



MASK & GAVEL

PUBLISHED BY THE JALT **S**PEECH, **D**RAMA, AND **D**EBATE SIG

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

JUNE, 2013

CONTENTS

Messages

David Kluge (*Coordinator*) ... 3

James Venema & James Matchett (*Journal Editors*) ...3

Feature Article

Ben Cowburn *Standing in Dorothy's Shoes: What Can Language Teachers Learn from Dorothy Heathcote? Part 1 ...* p. 4

In the Classroom

Dawn Kobayashi *Creativity through Drama in Language Teaching ...* p. 14

David Kluge *Beyond Roleplay: Simulation and Roleplaying Games for Language Learning ...* p. 22

My View

James Venema *Judging Speech Contests: Rating Scales and Common Sense ...* p. 27

Project & Conference Reports

James Matchett *Drama and the Hokuriku University English Club ...* p. 32

Peter Quinn *PanSIG 2013 Conference Report...* p. 37

David Kluge (SIG Coordinator)

James Venema and his team are following up the success of the first volume of *Mask & Gavel* with an equally interesting and useful second volume/issue. Congratulations, James! In order to continue this tradition of quality, there needs to be more people contributing their knowledge, research, and experience in oral interpretation, speech, drama, and debate. This coming year we are trying to emphasize speech and debate more, and so more articles on these topics would be most welcome. Let's show what the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG has to contribute to the field of language teaching!

James Venema (Editor)

Here is is, the second edition of *Mask & Gavel*. Once again I am proud of what we have achieved and excited about the quality of the submissions. I would especially like to give credit to the review board and proofreading team for their hard work. I am very much interested in expanding the team so if any members are interested in joining please contact me.

James Matchett (Assistant Editor)

I am pleased to be a part of the team responsible for this second edition of *Mask & Gavel*. The person most responsible for its publication, however, is our esteemed editor, James Venema and we recognize his hard work. We also thank the authors for their contributions and hope you find these articles useful and beneficial.

Mask & Gavel Staff

Editor

James Venema

Assistant Editor

James Matchett

Review Board and Proofreading Team

Aya Kawakami

David Kluge

Dawn Kobayashi

James Matchett

Jason White



All materials in this publication are copyright © of the JALT Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG.

Feature Article

Standing in Dorothy's Shoes: What Can Language Teachers Learn from Dorothy Heathcote?

Part One: Where Dorothy Came From, What She Did, and How It Can Support Language Development

Ben Cowburn

Chinju National University of Education, South Korea

bencowburn@gmail.com

Abstract

From the 1960s onwards, Dorothy Heathcote became a highly influential figure in UK drama education. Her practice, based around unscripted, participatory dramas in which students were often guided by a teacher working 'in role', helped to shape the way drama is taught in schools today, particularly within the process drama approach. Influenced by a range of educational theorists and practitioners, Heathcote developed a style of educational drama that she saw as being distinct from 'theatre', and more concerned with experiencing drama than performing it. To this end, she developed a number of dramatic techniques, such as 'Teacher in Role' and 'Mantle of the Expert', to help students inhabit dramatic contexts and learn through the direct imagined experience of a particular place, time or problem to be solved. These techniques have much to offer language teaching, particularly when communication is the main goal. Placing students in dramatic contexts is claimed to enhance motivation and engagement and lead to more truly authentic communication than is often found in language classrooms. Using a framework based on Heathcote's techniques, and those

developed by other process drama educators, language teachers can begin to explore the many benefits drama can offer language learners.

Introduction

Dorothy Heathcote teaches drama, but it's nothing to do with wearing leotards or pretending to be a tree. Mrs Heathcote uses drama as a teaching medium: a way of stimulating a child's mind to richer levels of learning.

(Narration from *Four lessons with Dorothy Heathcote*)

A junior school in the northeast of England in the early 1980s. A class of children work individually and in groups, absorbed in their roles as expert craftspeople in a leather factory. They consult plans for shoes, bags and belts, and mime the delicate, time-consuming construction of these items. Their teacher, in the role of the factory manager, moves around the group, talking to each child about the work they are undertaking. A girl talks with utmost seriousness and authority about the amount, width and length of leather needed for a dog sled harness; a boy discusses the design of a money belt; a small group measures the dimensions of a traveller's satchel. Throughout the room, the children continue with their individual tasks in an atmosphere of quiet, deliberate concentration.

Dorothy Heathcote, the teacher responsible for this activity, was a "high priest" (Hornbrook, 1998, p. 17) of educational drama, who helped create a "cross-curricular pedagogy that for some came close to religious devotion" (Hornbrook, 1998, p. 15). She was a forceful, influential and divisive educator who believed in a form of educational drama that promoted social health in learners, enhanced their appreciation of art and culture, encouraged empathy and understanding, and helped develop language skills and confidence (Davis, 1997, p. 38).

Heathcote, who died in 2011, trained as an actress at the Northern Theatre School in Bradford, England in the 1940s. After being advised she had no future in the theatre, she found work as a drama teacher at the Durham Institute, and began to develop her very personal teaching approach throughout the 1950s. In 1964, she began teaching at Newcastle University, and until her retirement in 1986, she worked with schools, youth centres, hospitals and correctional facilities, creating improvised pieces of drama that sprang directly from the ideas, emotions and life experiences of the participants.

Seeing drama primarily as "a means of using our experience to understand the experience of other people" (Wagner, 1979, p. 58), Heathcote developed a form she termed "living through' drama" (Heathcote, 1984, p. 48), in which a group works together to create unscripted drama content (Davis, 1997, p. 37). Her techniques, writing and teacher training helped to shape how drama is taught in British schools, and her student-centred, process-based approach has much to offer language teachers.

The Development of Educational Drama

Though Heathcote's approach can be seen as emerging from a singular vision, she was influenced by a number of earlier theorists and practitioners who believed that drama education could be a participatory medium which involves "a person's whole being in the exercise of all its resources and capabilities - sensory, motor, emotional, imaginative, intellectual, spiritual" (Francis, 1979, p. 11) and so can become an effective way to "practise living" (Way, 1967, p. 6). Alongside the study of plays as literature and the creation of formal theatrical productions, educational drama has long been seen as a form of creative play (Fleming, 2003, p. 29), and as a vehicle for personal development, in the way that it creates "moments of direct experience, transcending mere knowledge, enriching the imagination, possibly touching the heart and soul as well as the

mind" (Way, 1967, p. 1). The original Greek meaning of *drama* can be translated to mean "a thing done" (Francis, 1979, p. 11) or 'action', and it is this quality of direct experience Heathcote sought to capture in her work.

Heathcote worked extensively with adults and young people in a range of contexts, but she is best known for her peripatetic work with children in schools. She saw the skills learned in drama activities as central to child development, a view supported by theorists such as Froebel (Nicholson, 2011, p. 41), whose ideas about the importance of activities and games in child development were echoed and adapted by a number of early twentieth-century educators.

One of the first of these was Harriet Finlay-Johnson, who

in the early twentieth century was the headmistress of a small English primary school where she put drama "at the centre of children's learning" (Nicholson, 2011, p. 44). Starting from the belief that children's instinctive, imaginative play "could be represented as a *real* drama, rich both in creativity and learning" (Hornbrook, 1998, p. 8), Finlay-Johnson developed a curriculum based around improvised drama that was devised and performed by her pupils. She saw education-through-drama as a pedagogical tool for engaging children in the study of history and literature, and as a powerful "vehicle of expression and assimilation" (Finlay-Johnson, 1912, p. 19) that harnessed their natural enthusiasm for play and physical activity. Finlay-Johnson reported that when her young learners were introduced to her dramatic approach, they "developed a keen desire to know many things which hitherto had been matters of pure indifference to them" (Finlay-Johnson, 1912, pp. 36-37).

Also working in the early twentieth century was Henry Caldwell Cook, who "proposed the then-radical notion that students should perform rather than read the plays of the dramatic canon" (Neelands, 2000, p. 73), and believed that this had the potential to lead to "a more profound understanding of dramatic literature than could be achieved by formal teaching" (Hornbrook, 1998, p. 7). Due to this approach, and his support for creative play as an important part of classroom practice, Cook was a major influence on Peter Slade, who became a key voice in the promotion of educational drama in the 1950s and 60s. Slade's work was mainly focused on a form of child drama based around "spontaneous dramatic play" (Fleming, 2003, p. 17), with an emphasis on personal development and creativity over rehearsed performance. Particularly important was the distinction Slade made between theatre, as a form of entertainment for adults (Slade, 1958, p. 2), and child drama, which he conceived as an almost primal form of behaviour that can be harnessed to aid in the emotional and intellectual development of children (Slade, 1958, p. 2). In his theory of child drama, Slade put particular emphasis on the concepts of *sincerity* and *absorption*, both of which he claimed lead to the building of confidence, creativity and social skills in children (Slade, 1958, p. 80). Slade defined *absorption* as the state of "being completely wrapped up in what is being done or what one is doing" (Slade, 1995, p. 12), and *sincerity* as "a complete form of honesty in portraying a part, bringing with it an intense feeling of reality and experience" (Slade, 1995, p. 12). In Slade's view, the development of these qualities in children was highly beneficial to their early development, and lead to a state he termed *language flow*, in which children are able to spontaneously express themselves in a heightened yet truthful manner (Slade, 1995, p. 13).

Slade and his contemporaries, including Brian Way, who worked from "the same theoretical origins but placed more emphasis on individual practical exercises" (Fleming, 2003, p. 17), were instrumental in bringing practical drama education to the attention of teachers, trainers and educational policy-makers. Their approach became what some termed a "new orthodoxy" (Hornbrook, 1998, p. 26) in school drama practice, and also influenced the teaching of other school subjects. However, the prominence of creativity and self-expression that was a legacy of Slade and Way's work, though a welcome alternative to the earlier focus on rote-learning and obedience, came under criticism for its lack of rigour and accountability in a school context. Detractors at the time felt that this emphasis on self-expression and personal development over elements of skill and craft (Fleming, 2003, p. 72) deprived drama teachers of an "alluring body of 'important' knowledge" (Hornbrook, 1998, p. 44).



Photo courtesy of the Heathcote Archive

Heathcote's Approach

I am engaged first of all in helping children to think, talk, relate to one another, to communicate.
(Heathcote, 1984, p. 92)

Building on the work of Slade and Way, Heathcote made a similar distinction between her form of child drama and rehearsed theatre, favouring spontaneity, concentration and intensity of feeling over polished scripted performances. However, she also brought a sense of educational rigour to her practice, believing that drama could lead children towards improved literacy, oracy and self-confidence, bolster their ability to work with others, and build a sense of pride in their work (Wagner, 1979, p. 18). Like Finlay-Johnson, Heathcote was a strong advocate of drama's potential to actively engage children with many different forms of knowledge, and she saw that her work could offer numerous opportunities for contextual learning. Echoing Piaget, who suggested that learning should stem from authentic intellectual content (Furth, 1970, p. 6), Heathcote was in this way seen to return educational drama "to the track of pursuing knowledge" (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984, p. 7).

