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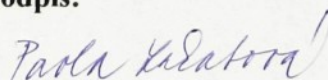
Developing Communicative Skills Through Dramatising

Entwicklung der Sprechfertigkeiten im Englischen mittels dramatischer Aktivitäten

Diplomová práce: 2003-FP-KAJ-105

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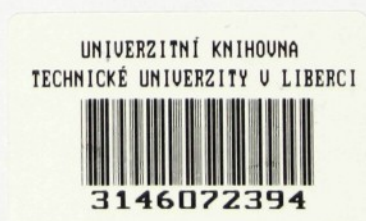


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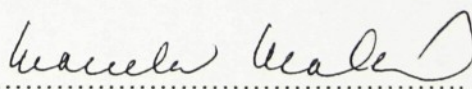
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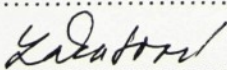
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Zadání diplomové práce

Diplomová práce zahrnuje akademický výzkum a praktické ověření teorie týkající se role dramatických aktivit v rozvoji mluvních dovedností žáka v anglickém jazyce. Začlenění dramatických prvků do výuky je chápáno jako běžný nástroj výuky, doplňující slovní či písemný projev a usnadňující pochopení učební látky.

Zpracování praktického projektu, analýza a interpretace výsledků v uvedené diplomové práci prokáží porozumění metodám analýzy teoretických východisek a jejich kritického zhodnocení a schopnost využití teoretických závěrů při volbě vhodných metod při výuce cizího jazyka. Posouzení efektivnosti teorie a zvolených metodických postupů v praxi dále ukáže schopnost využití evaluace jako nezbytné strategie hodnocení celého výzkumu.

Cílem této diplomové práce je ukázat, že dramatické aktivity vyvolávají potřebu mluveného projevu a tím procvičování jazyka. Pozornost žáka se soustředí na sehrání scénky či role, na simulaci určité situace, nebo na vyřešení problému. Aktivní participace na těchto aktivitách vyžaduje od žáků aby komunikovali, zapojili svou představivost a kreativitu, a tak, téměř nevědomky, rozvíjeli své komunikativní dovednosti v anglickém jazyce.

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Datum 14. 5. 2004

Podpis

Paola Karátová

Anotace

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá dramatickými aktivitami jako nástrojem rozvoje mluvních dovedností žáka v anglickém jazyce. Jejím cílem je ukázat, že dramatické aktivity vyvolávají potřebu mluveného projevu a tím procvičování jazyka. Teoretické výstupy byly testovány u tří studijních skupin různého věku a jazykové úrovně. Praktický projekt byl zaměřen na ověření vhodnosti zvolené metodiky včleněním komunikativních dramatických aktivit do výuky.

Zvolené aktivity motivovaly studenty k aktivní participaci, umožnily prezentovat jejich představivost a tím zvýšily i ochotu komunikovat. Hodnocení praktické části podtrhlo teoretická východiska a prokázalo vhodnost zapojení dramatických aktivit do výuky anglického jazyka.

Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with drama activities which are an apt tool for the foreign language learner's speaking skills development. The aim of this work is to show that drama activities provoke the need of spoken language and, thus, practising it. The theoretical outcomes were tested at three study groups of different age and language level. The practical project was aimed at the verification of correctness of the selected methodology through the implementation of communicative drama activities into the foreign language lessons.

The chosen activities motivated students to participate actively, enabled presentation of their creativity and, hence, increased their willingness to communicate. The evaluation of the practical part highlighted the theoretical bases and confirmed the compatibility of the use of drama activities in EFL teaching.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit den dramatischen Aktivitäten als mit dem Instrument der Entwicklung von den Sprechfertigkeiten des Schülers in der englischen Sprache. Ihr Ziel ist zu zeigen, dass dramatische Aktivitäten das Bedürfnis einer sprachlichen Äußerung und damit auch das Einüben der Sprache hervorrufen. Theoretische Auftritte wurden bei drei Studiengruppen des unterschiedlichen Alters und des Sprachniveaus getestet. Das praktische Projekt war auf die Verifizierung von der Zweckmäßigkeit der gewählten Methodik der Eingliederung von kommunikativen dramatischen Aktivitäten in den Unterricht orientiert.

Die gewählten Aktivitäten motivierten Schüler zur aktiven Partizipation, sie ermöglichten ihr Vorstellungsvermögen zu präsentieren, und damit erhöhten auch ihre Bereitwilligkeit zu kommunizieren. Die Bewertung des praktischen Teils hob die theoretischen Ausgangspunkte hervor und bewies die Zweckmäßigkeit der Eingliederung von dramatischen Aktivitäten in den Unterricht des Englischen.

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I. ACADEMIC PART

A. ENGLISH FOR COMMUNICATION

During the history of teaching foreign languages a lot of different approaches and teaching methods have been developed and applied. However, many of these methods have expanded and faded in popularity because the second language teaching is a dynamic field and approaches concerning it have been changing according to different society and learners' needs. In the 1980's a new wave of interest appeared, the wave which focused on the communicative process in foreign language learning/teaching. This "method" is called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and aims at communication of learners with a native speaker of the second language. Therefore, the main focus lies on listening and speaking skills, together with writing for specific communication purposes and reading of authentic materials. Brown (1987) points out that CLT is "the push toward communication" (p.212) because this method moves "to the point that we are teaching our students to communicate genuinely, spontaneously, and meaningfully in the second language" (p.12).

Since this diploma work deals with learners' speaking abilities and the use of drama activities for their improvement, I will concentrate on oral communicative competence. First, I will give a brief description of what is understood under the term of communicative competence, which is now, as stated by Brown (1987:198), "a household word" in second language research and teaching, and the first and leading term connected with CLT.

1. Communicative Competence

Definition of Communicative Competence

As Bygate (1987) writes, the foreign language teachers' main goal is to prepare students to be able to use the second language for communication, but knowledge is only a part of this process; at the same time, we must also teach a skill. This skill is called communicative competence and can be defined as "...knowledge that enables a person to communicate functionally and interactively" (Brown,1987:199). According to the theorists

Canale and Swain, communicative competence can be divided into four subcategories, or components: grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. The first two subcategories consider the use of the linguistic system and the latter two reflect the functional aspects of communication. In fact, all these components underlie speaking proficiency of the FL learner, and their main characteristics are as the following:

a) Grammatical competence:

This aspect of communicative competence covers "...knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology" (Brown, 1987:199). In order to express meaning, we must be proficient in grammar competence because it allows to use and understand English language structures accurately and swiftly. In short, with regards to speaking in a foreign language, grammatical competence plays a part in the learners' speaking fluency.

b) Discourse Competence:

Besides grammatical competence, learners must also advance discourse competence, which is focused on "intersentential relationships" (Brown, 1987:199). It means that learners need the ability "... to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances" (Brown, 1987:199). That is why, concerning speaking, an effective participation in a conversation does not manage without discourse competence because speakers should know how to utilise discourse markers to indicate cause, contrast, emphasis, show relationships of the ideas, or to take turns in conversation.

c) Sociolinguistic competence:

However, the knowledge of the linguistic system does not give us a guarantee of the effective and correct use of the target language. We must also acquire "...knowledge of sociocultural rules of language and of discourse" (Brown, 1987:200). This competence enables appropriateness in judgements during communication and, thus, helps learners with understanding the social context in which language is used.

d) Strategic competence:

Last, but ,perhaps, the most important component of communicative competence, is strategic competence because it helps us "...to manipulate language in order to meet

communicative goals” (Brown, 1987:200). If we can use this competence, we can balance insufficient knowledge of rules, vocabulary, breakdowns in communication, etc., through repetition, paraphrase, guessing, pauses and avoidance. In short, with reference to speaking, strategic competence is a set of general abilities, for instance, the ability to keep a conversation going, or terminate it, to clear up communication breakdowns and comprehension problems, to avoid problematic topics, or to get attention, which facilitates communication.

On the whole, in order to teach oral communicative competence, we have to bear in mind that the effective speakers should be trained in all of the above mentioned components of communicative competence, and drama activities are one of the best means for improving all of these components in an integrated way.

2. Oral communication

Considering oral communication only a skill of speaking, would be a mistake. Whenever verbal communication occurs, there is a speaker and a listener. Similarly, Byrne (1976:8) defines oral communication as “...a two way process between speaker and listener (or listeners), involving the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding...”. In other words, if we want to teach students how to communicate effectively, we should practise both these skills and make appropriate conditions “...to see that two oral skills are integrated through situations which permit and encourage authentic communication” (Byrne, 1976:10).

Providing that authentic communication is the teacher’s main objective, we should keep in mind that students need a purpose to start talking authentically. If students have a purpose to communicate, they will be focused on a content rather than on the language form which should be used, and that is the main goal in teaching the productive skill of speaking: to provide students with oral fluency. Oral fluency is “...the ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably accurately and without undue hesitation...” (Byrne,1976:9). Therefore, considering spoken fluency, we must train students to use the language to express their own ideas, not only to reproduce or reply.

Consequently, to bring students to this point, we must take every opportunity for speaking in the classroom as Gower suggests (1995). Byrne adds that students need a chance to say something in order to “...see the value and use of what they are learning: to

appreciate language as an instrument to be used rather than as knowledge to be stored away" (Byrne, 1976:78).

