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The use of drama activities in teaching German in a third-level classroom

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Abstract

This article discusses the use of drama activities in teaching German to various groups of students at Cork Institute of Technology in the academic year 2003/2004. The findings are based on action research and reflective practice. It describes the outcomes of the use of drama activities in the first-year classroom, and analyses what might have been done differently in order to achieve a more positive result. It also describes the more successful outcomes of the enactment of two dramatic activities by a second-year German class, and the use of a third drama activity with both second- and third-year students. The latter activity was created in collaboration with a colleague, and the latter's participation and observations, as well as the students' observations, formed an integral part of the analysis. The concluding part of the article makes suggestions for further research, and offers some advice to third-level teachers or lecturers who are interested in using drama in similar language classroom environments.

1 Teaching Context

This article presents an overview of the findings of an action research project conducted to establish whether the German classroom at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) is suited to the use of drama activities.

CIT is a third-level college, with a total of approximately 17,000 full- and part-time students. The courses span the areas of Business, Science, Engineering, Art and Music, and aim to provide practical, career-oriented skills, as well as academic knowledge of the subject areas. Foreign languages (FLs) are available as optional modules on some courses in the college; for the Tourism and Hospitality Management courses, students choose as a compulsory subject one of three FLs (German, Italian, or French), with the option to study a second FL if they wish to do so. Where FLs are part of a course syllabus, they are taught with a strong emphasis on LSP (Language for Specific Purposes).

Prescribed language textbooks for set syllabi often do not provide sufficient material to make a language class interesting, as suggested by Schewe/Shaw (1993:9):

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> Many of the textbooks and course-books in current use are still full of banal, painfully obvious and often dull dialogues [...].

In the academic year 2003/2004, I introduced drama activities, not in order to remove the textbook and other materials from the classroom, but rather to use the activities to encourage creative exploration and physical as well as emotional engagement with the language as presented by these materials.

> The games, miming and acting of drama activities provide a means of involving a student's whole personality and not merely the thought-processing part. (Dougill 1994: 6)

2 Research Methods

This article discusses action research findings from a 'teacher learning' perspective; the drama activities used in the classroom represented a departure from previous teaching methods employed on the courses (such as unimprovised role-playing, and textbook-based grammar and comprehension exercises). McNiff (2001:1) says of action research:

> [It] encourages a teacher to be reflective of his own practice in order to enhance the quality of education for himself and his pupils. It is a form of self-reflective enquiry [...] and [...] it actively involves teachers as participants in their own educational process. [...] It is a powerful method of bridging the gap between the theory and practice of education [...].

The research was conducted during the academic year 2003/2004[1] in repeated cycles, each cycle spanning four stages: planning and conducting a drama activity; observing what occurred; reflecting on the observations; and planning further activities based on previous findings. In addition to the use of observation notes as a source of information, the research was triangulated by the students' observations (in the form of questionnaires and interviews) and those of Holger Huber, a colleague, with whom I collaborated for the final exercise. According to Dewaele (2005), triangulation provides an alternative to having to choose between either quantitative or qualitative research; it allows for subjective findings to be included in the final analysis. In addition, including results based on student contributions allows students to become directly involved in research conducted to improve their learning experience.

> [...] there is growing acceptance within the SLA [Second Language Acquisition] community that learners' feelings and reflections on their learning process, language use, and changing identity offer valuable insights in aspects traditionally overlooked in SLA. (Dewaele 2005: 369)

[1] The academic year runs from September to June.

The initial phase of research discussed in this article was conducted with the first-year class, a mixed group consisting of 28 students from three different courses: Tourism, Office Information Systems (OIS), and Hotel and Catering. Subsequent phases of research with the second-year class (15 students consisting of two groups: five Hotel and Catering students and ten Tourism students) involved the use of dramatic role-plays (see Appendices II and III; Exercises 1 and 2), and culminated in rehearsing and performing the scene *Im Restaurant* (see Appendices IV and V), on which Holger Huber and I collaborated. His third-year class staged this activity in a classroom with props such as plates, cutlery and tablecloths, for which I became a participant-observer. One week later Mr. Huber became the participant-observer for my group of second-years, who staged their performance in the fully-equipped Training Restaurant. Based on our observation and discussion of the third-year performance, I incorporated changes into the second-year preparation and rehearsal of the *Im Restaurant* scene. For example, it became apparent that the third-years had not adequately prepared for the correct use of register (the 'waiters' and 'customers' inappropriately addressed each other as *du*). They also demonstrated a lack of what di Pietro (1987: 84) refers to as "conversation management devices"; incidental conversation was noticeably lacking while the 'customers' were seated at their tables. Consequently, exercises (both written and oral) were introduced during preparation time with the second-years to raise their awareness of register, and to increase their range of conversation 'fillers' (for example, utterances such as *ach so; na ja; also;* and requests such as *Können Sie mir bitte das Salz geben?*), so that they could make 'small talk'.

