DRAMATIZATION AS A WAY
OF DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS

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The article is devoted to the analysis of drama activities as a way of developing students' communicative skills at all stages of teaching English. Drama activities are an essential component of interactive games. Demand for interactive games containing dramatization and for dramatization itself is constantly growing making teachers use new methods and educational styles.

Drama activities can be an efficient way of forming and developing any language skills. All sorts of activities containing acting can help teachers to create communicative situations, which are close to real life. Properly arranged, these games can help the teacher to introduce new vocabulary or a grammar structure, to simplify the teacher's explanation as well as motivate learners and keep them involved and active during the whole language class. Dramatization may function in various forms and may be used at different stages of teaching a foreign language class. Acting out short dialogues at beginner and elementary levels can be a good way of practicing new grammar structures. The *triad* teaching format offered by N. McIver can be beneficial for mixed-ability groups.

The article proves that the language material used for drama activities can be divided into two groups – *real* and *dramatic or imaginary*. Examples from everyday experience can be used to create familiar communicative situations. Such exercises have a practical nature as the learners demonstrate the interaction between people and different services. *Close-to-real-life* situations are combined with some imaginary or dramatic components. Activities based upon imaginary situations contribute to learners' better cooperation and provide the opportunity for creating an atmosphere of friendliness and mutual understanding. The exercises based on imaginary situations often require the preparation of lengthy role cards.

The dramatization of famous paintings and songs forms another group of communicative activities, suitable for all levels of proficiency. An *open, long-term* drama activity can maximize creativity and motivation as well as provide an opportunity to develop flexibility in using a foreign language.

The drama activities offered in the article are easily adaptable to any language material or teaching format.

Key words: communicative skills, dramatization, interactive games, motivation, teaching format, *Triads*.

Щербина В.В. Інсценування як засіб розвитку комунікативних навичок. Стаття присвячена аналізу вправ з інсценування як засобу розвитку комунікативних навичок студентів на різних етапах занять з іноземної мови. Інсценування розглядається як важлива складова інтерактивних ігор. Показано, що потреба в інтерактивних іграх, які містять інсценування, постійно зростає, змушуючи викладачів використовувати нові методики та навчальні стилі. Вправи із інсценування можуть бути ефективним засобом формування та розвитку

лінгвістичних навичок. Показано, що всі види вправ, що містять елементи театральної гри, можуть допомогти викладачам створювати комунікативні ситуації, які є близькими до реального життя. Інсценування коротких діалогів на початковому та елементарному рівні навчання може бути діючим засобом засвоєння нових граматичних структур. Навчальний формат *Тріада*, впроваджений Н. Маківером, може бути корисним для груп, що містять студентів із різним рівнем володіння мовою.

Стаття свідчить про те, що мовний матеріал, який використовується для вправ з інсценування, може бути розподілено на дві групи – *реальний* та *уявлюваний* або *драматичний*. Приклади з повсякденного досвіду можуть бути використані для створення знайомих студентам комунікативних ситуацій. Ситуації, близькі до реального життя, можуть комбінуватися з уявлюваними або драматичними компонентами. Інсценування відомих картин та пісень становить іще одну групу комунікативних вправ, придатних для студентів усіх рівнів володіння мовою. Показано, що відкриті, довготривалі вправи з інсценування сприяють збільшенню креативності та мотивації та водночас надають можливість розвивати гнучкість у використанні іноземної мови.

Запропоновано низку вправ з інсценування, які можуть бути легко адаптовані до будь-якого виду мовного матеріалу та навчального формату.

Ключові слова: інсценування, інтерактивні ігри, комунікативні навички, мотивація, навчальний формат, *Тріада*.

Щербина В.В. Инсценирование как способ развития коммуникативных навыков. Статья посвящена анализу упражнений, содержащих инсценирование как способ развития коммуникативных навыков студентов на разных этапах занятий по иностранному языку. Инсценирование рассматривается как важная составляющая интерактивных игр. Упражнения по инсценированию могут быть эффективным способом формирования и развития лингвистических навыков. Доказано, что все виды упражнений, содержащих элементы театральной игры, могут помочь преподавателям создавать коммуникативные ситуации, близкие к реальной жизни. Инсценирование коротких диалогов на начальном и элементарном уровне обучения может быть действенным способом усвоения новых грамматических структур. Учебный формат *Триада*, предложенный Н. Макивером, может быть полезным для групп с разным уровнем владения языком.

