

# TALKING THROUGH DANCE: THE CASE OF VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN VILNIUS TRADITIONAL DANCE CLUB

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## Abstract

‘I wanted to talk through dance and I don’t know why’ Jonas said and danced all night with great vividness. This essay examines the verbal and non-verbal communication during participatory folk dancing in Vilnius traditional dance club (Nahachevsky, 1995), using participant observation, semi-structured interview and online survey methods. Over sixty amateur dancers come every Thursday to dance and communicate, but they are free to choose their preferred form: if they feel uncomfortable, they can talk – use *verbal* communication during the dance and it will likely serve them to reduce stress and help relax; if they come for *physical* proximity and the direct communication of bodies, it is completely normal, and the vivid music will facilitate that; and if they wish to feel *emotional* proximity with a partner they will embrace him or her closer and will start to pay more attention to the music and the emotional ups and downs of the partner. Regardless of age, experience or attitudes, all people seek to ‘susiškoti’ (to ‘dance harmoniously’ in English). Even though the dance club is the place where the man can learn to lead firmly and the woman can ‘feel feminine’ because she can trust the man, the increasingly popular swapping of the couple roles help them share the perspectives and responsibilities of their roles with the partner. People can even experience the state of *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), if they happen to dance with a good dancer or an old friend and beautiful melodies help them lose their everyday pains, tiredness and troubles. Though they exert themselves physically, dancers also rest here because their experience here is immensely pleasurable and fulfilling.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. *Etic* perspective

At the beginning of 2018, I have travelled with Vilnius traditional dance club to Latvia's dance festival and during the 8 hours bus trip I have discussed and collected some valuable insights about the dance repertoire and communication with dancers. They named three levels of communication during the dance: verbal, kinesthetic and emotional/spiritual. However, the communication processes themselves were not clear, yet the conversations made me interested and willing to get more. One experienced dancer reported his 'best dance experience': it happened in Prague's *balfolk* dance festival, while he was dancing a mazurka with one woman. They did not talk at all – during the dance, before or after it, but he felt so close to her. He added that 'we experienced spiritual proximity and something... very remarkable'. During this conversation, his friend interrupted us by asking 'Well, but did *she* feel the same? How do you know if you did not talk to her?' It was the 'aha!' moment for me, which crystallized the questions that concerned me: must dance communication necessarily be two-sided, and how can we know which form of communication we experience, and if we really do so. Does silence during the dance strengthen the communication, or to the opposite, weaken it? These questions prompted me to start research in this direction, and in my further investigation, communication came to be divided into three seemingly clear types: verbal, kinesthetic and emotional/spiritual.

Communication is a wide topic and subject of a research field called communication studies. However, as John Fiske argues in his book 'Introduction to the communication studies', 'communication is one of those human activities that everyone recognizes but few can define satisfactorily' (Fiske 2010:1), and perhaps as a result, the subject of communication is interconnected with many other study subjects. Fiske adds that communication consists of signs

and codes, the particular order of which creates the system according to which communication happens. Moreover, codes and signs have different meanings in different cultures, and they are tightly integrated with social practices of the communities, so every sign and code must be considered in the context of a particular social practice and as a component of the entire culture (Fiske 2010:2).

Anthropological study of bodily codes and signs has been performed by a scholar Thomas J. Csordas in his article ‘Somatic modes of attention’, where he analyses the relations of embodiment and textuality and indicates the need to ‘specify that a somatic mode of attention means not only attention to and with one's own body, but includes attention to the bodies of others. Our concern is the cultural elaboration of sensory engagement, not preoccupation with one's own body as an isolated phenomenon’ (1993:139). In the context of dance, this suggests that the body in dance situations should be perceived within the context of other bodies, which naturally leads to the considerations of dance communication. It implies that attention during the dance should not be limited within the confines of one's own body but also include the bodies of the surrounding dancers.

A number of dance anthropologists are studying the relations between bodies and the particular cultural backgrounds. In particular, Andrée Grau in her article ‘Dancing Bodies, Spaces/Places and the Senses: A Cross-Cultural Investigation’ (2012) presents several examples of different cultural systems of body, space and senses, and in this way she distances herself from other dance scholars in the field who analyse these components without the rich cultural context that accompanies them. Grau suggests that we should understand the body as an integral part of a particular cultural system. She argues:

‘Sensing, feeling and thinking, for example, are all part of human knowledge, and they do not operate in isolation. They are, however, different ways of apprehending the world. It is only through an investigation of the many distinctive channels experienced in dance that one will understand the phenomena better.’ (Grau 2012:7)

In a similar vein, the present study investigates dancing bodies within the context of the particular community and set of social norms, and investigates those aspects through the different ways that people perceive dance through verbal-intellectual, sensory and feeling channels of information.

Mary M. Smyth in her article ‘Kinesthetic communication in dance’ (1984) discusses the term ‘kinesthetic’ and describes kinesthetic communication as ‘the sense of movements of one’s own body, which is derived from movement information provided by receptors in joints, muscles, tendons and skin’ (Smyth 1984:19). Moreover, Sherrington (1906) suggests to analyse kinesthetic communication through the channels by which different types of kinesthetic information is received: *exteroception*, *interoception* and *proprioception*. *Exteroception* indicates that the information is received through the external senses – the traditional five senses of smell, sight, hearing, touch and taste provide us with such information. *Interoception* provides an internal source of information such as pain or other feelings from the viscera. Finally, *proprioception* is the intermediate between *exteroception* and *interoception* in that it refers to information coming from the joints, tendons and muscles.

Nevertheless, kinesthetic communication was mainly investigated in the context of the performative practices, such as ballet or modern dance, and few scholars study communication in folk dances. The collaborative study by Miriam Uhrinová, Mária Kožuchová and Jozef Zentko ‘Folk dance as a tool of mutual communication with regard to primary education’ identifies folk dance as the tool for ‘mutual verbal and non-verbal communication between

people' (Uhrinová, Kožuchová & Jozef, 2016:1). Despite the apparent relevance of the study, the communication during *participatory* folk dance (Nahachewsky, 1995) did not receive a lot of attention from the researchers. Nevertheless, they provide important insights about the functions of dance, and call it the social mediator for the modern society.

The present study is an attempt to close an important gap in understanding how different communication patterns unfold during the participatory dance practices in the field of traditional dancing in Lithuania, using three categories of dance communication – verbal, physical and emotional.

### **World context**

Folk dance was started to be conceptualized and collected by ethnographers predominantly at the end of the nineteenth century, although in Central Europe researchers started to notice folk culture one century before. According to Theresa Buckland (1983), the term 'folk', which is still alive today, was the construct of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. For a long time, this term was used by those in the positions of power to describe the 'labouring rural poor' and 'this term reflected the attitude of the collector, rather than the reality of informants' status' (Buckland, 1983:316).

The folk dance revival movement whose mission was to cultivate *participatory* dance tradition has started in the late nineteenth century in Europe and was conceived as a democratic social activity and propagated by folk dance societies. The revival movement strived to empower and encourage people to shift from passive dance observance to active participation in dance. In 1891, Artur Hazelius opened Skansen Open Air Museum in Sweden where local people were invited to teach museum visitors to dance. Two years later Hazelius helped to establish the 'Sweden folk dance friends' ('*Svenska Folkdansens Vänner*') society, which made

an essential contribution to folk dance revival movement. Soon similar associations were established in Denmark, Norway, England, and Scotland and shortly after folk dance revival movements were spread all over Europe. During the twentieth century, folk dance has grown to be conceived as a healthy, expressive and patriotic way of leisure activity. Folk dancing became the expression of national self-awareness, action in heritage preservation and was widely integrated into children and adults' education (Urbanavičienė, 2004). The new wave of folk dance revival in Europe has started in 1960s, at the same time as the new generation of Scandinavian folk dance clubs entered the movement.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the cultural and political relaxation from repressive regime (the so-called Khrushchev's Thaw) started with the death of Joseph Stalin (the USSR leader) in 1953 and the new leader Nikita Khrushchev undertaking de-Stalinization of the Soviet Union by creating 'peaceful coexistence with other nations' (Naruševičiūtė, 2008:6). By the early 1970s, the atmosphere of political warming has created a space for 'movement away from big grand performances, flags, and parades, and towards amateur ethnographic research, and the development of 'alternative lifestyles'.' (Taylor, 2004:100). In Hungary, the folk dance revival movement called *táncház* ('dance house'), which was closely connected with other youth movements at the time, sought to safeguard the legacy of Hungarian folk music and keep folk dances alive by organizing public folk dance events and summer camps.

### **The movement of ethno-culture in Lithuania**

In Lithuania and in other Eastern Europe countries, the term 'folk' was established during the twentieth century, specifically the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. According to an Estonian scholar Sille Kapper (2016), the term 'folk' must be considered in terms of the colonial and post-colonial experience. The term accommodates various different dance types which are still

in use: stage folk dance, authentic folk dance ‘in the field’ (Buckland, 1999) and socially interactive traditional folk dance which thrives in the Eastern European folk dance clubs. Indeed, folk dance is a complex subject whose history was strongly shaped power relationships and the multiple layers of cultural and national self-awareness.

Lithuania experienced the political warming of the Soviet Union with largely similar social developments as Hungary. During the Soviet occupation (1940–1990), the ethno-cultural movement had an essential role in gathering people and forming and strengthening communities. Of particular importance to the movement was the Society of Regional Studies (the so-called ‘Ramuva’), established in Vilnius University in 1957. Altogether, the ethno-cultural movement offered an alternative to the totalitarian regime and according to Ainė Ramonaitė and Rytė Kukulskytė (2014) it had an essential role in the Reform Movement of Lithuania in the late 1990s and early 2000s that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and independence of the country.

The society ‘Ramuva’ organized expeditions to rural areas and in-depth investigation and collection of traditional Lithuanian culture and its heritage, customs, musical and dance folklore. The society has also organised social dance events with local people during expeditions in order to learn local dance repertoire directly from *heirs*<sup>1</sup> and dance it later in social dance events in Vilnius University. Such activity was an alternative to the mainstreamed stylized folk dances which were stage-directed and shaped by the Soviet propaganda and performed by state-sponsored folk ensembles all around the Soviet Union (Jurkutė, 2011:21).

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<sup>1</sup> Here ‘heirs’ refer to Bakka’s (1992) distinction between heir and user: members of ethnographical ensembles correspond to heirs, while members of folklore ensembles – to users.

Folk dances organised or performed by the 'Ramuva' society were opposed to stylised stage performances of the state folk groups; in contrast, their activities were dedicated to self-entertainment and community-building. Despite their deep and long-lasting influence, 'Ramuva' society had broken after fifteen years of activity, and other initiatives of folk dance events also failed to develop into long term maintenance. 'Folk dance events were happening during the folk festivals and concerts, but it was dedicated for folk group members not for the use of public' (Ivanauskaitė, 2011:9).

In contemporary Lithuania, interest in ethno-culture is clearly diminished, compared with the 1980s and 1990s, when together with 'Sąjūdis' (the Lithuanian Reform movement) the ethno-culture movement had reached its peak. The shrinking of ethno-culture-oriented study programs in higher education institutions, as well as the lack of experts in the Ministry of culture and meagre funding attests to a complicated situation for traditional culture in contemporary Lithuania.

Members of cultural and political elite claim that ethno-culture is an old-fashioned subject. The official brochure of 'Kaunas European Capital of Culture 2022' exemplifies this attitude well: an interview about the Lithuanian polyphonic songs 'Sutartinės' (acknowledged as part of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage) was the only single piece of text representing the traditional culture amongst the 25 cultural initiatives in the brochure. It might signal that the traditional culture is not developing in pace with the modern conception of culture in Lithuania, or that ethno-culture still suffers from its use for propaganda during the Soviet regime, during which it was infested with the false pathos of soviet socialism and might still evoke associations for the contemporary cultural and political elite.

## Traditional dance clubs in Lithuania

Contemporary Lithuania folk dance can be distinguished into three distinct categories according to the dance function: stylized stage (*sceninis stilizuotas*), authentic stage (*sceninis 'autentiškas'*) and authentic social (*socialinis 'autentiškas'*) folk dancing (Jurkutė, 2011). All three 'folk' dance trends exist and develop in parallel in Lithuania as well as other post-Soviet countries. However, this study is focused on *participatory* dance activity – authentic social folk dancing. Kapper describes 'traditional folk dance' as 'an integral part of folklore, defined as artistic communication in small groups, variable depending on its location, time and social context.' (2016:94). The author agrees and in order to avoid confusion of terms, the term 'traditional' will be used throughout the study instead of 'folk' which, in Lithuania, is already connoted with stylised stage folk dancing since the Soviet period. Moreover, the term "traditional" was promoted by Lithuanian ethnochoreologist Dalia Urbanavičienė (2004) a few decades ago and now is well established in the ethno-cultural movement. The term 'traditional dance' is associated with the dance movement where the refined form of folk dance is not fundamental but rather optional to it because people perform it for their own pleasure.

Ethnochoreologist Dalia Urbanavičienė has founded the Traditional dance club in Vilnius in 2002 because she was inspired by her previous trips to Scandinavian folk dance clubs and Hungarian *táncház* dance houses. Urbanavičienė wanted to make traditional Lithuanian dances available for everyone, not only for the members of folk groups who were already familiar with the Lithuanian traditional dance heritage. Vilnius traditional dance club was the first of a kind in Lithuania. The news had spread quickly, and soon after similar dance clubs had opened in other cities: Kaunas in 2008, Varėna in 2009, Šiauliai in 2009, Klaipėda in 2012 and the most recent, Utena in 2016. In Latvia (Rīgas Danču klubs) and Estonia (Tallinna tantsuklubi), similar

dance clubs had started one decade before, and the Belarusian traditional dance club (Клуб традыцыйнага танца) was established in 2012. Nevertheless, all these traditional dance clubs in Eastern Europe ‘remained among small and closed circle of companions, whose impact was small in comparison to the dominant visual position of stage dance’ (Kapper, 2016:104).

