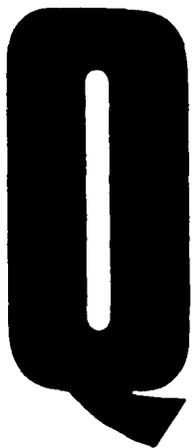# DRAMA IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Margarida Gandara Rauen[1]

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

a. Are drama and theater the same?
b. Must teachers and students have training in acting in order to benefit from drama?
c. What is the teacher's actual role in a dramatic exercise?
d. What kind of goals will drama help us accomplish?
e. Is dramatization an inhibiting practice that may hinder learning?
f. Can drama be used at any level of instruction?
g. To what extent should the memorization of sketches and play-

texts be stimulated?

h. Is drama a helpful tool in the development of cultural awareness?

i. How should errors during dramatization be treated?

The use of drama in the language classroom has been widely advocated since the 1970s, with modest but growing developments in the 1980s. Richard VIA[2] was one of the first to defend theatrical techniques in LT. More recently we've heard of the "Rassias' madness",[3] a program involving make-up, wigs, costumes, and props combined with much action. Literature with ideas, techniques and activities exploring the communicative nature of drama has also been published.[4]

Such appreciation for drama is a result of the shift to communicative competence as a major goal of language instruction: drama exercises allow us to bring into the lecture hall the emotional and social aspects of discourse, and to transcend the cognitive (analytical) preoccupation of academic environments. MALEY outlines some other advantages of drama techniques: they foster fluency, authenticity and range of output, provide contexts for acquisition (cf. KRASHEN), and can be highly motivating.[5] WHITE also advocates the use of drama to promote student motivation and to create non-threatening situations for language production by exploring the experiences that precede it, such as sensing and analysing.[6]

But teachers often seem to fret, consciously or unconsciously, about their ability to act or to help others to do so. These fears appear unwarranted, especially because we need not view drama predominantly as performance in order to take advantage of it in our teaching.

This paper encourages instructors to view drama as an alternative for students to transform theoretical knowledge into experienced knowledge, to practice living in the target language, as a creative means of perceiving and understanding ourselves and the world, and

[2]VIA, R. A. "English through drama." In: NEWTON, A. (Ed.). *The art of TESOL*. Washington, D.C. : English Teaching Forum, 1975.

[3]OLLER, J. W.; RICHARD-AMATO, P. A. (Eds.). *Methods that work*. Rowley, Mass. : Newbury House, 1983.

[4]HOLDEN, S. *Drama in language teaching*. Harlow : Longman, 1981. MALEY, A.; DUFF, A. *Drama techniques in language learning*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1982. SMITH, S. M. *The theater arts and the teaching of second languages*. Reading, Mass. : Addison-Wesley, 1984.

[5]MALEY, A. "A roomful of human beings." *Cahiers de l'APLIUT*, v.14, p.29-43, 1984. KRASHEN, S. D. *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford : Pergamon, 1982.

[6]WHITE, J. "Drama, communicative competence and language teaching: an overview." *Canadian Modern Language Review*, v.40, n.5, p.595-9, 1984.

as something inherent to our very human condition.[7]

1   WHAT IS DRAMA

The commonly held notion that drama and theater are insep-arable is misleading, which becomes clear if we look at the roots of each word in Greek. "Drama" comes from "dra(n)", meaning "to do". "Theater" comes from "thea" (-sthai), meaning "to view". The former means action, and the latter, performance.

The way we use these words in English generally suggests that both involve the art of histrionics, the rehearsed and affected behavior actors perform to an audience. Neither teachers, nor students, need special training in acting in order to take advantage of drama in the language classroom. First of all, we all "act" already, in everything we do. Secondly, we only should engage in dramatization with which we are at ease: drama in LT, moreover, is not designed for the benefit of an audience, but to bring internal and interpersonal rewards (such as self-confidence and mutual understanding in the foreign language).

Perhaps a play is the best image of a class, in the sense that every "performance" is different. But rather than training in histrionics, essential pre-requisites for both teachers and students engaged in dramatic activity are alertness and an experimental spirit. Teachers will need, in addition, to know exactly what they want to do in class and why, always bringing specific instructions and objectives to the attention of students.

