice and learn the best ways to speak-up and react to social obstacles.

**Effects of improvisation**

Improvisation is a more personal teaching method. It is a method of exploring emotions and personality, which reflects both background, education and personality. Improvisation is an important way to teach confidence, respect and self-awareness.

**Effects of frozen image building**

Frozen image building is an excellent way to increase confidence and normalize taboos. Communication is an important factor of forming these frozen images, which will deem talking about taboo subjects necessary. Furthermore, by slowly building the level of frozen images, less confident and outspoken participants will develop a sense of confidence and security in body language and spoken communication.

3.2 Which dramatic skills fit this purpose best?

The human body is the most important tool in communication and presentation. To be able to understand and control one’s body, there are three aspects that need to be worked on. Attitude or position, voice, and expressions. These three factors form our everyday communication, and most of it is unconscious behaviour. By making participants conscious of these factors, the communicational skills of participants can improve greatly.

These dramatic skills are fit for this purpose, because they are universal, and personal at the same time. They overlook age, gender and ethnicity, and are in the basics universally the same. Of course there are cultural influences within the communication of these skills, but the skills are not based on cultural differences.

The three different assets are in day to day communication coherent, but need to be mastered separately. By teaching these dramatic skills separately, participants learn how to use each of these functions consciously in communication. Using theatrical games in which the assets can be added and subtracted easily, this goal is reached most efficiently.

4.1 What communicative factors need to be taken into consideration to ensure the best possible results?

Communication is a very important part of accomplishing anything. As Ghana has a very different culture, there are some communicative customs we need to take into account. We have researched these customs in this sub question.

**Formal culture**

Ghana has a very formal culture. Respect and hierarchy are a high priority in Ghana. Certain forms of respect need to be obeyed. This includes the strict order of greetings, the distant attitude at first meeting and the use of correct title and form of greeting.

**Gesticulative taboos**

Gestures that are very normal and harmless in western culture, may be rude and inappropriate in other cultures. Therefore we have researched a few of the easiest mistakes to make in gesticulation. These include: Using the left hand, pointing, thumbs up, making eye contact with elder or higher ranking citizens.

**Verbal taboos**

The formality of the Ghanaian culture is noticeable in the Ghanaian language. The English spoken in Ghana may seem very similar to British or American English, but the tone of thing differs from time to time. Small harmless insults in British English may be very rude in Ghanaian English, for example: silly, nonsense and foolish. It is best to avoid such words. Furthermore, Ghanaians value the feelings of conversational partners a lot. Therefore they will try not to make anyone uncomfortable. However, they tend to do so with silences, which might seem rude to westerners. It is important to understand that silence means they do not wish to answer a question, but do not want to make you feel uncomfortable.

4.2 What lingual factors need to be taken into account to ensure successful communication?

To ensure effective communication, it is important to be able to understand each other. The easiest way to communicate is by using language. For this, we have researched the language in Ghana.

**Ghanaian languages**

Even though English is the official language in Ghana, it is hardly spoken between Ghanaian citizens. There are around eighty different languages, which can mostly be linked to the Ethnic groups in Ghana.

**Use of English**

English is the lingua franca of Ghana, and is therefore used throughout the country. All governmental and (inter)national institutions are obliged to use English. It is currently compulsory for all schools to teach in English from grades three and upwards, however, this law has changed a lot over the years. The level of English nationally, differs a lot. This is mostly due to the schools, which do not always teach in English even though it is obligatory according to the law. The elder generations are often less advanced in English due to more slacking schools and less strict laws than today. The teenage and adolescent part of the population we mostly try to reach is usually more advanced in English.

**Ghanaian English**

Ghanaian English, though officially the same as British English, knows quite a few lingual differences. These differences are important to understand to enable good communication. These lingual factors are a variety of things like widespread grammatical and vocabulary errors, and pure lingual differences derived from the Ghanaian languages like the answering of negative questions.

**The meaning of words**

Ghanaian English does not necessarily know many new English words, though sometimes African words are used to explain or emphasise. The meaning and use of words do however differ quite a lot from time to time. Firstly, Ghanaians are prone to using many metaphors and poetic speech. This is derived from the Ghanaian languages, and though it is correct English, it is hard to understand what is actually meant. Secondly, we have Ghanaisms. These are set expressions in English, not directly translated from Ghanaian languages. They are widely used and often hard to understand for non-Africans.

**Formality and tone**

Due to Ghana’s formal culture, the language between strangers or acquaintances tends to be formal as well. Teasing is usually not taken lightly and formal salutations and sentences are necessary. However, once people know each other well, the formality lifts quickly and the tone is heavily lightened.

**Chapter 6- teaching method**

## Introduction to workshops

To teach teenagers dramatic skills, we have decided to develop a workshop series. By introducing different skills and help develop these in the students, we try to give the subjects the necessary skills to improve their communicative skills. By bettering these skills we create an opening to start breaking or at least lessening taboos.

However, simply writing the workshops would perhaps diminish the success of the project. Therefore, to ensure good results, we have set up multiple guidelines. These will make it easier to achieve communicative skills and will help teaching them.

**1.  Create an open comfortable environment before starting the workshops.**

Talking about taboos is not easy, not for westerners and most definitely not for Ghanaians. Ghana knows a very formal culture, which the teens will be accustomed to. Opening up about such sensitives subjects will not be easy and will not happen at once. Creating a comfortable environment is key here. Getting to know the students and settling a light mood is important. Dropping formal communication is  the first step, without a comfortable environment nothing can be achieved.

**2.  Take notice of and accustom oneself with communicational customs**

Respect for one another is vital in a project like this. Therefore, communicational customs should be respected and understood. The formality of the culture will hopefully be dropped as a comfortable environment is created, but there are customs that need to be taken into account. Verbal and gesticulative customs exist for a reason, not respecting these customs will result in not earning respect for oneself. If the students do not show respect, there will be little to no results of the workshops. Furthermore, the verbal and body language of the students is important to be understood correctly in order to avoid misunderstandings.