Dance events in Vilnius and Klaipėda dance clubs happens once a week, in Kaunas twice a month, and in other cities – once a month or less frequently. All of these clubs have different style, community and other characteristics, but all of them celebrate *participatory* dance (Nahachewsky, 1995) and self-entertainment with live traditional music. These communities also aim to create social interactions between members despite their social, gender, age and physical differences.

Traditional dance club in Vilnius collaborates with dance clubs from Riga, Tallinn and Minsk and invite dancers and musicians to teach their dances in Lithuania. Some taught dances are well established in the repertoire of traditional dance clubs around Lithuania. Moreover, members of Riga, Tallinn and Minsk dance clubs participate and teach every year in the Traditional dance summer camp in Lithuania. Consequently, the dance repertoire consists not only of Lithuanian dances, but also dances from Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Poland, France, Portugal, Ireland and other countries, although Lithuanian melodies are still played most often.

However, there is one more traditional dance club in Vilnius called ‘Raskila’ and some people who participate in both clubs have identified differences between them. Vilnius traditional dance club differs from ‘Raskila’ in that the participants of the former are generally younger people of student years (just one-third are older than 30 years), meanwhile the majority of participants in ‘Raskila’ are mature and elderly people. The repertoire is different too: there are more dances from foreign countries in the traditional dance club, meanwhile in ‘Raskila’,

the majority of dances are from Lithuania (Mantas, Karolina, Rapolas, Lina). However, the biggest difference that people perceive is between the unity of community in the two clubs. The traditional dance club is informally fragmented into smaller groups of friends or people of the same age, and one bigger group, the so-called 'elite' which consists of good dancers and musicians. People from a particular group are more likely to dance with a person from his or her friends' group. Although this structure of dance community has developed naturally, some interviewees disapprove of the people from 'elite' who do not dance with the others and do not share their dance knowledge. The leader of the dance club participates in the so-called 'elite' group and argues that no one can force him to dance with specific people during the social dancing, because then he is not paid and he can invite whoever he wants. (Ugnius, Mantas)

Traditional dance club is part of the ethno-culture movement in Lithuania, and both phenomena have similar features related to socio-economical dimension:

- the majority of participants are amateurs;
- activities are based on the principle of volunteering, both of them have small incomes
- the structure of organization is largely undefined, just a few groups have a defined legal status;
- the numbers of participants are relatively small, and they make a small overall impact on the society;
- members prefer small and close communities, though they participate in town events;
- members spread the message about club activities mostly by direct verbal

communication, they do not use social media marketing to the full benefit.

Despite the relative shortfalls in spreading the culture to the wider public, traditional dance clubs in Lithuania were noticed and appreciated by ethno-culture scholars and identified as the medium which might help revive the traditional Lithuanian culture and involve more people into it (Naruševičiutė, 2008:10).

## **1.2. Research methods**

The author of this study has authored a bachelor's thesis titled 'The change of communication between dancers and musicians' three years ago, so communication topic is not new. However, the lack of available knowledge about the processes of communication during the *participatory* folk dancing motivated the direction of the present investigation, and the traditional dance club in Vilnius was chosen as a case for study. A long-term participation of the author in the club's activities (for nine years in 2009-2018) and the scale and importance of the club as the one dictating the trends for all traditional dance clubs in Lithuania (Vilnius traditional dance club organises the International Summer Camp of Traditional Dances in Lithuania every year, which gathers about two hundred dancers from all around the country) also motivated this choice.

In order to look closer into the communication process, the author started participant observation and a fieldwork diary at the end of 2017. However, this method did not provide sufficient information, so the research project was publicly presented during one of the Thursday dance club events (2018.03.08), and dancers were asked to participate in the online survey. This public announcement strengthened my role as an 'expert', while, according to Maria Koutsouba, the long-term involvement and living in the same city made me simultaneously feel 'at home' and 'insider'. However, social relationships vary constantly, and sometimes the scholar can be

‘at home’ but feel as an ‘outsider’, and the ‘expert’ role might create this change (Koutsouba, 1999).

In total, forty-one person filled the online survey that contained both open- and close-ended questions and took about 15 minutes to complete. Forty-four percent of the respondents were men, and the average respondent age was thirty-one years old, with the youngest participant being eighteen and the oldest fifty-four years old. For some analyses, people who attended the dance club for less than two years and average or low frequency were classified as ‘new members’, and people who attended for more than five years with sufficient frequency as ‘experienced members’. The proportions of new and experienced members amongst the respondents were similar. The online survey started on 2018 March 12 and the last interview was made on 2018 April 23.

In the next stage, the author conducted fifteen semi-structured interviews with participants. Ten of the fifteen interview participants agreed to participate in the next stage while filling in the online survey, and they contacted me via Facebook and e-mail; the other five were asked personally to participate. Interestingly, the first interviewed dancer (Mantas 2018.03.23) had spread a positive message about the ‘interesting interview’ (Austėja 2018.04.04) amongst his friends, which resulted in six people contacting the author via Facebook to offer themselves for the interview.

All interviews were one-on-one conversations except Rapolas and Jūratė (interviewed 2018.04.03), who talked together during the interview. Most interviews took part in cafés and it made the voice recordings hard to transcribe, but for the participants who were unfamiliar with the researcher, the public space provided additional comfort. Overt recording of interviews made some people feel a bit uncomfortable and tense, but in time they relaxed. The duration of

interviews varied from thirty minutes to one hour. All participants signed the consent form, although in Lithuania such practice is not very common, so some people felt uncomfortable. The questions of the online survey and the interviews were very similar and were divided into six sections: starting questions, communication, verbal communication, physical communication, emotional communication and summary. In general, interviewees found physical and emotional communication hard to describe because they are less used to reflecting their feelings, compared with verbal communication. It helped a lot that the author had already attended Vilnius traditional dance club for about eight years, so most participants trusted the author and were willing to talk openly.

The age of interviewees varied from eighteen to thirty years old, except for one man who was in his sixties; half of them were students and half were working adults. Six of the interview participants had no prior experience talking with the author, and the others were friends (this made a few of them share really honest and sincere experiences during the interviews). One-third of the interview participants attended the dance club up to a year, so a few of them did not have enough dance experience to have deep knowledge and operate the language of dance communication confidently. However, people with different levels of dance experience were selected consciously, because one of the aims of this research was to investigate how dance experience is associated with perceptions of communication during dance.

The research study considered the ethical issues involved in the study and meets the requirements of the Department of Dance and was approved in accordance to the ethical procedures of the University of Roehampton. The study guarantees the anonymity of its participants and no personally identifiable information was made publicly available.

### **1.3. Emic perspective**

The following chapter will analyse the *emic* perspective of the study and the fieldwork with ethnographic description, the loss of meanings when translating important terms and the community of Vilnius traditional dance club will be presented and analysed in more detail.

As Adrienne Kaeppler insightfully argued in her article ‘Dance Ethnology and the Anthropology of Dance’, ‘in order to find the larger view as advocated here, fieldwork is not only recommended but is necessary in order to bring movement into focus as part of a total cultural system’ (Kaeppler, 2000:121). Indeed, the fieldwork undertaken as part of this study, as well as the in-depth interviews with the participants of Vilnius traditional dance club have revealed that the *etic* perspective of communication is not adequate, as the classification that emerged in the process of deeper study was somewhat, albeit not radically, different from the one mentioned above. As such, the *etic* understanding of the nature of communication gradually transformed into the *emic* perspective, and as an anthropological study, this paper seeks to give precedence to and represent the *emic* view of communication in dance.

Every time when I go to Traditional dance club in Vilnius, I go out from Vilnius city centre by bus or trolleybus, crossing the river Neris on my way. I get out in Tuskulėnai Peace Park bus top, which is one minute walk from the Vilnius house of culture, entertainment and sports.



The building is one of most interesting architectural examples of the late Soviet modernism in Vilnius; however, despite its big size and great significance in the past, now it is just a cold and a bit empty building, where various unrelated hobby groups rent cheap, long non-renovated and frequently cold rooms for activities ranging from singing and dancing to learning languages and playing basketball and other sports. During the winter season, Vilnius traditional dance club rents one middle-size dance hall here, but when the weather gets warmer in the summer season, the dance club moves to the Moniuška square in the Vilnius city old town and ‘there is even more fun because passers-by can watch as we dance, and some of them really admire our dancing and they can join us if they want’ (Rasa 2018.03.23).

However, it is winter season now, and dancers cross the big cold lobby with huge stairs and a huge chandelier above (which remains there to remind of the past glory of the soviet architecture), to enter the 70-square-metre dance hall, where dancers and musicians gather every Thursday at 7 p.m. One wall of the dance hall is covered by the mirrors, and the opposite side has a row of large windows across the entire wall. When the dance event

starts at 7 p.m., usually only the last gleam of the sun illuminates the dance hall for the first hour.

Just next to the entrance to the dance hall you will find the basket for money. The participation fee is settled at two Euros and it is more similar to a donation than an entrance fee, because there are no tickets or a person who would ask everyone for money. Two Euros is a relatively low fee and, according to dancers, 'it is almost for free' (Rapolas and Jūratė). Using the participants' fees, the organisers pay the rents of the dance floor. The money that is left is distributed among the musicians, however, the organisers claim that musicians almost always play for free. Interestingly, this also means that musicians usually do not feel obliged to answer wishes or requests by dancers (Rubikienė, 2018).

People come here a few minutes before the start of the dance lesson, which precedes the open dance floor, in order to prepare themselves. 'You must dress with comfortable clothes for dancing and it is important to feel good, to smell good and not to be hungry so that you have strength; and the most important thing is to be in a good mood. [...] Girls wear skirts and dresses and they are very beautiful' (Ugnius 2018.04.04). Meanwhile, organisers recommend changing shoes to comfortable and flexible dance footwear. So, by 7:10 p.m. there are about twenty people in the circle who are prepared – they have changed their shoes and most of the girls wear skirts or dresses. Over time, more people enter into the dance hall and join the dance lesson. Not all of them are joining in, however, because some people want to talk with each other, some want to observe the environment or observe teachers and learn how to teach dance (personal conversations 2018.02.08).

Dance lesson is led by an experienced dancer who has extensive dance experience of 'folk' dancing and as well in other dance styles. She (it can also be a man) shares her

experience obtained from dance festivals and seminars around Europe (Rytis 2018.02.28). Waltz dance lesson starts with warm up exercises and continues with beat and swing sensation exercises, all the while soft voices of garmon (button accordion) and violin help people keep the beat during the lesson. Subsequently, dance teacher moves further and explains the basic patterns: plain step sequences, the ‘close to the ground’ feet position, soft knees and straight but not tensed body posture. At first, these elements are practiced individually, then she puts all people into one tight circle, so that the dancers would feel the pulsation (Mantas). Finally, she invites people to dance in couples and indicates the importance of the partner’s sensation and how it is important to dance together, not alone. During the dance lessons it is usual that people change partners and more experienced dancers dance with beginners, so that new people can learn faster. However, other dancers and dance teacher notice that ‘it is hard for the teacher to teach dancers with very different dancing skills and at the same time achieve the maximum benefit for everyone’ (Rytis).

It is important to note that dance teaching has altered recently with the change of the dance club leadership. The new leader names calls it moving ‘from quantity to quality’, as he seeks to establish ‘stylish’ and professional *polka* and *waltz* dancing as the basis of all Lithuanian dances (Rytis). ‘The learning progress is slow’ (Rytis), but some result are noticeable – ‘now I know that I have danced poorly before and I finally realized that *polka* must be performed in a ‘feet close to the ground’ manner [...] you need attend a particular dance lesson in order to learn it’ (Ugnius 2018.04.04). Most dancers argue that this shift is very useful and ‘I was sure that I know how to dance, but I came here and I realized that I have danced wrongly and there are a lot of things to learn’ (Karolina). Nevertheless, according to the leader, ‘this is an open community and all people can choose whether they want to come or not’ (Rytis).

After some exercises you might feel tired (personal conversations 2018.03.22), however, it trains your body, balance (Mantas) and stamina. Subsequently, the dance event will become more delightful physically (fieldwork diary 2018.03.29). Dance lesson finishes with the teacher summarising the main aspects of the lesson, and forty participants express their gratitude to the teacher with applause. A few minutes later, musicians tune up the instruments, and the dance event begins with vitality and playfulness.

At the beginning, musicians start from the well-known dances and they play with enthusiasm, so dancers immediately start to dance and the hall is filled with spinning couples in a matter of seconds. The atmosphere of dance event is light and cheerful. During the interviews, dancers emphasized the vitality, playfulness, professionalism, enthusiasm of musicians in Vilnius traditional dance club, and ‘when I am in another dance event, I always wait for the moment our musicians will start playing, because they are the best’ (Ugnius). The leading instrument is the garmon (button accordion) or the bandoneon, and a violin and a hand drum constitute a traditional set of musicians. Three ethnomusicologists play there as well as several amateurs, who have started playing some instruments since they entered the dance club.