Heathcote's version of drama education was a primarily student-centred process, in which instead of simply imparting knowledge, a successful teacher should "give students opportunities for struggling with problems and to reach an answer because of the work they do rather than the listening they have done" (Heathcote, 1972 in Wessels, 1987, p. 14). To facilitate this process, she developed a number of techniques designed to empower students and develop their linguistic and dramatic skills. These techniques included Teacher-in-Role (TIR), in which the teacher takes on the role of a character within the drama (Fleming, 2003, p. 91); and Mantle of the Expert (M of E), in which students take on roles of experts, such as scientists, factory workers, or archaeologists (Heathcote, 1984, p. 141), relevant to the context of the drama. Students working within M of E are usually called upon within the dramatic context to help their teacher, who often steps in and out of the role of a character with a problem (Fleming, 2003, p. 92). As a result the students' "prior knowledge and experience is validated and their frame of reference is enlarged" (O'Neill, 1995, p. ix).

Using these and other techniques, Heathcote helped students construct dramatic scenarios based on their own ideas, using a combination of discussion, research and group improvisation. Eschewing scripted drama, Heathcote preferred to challenge participants to spontaneously create improvised scenes which helped develop empathy with characters removed from their everyday experiences (Scherr and Verrall, 1987, p. x). Heathcote rarely planned sessions in detail, and instead worked intuitively from student suggestions (Wagner, 1979, p. 25), believing risk-taking to be an essential element of drama practice (Wagner, 1979, p. 21) and of teaching in general. This approach allowed Heathcote to give students permission "to take responsibility for their own learning" (Wessels, 1987, p. 14), and reverse the traditional classroom dynamic by putting the students in a position of superior knowledge and in some cases, authority (Bowell and Heap, 2001, p. 46).

By the early 1990's Heathcote and her colleague Gavin Bolton had helped to give drama education in the UK a renewed sense of legitimacy, with their focus on creating immersive, challenging experiences for pupils (Fleming, 2003, p. 17). Bolton saw educational drama as "a dynamic means of gaining new understanding" (Bolton, 1979, p. 112), and developed a framework that complemented Heathcote's on-going practice. Based on the theories of play and social learning developed by Piaget and Vygotsky (Bolton, 1979, p. 17-20, Daniels, 2001, p. 30), Bolton defined drama as "thought-in-action", and its purpose as the creation of meaning within particular contexts (Bolton, 1979, p. 21). Heathcote and Bolton's work in UK schools helped propagate the use of drama in a cross-curricular manner, with the aim of creating "learning contexts in which students use their literacy skills in multi-modalities immersed in situations that demand their participation" (Miller & Saxton, 2011, p. 147).

Process Drama

Educational drama today has developed into "an interactive, participatory form of pedagogy that engages learners emotionally and playfully" (Winston, 2012, p. 2), and encompasses a range of approaches. One of the most popular of these, and the approach that best encompasses Heathcote's beliefs, is *process drama*, in which "the participants, together with the teacher, constitute the theatrical ensemble and engage in drama to make the meaning *for themselves*" (Bowell & Heap, 2001, p. 7). Sharing many similarities with *applied drama* (Schonmann, 2011, p. 8), and also known as *creative drama* (Demircioğlu, 2010, p. 439) and the *conventions approach* (Neelands, 2000, p. 79), process drama has become a key part of much of today's

educational drama practice (Kao & O'Neill, 1998, p. 12) due to its adaptability to a variety of educational needs. Although preparation, discussion and rehearsal can be part of process drama work, the approach is mainly concerned with spontaneous dramatic action that is "lived at life-rate and operates from a discovery-at-this-moment basis rather than being memory-based" (Bowell & Heap, 2001, p. 7). In addition, there is a strong focus on creating a consistent narrative framework for dramatic action, through a series of student-centred activities that take place over a significant period of time (Kao & O'Neill, 1998, p. x). This allows for the creation of what is thought to be more meaningful work than can be achieved in one-off activities, and gives students a sense of ownership in the way that it "provides a significant context in which roles and identifications become detailed and complex" (Kao & O'Neill, 1998, p. 4).



Photo courtesy of the Heathcote Archive

Performance and sharing of work can be part of process drama, but as its name suggests, the approach is less concerned with the production of rehearsed performances, and more focused on the creative, interactional process of learners working together in a dramatic context. The inclusive nature of this process allows for the use of a range of dramatic techniques, many based around improvisation, in which the majority of the dramatic content is created by students.

Process Drama and Language Teaching

Thanks to the legacy of Heathcote and other practitioners who saw the value of skills development as well as self-expression, much modern process drama practice has a strong focus on language development, providing pupils with "opportunities to use language in all its forms to explore and create meaningful experience" (Holroyd & Kempe, 2003, p. 25). It can also be thought of as an excellent tool for transcending the often arbitrary nature of school subject divisions (Gilbert, 2002, p. 113) and promoting cross-curricular learning (Somers, 1994, p. 13). In this way, process drama has much in common with Content and Language integrated Learning (CLIL) and other modern language teaching approaches that prioritise authentic, cross-curricular learning in the target language. Also important is the way process drama allows learners to "engage with, and learn through, drama as participants in the imagined action not as spectators and observers of it" (Neelands, 1992, p. 28), and it is this participatory nature that is of particular interest when looking at using drama in a language learning context. When students are fully engaged with improvised drama activities, it is claimed that "they are active in their learning process, not just cognitively but socially and kinaesthetically" (O'Neill in Bolton & Heathcote, 1995, p. viii), and the language they use emerges "from the whole body" with "passion and power" (Schmidt, 1997, p. 123).

Learning a language is "a deeply social event" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 15), and drama can be seen as a "perfect medium for learning to be 'productively social'" (Davis, 1997, p. 13). When used in the language classroom, drama's social nature (Ntelioglou, 2011, p. 183) has the potential to support teaching in a truly communicative manner, as it presents "a view of language which goes beyond the superficial acquisition of skills and linguistic conventions and terminology to consider the relationships between language and thought, language and social context and language and identity" (Neelands, 1992, p. 9). From this perspective, a form of process drama that "offers a context and a purpose for language use" (Stinson, 2012, p. 71) and in which learners take part in "meaningful, fluent interaction in the target language" (Wessels, 1987, p. 13) is seen by many to be an excellent vehicle for language development.

Language activities that are based around the principles of process drama place learners in imagined "situations where they feel compelled to speak" (Wessels, 1987, p. 27), and encourage "active and discriminating observation and listening, which true communication always demands" (Evans, 1984, p. 11). In preparing learners to interpret meaning in real-life spoken communication, drama can be invaluable in its "capacity for tuning the ear to the nuances of meaning by encouraging pupils to look behind and beyond the face value of words" (Evans, 1984, p. 49). In addition, the direct experiences possible in drama can also be

highly effective in improving reading skills (Bolton, 1979, p. 122), allowing learners “to turn the abstract written words into concrete images and to construct meaning from the text through collective as well as individual experience” (Chang, 2012, p. 10). Similarly, drama-based writing techniques such as writing-in-role (Ntelioglou, 2011, p. 185), in which learners embody the attitudes and feelings of a particular character in their writing, can be highly motivating (Kao & O'Neill, 1998, p. 32), and give students opportunities to “practise writing in various registers and genres” (Chang, 2012, p. 11). Above all, it is drama's potential to “naturally integrate all language skills” (Ntelioglou, 2011, p. 184) that makes it an excellent fit for modern language teaching approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which aim to teach “communication in its widest and truest sense” (Evans, 1984, p. 12).

Language teachers working within a communicative framework aim to create motivation and language acquisition by “seeking to engage learners in genuine use of the language in authentic situations” (Addelman & Cajkler, 2000, p. 31). The importance of embedding learning in meaningful situations that mirror ‘real life’ is supported by many educational theorists (Neelands, 1992, p. 16), and is seen as extremely valuable in second and additional language learning. To successfully achieve this contextualisation, language learners are often required to make imaginative leaps into spheres of reference which are quite distinct from their own lives (Fleming, 2003, p. 41). The problem of how to enable these leaps in the closed and un-naturalistic setting of a classroom (Addelman & Cajkler, 2000, p. 32) is often overlooked in language teaching theory and practice. However, as Heathcote states, there is a need to “provide meaningful contexts in which to use language for a variety of purposes, and drama facilitates this need in an ideal way” (Heathcote, 1984, p. 147). Drama is unique in the way that it “relies on the human ability to pretend to be someone or something else” (Neelands, 1992, p. 3), placing participants in imaginary situations that are at once unreal and real (Somers, 1994, p. 11), and allowing them to experience *metaxis*, or “seeing two worlds at the same time” (Bolton, 1992, p. 33). In this way, drama-based activities allow for a deeper exploration of context than classroom role-play exercises, which “tend to take account of only one aspect of context - the physical setting” (Duff & Maley, 1982, p. 9). Dramatic situations rely on factors such as the role and status of characters, their mood, attitude and feelings, and their shared knowledge (Duff & Maley, 1982, p. 10-11), all of which can aid in heightening engagement, and create language learning situations that are “clearly embedded in living” (Ushioda, 1996, p. 42).

Many language teaching theorists and practitioners believe that “learners will learn best if they participate in meaningful communication” (Scrivener, 2005, p. 35). However, some have argued that there is a divide between the goal of focusing on meaning and the often un-contextualised nature of language used by learners during standard communicative activities such as “information gap” tasks (Wong, 2011, p. 186) and scripted role-plays with “tidy A/B/A/B sequence that we see in typical coursebook dialogues” (Wessels, 1987, p. 11). For many Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theorists, a truly communicative approach “involves setting the spoken word in the context of other aspects of communication” (Holroyd & Kempe, 2003, p. 26), which are often given little emphasis in modern language coursebooks. Placing learners in imagined contexts that encourage them “to struggle with concepts and emotions that they do not normally have to put into words” (Arnold, 1982, p. 53) allows for an emotional connection missing from activities such as standard “situational” role-plays in language teaching coursebooks (Wessels, 1987, p. 11), and this affective component is seen as another important factor in encouraging truly authentic language usage (Bowell & Heap, 2001, p. 2). When learners are actively and emotionally engaged, language becomes personalised, and this “makes language more meaningful and memorable than drilling or mechanical repetition can” (Desiatova, 2009). Improvisation, in which language is used in a “vivid and immediate manner” (Hornbrook, 1998, p. 75), is seen to be a key dramatic technique for generating this direct emotional connection.

In creating an immersive learning environment, drama is seen as an effective way to encourage active participation, build confidence and help learners to ‘find a voice’ (Winston, 2012, p. 3) in the language classroom. Using a dramatic context allows learners to “escape from their everyday identity and ‘hide behind’ another character” (Desiatova, 2009), which can help reduce the de-motivating anxiety many learners feel when asked to produce language in the classroom (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 40). This freedom from real contexts encourages “students to experiment safely with alternative identities” (Winston, 2012, p. 3) and can create a “wholly uncritical atmosphere” (Way, 1967, p. 121), in which language and creativity is able to ‘flow’ from learners with as few obstacles as possible (Nachmanovitch, 1990, p. 10). Working within role can allow

learners “to take risks with language that they would otherwise feel too self-conscious to attempt” (Winston, 2012, p. 3), giving them opportunities to ‘rehearse’ language for use outside the classroom.