Показано, что языковой материал, который используется для упражнений по инсценированию, можно разделить на две группы – *реальный* и *воображаемый*, или *драматический*. Примеры из повседневного опыта могут быть использованы для создания знакомых студентам коммуникативных ситуаций. Ситуации, близкие к реальной жизни, могут сочетаться с воображаемыми или драматическими элементами. Инсценирование известных картин и песен представляет еще одну группу коммуникативных упражнений, подходящих для студентов с разным уровнем владения языком. Открытые, долгосрочные упражнения по инсценированию способствуют росту креативности и мотивации и дают возможность развивать гибкость в использовании иностранного языка.

Предложен ряд упражнений, которые могут быть легко адаптированы к любому виду групповой работы.

Ключевые слова: инсценирование, интерактивные игры, коммуникативные навыки, мотивация, *Триада*, учебный формат.

The topicality of the research. Everyone likes playing games. People have always been fond of playing regardless of their age, profession or disposition. Most games include some sort of dramatization. If we look at the process of teaching a foreign language more attentively, we can notice how much dramatization it includes. As soon as students learn how to ask general questions and produce answers, dramatization begins. As the communicative approach to language teaching is gradually replacing the traditional teaching format, the demand for interactive games containing dramatization and for dramatization itself is constantly growing, making teachers adopt new methods and educational styles. We teach English in a non-English speaking surrounding, therefore the teacher has to create such communicative situations, which can help students to use foreign words in their natural context. The best thing that may be done in this case is to organize games which are more natural and relaxed than traditional exercises.

Taken seriously, dramatization can be helpful at any stage of the foreign language teaching. Properly arranged these activities can help the teacher to introduce new vocabulary or a grammar structure. Dramatization can help to simplify the teacher's explanation as well as motivate learners and keep them involved and active during the whole language class. "Creative acting and creative mime represents a huge potential for emotional involvement that is a meaningful and memorable use of language", points out A. Wright [11: 18].

It is natural for a human to be fond of everything moving, changing and amusing, therefore students are likely to enjoy all sorts of dramatization exercises which can allow them to express themselves in acting and keep them from getting bored. Drama activities can be an efficient way of forming and developing any language skills. J. Hadfield underlines that such activities can be used by teachers "as a creative technique for grammar practice which will motivate students by making what could be a routine and repetitious activity into something novel and exciting" [1: 51]. Dramatizing all sorts of everyday situations, students get the opportunity to experience a foreign language rather than just learn it. Acting makes students express feelings, therefore even small and primitive dialogues, that students create and dramatize, involve various emotions, which help students to sustain their interest in the learning process as well as motivate and encourage them.

The degree of scientific research on the issue. Dramatization as a method of foreign language teaching as well as a component of interactive games has been the object of research in the studies of many linguists, both native and foreign ones. The research done by P. Lutzker, who combines teaching with designing programs for language teachers, is devoted to the use of various forms of dramatic training in the teaching process. P. Lutzker points out that "learning to express oneself creatively is a highly individual process, deeply rooted in one's inner emotional life" [3: 134]. In the researcher's opinion, drama activities allow students to take their initiative as a part of developing their creative thinking. Dramatization can be combined with story-telling activities and creative writing. Students can be involved in creating stories, discussing and performing them. The stories can be transformed in the connection with grammar and lexical material given in the English class. The researcher points out that in a language class "such artistic projects can have long-term transformative effects on students both in terms of their relation to the foreign language and in their perception of themselves" [3: 141].

L. Stepanek, whose interests range from teaching English at Masaryk University Language Center and designing teaching material, to coordinating language soft skills programs, has worked out the interdisciplinary and creative approach of teaching English, based on the combination of his academic background and drama education. L. Stepanek emphasizes that such a combination "shows the possibility to engage students in the creative situations in which they can always succeed" [9: 101]. The researcher underlines the necessity to teach a new grammar structure or some new vocabulary in *close-to-real-life situations*, which are habitual and familiar for students. Short drama activities, completed by students, are aimed at refreshing the students' existing knowledge. Such exercises help them to realize their creative potential and become more confident in their communicative skills.

The researcher M. Sciamarelli, who has been working for 21 years as a teacher, designer of teaching materials and consultant for publishers, considers dramatization to be a component of *project-based learning*. In M. Sciamarelli's opinion, such an approach allows teachers "to reach all students and get them engaged in many different ways, thus giving them ownership of their learning by making them lifelong learners" [8: 114]. M. Sciamarelli points out, that dramatic techniques, made up by teachers and their students together, can be especially exciting and rewarding. A drama exercise can be especially beneficial

in mixed-ability groups, as low-level students have roles and are at the same time to take part in a performance and practice their speaking and listening skills.