Mantas was fascinated by the open-spirited and simple atmosphere: ‘musicians start to play, you see a girl and you like her, you invite her to dance and afterwards you let her go. That’s it’. This insight represents the relationship between dancers in the dance club well, because such an open-minded approach is common in the community. People come here to dance and to enjoy physical contact (Ugnius) without any obligations and ‘you don’t need to talk or do anything else if you do not want to, because dance talks for itself; you just need to enjoy these five minutes of dance’ (Rita 2018.04.04).

Musicians improvise passionately and they swap after some tunes couples are spinning faster and faster around the hall, their faces become moist with sweat and reddish, dancers start to sing out, feet-stepping as a drum in order to echo and reinforce the complete vivaciousness. Sixty people are like one stirring body and you feel it. ‘You feel the unity of all the community and it is amazing, because you feel part of it’ (Karolina). The seventy square meters accommodate the celebration of life and there is no matter whether you are an experienced dancer or you are there for the first time, whether you are in your middle sixties or a teenager, are whether you are an ethnomusicologist or a medic, all are one there. ‘You come here to dance for yourself and anybody observes and nobody can tell you that you cannot dance’ (Ugnius).

‘After a while, the musicians slow down and start to play ‘Estonian Subota’. He comes to me and he asks me to dance. I do not know him. Ok, let’s dance. Slow and sentimental melody comes to us and we gently snuggle with each other and I do not feel any discomfort with him. Gentle music mingles with slow dance steps (nearly slow walking) and then the muscles relax and fill the entire body with peace and softness. All the conversations around us die away and I forget where I am. Everything is so beautiful – music and movement is one. Music stops when it must stop and my partner thanks me by a glance and offers his armrest so we walk together where he took me before the dance. That’s all. Still, it was the most amazing thing during the whole night’ (fieldwork diary 2018.01.20).

### **The Traditional dance club community and communication**

First of all, we analyse the concepts of community and communication in order to ‘understand the phenomena better’ (Grau, 2012:7). Most people describe community as ‘the

group of people who know each other and they trust and take care of each other' (Mantas). Moreover, when interviewees were asked to describe the traditional dance club community and the people they meet there, the most common adverbs were *sincere, natural, open* and *warm*. Furthermore, some people have found such joy of belonging to that community that they name it as feeling part of the 'family' (Karolina 2018.03.24, Jonas 2018.04.04).

People also describe the dance club community as the place where they can talk about their love for dancing and for the folk culture, which they share with others and which makes them feel connected (Vytautas). Ann R. David in her article (2016) 'Embodied Cultural Memories of the Punjab: Giddha song and Dance in Migrant London Spaces' argue that 'behavioural synchrony in movement with others can give rise to a powerful uniting force [...] a sense of community, cooperation and togetherness – through bodily entrainment' (David, 2016:152). Indeed, people often experience the sense of togetherness when they are dancing in a circle and holding hands together (Rasa), and they appreciate it a lot because 'you rarely feel that way in the contemporary and alienated society' (Vaida 2018.03.28).

### **Forms of communication during the dance**

Every culture and community can have their own conception of communication, so the interview participants were also asked to name what is communication for them. The answers suggest that communication is 'the sharing of things that are important to people' (Rasa), or that 'it is done with the aim of better understanding each other' (Rapolas) Even though people describe it more as a verbal act, they emphasise the importance of emotions too, such as openness (Rasa ) and acceptance (Rita). However, communication might also be 'hard work' (Martynas 2018.04.03) and cause stress. Stress is discussed in greater depth later in the study, especially in relation to close physical contact.

In the dance club, communication during the dance is an important topic. Dance teachers encourage dancers to pay more attention to it, and the common opinion is that it is not sufficient to know the steps, as the dancers are supposed sense the partner. It is important to note that this study is deliberately directed toward the topic of communication during the dance, because this topic has been especially relevant for the community during the last two years. One source of interest have been the dance teachers of the club, who trained in Norway, *balfolk* summer camps and courses, as well as various ‘folk’ dance seminars around Europe. These interests also echo the developments of the dancing communities in the neighbour states: Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Belarus and the Czech Republic (participation and observation 2009-2018, conversation with Eivilė Šimeček, interviews with Rytis, Jonas).

While being responsive to global and regional trends, this research is also focused on the particular case of Vilnius traditional dance club, and does not attempt to summarize the activities of other dance clubs in Lithuania or other countries, or infer general conclusions about them. Furthermore, this research investigates the views of a particular community; and it cannot be said to perfectly represent even that community, but rather the insights of fifteen individuals who were interviewed by in-depth interviews, and forty-one individuals who answered the questions in the online survey. Meanwhile, around sixty people gather every Thursday and the turnover of people is large (Mantas), with regular members of community constituting only slightly more than half of the typical audience. Nevertheless, the author made the effort to collect views that represent individuals of both genders, various levels of experience and involvement in the dance club. The author assumes that the collected answers allow for some generalizations to be made about communication during dance.

During the process of investigation, it became clear that dancers in Vilnius traditional dance club understand communication differently than the researcher's initial definition intended. Dancers say that 'dance itself is the communication' (Jonas), and most people claim that communication has two main forms: verbal and physical, and just a few people identified emotional communication.

At the beginning of this investigation, the author had no doubts that emotional communication exists and everyone experiences it. However, during the process it became clear that some people do not seek the emotional communication; instead, they put all their attention and effort to dancing well and harmoniously with the partner. Moreover, during the interviews there were a few people who did not understand some of the in-depth questions about emotional communication, because they do not nurture this idea and find it difficult to operate in these terms. It represents their attitudes and expressed needs that they bring to the dance club, too. Moreover, a very important thing is that emotional communication happens *only* when a person wants to feel it, and 'the dance does not initiate emotional communication, but rather is a tool to achieve it' (Online survey respondent No. 4691).

Coming back to the *emic* perspective, dancers do not use the term 'emotional communication', but rather the term 'emotional proximity'. In order to better understand emotional proximity, analysis of interviewees' responses suggested that it would be useful to separate it into two aspects: the *process* of getting there, and the *result*, that is, the quality and the consequences of achieving it. The process is named 'sensation of the partner' and the result is called 'the *flow*'. The concept of *flow* is a complex psychological and physiological construct coined and used by the scholar Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and his followers, and it is very useful for analysing the emotional state of dancers in this particular context.

## Lost in translation

For the dancers who participated in the online survey and the interviews, the meanings of verbal and physical communication were relatively clear and dancers were able to describe them quite well. However, questions and discussions about emotional communication were sometimes confused, as the concepts and descriptions became less clear and elaborate. Linguistic parallels between verbal communication and communication (in general) were also sometimes difficult to distinguish and they entangled the discussants into the complexity of loosely defined concepts. Henrietta Bannerman (2014) in her article ‘Is dance a language? Movement, meaning and communication’ analyses the relationship between language and movement, and concludes that dance is not the same as the language, but ‘dance is structured like a language’ (Bannerman, 2014:78). Indeed, during the study of Vilnius traditional dance club, the correlations between language and dance were clearly seen in the dancers’ responses, too.

‘During the interviews, dancers often used terms ‘verbal communication’ and ‘communication’ (in general) as synonyms. There is a close linguistic link between the two in Lithuanian language, because the direct translation from term ‘communication’ is ‘**bendravimas**’, which has strong connotations with *verbal* communication specifically. As a result, participants were sometimes confused about the topic of this study as they thought it is only about verbal communication.

It first appeared during an interview with a very good dancer Jonas who described communication during the dance. He employed parallels between verbal language and dance by arguing that ‘*talking* through dance starts when you invite someone to dance, and in verbal language it would be saying ‘hello’ (Jonas). ‘[in verbal language] to change names in dance is

the embracement of your partner' (Jonas). Moreover, he used the parallels between verbal language and dance during the whole interview by using the term 'talking' to describe the *sensation* of each other during the dance: 'we could talk [in terms of dance] and I do not know why I wanted to talk, but I did' and 'every *conversation* [as a dance] is different and you adjust yourself to each one' (Jonas).

It was not clear whether Jonas used terms 'talk' and 'dance' as synonyms because of the Lithuanian word 'bendrauti' that has close connotations between verbal and overall communication, or whether he connected these parallels because he naturally discovered associations between language and dance. Or, perhaps he heard someone using this comparison in some dance workshop around Europe. Whatever the reason, there were strong indications from the interviews that the nature of the word 'bendrauti' and its connotations have influenced the understanding of the term 'communication' and it is different in Lithuania and English – in a sense, the meaning of this word is lost in translation.

'Another significant term used by most people to describe communication during dance is the Lithuanian verb '**susišokti**'. It is undoubtedly a complex and multi-layered concept, where two relevant aspects can be distinguished – the physical and the emotional senses of the word. In its physical meaning space, it is associated with the ability to 'dance together harmoniously' in terms of physical coordination and empathic understanding of each other's physical movements. This meaning was the most common in dancers' use of the word. However, the dancers also used it in the emotional meaning space to express the 'emotional togetherness and unity' that goes beyond externally-oriented physical coordination towards the feelings to each other. To illustrate, 'susišokti' might describe a couple which started to dance together and

finally fell in love with each other. Dancers very often use this word to describe the harmonious dancing, but in some cases they use it to describe the deeper experience of emotional proximity.

When respondents describe the components of (a noun) ‘susišokimas’, they have emphasised the importance of *sensing* each other. Even dance teachers invite people to learn to dance harmoniously, saying ‘dance together not alone’ (fieldwork diary 2018.03.15). However, some people do not understand ‘what does it mean and how am I supposed to do this because we do the same steps, but we do not ‘susišokam’’ (Miglè 2018.03.29). However, most dancers agree that in order to dance harmoniously, a person needs to practice and ‘susišokimas’ comes only with time. In this sense, ‘susišokimas’ is more a result than a process. The process towards achieving ‘susišokimas’ might be described as *the sensation of each other* which will be analysed in the chapter on physical communication. Moreover, ‘susišokimas’ cannot be analysed because almost every person has different meaning of it and it accommodates both the process and the result, so in order to analyse the process of communication we use a possible synonym ‘susišokimas’ – *sensation of each other*.

Similar to the term ‘susišokti’, the phrase ‘sensation of each other’ is hard to crystalize, but it is not as complex as ‘susišokti’. *Sensation of each other* is a multi-layered concept and it has aspects of emotional and physical sensation, but it is difficult to distinguish between these aspects in the time dimension, as physical and emotional sensations intermingle with each other smoothly during the dance. Consequently, dancers found it difficult to define when one ends and another starts, but they were reasonably able to separate and describe the *factors* that have influenced the emergence of each.

## **2. Analyses**

### **2.1. Verbal communication**

‘I talk through dance’, Jonas says. According to the online survey, one-third of the dance community could dance all evening without saying a word. However, the remaining two-thirds would rather agree with a statement by Rasa (2018.03.23): ‘others can talk through the dance only, but I need to talk because I want to familiarise myself with the people’. Verbal communication plays an essential role in the process of communication in the Traditional dance club in Vilnius. However, it remains unclear: why do the dancers talk and why they keep silent? What impels them to appear talkative or quiet? What function verbal communication performs for them, if any?

#### **New and experienced dancers**

Results from the online survey and the interviews indicate that for new dance club members, verbal communication fulfils their needs in two ways: it helps them to learn dance by talking about steps with the dance partner, and enables them to start a conversation that would help them establish personal connection and gradually enter the dance community. However, novice dancers need to focus on dance steps and physical movement coordination, which consumes most of their attention. It turns out that verbal communication can also impede their ability to learn and feel dance, which is indicated by the fact that two-thirds of new members agree or fully agree that ‘verbal communication during the dance impedes my ability to feel the dance and move harmoniously with the partner’. Interview participants elaborate on this further:

‘When the dance experience of both dancers is low, they only watch and repeat dance steps so there is no time for talking. [...] New couples do not talk because they get confused’ (Mantas);

‘If I start to talk while dancing I lose the rhythm and I forget what I need to do and I get confused’ (Rapolas)

‘I talk only during the pauses between dances because for me it’s difficult to talk during the dance and I am not a very good dancer so talking distracts me.’ (Miglė)

It should be mentioned that that Lithuanian traditional dance club repertoire distinguishes itself for having a large amount of different dances with many steps, and new members find it difficult to cope with. It takes them a while to learn all steps and acquire a sense of the environment – to navigate in the dance hall without bumping into each other: ‘In the beginning of the dance event musicians play ‘Lakyšius’ where you need to pass other dancers, and you see that they are not passing and some people do not know where to go’ (Mantas).

On experienced dancers, Mantas claimed: ‘when you know all the steps and there is physical and emotional proximity, you can talk without getting confused’. Nevertheless, dancing and talking at the same time is an endeavour in multitasking and even good dancers struggle with it: ‘Only one brain hemisphere works in me and I can do only one thing well – either dance or talk.’ (Ugnius). Experienced dancers are often able to multitask – ‘It’s hard to talk and dance together, but I can do it now’ (Jonas), but if they sense they have to choose between them, they prefer dance: ‘now I do not talk because dance itself is too important for me’ (Jonas). Moreover, three-fifths of the experienced dancers in the online survey claimed that talking impedes on the connection with a partner and the full sensation of a dance. That indicates that talking during the dance time becomes less relevant and preferred as dancers become experienced.