**3.  Use understandable and local language**

The lingua franca of Ghana is English, but it is rarely the mother language. Furthermore, the English spoken in Ghana is slightly different than the British or American English. For these reasons it is important to use clear and understandable English. Getting across exactly what you mean to is necessary to improve communication. We would recommend having locals help with language and translation, but we’ll elaborate on this in point 4.

**4.  Include the local population as much as possible**

We would wholeheartedly recommend including the local population as much as possible. In an ideal situation we would advise local educators to teach the workshops. Not only will this be easier language wise, it also gives of a different signal. By teaching our western ideals we might be seen as western supremacists or imperialists. The last thing we would want is enforcing our ideas onto an unwilling population. Therefore, by including the local population or even having local teachers we decrease the western pressure. The ultimate goal is of course that the local population understands how important breaking taboos is for social development. Including the local population increases enthusiasm and decreases the notion of western imperialism and supremacy.

**5.  Keep the focus on youth and include teachers**

We believe this project will work best and is most necessary for youth. Youngsters are often more open minded and less traditional, which makes it easier to change their view on taboos. Furthermore, they are the future of their country and their culture. By changing their thought processes and way of expressing themselves, we will not only help this generation on a longer term but also see the same result in future generations.

By including teachers in the workshops we intend to create a more open environment in schools. As the workshops are not necessarily a long running project, we foresee that educating teachers in communication and openness will have a positive effect on maintaining better communication. They can help their students with their communicative skills and can aid in the breaking of taboos on small scale matters.

**6.  Create awareness about the taboos and their restrictions and solutions**

An important addition to the workshops is explaining the pressing taboos. The workshops themselves are focussed on the communicative skills and not directly to the breaking of taboos. However, to use the achieved skills, one should know why they should learn them and for what cause they could use them. Educating the students about the taboos, what they are, why they are harmful and why they should be broken increases the usefulness of the workshops. Often there are no legal restrictions on taboos but that is not always known by the population which slows down the process of dissolving the taboos. Creating awareness on the taboos, the legal restrictions and the best ways to break them is very useful information and increases the effect of the workshops.

**7.  Take a personal approach to the taboos and the communicative skills**

Again, breaking taboos is not an easy thing to do. It takes a lot of courage to speak up about personal experiences, and even more to be the first to do so. By telling about personal experiences while teaching the method you show the students that it is not strange. We do not intend to let the students reveal all their deepest secrets of course, but by telling them that experiences they are having are normal, we hopefully give them a bit of courage and assurance. Furthermore, by illustrating how to use the communicative skills by telling about personal experiences shows them that they really are useful. This shows them the workshops are necessary and can actually help. By inflicting this bit of assurance they might become more enthusiastic which would benefit the results.

Other than the workshops we have developed for this project, we find there are a few other measures that would greatly benefit the communicative environment and the breaking of taboos. These things are perhaps difficult to achieve but will have a big positive impact. The three that stand out in our opinion are:

**1.  Creating international awareness**

The workshops are aimed at a very local scale, but to have a big impact it would be helpful to take it global. By educating the world about the problems in developing countries like Ghana we might ensure international support for small scale projects like this one. Not only economically, but also via the internet for example. Ghanaian youngsters, especially in the cities do make use of social media, and discussing things like taboos via these platforms can benefit Ghanaian youth. Seeing openness concerning these subjects and talking about it can show them that these taboos are topics of discussion all across the globe. Lastly, international awareness might have an effect on the political restrictions within Ghana, as the pressure enforced by other countries could possible make them reconsider their laws and restrictions.

**2.  Getting governmental support**

A big cause for the existence of taboos is the government. Both the restrictions and lack of restrictions keeps the fire burning. By lessening or even removing restrictions on some taboos like homosexuality, the government at least does not form an obstacle in breaking taboos. Furthermore, sanctions should be placed on big problems for breaking taboos, for example the beating or casting aside of homosexuals. If the government does not react to such events, they send a clear message that it is okay to do so, and that being homosexual is not allowed, even if it is not illegal. Lastly, governmental campaigns are very effective. If the government was to start to campaign against these taboos by for example education or supplies like tampons or condoms, the citizens would be confronted with these taboo topics and with that most likely start to normalize them.

**3.  Economic development**

Economic development is key in the social-cultural development of a country. As we can clearly see, most well developed countries know less pressing taboos and less legal restrictions on these topics. If Ghana were to develop in an urban society instead of the agricultural-urban society, the culture of the country would change with it. An urban society generally has more international relations and tends to become more individualistic. Both the international influence and individualisation will have positive results on the breaking of taboos. There will be more pressure on developing oneself instead of being part of a community, which, as we’ve seen in many western countries, will benefit minorities.

## Introduction to the workshops

## *Focus*

Body instruments

In these workshops we will focus on reaching awareness of your body instruments and getting the knowhow on how to use these consciously. To achieve this result we separated the workshops into five courses. We start with an introductory workshop to get to know all the participants and discover how far conversation and openness go.

This is important for teachers to know how to create a suitable environment for the rest of the workshops.