In addition, two speaking sub-skills which must be taught to develop oral fluency should be mentioned: accuracy and fluency. Accuracy, on the one hand, focuses on the correct use of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. On the other hand, fluency can be defined as "...the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously" (Gower, 1995:100), and correction is not desired. Both these sub-skills should be in balance during the second language teaching and drama activities allow to set an equilibrium between these two sub-skills.

Finally, to make students communicate truly, we must design communicative activities which will provoke students to take part in them and, thus, get them to speak. According to Harmer (1991:50) we can distinguish several characteristics of communicative activities: "a desire to communicate", "a communicative purpose", "content not form", "variety of language", "no teachers intervention", "no materials control". First, I dealt with purpose and content which is more important than form in the paragraph concerning oral fluency (p.8). Next, communicative activities should arouse in students desire to talk and offer a variety of language, rather than practise only one grammatical structure. Further, the teacher should not interfere by insisting on accuracy or by overcorrecting mistakes and should not restrict students by limiting materials which do not allow the language variety.

In fact, drama activities belong to such communicative activities because they grant all these characteristics and offer another – space for the students' creativity. (For more details, see p.13)

B. DRAMA ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH

From the previous paragraphs we can conclude that drama activities meet students' communicative needs and aim at the development of students' ability to understand and exchange real information. Simultaneously, they stimulate learners' linguistic and functional competence for spontaneous performance and, therefore, are an important type of oral communicative activities.

Further, drama activities can serve as a psychological aid which confidently influences learners' affective side because they have "...a positive effect on second language learning by encouraging the operation of certain psychological factors which facilitate oral communication: heightened self-esteem, motivation, and spontaneity; increased capacity for empathy; lowered sensitivity to rejection" (Richard-Amato, 1988:128). For example, drama activities foster self-esteem in inhibited, hesitant and passive students by breaking the barriers and getting students to participate successfully in motivating activities. That is why, the next paragraph comments on the factors that have an effect on the learners' second language acquisition.

1. Personality/Affective factors

While discussing communicative competence and speaking skills, we should not forget personality factors which can facilitate or impede students' communication, specifically, students' production of the spoken language. As Brown (1987) writes, the affective domain of second language acquisition deals with two aspects. The first one is the intrinsic side of affectivity (personality factors) that contributes to the success of the language learning and that will interest us. The second aspect includes extrinsic (sociocultural) factors which deal with the second language culture. Since the Professional Project is aimed at the learners' affective side and not at foreign language culture, I will not comment on the second aspect.

In particular, the personality factors related to foreign language learning are self-esteem, inhibition, risk-taking, empathy, anxiety, and motivation.

a) Self-esteem:

"...Self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that the individual holds towards himself" (Brown, 1987:101-102). It shows belief in own capabilities for managing particular activities and, thus, influences language learning success as these two factors are interactive. If teachers focus on linguistic goals, as well as on individuality of their students, they can positively affect both these factors.

b) Inhibition:

It is a set of defences which a person builds to protect the ego against affective threats, such as making errors during oral communication. This example illustrates that these defences prevent us from communicating in a foreign language and, thus, restrict effective second language acquisition. As language learning encompasses a lot of forms of estrangement increasing defences, and hence inhibiting language learning, the teacher should try to lower these interpersonal ego barriers, to provide free, successful communication. This can be achieved by creation of purposeful, contextual communicative activities (such as drama activities), and by assuring students that no penalties will be imposed on them for mistakes.

c) Risk-taking:

This term is crucial element of successful foreign language learning. Learners have to be willing to take the risk of being wrong, mistaken and eager to make accurate guesses (Brown,1987). Risk-taking is related to self-esteem because self-confident students are not afraid of experimentation in a foreign language, they are not stressed by a possibility of being laughed at, when talking with mistakes. The teacher has to encourage students to guess, experiment, and appreciate them for risk-taking.

d) Empathy:

It can be characterised "...as the projection of one's own personality into the personality of another in order to understand him or her better" (Brown,1987:107). In other words, there is a need to be able to understand the other person's states, attitudes, affective assumptions, to communicate truly. In addition, non-verbal communication facilitates the process of empathising.

e) Anxiety:

Doubtless, this factor influences second language learning a lot. However, it is not only a negative influence because two types of anxiety are distinguished (Brown, 1987:106): debilitating and facilitative. The second one is related to competitiveness, and that is why it can promote the language learning success. The teacher should recognise which type of anxiety his students are occupied by and use it for effective second language learning.

f) Motivation:

The most common definition says that motivation is a kind of inner drive or desire which moves a person to a fulfilment of needs or to a particular action. According to Brown (1987:114), we can identify six desires that form motivation:

- the need for exploration (testing unknown areas)
- the need for manipulation (operating and causing changes)
- the need for activity (physical and mental exercise and movement)
- the need for stimulation (by the environment, other people, feelings,...)
- the need for knowledge (to handle and absorb the results of above mentioned desires)
- the need for ego enhancement (approval of others)

Therefore, to set the activity which will be motivating for learners, we should bear in mind all these desires constructing motivation. Drama activities, used for communicative purposes, can satisfy all these desires. As they are enjoyable, they motivate students to be willing to participate and, thus, they facilitate their learning.

2. Benefits of Drama Activities in the Foreign Language Classroom

Dramatising is a means of making students participate and to be active during their learning process. It is based on learning through the children's experience because dramatising is a part of a children's life from an early age; for example, they play at being adults in various situations. Therefore, language teachers can use this natural desire to act out real-life-like scenes. Then hiding behind their roles, children can escape from their everyday identity and lose their inhibitions. This is especially useful with children who are shy or afraid of speaking English. If the teacher gives them a certain role, it encourages them to become that character and lose their shyness or embarrassment.

There are a lot of different explanations of drama and drama activities in which the theorists see these terms from diverse points of view, but, in general, they highlight what these activities should mean to foreign language teachers.

Although drama is usually connected with the theatre, language teachers ought to be aware of the difference between drama as a performance at the theatre and drama as a teaching method. John Doughill clarifies it as follows: "The two fields are entirely separate, informal drama being concerned with the participants' experience, and theatre with interpretation" (Doughill, 1987:1).

Next, drama activities can be used to raise awareness of self-expression and creativity as Peter Slade and Brian Way claim. While Slade sees drama and plays as natural to children and believes it can help children develop to maturity, Way deals with realising the potential of the individual person - "the individuality of the individual" as he calls it (Slade and Way in Doughill, 1987:3-4).

Also Maley and Duff emphasise the pupil's creativity and imagination and describe drama activities with following words: "They are activities which give the pupil an opportunity to use his or her own personality in creating the material on which part of the language classes is to be based. These activities draw on the natural ability of every person to imitate, mimic and express himself or herself through gesture" (Maley and Duff, 1991:6). Doubtless, it is very motivating for pupils to make their own part of the lesson. It means that if they can use their own ideas and opinions, they are willing to work much harder because they know it is their turn to create the lesson. The teacher in these situations usually just gives a topic or a form of what is being acted.

Another expert, Dorothy Heathcote (in Doughill, 1987:4), states the following characteristics as important and significant aspects of drama in education. Firstly, "drama demands the co-operation of the participants." Secondly, "it draws on previous experience." Thirdly, "it creates situations in which there is a need for precise communication." Further characteristic concerns the fact that drama "is experiential, thereby affecting students in other than a purely intellectual way." Last but not least, she claims that "it challenges students to discover new truths or insights by confronting them with previously unknown predicaments."

These are some of the most accurate explanations which are supposed to help teachers understand what drama activities mean and they suggest that drama activities involve action. They call for movement, and the learners are challenged to walk around the classroom, to communicate with as many people as possible.

In addition, drama exercises the imagination. Pupils are encouraged to invent new situations or animate existing ones with their own ideas and to allow the dreams of their mind to come true through dramatising.

Furthermore, drama activities involve both the learning and acquisition of taught items. In general, they practise far more language than only the single structure as they very often lead to discussions amongst the pupils.

Moreover, dramatising allows expressing emotions, both by words and body language. Since the learners have to imagine themselves in the place of the situations or people they are asked to represent, they are given the chance and freedom to express various emotions, not only in speech (prosodic features), but through gestures or facial expressions as well. Naturally, the English language is not only words, structures, word order and phrases, but also kinesics. This means body movement, facial expressions and bearings. In fact, kinesics accounts for about 55% of the total communicated message. It is fully understood that everyone uses these additions to the basic flow of speech, and that there has to be a balance between an oral speech and body movements. Otherwise, there could be misunderstandings or breakdowns among people who communicate and as has been said before, drama activities help establish that balance which makes our communicated messages understandable for others.

C. METHODOLOGY OF DRAMATISING

However, not only the theory is enough to be an expert on drama activities as part of foreign language teaching. The saying 'practice makes perfect' fits perfectly for drama activities. Similarly, as a lot of other things, they have to be experienced and practised.

In addition to the explanations above, I would like to mention other traits drama activities should have. They are based on my previous teaching practice.