## **Talking as community-building**

It is important to note that verbal communication during dance plays an essential role for the new members' entry into the dance club community. Interviews have revealed that 'verbal communication was necessary in order to get familiar and acquainted with people' (Karolina), because new members are not yet good in 'talking through dance' (Jonas) and understanding other people in this way, but they want to know more about the dances, dance club and the surrounding people:

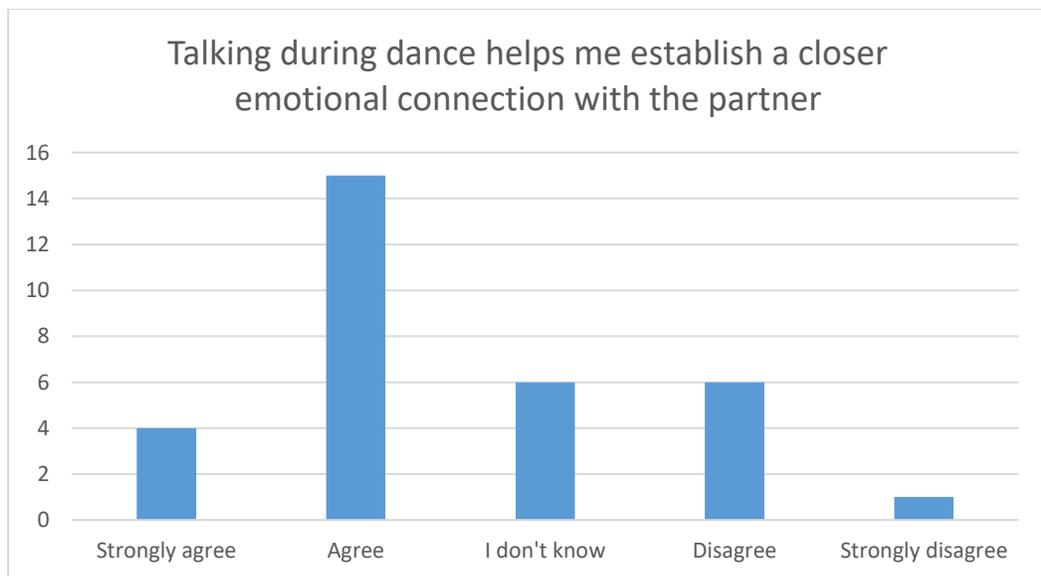
'At the beginning, I did not know anybody so I was trying to talk as much as I can because I needed emotional and verbal connection. Now I know how to dance so I don't need to talk anymore and I can enjoy the dance because now I feel safe here.' (Karolina)

Some people (Vaida, Tadas 2018.04.02, Ugnius, Austėja) said that they come here to experience close physical contact, and that beyond the dance club they do not have close physical contact with anyone at all. Nevertheless, physical proximity requires personal preparation (Austėja, Karolina, Rasa), as people have different limits of tolerance and preference for it. Talking can sometimes help to overcome discomfort by creating the state of being 'familiar' with a person. A few interviewees (Rasa, Miglė) emphasized talking as the way to feel safe in a close physical contact and also to feel safe in the dance club community: 'I was talking, because I did not have enough information: what is his name, what he is doing for living and else' (Karolina). Talking helps to relax and engage with the environment and your partner, and when the person is relaxed he or she can appreciate dancing more.

Depending on the situation or the personality, talking might help maintain the feeling of safety, or it might help new people enter the community or establish and maintain friends' circles

together; but whatever is its particular purpose, it is indeed strongly related to the sense of 'belonging to the community'.

Despite all the differences in how verbal communication manifests and what purpose it serves for different individuals, new members and experienced dancers alike have agreed that it helps create an emotional connection. This is so even though the majority of dancers claimed that under some circumstances, verbal communication can impede the connection with the partner and the full sensation of the dance. Dancers have also revealed in the online survey that emotional connection is the most appreciated and sought after form of communication, surpassing the importance of verbal and physical communication. Therefore, verbal communication might be considered as a vehicle for the emotional connection, not the ultimate result. Moreover, according to the online survey, people mostly agree that talking helps them establish a closer emotional connection with the partner (both new members and experienced dancers have responded similarly):



In the online survey, the community and friends were the second most motivating aspect of attending the traditional dance club, after the love for ethnic culture. A considerable number

of people come here in order to feel part of the community. However, this research has revealed that communication might also be non-verbal, and the person who comes here can fulfil their need for communication by physical contact. Nevertheless, some people talk because they meet ‘an interesting person and you want to talk with them’ (Austėja). Furthermore, ‘verbal communication serves to cover up the discomfort’ (Mantas) and ‘when there is discrepancy between us’ (Rapolas) and you cannot feel a dance (Miglè, Mantas).

These insights point into direction that talking while dancing takes a side role compared with the dance itself. Even though it is clear that people are used to talking during the dance than there is a demand for it. However, dancers often say that it is hard to summarise talking during the dance because every case has specific circumstances and always it depends on person and dance.

## **2.2. Physical communication**

Analysis in the previous chapter has already shown that verbal communication helps dancers reduce the discomfort of a close physical contact. However, physical contact is very important but not all people realise it and dance teachers see the need to stimulate physical communication during dance lessons:

‘Goda [Sungailaitė, the teacher] prefers making tight circles of people, so that the dancers would feel the common pulsation. It is encouraged during the teachings, but not during the social dance part [...]. In my circle, dancers know that a good dancer listens to the partner. When you work out that step, it grows into you and you do not need to think about it.’  
(Mantas)

Although, some people understand the importance of physical communication without any lessons and in their mind the search for the physical communication is feature of a good dancer.

## **Good dancer**

According to the communication theory (Fiske, 2010), in order for communication to happen there must be a sender and a receiver. In the 'traditional' couple role arrangement, the sender is usually the man while the receiver is the woman. This arrangement rarely applies for verbal communication, as both men and women can easily be senders and receivers, as the example of Rasa attests: 'I usually start the conversation' (Rasa 2018.03.23). Nevertheless, in case of physical communication, the receiver is often the woman and according to some interviewees, it seems that the man does not need to listen to the woman's needs but just to lead her and if she follows good enough, then the dance is good:

'Good dancer [man] must feel the rhythm and music, meanwhile, the woman must feel the partner so that coordination of movements and good couple dancing could happen.' (Tadas)

All members are aware that in a dance, couple roles are different and that the man and the woman have different tasks: 'a good dancer [man] knows what he is doing' (Jūratė), meanwhile 'a good dancer [girl] must feel how I lead her' (Martynas). As well, participant observation and some of the interviews confirm that there are men who 'lead and they do not need any connection with the partner; they lead earnestly and firmly, and women like how they lead and they do not want any changes of couple roles. Women fly every time with such a dancer, despite the woman's height. And if she would like to improvise or lead, he will not give up' (Jonas). A case in example was a dance workshop called 'Dance as a dialogue', where the dance teacher summarised the workshop by inviting people to swap the couple roles, and when I asked my friend what he thinks about it he commented that the words 'vyras' ('man' in English) and 'vyrauti' ('dominate' in English) have the same root and it means that it is natural. He added

that if someone wants to make changes in this respect, they are free to do it, but he has no need to change anything (personal conversation 2018.04.12).

Such a solid attitude might echo the patriarchal mindset and society norm, which remain strong among some Lithuanians, including some dance club members. But it might also be the integral part of the general dance club value system that includes the dance etiquette. The traditional dance club contains dance repertoire and dance etiquette originating from the first part of the twentieth century, and the solid arrangement of roles in a couple was one of the most distinctive features of the peasant dance culture. Moreover, the previous dance club leader Dalia Urbanavičienė had educated dancers about the ‘old’ dance tradition, which some dancers, together with other aspects of the ‘old’ dance tradition, might treat as their own values, or might want to uphold from disappearance. However, it is also possible that they act in this manner only in the context of the dance club and other folklore community gatherings.

However, the more experienced dancers and those with international dance experience have a different attitude towards couple role arrangements. They are more likely to pay attention to the partner and for them, good couple dancing strongly depends on both the man and the women and how they sense each other:

‘Four months ago I had the best dance ever and we communicated so high that we have changed the roles and it did not matter anymore who was leading and who was following.’

(Jonas)

Moreover, one dancer gives a very interesting insight about the leading as he argues that ‘very good dancer [women] leads you but she dances so well that you do not understand it’ (Ugnius). Although he adds later that he does not let women to lead him, he had already

acknowledged before that it happens. That suggests that good dancers (women) have more space for dance interpretation than new women.

### **Couple roles**

Traditionally the leading person is always responsible for dozens of tasks: he has to keep the beat, to navigate in the dance hall without bumping into others, to know all the steps and if he wants to be a good dancer he should be able to ‘make improvisation that matches with the dance’ (Rapolas). The pronoun ‘he’ was used here with a reason: in the traditional dance clubs the leading person almost always is a man and the following person is a woman, with some exceptions when two women are dancing together.

Therefore, the leading person must do the multitasking surely, but the following person is not in charge to such a large extent as the leading one. However, the leading role it is not usual and it requires and lot of attention as well:

‘When I came here it was strange that the men lead the dance so effectively because now we do not find such a thing in our society. I like it because I can feel feminine, in that someone cares for me and I need to just follow and make steps.’ (Austėja)

Almost all the interviewed women (Rasa, Karolina, Rita, Miglė) found this role unusual and they consciously inhabit it. Meanwhile some people were familiar with couple roles in dance before and ‘that the man leads I knew from my early days’ (Ugnius). Moreover, some respondents agree that this couple role arrangement is ‘universal for all couple dances’ (Tadas). This attitude also represents a worldview that was very common among the older generation: ‘if a woman follows during the dance, then she will follow in life too’ (Ugnius). However, the young generation of dancers grew up in a liberal regime with predominant ideas of gender equality and personal freedom, so a fair amount of new and young (30 years or less) members

experience the leading and following roles for the first time, and for them it is the new ground to inhabit.

The modern attitude towards couple roles came to the traditional dance club with the coming of a new leader, who promotes a new distinction between man and woman roles during the dance:

‘For the women, there are one criteria and for the men, the other: a woman must follow easily and understand everything, furthermore, she must put the same effort as the man and it makes her a good dancer. Meanwhile, a man must lead confidently and show clearly what and how he wants to do something. Though at the same time, he must be equal with a woman and not dwarf her.’ (Rytis)

Within the context of modern understanding of gender roles and dance etiquette, traditional dance club seems somewhat outdated. In the dance club, the ‘gentleman’ leads the woman and a woman cannot refuse to dance (Ugnius, Tadas, Karolina), but the man ‘cannot force a woman to dance with him more than three dances’ (Ugnius). The dance club inhabits these forms of dance etiquette and in a sense, it also justifies the name of ‘traditional’. Although some aspects of dance etiquette protect the rights of a woman, the power distribution among the couple dancers is outweighed on one side – woman is mostly the passive receiver. However, exceptions exist and according to some young dancers (Rytis, Jonas, Mantas, Martynas), good dancers (women) try to outbalance the power distribution and initiate actions too:

‘For several times, I had a dance where the girl lead and she took me strongly, so I thought ‘Well, let’s go!’ and it was fun. I liked when the girl lead me and I did not feel strange or bad. When I do not have a lot of experience, then it is fun to dance like this. I do not know how it would be if I were a professional dancer.’ (Rapolas)

However, even more experienced dancers often do not act very ‘traditionally’:

‘There is no difference for me who is leading and it is not true that the man leads a hundred percent, because a girl directs me in order not to bump to other couples. It happens that girls ask men to dance and I am not opposed to it.’ (Martynas)

‘Usually, a girl cannot refuse to dance but now the times are different and so she can say ‘I do not want to, I am resting’.’ (Ugnius)

‘I was surprised by these girls who invite men to dance because I thought that men must do it, and even elderly women said they too thought it was strange. This is the dance etiquette. Though when I talked to the men they said that they like it. I invite only when there are more men than women and you see that some guy sits for three dances, so I invite him because I feel sorry for him.’ (Karolina)

Though some general patterns of behaviour might exist, every case is also unique and depends on the personal relationship between the dancers. For instance, during social dancing part of the event, usually more experienced dancers do not want to teach new members and prefer to dance with similarly experienced dancers, but ‘if that professional [dancer] is your friend, you can surely invite him to dance and you will learn a lot, the barrier disappears’ (Rytis).

Moreover, it is typical for almost all dancers that when the man dances clearly worse than the woman, she can and does take the initiative into her own hands, and men (for example, Rytis, Mantas, Rapolas, Jonas) report it as a useful behaviour that accelerates the process of learning dance:

‘If a man does not know how to dance sometimes the girl starts to lead, because she had to dance with a man who does not know how to do it and it [this shift] is not a tragedy because this is the way you learn. [...] An inexperienced man can dance if he follows a woman’ (Mantas)

‘At the beginning I danced with better dancers [women] and I did not lead strongly and they supported me by leading.’ (Jonas)

Overall, the citations illustrate the flexibility of couple roles and communication in dance, and the exceptions from the ‘traditional’ etiquette exemplify a wonderful synthesis of two different worldviews, where the ‘gentleman’ etiquette meets the requirements of the ‘new times’ and co-exists with it without apparent tension.