In the next three we shall focus on a separate body instruments, the three instruments discussed are:

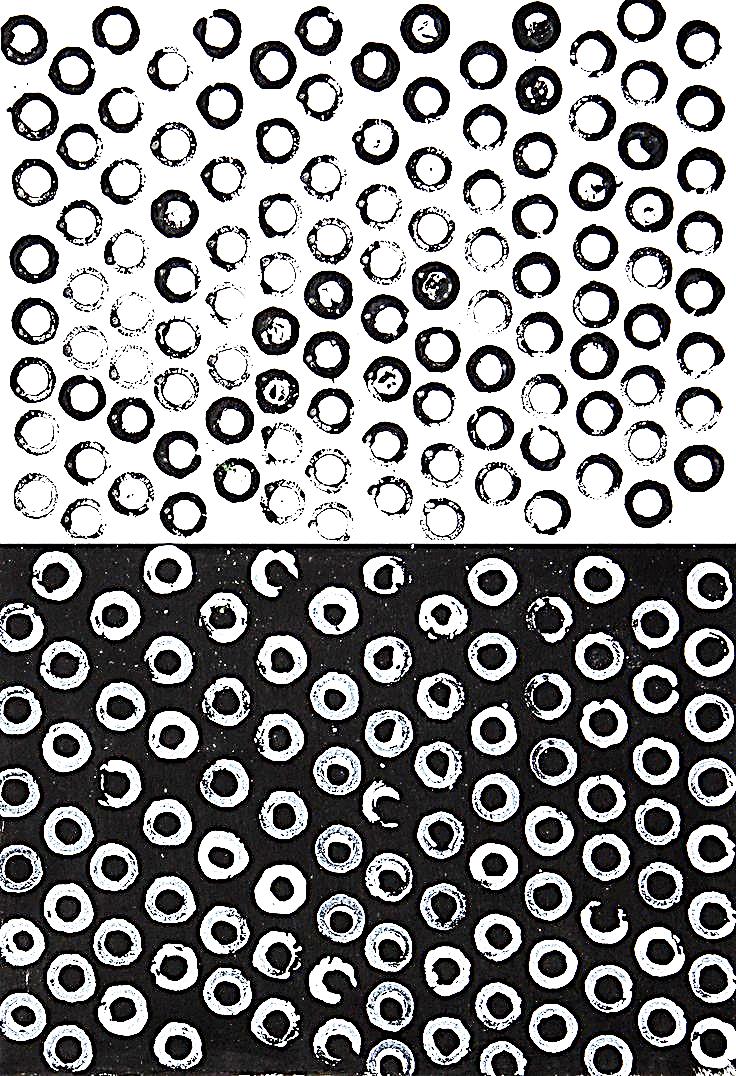
1. Attitude or Position: The way we stand, walk and react with our body.
2. Voice: The way we use our voice, intonation, resonance.
3. Expressions: How we filter emotions and recognise these.

The last workshop will be a recap of these three core workshops, covering all the instruments at once and giving the lead in these classes to the participants instead of the teacher. This will give an impression of the extent to which the teens will be able to use the skills they have supposedly achieved in real life when they are not guided any longer.

Being able to use the instruments consciously practically means that you can manipulate a situation by using your body, voice and expression so that you are not or no longer disadvantaged in a social situation. Equality in conversation is key here.

This is critical in order to create an open environment in which everything that bothers a child, a teenager or preferably everyone can be discussed. This will then hopefully contribute to the eventual breaking of taboos.

In the workshops we shall give options as to what sort of situation a particular skill can be used in.



WORKSHOPS DRAMATIC SKILLS TEACHERS GUIDE

WORLDSCHOOL PWS 2017

**WORKSHOP 1 – Introduction to drama**

In this workshop we shall do some exercises that focus on getting to know each other. Besides this the teacher will open up about him/herself.

Goal: The teenagers participating will feel like that the group they are in is open, non-judgmental and will feel comfortable and secure, also they will know the names of the others in the group.

Teacher's Goal: Get an impression of the openness of the group’s participants and opening up to the teenagers. The teacher needs to show their vulnerability to create an open environment. The knowing of names is a goal for the teacher as well.

1. **Start the workshop by welcoming everyone and making a circle.**

When everyone is present you start by throwing a ball between participants. When you catch the ball you say your name, then you make eye-contact with another person and you throw the ball. Repeat this for a while.

**Teachers note:** *making eye-contact is a form of openness. The teacher can see from the behaviour of students how open they are by noticing how easily they make eye-contact.*

You proceed by making eye-contact with and saying the name of the person you are throwing the ball to, instead of you own name. When you forget a name you ask the person.

When you have done this a couple of rounds and you get the impression names are now familiar to everyone we move on to the next exercise.

1. **The teacher proceeds by standing in the centre of the circle and tells something about him/herself.** This is purely for introduction purposes. When you tell something about yourself, your family and your heritage you set an example for the teenagers who might be weary as to what they have to share with the group.

You move on by asking one of the other participants to move toward the centre of the group and share their introduction. The student in the centre keeps picking the next person, this continues until everyone has spoken.

**Teachers note:** *In this exercise, you get to know a lot about the teens’ body language and their voices. Watch the way they stand, the way they talk and the way they approach others. You shall notice that some participants feel less comfortable than others doing the exercise. Bear this information in mind because treating them more careful might make them feel better. You are responsible for creating a suitable environment.*

Ask the participants to move while they speak, in such a way that they turn while talking and make sure they keep making eye-contact with everyone (turning enables them to look at different people whilst talking).

1. **The next assignment focuses on listening and daring.**

This is an improvisation exercise that consists of two parts. During the story the participants have to listen and individually act out the actions in the story. You will be able to see how well the teenagers respond to certain described feelings, how they interpret these and how well they dare use their body in acting out.

**Story 1 - individual improvisation**

One morning you wake up, completely startled. You realise that you are late for school. Hastily you eat some breakfast. You run outside while taking the quickest way to school.

The only thing you can think about is running, before you know it you trip. Boom! And there you are, lying flat on the ground.

You try to get up, but OW, your foot hurts too much. You cautiously try standing on it.Now you are limping, as you continue your way to school. Already fed up with the day before it had even begun.

You’re walking uphill, through the shadows until you suddenly feel the warm friendly light of the sun hit you. It instantly brightens up your mood.