Firstly, it is very important to create scenarios (set situations) in the classroom in which pupils use language in a meaningful manner. Dramatising means that the children become actively involved in a text through personalisation. This personalisation makes language more meaningful and memorable than drilling or mechanical repetition can make. Since language is most of all a means of communication, not abstract knowledge to be learnt, drama activities provide situations in which learners have a real need to communicate and the desired language is used within a meaningful context, even if students are in "the cosy and controlled world of the classroom" (Doughill, 1987:6). Activities like these help pupils to bridge the gap between the classroom environment and the outside world.

Secondly, dramatising arouses the students' interest because it supports their interaction. Every learner brings a different way of life, opinion and background to the classroom, and so there originate opportunities to learn and get to know various views and

behaviours in diverse situations and also trade one's own attitudes and ideas. In addition, dramatising is a game because it stirs up the learners' curiosity which is a crucial internal drive for learning something new. Students have a chance to play with the foreign language, to find out where the gaps are in their knowledge because "word play does not mean 'being clever with language', but rather 'exploring the language'" (Maley and Duff 1991:3). Moreover, it has recently been supported that drama activities have a positive effect on the learners' affective side, by stimulating personality factors (Richard-Amato, 1988).

1. Strategies for the Use of Drama Activities

There are three main stages in a lesson at which drama activities can be used most effectively. Firstly, there are ice-breakers or warm-up activities, which are supposed to be performed at the beginning of a lesson as introductory activities. They are intended largely for fun, to relax the pupils, make them feel at ease with each other and willing to work together. They are very useful for getting the students to know more about each other, and they are also used to introduce the main topic of the lesson. The aim of these activities is to create a friendly atmosphere and a climate of group collaboration as in the climate of mistrust pupils are not willing to express their opinions or invest their feelings. The warm-ups facilitate fluency and are good for steering learners' minds away from the mother tongue and towards the target language.

Secondly, there are activities used as a part of the lesson, to revise, check and practise matters taught before. In general, they are useful for clarifying and reinforcing the taught material through learners' experience.

Thirdly, there are activities that are intended for the end of the lesson and can aid in revising the language taught during the lesson and fixing it in a funny and enjoyable way.

In fact, I have been using drama activities in all of the lesson stages, but mostly as a part of lessons to check or practise the structures or vocabulary which have been taught recently. The students enjoy such a practice because it is something special, not so common as exercises or tests. As for the model of my Professional Project, I implemented drama activities which practised and reinforced the taught subject matters.

2. Preparation of Drama Activities

There are a lot of different types of drama activities which a language teacher can choose from. Such a variety is valuable for language learning because it makes the lessons more interesting and enjoyable. However, these activities are demanding for preparation. Penny Ur suggests that "...a task must be hard enough to demand an effort on the part of the group members, but easy enough for it to be clear that success is within their grasp" (Ur, 1981:15), which illustrates exactly what the activity should be like. Teachers ought to bear in mind that they have to choose activities and materials appropriate to a particular class and have to know the aim of a drama activity as there is a wide range of activities concerning different aims, for instance, accuracy, fluency, practice of other language skills or revision.

Another aspect that teachers should consider is the children's age which might influence their work in groups or pairs during acting. Thus, the group work can be structured so that children reproduce a model, or it may allow them to take responsibility for their own, more creative work. They have to make decisions, listen to each other and co-operate to accomplish the task. Further, it is more difficult for younger children to work in groups and that is why, the whole-class activities or guided activities are more suitable for them. In contrast older children might work better in smaller groups and can contribute with their own ideas connected to certain situations. Next, young learners are more at ease with a short scenario with a lot of action while older students feel happier with a single scenario and more conversation. However, since not all children are good at acting, teachers should start the lesson with easy, guided activities and move on to less controlled ones.

Last, but not least, it should be clear which kind of feedback the teacher wants to use. If the communicative drama activity is focused on accuracy, it should be pointed out, that accurate expressions are needed, and that is why, the teacher uses ongoing correction. On the other hand, if the activity is aimed at fluency, ongoing correction is not desired. The teacher can take notes during the students' performances and comment on the most frequent mistakes later in the lesson. Provided there is an individual correction required, we should not discuss it in front of the whole class because it could be understood like a humiliating or embarrassing factor and we would inhibit students from speaking. Also, excessive correction should be avoided as it can be demotivating for further students'

performances. However, it is necessary to give feedback on the process students went through, the way they co-operated with each other and how they took risks in conversations, not only on final product. Consequently, the teacher should appreciate students' attempts and willingness to take part in an activity.

3. Techniques Used for Dramatising

Following types of drama activities are usually found in English language teaching classrooms:

a) Simulations/Role-plays: These terms are related as the activities are very similar. A simulation is a decision-making activity where the participants discuss a problem within a defined setting. They simulate the real world in the classroom by acting as themselves or using different social roles as instructed. On the contrary, role-plays do not have to simulate the real world, they offer students the chance to use their imagination and creativity. Students play simple scenarios: for example, they can order a meal at a restaurant or talk to friends about photographs they have taken during their holidays. To fulfil the task they can use their own ideas or ideas and information on role-cards. At the same time the learners can analyse the characters, their feelings and attitudes. By simulating reality, role-plays allow pupils to prepare and practise for possible future situations because they are intended to create a more complex world that mirrors real life.

Thus, activities that use simulations or role-plays not only give valuable practice for real life situations where students would need to solve a problem in English, but also allow even the shyest student to come to life when hiding behind the role.

b) Improvisation: Hodgson and Richards (in Doughill, 1987:19) define improvisation as "...a spontaneous response to the unfolding of an unexpected situation." A scene is improvised and learners one by one join in a character, until the whole scene and possible story takes on a life of its own.

c) Warm-ups: These are short games that usually involve movement and imagination and help to create a warm, active environment.

d) Storytelling: Many methodologists believe that stories are important in everybody's life because they help children to get to know the world, and, that is why, they should participate in children's upbringing (Wright, 1995). Motivation of stories lies in their

characteristics that correspond with children's likes and needs: tales are funny and amusing; they allow creativity and fantasy. Stories can serve as a source of speaking activities because children like participating and are eager to share ideas about what they have read before. Storytelling stimulates curiosity and fantasy and brings to the classroom aspects of real life and motivation.

In short, the value of dramatising as an educational tool is rooted in supporting the intellectual, social and linguistic development of the learner. On the other hand, students develop strategies not only related to language learning, but also how to learn as they collaborate together in 'warm' atmosphere. Moreover, drama activities keep students greatly motivated as they offer them a chance to be involved in creative language use. Besides, since dramatising influences learners' affective side barriers, it encourages students to participate boldly and successfully in communicative activities and, hence, enhances their speaking skills.

D. HYPOTHESIS/THESIS

This Professional Project is going to support the following thesis: Drama activities included in teaching the English language can help learners to lower their inhibitions to speak, encourage them to talk more, motivate them, and thus improve their speaking skills. Moreover, dramatising also helps to explore the language from other points of view (prosodic features, non-verbal communication).

E. PARTS OF PAPER

Lastly, in Chapter II, the practical research of the Professional Project is discussed, and in Chapter III, the results, practical outcomes and conclusions of the Project are presented.

II. PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

A. DISCUSSION OF PROJECT

This professional project should prove my belief that drama activities in foreign language learning are a highly useful 'educational tool', especially for improving and exploring the spoken language. As they can motivate learners to speak, and also help them to develop their speaking skills.

I agree with the theories of Philips, Maley, Duff, Doughill and other experts who write about the importance of drama activities in language learning. They consider drama to be very helpful because the activities offer many situations that are suitable for foreign language learning. A teacher can choose which type of drama activity is most appropriate for the language area he/she wants to cover. Moreover, not only the language development can benefit from the use of drama activities, but they also positively influence the learner's personality, as the affective side, inhibition, risk-taking, etc.

Generally, this project is focused on improving communicative competence in English language learning. For example, Doughill (1987) highlights how drama activities allow creativity and physical involvement, provide the framework for communication, develop confidence, and can be highly motivational. All these features are very important for communication. As most people who learn foreign languages want to be able to communicate, to understand and to be understood, dramatising meets their need. According to Philips (1999), dramatising gives learners the chance to communicate even with limited language skills.

Another important condition of speaking is motivation. Motivation influences students' attitudes towards learning. Evidence suggests that drama activities in language learning increase motivation. Since drama activities can be modified to differentiate the level of students, they motivate by the ability to suit each learner. All students can do the same activity but at their own levels. They choose the level of difficulty, which necessitates that all students can be successful.

In addition, students consider dramatising as fun. They can use their own experience, bring situations from real life into the classroom. Consequently, if the activity is personalised, the language is more meaningful and memorable. Moreover, drama

activities appeal to all types of learners, audible, visual, tactile. This diversity in approach facilitates the learning process for many learners and thus improves communicative skills.

Furthermore, dramatising is creative. It develops the students' imagination. They are the creators of the 'story' that will be performed. They work with the language, grammatical structures and vocabulary in new contexts. Students add new emotions, situations, plots, settings, characters, etc.

Another advantage students can gain from dramatising is that it can raise their confidence. This can be crucial for inhibited students. They can escape from their everyday identity because there is another character for them to hide behind. For example, Philips (1999) suggests puppets dramatising to abandon students' embarrassment.

All these characteristics show that drama activities are enjoyable and can be used with all kinds of learners. That is why they are indispensable tools for the students' learning process.