3 Terminology

There are many terms used to describe different forms of drama-based language teaching. These are referred to variously as *creative dramatics* (Sam 1990); *creative drama* (Dodge 1998); *strategic interaction* (di Pietro 1987); *drama activities* (Dougill 1994); *drama techniques* or *drama* (Chauhan 2004; Maley/Duff 1996); *Drama in Education for Language Learning* (Healy 2004) and *dramapädagogische Lehr- und Lernpraxis* (Schewe 1993). All of these terms refer to the use of drama activities such as role-play, simulation, scenario enactment, mime, song, and the writing and performing of plays or sketches. These activities form an integral part of the overall teaching concept referred to as Communicative Language Learning, as advocated by Morrow (1981) and Brumfit (1984). This article will use the terms drama, drama activities or drama techniques interchangeably.

4 Role/s of the Teacher

The role of the teacher in the language classroom that uses drama differs greatly from that of the teacher in the traditional language classroom. It is

important that the teacher learns to take a 'back seat' during certain stages in drama exercises. The teacher works as a co-participant in the drama in the performance stage, thereby creating a democratic classroom environment "that promotes collaboration and risk-taking" (Healy 2004: paragraph 5). Drawing on the writings of Richards and Rodgers (1986), Schewe lists four main roles of the teacher in communicative activities:

Of particular interest to drama-based foreign-language teaching would appear to be the following:

- the teacher as *facilitator* assumes the role of a promoter of the process of communication between learners, or between learners and a set task;
- the teacher acts as an independent *participant* in the language group;
- the teacher as *counsellor* comes to assistance when a bridge has to be made between speaker intention and listener interpretation [. . .];
- the teacher as *manager* (more accurate here might be producer-director) in group processes sets up an organisational/methodological framework for communicative activities. During and after these activities he injects impulses which accelerate or induce reflection on the group communication process. (Schewe/Shaw 1993: 293)

In taking on these roles, the teacher learns to reduce his or her control over the group, so that the students have sufficient freedom to both explore and act in situations in a natural manner.

Royka (2002:1) talks of the 'fear factor' for teachers considering using drama methods in their classrooms:

> At times teachers are reluctant to use 'drama' activities in classrooms for various reasons: they don't know how to use the activities, limited resources, time constraints, a fear of looking and feeling foolish [. . .]. Generally these feelings are more prevalent when attempting to use drama with adults. [. . .] Often children are much more receptive to any kind of "make-believe" or drama type activity.

Royka argues that very few books containing drama activities are aimed at experts in drama: they are written for teachers of subjects other than drama. She recommends that inexperienced teachers include just a few games in their teaching material initially. She states that teachers should not feel that they are 'performing' drama to the class. All members of the group (that is, the students and the teacher) should feel that they are creating the experience together.

Royka draws on Wessels' observation that many think of drama as "theatricals" (2003: 3) (where the teacher 'performs' for the class). Wessels (ibid. 14) states that this perception is often acquired during teacher training, where the trainee teacher learns that education is

> a one-way transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the student, rather than the creation of a learning situation in which the student is also the teacher.

Wessels feels that the use of drama breaks down barriers between teacher and student, and that this can make less confident teachers reluctant to use it. Drawing on observations made by Heathcote (1972), Wessels argues that the teacher can take a less dominant role in the classroom, without losing the respect of the class or completely losing control, which seems to be a "predominant but baseless fear among some teachers" (Wessels 2003: 15).