Your foot starts feeling better. Everything you see has a golden lining because of the sunlight. You can’t help thinking, ah, life is beautiful!

Note: Orange: Action Green: Expression

**Part 2 - group image building**

You divide the group into two. You let one group cover their eyes and ears. The other group you ask to show a still or frozen image of a situation. When they finish you let the other group describe what they see and guess the situation.

What this means is that you let the teenagers work together to form a collective. Give them time to interact and reflect. Let the groups react to each other’s images. It is important to keep asking the participants about their experiences and also what they get from the others, this does not only keep them engaged but it also gives them the consciousness we are looking for.

**Example**

What do most of you find scary?

Example: Thunder.

You ask: Can you show us what it looks like if you were all outside near a big tree and you hear thunder in the distance?

You give the group time to discuss, to interact and finally to form a still image.

When they are done, let the other group describe and guess what they see.

Example: scared faces, people hiding.

Other possible things to ask is, what is a sport you like to play?

Show us a very important match of that game and make clear what game you are playing.

What do you love doing with your friends?

Show us that activity/place and that you are having lots of fun.

What is the dullest class in school?

Show us how you sit in that class and try to show what class it is.

Or you give an assignment such as: You all really like someone, and that someone is walking by and you really want them to see you.

This way is more individual for it requires less discussion and interaction.

You also let the other group have a go at this, and you can repeat this a couple of times as well, depending on how much time you have. After this you thank everyone for participating and end the workshop. You can always ask teens to share their experiences.

**WORKSHOP 2 - Attitude/Position (Body)**

In this workshop we shall start working on one of the body instruments. The way we stand can determine or influence the way we are treated. Being aware of your position and attitude can help create equality in conversation.

Body language is a strong signal. Strength and confidence are messages carried strongly by your body.

Having confidence and strength is important for the breaking of taboos. Confident looking women could be safer for sexual harassment, they might not be subject to violence and inequality in work and education.

Confidence gives people the courage to talk about their issues, seek help and demand things if needed.

Goal: Give the participants the knowledge and awareness of their current behaviour and by exploring find out how they can change and use their body differently. Hopefully in such a manner that they get confidence or know how to adapt in socially challenging situations, like when discussing taboos.

To reach this, we should be aware of what our body does in certain situations, recognise this behaviour and use it consciously.

1. **You start with a physical warming up.**

This will give energy and generate awareness for all physical functions. If possible music to accompany the warming up will enhance the energetic effects.

First a couple of stretches will do, start by gently moving the neck, move slowly to your left, then back centre, to the right, back centre, up, back centre and then down and back centre. Repeat this three times.

Then stretch the arms, as if reaching for something very high, try reaching further with a different arm each. Keep standing on the floor.

Next move the shoulders, make circular movements, first forwards and then after a while backwards.

After this you reach for the floor. Keep your legs straight. Gently stretch and bend a knee at a time whilst keeping you hands and your head down. With every exhale you can reach deeper.

Shake your body in such a way that you move every part of it including head, feet, hands and lips.

**2. We move on with a dialogue role play.**

Let the group form duos. Hand out the dialogues, you can make your own dialogues to fit your group or for variation. We’ve provided two dialogues.

After you’ve given the participants the dialogues, let them discuss what they think A & B want to achieve. When they’ve done this you let them act out the dialogues.

Walk around and listen.

Dialogue 1

A: What’s up.

B: Nothing, leave me alone

A: Don’t you want to talk about it

B: I said it’s nothing. Please go.

A: You will tell me now!

B: No.

Dialogue 2

A: I’m not feeling well.

B: What do you need from me.

A: I want to go home.

B: I can’t help you.

A: Please.

Let them play both role A & B in both dialogues. After they have finished you ask them to make a circle and you evaluate the experiences.

What did they notice? Did they feel like it was easy to get what their character wanted? What was it that they wanted? Why was it easy or difficult?

Listen carefully and repeat a couple of things that the teens named.

3. **Now we’ll do an exploration exercise that focuses on positioning the body.**

Stay in the circle you were in. If you were sitting please stand for this exercise. In the previous exercise you let the participants discuss what their characters wanted, and they have probably noticed things about one another’s body language.

Ask the subjects to think of a pose in which they resemble something; an emotion or a state of mind like: confident, sad, curious, shy, startled, shocked, euphorical or tired for instance.

Let one of the teens come to the centre of the circle and tell them to take the pose they had in mind, walk towards someone and greet them which the body language. The person they greet then has to say what he or she thinks the emotion/state of mind was and when it’s correct they swap. When it isn’t correct the person in the centre has to keep greeting others until either someone guessed it or three people failed to guess.

Let them say their emotion/state of mind out loud. And choose someone to swap places with. Go on until everyone has tried their pose.

When you’re finished come back in the circle and start evaluating. What did they see? Are there certain poses, certain parts of the body that do specific things in resembling situations? Let the participants dig deep to recollect all their experiences. When do they think they can use certain things? In what situations would they be helpful. Ask if there is someone who has a struggle or an issue in which a change of body language might improve the situation. This is personal so don’t dig too deep and be respectful of anything that is named.

4. **Now you’ve done all the evaluating you can make a conclusion.**

Ask the participants to draw a conclusion. What have they learnt and what are they now conscious of that they weren’t before? Listen to different opinions.

5. **Finally recreate the duos from earlier on and take the dialogues.**

You now ask the participants to do their dialogues again, but now using their body language consciously. In dialogue 1 - A is determined and in dialogue 2 - B is determined. So in 1 - B and in 2 - A have to work hard to get what they want. Try first to do the dialogues in a shy and insecure way, and the second time in a determined and confident way.

Dialogue 1 - (B changes from insecure to confident)

A: What’s up.