B. DISCUSSION OF MODEL

I started to think about the professional project which deals with dramatising some time ago. As I have been teaching English for four years and have tried some activities and methods in my classes, I wanted to focus on improving speaking skills by the use of drama activities. I have been using drama activities to facilitate the students' language learning because I like the way of teaching communicatively. I have gained teaching experience with classes of adults who attend the evening English courses and then, with adolescent students who attend morning courses.

Since the beginning of my teaching practice, I have been using the textbooks *New Headway* by Liz and John Soars. These textbooks are mostly based on the communicative approach and activities in the textbooks are drafted for pair or group work, they operate with lots of themes for dialogues, role-plays, and discussions. Almost all these suggestions can be adapted for drama activities and I have been using them as a framework for communication. I have noticed that some of my adult students enjoy drama activities but they are not as creative as I would like them to be, therefore I wanted to compare my observations concerning the influence of drama activities on my adult students to young learners who I was going to teach at Husova basic school. The teaching practice gave me

an opportunity to compare the influence of drama activities on various kinds of students - children, adolescent students and adults.

My assumption was that the younger the students, the more influential the effect of drama activities would be on their communicative competence improvement. I supposed that younger students who are familiar with the use of dramatising would be more creative and spontaneous during role-plays, discussions, simulations, storytelling, and so on.

As I was preparing the model of the professional project, I got acquainted with the books dealing with drama activities in language learning. Considering, theory and methodology, I looked up some suitable activities which I could use during my teaching practice. I studied Maley and Duff's drama resource book, consulted my friends who have been teaching and invented my own activities.

First, I started to think about the criteria that had to be respected during designing the tasks. The criteria I considered are following:

- Drama activities should be designed according to the students' language level. If there is any new vocabulary, it needs to be presented beforehand, or a teacher should revise the grammar or vocabulary students will need.
- Drama activities should be aimed at students' ages.
- Drama activities include the topics, themes or structures from the textbook which students use.
- Drama activities should motivate students to speak (interesting topics, teaching aids, atmosphere, groupings, etc.).
- Drama activities should decrease or remove students' inhibition, especially from speaking.
- Time criteria (for example, the normal lesson at a basic school is 45 minutes, but the lessons in a language school are 90 minutes)
- Classroom equipment and setting criteria
- Assessment criteria (how to evaluate the effectiveness of activities, attitude towards the task, fulfilment of the task, willingness to be involved and speak)

- Correcting, feedback (I decided not to use ongoing correction, I made notes during students' performances and later commented on them if there was any need)
- Students' experience with drama activities in language learning.

I tried to think up drama activities that included all these points. Firstly, I focused on the design of the tasks for my teaching practice at basic school. I worked with the textbook *Project English II* and I modified suggested activities in the book to meet the purpose of my teaching project.

Secondly, I chose two groups from my classes at our language school and created activities for them. It was much easier because I have been teaching them the whole year so I did not have to hurry with the implementation of the activities designed for the research purpose. The criteria for them differed slightly. For example, the time criterion was not as crucial as during the teaching at basic school (90-minute lessons provide wide space for dramatising). All the activities I have prepared for my teaching project were the types of dramatic activities facilitating speaking competence. I believed that their implementation into lessons would influence the motivational atmosphere for exploring language and developing speaking skills.

At the end of my teaching project I wanted to compare the way drama activities worked in different types of classes (children, adolescent students, adults). I supposed that dramatising would develop communicative skills, but I was also interested in differences in the results of the drama activities in language learning between younger and older learners.

The last step of this preparatory phase was to select methods of evaluation. The first and the main method of evaluation was observation and reflection of the lessons, hence I asked my supervisor teacher to help me with the observations and to tell me her comments after each class. As we talked about the topic of my diploma thesis, she became familiar with my professional project, and thus could help me to observe the things I was interested in.

The next method of evaluation was questionnaires. I set some questions concerning language learning, students' attitudes towards the English language, speaking English and I wanted students to answer them after my teaching project was finished. All groups of the students were given the same questionnaire (see Appendix V).

Another method I wanted to use for evaluating the validity of my thesis was a discussion with my supervisor teacher. I gave her several questions (see Appendix VI) dealing with her experience with the use of drama activities in language teaching (results are summarised in Chapter III). Both questionnaires and questions for the interview were prepared in Czech because I supposed that students would express their comments more accurately if they could use their mother tongue.

The final method I wanted to try was the recording of the students' performance (the tape is included). This method turned out to be a problem because I realised that the recording distracted students' attention and increased their inhibition to speak. I will give a detailed description later in the reflection to the particular lesson plan (p.40).

C. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF MODEL

I chose the school for my survey very carefully because I wanted to test the project on the students who were experienced with language learning through dramatising. I think that the four-week-long period for the implementation of the project and the evaluation of the results is too short. Consequently, I felt that more experienced students would give me an opportunity to carry out the project more successfully. The observations were easier because I did not need to introduce drama activities as a totally new tool in learning, the students were already familiar with this kind of language teaching.

Therefore, I decided for the basic school Husova that specialises in foreign language teaching. The first foreign language is taught from the third grade and in the fifth form pupils start another foreign language. This kind of extended language learning provided me with good conditions for the project implementation.

Moreover, I had known that the teachers from this school took advantage of using dramatising. That is why I asked the teacher Eva Bonhardová for her support and she was very helpful as she offered me to teach and launch the project in her classes. She agreed to be my supervisor and I really welcomed it because she has had lots of experience with drama activities in the English teaching. She has been using them in her classes to facilitate the learning process. Furthermore, every year she practises a bigger piece of drama with pupils to perform it on the stage in front of the audience. So, we talked about her experience and she showed me photos from the students' performances.

After that, we chose the most suitable class that met my timetable requirement. The class 8.C was very co-operative for the launch of my project. Although this class belonged among the weaker ones in marks, they liked participating in the communicative activities and that was the most important fact for my decision in selecting this group.

The teaching practice lasted four weeks and I taught the class according to the class curriculum. It means that I followed the topics in the textbook (*Project English II*) and only modified or thought up activities which filled out the learning process and corresponded with my purpose. The first week of my practice was focused on the preliminary observations of the class I wanted to launch the project in because I intended to become acquainted with the pupils and teaching methods they were used to. In the next three weeks I taught seven consecutive lessons to this class.

The other groups where I tested the model of my professional project were chosen from my classes at language school Stamina. Considering the fact that the part of the conclusions should be focused on the age of the students and the effect of drama activities on them, I selected two different types of classes.

1. Characteristics of the classes

Basic school Husova, the 8th form

Age: 14 years

Language experience: their first foreign language is German; they had been learning English for two years and several months.

Number of pupils: 11

Textbook: *Project English II*, by Tom Hutchinson

Short characteristics of the group:

As it was said before this group was recommended to me by their teacher. They knew each other well and had experience with drama activities and participated in them very willingly. They were used to co-operating in groups or in pairs. However, if they had a chance to select their own groups, they made single sex groups (female only and male only groups). This could be caused by their age in which children think that the opposite gender is 'stupid'.

There was one boy who was ill for a long time and had problems with communication (not only in English). His name was Petr. He seemed not to be interested in the lessons and rarely said something. His knowledge of English was worse than the English of his classmates, but it was caused by his long absence. It was a great success when Petr started speaking.

This group of students was a little bit problematic. There was only one boy with mark one from English. The rest of class had worse marks and not only from the English language.

Furthermore, English was not the main foreign language for them. Therefore, the knowledge of the language did not correspond with other English classes in the eighth form. They could use the grammatical structures at the moment they were practising them, but later when something was added they forgot all the practised grammar and were confused.

In spite of these problems, I was satisfied with them because they participated in my lessons, they tried to speak a lot and were very active. The students wanted to perform the dialogues or miming scenes and they were not diffident at all. I really enjoyed teaching them.

Stamina, the one year after school-leaving study of English, "adolescents"

Age: 19-24 years (with one exception)

Language experience: all the students were supposed to be beginners, but more than one third were false beginners; they had been learning English for eight months.

Number of students: 16

Textbook: *New Headway Elementary and Pre-Intermediate*, by John and Liz Soars

Short characteristics of the group:

This group was made of students who wanted to study a foreign language after their graduation from secondary school. But there was also a student in my class who was 53-year old. This woman started this course to learn English because she needed it for her job.

Firstly, the students did not know each other. Their experience with language was very different. Some of them were false beginners and these students profited from their previous experience at the beginning of the course. After several months it suddenly changed and the students who had not learned English before started to get better.

Next, this group was quite co-operative, they seemed to enjoy working in groups and pairs. Only the older woman had problems to work in a group. She told me that she could not work together with other students because she preferred individual work. The students were not as attentive as the pupils at Husova, but this was understandable according to their age. They participated in drama activities, but preferred not to perform in front of the class. The students liked making up the dialogues and I always looked forward to their performances because they tried to add something funny and unpredictable. They were very innovative as for the topics, vocabulary and plots and liked playing with language, so it was pleasure to teach them.

Stamina, afternoon course of English, adults

Age: 27-56

Language experience: pre-intermediate; they had been learning for three years and eight months in the language course.