### **Dance experience**

Let us look closer how the dance experience affects communication *during* the dance. In order to illuminate it, the *inexperience* in dance will be discussed, namely how new members cope with physical contact, which is the basis of communication in dance and which ‘happens whether you want it or not’ (Mantas). We are going to analyse the physical contact from the perspective of personal barriers, but before that we will look closer to the physical aspect of couple dancing in the traditional dance club. Let’s start with a quotation by Ugnius and Jonas, which describes a casual situation when a man takes a newcomer partner to dance:

‘I embrace her closer and I say that our centres of gravity must be closer, for instance, during the *foxtrot* legs must be very close that you would catch the inertia and your shoulders must be little bit further and your hands must be tensed. I do not like when a woman does not hold her left hand firmly, because I need to hold her with my right hand all the time and it tires my hand a lot.’ (Ugnius)

‘I often say that we need to clasp a pole and that pole moves with us, and we hold to it. It happens that the women pull the right hand, because they want to take hold of me. The steps are also one of the main things, and new dancers [women] often do not know how to make the steps.’ (Jonas)

Yet, new members are less accustomed to seeking the close physical contact; moreover, they often feel uncomfortable and almost all women have mentioned that they avoided it when they just started to attend the dance club events:

‘At the beginning I avoided physical contact because you do not know these people. [...] Sometimes they embraced me closer and I pushed them away and kept the distance.’  
(Karolina)

‘I retreat physically and I try to keep the distance or softly push him away and I show him by body language that it is too close to me.’ (Austėja)

On the other hand, the men acknowledge the issue as well:

‘I see that new women are afraid of close physical contact but I try to adjust myself. New women do not know how to communicate through dance, they do not know how to hold the partner and they do not search for the couple’s dancing centre.’ (Jonas)

In this analysis, the descriptions of physical contact and the insights were gained during the long-term participant observation in the traditional dance club and from the view point of a woman (related to the gender of the author) and it might convey the feminist view point. This topic arose during the interview with women, as they mentioned physical proximity as uncomfortable. Only afterwards the question organically moved to the men’s interviews, too. It remains unclear whether men would have risen this topic if the interviewer did not ask. Indeed, the way the questions were framed might not fully reflect what the men are concerned about and attend to, and the role of the anthropologist must be acknowledged here. Nevertheless, ‘conflicts of interest and emotion between the ethnographer as authentic, related person (i.e. participant), and as exploiting researcher (i.e. observer) are also an inescapable feature of ethnographic method.’ (Stacey, 1988:23).

Three quarters of the online survey participants agree that the lack of dance experience negatively affects the sensation of a partner. These findings agree with the interview responses where more experienced dancers state that if there is an agreement that one partner leads and the other follows, then ‘other things are just an aid: knowing steps, dance experience, wide

assortment of movements, following each other' (Rytis). However, the extraordinary dance for good dancers happens when both partners put the same effort (Mantas, Rytis, Jonas) and in order to communicate by changing the couple roles during the dance, both dancers must be experienced: 'they know what they are doing and what they are looking for' (Rytis).

Nevertheless, different requirements of dance experience apply for men and women. That is to say, according to men (Rytis, Jonas, Ugnius, Martynas, Tadas) it is not necessary for a woman to have a lot of dance experience or know all the steps, but more important is to follow easily. Meanwhile, for a man it is important to have dance experience and to lead firmly and 'if a couple dances badly, the man is responsible for this' (Ugnius). This attitude helps the woman to relax and keep following, however, it does not help the man to do so. For example, 'the women say that if a man does not know how to dance, then is hard and unpleasant to dance with them' (Mantas), and when a woman dances with 'a man who does not know how to dance, it causes me [the woman] a lot of stress because it is so responsible' (Karolina). Such attitudes challenge the men and a lot of times it might be an exhausting and deterring responsibility:

'At the beginning it was hard to cope with all the movements and steps. [...] It was scary but with time I learnt it.' (Mantas)

'If you do not know how to dance, then you don't invite anyone to dance; if you don't invite anyone to dance, then you don't dance; if you don't dance then you don't learn; it is a vicious circle, so what to do? Alcohol helped me here – I drank one mug of beer before [the dance] and it gave me more courage.' (Ugnius)

The men, especially new members, have a twofold burden on them: they must dare to invite a woman to dance and secondly, they must lead the dance even if he does not dance very well. In general, this interview has showed that men feel a lot of stress as a result, and they also feel very depressed when women refuse to dance with them. Indeed, some men drink alcohol

during the dance (field notes 2018.01.20), which gives them courage to overcome their fears – and perhaps the underlying feeling of mistrust. Many men cannot manage to step up, and finally stop attending the dance club for a while or completely (Ugnius).

Louise P. Kirsch, Kim A. Drommelschmidt and Emily S. Cross (2013) in the collaborative research ‘The impact of sensorimotor experience on affective evaluation of dance’ analyse the how dance experience affects dance evaluation of 60 dance-naïve people and conclusions they the argue that the prior dance learning and ‘this pattern of findings suggests that the experience of learning to embody an action may play a crucial role in how much pleasure one derives from watching that action’ (Kirsch & Drommelschmidt 2013: 521) The findings of this research confirms this affirmation and most people agree that having previous dance experience is useful. More experienced men claim that they can sense what kind of dance the woman had attended before and according to them, it can affect the dance both positively and negatively:

- if a woman had attended dances like *blues*, *lindy-hop*, *salsa* or *tango*, were the couple improvise and one person during the dance leads and the other follows, then ‘these girls follow you very well’ (Mantas);

- if a woman had attended stylised folk dances, then ‘her body posture is almost like in the ballet and she will dance the *waltz* very well, however she will dance *polka* roughly’ (Mantas) and ‘she will dance on tiptoe though she embraces the partner correctly’ (Jonas).

### **Knowing how to dance**

One of the most important thing in the dance is to know how to dance and if someone came to the dance club in order to feel the partner emotionally and physically, she needs to *know* how to dance. All dancers agree that knowing how to dance is very important and is the central

axis of all dancing because ‘when someone treads on my toe, the pain dominates’ (Martynas) and ‘if you do not know the dance steps then you become very stressed and all the remaining thoughts become blocked’ (Austėja). Knowledge of dance steps is also very important for the ability to ‘susiškoti’, because only when the partner knows how to dance, he or she can start to concentrate on the sensation of the partner and finally it might bring partners to emotional proximity:

‘When you do not think about the steps and when you ‘susiškoti’ with your partner, then the emotional communication and spiritual satisfaction happen.’ (Rytis)

**Motion from yourself → other**

The process of learning to dance is very complex and it has different stages but first of all the person should learn the dance steps by himself or herself, and only when one knows the dance steps, one can start to communicate with the environment and the dance partner.

‘In the beginning, you learn the steps and when you don’t need to think about the movements and you do not put in special effort, you can feel the partner and the pleasure of dance.’ (Tadas)

Despite the teachings before the social dancing, in the traditional dance club dancers are often learning dance steps by way of observing other dancers. Smyth (1984) in her article ‘Kinesthetic communication in dance’ states that ‘the perception of another's movement involves the production of movement in one's own body, even in a rudimentary way, seems inadequate as an explanation of kinetic communication, and may also reflect a lack of understanding of the kinds of mental representation which could be involved in both the perception and production of movement.’ (Smyth 1984: 21)

So, firstly perception takes place and people collect information by the visual sensation and they watch when to spin, how many steps to make, how to hold hands, how to embrace the partner and so on. However, not all relevant information can be understood by sight: it requires to sense it by touch-feeling the partner's body, such as the body posture and balance, the body rhythm and other things. Finally, some aspects of dance can only be understood through verbal channels of communication: 'you cannot learn to dance *polka* and *waltz* by observing others or dancing with a good dancer: you need to attend dance lessons' (Ugnius). So, dancers distinguish three income channels: sight, touch and hearing (verbal) and all of them are *exteroceptors*.

Finally, the production movement starts and people embody what they have perceived through their *exteroceptors*, *interoceptors* and *proprioceptors* (Smyth, 1984) and the attention to your senses shifts to the partner, although the information about the partner comes from your own channels of exteroception: sight, touch and hearing.

### **Physical sensation**

While a dancer might concentrate on his or her partner during the dance, he or she might not be willing to feel physical proximity. However, the majority of Lithuanian dances involve a physical connection by holding hands while standing in front of each other or with a neighbour in a circle. Usually at least one part of a dance consists from a close couple embracement where a partner holds one hand on the shoulder (woman) or the waist (man), and another hand is in the partner's hand. So, a person can avoid close physical contact by staying away from some specific dances.

Nevertheless, most people agree that the physical contact is very important and that the wish for physical contact is connected to the wish for personal contact. The majority of people seek the communication through physical contact and they are looking for comfortable body

positions in order to find the ‘centres of gravity’, which requires close physical contact. However, eighty percent of participants in the online survey agree that the physical sensation of a partner is necessary for developing emotional proximity. All dance club members understand the benefit of the physical sensation of the partner during the dance, because ‘verbal communication is not special in any way and you can talk like that anywhere. If I come to a dance event, the physical proximity probably has a value’ (Vaida). Respondents in the online survey indicated that physical communication is twice as important to them as verbal communication, and this is reflected in interviews, too:

‘I focus more on physical communication. If the person does not talk, it does not hurt your heart, because physical connection is several times more important. Maybe that is because the conversations are often shallow, or maybe because the physical connection is not found anywhere else besides dance.’ (Mantas)

‘The sensation of the partner is very important to me and I came here because of it. It is important for me to be with someone and create that connection.’ (Rasa)

The verb that describes the proper physical sensation of the partner and proximity with him or her, but which is difficult to translate, is ‘susišokti’. It might be translated as ‘to dance harmoniously’. However, in order to ‘susišokti’, the dancers must first practice a lot and ‘it is not enough to come here [to dance] once a month’ (Aisté 2018.04.23). Secondly, they must clarify their approach to their role in the couple: are they leading or following, or are they mixing roles? They need to communicate with each other clearly about this in order to ‘susišokti’.

Although, communicate with signs are very complex however, according to Mary M. Smyth (1984) ‘the communication is subtle and seems mysterious but it is effected via the ordinary sense organs operating on a supra-liminal input, and the mystery lies in how we use and understand signs which we do not know that we produce or receive’ (Smyth, 1984:20).

However, even people do not realise the communication signs or they cannot name it, but with time most people learn how to communicate physically and the particular body language, and ‘you do not need to say it in words for the good dancer – you push or turn her somewhere and she knows what to do’ (Martynas). However, in order to ‘hear’ the body language the dancers need to allocate all their attention:

‘Now I am trying to understand the signals of the partner and I try to sense the body rhythm, movements because then a dance becomes looser. Now I am working on it intensively so I keep my mouth shut. I try to feel were to turn, when he wants to turn me, when he wants to spin faster and when he wants to turn me back [anticlockwise]. There is soft push to one side and some guys show it very clearly and firmly, meanwhile others do it softly and it so hard to feel the soft one. You must be prepared and feel it with the whole body. Also, you must not be afraid of close physical contact and to embrace him closely, something that you are afraid to do from the very beginning.’ (Karolina)

Karolina has mentioned that she ‘keeps her mouth shut’ in order to feel the partner and this idiom reflects the typical situation where people practise the *sensation of each other* and verbal communication does not help at all, rather the opposite – talking distracts and even very good dancers try not to mix the talking and the sensation of each other. There are too many tasks to do: one must do a lot of different dance steps, navigate oneself to avoid bumping to other couples and finally to sense one’s partner.

### **Dance workshop ‘Dance as a dialogue’**

I would like to close the physical communication chapter with ethnographic description of the workshop called ‘Dance as a dialogue’ which illustrates the current trends and perceptions of the dance club with respect to the topic of physical communication. The workshop happened on April 12, 2018, and was led by an experienced dancer Eivilè Šimeček who lives and practices *balfolk* dance in Prague. Eivilè is a dance scholar and my friend, and I met her one week before

the workshop and we have talked about my recent research, which she became very interested in. It is yet another case on how the researcher can influence the field, because at the beginning of the workshop she remarked that she hopes this workshop will be useful for the dance club and that it echoes with my research (fieldwork diary 2018.04.12). This occurrence surprised and made me cautious as the ethnographer because I realised that I can make a significant influence to the field. However, according to the post-positivist theory, ‘there is no one stable and overriding interpretation’ of the situation (Buckland, 1999a:197), and the ethnographer always influences the environment.

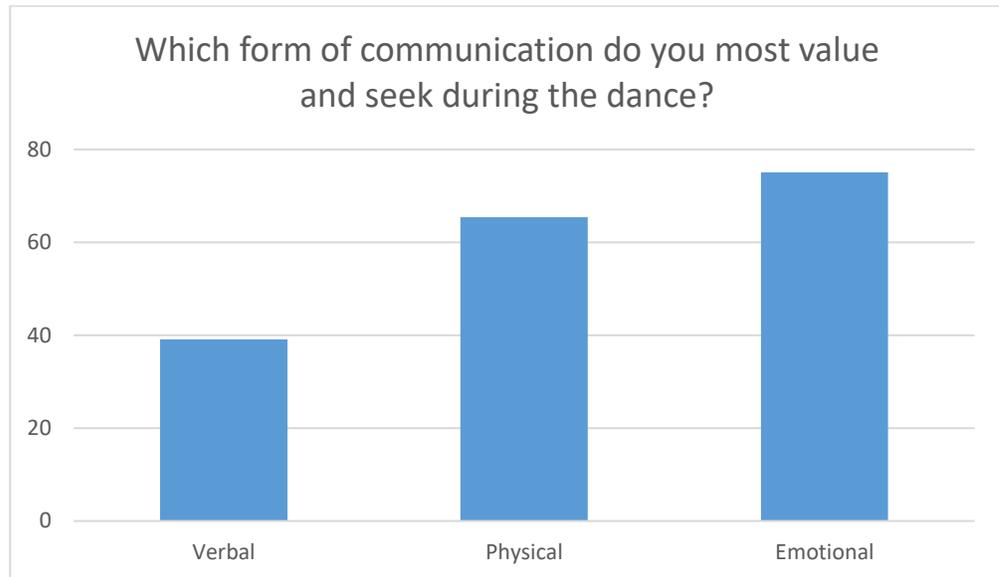
The workshop was the most crowded that I had ever seen, and in the end there was not enough space to dance for everyone. The workshop oriented participants toward sensing each other and communicating during the dance, and various exercises were performed to feel the contact with the partner. However, it has nurtured the physical sensation and did not pretend to stimulate emotional communication. The central axis of the exercises was the roles in the couple, and people have swapped the leading and following roles all the time. Regardless of the gender, everyone has danced on both sides. Moreover, the people in the follower’s role almost always had to move with their eyes closed. During the whole workshop we did not dance any particular dance but we were moving and improvising by the slow music played by a few musicians. It was interesting how Eivilè described the analogy between language and dance. In the middle of the workshop she compared the dance to talking and said that just as you can shout or whisper while talking, so the same can be said about the leading during the dance (fieldwork diary 2018.04.12).