Another important aim of many language teachers working within a communicative framework is to create student-centred classrooms in which learners play an active part in acquiring language (Wong, 2011, p. 132). Drama provides many opportunities for learners to actively explore the target language, and this can be highly beneficial to language acquisition (Wessels, 1987, p. 8). It has been shown that students are “more likely to remember the meaning of the word as a result of this moment of direct experience” (Wessels, 1987, p. 7), and that active participation can provide learners with a real sense of enjoyment and achievement (Duff & Maley, 1982, p. 13). In this way, process drama techniques can be seen as excellent motivational tools (O’Neill in Bolton & Heathcote, 1995, p. vii), as instead of focusing on extrinsic factors (Furth, 1970, p. 4), learners can become active participants (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 77), immersed in “the experience of language use, and all the positive motivational repercussions, self-perceptions and intrinsic rewards that using the language can bring” (Ushioda, 1996, p. 31). Moreover, it can be said that “drama returns the initiative to pupils” (Evans, 1984, p. 17), with student contributions actively shaping the content of the dramatic narrative. This can lead to a sense of ownership of the learning process, resulting in learners who “have a greater commitment to it and therefore more to gain from it as a result” (Bowell & Heap, 2001, p. 8).

Process drama offers an effective framework for language development, and a set of very useful tools to help engage and motivate students.

To support this participatory, student-centred approach, rather than merely acting as a transmitter of knowledge, a teacher working in a process drama-based approach has the opportunity to become a “collaborator or co-artist” (Webb, 1992, p. 109). Heathcote encouraged teachers to prepare lessons focused on allowing the “learning situation to happen” (Heathcote, 1984, p. 29), rather than on the static imparting of knowledge from teacher to student in the “transmission model of education” (Neelands, 1992, p. 14). In facilitating a shift towards a more symmetrical classroom dynamic (Kao & O’Neill, 1998, p. 42), drama-based lessons have the capacity to represent “a radical change in the relationship between teacher and student” (Duff & Maley, 1982, p. 22). This shift is often aimed for but rarely achieved in language lessons, where there may only be the illusion of student contribution (Wright, 2005, p. 71), and teacher questions can be seen as inauthentic, “in that the teacher already knows the answer, and is merely checking the students’ knowledge” (Kao & O’Neill, 1998, p. 31). In this way, drama-based lessons have the capacity to allow the emergence of authentic language and learning situations that “seldom see the light of day in the classroom where the lesson has been pre-processed and pre-packaged by the teacher” (Evans, 1984, p. 17). This can be an excellent way to attain an atmosphere of genuine cooperation, which allows students “to move beyond just following directions and into open-ended terrain” (Smithner, 2011, p. 223), which can be both rewarding and challenging for language teachers and learners.

Conclusion

So... we’ve got from now until 12 o’clock to do a play. What would you like to do?
(Heathcote in *Three looms waiting*)

Integrating process drama-based activities into language lessons has the potential to create many opportunities to “activate learners’ ‘static’ knowledge of the target language by pushing them to apply what they have previously learned for meaningful communication” (Kao & O’Neill, 1998, p. 79). By preparing learners to use the target language in a spontaneous manner (Kao & O’Neill, 1998, p. 123), drama can give them the confidence and ability to take their skills into real-life contexts. However, drama should not be thought of as “a panacea, as a magic formula, as something readily packaged and easy to deliver with the minimum amount of thought and effort on the part of the teacher” (Winston, 2012, p. 5). Instead, process drama offers an effective framework for language development, and a set of very useful tools to help engage and motivate students. Using these tools, teachers can encourage active participation in activities that demand truly authentic communication, using a range of linguistic and paralinguistic features in a variety of contexts.

For language teachers anxious about using drama, process drama techniques pioneered by Heathcote and developed by other educators can provide a safe and relatively structured way to gradually introduce a

range of dramatic techniques. As the teacher's confidence grows, so should that of the students, and together the class can use authentic language to explore a wealth of dramatic situations from within the comfort of the language classroom, allowing them to "see the real world more clearly when they have experienced the imagined one" (Wagner, 1979, p. 229).

Special thanks are due to Tim Taylor.

Approaches to implementing Dorothy Heathcote's drama techniques in a language teaching context will be further explored in the next issue.

References

- Addelman, R., & Cajkler, W. (2002). *The practice of foreign language teaching (2nd ed.)*. London, UK: David Fulton.
- Anonymous. (n.d.). *Four lessons with Dorothy Heathcote* [Television broadcast]. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: BBC North East & Cumbria. Retrieved from Dorothy Heathcote Archive. Retrieved March 25, 2013, from <http://www.mantleoftheexpert.com/film-and-video/dh-video-archive/blackley-and-broadene-the-shoe-factory>
- Bolton, G. (1979). *Towards a theory of drama in education*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Bolton, G., & Heathcote, D. (1995). *Drama for learning: Dorothy Heathcote's mantle of the expert approach to education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Bowell, P., & Heap, B.S. (2001). *Planning process drama*. London, UK: David Fulton.
- Chang, L-Y, S. (2012). 'Dramatic' language learning in the classroom. In Winston, J. (Ed.), *Second language learning through drama: practical techniques and application* (pp. 6-14). London, UK: Routledge.
- Daniels, H. (2001). *Vygotsky and pedagogy*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Davis, D. (1997). Dorothy Heathcote reflects with Gavin Bolton. In Davis, D. (Ed.), *Interactive research in drama education* (pp. 7-40). Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.
- Davis, D. (ed) (1997). *Interactive research in drama education*. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.
- Demircioğlu, S. (2010). Teaching English vocabulary to young learners via drama. *Procedia social and behavioral sciences*, 2, 439–443. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.039
- Desiatova, L. (2009). Using different forms of drama in the EFL classroom. *Humanising language teaching*, 11 (4). Retrieved 26 July, 2012, from <http://www.hltmag.co.uk/aug09/sart07.htm>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Duff, A., & Maley, A. (1982). *Drama techniques in language learning: a resource book of communication activities for language teachers (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Evans, T. (1984). *Drama in English teaching*. Beckenham, UK: Croom Helm.
- Fleming, M. (2003). *Starting drama teaching (2nd ed.)*. London, UK: David Fulton.
- Francis, H. (1979). *The vocabulary of educational drama (revised ed.)*. Banbury, UK: Kemble Press.
- Furth, H.G. (1970). *Piaget for teachers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Gilbert, I. (2002). *Essential motivation in the classroom*. London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Heathcote, D. (1984). *Collected writings on education and drama*. London, UK: Hutchinson.
- Holroyd, J., & Kempe, A. (2004). *Speaking, listening and drama*. London, UK: David Fulton.
- Hornbrook, D. (1998). *Education and dramatic art*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Kao, S-M., & O'Neill, C. (1998). *Words into worlds: learning a second language through process drama*. London, UK: JAI Press.
- Miller, C., & Saxton, J. (2011). Story drama structure: 'recipe' for success. In Schonmann, S. (Ed.), *Key concepts in theatre/drama education*. Rotterdam, NL: Sense.
- Nachmanovitch, S. (1990). *Free play: improvisation in life and art*. New York, NY: Most Tarcher/Putnam.
- Neelands, J. (1992). *Learning through imagined experience*. London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton Educational.
- Neelands, J. (2000). Drama sets you free - or does it? In Davison, J., and Moss, J. (Eds.), *Issues in English teaching*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

- Nicholson, H. (2011). *Theatre, education and performance: the map and the story*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Ntelioglou, B.Y. (2011a). 'But why do I have to take this class?' the mandatory drama-ESL class and multiliteracies pedagogy. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 16 (4) 59 –615. doi:10.1080/13569783.2011.617108
- Ntelioglou, B.Y. (2011b). Drama and English language learners. In Schonmann, S. (Ed.), *Key concepts in theatre/drama education*. Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishers.
- Scher, A., & Verrall, C. (1987). *Another 100+ ideas for drama*. London, UK: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Schmidt, P. (1997). Dorothy Heathcote's approaches to drama in education applied to the teaching of English in a comprehensive school in France. In Davis, D. (Ed.), *Interactive research in drama education*. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.
- Schonmann, S. (ed) (2011). *Key concepts in theatre/drama education*. Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishers.
- Scrivener, J. (2005). *Learning teaching: the essential guide to English language teaching (2nd ed.)*. Oxford, UK: Macmillan Education.
- Slade, P. (1958). *An introduction to child drama*. Aylesbury, UK: Hazell, Watson and Viney.
- Slade, P. (1995). *Child play: its importance for human development*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Smedley, R. (Producer). (1971, June 13). Three looms waiting [Television series episode]. In *Omnibus*. London, UK: BBC. Retrieved from Dorothy Heathcote Archive. Retrieved March 25, 2013, from <http://www.mantleoftheexpert.com/film-and-video/dh-video-archive/three-loom-waiting>
- Smithner, N. (2011). Creative play: the importance of incorporating play, liminality and ritual in teaching K-12. In Schonmann, S. (Ed.), *Key concepts in theatre/drama education*. Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishers.
- Somers, J. (1994). *Drama in the curriculum*. New York, NY: Cassell Educational.
- Stinson, M. (2012). Accessing traditional tales: the legend of Bukit Merah. In Winston, J. (Ed.), *Second language learning through drama: practical techniques and application*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Ushioda, E. (1996). *Learner autonomy 5: the role of motivation*. Dublin, IE: Authentik Language Learning Resources.
- Wagner, B.J. (1979). *Dorothy Heathcote: drama as a learning medium*. London, UK: Hutchinson Education.
- Way, B. (1967). *Development through drama*. London, UK: Longman.
- Webb, E. (1992). *Literature in education: encounter and experience*. London, UK: The Falmer Press
- Wessels, C. (1987). *Drama*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Winston, J. (2012). Second and additional language learning through drama in Winston, J. (Ed.), *Second language learning through drama: practical techniques and application*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Winston, J. (Ed.). (2012). *Second language learning through drama: practical techniques and application*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Wong, M. (2011). *Language teaching: linguistic theory in practice*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.
- Wright, M. (2005). Drama. In Wright, T. (2005), *How to be a brilliant English teacher*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Wright, T. (2005). *How to be a brilliant English teacher*. London, UK: Routledge.

In the Classroom

Creativity Through Drama in Language Learning

Dawn Kobayashi

Onomichi City University

kobayashi-dawn@onomichi-u.ac.jp

Abstract

This paper will argue that drama techniques can provide an excellent framework for developing students' creative thinking. The first part of the paper will attempt to define what is meant by creativity in educational settings through discussion of the work of psychologists Kaufman, Beghetto, and Sternberg. It will focus specifically on the difference between BIG 'C' legendary creativity and little 'c' everyday creativity and how little 'c' creativity relates to discourse in the language classroom. Next, the author will discuss how some of the activities in the Torrance test of creativity (1996) share striking similarities with drama techniques. Lastly, some of these drama techniques will be briefly introduced in the final part of the paper.