2   ROLES AND GOALS

The teacher's role is that of "director", since he or she plans the exercises and leads the class to accomplish a particular task by defining objectives, choosing relevant situations and materials, giving specific instructions, organizing, monitoring and helping during the dramatization as necessary. Teachers will not "spoon-feed" students, but stimulate them to become aware of themselves and of the language they are attempting to use. Consequently, and as MALEY[8] points out, **teacher control** must be well-balanced with

[7]WAY, B. *Development through drama*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J. : Humanities Press, 1967.
   [8]MALEY, 1984.

teacher **willingness to withdraw**, thus allowing learners to pursue and achieve communication needs for themselves.

By using drama in LT we simply attempt to impart into the language spoken in class many of the elements of real-life activity: the emotion, naturalness, voice qualities, and non-verbal accompaniments. We start where we and our students feel comfortable, and include only what seems relevant given the level, programming, as well as students' interests.

3 HOW TO APPROACH DRAMA

Dramatic exercises will complement the language program at any level of instruction. Many readable sources give extensive information on activities, techniques and procedures, including CHRISTISON and BASANO; DENNIS, GRIFFIN and WILLIS; McRAE; MALEY and DUFF; SMITH; VIA; and WESSELS, among others.[9]

The suggestions below will serve as a basic guide into the process of selecting and planning dramatic exercises, while also considering some of their advantages.

3.1 Inhibition

Overall, drama can increase confidence, poise, and comfort in interpersonal relations, as long as it offers opportunities safely to work out real-life issues. The literature recommends relaxation, voice projection, rhythm, breathing and concentration exercises, as well as other techniques derived from the theatre (e.g., DUFEAU; RANA)[10] whenever inhibition has to be overcome and anxiety reduced (q.v. activities 1, 2, 3, 4.) Because concentration and relaxation are at the core of a good performance, exercises that

[9]CHRISTISON, M. A.; BASSANO, S. *Look who's talking*. Oxford : Pergamon, 1981. DENNIS, J. M.; GRIFFIN, S. M.; WILLIS, R. D. *English through drama*. Hayward, CA. : Alemany Press, 1981. McRAE, J. *Using drama in the classroom*. Oxford : Pergamon, 1985. MALLEY; DUFF, 1982. SMITH, 1984. VIA, R. "The 'magic if' of theater: enhancing language learning through drama." In RIVERS, W. (Ed.). *Interactive language teaching*. Cambridge : Cambridge UP, p.110-123, 1987. WESSELS, C. *Drama*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1987.

[10]DUFEAU, B. "Linguistic psychodrama or language learning through real life experience." *Français dans le monde*, v.175, p.36-45, 1983. RANA, A. "The use of drama in the classroom." *Papers on Work in Progress*, v.9, p.19-25, 1982.

foster them are useful not only at the beginning of class, but during longer sessions. As the actor and the athlete, language learners must control anxiety and distraction in order to perform well.

As a rule, do not ask individuals or even pairs to be on the spot, especially in early stages. Activities that **involve the whole group** or allow you to have all the students working in several groups are preferable. By including everyone you will avoid exposing individuals to observation when they still need to develop self-confidence and to be helped to participate without aggravating their self-consciousness. Willingness to expose the self and take risks normally develops spontaneously, as a stage reached in the student's process of adaptation with the class and with the target language. One may gauge progress in this sense by asking the groups to volunteer for performance in front of the class from time to time; individuals will thus experience greater levels of vulnerability, yet will still be within the safe boundaries of a group. The actual use of a different identity for class work (cf. Suggesto-paedia) is an additional artifice believed to help students detach themselves from their egos and to protect their self-image.

It is also important that students team up with different class-mates for group work; experience indicates that rotativity should be required every time there's a new dramatic exercise. Otherwise, students tend to create emotional ties within groups instead of getting used to one of the commonplaces of communication: we can seldom choose our interlocutors, permanently having to deal with strangers.

Another rule of thumb to keep students at ease is to avoid tagging dramatic activities as "difficult", "challenging", etc. but rather, associating them with fun and "breaks" in the program routine. In effect, and as ASHER[11] notes, drama activities are more like play, and less like work.

3.2 . Level of instruction: content and timing

As in routine planning, in dramatic exercises we must **respect students' limitations** on the basis of their level of instruction.

With beginners, for example, it is crucial to aim at a balance between purely physical games (e.g. responding to commands as in Total Physical Response or TPR; see ROMIJN and SEELY)[12]

[11]ASHER, J. *Learning another language through actions*: the complete teacher's guidebook. 3.ed. Los Gatos : Sky Oaks Productions, 1988.