B: Nothing, leave me alone

A: Don’t you want to talk about it

B: I said it’s nothing. Please go.

A: You will tell me now!

B: No.

Dialogue 2 - (A changes from insecure to confident)

A: I’m not feeling well.

B: What do you need from me.

A: I want to go home.

B: I can’t help you.

A: Please.

When they’ve done this re-evaluate if they noticed changes and how it felt/what

they have experienced.

Thank the group for their participation and end the workshop.

**WORKSHOP 3 - Voice**

Using your voice is important. Using the same words but a different tone can change the intention of what you’re saying, and with that the reaction of others to what you are saying. The way your voice sounds, high or low, steady or trembling, loud or soft also matters. It isn’t only the body language that can change a conversation and or your confidence. It is your voice as well.

Let’s put it this way. The right position sends off a strong signal, and gives yourself a confident feeling. The right voice is what will convince others that you are strong and confident. Do mind that aggressiveness is not the same thing as confidence and that you don’t just use your voice to sound confident, but also to reach others, shy people, hurt or sad people, you need to consciously use your voice. Kindness and trust is gained by proper use of your voice.

Goal: Reaching awareness of the use of voice in conversation. And knowing all the different aspects of the voice that can be used in various situations. Hopefully this will contribute to a comfortable atmosphere in which taboos can be discussed and sounding confident.

1. **We start with a warming up of the voice.**

First it is important that you briefly warm up your neck and shoulders, do the rotating exercises discussed in the previous workshop. Then you ask the participants to push their lips together and blow air through them, if you do this correctly your lips will vibrate and a “prrr”- like sound will come from your lips. It might tickle as well. Relaxation is key here.

Next make chewing motions with your jaw and rotate your hands on your cheeks while you are doing this.

2. **Then we move on with a dialogue role play.**

Let the participants form duos, different ones than the ones they have worked in during the previous workshop. Hand out the dialogues and let the duos play both characters in each dialogue. Of course you can add your own dialogues. We have provided two. Let the participants discuss what they think their character wants to achieve. When they have done this let them act the dialogues out.

Dialogue 1

A: Give that back!

B: It’s mine.

A: I don’t think so.

B: Do you want it?

A: No, you can have it.

Dialogue 2

A: Hey, are you okay?

B: Yes

A: If something is wrong, you can tell me.

B: Thanks, but I’m fine.

A: Alright. Sorry for bothering you.

B: No problem.

This time instead of watching, listen whilst walking around. Listen to the different aspects of their voices. What you can do is watch whether the participants use their bodies. This is just a way to check whether the previous workshop had lasting effects.

Listen to the height of the tones, to the resonance and the intonation.

When the teens are done form a circle and evaluate the exercise. Did they clearly understand each other’s intentions? Why was this clear? Why not? Did they notice something in their voices? What are the things that define the intention of the character? Let the teens name everything they can remember, help them if necessary with the things you noticed yourself.

Dialogue 1 B - Consciously uses its voice in a confident and indifferent way.

B: Give that back!

A: It’s mine.

B: I don’t think so.

A: Do you want it?

B: No, you can have it.

Dialogue 2 A - Tries to use their voice in a more friendly way.

A: Hey, are you okay?

B: Yes

A: If something is wrong, you can tell me.

B: Thanks, but I’m fine.

A: Alright. Sorry for bothering you.

B: No problem.

3. **We shall continue with an exploration exercise.**

In this exercise you really let the participants explore what their voices can do. Ask them to form groups of three (or two or four depending on the size of the group). When they have formed a group instruct them.

The groups get five to ten minutes to make a soundscape. They need to come up with a story. A simple story but with very different elements. They cannot use words, only sounds.

One group will perform their soundscape while the rest covers their eyes. When it’s over the rest has to tell what they thought happened in the story, and why. Who was feeling what at what time and how did we notice? What were the things that you recognised in using yourself? Who was dominant? How do you know this?

Repeat until every group has shared their soundscape. Make sure to evaluate after every group. Repetition will increase the consciousness. Also when the participants try to describe something they heard, let them make the sounds themselves. Experiencing the conscious use of voice is after all what we are trying to achieve.

4. **Now you can draw a conclusion together**

Ask the participants to sit in a circle again. What are the things that stood out? What do you think you can use in a conversation?

What aspects of the voice do you use in that particular situation? When do you think you can use your voice consciously?

Then finally ask if anyone knows another person who might benefit from the awareness created. Remember this is a personal question, listen to every story and respect these. Opening up is a very big deal for some people. In these situations your knowledge from workshop 1 comes in handy.

5. **Form the duos from the beginning and redo the dialogues.**

You take the dialogues back and reform the same duos as we started with this workshop. Do the dialogues again. First try to do dialogue 1 with an insecure, or intimidated voice, and later with a confident/indifferent tone.

Dialogue 2 can be tried aggressively or pushy, and the second time friendly and gentle. Really try hard in both dialogues to adapt your voice to the intention that you gave the character.

Come back in a circle when everyone is done and re-evaluate the dialogues. What has changed since the first dialogues. What did you notice? Did your intention become clearer now you consciously use your voice? Also ask if they were conscious of their body language. Don’t be judgmental when they admit that they don’t. Also ask whether since the last workshop they notice differences in their day to day life. Thank everyone for their participation and end the workshop

**WORKSHOP 4 - Expressions**

Recognizing and filtering emotions and expressions can be really helpful. Take taboos for instance, some taboos like homosexuality or abortion are really personal and emotional matters.

Not being able, or not feeling confident or comfortable enough to discuss them or act on them can spark really vivid emotions like anger, sadness and anxiety.

When you are conversing with a person who doesn’t treat you as equal for instance an elderly person in your community like a grandparent but also teachers, parents, spouses or like a reverent, you have to be strong.

It might be helpful to be able to filter your emotions, especially when you want to seem confident.