A task-based approach, created by P. Moor, seems to be especially beneficial for those teachers, who consider all sorts of talking in class to be the most important activity students can be involved in. "Oral task should be something which is worth doing in itself" [5: 24]. Dramatization can guarantee "the topics of universal interest that will work well in most classroom situations" [5: 24]. In P. Moor's opinion, *utterly unrealistic* topics can motivate students better than those that reflect real-life language. It goes without saying that the more imaginary the communicative situation is, the more acting it requires. In this case the teaching format is changed more often and dramatization is viewed as a very important method of teaching speaking skills.

In the article "Speaking Activities: Five Features" P. Nation names the main features, "which help to achieve the learning goal of speaking activity as well as motivate students and encourage them" [6: 109]. The adoption of roles by learners allows them to use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar structures. This method may help to get more variety into speaking activities as well as class work.

Analyzing various kinds of group work, N. McIver points out that such kinds of group work as *Pyramids* and *Mingles* are viewed as the most suitable format for organizing dramatization activities though both of them seem to be rather chaotic and challenging for teachers [4: 23].

S. Woodward's book "Fun with Grammar" offers a great number of communicative activities that can be used by foreign language teachers for making their classes informative as well as exciting and enjoyable. According to the linguist's approach, described in the book, "grammar class is always an opportunity for fun" [10: 5]. It is impossible to imagine funny situations without dramatization. It is pointed out that all the explanations "can be enlivened by funny sentences, dramatizing, demonstrations or pantomimes" [10: 5]. The activities, described in the book, involve students' interaction and are worked out for the whole group, therefore they shouldn't be done alone. The teacher is responsible for mixing up the class, preparing the material, giving instructions and monitoring progress, made by learners.

In F. Klippel's point of view, most of role plays and simulations contain some kind of dramatization. Such activities are based on the principle of *message-oriented communication*. The term, created by

C. Black and W. Butzkamm is used "to refer to those rare and precious moments in foreign language teaching when the target language is actually used as a means of communication" [2: 3]. F. Klippel underlines the necessity of using spontaneously developed communicative situations in a foreign language class. The ability to dramatize is the core of such exercises. The teachers can start with simple dialogues, containing "predetermined responses by the learners" and gradually concentrate on more complicated "skill-getting" activities [2: 4].

The aim of this article is to define the role of drama activities in organizing and motivating students and to offer a set of exercises which can be used for various teaching formats at different stages of the English lesson, aimed at forming and developing students' communicative fluency.

The simplest variants of dramatization have been used by foreign language teachers for many years. Both the old and modern course-books are full of dialogues which can be just read or learned by heart and dramatized. Dramatization may function in various forms and may be used at different stages of a foreign language class. No matter how primitive it may seem, such activities may be beneficial if it is used for beginners or learners with elementary level. Taken creatively those easy exercises can be modified into something more exciting. If the teacher doesn't want the learners to be bored, acting can be introduced for having phonetic drills, memorizing vocabulary, practicing grammar structures as well as revising and testing. All sorts of activities containing acting components can help teachers to create communicative situations in which the language seems to be useful. Dialogues at beginner and elementary levels can be first organized in pairs. It is a good way of practicing new grammar structures following given models. The triad structure, offered by N. McIver, can be used for all levels of proficiency. This teaching format can be especially beneficial for mixed-ability groups as it provides an opportunity for every learner to use the language. Drama activities, done in triads, gives learners a chance to be creative. Students can use familiar vocabulary and grammar structures as well as include in their acting something that goes beyond class work.

Taking into account different preferences in learning styles the language material used for drama activities can be divided into two big groups – real and dramatic or imaginary. The teachers can use

examples from everyday experience to create familiar communicative situations and dramatize them. Those drama activities look more like simulations. The classroom easily becomes a restaurant, a shop, a hotel or a railway station. Such situations obviously have a practical nature as the learners demonstrate the interaction between people and different services. The learners' interest will be aroused if *close-to-real-life* situations are combined with some imaginary or dramatic components.

The game **Lost in the Fog,** aimed at revising the topic *Travelling by Air*, is played as the whole class drama activity in which the classroom becomes a big airplane.

Step 1: The students are given role cards with the description of characters they are going to play. The number of roles can vary. The main characters are: one or two pilots, a mechanic, a flight attendant, several passengers, and an air traffic controller.

Step 2: The teacher explains the task and asks the students to imagine that the airplane is lost in the fog without radar. The passengers are in danger. The pilot tries to save the passengers and to land the plane safely. During the dramatization, the pilot is to keep his or her eyes closed as he (she) can see nothing in the fog.

Step 3: The controller's task is to guide the pilot. The flight attendant and the mechanic help to handle different problems the passengers have during the flight. There may be situations with a nervous elderly woman, a frightened child or aggressive behavior of an ill-bred passenger, who may threaten other passengers. The game gives all the students a reason for speaking. At the beginner level, the activity demands simple questions and answers but it can be easily adapted to a higher level of proficiency and transformed into an exciting story with a dramatic plot. The game is suitable for revising target vocabulary and practicing model verbs and conditional sentences.