Number of students: 6

Textbook: *New Headway Pre-Intermediate*, by John and Liz Soars

Short characteristics of this group:

I had been teaching most of these students for four years. They started from total beginners and now they are able to communicate on a standard level. Most of the students were learning English for travelling. They were focused on speaking and vocabulary. They were co-operative, attentive, well-prepared, and motivated. The only problem was that they were not innovative. They operated with the phrases they knew and they did not like experimenting so it was very difficult to make them lose their inhibitions and inventing new ways of speaking. I used drama activities to restrain their shyness but I felt that they were not very spontaneous during their performances. I liked them very much because I knew that they liked learning English and tried a lot.

2. Teaching performance

I have chosen two complete lesson plans including the preparation for the drama activities. The lesson plans concerning the production of a drama piece will not be complete, I will describe only the stages which I tested the model of my professional project in.

Lesson Plan 1- Introductory Lesson For Dramatising

Group Husova - Children

Textbook: *Project English II*, page 46

Aim:

- to practise vocabulary connected with the theme *Cooking* and *Food*
- to develop pupils' reading skills
- to prepare students for a drama activity

Objectives:

- pupils are able to talk about their experience with cooking
- pupils are able to work with the information gained from the text and use it in completing the task
- pupils are able to perform the story

Stage 1:

The teacher revises pupils' vocabulary connected with the theme *Food* that they have learnt so far. Pupils play the game 'Last is first'. The first player calls out a word or expression (the topic of this game is food), the next player continues with another word beginning with the last letter of the previous word.

Example: meat – tomato – onion – noodles

Aim: to warm up the children, to introduce the topic of the lesson

Time: 4 minutes

Stage 2:

The teacher asks pupils about their experience with cooking. The teacher elicits pupils' answers.

Aim: to raise pupils' interest

Time: 7 minutes

Stage 3:

The teacher says the title of the story – Stone soup and asks pupils what they think the article will be about. Pupils express their suggestions. The teacher explains the unknown words (mean, delicious, fetch). The teacher gives reasons for reading; he/she writes several

questions on the board. The teacher gives pupils four minutes to skim the text to be able to answer the questions.

Example:

Who are the people?

Where are they?

What are they doing?

Aim: to set the task, to check the task and reading for gist

Time: 10 minutes

Stage 4:

The teacher gives pupils three questions and lists of ingredients.

Example:

What was the old lady like?

What did the tramp do when he left?

What did the tramp put in the soup?

What was the order of the ingredients?

Pupils read the text for the second time, answer the questions, underline the ingredients that are mentioned in the text as parts of the soup. Pupils put the ingredients in order (what was the first, second, ...). Pupils present their solutions.

Aim: to set the task, to check the task and reading for details

Time: 12 minutes

Stage 5:

The teacher appoints one pupil as a narrator. The next two pupils play the roles - an old lady and a tramp. The teacher gives pupils pictures of the ingredients and a pot. The narrator reads the story out loud, the two performers mime the story according to the reading.

Aim: post-reading activity, to work with the information from the story, to give pupils a chance to show their creativity

Time: 10 minutes

Stage 6:

The teacher sets the homework, divides students into groups of three. Pupils will prepare the drama piece in the groups. Pupils will learn the roles from the textbook by heart and they will prepare all the aids and costumes they will need for performing. The next lesson they will perform the story on stage in front of the audience (the class) and the teacher will choose the best performance. (The aim of the homework is to get pupils to be prepared for the drama activity.)

Reflection:

This lesson plan prepared pupils for the next lesson in which I wanted them to perform the story. All the pupils tried to participate in the lesson, so I did not have to make them speak. They were willing to talk and they did not mind the mistakes. Sometimes I had to correct them because they were so eager to express their ideas that they completely forgot the grammar structures.

Though I was an unknown person, they co-operated with me. It was my first lesson in this class and I was very surprised with their attitude towards the lesson and speaking because I thought it would be more difficult to get them to communicate.

First, I wanted to see the pupils' reaction to drama activities during this lesson, so I started with miming which is supposed to be the lowest degree of drama activities and also the natural part of a child's life. Thus I prepared miming as the post-reading activity. For that activity, I had drawn and cut the ingredients and the pot. Then I appointed one boy a narrator and two other boys had to follow the narrator's voice and mime the story according to the text. For miming I chose two particular boys because their teacher said to me they were confident enough to act at the story in front of the class and would not be shy. Finally, it proved to be a good choice because these boys were natural showmen. They tried to act in the way to amuse both the audience and themselves. They mimed the story like in an old accelerated film as the narrator read the story too fast. That is why, they were not able to follow his speech or to act in a normal pace and they speeded up their movements. In any case it was funny, I had to stop the narrator to ask him to slow down and watch the boys. Then he adapted his pace of reading to the pace of the performance. The pupils enjoyed this activity a lot and some of them wanted to perform the story as well. I had to say no to them because there was no time for another turn. The lesson was going to end and I needed to set the homework. I promised them that they would perform

the story, but a little bit differently, next lesson. They were satisfied with my justification. I was pleased to see that the children liked the activity; they wanted to participate and I looked forward to their performance on stage.

Evaluation:

The aim of this lesson was to prepare pupils for the implementation of drama activities into their lessons. The last activity of the lesson was supposed to be a motivating factor for the pupils' next performance on stage. Considering the fact that children like fairy tales, the story of Stone Soup satisfied the pupils' desire for stories because there was a magic stone, an interesting plot and in the end it had happy ending. The pupils were interested in the topic and I supposed that it motivated them for the homework.

Furthermore, this drama activity focused on non-verbal communication. Miming belongs among drama activities, it is said to be natural, especially for children, and its main feature is a development of non-verbal communicative skills. Thus, I explained to the pupils that they could be understood by this kind of communication, too. I told them that gestures, facial expressions, attitudes, and movements facilitate the process of communication, carry most information and illustrate the speech. These factors also make the conversation more 'colourful', in terms of emotions and feelings. As pupils tried to use gestures and face to fit the story, they were exploring language because they realised that they could make the communicated message more understandable by exploiting non-verbal aids. They learned that not only the oral part of communication is substantial for the information which has to be transferred.

To summarise, the project thesis was verified by the implemented drama activity because it motivated students. This fact was demonstrated by the pupils' willingness to participate. In addition, it helped to develop the students' speaking skills by finding that they were able to enrich the communicating message by gestures, facial expressions, etc, and so facilitate their intelligibility.

The lesson plan 2- Performance

Group Husova – Children

Aim:

- to reinforce vocabulary and grammatical structures from the article *Stone Soup*
- to practise pupils' speaking skills in controlled way by the performing

Objectives:

- pupils are able to perform the story
- pupils are able to use the grammatical structures - *some, any, have got* (during speaking)

Contents of the lesson:

The pupils' stage performance was the main part of this lesson, in order to do this we went to a room which is normally used as a theatre room. There is a big stage with curtains and several rows of chairs. The pupils had five minutes to prepare the costumes and props. They worked in groups of three. They took turns on stage and performed the story in front of the rest of the class. After they finished, the supervisor and I evaluated the performances. Then we played a puzzle game in the classroom.

Reflection:

At first I wanted to use the puzzle activity at the beginning of the lesson as a starter and warm up activity. This activity revised vocabulary connected with the topic *Food* and thus introduce the next drama activity – cooking the Stone soup. Furthermore, pupils could revise some vocabulary which appeared in the story.

After I entered the classroom, I changed my mind because all the pupils were nervous and wanted to start with the theatre. So we went to the third floor where the special theatre room is and I let pupils prepare for the performance. They brought a table and chairs on the stage and got dressed into their costumes. The girls, especially, prepared themselves very well. They had a cloak for the tramp and an apron and a scarf for the old lady. All the groups brought a pot and ingredients mentioned in the story, some were real, some were drawn. The first group started to perform the story. Their narrator sat down on the floor of the stage, introduced the story and the characters began to act. Then the groups took turns. One narrator had to perform twice because there was a member of one group missing.

There were no big problems. Some pupils forgot the text, but for that reason there was a girl who was a prompter, and some others did not act the story, they just repeated the lines of their text. As they tried not to forget the words, they were not concentrated on showing emotions, or playing with intonation. They had to listen to the narrator to know what to do and that was quite demanding. It seemed that some weaker students would be overwhelmed by focusing on something more than acting, but the prompts like *a pot* or *spoons* and movements helped them to overcome it. For instance, they could start to stir the soup or stand up to walk for a while and it gave them a chance to think what the next dialogue should be about. Along with these students, there were also the pupils who were pleased to show their actors' abilities. They played their roles excellently. For example, they modified their voices, changed their body postures to show old age and tiredness. All the groups tried a lot and I think they were very enthusiastic about this kind of speaking activity. I was surprised that even Petr, the student who was not confident at speaking enjoyed the performance. He turned out to be quite a good actor and his role learned by heart furthered his confidence to talk.

When the pupils ended the activity, Mrs Bonhardová and I selected the best group. We agreed that the boys' group showed the best actor's performance. Especially, the narrator's performance was excellent. During the performance my supervisor teacher took photographs of the pupils (see Appendix I).

After that we returned to the classroom and I used the puzzle as a calming down activity. It worked well because everybody wanted to be the first and to get a mark.