Introduction

The role of creativity in education has recently been receiving considerable attention. Research in educational settings has mainly been carried out by psychologists interested in creativity (Kaufman, Beghetto,

and Sternberg). Research has focused rather broadly on ‘education’, particularly in elementary school settings with little work focusing on the interrelation of creativity and EFL. Within the field of applied linguistics, studies have focused on the creativity of language rather than the application of creative thinking to English language teaching [and learning?]. Studies have included the creative nature of everyday talk (Carter, 2004), creativity in children's language play (Cook, 2000), and also the literary-like uses of language in advertising and internet communications (Crystal, 2001). The research so far has thrown up some interesting insights into the creativity of language, but as yet there is a dearth of information on how these discoveries could be translated into the language classroom (Smith & Smith, 2010, p.251). This short paper, by suggesting how drama techniques can improve students’ creative thinking, is intended as a call for further research in this neglected area.

What is Creativity and Why is it Important?

Any discussion of creativity must initially attempt to clarify what creativity means in an educational setting. For many people creativity is associated with the words imagination, ingenuity, innovation, inspiration, inventiveness, muse, novelty, originality, serendipity, talent, and unique (Plucker & Makel, 2010, p.48). It is often thought of as a skill which one either has or does not have. In this sense, it is associated with highly artistic innovations and discoveries –something intrinsically unique. This definition of creativity is what is referred to as BIG ‘C’ creativity. Within educational settings a distinction is made between ‘BIG C’ and ‘little c’ creativity (Craft, Jeffrey & Leibling, 2001). BIG ‘C’ creativity is the creativity that most people think of: the world changing ideas, artistic creations and dynamic inventions of an elite, eminent few. Little ‘c’ creativity relates to the more prosaic discoveries and explorations in the world of music, art, industry, technology and all forms of discourse. The elements of conversation that mark us out as interesting, friendly, eager to interact with our fellow language partner all come under the umbrella of little ‘c’ creativity. It is this little ‘c’ creativity that is most evident in everyday discourse and the type of creativity that language teachers need to develop in their classrooms.

So what is the definition of this little ‘c’ version of creativity? The psychologists Kaufman and Sternberg (2010, p. xiii) define creativity as: 1. something new, different, innovative, 2. of high quality, and 3. appropriate. Creativity has also been defined as something that entails change or transformation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 28) and something that creates the *need* to make, create, imagine, produce, or design anew (Feldhusen, 2006, p. 137) (*Italics added*). From these definitions some conclusions can be made. Creativity means producing something new, something for which a need exists, and something deemed appropriate. It also needs to have merit in terms of quality and expertise. Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) extend the BIG ‘C’, little ‘c’ theory further to talk about four levels of creativity, Beghetto uses the analogy of a jazz pianist to illustrate the distinctions:

1. Big C – legendary creativity, ex. Fats Waller
2. Pro C – professional creativity, ex. Professional jazz pianist
3. Little c – everyday creativity, ex. Accomplished amateur jazz pianist
4. Mini c – interpretive creativity, ex. Young player just discovering jazz riffs

(Adapted from Beghetto, 2010, p. 455-456)

This theory is very useful for language teachers as it provides a very basic kind of road map to build students’ creative thinking from mini c to Pro C level. In light of these insights it is possible to view creativity not as a kind of on/off switch: people are either creative or they are not, but as a continuum scale: people are all at some point on the creativity scale from mini ‘c’ to Big ‘C’. Accordingly, teachers can reject the idea of creativity as a kind of divine gift and accept the verity of it as an innate skill that all possess. Once creativity is viewed as a universal skill, students’ abilities can be developed through specific activities and

It is possible to view creativity not as a kind of on/off switch but as a continuum: people are all at some point on the creativity scale.

consciousness raising techniques. Many researchers, including Chomsky, regard creativity as more than just language being used in imaginative or poetic ways; they considered it a central part of the language system. It is people's innate programming to recognize, produce and process creativity that allows them to immediately understand the true meaning of their interlocutor's original utterances (Chomsky, 1964, p. 7). Consider the following example from Carter:

Extract: members of a family are preparing food for a party:

C: Foreign body in here. What is it?

B: It's raisins and (inaudible)

C: Er oh it's rice with raisins is it?

D: No no no. It's supposed to be [laughter] erm

C: There must be a raisin for it being in there

(Adapted from Carter, 2004, p.93)

It is a sense of universal creativity that allows readers to recognize the word play in Cs last contribution. Readers simultaneously, register the connection between 'reason' and 'raisin', understand that this is intentional and not a slip of tongue and recognize that it is an example of creative, humorous wordplay. All this even though it is may well be the first time that they have encountered this novel use of language. Carter recasts Chomsky's theory of the creative nature of language as "creativity is a pervasive feature of spoken language exchanges as well as a key component in interpersonal communication, and ... it is a property actively possessed by all speakers and listeners; it is not simply the domain of a few creatively gifted individuals" (2004:6). In this sense, creativity is essential for how people both produce and process language.

It has been argued that there are now two models of creativity: creativity for personal growth and cultural awareness, and creativity for the knowledge economy and employment (Pope & Swann, 2011) There have been concerns raised that the latter, somewhat capitalist-driven version, is gaining too much attention and that teachers should be encouraging creativity for personal growth as opposed to creativity for financial gain (O'Connor, 2007: 53-4). Nevertheless, leading educationists believe that such a view of creativity is essential if teachers are to equip students to succeed in modern work environments. There have even been calls for creativity to be added to the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Robinson, 2011). Whether this economically driven justification for creative development assists students' language acquisition needs further inquiry and teachers must ask themselves if these materialistic motivational sources are sufficient to aid language learning. The next section will look at how drama techniques complement the main elements of creative thinking and how they can be employed to facilitate transitions from Mini 'c' to Pro 'c' creativity.

How Can Drama Techniques Aid the Acquisition of Creativity?

Before a discussion of how drama techniques can help with the acquisition of creativity, it may be useful to review what is meant by the term 'drama techniques' (hereafter DTs). DTs are different from drama in that they are based on activities that were developed in the theater to help actors gain deeper understanding of character, situation, and background of the scene. These activities have been selected and/or adapted for use in the language classroom. DTs often revolve around some conflict or tension that must be resolved. How the problem will be resolved is up to the participants—any one stimulus will have multiple solutions. DTs then offer students a heuristic learning experience; one of the most important aspects of DTs is that they are not intended for performance. This means that the focus is on the process of developing the drama rather than the finished end product.

One of the most important aspects of drama techniques is that they are not intended for performance. This means that the focus is on the process of developing the drama rather than the finished end product.

It is important to note that DTs differ considerably from the role-plays that are often taught in the language classroom. Traditional classroom role-plays such as buying a hamburger at a fast food restaurant often have more features of formal discourse than informal ones. For example: predetermined formulaic language, turns which are clearly assigned, a discourse which often sticks to just one topic, and unnatural language exchanges. This type of role-play contains nothing of the unpredictability of everyday language. This checklist of the features of formal speaking from Nation and Newton provides startling similarities with textbook role-plays:

- 1 It is transactional. That is, its purpose is to communicate information rather than maintain social contact.
- 2 It involves a long turn.
- 3 It is influenced by written language.
- 4 The speaking is done ...in a clear and deliberate way with opportunity for the speaker to monitor the production.
- 5 It often needs teaching as it is a skill that is not part of typical language use.

(Nation and Newton, 2009, p. 122)

Drama techniques on the other hand involve the assimilation of ideas into an interpretation or rewriting of a 'text', which could be anything from a poem, a photo, newspaper article, and does not have to restrict itself to the written word.

The Torrance test of creativity (Torrance, 1966) is still one of the most common assessments of creativity. A close look at some of the tasks in the Torrance test of creative thinking reveal that many of the tasks are surprising similar to the theatre games and drama techniques devised by the like of Viola Spolin (1986) and Maley and Duff (2005). For example, categories of the Torrance test include asking, product improvement, unusual uses, and 'just suppose': these all require divergent thinking areas of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. Specifically, the unusual uses part of the test is almost identical to a theatre game included in Swale's *Drama Games* (2009, p. 136).

Another rationale for using DTs in the language classroom is how they can be utilized to foster creative, cognitive function. Acquiring more knowledge about the rules of language can enable more creative thought, and thinking creatively can help students to make new linguistic connections and test out their theories of language like the 'raisin- reason' example above. It can be seen, therefore, that learning and creativity are synergic. It has been argued that one of the main factors that inhibit creativity in the classroom is the predominance of IRE: initiate, respond, evaluate also sometimes referred to as IRR: initiate, reply, and respond. Within this framework students soon learn that their role is to answer or respond to the teacher's utterance, which the teacher will follow up by telling the students that their response is correct, acceptable or otherwise. It becomes a kind of intellectual hide and seek, the students must guess what the teacher perceives to be the correct answer (Beghetto, 2010, p.450). This means students have few opportunities to explore or express their own ideas, theories, and interpretations of language. Drama techniques on the other hand positively encourage the unexpected.

Sternberg's investment theory of creativity (2006) states that creativity is a decision-making process a decision to generate ideas, a decision to choose the most appropriate choice, and a decision to persuade others that this is the best choice. Importantly, he stresses that it is not enough to have the skill; it is imperative that students make the decision to use the skill (Sternberg, 2006, p. 90). This is where DTs can be utilized; by nature they give students opportunities to make proactive choices and exploit their abilities. Additionally, Sternberg's cycle of 'generate, choose and persuade' are all employed in drama techniques. The students generate a number of possible solutions to a problem, they then choose the most appropriate and interesting in terms of uniqueness and quality, lastly through their interpretation they must persuade their audience real or imagined of the validity of their choices.

From the teacher's point of reference, DTs also comply with Torrance's three stage incubation model of teaching (1993): stage 1. heightening expectations and motivation, stage 2. deepening expectations or digging

deeper, and stage 3. going beyond or keeping it going. In stage 1 the teacher attracts the students' motivation by introducing the stimulus, in stage 2 student expectations are deepened through their own explorations, and in stage 3 the students' expectations are kept going through feedback and reflection sessions.

Some Examples of Drama Techniques to Foster Creativity

Nearly all drama games and techniques can be used to develop creativity but some good starting points include conflict role-plays, stories from pictures, mimes and tableaux, and developing skits from dialogue snippets, all described below.

Conflict Role-plays

In conflict role-plays students are given the beginning of a scene which features conflict or tension. They must resolve the conflict in any way that they deem fitting. One good example is:

You are travelling in a strange country with your friends. Your car has broken down at night on a lonely desert road. Another car stops. A man gets out. He has a gun.

(Maley & Duff, 2005, p. 216)

Students are free to continue and resolve the scenario in any way they choose. For example, when the author's students worked on this scenario, endings varied from outsmarting the gunman, discovering the gunman is in fact a long lost friend, discovering the gunman is a 'good' escaped prisoner, and recasting the gunman as a Resident Evil-style zombie killer!