5 Outcomes and Conclusions

5.1 The First-Years

During the first phase of my research (in the first-year classroom), I discovered that drama activities do not necessarily succeed in breaking down barriers, either between students and teacher, or between different groups of students within a class. The first-year students did not respond well to drama activities such as the *On the Raft* exercise (see Appendix A), or the *At the Party* exercise (see Appendix A) and increasingly refused to cooperate when I attempted to introduce such activities. They did not move when asked to do so, and repeatedly refused to rearrange classroom furniture. These students also demonstrated reluctance to cooperate with other class members who belonged to different course groups. Consequently, my research for this particular phase changed direction away from the development of further scenarios, and toward an understanding of, and therefore a possible resolution to, uncooperative group behaviour.

Rivers (1987: 9) describes the hesitant teacher teetering "on the brink of interactive practice", resulting in the students' withdrawal from the new experience. It may be that my nervousness, due to unfamiliarity with this teaching method and with these new students, may have transmitted itself, thereby contributing to the students' reluctance to participate. It also became clear to me that, due to my inexperience with drama techniques, I had used inappropriate exercises with this first-year group, such as pretending to be on a raft. Bernat (2004: 4) reminds us that adults are proud of their independence, and that treating adult learners as if they were not fully independent attacks their pride in themselves. This must be particularly true of 18-year-olds, who have only just reached adulthood. It is probable that my methods in the first-year classroom were regarded by the students as forcing them to be childish and undignified.

Bernat (ibid.) also argues that adults have strong feelings about learning situations: some have had "depressing and demoralizing" learning experiences in school, which may indeed be true of some CIT students' prior language learning experiences. An entirely new teaching and learning method may have caused them to feel threatened, particularly if the idea of learning a language at

third-level did not appeal to them to begin with. I realised belatedly that drama techniques should only be introduced after students have established a good working relationship with each other and with the teacher. These first-years were trying to cope simultaneously with unfamiliar classmates, an unfamiliar learning environment, and an unfamiliar teacher; it was not an appropriate time to introduce new teaching and learning methods as well.

Hegman-Shier (2002: 189) states that, when using drama activities, the teacher must be able to "give up control" to make a successful transition from "guiding" (Schewe's *manager* and *counsellor* roles) to "facilitating" (that is, functioning as a *facilitator* and an *independent participant*). She believes that a combination of instinct and experience will tell the teacher how to do this. I believe that I did not achieve a successful transition between the teacher roles of *facilitator*, *independent participant*, *counsellor*, and *manager* that Schewe (1993: 293) lists as essential for classroom drama. Perhaps my inexperience in using drama, combined with my unfamiliarity with the first-years, caused me to be instinctively cautious, rendering me reluctant to relinquish my *counsellor* and *manager* roles and become a participant on an equal footing with the students. An additional contributing factor may have been the students' reluctance to accept me as a participant, as they were accustomed to the teacher being 'in charge' at all times.

Low motivation to participate in the first-year German class resulted in fluctuating attendance levels; this meant that most relationships within this class – apart from those between the few regular (and, arguably, more motivated) attendees – could not be established. The ice did not break in this first-year class.

> Until the climate warms sufficiently, ice has a habit of re-forming. [...] [M]ost learner groups will have spent intervening time belonging to, and conforming to the norms of, many other groups (families, peers, other classes, etc.). For this reason, most groups need a period of readjustment each time they come together, a time to rejoin the group, to accept each other again, to re-establish relationships, and to remind themselves implicitly of the goals and rules of the group – at the same time as switching into a second language "mind-set". (Ehrmann/Dörnyei 1998: 235)

As a different set of students was present for each class, the few students who attended regularly were constantly readjusting to different group members. A lesson had to be repeated on more than one occasion, as no-one present had been to the preceding class. This is not an ideal climate in which to attempt group cohesion exercises.

5.2 The Second- and Third-Years

The second-year class was half the size of the first-year class, and contained students from only two different courses (as opposed to three in the case of the first-year group); I believed this would facilitate a higher level of group cohesion. In fact, the use of drama activities with both the second- and

third-year classes (the latter in collaboration with Mr. Huber) were more successful, probably because the students were more familiar with each other and with me (and, in the case of the third-years, Mr. Huber), and also with their environment.

I first introduced paired role-playing activities using physical movement to the second-year class (as an example see Appendix B: Exercise 1). Drawing on my experience with the first-years, the second-years were allowed to pair up with whomever they chose to sit on entering the classroom during this initial phase, an approach recommended by di Pietro (1987: 71):

> Allowing students to seek out their own groups with whom to work improves the chances that they will be productive in their learning tasks.