The dramatization **Who can find Mary Smith?** is another example of a problem-solving activity. The game requires additional preparation as it is based upon an imaginary plot. Students should be given enough time to get acquainted with the story and realize what their roles include. The events take place in Baker Street in Sherlock Holmes' living-room.

Step 1: The students are given two cards – a role card and a card with the information concerning Mary Smith and a keyword. Two students get the roles of Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson.

Step 2: The teacher explains the task. Mary Smith has disappeared. The members of her family and her friends are trying to find her.

The detective and his friends ask questions and analyze the information they get. If the question is asked correctly, the keyword is given to the detectives.

Step 3: When all the keywords are found, the detectives explain where Mary Smith is staying at the moment and what should be done to find her. The presence of famous fictional characters motivates students and contributes to creating a mysterious atmosphere.

Drama exercises based upon imaginary situations often require preparation of lengthy role cards. J. Hadfield points out, that lengthy role cards "are almost mini-reading exercises in their own right, and students may find it helpful to make a few notes on the important points" [1: 4].

The dramatization ***Rescue Fictional Characters*** is the combination of problem-solving activity and ranking exercise. It can be challenging as it requires additional preparation and knowledge of the world literature.

Step 1: The students are given the cards with the names of the fictional characters they are to present.

Step 2: The teacher explains the situation: the planet, inhabited by fictional characters, is doomed. All life is going to perish in a few days. A spaceship from the Earth can rescue only seven fictional characters and take them to the Earth.

Step 3: The selection committee is to choose which characters are worth saving. They have to make up criteria which they would use and listen to the arguments given by the fictional characters.

The game ***Addressing the World from Mars*** is good for practicing Future tense structures as well as topic-based vocabulary.

Step 1: Students are divided into two groups. The first one represents the crew of spacemen who reached Mars. The second group represents the planet Earth.

Step 2: The teacher explains the task. The Astronauts are to tell the inhabitants of the Earth what they have found on Mars, what they are going to do, what to build, to create and grow.

Step 3: The inhabitants of the Earth are to prepare their questions to find out all the details they are interested in.

Dramatizing famous paintings and songs forms another group of communicative activities, suitable for all levels of proficiency. The teacher divides the class into two groups. The first group selects the well-known paintings, act them out and then ask the second group to recognize which paintings have been shown. The students can be also asked to make up a story, preceding the events shown in the painting.

The story is dramatized, and the students are to guess what painting the story relates to. The activity ***Mime the Song*** is a good way of having fun.

Step 1: Students are divided into two groups. The teacher explains the task.

Step 2: The first group receives a copy of a famous song. The students read the song attentively and start miming it a sentence by sentence.

Step 3: The representatives of the second group have to guess what song is mimed. If their guessing is correct, they are to mime another song to the first group. Students can be also asked to mime proverbs, sayings or famous quotations.

Caring and sharing exercises are focused on individual learners. Students are asked to express their feelings, likes and dislikes. Speaking about oneself can be rather difficult. Judging other learners' feelings and attitudes may seem impossible for shy and introverted people. In this situation, drama activities appear to be especially essential and helpful. Asking students to play roles the teacher can avoid any kind of embarrassment or misunderstanding. The game ***Soap opera*** is a good example of open long-term drama activity. This exercise can maximize challenge, creativity, and motivation.

Step 1: The teacher and students discuss what they know about soap operas, their features, and characters. The teacher explains that they are going to create a soap opera and then asks students to choose the characters they want to play and create their images.

Step 2: The teacher explains that the images the learners created will be their guiding models in discussing all topics or problems arising in the class. The students should keep in mind that they speak and act on behalf of the created characters. This sort of dramatizing may last within a term or even for the whole year. It leads to more language flexibility and cooperation.

To sum up, it can be said that drama activities are aimed at successful communication. Properly arranged dramatization can be regarded as a creative teaching format as well as a way of practicing any language skills. Exercises based upon acting can focus on learners' personalities and can include *close-to-life* situations. Drama activities based upon imaginary situations contribute to learners' better cooperation and provide the opportunity of creating an atmosphere of friendliness and mutual understanding. Flexible by its nature

dramatization can help the students to use their knowledge flexibly and to adjust to any communicative situation that can arise. No matter what learning style the teacher may prefer dramatization is an integral part of any language class. Long-term open drama activities can be especially beneficial as they help the teacher to structure the class as well as to create a relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere.

Further research in this area is to be devoted to the analysis of creative writing activities as a way of encouraging and motivating students.

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