Stories from Pictures

Students are given some random pictures from which they must create a story in the form of a role-play or oral narrative. Here is a good example adapted from Lindstromberg:

Give each group of students four pictures: a location, a man, a woman, and an object. The group must act out a scene incorporating all four pictures.

(Adapted from Lindstromberg, 2004, p. 72)

Allowing students to select the pictures themselves enhances their creative output. This activity is also very similar to that of Sternberg's creativity test in the Rainbow Project. (Sternberg & The Rainbow Project Collaborators, 2006)

Mimes and Tableaux

Mime and tableaux are powerful tools to develop creativity; creating mimes and tableaux from poems, short stories, pictures or songs and vice versa is a fulfilling, creative activity. Any text can be used as a stimulus: a short story, a poem, song lyrics, and also visual and aural texts such as photos, pictures, advertisements, or pieces of atmospheric music. Students then use these stimuli to develop mimes or tableaux. This can also work the other way with students' mimes and tableaux acting as the catalyst for other groups to create written responses in the form of poems, short prose pieces, or montages.

Developing Drama Skits from Dialogue Snippets

Another way to develop students' creativity through drama techniques is to provide students with brief snippets of dialogue. Students use these snippets as the stimulus for a role-play. The dialogue may be featured at the beginning or any other point in the role-play. Here are some examples from Maley and Duff (2005):

- 1.A: Can you see?
B: No, where are they?
A: Look over there, behind that tree.
B: Wow! That's really interesting!
- 2.A: How long?
B: I'm not sure...
A: But I need to know.
B: Come back later then.
- 3.A: Please tell me.
B: What can I tell you?
A: You know what I mean.
B: How CAN I tell you that?
- 4.A: Who did this?
B: I'm not sure.
A: But you must know. You were here all the time.
B: I'm sorry...I can't... it's a secret.

(Maley & Duff, 2005, p. 208)

It should be apparent from these few examples that drama techniques act as stimuli for students' creative thinking and interpretations. They function as the starting points from which students may depart to multiple potential end points.

Conclusion

This paper has briefly addressed various issues pertaining to building creativity through drama techniques. A number of people from educators to psychologists have stressed the importance of creativity in the modern workplace. Other linguists have argued that creativity is a universal language skill that needs more attention in the language classroom. As Robinson puts it, teachers are educating students to enter a work environment that they can only begin to imagine. Current jobs such as web designer, app developer, advertising on social media networks were unimaginable 20 years ago. If students are to thrive in unforeseen job markets in 20 years' time, then teachers need to hone their creativity and ability to adapt to new situations. DTs are an excellent method to develop creative thought processes; however more teachers need to be willing to apply the results of current research to the language classroom and more specific research is needed to explore the role of creative thought in language learning.

References

- Beghetto, R. A. (2010). Creativity in the classroom. In R. J. Sternberg & J. C. Kaufman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of creativity* (pp 447 -463). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carter, R. (2004). *Language and creativity: The art of common talk*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Chomsky, N. (1964). *Current issues in linguistic theory*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Cook, G. (2000). *Language play, language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Craft, A., Jeffrey, B. & Leibling, M. (Eds.) (2001). *Creativity in education*. London: Continuum.

- Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. NY: Harper Perennial.
- Feldhusen, J. F. (2006). The role of knowledge base in creative thinking. In J. S. Kaufman & J. Baer (Eds.) *Creativity and reason in cognitive development*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaufman, F. S. & Sternberg, R. J. (2010) Preface In R. J. Sternberg & J. C. Kaufman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of creativity* (pp. xiii-xv) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaufman, J. C. & Beghetto, R. A. (2009). Beyond big and little: The four C model of creativity. *Review of General Psychology* 13, 1-12.
- Lindstromberg, S. (2004). *Language activities for teenagers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maley, A. & Duff, A. (2005). *Drama techniques*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nation, I. S. P. & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. Oxford/New York: Routledge.
- O'Connor, J. (2007). *The cultural and creative industries: A literature review*. London Arts Council and Creative Partnerships.
- Plucker, A. J. & Makel, M. C. (2010). Assessment of creativity. In R. J. Sternberg & J. C. Kaufman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of creativity* (pp 48-73) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pope, R. & Swann, J. (2011). Introduction: Creativity, language, literature. In J. Swann, R. Pope & R. Carter (Eds.), *Creativity in language & learning: The state of the art* (pp 1-22). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Robinson, K. (2011). *Out of our minds: Learning to be creative. (2nd Ed)* Chichester UK: Capstone.
- Smith, J. K. & Smith, L. F. (2006). Educational creativity. In R. J. Sternberg & J. C. Kaufman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of creativity* (pp 250 - 264) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spolin, V. (1984). *Theater games for the classroom: A teacher's handbook*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Sternberg R. J. (2006). The nature of creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*. 18 (1), 87-98.
- Sternberg, R. J. & The Rainbow Project Collaborators. (2006). The rainbow project: Enhancing the SAT through assessments of analytical, practical and creative skills. *Intelligence* 34, 321-350.
- Swale, J. (2009). *Drama games: For classrooms and workshops*. London: Nick Hern Books.
- Torrance, E. P. (1966). *Torrance test of creative thinking: Technical norms manual*. Lexington MA: Personnel Press.
- Torrance, E. P. (1993). Understanding creativity: Where to start? *Psychological Inquiry*, 4 (3), 232-234.

Beyond Roleplay: Simulation and RPG for Language Learning

David Kluge

Nanzan Junior College, Nanzan University

klugenanzan@gmail.com

Abstract

Roleplay is a popular activity that many EFL writers recommend, and many EFL teachers also agree that it has great promise. However, roleplay is not often used in EFL classes for several reasons, among them the spotty success rate of the activity. In addition, even if the roleplay is successful, there are doubts about the language learning that results from the one-off, stand-alone roleplay activity. This paper suggests a possible alternative: simulation/RPG (roleplaying game), sometimes known as live RPG, and gives some indications on how to implement it in the EFL classroom. It gives suggestions on how to insure a higher success rate for the basic roleplay activity, and then recommends expanding the idea of roleplay into the simulation/RPG activity to allow for extension of the English-using simulated world, elaboration of the students' selected roles, and expansion of the language learning experience.

Introduction

Jason White in *Mask & Gavel Vol.1* wrote on the value of using roleplays in language teaching, first explaining the differences among the terms simulation, roleplay, and improvisation, and then suggesting some roleplaying activities (White, 2012). This article looks into the same areas but ends at a different place—roleplaying is considered a good activity (albeit spotty in success rates), but often there is something missing in the connection between roleplaying and language learning. This article suggests an alternative: the simulation/RPG (roleplaying game), sometimes known as live RPG.

Definition of Roleplay

What is roleplay? H. D. Brown (2001) defines roleplay as “ a) giving a role to one or more members of a group, and b) assigning a purpose or objective that participants must accomplish” (p.183). Tompkins (1998) defines simulation as being like roleplaying, but more complex, and often including roleplaying. RPG (role playing game) is a game where the characters can be involved in a roleplay either live (live

RPG), as a boardgame (like Dungeons and Dragons), or digitally as computer software or online. All use roleplay as the basis.

Using Roleplays in EFL Classrooms

Many teachers who write about roleplay in the classroom strive to show why roleplays are useful, and do a good job at it. However, why is roleplay not a central part of every oral communication class? Eric Bray, author of the popular roleplaying textbook *Moving on with English*, states very clearly the problem with using roleplay in the language classroom. He writes, "doing a roleplay can elicit excitement as well as fear in the hearts of students and teachers alike. Why? Because unlike more controlled language-learning activities, roleplays can either be a lot of fun or fail miserably" (2010, p. 13). This possibility of "failing miserably" makes roleplay a high risk activity for teachers. This brings up two questions:

1. What can cause roleplays to fail?
2. How can teachers insure that roleplays are successful?

Bray gives some indication of why roleplay fails in Japanese EFL classes: "Japanese students may opt for silence rather than publicly make errors. Conversely, if their ability level is high, their silence may be due to a reticence to shine and stand out from their peers." In addition, roleplays are not a usual part of Japanese EFL classes, so students may not be used to doing them. Actually, the answers to the two questions are related. There are suggested criteria for doing roleplays, and if these criteria are ignored, the roleplay is apt to fail. Starting with a basic criteria, according to White, "The most successful role-play activities will be those that stimulate student interest and also connect with familiar settings." (White, 2012, p. 36). Bray, in a very practical article, includes this advice:

1. Take into consideration cultural factors.
2. Take into consideration language learning experiences and ability level.
3. Insure that students are initially successful to lay the groundwork for later activities.
4. Prepare the students before the roleplay:
 - a. Start with discussions with students (topic, details, moving of classroom furniture to create scene, etc.)
 - b. Have students do creative projects related to roleplays (make a menu for a restaurant roleplay).
 - c. Give students an overview of the roleplay (situation, roles, problem, and useful language).
5. Have a student act as manager/supervisor outside of the roleplay.
6. Include a problem.
7. Encourage the use of body language.
8. Have students use props.
9. The teacher should give supervision and feedback.
10. Encourage creativity.
11. Encourage stubbornness. (Japanese students tend to quickly compromise which quickly ends the roleplay, so encouraging them not to compromise quickly makes for longer, more complex, and more interesting roleplays.)
12. Encourage students to take or create challenging roles.
13. Repeat the roleplay for more language practice and for better roleplays.
14. The teacher should join in.

15. Let students create the roleplays.
16. Do a final feedback session with the whole class.
17. Video record the roleplays.
18. Have students reflect on results.

One problem with roleplays is the same problem with all EFL activities—they finish, the students go on to the next activity, and the lessons of the previous activity are forgotten.

If teachers follow these suggested criteria, their roleplays are more likely to be successful.

However, even when the roleplay activity is successful, does this mean that language learning is taking place or is happening in the most effective way? Not necessarily. One problem with roleplays is the same problem with all EFL activities—they finish, the students go on to the next activity, and the lessons of the previous activity are forgotten. One possible solution is to extend the roleplay over a longer period of time. This possible solution is described below.

Beyond Roleplays: Simulation/RPG

Simulation/RPG (also called live RPG) is one way to extend the roleplay activity. Scarcella and Crookall (1990) discuss simulation and second language acquisition using three learning theories:

1. Students are exposed to large quantities of comprehensible input in the simulation
2. Students are actively involved in the activity
3. Students have positive attitudes about the activity. (described in Krish, 2001)

The simulation/RPG could run over the course of a month, a semester, or a year. Unlike roleplays, with which students have little experience, RPGs (roleplaying games) are very popular among Japanese students, so there should be considerable interest in this kind of activity.

Although some RPGs are inappropriate for language teaching, such as the shooting games, battle games, or games like Resident Evil, known as Biohazard in Japan (although students may enjoy playing zombies), there are some simulations that would be very appropriate. One such type of appropriate simulation would be similar to the Simcity computer game series. In Simcity, one player becomes mayor of a city, and tries to create a successful city by making good decisions. The decisions have consequences that are determined by the software.

To make this computer simulation into an interesting EFL activity, rather than one player, all students in the class become players in the simulation. Each student creates his or her own character and develops the character's life story over the span of the simulation.