Exercises for larger groups followed from the paired exercises (as an example see Appendix C: Exercise 2), leading ultimately to whole-group exercises (see Appendices IV and V: *Im Restaurant*.). Way (1973: 44) advocates this method, as it allows for different stages of development in the use of drama in the classroom to be achieved in a natural fashion:

> [...] it is wisest to allow opportunity for early practice and mastery to be entirely personal, individual and isolated; following this, little by little one learns how to share with other people, developing from the few to the many, often working with one's own friends in natural social grouping.

This gradual phasing in of group exercises was coupled with a change in the physical layout of the classroom, and adding props, to accommodate the transition to more elaborate role-playing required by Exercise 3 (see Appendix D).

During their performance of these exercises, the students responded well to tension-creating dramatic devices; for example, during Phase 4 of Exercise 3 (*Im Restaurant*), they quickly learnt to distract the others at their table in an attempt to rid themselves of the 'poisoned' red wine glass (see Pictures 1 and 2)[2], and they reacted promptly to news of their cars being towed, by leaving the restaurant to deal with the problem outside before returning (see Picture 3). The waiter demonstrated an ability to think quickly and respond in German when dealing with customer complaints (see Picture 4), and, where vocabulary was lacking, he and the other students utilised paralinguistic communication skills to compensate. Personae were adopted to a certain extent, although I believe that the students did not fully 'get into character' during any of the exercises. It is probable that they did not perform a sufficient number of exercises to become comfortable with this method; the grammar-orientated syllabus prevented the inclusion of a greater number of activities.

The response of the second- and third-years to the drama activities was generally positive, as demonstrated by words such as 'real', 'realistic' and

[2] Pictures 1 to 4 show the second-years performing Phase 4 of Exercise 3 in the fully-equipped Training Restaurant in the Tourism and Hospitality Management Department.

Figure 1: *Der Rotweinglas ist vergiftet!*

Figure 2: *Spaß mit dem Rotweinglas*

Figure 3: *Ihr Auto steht im Weg*

Figure 4: *Das habe ich aber nicht bestellt !*

'enjoyable' in their interview and questionnaire answers. As Holden (1981: 1) states: "Anything that can be done to make the learning process less remote, and more obviously transferable to the world outside the classroom, is to be welcomed."

Although the responses of the second- and third-year students who participated in the drama activities were very positive, use of these activities did not noticeably improve attendance levels. Such activities cannot be successfully performed without group cohesion and an established atmosphere of trust; these cannot be properly established where attendance is low. Poor attendance is mentioned repeatedly throughout my observation notes for all years, and was commented on by Mr. Huber and the second-year students themselves. Longer exercises with the second-year students resulted in the repetition of preparatory classes as a result of low attendance. I also learned that exercises had to be flexible enough to accommodate four to fourteen students, as I could not be sure how many students would be present on any given day. I had expected that the second-year Tourism and Catering class would respond more positively to drama activities than the first-years, because they knew each other and me, and I considered them to be a more cohesive group. However, subsequent to the performance of the final exercise, a Tourism student expressed the belief that relationships had not formed successfully between his group and the Catering students. Although this class had performed the exercises in a satisfactory manner, and had provided some positive feedback, it became clear that the full potential of the activities was not being realised, as this group still lacked cohesion.

I also discovered that classroom layout can present a physical, and a psychological, barrier to the performance of drama activities. Although many of the classrooms in CIT are small, they have the design of third-level lecture-theatres and consist of fixed, tiered benches. Drama activities often require a large amount of floor space, or the rearrangement of furniture. The second-year students commented on the CIT classrooms themselves; one of them referred to the classrooms of CIT as "dull, lifeless and beige." College students do not 'own' their space as secondary-school students do, as they move from room to room for various lectures, and do not hang posters or other

emblems of 'ownership' in any classroom. Wessels (2003: 22) likens this type of environment to performing in a vacuum:

> [...] you do not want a bare, featureless room lacking in stimuli, in which the learners will be expected to be creative in a vacuum. [...] [A] bare room creates inhibitions and stifles the imagination.

Unfortunately, her recommendation to dispense with the traditional arrangement of desks cannot be followed for most rooms in CIT.