Evaluation:

The aim of this role-play activity was to reinforce the structures from the story (*some, any*). Before I set this activity I had discussed it with Mrs Bonhardová. I was unsure whether to tell the pupils to learn the play by heart, or ask them to create their own dialogues similar to the text. She advised me to tell them to learn it by heart. As I could compare another activity which was less controlled (Lesson Plan 4) to this one I must say that the controlled activities worked better in this class. As the pupils rehearsed the story and learned it by heart, they used the structures accurately and they only made minor mistakes. Though this performance was focused on accuracy, pupils really enjoyed it because there was the motivating factor of a tale.

Along with that, I wanted pupils to try to match non-verbal communication with the speaking, to understand that movements and gestures help them to express themselves together with the oral performance. The costumes and aids as *pots, spoons, ingredients* helped them to enter the spirit of the play.

Furthermore, this activity provided shy pupils with lots of possibilities to abandon their fear of speaking. They could hide themselves behind the characters of the play. They did not appear in their everyday roles. They presented someone else - someone who might be more confident, more successful and more talkative. The pupils dared to experiment with their characters' voices, pace, faces, and so on. All these things, roles, aids and costumes helped some pupils to reduce their inhibition of talking. Generally, shy pupils appreciated it a lot; Petr's performance proved this.

In addition, the learners' affective side was encouragingly influenced while participating in this kind of activity. Firstly, the speaking confidence was strengthened because the pupils knew the text. Secondly, the prompter who elicited the forgotten lines gave the pupils the feeling of security. The weaker students participated as well as better ones and could fulfil the task successfully.

Next, the activity was demanding on the pupils' listening skills as they had to concentrate on their classmates' performances. It also improved the speaking competence because pupils had to react on their classmates' presentations, to co-operate.

In conclusion, the lesson convinced me of the authenticity of the professional project thesis. While the pupils were learning the roles they reinforced the grammar structures and vocabulary and thus extended their language competence. The form of the drama activity positively stimulated their personality factors as motivation, anxiety, confidence and consequently encouraged them to talk. Besides, the feature of miming enriched their speaking skills by involvement of non-verbal communication.

Lesson Plan 3 - Preparatory Lesson For Dramatising

Group Husova - Children

Textbook: extension of the activities on pages 48,49,50 (*Project English II*)

Aim:

- to extend pupils' vocabulary connected to the theme *Cooking*
- to remind and revise the present continuous tense
- to prepare pupils for the drama activity - *The Cooking Competition*

Objectives:

- pupils are able to prepare their own recipe in English
- pupils are able to use the new vocabulary
- pupils are able to use the present continuous tense for the situations happening right now

Stage 1:

The teacher introduces the topic of the lesson. Pupils will play the game called "hangman". The teacher writes the first and the last letter of an unknown word on the blackboard. Between these letters there are macrons for the missing letters. Children guess the letters to fill in the words. The teacher draws step by step a picture of a hangman if the pupils say the wrong letter.

Example:

I-----s (Ingredients), R----e (recipe)

The teacher explains that the first word is in plural. When pupils finish the words, the teacher asks them if they can guess what the lesson will be about.

Aim: to warm the pupils up, to introduce the topic of the lesson

Time: 3 minutes

Stage 2:

The teacher asks pupils questions: *Can you cook?*

Do you like cooking?

What is your favourite recipe for?

What ingredients do you need for it?

Aim: to raise pupils interest, to make pupils speak about their favourite meals

Time: 3 minutes

Stage 3:

The teacher asks students to think about the verbs connected with cooking. The teacher writes them on the side part of the board. Then he/she shows pictures that express activities in a kitchen and asks pupils to say the English word for it. The teacher sticks the pictures and the cards with the English word and its pronunciation on the board. He/she uses blue tack. The teacher pronounces the words and pupils repeat them. The teacher elicits its Czech meaning by the pictures, gestures, and expressions connected with the words.

Example:



STIR



SEASON

[si:zn]



PEEL

[pi:l]

The teacher says: *I can peel potatoes, carrots.* He/she shows the movement of peeling. Pupils write the words into their exercise books. The words are following: press, peel, salt, dice, bake, cook, season, pour, stir, slice, make, put, strain, beat, add, grate, wash, mix.

Aim: to extend pupils vocabulary, to present new words and revise the old ones

Time: 12 minutes

Stage 4:

The teacher writes on the blackboard - *Right now* and point to a picture. He/she says: I am peeling a carrot. The teacher writes questions on the blackboard:

What is happening right now?

What am I doing?

What am I using?

The teacher points to another picture and answers the questions, he/she writes the answers on the board.

Example: I am cooking. I am stirring soup. I am using a spoon.

The teacher says to pupils to write the grammar to their exercise books. The teacher writes the form of the present continuous tense on the board. The teacher practises the words and the structure. He/she points to the pictures and asks pupils: *What are you doing right now?* Pupils use the structure and answer: *I am pressing garlic, I am pouring water into a bowl, I am beating an egg.*

Aim: to practise the words, to refresh the structure of the present continuous tense and to revise and practise it

Time: 8 minutes

Stage 5:

The teacher distributes another set of the cards showing kitchen activities among the pupils. He/she sets the task. Pupils work in pairs. They ask each other a question: *What are you doing?* They answer according to their cards. Then the teacher asks them: *What is your partner doing?* and they answer using the information they gained and the present continuous tense for the third person of singular.

Aim: to practise the present continuous tense, to practise vocabulary

Time: 5 minutes

Stage 6:

The teacher divides pupils into three groups. Pupils are given a set of cards (see Appendix II). The teacher explains to them that on the cards there are cut recipes. The pupils' task is to put the recipes in order and to find out what the recipe is for. Children work and the teacher helps them, he/she explains unknown words (breadcrumbs, parsley). The teacher checks the order of the activities and asks pupils to tell the meal name (risotto, chicken

outlet, potato salad). After that the teacher says: *Imagine you are cooking this meal right now. What are you doing? What ingredients are you using? What things are you using?* The teacher asks pupils and they answer according to their recipes.

Aim: to practice new vocabulary and present continuous tense in the recipes, to show pupils the structure of the recipe, to make children co-operate, to prepare pupils for the homework.

Time: 10 minutes

Stage 7:

The teacher sets the homework. Next lesson children will play *The Cooking Competition*. The teacher divides pupils into the groups of three. One of them will be a speaker of that competition. He/she will ask the competitors about their meals, what ingredients are they using, what are they doing, what things are they using. The two competitors have to prepare their own recipes. They can use recipes from their students' book, recipes they did in this lesson, or recipes they will think up. They can bring some aids they need for the presentation. They will talk to the speaker. They will answer his questions.

Aim: to make pupils revise the vocabulary and the present continuous tense, to make them prepare for the next drama activity

Time: 4 minutes

Reflection:

The aim of this lesson plan was to prepare pupils for the next drama activity - *The Cooking Competition*, that is why I presented and revised vocabulary and structures I wanted the pupils to use in their homework. The warm up activity was very fast because the pupils guessed the words almost immediately. Since they knew this kind of activity, they enjoyed it.

During the next stage they were surprisingly communicative because everybody wanted to tell me his/her favourite recipe. The next activity seemed to get them interested, they knew a lot of verbs. I did not have to elicit the Czech meanings - they guessed it from the pictures. The only problem was that some verbs on the cards were marked with by not that visible fluorescent ink.

Another problem appeared in the next stage as I wanted to revise the present continuous tense. I thought that pupils were familiar with it, but it appeared that most

pupils had forgotten the structure. They remembered the use of -ing ending but they forgot to use the forms of the verb – *be*, and thus I had to revise it more deeply. Therefore, we also wrote the questions and negatives. Still some students were not sure about the structure in the next activity and I had to correct them while they were practising the dialogues.

Next, the activity with recipes was also quick. As two recipes were quite easy, the group that had risotto was the slowest. Finally, I had to put their cards in order and helped them to guess the meal because they thought it was soup. The pupils from the other groups laughed at them but I told them that it was the most difficult recipe. Then we practised again the present continuous tense and I rehearsed the questions which I wanted them to learn and use in the homework. They used the structures accurately.

Lastly, I set the homework and chose the better students as speakers of the competition. Then some pupils asked me about details to their presentations. Pupils enjoyed the lesson, especially the pictures, they communicated and co-operated together.

Evaluation:

I did not use any drama activities in this lesson because the aim was to prepare the pupils for a drama activity produced next lesson. This aim was fulfilled as they practised vocabulary and the present continuous tense which they would need for dramatising. Though there were not drama activities pupils communicated in a controlled way because I was focusing on accuracy and corrected pupils immediately.

Lesson Plan 4 - The Cooking Competition

Group Husova - Children

Aim:

- to motivate students for the drama activity
- to practise their speaking skills

Objective:

- pupils are able to use the present continuous tense and vocabulary connected to cooking
- pupils are able to perform the cooking competition

Stage 1:

The teacher gives pupils cards with some activities written on them.

Example: Water the flowers, Watch a football match, Peel potatoes, Jump into the lake, and so on.

The pupils should mime the activity on the card and the rest of the class guesses the activity. The teacher asks pupils: *What are you doing?* A pupil shows it by movement or gestures. The teacher asks the class: *What is he/she doing?* Pupils answer using the present continuous tense.