There are two models of simulations, the convergent model and the divergent model described in this table (Tompkins, 1998):

Convergent model	Divergent model
-----	-----
"This is the problem; How shall we solve it?"	This is the situation; What will we do?"
The action has a "past."	The action takes place "on stage."
Roles are given in detail.	Roles have no constraints.
The organizer processes the action.	No formal steps or sequences.
Focus on "what will happen?"	Focus on what the players do.

The convergent model is more focused and is more restricted in the roles and goals. The divergent model is more free form with less constraints.

Implementing RPGs in Language Teaching

How does a teacher implement simulations in the classroom? Cummings and Genzel (1990) state that the first step in designing a simulation is to decide upon game criteria. To help with this, it would be good to keep in mind Skehan's (1998) four criteria for task-based instruction: meaning is primary; there is a goal which needs to be worked towards; the activity is outcome-evaluated; and there is a real-world relationship. (cited in Tompkins, 1998) The possible role of learners in simulations can be active, having control over the situation, roles, and direction of the simulation, according to Scarcella and Oxford's (1992) "tapestry approach" (cited in Tompkins, 1998).

It would be too difficult to jump from the typical EFL classroom activities straight to simulation/RPG. It is a good idea to follow much of the advice that Bray gives to prepare Japanese students for roleplaying (see above). When the class gets to the actual simulation, they can also do the activity in stages. The first stage could follow the convergent model, with more things decided by the teacher. At a later stage or at higher levels of student competence and experience, the freer form in the divergent model could be used. In this way, students go from good, but short roleplays, extend them to restricted convergent model simulation/RPG, and at some point move to the divergent model. At this point students would have more freedom in creating the parameters of the simulation and their roles, and where the language use is more free, more natural—the goal of most EFL conversation classes.

Conclusion

Doing simulations/RPGs may be new for teachers and may be a little difficult to implement, but there are so many possible rewards. As Falk and Davenport (2004) state about live RPGs as games:

Live role-playing (LRP) games stand as powerful metaphorical models for the various digital and ubiquitous forms of entertainment that gather under the term pervasive games. Offering what can be regarded as the holy grail of interactive entertainment – the fully immersive experience. (p. 127)

Their terms, “pervasive games” and “the fully immersive experience” sound like descriptions of excellent language teaching activities. Falk and Davenport (2004, p. 127) go on to describe simulation/RPGs as “emergent, improvised, collaboratively and socially created, and have the immediacy of personal experience.” This also sounds like the kind of activity that language teachers are searching for.

This article is just an indication of a new direction in implementing roleplay in the language classroom. Obviously, more concrete steps need to be delineated to make simulation/RPGs easy to use in EFL classes, and more likely to be successful language learning activities. In addition, commercial text materials need to be developed that will make the procedure easier to understand by both teacher and students, and will make simulation\RPGs as ubiquitous in the EFL classroom as the digital RPGs are in Japanese society.

References

- Bray, E. (2010). Doing role-play successfully in Japanese language classrooms. *The Language Teacher* 34(2), 13-18.
- Brown, H.D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. 5th ed. White Plains: Pearson.
- Crookall, D., & Oxford, R. L. (1990). Linking language learning and simulation/gaming. In D. Crookall & R. L. Oxford (Eds.), *Simulation, gaming, and language learning* (pp. 3-24). New York: Newbury House.
- Cummings, M. G., & Genzel, R. B. (1990). Simulation/game design and adaptation. In D. Crookall & R. L. Oxford (Eds.), *Simulation, gaming, and language learning* (pp. 67-72). New York: Newbury House.

- Falk, J. & Davenport, G.(2004). Live role-playing games: Implications for pervasive gaming. *Entertainment Computing – ICEC 2004. Lecture Notes in Computer Science Volume 3166*. Springer Berlin / Heidelberg, pp. 127-138.
- Krish, P. (2001). A role-play activity with distance learners in an English language classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal* 7(7). Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Krish-RolePlay.html>
- Ladousse, G. P. (1987). *Role play*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Scarcella, R. & Crookall, D. (1990). Simulation/gaming and language acquisition. In D. Crookall & R. L. Oxford (Eds.), *Simulation, gaming, and language learning* (pp. 223-230). New York: Newbury House.
- Skehan, P. (1998). Task based instruction. In Grabe, W. (Ed.), *Annual review of applied linguistics* (pp. 268-286). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tompkins, P. (1998). Role playing/simulation. *The Internet TESL Journal*. Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Tompkins-RolePlaying.html>
- White, J. (2012). Role-play ideas for the EFL classroom. *Mask & Gavel Vol. 1*, pp. 34-37.

My View

Judging Speech Contests: Rating Scales and Common Sense

James Venema

james.venema@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper discusses the judging of English speeches contests in Japan. The paper begins by discussing some of the factors that might affect the reliability scores in a speech contest including the complex relationship between three factors: specific performances, the rating scales of a contest, and the judges' interpretation of both. Two kinds of validity were discussed: face validity and construct validity. While testing experts have tended to de-emphasize face validity, it is critical in a public event such as a speech contest. While there is very little literature on a theoretical construct for evaluating speech contests, speech contest organizers do make critical construct decisions when constructing rating scales that will affect the rating of speeches. The paper concludes with some practical suggestions for teachers who may be asked to participate as judges in English speech contests in Japan.

Introduction

In a country such as Japan where the predominant stereotypes are of a more reserved and reticent culture, it is somewhat surprising to find that English speech contests remain quite popular. A Google search turns up dozens of high school, junior high school, children's, and even English teacher speech contests. I have been participating as a judge in four different annual speech contests for university, high school, and junior high school students over the last 10 years just in the Nagoya area. In preparation for these contests students will have spent many intense hours writing and rehearsing the speeches, typically with considerable input and support from teachers. Winning or placing high in the contest represents success not only for the students and their families, but also for teachers and schools. There is, therefore, considerable pressure on the judges

as they choose the winners. For the purpose of clarity and to ensure some kind of judging standard among different judges, these contests typically rely on rating scales. Of course, speech contest rating scales will differ widely from contest to contest, and the judges themselves may have had very little or no input into these scales or training in how to interpret them. This raises issues regarding the reliability and validity of the judging process.

In this paper I will not address all the issues of judging speech contests. Instead, I will begin with a brief look at general reliability and validity concerns and conclude with some practical suggestions for judging speech contests in Japan.

Research on oral English rating scales: reliability and validity

Two critical considerations in any kind of test are reliability and validity. While there is very little research on these issues with regards to evaluating speech contests there is a lot of research on general oral English tests. Judging a speech at an English speech contest, where English is not the mother tongue of the participants, is similar in many ways to the task of test writers and assessors in assessing an oral communicative act in English as a second language.

Reliability

Reliability is “a measure of the degree to which a test gives consistent results”. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 454). A reliable assessment of a speech contest would be consistent across judges and over time (such as if the speeches were recorded on video). One way in which the assessment of a speech differs from most language tests is that it is an overt test of a given performance. Judges need not concern themselves with extraneous factors that may affect the measurement of some innate ability. An evaluation of the performance itself suffices. While this may simplify the measurement process, it by no means makes evaluating speeches simple or error free. Any final score the judge arrives at is the product of complex and often unpredictable interactions among three variables: a given judge, a given performance, and the rating scales. In order to untangle this complex relationship a number of questions need to be addressed:

Any final score the judge arrives at is the product of complex and often unpredictable interactions among three variables: a given judge, a given performance, and the rating scales.

1. To what extent did the rating scales accurately represent and thus fairly evaluate a series of speeches? This may be a more important question than speech organizers would like to recognize. How many rating scales allow for the importance of humour, apparent sincerity, or timeliness? Does this mean these aspects should be ignored by judges? Can judges be expected to tune out such factors not included in rating scales? On the other hand, a comprehensive list of all possible factors that might be important in evaluating speeches would quickly prove unwieldy and would introduce numerous elements not relevant to any single given speech. After all, not every speech need incorporate humour.
2. To what extent did judges agree on their interpretation of the rating scales? For example, do different judges agree on what constitutes effective and appropriate ‘facial expressions’, ‘gestures’, or ‘intonation’ - factors often included in rating scales? Reliability between judges (inter-rater reliability) will be determined by the judges’ interpretation of aspects of the rating scales vis-à-vis given performances.
3. To what extent did judges agree in the weight given to different parts of the rating scales? Were judges attending to the same aspects of the speech and rating scales? Given the serious attention demands on judges, and the practical necessity for cognitive shortcuts, there can be no guarantees that judges are attending to the same aspects of speeches when arriving at decisions. Rating scales including too many different rating categories and factors can inadvertently compound the problem by overwhelming judges and forcing them to be selective in what they attend to.

The questions above apply to intra-rater reliability (a range of scores given by a single judge) as well as inter-rater reliability. After having judged 25 different performances over a long day of speeches, I would hesitate to state with any confidence that there would be no significant variation in my scores upon judging the speeches on video a week later.

Validity

Bachman (1990) writes that the essential concern in validity is demonstrating that “the interpretations and uses we make of test scores are valid.” (p. 236) Thus validity, as a concept, is inextricably intertwined with the purpose of a test. In a speech contest, the critical task of the judges is not to provide performance scores of all participants, but to sift through the performances to rank them and make decisions on winning speeches. Any numerical scores arrived at on individual speeches, and their components, is incidental to the ranking of speeches, most importantly the ranking of the top speeches that are chosen as winners or runner-ups. (The exception here would be speech contests where judges are asked to provide individualized feedback to all participants – a request that does occur at speech contests in Japan.) Unsurprisingly, the concept of validity has proven to be a notoriously slippery one. While many testing experts such as Bachman (op cited) have argued for a unitary concept of validity, different types of validity have been identified, and I will deal with two that I believe are particularly relevant in a discussion of speech contests, face validity and construct validity.

Face Validity

Face validity, also known as surface validity, is “the degree to which a test appears to measure the knowledge or abilities it claims to measure, based on the subjective judgment of an observer.” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 196) The words ‘appears’, ‘subjective judgment’ and ‘observer’ are revealing. The decisions made by judges on speech contests would be valid to the extent that observers believe them to be so. While testing experts have tended to scoff at such a process of validation ‘by faith’, it is safe to say that, for most organizers of speech contests, face validity is the primary concern. After all, speech contests are public events with

For most organizers of speech contests, face validity is the primary concern. After all, speech contests are public events with public relations goals at least as important, if not more so, than educational goals.

public relations goals at least as important, if not more so, than educational goals. The absence of face validity among participants and audience, including teachers and family, would be a serious blow to the event organizers, and frustrating or discouraging to participants. To augment face validity, the expertise of speech contest judges is often subtly boosted. Teachers with university affiliations are preferred. The judges themselves are often very visible during introduction and award ceremonies, sitting in places of prestige. In addition, for English speech contests, native speakers are common. Of course, being a university English professor, or a native speaker for that matter, hardly guarantees any expertise in judging English speech contests. In fact, most judges in the speech contests I have taken part in have never participated in a speech contest (myself included), nor have they received any special training in evaluating speech contests.