Subsequent to the second and third-year performances, it became clear that all of the students needed to embrace additional learning strategies. Despite repeated attempts during preparation to teach them conversational management devices and the correct use of register (using choral speaking, listening comprehension and basic role-playing), the students did not use these devices effectively during their performances. Furthermore, it was apparent that they lacked what Daewele (2005: 374) calls "emotion vocabulary", which L2 (second language) users often lack, as they see the L2 as "colder, more distant, and more detached from the L2 user." I realised that these students needed to be taught how to use basic and emotional vocabulary in a structured manner from a very early stage in first year. Only by doing this, and by reinforcing the vocabulary through successful teaching and learning strategies, can the language required for everyday interaction be retained. However, it remains unclear as to which learning strategies are suited to students who are unwilling to devote a large amount of time to learning a language.

Based on my research, Mr. Huber and I chose to reduce the prescriptive grammar content of the new Business Studies syllabus, and to include terminology such as 'drama', 'short script-writing', 'improvised role-playing' and 'group and paired interaction'. This should allow for a greater number of varied drama activities to be incorporated into weekly classes, in order for the students to become comfortable with using them. Activities such as dramatic role-playing and mime have also been incorporated into the new first-year Business Studies syllabus; it remains to be seen if these can be introduced successfully. Each class is different, and occasionally "the most imaginative drama-based method will run afoul of uncooperative and unmotivated students" (Moody 2002: 155). Moody states that he should have sought "more alternatives to emphasize the aspects of essential play" (ibid.) with his uncooperative high-school class; I felt that perhaps more carefully thought-out drama activities might work with future first-year classes, especially if time was specifically allocated to their use in the syllabus.

Most of the contributions from researcher-practitioners on the use of drama in the language classroom are written from the perspective of the successful implementation of these activities (for example Smith/Via (1982); Maley/Duff (1996); Ralph (1997); Miccolli (2003); Schewe/Scott (2003); Healy (2004)). Little has been written about the *incorrect use* of drama activities in the language classroom, or the students' refusal to cooperate when asked to participate. More research is required to determine what constitutes *successful* versus *unsuccessful*

methods when using drama in the language classroom, and descriptions of drama activities need to include clearer indications as to exactly what the teacher's role/s and aims should be.

Hadfield (2003: 10) states that "very little material exists to offer suggestions for practical things a teacher can do to improve relations and atmosphere within a group." More research should be conducted to determine how to positively change group dynamics within uncooperative, or indeed hostile, groups of language learners. Furthermore, research needs to be conducted to determine which learning strategies best suit the acquisition of skill sets essential to a student's successful performance of a drama activity. My research was unable to determine whether drama activities can raise motivation levels in students. Dörnyei (2001: 251) states that motivation in L2 studies is currently being treated somewhat ambiguously within the field of Applied Linguistics; although some progress has been made, more qualitative research should be conducted to determine how different teaching methods may affect motivation to learn a L2.

6 Suggestions

The research conducted for this project concerned a very specific (and small) group of students; the findings were intended as a 'teacher learning' tool for my own development, and I did not intend that the findings should be directly transferable to other language teaching and learning situations. However, the following suggestions may be helpful to third-level teachers or lecturers considering using drama activities in the language classroom, particularly where a FL (or L2) class consists of students from different course groups, or a teacher (or lecturer) is experiencing low student motivation, low attendance levels, and/or a lack of group cohesion:

- Autodidactic methods may be insufficient for the effective use of drama in the third-level language classroom. Unless a teacher feels completely confident in his or her ability to use drama in the language classroom, he or she should attend workshops and/or drama classes.
- Trust must be built within the group before attempting drama activities; other activities may be used to achieve this, such as joint project-work. If students are uncooperative, the teacher may find exercises from Hadfield's (2003) collection of affective and cognitive activities helpful. Her book is designed to promote a successful group dynamic, and was created as a response to her, and other teachers', experiences with unsuccessful groups of language learners.
- Activities should reflect the dynamics of each individual group of students. If most students in a group are introverted, drama activities requiring a lot of motion should not be used, or should at least be introduced gradually, so that students can become comfortable with them.

- Students cannot be expected to learn a large amount of vocabulary – including emotion vocabulary – at the last minute. The use of drama in the classroom needs to be approached as a long-term project. The students need to begin acquiring basic transactional vocabulary from an early stage in their learning, before they are expected to use it in drama activities.