Mind that we definitely do not encourage shutting out emotions completely. On the contrary, discussing these and letting these out is very important but isn’t likely to happen when the environment doesn’t accept these feelings.

We want to give people strength, using these workshops to stand for themselves, to address their issues and demand acceptance.

Besides this we need to use our instruments consciously, after the acceptance is gained, to create an environment for the offspring and the next generations to live in a place where they are safe to discuss and seek help for anything that bothers them.

Sometimes you need to show your emotions to show your vulnerability. You want others to realise that all the issues are human, are normal and are safe to discuss.

Also being honest and open about your own feelings might enhance the trust and comfort that others might find in you.

This is why we started the workshops by having the teacher to tell some personal information. It is important to engage. All anecdotes are welcome. The workshops are purely a guideline.

Goal: Create awareness of your emotions, recognize these in yourself and others and know when to show and when not to show these emotions.

1. **We start with a warming up.**

In this warming up you come up with all kinds of different feelings and emotions, you combine these with a specific body part. So for instance, a sad head, an exited left hand or a tired right leg. You name a combination. Everyone has to now move that body part in that way.

Now ask everyone to start walking, and slowly but surely ask them to transform the whole of their bodies into that emotion, led by the body part they started with. You will notice that everyone is walking around in a different way, but that there are a lot of similarities as well.

Repeat this exercise a couple of times, start from a standing position, and progress into walking and changing slowly, keep changing the feeling and the leading body part.

You can ask for suggestions as well.

2. **We continue the workshop with a dialogue role play.**

Let the group form duos, different ones preferably than the ones they have worked in during previous workshops. Hand out the dialogues. This time a little more preparation is needed. You ask the participants to decide what the situation is. That means, think of what might have just happened, also who you are in relation to one another, and what the main emotion is of the characters.

Then they can decide the intentions, we have provided two dialogues but feel free to add more for variation. Give the participants a couple of minutes to decide what they are going to do, what intentions, what emotions, which characters and the situation.

Dialogue 1

A: We have to talk about this.

B: Is this about what I think it is? If it is, I’m not listening.

A: But I’m struggling, it hurts.

B: Life is hard sometimes. We all hurt.

A: Please

Dialogue 2

B: It’s time that you start listening.

A: What are you talking about?

A: Is this a joke?

B: No it is not a joke, we are done with this.

A: What are you asking of me?

B: You need to treat us better. We deserve respect.

Walk around, watch and listen. This way you can keep track of things you notice, similarities between different groups, and you can see whether the instruments from the past two workshops are used.

Let the participants act the dialogues out both ways. When they are done you ask them to come in a circle.

You ask if there is a duo that wouldn’t mind performing their dialogue in front of the rest of the group. If nobody volunteers ask a duo directly.

Let the group evaluate what they are seeing, what the situation might be. How do they know this?

If more than one group wants to perform that is fine. When you are done with that you come back into the the circle and start a general evaluation. How come you know when someone is feeling a particular emotion. What sort of situations lead to these emotions? Where there things that the group noticed in each other. Did you let the emotion shine through the whole way? Or did it work better if you didn’t show the emotion (of course depending on the intention)?

3. **The next assignment is a mirror image assignment, which is based on action and reaction.**

Form new duos. Everybody picks a place to stand, across from the partner. The participants have to think for themselves of an emotion, they will act as if they are in that emotion. They start off with a mild version. Across there is a person (the partner) the participants need to look at each other.

Let them interact, the point is that they need to act upon the other’s emotion. How does that influence their own emotion at the time?

**Example:**

My emotion: Sad

Their emotion: Angry

That might make me angry too, or it might make the sadness worse.

A happy emotion from a partner might cheer me up, but it could possibly annoy me as well.

Let them go on for a bit, then call: ‘Switch partners!’, and the group has to mix up. This way they get to work with all different emotions and people. And one emotion from someone might trigger a different response as the same emotion but from another person.

When you have mixed a couple of times call everyone together and reform the circle. Start evaluating, how was it? Do you think this is what could happen in reality as well? Would you recommend always showing your emotion? Why or why not? What did you notice? Are there emotions that trigger the same response for a lot of people?

Keep asking and sometimes you can ask the participant speaking to elaborate, this way it is clear for everyone.

4. **Now you can draw a conclusion together.**

What situations benefit from the conscious use of emotions? Could you use this skill in real life? Why, and when? What are the things you already did? Are there things that you think you could change by using this skill? Is there anyone who wants to tell us a situation? This is again personal so always be kind and respectful.

5. **Reform the duos from the beginning and give them time to reconstruct their situation etc.**

Now, the question is; how do you achieve what you want to achieve? Give them a bit of time to think about it.

Now let them redo the dialogues. Really focusing on how they use their emotions, skillfully adapted to the situation. (Dialogues on the page below).

When the duos finish their dialogues, come back into the circle and re-evaluate them.

What has happened since the beginning? Did it work better? Ask for a couple of situations and to what works best in them according to the participants. What didn’t work?

Dialogue 1

A: We have to talk about this.

B: Is this about what I think it is? If it is, I’m not listening.

A: But I’m struggling, it hurts.

B: Life is hard sometimes. We all hurt.

A: Please

Dialogue 2

B: It’s time that you start listening.

A: What are you talking about?

A: Is this a joke?

B: No it is not a joke, we are done with this.

A: What are you asking of me?

B: You need to treat us better. We deserve respect.

Thank the teens for their participation and end the workshop.

**WORKSHOP 5 - RECAP**

In the last three workshops we have worked on various dramatic skills. We did this by defining three body instruments. We think it's important that now, when the workshops draw to a close we do a sort of check.

So far we've assisted the teens during the workshops, but after today they need to carry on doing what they've learnt in a very real life situation.