Construct Validity

Construct validity is the degree to which test scores, including rating scales, are based on a coherent theoretical construct. However, it is probably asking a bit much of speech contest organizers to do what I cannot find in the literature: provide a complete theoretical concept of what constitutes a good speech. Still, event organizers, whether consciously or not, are influenced by at least partially developed constructs when developing rating scales. Take for example the weighting of two annual speech contests that I have been taking part in. In one, pronunciation is given a 40% weighting and content 30%. In the other, content constitutes 40% of the final scores while pronunciation accounts for only 20%. The former is very consciously an EFL speech contest, while the latter is more a communicative event. These constructs can have serious implications, intended or not. For example, in the former event where there are frequent participants who have lived abroad for significant lengths of time, the weighting given to pronunciation makes it very difficult for a student who has not lived abroad to win. Ironically, a speech contest with an apparent EFL focus has weighted the rating scales in favor of students who are nearer towards having English as a mother tongue.

As mentioned earlier when discussing reliability, there can be no certainty that judges are even using the same constructs for relatively simple concepts such as ‘pronunciation’, ‘intonation’, or ‘gestures’. In fact,

in the absence of a comprehensive theoretical construct, and rater training, we can assume that there are significant discrepancies between judges.

Further issues with validity can occur when qualities of a good speech are not reflected in the rating scales judges use. After all, I have yet to encounter rating scales that incorporate humor or sincerity, both of which I believe can be important components of a good speech. While rigorously following rating scales guidelines should help improve reliability, the same cannot be said for validity when important aspects of speeches are deliberately ignored by judges simply because they are omitted from the weighting scales.

Other Factors Affecting Reliability and Validity

A series of (albeit dated) studies on the effect of speaking order on the scores of participants in speech contests in the United States highlight how random factors can have a significant effect on the scores given to speech contest participants. Knowler (1940) and Becker (1953) found that participants who speak later in speech contests tend to place higher than participants who speak earlier. While there was no research done on the reason for these findings, one possible explanation I found from my own experiences is that judges may be reluctant to score participants too highly early on in a contest. If a judge does so and then encounters subsequent speakers they feel are better, he or she may have little scoring room left to rate these differences.

Of course, a number of other factors can influence speech contest scores including extraneous sounds, inadvertent repetition of themes between participants, a selectively responsive audience, and the ratio of male to female speakers, just to name a few.

Judging Speech Contests and Common Sense: Some Suggestions

Thus far in the paper I have discussed reliability and validity issues of speech contests. In spite of varying standards, I do believe such contests can be legitimate performance events, while simultaneously providing a valuable educational experience. What follows are some suggestions for teachers who may find themselves serving as judges in speech contests.

Read the scales ahead of time

Organizers of speech contests will often send the rating scales to judges ahead of the contest. Read them carefully so that you are familiar with them on the day of the contest. Not only will this reduce processing time during speeches where the cognitive load is high, it may also help clarify where the scales are limited and other factors need to be taken into account when judging speeches. Where the scales are not provided ahead of time, judges would be advised to come early and spend some time reading them. In the (presumably rare) event where no scales are provided judges would be advised to come prepared with their own general scoring scheme and discuss it with other judges in advance. In my own experience three broad parameters can be used for a variety of English speech contests: 'content', 'delivery', and 'English ability'.

Recognize the difference between the printed and oral word

Speech contest organizers often ask participants to turn in a copy of their speeches ahead of time, and these speeches are sometimes passed on to judges to read in advance of the contest. Where requested, do read them ahead of time. Indeed, this is another means by which to reduce the cognitive load at the contest. However, resist the impulse, or request from organizers, to come to a final 'content' decision in advance of hearing the speech. After all, a speech and an essay are two very different things indeed. Judging a speech before the event is much like judging music by its score before actually hearing it.

Follow the rating scales provided (up to a point...)

Every speech contest I have taken part in so far in Japan has been well-organized affair in which every aspect of the contest, including the rating scales, has undergone the process of 'hansei' or some form of reflection and evaluation. Respect that, and work to the best of your ability within the boundaries of the rating scales provided. In addition, judges will typically be working as a team, and the scales provide the best opportunity for some reliability and transparency. However, as already noted in this paper, even the best rating scales have limitations, particularly with regards to specific, perhaps unique, performances. Where you feel a participant deserves credit beyond the numerical restrictions the rating scales overtly include, find a way to

grant him or her credit in the categories provided. This is not only fair to the participant - it may also have the effect of encouraging creativity in the long run.

Let the numbers decide

The number of judges in speech contests in which I have participated has ranged from three to seven. Typically, the organizers will collect the scoring sheets and tabulate the total scores as well as individual scores given by all judges. Unless there are good reasons not to do so (such as an overlooked infraction of rules or an error in reading the judges' scoring sheets) accept the fact that the judges will almost never agree completely and make the decision on contest winners on the basis of total scores. The alternative could be a drawn out argument in which no one is satisfied and everyone is kept waiting.

Give yourself enough room for a range of scores

One of the most difficult dilemmas I have found myself in was one of my own making. I gave a near perfect score to an early speech before subsequently encountering several speeches that were considerably better. Similarly, in another contest, I scored performances in a final round of speeches with the same generosity I showed in an earlier round thus creating a large cluster of scores at the top. When the scores were averaged out over 7 judges, my own opinion on the winning speech (and I had a clear winner in mind) was lost due to insufficient variation in the range of scores. In general, judges should avoid the inclination to be overly generous in their scoring as this will have a real effect on the final range of the scores. Of course, calibrating the range of scores before having heard a number of speeches can be extremely difficult. Where contests allow, it is a good idea for judges to confer after a number of speeches, both to ensure that there is sufficient range, and to make sure that judges are not differing too widely in their scoring.

Credit great speeches with great scores

In many contests judges will find that, for some speeches, the whole is more than the sum of the parts. One of the dangers of compartmentalized rating scales is that a judge may be too busy evaluating trees to see the forest. Speeches are inherently communicative events, and judges should also wear the hat of audience. Where a speech moves you, find a way to score it accordingly so that your opinion will be reflected in the final tally of scores. Where organizers are open to the idea I have also encouraged them to provide the opportunity for a holistic score which would take into account an overall impression of the performance.

Be prepared to give feedback

Frequently judges may be asked to give some final comments before introducing the winners. This can be a rather daunting experience as the 'expert' suddenly finds him/herself in front of an audience giving a short speech. Take a deep breathe, try to relax, and speak honestly. Perhaps ironically, the best received feedback I have given included the frank admission that the judges did not perfectly agree. Of course, also included was some positive feedback on all the performances and some gentle specifics on how speeches could be improved. Do keep in mind the difficulty of what the participants have done: they have given a public speech in a second language. After all, how many native English-speaking readers would feel comfortable giving a speech in Japanese? On one occasion (probably rare), I was challenged by a participant who was disappointed in not making the final round after having finished runner-up at a previous contest. If this should happen, recognize the very real disappointment of a participant and avoid getting defensive. In this case, I was able to more or less neutralize a potentially embarrassing situation, two of the participant's teachers and a number of contest organizers being present, by recognizing her disappointment and pointing out that no speech is exactly the same at two different contests and that the participants and judges are also different.

Conclusion

English speech contests will remain popular events in Japan and readers may find themselves called on to participate as judges. While I believe it is important to recognize the very real reliability and validity issues in rating speeches at such contests, I also believe that they are legitimate events, both as contests and as educational opportunities. In my own experience, judging speeches has proven to be a valuable process of

clarifying and adapting my own views on what constitutes a good speech. In the end, each judge will probably bring slightly different approaches and opinions to evaluating speeches, but this imprecision, while occasionally frustrating to speech contest participants and organizers looking for clear-cut guidelines, probably also better reflects the complex process of speech-making in the real world. The attempt to influence a heterogeneous audience with words will always be more an art than a science and, consequently, judging speeches will also be so.

The attempt to influence a heterogeneous audience with words will always be more an art than a science and, consequently, judging speeches will also be so.

References

- Bachman, L. (1990). *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Becker, S. (1953). The ordinal position effect. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 39 (2), pp. 217-219
- Knower, F. (1940). A study of rank-order methods of evaluating performances in speech contests, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 24, pp. 633-644.
- Richards, J. & Schmidt R. (2002). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, London, Pearson Education Limited.

Project & Conference

Drama and the Hokuriku University ESS Club

James Matchett

Hokuriku University

matchettja@yahoo.com

Abstract

For several years I served as advisor to the English Speaking Society (ESS) club at Hokuriku University (HU). During that time, beginning in 2002 or 2003 and continuing until 2009, the ESS club took part in a drama contest held in December every year. The purpose of this article is to describe the process the club went through to prepare for the contest and my role in helping them prepare. The plays are summarized for the benefit of those who might have interest in them. Finally, a few students give their comments about what being in the drama contest meant to them.

Introduction

On December 27, 2009 the 20th and last Hokuriku English Speaking Society Association (HESSA) drama contest to date was held in Niigata. HESSA is a group of university ESS clubs in the Hokuriku region located in Fukui, Ishikawa, Toyama and Niigata Prefectures. What follows is a summary of the HU ESS club participation in that event. All student names given are pseudonyms in order to protect student privacy.

The Process

The process during the eight years or so that the HU ESS club took part in the HESSA drama contest was fairly constant. Every year the students would choose a play in Japanese, something they found on the internet.

They would then pool their talents and translate the play into English. They did not choose already published plays in English, as other ESS clubs I was associated with did. Usually I would get the play script in early October and then it became my job to correct and polish the English so that it became comprehensible. I didn't always make dialogue sound like native English; sometimes I left the lines pretty much as the students had translated them. I didn't want students to get the feeling that too much was being changed, so I often accepted dialogue that was not exactly the way native English speakers would phrase it but could be understood.

Once we had a completed script, students themselves chose roles. I never got involved in that even though I didn't always agree that the best person had been selected for a particular part. They also chose a director and technicians to work on lighting, sound effects, set design and costumes. In the early going, practice would be held two or three times a week and I tried to come at least once. During practice, my main role was to correct English pronunciation and intonation. However, I also helped with stage directions, blocking and improving dramatic impact by the way they said their lines. Sometimes the students would ask me to record their part so they would have a model. As the date for the contest got closer, the number of practices per week increased and I tried to come as often as I could. Unfortunately, I was never able to see any of the presentations at the HESSA drama contest because I always had other responsibilities on weekends when the contest would take place.

2005: The Ghost of Suzuno-so

Actually, the first year the HU ESS club took part in the HESSA drama contest was either 2002 or 2003. As I don't have any records and my memory is unclear, I can't write much about what happened in those first two or three years.

The play the HU ESS club chose in 2005, "The Ghost of Suzuno-so," is about a girl who runs away from home and goes to Tokyo so she can be independent. However, there is a ghost in the room the girl rents. After an initial scare, the girl and the ghost form a relationship and she gets help dealing with her father, who wants her to return home. The play, which is a mix of comedy and drama, has some good comic interludes, especially in scenes between the father and the landlady and between the father and the ghost, who he mistakes as his daughter.