- The environment should be taken into account, in order to choose appropriate activities. Classroom layout, movement between classrooms, and the presence or absence of signs of 'ownership' (such as posters or notice-boards), influence students' confidence in themselves and the group and, therefore, their attitude to drama activities. Where possible, students should be encouraged to 'take ownership' of their environment, for example by creating posters (as a group project), or making joint decisions about the arrangement of furniture.

- Exercises that suit both a small or a large number of students should be used, as full student attendance cannot be guaranteed. It may be that carefully chosen drama activities will raise motivation, and therefore attendance levels, but this cannot be assumed.

- If attendance is low, preparation for longer exercises may have to be repeated. The teacher must decide in advance if this is something he or she is prepared to do.

- If it becomes clear that students are not comfortable participating in the activities, the teacher should open a dialogue with them, to establish what is wrong, as suggested by Nunan (1993: 86f). It may be the teacher's own attitude, or it may be that of the students. While it may be possible for the teacher to change his or her attitude, it may not be possible to effect a change in the attitude of the students. If the students remain uncomfortable, then it is possible that drama activities are not a viable option for that particular group.

Although the above points address possible obstacles to the successful completion of drama activities in the language classroom, such activities have, of course, also achieved successful outcomes as is demonstrated, for example, in the following three studies: Whitear (1998) talks of the 'interesting results' [paragraph 11] that the use of visual/physical activities such as mime, mirroring, tableaux and configuration can achieve; results from Schewe and Scott's (2003) project *Literatur verstehen und inszenieren: Foreign Language Literature Through Drama* showed 69.2% of the students feeling that they had "experienced new ways into literary texts" (72) during the course, and that they felt they had frequently used their various intelligences during the module workshops (ibid.); and Miccoli (2003) proved that using play production with a mixed-level class can raise student motivation. It is not the intention of this

article to detract from such successful outcomes, but to contribute a cautionary note to the existing literature on drama in the language classroom. Drama has been proven to be a valuable language teaching and learning tool; however, if it is used in an inappropriate manner, it may not automatically achieve the positive outcomes that an inexperienced teacher may expect. It is only by considering such things as group dynamics, motivation levels, trust issues, the environment and fluctuating attendance levels that a teacher in a similar situation to my own might successfully conduct drama activities with his or her students.

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A Appendix A

A.1 The First-Years: Sample Exercises

A.2 Warm-up exercise: On the Raft (Whole-group exercise)

This exercise was taken from the Spielend Deutsch - DaF lehren und lernen mit Theatermitteln Workshop, led by Birgit Oelschläger (Goethe Institut - Inter Nationes, Berlin), at the International Conference on Drama and Theatre in the Teaching and Learning of Language, Literature and Culture at UCC in 2003.

Setting

Classroom furniture is moved to the sides and back of the room, clearing a floor space with no obstacles.

Instructions (2-part exercise) – given verbally to the group in English

1. Imagine you are all on a raft on a river. In order for the raft to remain upright, you all have to keep walking around. The raft will capsize if too many of you are on one side of the raft, so keep an eye on where everybody is!

2. Imagine you have docked the raft, but although you are all now on dry land, you are very wet. Move around, jump up and down, and shake yourself dry.

Goals

To encourage physical movement, and to familiarise the students with each other's physical space as a way to break down communication barriers. It aims to prepare students for physical interaction during future exercises.

A.3 Warm-up exercise: At the Party

Setting

- Classroom furniture is moved to the sides and back of the room, clearing a floor space with no obstacles.

- Music suited to a house party is played in the background.

Method

The students are introduced (verbally) to the question *"Wie heißt du?"* and the statement *"Ich heiße . . . "*

Instructions – given verbally to the group in English

Imagine you are at a party. Walk around the group, introducing yourself and finding out the names of the other partygoers. Pretend you are holding a glass or a cup in your hand!

Goal

To introduce verbal interaction to accompany physical movement in a situation that mirrors real life.

B Appendix B

B.1 The Second-Years: Exercise 1 Meet-and-greet (based on Conlin 2000: 10)

Duration

approximately 25-30 minutes

Setting

At the airport.

No props required. No alteration of classroom layout required.

Instructions (given verbally in English)

You work for the Irish branch of a German company, and a German colleague is visiting your company. You are in charge of collecting him/her from Cork airport. You are to meet the colleague at the airport, and drive him/her to your workplace in your car. You will have to make conversation en route!