Today will give you an idea of whom has successfully gained consciousness and those who still need practice. You could, possibly, extend the workshops for those who need it. Simply adapt the workshops a little in this case.

The check-up in this final workshop is in the form of a great improvisation. You don't assist the participants but you let them discuss, work together and use their instruments without assistance.

This can be tough as well. Make sure everybody feels comfortable.

Goal: for everybody to experience how to combine the learnt dramatic skills and how to use them independently.

When all instruments are used correctly and consciously, (correctly means fit for your intention, which is personal) dramatic skills we believe, contributes to a better or improved communicational environment in which Ghanaian teens might just be able to start breaking taboos.

Mind that the workshops can be used for other countries as well, after some research into the necessity and the customs.

1. **We get started with a warming up.**

Ask the participants to warm up their instruments. Tell them to think of the other workshops and their warming ups.

Get in a circle, one participant at a time will get to name an exercise in the warming up. When everybody has done this exercise they swap places with someone else and this continues until either everyone has done one round or until the participants can't think of new exercises.

**Examples are:**

Shaking the body

Stretching arms or legs

Rotate neck or shoulders, hips can be rotated as well.

Massage the cheeks

Blowing air through the lips

Try not to intervene as much as possible. This whole workshop focusses mainly on giving the lead to the participants, and assessing their skills.

2. **Move on in the circle, the next assignment focuses on recap.**

One by one ask each participant to present to others what they’ve learnt. Also ask them to use examples, show us in body, voice or expression.

Every group member will add their own experiences.

**Example questions:**

Has it helped you?

Did you feel confident?

How did the people react?

Are you going to do it again?

Were you nervous?

Did you have to try hard?

Did it help you reach what you intended to?

Besides a recap of the lesson material, ask them to finish their summary with a moment in their day to day life that they have applied conscious use of their dramatic skills. Let the other ask questions about this situation.

3. **Now get ready for the group improvisation. Split the group into two.**

The two groups now face the ultimate test, in the form of a big group assignment. The idea is that the groups sit together and make up a story. There are a couple of items that have to be included:

**Obligatory items:**

The conflict/situation is about a problem or issue that is faced by the teenage population.

The characters need to have a clear intention.

The improvisation must include examples of conscious use of body, voice and expression.

The improvisation can’t last over five minutes.

Be respectful in the co- operation.

The teens now get 15 minutes to prepare their improvisation. Encourage them to be experimental and try rather than discuss it only. Monitor closely that everyone has a say in the preparation, intervene only when this is not the case.

Leave the teens to prepare independently, do watch the teens closely as you will be able to notice progression this way. You can, if you wish, give the participants feedback after the workshops.

The groups watch each other when they are ready to perform.

Evaluate when they are finished what they recognized, what is was about, if it was clear, what the intentions were and how these were visible. Also ask if they recognized the issue and or something similar.

What could the other group have done differently?

4. **From this evaluation you will be able to draw a final conclusion.**

What do the teens feel about their performances? Do they feel skilled enough to keep applying their new knowledge in real life? Do they think it can contribute to a better communicative environment? Will it help breaking taboos?

5. **Finally open a discussion, on the workshops. What could be better/different?**

What was the atmosphere, would they recommend others. Are there other things the teens want to discuss give them room to do so, especially with each other. Normalizing taboos in conversation is a great step in the right direction.

Thank the participants one last time and end the workshop.

**Chapter 7- Discussion**

As in every research paper, there are aspects that can be improved. These could be for example generalisations, interpretations or lack of depth. In this discussion we will name these aspects so they can be kept in mind whilst reading this paper or in future research.

General research

There are a few factors in the general research which need to be taken into account.

**Generalisation of Ghana**

The first point of discussion is our generalisation of Ghana and its culture. Ghana is a complex country with many different ethnic groups with their own culture. Each of  these cultures have their own taboos and communicational customs as well. We have based our workshops on general customs and taboos in Ghana, but these are not the same in all parts of the country. For using these workshops a few alterations might be necessary depending on the region they are applied to.

**Western perspective**

This paper is written from a western perspective, as are the workshops. As we are both raised in the western world and no experts on Ghanaian perspectives, we have written this paper from our own westernized worldview. This has influenced this research strongly, for our morals and thought processes are interwoven in this social-cultural topic. To make this project work it will be necessary to include local population to ensure the use of the local perspectives.

**Literature based research**

This research is heavily based on literature, and not so much on practical research. We were of course not able to travel to Ghana and do our research there, but that could benefit further research. We have taught the basics of the workshops to students here in the Netherlands, from which we can conclude that it has a possibility to work, but we do not know whether the same results will be achieved in Ghana. Literature based research is usually influenced by the author, which results in slightly subjective information. However, by using many different sources we hope we have balanced this out a bit.

**Workshops are not a solution**

The workshops we have designed for this project are not a solution to the taboos in Ghana. They simply provide Ghanaian teens with a set of skills they could use for breaking taboos. However, we do see that just these workshops won’t be enough to solve the problem, as these root deep within Ghanaian culture. To achieve beneficial results from these workshops, there will have to be made big changes within Ghana. Furthermore, the skills taught in these workshops are quite basic, and will have to be practiced often to achieve results, simply teaching four workshops might minimalize the benefits.

Sub questions

We will now list a few notes concerning the sub questions.

**Geographical influence on culture**

Some of the data used might be not entirely accurate. As we’ve used GB 53, some numbers have increased or decreased and some climate data might be slightly outdated. However, we do not expect the reality to be very different from the data used.

**Political influence on culture**

·           An important note in this sub question is that there is a big difference between the official politics and the actual application in society. As we have no direct means of experiencing the application of politics in Ghana, we have focussed on the official politics.

·          Another important factor is that part of our information is quite subjective. Governmental websites might be partly propaganda, as could some western sites and papers.