Aim: to warm up the pupils, to increase their interest for the next activity, to revise the present continuous tense and some vocabulary

Time: 8 minutes

Stage 3:

The teacher divides students to the groups they prepared the performance in. The teacher gives pupils 5 minutes to prepare themselves for the activity. The teacher helps pupils with some vocabulary and checks the recipes. The teacher prepares the tape for recording and gives the speaker a microphone as an aid for the presentation.

Aim: to check pupils homework, to prepare the classroom for the performance

Time: 6 minutes

Stage 4:

Pupils play their scenes. The speaker holds the microphone and asks the competitors about their recipes. The teacher records the performances. The groups take their turns and perform the competition.

Aim: to make pupils speak in a free way, to revise the structure *-ing* and vocabulary

Time: 20 minutes

Stage 5:

The teacher plays the recorded tape and stops it if there is a mistake. Pupils should correct it. The teacher chooses the best scene. These pupils get a mark.

Aim: to check students' work, to correct the mistakes, to evaluate the task

Time: 10 minutes

Reflection:

The aim of this lesson was to practise students' fluency in speaking. The first activity revised the present continuous tense because I wanted to refresh the structure before the students' performance in which they were supposed to use it. The miming was a fun and activities were very easy to act. Despite this, there was a girl who had a problem to mime observing a football match. It might have been better if I had given the activity to the boys. The pupils were so eager to be the first who guessed the activity that they forgot to use the present continuous tense for describing the activity. That is why, I had to repeat the question: *What is he/she doing?* to remind them the structure.

Then we started with the performances - The Cooking Competition. Firstly, I wanted to record the students' presentations to have another source for evaluation of my professional project and to use it as a feedback to correct students' speaking performances, but it turned out to be a big problem. Some pupils were too shy to speak on the tape because they were not used to recording. Mainly the girls could not cope with it and they started laughing as soon as I began recording. They tried to say some sentences, but again burst into laughter. Then I told another group to play the competition to let the girls calm down. Finally, they presented it but without the tape. Later they told me they were sorry for spoiling it, that they prepared themselves for the activity and wanted to present it. After this experience I found out that the recording was troublesome. It could do more harm than good.

But not only the recording went wrong. Though, I wanted the students to use only the present continuous to make the activity easier, they mixed all the tenses together. Unfortunately, they did not listen to the speaker's questions and did not use the structures from the questions. Moreover, some pupils did not prepare the recipes and created them during their presentations. Consequently, they were not focused on the grammar, only on words. I was desperate during pupils' performances because I realised that they were not prepared for the free speaking activities and I was mistaken to think they would manage to build the conversations on their own.

Only the speaker Pavel, the best pupil from the class, managed the performance. As he prepared himself very well, he spoke almost without the mistakes in spite of using different tenses. Besides, he tried to elicit his mates' answers and help them during the speech. On his performance I could compare the gap between his English knowledge and the knowledge of the rest of the class. If I had a class full of pupils like Pavel, this activity would have worked.

At the end I played the tape and we corrected the mistakes. However, the pupils were interested in their voices on the tape and did not pay much attention to correction. The only pupil who got a mark for the performance was Pavel, but I also praised some pupils for the presentation. I reminded them of some mistakes and told them to be more careful during next presentation. I reproached them for not listening to each other and explained to them that they had to listen to a speaker to be able to react.

Evaluation:

Primarily, I thought that my thesis statement was supported only by Pavel's performance. I must say that I demotivated some pupils by using the tape recorder and I lowered the effect of this drama activity on pupils speaking competence by putting an inhibiting factor into the lesson.

I supposed the activity was successful because it provided several conditions for benefiting. First, the topic of the drama activity was motivating for the pupils as I could see during the previous lessons; most students were interested in cooking. Second, the form of the drama activity, the competition, aroused students' interests. Third, the purpose was clear and the competition provided context for the language use. Besides, students could use their experience from real-life situations.

In spite of the fact that all the conditions were fulfilled, the activity was not successful because while making up this activity, I did not keep one of my criteria: the language level of pupils. I wanted to try almost free fluency activity and it did not work because I overestimated the pupils. The task should have been set more controlled.

However, as I thought about this activity longer, I found a positive effect on the pupils' speaking competence. They learned that communication without listening to the people who participated in the conversation was not very successful. In conclusion, we agreed that to know what the other people say was crucial for understanding and leading a conversation. As the results of that activity made them think about the rules of successful communication, they explored the language, and thus could improve their speaking skills.

Fortunately, pupils did not realise that the activity had not responded to their knowledge of English. They enjoyed the activity because it was something new for them and were not aware of the mistakes in their presentations. As they made an effort to fulfil the task, they participated in the dialogues willingly.

Although this drama activity was not as successful as I had expected, its benefits proved the professional project thesis. The pupils joined this communicative activity eagerly as it was a competition, which motivated them. Moreover, they improved their speaking skills by finding that listening was a prerequisite of a sensible conversation.

Lesson Plan 5 - Visual Consequences

Group Stamina - Adolescents

Textbook: based on activity 4.24 from the book *Drama Techniques In Language Learning*, page 164, 1982

Aim:

- to revise new vocabulary and structures (*it drives me mad, annoying habits, ...*)
- to practise students' speaking skills

Objectives:

- students are able to talk about annoying habits

Stage 1:

The teacher divides students into groups of five. He/she gives a blank sheet of paper to each student. Then the teacher tells students they are going to draw a creature, a human being, or an animal, but in parts. The teacher starts the activity by setting the task: *Everybody will draw a head including a neck on his/her sheet of paper and then he/she will fold it and pass to the next student.* The teacher shows it on his/her sheet of paper. The teacher explains that students can experiment and draw creatures which do not exist. When students are ready, the teacher says to them to draw the trunk of a person, animal, or monster. Students draw, fold the sheets and pass them on. The next part are hips, then legs, then the final part - the feet. At the end everyone has a sheet of paper that he/she started with. They can unfold the drawings and look at their creation.

Aim: to motivate students, to arouse their interests, to set the topic, to prepare aids for the speaking activity

Time: 10 minutes

Stage 2:

The teacher sets pair-work. Students will prepare a dialogue between their creatures. The creatures will argue and reproach one another their annoying habits. Students can think up the annoying habits from the creature's appearance, or they can use common annoying habits. They can imagine that creatures are flatmates and some annoying habits drive them mad. Students prepare their dialogues. The teacher helps them.

Aim: to give students a chance to show their creativity, to practise students' speaking skills

Time: 10 minutes

Stage 3:

Students act their dialogues. The rest of class listens to the performances.

Aim: to make students speak

Time: 5 minutes

Reflection:

Since I wanted to revise the structures that appeared in the students' textbook (*New Headway Pre-intermediate*, p.20), I looked for a drama activity that would be useful. This activity interested me because of drawing. As it was the first time we had been drawing in this class some students were startled to be asked to draw. When I told them that they could draw non-existing creatures, they calmed down. The activity was enjoyable and everyone did his/her best to draw the most beautiful creature.

As we unfolded the drawings we found out that a slip had crept into the pictures; the students did not mark the ends of bodies' lines so when they folded the sheets, it was not visible where was the body placed and where it ended. The next student drew the next part but he/she did not know if it corresponded with the placement of the rest of the body. Hence, some drawings were very funny because their bodies have been shifted (see Appendix III). Also the dialogues were amusing. For example, one creature reproached another one, that it drank a lot and so he always had a red nose. The second creature protested and claimed that it had the red nose because it was allergic to the first creature's wings.

Although it was a speaking activity, everybody involved into the dialogues enthusiastically because it allowed them to be creative and inventive. Despite the fact that I did not ask all students to perform the scene, everyone had a chance to practise his/her speaking skills by the process of creating the dialogue.

Evaluation:

This drama activity included drawings as a motivating factor. The students enjoyed the first part of the activity and at the same time it motivated them for the speaking and their performance. The drawings used as aids, helped students suggest ideas for talking.

The next part of the activity was a typical role-play. The roles offered the students some characters to hide behind, therefore, provided a secure environment for speaking because the students could suppress their own shy personalities. While they were speaking they acted like their creatures. Especially, some students exploited their monsters perfectly, as for the non-verbal expressions. They moved in a way monsters would move, they changed the voice and waved their wings.

Besides, they had to co-operate and react on their partner's tags. By that they developed their listening skills and strategic competence which were crucial for successful conversations.

The professional project thesis was confirmed as the drama activity aroused students' motivation to talk and thus led to improving their speaking skills. Moreover, the learner's affective side could be secure in the roles and did not inhibit the learner from communicating.

Lesson Plan 6 - The Flying Saucer Game

Group Stamina - Adolescents

Aim:

- to practise adjectives describing feelings
- to explore the language by playing with it

Objectives:

- students are able to express their emotions in sentences

Stage 1:

I brought a flying saucer to the classroom. I asked students if they knew the English word for it. Then they guessed what the next activity was going to be about.

Aim: to arouse students' interest

Time: 2 minutes

Stage 2:

I told them to follow my directions and described them the way out of the school to the near park.