Preparation

Phase 1 (15 minutes)

Students sit in pairs at their desks and prepare a dialogue. The course-book and dictionaries are used as primary sources of vocabulary and phraseology. The teacher facilitates phraseology when requested to do so.

Phase 2 (6-8 minutes)

Students move from behind their desks to the front of the classroom. They enact a 'meet-and-greet' situation in the arrivals area of an airport. They then walk to their 'cars' (their desks) and continue the conversation.

Phase 3 (6-8 minutes)

The students swap roles and repeat the exercise.

Goals

1. to introduce students to the appropriate language for a preliminary business encounter

2. to promote physical movement as an accompaniment to verbal expression, thereby facilitating greater language retention.[3]

3. to motivate students to use the acquired language in a realistic way, thereby bridging the gap between the classroom and the world outside.[4]

[3] Methods such as Total Physical Response use this to tap frequently into short-term memory: "Particularly high memory retention is achieved when this tapping not only occurs verbally, but is associated with motor activity." (Schewe/Shaw: 1993: 296)

[4] See Holden 1981: 3.

C Appendix C

C.1 The Second-Years: Exercise 2

Setting

A pub in Germany.

Classroom furniture is arranged by students to resemble the layout of a pub.

Instructions (given verbally in English)

You are on holiday in Germany with some friends, and you are in a German pub. You end up sharing a table with some Germans and you strike up a conversation with them. They are curious about Ireland and have many questions about what Ireland is like. Do your best to persuade them to go to Ireland on holiday!

Preparation

Phase 1

Students decide on a persona. Some decide to be Irish, and some decide to be German. The 'Irish' people sit together at one table, and the 'German' people sit together at another table. The two groups prepare vocabulary and phraseology, using the course book and dictionaries. The teacher facilitates phraseology on request.

Phase 2

Students assume their personae and enter the 'pub'. They arrange themselves so that there is a mixture of 'Irish' and 'German' people seated at each table. A menu is provided. The teacher assumes the role of waiter/waitress and serves (imaginary) food and drink to the groups while they talk.

Goals

1. to introduce students to the concept of assuming a persona during dramatic activities

2. to introduce the students to the concept of group versus paired activities (Phase 2)

3. to motivate students to use the acquired language in a realistic way

4. to motivate the students to use acquired information about behavioural and cultural differences between Ireland and Germany in a meaningful way

D Appendix D

D.1 Exercise 3: Im Restaurant

Setting

A restaurant in Germany.

Materials: (phases 2 and 3): menus, paper cups, paper plates, plastic knives and forks, paper serviettes.

Environment (phase 4):

The third-years: a classroom

The second-years: the CIT Training Restaurant

Additional auditory stimulation: Background music (Classical)

Instructions (given verbally in English for Phases 1-3; given on cards for Phase 4)

You are at a conference/on holiday in Germany with some colleagues/with your family, and you go to a restaurant for lunch. You booked the table yesterday. You order a starter, a main course, and dessert, as well as something to drink. However, the service is appalling and you make many complaints to the waiter/waitress. At the end of the meal you come to a compromise with the waiter/waitress about the bill, as you don't want to pay the full price.

Preparation

Phase 1

Vocabulary items (including a menu and wine list) are presented to the class. The processes of ordering food and drink, and of complaining about aspects of the service, are then practised through paired role-playing. At this point the students are still seated at their desks. They take it in turns to be the waiter and the customer. The teacher, as facilitator, guides the students through the phraseology.

Phase 2

The classroom is converted into a restaurant scene. Students sit in groups of 3 or 4 around the desks, and discuss (in English) who they are. Are they a family on holiday, or are they work colleagues at a conference? Once this is decided, they assume their personae and make conversation (in German) as though they are at a restaurant table. The teacher provides guidance only on request.

Phase 3

The teacher (as participant-observer) assumes the role of waitress, takes orders, and serves food and drink to the groups while they make conversation.

Phase 4 (see Appendix E for written instructions to the students)

The students take ownership of the activity. Waiters and waitresses are chosen by the groups for each table. Props such as cutlery, crockery, and napkins are provided. The teacher, in her role of restaurant manager, becomes the director-observer, occasionally providing impromptu dramatic twists to the scenario, to which the students have to react.