[12]ROMIJN, E.; SEELY, C. *Live action English*. Oxford : Pergamon, 1981.

and mental games that include verbal responses. SCHER and VERRALL'S "Who is missing?" and "Word tennis"[13] are interesting to do in as little time as five minutes (q.v. act. 5 & 6.) Both games, because they involve movement, memory and imagination, are particularly effective for developing class interaction, coordination and self-reliance in the target language.

The more advanced the level, the more language-dependent dramatization your students will be able to achieve (q.v. act. 7, 8, 9, 10). Ideas for role plays in general can be found in GOW, NICHOLSON, and WALKER.[14] The simple memorization of sketches and playtexts, however, should be used with caution and moderation. Despite the known success of theatrical approaches such as RASSIAS',[3] we have practically no empirical evidence to determine the extent to which playtext-based approaches to drama promote language learning. The work of HALL in this unexplored research area, for example, actually suggests that a creative (improvisational) use of drama generates better results in LT than a purely theatrical one.[15]

Ability to improvise dialogue may well be the essence of communication. Improvisation exercises are, however, tricky to do in the artificial classroom setting. The following procedures should help you manage in this case: have groups with five or six people at the most; provide a title, the first line, or the basic idea of a plot or situation when you give the instructions; encourage students, for five minutes or so, to ask questions and clarify their doubts while defining their roles; require students to consider where and when the action takes place, and to discuss the kinds of feelings it entails before they begin role play. In early stages it is useful, in fact, to have students experiment with the emotional aspect of language by dramatizing short dialogues that express, with exactly the same words, different intentions if intonation, pitch and voice volume are changed (q.v. act. 11).

Timing is another technical aspect of planning. Assuming that

[13]SCHER, A.; VERRALL, C. *100 + Ideas for drama*. London : Educational Books, 1975 (rpt. 1985).

[14]For open-ended role plays see GOW, M. *The commercial scene* – role-playing for commerce students. London : Edward Arnold, 1982. NICHOLSON, R. *Open to question* – starters for discussion and role-play. London : Edward Arnold, 1978. WALKER, D. *Dilemmas 1, 2, and 3*. London : Edward Arneld, 1979/rpt. 1982/rpt. 1983.

[15]HALL, A. "Drama in English language teaching: two approaches at the university level in West Germany." *Applied Linguistics*, v.3, n.2, p.144-60, 1982. Hall's line of work is an important and neglected one. Much more research measuring the extent to which different drama techniques foster language acquisition seems expedient.

we've been discussing drama not as a method, but as a teaching resource, timing should range from five to twenty minutes and be defined on the basis of the level of instruction, of the type and the purpose of the activity. Following these criteria, WESSELS, for example, offers a particularly useful list of drama games grouped in three major categories: a) icebrakers or "warm-ups", used to introduce new lessons and/or topics; b) in-betweens, for revision of contents taught previously; c) endgames, to revise and fix the lesson.[16]

3.3 The role of repetition

Activities should **allow for plenty of interaction**, including a task for every participant and thus reinforcing active participation, rather than passive observation. The shifting of roles once or twice is desirable, especially in dialogue improvisation with dominant parts. Far from being tedious, this repetition technique not only gives the less articulate students a chance to experience more difficult roles, but also helps to enforce adequate social, verbal and non-verbal adaptation in the foreign language.

Since drama is sensed as fun, rather than work, it seems to allow a great deal more repetition than traditional academic activities. Students normally can, in principle, go over an improvisation several times without feeling the artificiality they might feel in a repetition exercise with virtually the same content. Consequently, activities of a dramatic nature can also facilitate the training of pronunciation, with plenty of opportunity for experimenting with voice modulation and projection, using gestures, exaggeration and other strategies which are considered effective for overcoming fossilized speech.

3.4. Complexity

Drama, besides tieing together words and physical action, has the potential of integrating many facets of communication: setting, goals, problems, relationships, emotion, discourse needs (speech acts), culture, and common authentic episodes.

While this complexity may enable us to balance artificiality and authenticity in the classroom environment, it may also be a constraint if the materials and/or activities chosen are too loaded

[16]WESSELS, 1987, p.30-31.

with concepts and permeated with ambiguity.

To minimize problems, of course more common in beginning levels, teachers must **avoid overwhelming instructions** (when they themselves design) and **do a great deal of close-reading** (when choosing materials). A common mistake is to focus only on language form, lexical difficulty, idiomatic usage or on particular functions, and forgetting to deal with implications of discourse patterns, rhetorical organization, schemata, task demands, etc. . .