During the first exercises we tried to feel the body balance of the partner and of one’s own by pushing, pulling and turning each other. But the most interesting part was when Eivilè asked

the people how they felt, because it was very unusual in this community that dance teachers stimulate discussions; usually, they only do physical exercises. Most people stayed silent and just several brave ones shared their experience. Most of them were surprised by the senses they experienced while being on the other side of the leading or following roles. During the practice, women appreciated the sensitivity and the carefulness of the leading person (when they lead the partner with closed eyes) and asked that the men would keep such attentive dance during the social dancing too, because women are tired of bumping to other couples. It was intriguing when the men had to dance with other men in order to learn to follow and even though a few people acknowledged its usefulness, the majority were rather sceptical. It is important to say that Eivilė now represents the dance-view of *balfolk*, where the communication during the dance is expressed much more strongly than in the traditional dance club in Vilnius and this workshop was described as ‘untraditional’ (Rytis) and ‘fresh air’ (personal conversation 2018.04.12). Altogether, people found out many new things about themselves and the dance, and they applauded the teacher loudly in the end.

### **2.3. Emotional proximity**

Previous section has analysed the physical sensation of the partner and most people describe the physical sensation of each other as the preparatory step for emotional proximity. Some people name the physical sensation of each other as the necessary stage to pass in order to feel the emotional proximity which according to the online survey is the most valuable form of communication during the dance:



Even though emotional communication is the most valuable dance element, it is also the most difficult subject to describe and analyse, and Austėja gives an excellent description:

‘Emotional proximity has different levels, because first a common emotion, its sensation appears – and here is a common dance, and we are both having fun. Then, a deeper emotional sensation of another person occurs, when you can understand the hidden emotions: whether the person had a difficult day, and even though he is jolly now, actually he is tired. The deepest kind of sensation is when you can read the other person from his movements or facial expression. It occurred to me yesterday, when [he] read me and my emotions as if it was an open book. This is the deepest level after which *the flow* comes. When you feel not only the momentary emotion, that day’s mood, but also that unique changing, shifting of emotions. When you fully understand the other person, then it is the flow.’ (Austėja)

First of all, people do not use the term ‘emotional communication’ but rather ‘emotional proximity’. In order to analyse emotional proximity, we need to disentangle its separate components. We will use two terms: the *emotional sensation of partner* and the *flow*. The first represents the *process* of achieving emotional proximity, while *flow* is the *result*, or an experienced situation. However, both the emotional sensation of the partner and the flow emerge

only when the person is willing, and dance is just a vehicle that the person needs to reach emotional proximity (Online survey respondent No. 4691), *if* there is such a wish.

This chapter will analyse the emotional sensation of the partner and proximity with him or her. It is the desire to dance harmoniously, but also the wish to feel the partner emotionally. It is important to note here that although all dancers understand the importance of the physical sensation of each other during the dance, not all people in the dance club seek to feel the partner emotionally; rather, they come here to relax and get entertainment with others:

‘They do not want to elaborate dance elements up to perfection but they treat dance as an entertainment and they do not go deeper.’ (Mantas)

A fair amount of people in traditional dance club in Vilnius ‘do not go deeper’ (Mantas) and they stay at the level of physical sensation of each other and ‘susišokimas’. Even though not all the participants of the dance club seek emotional proximity, there are several features which facilitate the enjoyment of dance and increase the likelihood of feeling it, which will be reviewed below.

### **The wish to dance**

All dancers note that the wish to dance, which manifests itself through the body language, motivates the dancer and helps enjoy the dance more. Such emotional feedback, if it is positive, ‘gives a lot of pleasure because you understand that your partner feels good’ (Rasa). However, in order to feel your partner emotionally you must sense him or her, which is a conscious action that would not happen without a wish. Moreover, dance quality depends on the people’s desire to pay attention and good dance would not happen without the communication of dancers:

‘You analyse every partner, even if you dance the fifth dance together with him; at the beginning of every dance you analyse whether she wants to dance with you vigorously, or does she want to improvise or to spin. The communication of both is very important and when you analyse and see that she wants the same things as you, then it is one of the best dances.’ (Jonas)

Even though all people who come here have the desire to dance and the respondents ‘did not notice any people who would not wish to dance’ (Jūratė), traditionally men ask for dance and thus their wish is more overtly expressed than the women’s. Formally, women are the passive partners, but in practice they choose as well – a woman chooses a man and signals it with glances, and if the man catches it, often he comes and asks her to dance. Many men do the same: before they invite a woman to dance, they check her wish by looking at her eyes, and if they get a positive response (smile) they come and ask her to dance. Men do not need to stand next to the woman in order for the eye contact to happen, both dancers can stand in the distance of 5 metres or more (personal communication and observations 2017–2018).

While body language is often labelled as a universal speech, sociologists and anthropologists have repeatedly shown that many cultures have their own body languages, and a particular body gesture might have the opposite meanings in different cultures, or even in the same community (Grau, 2012). While describing the expressions that signify a person’s wish to dance, Rasa suggested that when a partner spins you more than it is required according the dance choreography, it means that he *likes you* (Rasa). However, I disagreed with her, because in my view, an extra spin means that he likes to *dance* with you (fieldwork diary 2018.03.23). This is because different people have different tolerance levels for close physical contact and embracement. However, in the dance club if the partner embraces you closer, this might either mean that he *likes you* (Ugnius) or that he enjoys *dancing with you* and he wants to go along and feel the emotional proximity.

Smiling is one of the forms of ‘universal’ body language which expresses positive emotions and good will. However, Lithuanians and people who visit Lithuania notice that people do not smile here so much as the people from Central Europe and there are many possible explanations for this. Still, you rarely see people smiling without a reason in public transport or in the streets and a smile without a reason is often accompanied by a suspicious glare. However, people in the dance club are much more used to smiling during the dances, and the smile might express the appreciation of the person:

‘I try to smile and keep the eye contact – I show that a person is important to me [...] but it does not mean that I like him.’ (Rasa)

The smile can also express the pleasure of dancing with a particular person and might show the acknowledgement and compliment for good dancing:

‘The smile shows that a person enjoy the dancing with you, because if a person hides his eyes then it means that he does not like to dance with you. However, an overly long eye contact [looking more than 5 seconds] is not good too. The short smile is a compliment of good dancing.’ (Ugnius)

### **Trust**

Physical contact can exist even with a partner whom one does not fully trust, but the emotional sensation and proximity would *not* appear if the person does not truly trust the partner. People from the online survey and dancers during the interviews note the importance of relaxation for the emotional sensation of the partner and for the ‘susišokimas’ (‘dancing harmoniously’ in English). In the context of social dancing in the traditional dance club, trust is twofold: self-confidence (inward directed trust) and trust of the other (outward directed trust).

Self-confidence is related to knowing how to dance because when a person is able to perform dance movements, he or she has more courage to invite or accept an invitation from other people. When both partners know how to dance, ‘even if they are not very experienced dancers, given that they feel comfortable within their selves, it is easier to feel the contact with a partner. In my opinion, the sensation depends on the self-confidence and the trust of the partner, as well as on the ‘susišokimas’ and dance experience’ (Online survey No. 1191).

Self-confidence also depends on person’s appearance: ‘if you wear comfortable, beautiful clothes and you smell good, then girls will say so and if you feel good then you will dance well too’ (Ugnius).

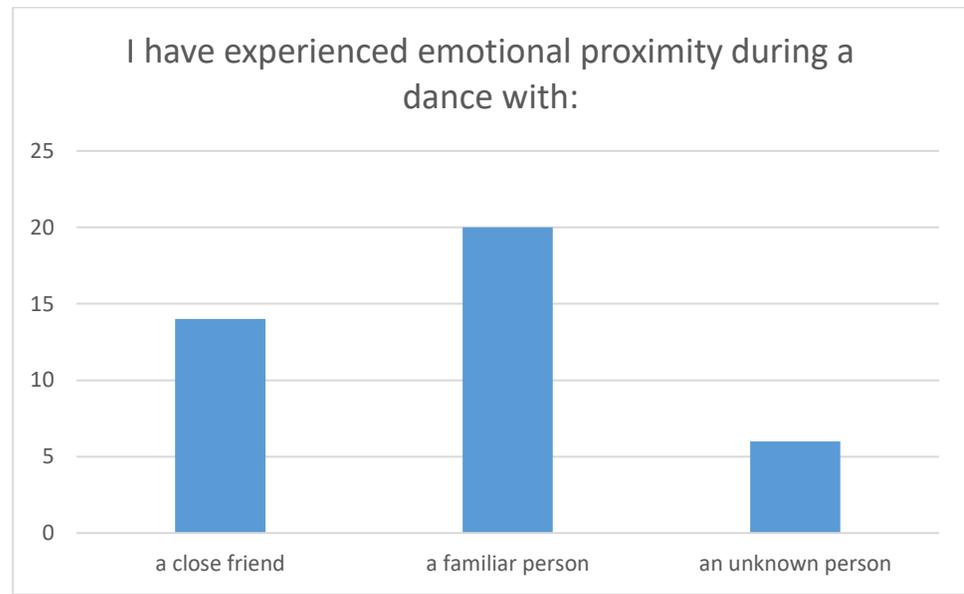
Outward trust was discussed in the previous chapters on verbal and physical communication. To remind, trust is very important for physical communication and trust in the partner is also one of the major factors in establishing emotional proximity. In the traditional dance club people indicate that all participants are respectful and friendly, which helps develop trust between dancers a lot. In time, people adapt to close physical contact and they ‘need less personal space physically and emotionally. [...] it is because the warmth of people’ (Austėja). Most people feel the pleasure of opening up and they get emotional fulfilment by trusting the partner:

‘Trust is important because when you trust a person, you are open for connection and communication. [...] Dance is energy and you can adopt it only through contact with your partner.’ (Jonas)

Trust is really important and without it the communication would scarcely happen during the dance. Good dancers know it and as a result they treat the partner gently:

‘You can understand that she does not trust you from micro-details. [...] there is now fear in dance but you can find distrust [what that means] – then you spin to the opposite side. And every time she looks back or you spin her with one hand and she slows herself down – then you feel from her body language that she does not trust you and your actions. Then you dance differently and you do not improvise so much and you let her dance gently. You create comfort zone and in time she starts to trust you. If you say ‘Why don’t you trust me? Trust me!’, she will not trust you. You must grow it somehow and communication there is very important.’ (Jonas)

Indeed, the online survey shows that familiarity and friendship with the person is very important for the emotional proximity during the dance to develop:



Trust also seems to be more important to women than men. Women are more likely to emphasize the need for trust during the dance and they associate lack of trust with the lack of familiarity with a person:

‘When I dance with a well-known person I am not afraid of physical contact so much as with an unknown person. Then the relaxation, pleasure and the sensation of a dance emerge.’ (Vaida)

Women also tend to transfer the trust which emerges during the dance to their own lives: ‘during the dance you are in a close connection with a man and you realise that it is OK. Dance helped me to develop trust in a man’ (Rasa). Women often appreciate the process of learning to follow and transfer the same principle to their own life as well: ‘I have realised that I need to give in and then everything in my life will go more easily’ (Karolina). Moreover, when trust develops, ‘there is more relaxation, enjoyment and feeling during the dance’ (Vaida), it opens the gateway to ‘spiritual satisfaction’ (Rytis) and helps to ‘bestow yourself to the partner’ (Rita). To facilitate this, familiarity is very important, and ‘in order to relax and to feel the emotional or even spiritual proximity you should have seen him for at least a few times before’ (Mantas).

### **Particular dance and music**

A common practice in the dance club is that people tend to dance some particular dances with a particular person. Ugnius argues that ‘there is one woman whom I know, who likes to spin and dance the ‘Belarusian subota’, so I ask her to dance it’ (Ugnius).

Although dance club gathers in one place people of different ages, professions and personal beliefs, and all people have their own musical tastes and favourite dances, there are several dances that almost all people appreciate. These are ‘karmoškale’ and ‘estiška subota’. Both dances are sentimental and have melodious tunes, which people sometimes appreciate even more than the dance steps (although most dancers do not make a distinction between the dance steps and the melody). Dancers’ preferences for particular dances are strongly related to musicians’ likings. Indeed, ‘music has large influence on dancing and you can feel the rhythm and the dance itself. Live music is more beautiful and it transmits musicians’ feelings’ (Karolina). Some people say that ‘this dance is too good’ (Ugnius) or ‘too precious’ (Jonas) that the person would spend time talking during it.