Goals

1. to motivate students to use the acquired language in a realistic way

2. to encourage students to use the acquired language in situations where they are required to react quickly in the target language

3. to heighten awareness of, and sensitivity to, the concept of register in the target language

4. to heighten awareness of non-verbal communication strategies

5. to encourage 'ownership' of the learning process

E Appendix E

E.1 Cue cards given to the students for Exercise 3 (*Im Restaurant*): Phase 4

Instructions: Guest 1 – Table 1

- You order three courses: a starter, a main course, and a dessert. You also order
- a glass of wine
- a cup of coffee with dessert.
- You don't like your dessert. Ask for a different one.
- You need to go to the bathroom – ask the waiter for the way.
- Everybody at your table wants to pay separately.

VORSICHT! You suspect the waiter is trying to poison someone at your table. Avoid the red glass! Try to exchange it with your neighbour's glass, but don't get caught!

Instructions: Guest 2 – Table 1

- You order two courses: a main course and dessert. You don't want a starter.
- Your main course is burnt. Demand another one!
- You also order:
- a beer
- a cup of tea with your dessert
- Everybody at your table wants to pay separately.
- Your car has the registration number HH-E-4567

VORSICHT! You suspect the waiter is trying to poison someone at your table. Avoid the red glass! Try to exchange it with your neighbour's glass, but don't get caught!

Instructions: Guest 3 – Table 1

- You order three courses: a starter, a main course (you want fish), and a dessert.
- Your waiter brings you the wrong main course. Complain!
- You also order:

- a glass of mineral water
- a cup of coffee with your dessert

- You've forgotten something in your car. Go and get it.

- Everybody at your table wants to pay separately.

VORSICHT! You suspect the waiter is trying to poison someone at your table. Avoid the red glass! Try to exchange it with your neighbour's glass, but don't get caught!

Instructions: Guest 4 – Table 1

- You order two main courses: a starter and a main course.

- You start to feel ill after eating the starter.Your waiter brings you your main course and you decide you don't want it. Ask the waiter to take it away.

- You also order a glass of water.
- You order another glass of water!

- You need to go to the bathroom. Ask the waiter for the way.

- You feel better so you order dessert and a coffee.

- Everybody at your table wants to pay separately.

VORSICHT! You suspect the waiter is trying to poison someone at your table. Avoid the red glass! Try to exchange it with your neighbour's glass, but don't get caught!

Instructions: Guest 1 – Table 2

- You order three courses: a starter, a main course (the *Kohlroulade*) and a dessert.

- Your *Kohlroulade* is too spicy – you can't eat it! Order something else from the menu.

- You also order:

- an extra portion of noodles
- a glass of wine
- a cup of coffee with your dessert

- Your car has the registration number CO-C-3689

- The people at your table want to pay the bill together.

VORSICHT! You suspect the waiter is trying to poison someone at your table. Avoid the red glass! Try to exchange it with your neighbour's glass, but don't get caught!

Instructions: Guest 2 – Table 2

- You order three courses: a starter, a main course (the *Hacksteak*, but you want chips instead of roast potatoes!), and a dessert.
- You also order a glass of red wine.
- You need to go to the bathroom. Ask the waiter for directions.
- When your main course arrives, it has roast potatoes on the plate and no chips.
- You order a cup of tea with your dessert.
- The people at your table want to pay the bill together.

VORSICHT! You suspect the waiter is trying to poison someone at your table. Avoid the red glass! Try to exchange it with your neighbour's glass, but don't get caught!

Instructions: Guest 3 – Table 2

- You order 3 courses: a starter, a main course (you order the wild salmon), and a dessert.
- You also order a beer with your meal.
- Your salmon is only half-cooked. Send it back!
- You decide you want a salad with your meal.
- You order coffee with your dessert.
- Your coffee is cold. Ask for another one.
- The people at your table want to pay the bill together.

VORSICHT! You suspect the waiter is trying to poison someone at your table. Avoid the red glass! Try to exchange it with your neighbour's glass, but don't get caught!

Instructions: Guest 4 – Table 2

- You order 2 courses: a main course and a dessert. You don't like the look of the starters.
- You order a glass of wine with your main course.

- You have forgotten something in your car. Go and get it.
- You order dessert and a coffee.
- Your dessert is horrible. Order something else from the dessert menu!
- The people at your table want to pay the bill together.

VORSICHT! You suspect the waiter is trying to poison someone at your table. Avoid the red glass! Try to exchange it with your neighbour's glass, but don't get caught!