Complexity can be dealt with in stages: one or a few aspects at a time, rather than a direct aim at synthesis. STIRK suggests, for example, that students need training in pooling information together before they can successfully bridge an information gap;[17] role plays involving jigsaw techniques are useful tools in this sense (q.v. act. 12).

Pantomime is another tool. Students can work out only the non-verbal communication aspect, the emotions, facial and body expression appropriate to an interaction before trying its verbal dimension, WHITE suggests; the use of pictures to stimulate discussion and role play (cf. MALEY, DUFF and GRELLET) must also be remembered.[18]

3.5 Cultural issues

HOWARD provides a comprehensive discussion of how language students must learn conceptual frameworks in order to adapt in a new environment.[19]

Drama techniques are one of the best means to deal with cross-cultural subtleties. SMITH and VIA, or DONAHUE and PARSONS,[20] for example, point out how useful role play can be for students to learn to view themselves and others objectively while attempting to negotiate meaning and experiment with rules of conversation and behaviour in the target language.

As DONAHUE and PARSONS argue, while trying to adjust to

[17]STIRK, I. C. "Role-plays: bringing unreality into the classroom." *Chalk face*, v.2, n.2, p.52-68, 1982.

[18]WHITE, 1984. MALEY, A.; DUFF, A.; GRELLET, F. *The mind's eye.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1980.

[19]HOWARD, R. W. *Concepts and schemata*: an introduction. London : Cassell, 1987.

[20]SMITH, L. E.; VIA, R. A. "English as an international language via drama techniques." *World Language English*, v.1, n.2, p.102-7, 1982. DONAHUE, M.; PARSONS, A. H. "The use of roleplay to overcome cultural fatigue." *TESOL Quarterly*, v.16, n.3, p.359-65, 1982.

a new culture and to acquire appropriate social behaviours students develop cultural fatigue, which sometimes is the cause of a poor academic achievement (particularly in ESL situations). To overcome this fatigue they need **encouragement to express negative feelings and exchange information about cultural differences**, both of which can be done through role-play.

The students' own stock of troublesome cultural experiences can be explored, too, if they themselves help design sketches and situations for dramatization (q.v. activities 13, 14), a kind of task which is suitable for intermediate and advanced levels. Even beginners, however, can deal with cultural issues through roleplay that involves simple differences of greeting, timing, concepts of politeness, etc.

OMAGGIO, amongst several techniques reviewed in her chapter "Teaching for Cultural Understanding", also recommends the use of drama or "culture minidramas", illustrating how reaction on the basis of ethnocentric frames of reference may affect communication.[21] But one should be aware that the key to success in communication in general may be learning to concentrate on styles, rather than to speculate about intentions, as TANNEN suggests:[22]

> Communication is a system. Everything that is said is simultaneously an instigation and a reaction, a reaction and an instigation. Most of us. . . see ourselves as reacting to what others say and do, without realizing that their actions or words are in part reactions to ours, and that our reactions to them won't be the end of the process but rather will trigger more reactions, in a continuous stream.

Through dramatic exercises students will not only get information about style differences, but learn to focus on the negotiation of these differences, rather than on emotional responses, whenever problems arise.

3.6 Error treatment

[21]OMAGGIO, A. *Teaching language in context.* Boston : Heinle & Heinle, 1986. p.399-402.

[22]TANNEN, D. *That's not what I meant!* New York : Ballantine. 1986. p.124.

Assuming that correctness is a goal for formal language learners, especially those who intend to get involved in academic and/or professional activities in a foreign country, teachers should be alert to students' errors during all moments of instruction. In addition, and as OMAGGIO reminds us,[23]

> learners who succeed in communicating a message and who receive no negative or corrective feedback will often assume that their interlanguage hypotheses are correct and will not attempt to change or improve them.

Dramatic exercises, because they normally require spontaneity, provide excellent opportunites to notice students' fossilization problems at the discourse level. Having noted down the kinds of errors made, teachers can then provide suitable feedback. As a rule, oral errors which interfere with comprehensibility or are repeated frequently are considered severe (q.v. WALZ) and deserve systematic treatment.[24] HOLLEY and KING actually recommend correction within 10 seconds when there is no student or peer response to errors.[25]

4.0 SAMPLES OF DRAMA EXERCISES

Examples from various sources will help clarify many of the points made above. Most of them feature one or more of the following: the use of imagination, visualization and concentration; playfulness; relation to activities or feelings from beyond the classroom; they may elicit strong emotions; they break down normal barriers between members of the class; they place the participants in the personalities and activities of someone else.