Sometimes, it is not a particular dance but rather the melody which transmits the specific emotion. There are a lot of different people in the dance club, and some prefer fast and vivacious dances while others prefer experiencing emotional proximity during slower dances. Most often slow dances are nostalgic and melodious, the dance movements are slow, and ‘I can dance merely with my eyes closed’ (Ugnius), sometimes during the *waltz* ‘such an intimacy appears between the people’ (Rapolas). Meanwhile, other people prefer vivacious dances (Ugnius, Karolina) ‘because during the fast dances it is easier to dance rhythmically’ (Ugnius).

In general, one of the most important dance elements is music, and according to a majority of dancers, the various qualities of music affect the emotional states during the dance. Almost all dancers agree that their own emotional states align with the *musicians*’ sense of involvement with and feeling-through of the music: ‘when musicians play what they like, you feel it’ (Jūratė). It increase the joy of dancing and engagement with it. Moreover, the dancers note that good music at the right tempo, played by involved musicians, together with the sense of ‘susišokti’ create an extraordinary emotional satisfaction. During fast dances such as ‘šeštiniš’, musicians’ increasing rush and tempo inspire people so they start shouting along and stomping their feet like a drum. Meanwhile, rushing the music during slow dances like ‘estiška sobota’ pressurizes the dancers and they cannot feel it fully. Moreover, a sensitive improvisation by the musicians is of high value to dancers, and felt-through music inspires dancers to feel the music and the partner as well (personal conversations 2014-2018). Some dancers enjoy the music by closing their eyes during the dance (Ugnius, online survey participants ‘kauns1’ and ‘bubu’).

To sum up, the ‘susišokti’, the good partner (who knows the dance steps) or well sensed music played by good musicians are necessary components of emotional proximity and guides dancers to the pleasant emotional drift which is described in the next section as the *flow* state.

## The flow

The concept of *flow* was described and investigated by a physiologist and positive psychology scholar Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in a number of publications since 1975. In his book '*Flow: The psychology of optimal performance*' he describes *flow* as the mental state in which a person is deeply immersed in a fulfilling activity and loses the sense of time and space. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:4). Even though the state of *flow* is a very complex physiological construct, in the context of this study it will be used as a tool to analyse the *end results* of emotional proximity that emerge during dance in Vilnius traditional dance club. The *flow* in this research is described as the deep immersion into the dance activity accompanied by forgetfulness of space, time and other physical sensations (pain, cold, hunger).

Of particular interest to this study is Csikszentmihalyi's analysis of *dance*, together with other art and physical entertainment forms. In the chapter called 'The joys of movement', he describes activities 'that use the body as an instrument':

'Sports and fitness are not the only media of physical experience that use the body as a source of enjoyment, for in fact a broad range of activities rely on rhythmic or harmonious movements to generate flow.' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:99)

These insights apply to activities in the traditional dance club, which is witnessed by the oft-used term 'susišokti'. The harmony of dance steps and music, and the harmony of two people dancing in a couple are crucial to achieve the state of 'susišokti' and the extraordinary pleasure that it gives:

'If the music connects with dance and there is a good dance and you dance with a good partner, then you indulge fully' (Rita)

‘The music became faster and I just held my partner and I felt safe and I was completely ‘out’ of my mind. When the dance ended, I opened my eyes and it seemed that I woke up a dream’ (online survey respondent kauns1)

Moreover, Csikszentmihalyi states that in order to feel the pleasure of movement (to ‘enjoy controlling the expressive potentials of the body’), there is no need to ‘become a professional’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:100). The amateurs can enjoy the harmony of movement without becoming the professionals and the movement has a great potential for people to experience more fulfilment and happiness.

According to the interviews and the online survey, three-quarters of participants have experienced the state of *flow* during the dance. However, it is still unclear what it is, how and why it happens to the participants. In the following analysis, we will analyse the dancers’ responses in order to understand its importance. An experienced dancer Mantas (interview 2018.03.23) gives three scenarios when *flow* is more likely to happen, largely confirmed by other dancers: dancing throughout the night, dancing with a likeable person, and dancing a physically demanding dance.

### **Dancing throughout the night**

The most common scenario when the *flow* appears is during the full-night dancing called ‘naktišokiai’ (‘night-dances’ in English). It happens about once a month, and the most enthusiastic dancers travel the few hundred kilometres to dance all the night there. People claim that during the ‘naktišokiai’ they feel more relaxed because they have all the night and they know that musicians will play for hours and hours. So, they do not need to rush to dance every dance and they select their favourite dances and enjoy the night without any hurry.

People during the ‘naktišokiai’ often choose a person and they do not hesitate to dance with him more than a few dances. As a consequence, they attain the state of ‘susišokimas’ more often than in the casual dance events on Thursday. However, during ‘naktišokiai’ people dance much longer so they became more tired too, and their ‘exteroceptors’ – vision, hearing, touch (Smyth, 1984) – become less receptive. Such ‘blunted’ senses help them forget everything around and fully immerse themselves into the dance, which create favourable circumstances for people to experience the *flow*:

‘Music plays, you dance and spin and your partner... and then everything disappears: tiredness disappears and you feel happy. I felt there that I rest while dancing, no matter that I am moving. But then the dance ends, and you feel tired again.’ (Karolina)

### **Likeable person**

Another important factor for experiencing the state of *flow* is personal relationships. Dancers claim that when dancing with a likeable person, it is easier to feel him or her emotionally and they often feel the state of *flow*, too. Moreover, in such a case, he or she does not need to dance perfectly and to know all the steps. The liking or flirtation with other dancers gives a lot of joy and enriches the dance emotionally, as well as makes this experience exclusive and pleasing (participant observation 2015-2018). Mantas appreciates the dance club because he can enjoy dancing with a likeable person, yet invite other woman to dance after a while, too, and does not need to feel any obligations and can enjoy the variety of different experiences of emotional proximity (2018.03.23). However, Rasa argued that during the dance there are plenty of ways to show the liking and for the shy person it might be a challenge to dance with the likeable person (interview 2017.03.23).

### **Physically intense dance**

The last scenario when the *flow* emerges is during physically intense and tiring dances. The role of music is crucial here. When the dance club musicians play vigorously, dancers are willing to join the common spree and they put their full effort to echo the vigorousness of the musicians and their emotions (see video link No. 1). Moreover, in order for the state of *flow* to emerge, the fast tempo of the dance is necessary because then the dancer puts all their efforts to make out the dance steps and does not have any time to think about anything else, and ‘you forget your painful feet and that you are tired after two hours of constant dancing, but you are fully within that second and moment’ (Mantas). Or ‘it seems that you are fully exhausted, your feet hurt and you don’t want anything more, that you will soon fall down and that’s it. Then you are invited for another dance, and during the dance you forget everything’ (Karolina).

To sum up, some dancers cannot *name* that emotional satisfaction, but its effects are no less for that reason: the temporary escape from the casual thinking processes and concerns makes people feel refreshed, and the deep immersion into the pleasing activity fills them with the vitality and gives intensive joy and happiness.

### **3. Discussion**

Communication during dance is a multi-layered process, influenced by a variety of personal and situational factors discussed in the previous chapters. As we discovered, it also changes with time and with dancer’s experience, as one learns the steps, builds familiarity with the people and intuitively dances ever better. Dancers’ motivation also transforms with time and experience, and their communication adjusts accordingly as they find new attractions.

## How?

Most interview respondents came to Vilnius traditional dance club because they were invited by friends or family (Austėja, Rapolas, Mantas, Vaida, Miglė, Rytis, Martynas, Jonas). However, the initial *motives* were different, some people choose to establish themselves in the community by ‘talking their way in’, while others claim that at the beginning they appreciated dance as a form of physical activity (Martynas, Austėja) and only afterwards they find friends and develop small friends’ circles inside the club community, belonging to which manifests by talking (Miglė, Austėja, Rita, Rasa, Mantas, Rapolas, Jūratė, Martynas, Tadas).

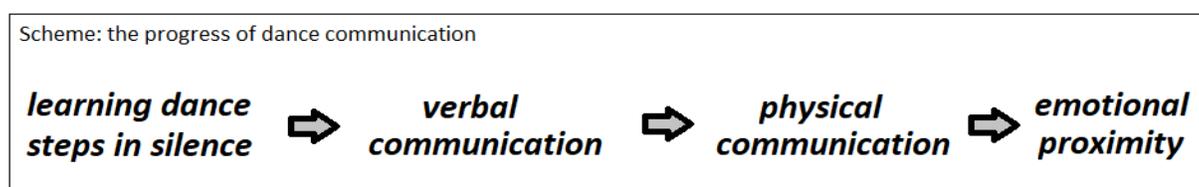
Regardless of the motives for coming, verbal communication helps new people learn the dance steps and familiarise themselves with the community. However, at the beginning there is a period when even verbal communication usually does not happen: ‘if both dancers do not know how to dance, then verbal communication does not happen because they watch other couples and try to repeat the dance steps’ (Mantas). From the outside, one recognizes such situations when the dancers keep their heads bent down or constantly look around to neighbours (participation and observation 2009-2018). It is important to say that this stage is really difficult, because it requires courage and patience from the dancer as well as his neighbours (Ugnius, Mantas). The learning of dance steps might take anywhere from a few minutes to a month, depending on the talent of the dancer and the previous dance experience (Tadas, Mantas). Still, this stage is sooner or later passed, and verbal communication can start: people start to talk and familiarise with each other during the dance. However, these elements might vary and change because people do not act according to a strict mechanistic process model but conversely, it reflects every nuanced situation.

## When?

In general, all dancers must pass the stage of dance step learning before advancing to the states of ‘susišokti’ and emotional proximity. But even more interestingly, most people emphasize the gradual shift with time from verbal communication towards predominantly physical and emotional ones. At the beginning, most people talk a lot of the time, but after a while they become increasingly more conscious of the physical sensation of the partner and grow willing to explore the deeper aspects of dance. As a result, they start to cultivate their senses of ‘exteroception’ and ‘proprioception’ (Smyth, 1984:19) and improve the physical communication skills. Indeed, dancers repeatedly noticed that during the physical and emotional stages of dance communication they talk less:

‘Now I know how to dance and I don’t feel the need to talk and I can enjoy the dance without talking, because I feel safe in this community.’ (Karolina)

From the above analyses, we can therefore sketch a scheme that represents a generalized pattern of shifts in the types of communication during dance:



It must be noted that this is a rough approximation of the sequence of communication in one particular dance club in Lithuania, and some dancers would surely disagree with it. Therefore, the limitations and exceptions should be acknowledged. Nevertheless, it reflects the typical process observed in the collected responses reasonably well, and might facilitate deeper

and more nuanced discussions about the typical features of couple ‘folk’ dancing in Eastern European region.

Moreover, interviews and the online survey and participant-observation showed that there are several main aspects which could help to predict when people seek more verbal communication than others. People talk more when they do not know dance steps and talking with a partner provides essential information for dancing. Moreover, most people talk because they want to get acquainted (Rasa, Tadas, Mantas, Vaida, Miglè) or they dance with a good friend or someone ‘you met a long while ago’ (Tadas).

### **Why?**

Analyses in the previous chapters suggest that communication during dance in Vilnius traditional dance club is influenced by a variety of external factors, such as teaching and the impact of other dance styles. They are discussed here in greater depth.

The recent dance teachers in the traditional dance club were all professional dancers with extensive dance experience, who travel and teach dances in other countries. They incorporate to teachings their experience which they collect from dance festivals, summer camps, seminars from all around Europe. Some of them (Rytis, Eivilè) have professional qualifications, having completed university dance courses in Norway. Moreover, all of them have experience of other styles, including lindy-hop, contact improvisation, ballroom dances, modern dance and *balfolk*. All these dances left imprints on their muscle memory, and they help them approach the dances not as naïve (Buckland, 2006) dancers from the ‘first dance existence’ (Hoerbürger, 1968). The teachings of these teachers affects various aspects of dance: dance style, body posture, dance etiquette, dance aesthetics, dance repertoire, musical taste as well as communication between two dancers. Dance teachers have power to shape communication during dance by directing

dancers' attention to specific aspects of their practice facilitate development of specific skills related to their ability for communication. For example, the dance workshop lead by Eivilė cultivated physical sensation of the partner, and after the workshop people became more conscious about sensation of the partner through 'elbow on elbow' contact. Moreover, some people discovered that closed eyes helps a lot to feel the partner and his or her leading.

The recent dance teachers have certainly made significant effect and most people appreciate the continuing training of *polka* and *waltz*. However, the dance club leader and some other dancers consider that continuous training about the connection between the partners is lacking, and leading and following are considered 'not the strong side' of Vilnius traditional dance club (online survey respondent No. 5678).

### **Other dance styles**

Some people who do not participate in the traditional dance club but are watching its videos on social media have noticed that the dance style of some dancers is clearly influenced by the lindy-hop dance style (audience remark after the dance research presentation 2018.04.26). The dance club leader confirmed that such an influence indeed is visible and people embody some of the lindy-hop dance features. Moreover, one interviewee (Mantas) claimed that he knows five traditional dance club dancers who also dance lindy-hop, and that people who have lindy-hop experience feel the partner better. The traditional dance club attracts many new people and the professional level consistently increases, however it is not affected directly by the development of lindy-hop culture in Lithuania. However, the current leader of the dance club takes the lindy-hop culture as a good example and proposed that the traditional dance club should have an ambition to reach the same level of professionalism as lindy-hop clubs have achieved (public discussion with the club's members 2017.10.27).