**Economical influence on culture**

·          To estimate the average development of Ghana, we have used the GDP. However, it is important to note that this is not an entirely reliable as it does not include income inequality and the informal sector.

·          Concerning the trade in Ghana, we have not included the trade balance. Ghana exports mostly raw materials and imports more complex products. This might influence the international influence in Ghana, in that it is possible there is some sort of resentment due to the negative trade balance.

**most pressing taboos**

*.* It is difficult to say which taboos are most pressing, as there is no way of measuring it. For this sub question we have chosen the taboos that we found to be discussed often concerning Ghana, and of which we could clearly see they are very present.

. The source used for the menstruation taboo is primarily about Akan culture. As this is the biggest culture in Ghana we have made the generalisation that this is a pressing taboo in all of Ghana.

**Locating pressing taboos**

·          We have used official data regarding homosexuality and abortion, but this does not tell us how it is in reality. Ghana is officially not very strict on these topics, but socially they are not accepted, and the government does nothing to better this situation

·          Factors like androcentrism or strictness of government are very difficult to measure. As they are based on perspective and opinion, these factors are heavily influenced by our western perspective in this research paper.

**Why use dramatic skills**

. The sources used in this sub question are mostly written by western authors and those researches have been done with western teens and students. We expect  similar results with Ghanaian teens, but of this we cannot be a hundred percent sure.

**Which dramatic skills fit best**

. The skills we use are basic communicational skills, used for various purposes. They are not designed to break taboos, but do help improving the communication of Ghanaian teens by adapting them to fit our goal which will be illustrated in the workshops.

**Communicative factors**

·          The communicative customs differ quite a lot between ethnic groups, we have made a list of general customs. Depending on the region, we’d advice researching which customs apply to that ethnic group.

·          Some customs and taboos listed hear would ideally be broken, partly with this project. Things like the hierarchical structure are listed here mostly or first meetings but will hopefully fade overtime.

·          There are some customs that differ between age groups. The choice of words of teenagers are different than that of elderly, which results in different communicational customs.

**Ghanaian English**

·          For this sub question we have made the generalisation of west-African English. There are small differences between west-African countries, but these are generally quite small. Because we find it important to understand the local population we did want to include this sub question and have therefore decided to make this generalisation, as there is near to no information on Ghanaian English itself.

·          This sub question is mostly intended to learn to understand Ghanaian English, not to use it in the workshops. We assume Ghanaians can understand British English, and we wish to include locals, which will eliminate big language misunderstandings.

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**Logbooks**

Nynke Ariesen:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What | when | time |
| meetings Marjan Macco | During year 5 | 4 hours |
| Meetings Sijtsma | During year 5 | 2 hours |
| Plan of action | During year 5 | 2 hours |
| PWS week | July 2016 | 20 hours |
| MW PWS hours | Tuesdays 6&7th | 8 hours |
| Planning | 15-09-16 | 1 hour |
| hypotheses | 18-9-16 | 1 hour |
| Subquestion politics | 25-09-16 | 4,5 hours |
| Meeting Jorritsma | 27-09-16 | 1 hour |
| Sub question economics | 2-10-16 | 2 hours |
| Sub question economics | 6-10-16 | 2 hours |
| Sub question taboo environment | 11-10-16 | 2 hours |
| sub question taboo environment | 16-10-16  23-10 | 1 hour  3 hours |
| Sub question previous project | 17-11-16 | 2 hours |
| 20-11-16 | 3 hours |
| Sub question communication | 27-11-16  30-11-16 | 2 hours  2 hours |
| Sub question linguistics | 04-12-17 | 5 hours |
| Conclusions | 11-12-16  20-12-16,  21-12-16 | 3,5 hours  2,5 hours  2,5 hours |
| Introduction workshops | 2-02-17 | 4 hours |
| Discussion | 09-02-17 | 4 hours |
| Introduction | 14-02-17 | 1 hours |
| Conclusions | 14-02-17 | 3 hours |
| 16-02-17 | 2 hours |
| References | 16-02-17 | 3,5 hours |
| Lay-out | 16-02-17 | 3 hours |

Evelien Jager:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What | When | Time |
| Inleiding | 18- 09- 16 | 1 uur |
| Planning | 15- 09- 16 | 1 uur |
| Bronnen zoeken | 20- 09- 16 | 3 uur |
| Deelvraag Geschiedenis | September 2016 | 3.5 uur |
| Gesprek Jorritsma | 27 –09- 16 | 1 uur |
| Avond Going Global | Eind 2015 | 2.5 uur |
| Gesprek Jantsje Koopmans | Eind 2015 | 1 uur |
| Workshop opzet maken | Eind 2015 | 4.5 uur |
| Workshop uitwerken | Begin 2016 | 4 uur |
| Workshop geven voorbereidingsdag Going Global | 16 januari 2016 (geloof ik) | 8 uur |
| Gesprekken Marjan Macco | Gedurende vorig jaar | 8 uur |
| Gesprekken Sijtsma | Gedurende vorig jaar | 2 uur |
| PWS-week | Juli 2016 | 20 uur |
| Plan van aanpak | Gedurende leerjaar 5 | 2 uur |
| MW PWS uren | Dinsdags 6e & 7e uur | 4 uur |
| Deelvraag 1.1 | Oktober 2016 | 4 uur |
| Deelvraag 1.2 | Oktober 2016 | 2 uur |
| Deelvraag 2.1 | November 2016 | 6.5 uur |
| Deelvraag 2.2 | November 2016 | 4 uur |
| Deelvraag 3.1 | December 2016 | 2 uur |
| Deelvraag 3.2 | December 2016 | 5 uur |
| Opmaak | 21- 12- 2016 | 5 uur |
| Maken van de workshop | 13- 14 – 16 – 17 Feb ‘17 | 34 uur |