If you decide to make such activities a consistent part of your teaching, you should probably study organized programs such as

[23]OMAGGIO, p.282.

[24]WALZ, J. C. *Error correction techniques for the foreign language classroom.* Language in Education. Theory and Practice Series, n° 50. Washington, D.C. : Center for Applied Linguistics, 1982.

[25]HOLLEY, F. M.; KING, J. K. "Imitation and correction in foreign language learning." In: SCHUMANN, J.; STENSON, N. (Eds.). *New frontiers in second language learning.* Rowley, Mass. : Newbury House, 1974.

those by DENNIS, GRIFFIN and WILLS; LADOUSSE; or WESSELS,[26] which have a whole range of activities and also show how these activities may lead from one to another in a progression.

Remember, however, that drama need not be approached as a method. As a complement to teaching it allows, above all, for cooperative learning and for the adjustment of behaviour without suppresing the students' emotional, physical and intellectual idiosyncrasies, so often put aside or oversimplified by information-focused pedagogy.

Concentration, relaxation and imagination development (make sure you have silence and everyone's attention before beginning these exercises; playing with the light-switch several times, even during day time, normally catches people's attention faster than verbal requests.)

1) Tune in. With their eyes closed, students listen to a range of noises, in this order: outside the building, outside the room, inside the room, their heartbeating. Still with their eyes closed they will then listen, for one or two minutes, to soft music as you switch the cassette-player on. Do not turn it off abruptly, but gradually lower the volume when you want to end the exercise.

2) Focusing. Look around and find a point or section on the wall or ceiling. Stare at the spot you've chosen and note all its marks and patterns. In intermediate levels you may have some students talk about what they were focusing on, and the kinds of ideas that occurred to them while they were concentrating.

3) Mirror hands (MALEY and DUFF). Partners stand facing each other, palms forward. The leader moves his or her palms around in any way desired, and the partner must try to mirror the movements. Then they switch.

Oral exercises
4) Voice. A good voice is vital for effective oral performance, especially in regard to volume and articulation.

a. Projection (SCHER and VERRALL). Divide the class into groups. Give each group a "speakeasy" subject (e.g., If I had 1000

[26]DENNIS, GRIFFIN; WILLS, 1981. WESSELS, 1987. LADOUSSE, G. P. *Speaking personally.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1983.

dollars I would. . .). Group by group, students will go to different corners or places of the room and each must be clearly audible to the others in the group and to the class. Anyone not hearing must indicate so by saying, as loud as necessary: "I can't hear you".

b. Modulation (SCHER and VERRALL). Group by group, students will take turns saying a sentence (e.g., I can't see you tonight), or gibberish, in different ways, using inflexions of anger, delight, fear, surprise, boredom, and making tone, volume and pitch variations.

5) Who is missing? (SCHER and VERRALL). Students walk around the room with their eyes closed and stop on "freeze" command; the teacher, who'd also been moving, cues someone to leave the room by tapping the person on the back; after three or four people have left, students will open their eyes and try to determine who is missing. Another version of this can be done with the change of objects in the room: what is different or what is missing? This old exercise is not very interesting to do in groups with fewer than eight students.

6) Word-tennis (SCHER and VERRALL). Divide the class into groups that must, for two or three minutes (or until the opponent runs out of words), face each other and take turns naming items from a given category (e.g. fruit, clothes, names, meals). The first speaker has to place his or her word in context (like the starting sentence of a substitution drill). Advanced and false beginners can, for instance, play a more complex version of word-tennis by changing the context and/or including several word categories in a coherent context.

7) Interviews (MALEY and DUFF). Pairs are given pictures. Between them they pick one picture each, and create an identity for the person in the picture. Then they go to another student, show the picture, and are "interviewed", answering questions as if they were that person. See MALLEY, DUFF and GRELLET for specifics on pictures as a stimulus to role play, if necessary.

8) Job interview (DENNIS, GRIFFIN and WILLIS). Students are placed in improbable and humorous job interviews in a department store. One role, for example, would be that of a person who doesn't know anything about smoking applying for a position in the tobacco department.

9) Yes/No (WESSELS). The teacher (or one student in each group

if the class is too large) has a story in mind, which the students figure out entirely by asking yes/no questions.