Another significant external influence is *balfolk*. This folk dance trend originates from France and contains folk dances from France and other countries, including Central Europe. This dance trend reached the dance club from the largest *balfolk* event – Gennetines summer camp in France, with the previous dance musician group ‘ByTikZyz’ four years ago. However, people are increasingly interested in this ‘folk’ dance trend and recent dance teachers and other good dancers have participated in Gennetines summer camp and other *balfolk* dance events abroad or in Lithuania.

*Balfolk* is more concerned with the improvisation of musicians and dancers and less with the authenticity of dance steps and music. The dance style is open for development and the current dance style is constructed by dancers who practiced contact improvisation and folk dancing (Rita). The impact of *balfolk* to Vilnius traditional dance club manifests by stronger significance attached to the sensation of the partner, flexible couple role arrangements and constant improvisation. Moreover, Rita provided this accurate comparison of *balfolk* and traditional dancing in Lithuania:

‘Lithuanian dances are more static and such contact [as in *balfolk*] would not be possible because the dances are so different. Of course, you can experience the contact during *waltz* or *polka* because it depends on you. It might be due to Lithuanian mentality, who are not as warm as people, given that *balfolk* is in France, Italy, Portugal. There the people are different, they communicate differently and dance accordingly. During *mazurka*, *Scottish* you can become closer and express it through the whole body. Meanwhile, when you dance *polka* you can dance alone and you don’t need the contact with your partner because you can do the steps alone [...]. During *mazurka* or *Scottish*, the partners can help each other, because they emphasise that both partners can lead or follow, and the man must listen more and it gives him more flexibility.’ (Rita)

The most visible examples of *balfolk* practice in the dance club were the dance workshops ‘Dance like a dialogue’ lead by Eivilė, during which the sensation of partner was cultivated by

changing the couple roles during the dance and encouraging the men to dance with men like in the *balfolk* dancing (Rytis, Jonas). Also, the dance club leader consciously absorbed and applied *balfolk* dance practices in order to improve dancing skills of the dancers (participant observation and an interview with Rytis). So, the new attitude made first direct entry into the club via the dance teachers' worldview, which were formed by their personal dance experiences and international dance festivals and camps. For instance, the experience of Goda Sungailaitė, one of the main dance teacher in the dance club, is described in such a manner:

‘From the very young age she was developing dancing skills by dancing different style dances (ballroom dances, lindy-hop, modern dance, balfolk). She has been the dance teacher at international traditional dance festivals together with professional European traditional dance teachers, and she is further improving her dancing and teaching techniques.’ (Description form the Traditional dance club event on Facebook ‘Balfolk lesson with Goda Sungailaite + social dancing’ on 2018.04.19)

The dance style of Goda Sungailaitė is shaped by her past experience and now she forms the new dance culture in Vilnius traditional dance club by drawing on her previous experiences in European contexts. Even though Goda has deep knowledge about Lithuanian traditional dance, she cannot ignore her previous bodily experience and dancing habits from other styles. Moreover, dancers themselves are also curious and they travel all over Europe to attend various ‘folk’ dance festivals, where they gather knowledge and bodily experiences, and bring them back to Vilnius traditional dance club. That is to say, the dance club as any cultural phenomena will be influenced by the experiences and environments of their members and teachers, and every teacher inevitably modifies the club into their making. It seems that dance teachers have a greater influence over the dance club culture than individual dancers.

The *balfolk* dance repertoire is successfully integrated in the repertoire of Vilnius traditional dance club and some *balfolk* dances (such as mазurka) became favourite dances of some dancers (personal conversations 2009-2018). Moreover, participant observation and interview data strongly suggest that *balfolk* is now the single most significant external influence on communication during dance in Vilnius traditional dance club, far surpassing the influence of lindy-hop, because it is stylistically close and has the quality of desirability as a new trend and discovery in the Lithuanian folk dance community.

### **Special relationship and mood**

Participant observation and other collected data confirm that when people dance with a likeable person they are more likely to experience the state of *flow*, and that in such a case dance experience of the partner is dispensable and mistakes are forgivable. Interestingly, one woman also experienced the opposite situation. Once, a grubby man asked her to dance and at the beginning she felt uncomfortable, but he danced so well that his grubbiness stopped concerning her because ‘when a person dances very well, you do not think about anything else’ (Rita).

Moreover, over a fifth of interview participants stated that they hope to find their life partner in the dance club, and it also influences the features of communication during dance. Such a purpose in mind creates openness to emotional experiences, and these people might be more inclined to initiate or seek emotional proximity during dances. It might be that non-single and married people seek emotional proximity less, for which the data from participant observation gives initial support but a deeper investigation would be needed to make firm conclusions. On the other hand, people who are already in love relationship talk less and dance within smaller distance from each other, and seem to enjoy the dance more intensely than other people (Karolina).

Finally, the mood also influences communication during dance. During the interviews, all people were asked to describe their way of communication when they are in a good mood, and the opposite – bad mood. The majority of people confirmed that being in a good mood evokes the wish for vivid dances they improvise more and communicate with people around them more by smiling, teasing or making jokes, and paying less attention to the social norms (Mantas). Moreover, they are more likely to communicate verbally with the partner and neighbours, but they still ‘want to feel how the partner leads you and how he feels, and this remains whether you are in a good or bad mood’ (Miglė).

When dancers are in a bad mood they are less likely to communicate verbally, because they do not want to spread their bad mood. With regards to the physical and emotional types of communication, there are two possible but opposite reactions: some are more likely to feel the partner and the music deeply, while the others, on the contrary, cannot concentrate and do not want to have any physical or emotional proximity at all. In general, all respondents agree that dance improves their mood in any case, and every time they leave the dance event with a much better mood than the one they came with.

### **A different generation**

According to Rita, during Lithuanian traditional dances you do not need to come into physical contact with your partner, and the constant change of the dance steps, spinning, clapping, jumping are often considered more important and takes a lot of people’s attention. This insight by Rita corresponds closely with the attitude of an earlier generation of dancers, in which most people come to entertain themselves and are not interested in the emotional sensation of the partner or searching for something ‘deeper’. Although some of them still attend the dance club and during the online survey they have agreed that physical and emotional

communication with the partner are very important, they remain conservative about the swapping of couple roles and prefer the more physical aspects of 'susišokti' instead of emotional proximity. These might come from the dominant general values at the time when those people learned to dance and did it actively.

Sille Kapper (2016) in her remarkable paper analyses three different trends of folk dancing in post-Soviet Estonia within the dense socio-cultural background of the times, and gives a few remarks directly related to the topic of this study. Kapper argues that the new generation of dance community born in the post-Soviet Estonia does not associate their dancing practice with collectiveness and other Soviet ideological concepts, but they 'value harmony in the relations between co-dancers and partners or dancers and musicians, they appreciate dance situation as an expression of mutually or collectively adopted inner values and, finally, they regard the combination of traditional folk dance and music as a specific complex of knowledge and emotional self-expression' (Kapper, 2016:107) These insights strongly support the idea that different generations value different aspects of dance. Moreover, Kapper puts the present research into perspective, as the author of this study is also born in the post-Soviet period and this research analyses the same 'emotional self-expression' through experiences of emotional proximity, the flow and the state of 'susišokti'. The 'collectively adopted inner values' were investigated in through the medium of couple roles which are intertwined with almost all the topics of this research.

It comes to the conclusion that this research reflects the interests in dance which are common among the post-Soviet dancers' generation in Eastern Europe, and represents the general direction away from the choreographed and synchronically performed folk dance on the stage. Indeed, this investigation might be called exploration in the *personal* meanings of a dance.

## Conclusions

All in all, the study revealed how the complex processes of communication vary with time and depend on many situational and personal factors, so that every occurrence of contact is unique. However, this investigation has also revealed certain patterns of typical behaviour which dancers often employ when they communicate during the dance in Vilnius traditional dance club:

1. People are more likely to communicate during the dance when they are familiar with the partner;
2. Women have strongly expressed the need for trust and their openness to any kind of communication highly depends on the development of trust;
3. Men in the leading roles are less concerned with talking than women, due to the a variety of tasks to perform during the dance, which burden their attention: leading firmly, navigating in the dance hall and avoiding bumps, trying to sense the partner and seek the state of 'susišokti', and improvise during the dance;
4. More experienced women have more self-confidence in the subject of dance and they often start to lead during the dance;
5. Verbal communication helps people cope with stress during the dance and reduce the emotional tension that might occur when two unfamiliar dancers find themselves in close physical contact with each other. It also helps learn the dance steps or transmit other important information. However, most people state that verbal communication is an activity of secondary importance, compared with the desire to dance harmoniously – the so-called 'susišokti';

6. New members highly value verbal communication because it helps them to get familiar with people and establish the trust they need to enter the dancers' community.
7. All members value physical communication, however, experienced dancers value emotional proximity and the sensation of the partner even more ;
8. For some dancers, dance is a tool for achieving emotional proximity, but it depends on the person's wish to 'go deeper' with the partner, and the particular partner, the particular dance and how it is played all determine the ultimate outcome.
9. The *flow* occurs most often during the all-night dancing events and it has three scenarios: when person dance with a likeable person, when you dance for a long time with the same person and 'susišoki', and finally when the dance is fast and vivacious and people put in all their effort to perform it.

Generally, there are two alternative views of verbal communication. Some dancers claim that verbal communication is not very significant, a secondary activity, while others state that talking is an essential activity during the dance to fulfil their needs of communication and help them feel comfortably. Though some people in the dance club value verbal communication more than the others, most of them agree that physical communication is the most important type and they prioritize their efforts to sensing the partner physically. However, verbal communication and physical communication are interrelated, and verbal communication often helps to grow and nurture physical and emotional communication.

I would like finish the study with a quote by Vaida, who explains how the preferred type of communication can vary with every moment, illustrating that the actual people make free

choices and, ultimately, might not conform to the theories or generalizations thought out by academics:

‘There is that debate: do you like the cake or the omelette more? When I want to eat properly, I like omelette more, but when I want a dessert, I want the cake. Both things [in dance] are very important [physical exertion and emotional experience], because if I only wanted the physical exertion, I would go jogging; but I go to the dances.’ (Vaida)

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A. Questionnaire**

#### ***Starting questions***

1. *How long have you attended the traditional dance club (TDC)?*
2. *How did you come to the club?*
3. *Is TDC an important part of your life? Do you go there often?*
4. *Why do you attend TDC?*
5. *How TDC community is unique to you?*
6. *Is there an internal structure to the organization?*
7. *Are dance teachings useful?*
8. *Are you satisfied with the dance repertoire?*
9. *Do you prefer that the favourite dances are to be repeated?*

#### ***Communication***

10. *What is communication?*
11. *What is communication during dance?*

#### ***Verbal communication***

12. *Do you talk often during the dance? Do you talk more frequently during the dance or the breaks?*
13. *On what topics do you talk during the dance?*
14. *Does talking during the dance disturbs you, or rather adds to the charm?*
15. *Are there specific dances during which you talk more or keep silent?*

#### ***Physical communication***

16. *When you started attending TDC, was it easy to get used to the rather close physical contact?*
17. *Do you put in the effort to sense the partner during the dance?*

18. *What features of the dancer can strengthen the wish to dance together, experience physical proximity?*
19. *When did you understand that it is important to sense the dance partner? Did the dance teachings or particular teachers have influence?*
20. *Do the women need to listen more to the dance partner than the men?*

***Emotional proximity***

21. *Have you ever experienced a strong emotional proximity with the partner while dancing?*
22. *Have you ever experienced the state of flow?*
23. *What kind of circumstances facilitated this experience?*
24. *Is this state a valued goal of pursuit?*
25. *Is physical sensation of the partner needed for the experience of emotional proximity?*
26. *Is TDC the place where you can best express your emotional states?*

***Summary***

27. *How does the good mood affect your willingness to communicate, experience physical and emotional proximity?*
28. *How does the bad mood affect your willingness to communicate, experience physical and emotional proximity?*
29. *Does communication change with dance experience?*

## Appendix B. Consent form

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Title of the study:** Dancers' communication in the traditional dance club

**Short description of the study:** Communication is a broad and multi-layered phenomenon, but in this study it is distinguished into three types: verbal, physical and emotional. All of these types of communication make a differential effect both to the dancer and to the process of dance. This study's goal is to investigate the communication models dominating in Vilnius traditional dance club, as well as club members' motivation, the need for communication and its influence to the traditional dance participants.

**Confidentiality:** The interview will be recorded and transcribed excluding any personally identifiable data, so the responses will remain anonymous. Interview transcript or excerpts from it can appear in the study material or other publications of the study's author. The recordings can be listened to by the master thesis supervisor or other persons involved in the process of examination.

**I (name) .....** agree to participate in this study and I know that at any time I can suspend the interview or request the researcher to delete the data obtained from me. I agree that everything I will say will remain anonymous, but if I decide to withdraw my data when the study is finished, they will be available to be used in a generalized form. I understand that all the information that I provide will be treated responsibly and ethically, and that my identity will be protected in the publications and other research products. I agree that my data will be collected and processed in accordance with Roehampton university data protection regulations.

Signature .....

Date .....

If you have any questions regarding your participation in this study, please contact the master thesis supervisor or, if you should seek impartiality, please contact the head of Roehampton Dance department:

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Videos:

1. Video of vigorous playing: <https://www.facebook.com/vydaras/videos/2048784445355447/>