The 2005 group was very talented and did a great job of translation. Many lines were written in perfect English that needed no change at all. Although I had high hopes for this group because of their very good English ability, the play failed to garner any awards, acting or otherwise. Though the play has comic elements, it is not really a comedy and doesn't totally succeed as a drama either. Also when the students decided to change the ending to have the group sing "Happy Birthday" to the ghost, whose birthday it happened to be, the play was further weakened as the rewritten ending lacked much dramatic impact.

2006: Murder at the Tachibana Wedding Hall

"Murder at the Tachibana Wedding Hall," the entry for 2006, is a murder mystery of sorts. On the day of her wedding, a bride collapses. It is not known if she is alive or dead or who might want her dead. The groom, the bride's sister, and the two wedding hall owners are joined by the groom's mysterious friend, who asks a lot of questions in an effort to get at the truth.

The mystery to me is why the ESS club chose this play, which is rather gloomy and morbid. It involves an on-stage murder scene in which the victim gets bashed over the head by two very petite and demure young Japanese ladies, and no prize was forthcoming. However this was the beginning of a long association with three students, all Pharmacy majors. They included Keiko Ohara, one of the Tachibana sisters, Ryo Ikeda, the groom's friend who turns out to be a police inspector, and Shota Ichino, who never acted but took care of lighting and sound effects for this play as well as the next three (all names are pseudonyms). In spite of an inauspicious start, better things were in store for them.

2007: The Sawada Rangers

The 2007 play, “The Sawada Rangers,” takes place at a high school just before the school festival, which is being organized by four student council members. The irresponsible and mischievous president, Daisuke Sawada, dreams up a play about the Sawada Rangers, a group of heroes who save the world. He wants the student council members to play it with him. Two of the council members are easily persuaded to take part, but things get sticky with Nozomi, a more serious girl. When Daisuke makes a mistake by putting a microphone in the student council room and Nozomi finds out her private conversation has been broadcast to the whole school, he finds himself in big trouble with a very angry Nozomi.

At last the ESS club found a play worthy of their talent, full of witty dialogue and comic action. The staging, lighting, set design and timing all worked well. The students themselves thought up some nice touches to add dramatic appeal, for example having someone ride a bicycle across the stage with the moon in the background, reminiscent of a scene from the movie E.T. The result was a first prize award for best play. Keiko Ohara picked up the best actress award as Nozomi and Ryo Ichikawa, who played one of the student council members, was chosen best actor. The Hokuriku University ESS Club could finally celebrate their success.

2008: The Super Butler Audition

In 2008’s play, entitled “The Super Butler Audition”, the mistress of the Ninomiya Mansion has kicked out all the staff of the house except for the head butler and a maid. They decide to hold a super butler audition to find a new helper. The three applicants include an ugly boy by the name of Tetsuya from a poor family, a gay bar owner, and an elderly foreigner. After the winner is declared, the mistress finds herself in great peril, but homely Tetsuya comes to the rescue. Ryo took the part of a former butler of the house, who is in fact masquerading as the old foreigner. HU combined with the Kanazawa University (KU) ESS club so the cast included members of both clubs. A Chinese student played the mistress of the house, making it an international cast for the first time.

Unfortunately, the HU ESS club could not replicate their success from the year before and they did not get any major awards. The play, a mixture of comedy and drama, was not very strong and more problems developed when one of the cast members did not show up regularly for practice. Some casting and staging problems surfaced as well. Keiko, though she is far from homely, played poor ugly Tetsuya. In addition, the club members decided to put the gay bar owner in a dress in an effort to enhance the comic effect, but that just made things more strange than funny.

2009: The Melancholy of Café Meguresu

2009 marked the 20th anniversary of the HESSA drama contest. The title of this year’s production was “The Melancholy of Café Meguresu.” This café attracts some strange customers. On this day, employees of the shop have to deal with a crazy girlfriend, who wants to kill her wayward boyfriend when she finds he has been cheating on her, and a reluctant robber who gets caught up in the fray. The result is hilarious mayhem.

Another joint effort of the HU and KU ESS clubs, this was an extremely fun and successful

production, claiming three major awards, including best play. One student of KU got the best actor prize



“Die, you cheater!” shouts the girlfriend as she threatens her wayward boyfriend with her knife. The reluctant robber looks on at left.

playing the robber, and a Chinese exchange student at HU nailed down the best actress award as the crazy girlfriend. She was not so impressive in practice but really came into her own during a performance at HU for students and faculty, which I was able to see.

2010: Caramel Flavored Love But No Contest

Unfortunately, some universities left HESSA after 2008, so there were only two plays in the 2009 drama contest, the one from HU and KU collaboration and another from the Niigata University ESS club. As a result, no contest was held the following year. The HU club had given me some short plays they had translated. I took one of them entitled “Caramel Flavored Love,” and expanded it in the hope in they might be able to use it sometime in the future. However, the drama contest was not revived in 2011, so the one in 2009 may have been the last. The play is about a candy maker who finds love in a coffee shop while drinking caramel lattes with a girl he meets there. The situation becomes complicated because the girl’s sister is in love with the same guy and he has plans to study for a year in France, a fact he doesn’t want to tell her.

Student Comments

Here are comments from a few students. Keiko Ohara said she gained a lot of things, how to work in a team, how to get people to laugh, and how to identify with the heroine. She also said memorizing English sentences helped boost her confidence in English and added, “Drama was a very nice experience.” Ryo Ishikawa said that at first he felt uneasy not having good English or experience in the theater, but in spite of the difficulty, he felt a sense of accomplishment when it was all finished. Other students had similar impressions.

Memorizing lines in another language is no easy task, but there are definite rewards to taking part in English drama contests, including a sense of accomplishment, English improvement and, last, but certainly not least, enjoyment.

Concluding Remarks

From these comments, two things are clear; memorizing lines in another language is no easy task, but there are definite rewards to taking part in English drama contests, including a sense of accomplishment, English improvement and, last, but certainly not least, enjoyment. It is unfortunate that the HESSA drama contest came to an end. Hopefully it can be revived some time in the future.

As for the plays described above, they are available to anyone who has interest and can be had by sending an e-mail to the author. It is his hope that they will be put on the SD&D web page. It would be nice to have a library of plays there for the benefit of the members of this SIG whenever they need something to put on a show.

SDD PanSIG 2013 Conference Report

Peter Quinn

Takushoku University

peterquinn40@hotmail.com

The 2013 JALT PanSIG was held from May 18th to May 19th in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture. The venue was in the spacious R building of Nanzan University's Nagoya Campus. This was the 12th annual PanSIG Conference, whose goal is to showcase the activities of the JALT SIGs and to stimulate more interaction among and between SIGs. Twenty six SIGs came together in innovative ways to make this a very successful and enlightening Pan-SIG.

This year the SIGs were joined by the JALT Peer Support Group (PSG). The PSG gave the featured presentation *Writing for academic publication: Participation and collaboration*. This presentation was very well received judging by the number of questions asked by the audience. The PSG also gave a shorter presentation about joining the PSG as a Peer-Reader. According to the latest information the PSG is growing quickly and has gained many new Peer-Readers.

There were two plenary speeches. *Exploring practitioner perspectives on collaboration, co-operation and community in the language classroom* by Judith Hanks was the first speech, and *Ten rules for doing effective research* by Robert Croker was the second. Both of these speeches were very well received by the attendees.

The theme of the conference was *From Many, One: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Community*. In the spirit of this theme, SIGs joined in partnership with other SIGs and created joint programs. Each partnership was given a separate room. The keystones of these co-created programs were the PanSIG forums. Each partnership hosted a forum with a single theme of interest to all of the partnering SIGs. The SDD SIG united with the Critical Thinking SIG and the Literature in Language Teaching SIG to co-host the CT LiLT SDD Forum. The theme of this forum was *Creativity, critical thinking and language learning*. Creativity featured in each presentation in this forum. David Gann (Critical Thinking) discussed critical and creative thinking, Dawn Kobayashi (Speech, Drama and Debate) talked about levels of creativity and drama techniques, Jane Nakagawa (Literature in Language Teaching) explained the relationship between multiple intelligence theory and creativity, Tara McIlroy (Literature in Language Teaching) discussed

originality and creativity. The Q&A session of this forum included a lively debate about the nature of critical thinking and creative thinking.

The two words that best describe the SDD presentations are "Useful" and "Interactive." All of the presentations were very practical, focusing on things teachers can do in the classroom to enhance their students learning. Roehl Sybing showed the attendees some beautiful examples of his students' storyboard projects in his presentation *From conversation to storytelling: Recycling language across genres*. A passionate case was made for the use of TED Talks in Jay Klaphake's *TEDTalks and TEDx events as project-based learning*. James Venema gave us many "nuggets" of wisdom about the common problems Japanese students have while learning debate in his presentation, *Formal debate and academic writing: Facilitating critical thinking and effective writing*. Mark Brierley Explained how to use technology to support debate in his presentation *Using Moodle to support debating in class*.

The SDD presentations were also incredibly interactive. Enough time was given for discussions with other attendees and Q&A sessions with the presenters. There was an interesting discussion about how to teach students to design effective PowerPoint slides in Terry Fellner's talk *Teaching academic presentation skills to low-level English speakers*. Paul Nehls' presentation *Student feedback on the value of impromptu speeches* sparked a very active Q&A session.

Attendees were invited to engage in improvisation exercises with Dawn Kobayashi who talked about *Improving students' conversation skills with improvisation*. David Kluge welcomed everyone to "David's Boxing Gym" as a part of his presentation on *Performance, Literature, and Critical Thinking*. The most interactive presentation was Aya Kawakami's *Dramatic steps to the L2 world* where the attendees participated in drama activities that went far beyond the usual "roleplaying" activities typically incorporated in ESL classrooms.

The conference was concluded by a Final Panel Discussion about the theme of the conference *From Many, One: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Community*. The plenary speakers Robert Croker and Judith Hanks, JALT President Kevin Cleary, and the audience joined in the lively discussion.

PanSIG 2013 was very successful due to the efforts of the organisers, especially SDD's own David Kluge, who was the conference chair, and the many student volunteers, without whom conferences like this could not function.

Call for Papers for *Mask & Gavel*, the publication of the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG

We are now open for submissions for the second edition of *Mask and Gavel*, a peer-reviewed publication of the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG. We welcome the following kinds of submissions:

1. Research articles on topics connected to the themes of our SIG, speech, drama and debate. (For submission guidelines please refer to the guidelines for the Feature Articles section of *The Language Teacher*.) Submissions for research articles will be read by two referees who will make a decision on whether the article can be accepted for publication, as is or with rewriting.
2. Practical or opinion articles on topics connected to the themes of our SIG. (For submission guidelines please refer to the guidelines for the Reader's Forum section of *The Language Teacher*.)
3. Conference and classroom project reviews. (For submission guidelines please refer to the guidelines for the Conference Reports section of *The Language Teacher*.)

Submission guidelines can be found at <<http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/submissions>>

Submissions should be sent to the editor, James Venema, at james.venema@gmail.com

* *Mask & Gavel* is a peer-reviewed journal and submissions will be sent to two anonymous reviewers from the review board.