10) Dialogues. Most programs include dialogues that introduce functions and common cultural situations. Many teachers, especially at beginner levels, like to have students "dramatize" such dialogues through the "read and look up" method (they cannot read and speak at the same time, but may use the text). A more creative option for intermediate and advanced groups would be to use them as models for improvised interactions with a similar theme and characters. Dialogue improvisation, however, is especially fun when the theme involves a situation of conflict to be solved **within three minutes**. Here are some suggestions:

a. you have taken a cab and arrived at your destination but realize you have no money or checks; you try to solve the problem with the cab-driver while another passenger starts rushing you at one of the doors;

b. a teacher argues that your final paper is very weak and you must persuade him or her to let you revise it, explaining why you can't afford to flunk the course;

c. at the grocery-store, you receive some change and do not count it, realizing only a few minutes later that you are more than eight dollars short; you go right back and complain but the cashier is reluctant to believe you because you have no receipt;

d. a policeman stops you for speeding and wants to arrest you because you have no documents.

Roles such as the ones suggested above can be passed on in slips of paper for group work, with the advantage that several situations can be dramatized at the same time. Students in each group can perform by themselves and shift roles, but you should require them to be aware of the three minute "rule". You might also **establish a minimum of speeches,** if you feel that some students are lazy and tend to oversimplify the dialogues. If the teacher has 8 groups and 4 situations, for example, it is also interesting to ask volunteers from each of the groups with identical themes to improvise for the class.

11) Discover the subtext (McGAW).[27] Intention and motivation shape meaning, but the focus on the literal (surface) meaning in formal classroom settings often obscures this feature of spoken language. These exercises enable students to experience the essentially emotional nature of discourse by speaking lines with various possible subtexts, which the class has to guess as each short interaction/dramatization ends. Students will also use the appropriate physical action for each situation.

a. Asking the time:
> – What time is it?
> – It's seven o'clock.

Motivation and suggested subtexts
> – romance: a couple does not want to part (How much longer can we stay together? Not very long.)
> – a lecture: two students are bored (When is this thing going to end? The bell will ring any second.)

b. Pairs of students produce the following dialogue making it mean different things only by changing pauses, intonation, facial expression and loudness. Suggested subtexts: romance, embarassed surprise, hostility, cool indifference, friendly politeness.
> St. 1 – Hello.
> St. 2 – Hello.
> St. 1 – I didn't expect to meet you here.
> St. 2 – I didn't expect to meet you here.
> St. 1 – It's getting warm, isn't it?
> St. 2 – It sure is. Well. . . I'll see you later.
> St. 1 – Oh sure, that will be nice.

Since the objective of this exercise is to provide formal training in non-verbal communication, there's no need to require memorization of the speeches.

12) JIGSAW (STIRK). Students receive cards describing a mysterious incident in as many versions as there are characters in the role-play. Each person will help bridge the information gap as the group pools the information. This conversation exercise is usually based upon magazine and newspaper clippings and Stirk recommends it for the more advanced levels. But you might design structurally simplified versions for use with lower-intermediate students.

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[27] Adapted from McGAW, C. *Acting is Believing*. 4.ed. New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.

Focus on culture

13) Complain (ESL). Each group is asked to work on an upsetting cultural difference they have encountered in the host country. Some characters must be sympathetic and only complain, while others must try to argue in favor of the "strange" style by explaining its advantages. Example:

St. 1 – Americans take too little time off for lunch.

St. 2 – But they begin work later and go home earlier than Latins.

14) Discover (EFL). Each group receives a picture of a situation involving a cultural difference. They must identify the difference by contrasting the situation depicted with concepts and/or styles of their home-country and then dramatize a conflict situation. Example: picture of guests arriving for a pot-luck (a Latin student is embarassed because he brought nothing and, without offending the hosts, must explain that in his native country guests are not expected to provide food and drink for dinner parties).

All of the above dramatic exercises are recommended as complementary activities to any language program. They require little class time and allow for intensive practice in the target language. For advanced students one might, of course, explore a truly theatrical piece by putting on a play, even as a graduation assignment. WILDER's **Our Town**, for instance, offers many interpretation possibilities, cultural insights, with accessible and relevant language. WESSELS offers comprehensive guidelines for teachers interested in drama projects of this sort.

RESUMO

Este trabalho apresenta os princípios técnicos para o uso de drama em ensino de idiomas, incluindo exemplos de exercícios especialmente úteis para a complementação de qualquer programa de línguas, independentemente de aspectos metodológicos.

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