Example: *Go out of the class, go downstairs and out of the school, cross the tram rails and go straight on to the bench. There wait for me.*

Aim: to practice directions

Time: 1 minute

Stage 3:

I made a circle from the students in the park. I explained to them the rules of the game. A person throws the flying saucer and sets a feeling (you are angry, you are bored, you are surprised,...). The person who catches it, says an ordinary sentence or phrase but he/she tries to colour his/her voice by the feeling. Students throw and catch the flying saucer and play the game.

I suggested three sentences for the beginning: You are late.

I really like you.

I have a lot of time.

Aim: to practise adjectives describing feelings, to show the influence of prosodic features on the communicated information

Time: 20 minutes

Reflection:

This activity revised the topic *How do you feel?* (*New-Headway Pre-intermediate*, p.45). Since I extended students' vocabulary by other words, I wanted to practice and revise them unconventionally. The nice weather inspired me to think up this activity. Students were surprised when they saw the flying saucer and guessed that we would go outside and just play. As I explained the activity to them, they were a little bit worried, and so I had to show them some feelings on the sentences.

Finally, we started playing and most students really enjoyed it because the sentences were easy to remember and they could choose one that suited the feeling best. At the beginning we had some problems with throwing the saucer but it got better. At the end, the students started to think up new sentences to practice feelings on them. Sometimes it was very funny. For example: It hurts me!- you are happy. When I wanted to stop the activity and to move to the classroom I was not successful. We continued till the end of the lesson.

Evaluation:

Sometimes when my students make dialogues it lacks emotion in their conversations. In spite of using accurate grammar structures and words, having good ideas for plots, they cannot make the dialogues sound natural. This short and easy drama activity showed my students that the information can be enriched by prosodic features as intonation, pitch, or changed rhythm to make the speech more natural and interesting. The students were familiar with these communication strategies in their mother tongue but they found it more difficult to use them in a foreign language.

During the activity they realised that they can play with the words and the tones, intonations and rhythms in a foreign language as well as in their mother tongue. While they tried different tones to modify the message in the sentence, they explored the language from a different angle, from an angle of slight changes of intonation, rhythm, and sound.

The flying saucer was just a medium to lessen students' inhibition to act or pretend and I think it offered them a sense of security.

The drama activity seemed to be successful because all the students participated and were interested. Besides, the activity established verity of the thesis claiming that drama activities motivate learners and help them explore the language. As the students played with the tones and intonations, they dealt with the language and thus developed their speaking skills.

Lesson Plan 7- The Market

Group Stamina - Adults

Textbook: extension of the topic *Shopping* (*New Headway Pre-intermediate*, p.35,36,37)

Aim:

- to practise vocabulary connected with the topic *Shopping* along with students' speaking skills
- to practise prices

Objectives:

- students are able to lead the conversation focused on shopping
- students are able to persuade, bargain with a shop assistant, refuse the goods
- students are able to speak in a free way

Stage 1:

The teacher asks students about their experience with shopping in the markets. Students talk on this theme. The teacher tells students his/her experience with Asian markets.

Aim: to introduce the topic - *Market*, to arouse students' interest

Time: 4 minutes

Stage 2:

The teacher sets a scene and a placement - An Asian market. The teacher divides students into two groups. The first group are assistants and the second are tourists. The assistants think up three items they want to sell and the tourists who are leaving the country have to spend a certain amount of money (\$20). The tourists go round "the stalls" and talk to the assistants who try to sell all their items. The items that are sold by assistants do not need to be real. The assistants can sell, for example, the blue colour from the sky, a flying carpet, a perfume that attracts all men, and so on. The assistants should persuade the tourists to buy these things. They can persuade them by the price offer, argumentation or describing advantages. The customers bargain the lowest price if they are interested in the offered thing. Students talk at the same time and the teacher goes around listening to them.

Aim: to practice students' speaking skills, to practice the phrases connected with shopping

Time: 12 minutes

Stage 3:

The tourists make a summary. They comment on what they have bought. They explain the reasons why they have bought it and how much has it been. Then they elect the best shop assistant.

Aim: to check the task

Time: 4 minutes

Reflection:

As all my students were experienced with shopping on the markets, they spoke about their experience willingly. Some of them also visited Asian markets so the activity was easy to imagine for them.

Firstly, when I said that they could start, nobody moved. The students did not want to move around the class, they were stuck to the tables and chairs. They thought they would be able to make the dialogues at the tables. That is why, I had to appeal to them to move around the class, to start conversations with all the assistants.

Although the beginning of the activity was a little bit hesitant, later the activity proved to be motivating because all the students talked a lot and tried to fulfil the task. The assistants were creative and they sold, for example, an old dying camel, a tse-tse fly which was caught in Africa, Michael Jackson' skin, etc. The best shop assistant was elected a man who pretended to be a real Asian assistant as he used only basic English. The summaries were funny and the choice of goods wide.

Evaluation:

Since I do this activity more often, I know that it works very well with all the levels of students. Therefore, I launched it in this class and it again went well. This drama activity is successful due to several reasons.

First, it provides a space for communication without performing in front of the audience. All the students can talk at the same time and they are secure enough to experiment with the language because nobody listens to them (except an assistant) and corrects them.

Second, the activity is not focused on accuracy, and so students enjoy the possibility of speaking freely without ongoing correction. That is why, they talk more than

normally, they do not need to be aware of mistakes. Moreover, the activity is not demanding on the students' lexicon. If they do not know any words, they can show them, express them by movements, gestures, or just skip them.

In addition, students have a possibility to choose the level which suits them best. The assistants can sell normal things like food and use common phrases, but they can also show their creativity and think up extraordinary objects or bargain with the customers. They can also add acting to their dialogues, but if they do not want, they can just speak.

Besides, students are motivated as shopping belongs among the activities they are familiar with. Especially the setting of the activity is motivating because students imagine they are abroad and try to communicate with people who do not understand their mother tongue. As they travel a lot, this activity shows to be helpful and purposeful.

To sum it up, the activity fulfilled its aim by motivating the students and getting them talk a lot. Next, the students were not inhibited from speaking because they did not need to perform and the dialogues passed off at the same time. As they spoke all the time, they practised their speaking skills and thus developed them. This fact proved the validity of my project thesis.

III. PROJECT EVALUATION

A. DISCUSSION OF CONCLUSIONS

My Professional Project thesis states that drama activities can improve the students' speaking skills by helping students to remove inhibitions and provide motivation to speak and explore the language. The project was focused on trying to confirm this statement.

According to the study of related literature, dramatising can be an effective tool in teaching the language, especially speaking. The experts, for example Doughill, Maley, Duff, Wessels, highlight the implementation of drama activities into teaching the foreign language because they can bring considerable benefits and thus facilitate students' learning process. As a result of the use of drama activities in English teaching, ...“each student may be able to improve his or her ability to produce the target language, lower anxiety, acquire many of the nonverbal nuances of the language, and improve the ability to work cooperatively in group situations” (Richard-Amato,1988:128). In addition, drama activities are believed to release imagination and energy; in consequence, they motivate students to participate actively in their learning process.

Moreover, dramatising provides a wide range of activities dealing with various language features. The activities can be adapted to different knowledge levels, and that is why they are suitable mainly for the development of speaking.

Concerning the theories, children need an occasional chance to take risks in the language, to experiment with words and meanings. Undoubtedly, drama activities enable that.

I planned my Professional Project with literature support, and implemented it during my teaching practice. I looked up some activities (*Visual consequence, Stone Soup*), created other ones (*Flying saucer, Cooking competition*), or asked my colleges for their tips (*Market*).

After the accomplishment of the project it emerged that my assumption presented in the thesis was valid. To prove this validity I conferred with observations and evaluations that resulted during my teaching practice. The conclusion on the thesis validity issued from the following data sources:

- comments of students who were involved
- evaluation feedback and observation provided by the supervisor teacher
- my own evaluation and observation

1. Students' Comments

To find out the students' feelings, opinions, and attitudes towards the use of drama activities, I used two methods. I made brief interviews after each lesson, that I implemented a drama activity in (I asked the pupils several questions in Czech. For example: *Did you like the activity? Why did you like it?* etc.). Further, I gave students short questionnaires after a completion of the practice. I found out, from these two methods, that students generally liked the activities. I must admit that the interviews proved to give more effective feedback than from questionnaires. After the evaluation of the questionnaires I realised that I should have formulated the questions more concretely to get more accurate responses.

a) Results obtained from Group Husova (Children):

The pupils appreciated the opportunity to do something totally different from their common lessons. The majority of them liked both activities, The Stone Soup and The Cooking Competition, but the first one was more successful. They liked the fairy-tale and enjoyed performing the story. Besides, the setting of the performance was inspiring for them because they rarely use the school theatre room. They stated that they enjoyed the opportunity to act like professional actors, to use the stage and costumes and all the aids. Most of the pupils thought that drama activities were interesting because they could move and actively participate in them.

b) Results obtained from Group Stamina (Adolescents):

All students enjoyed the activity with the flying saucer. What they appreciated most was the possibility to go out to the park. The students told me that they were pleased to go outside to learn because the weather was perfect and they might have been miserable if

they had stayed in the closed classroom. They liked the aid - the flying saucer. Most students stated that they welcomed the sporting nature of this activity, the throwing and catching of the saucer. Some students liked the activity concerning the drawing of a creature. They noticed that they could release their creativity in drawings the monsters and descriptions of their characteristics.

c) Results obtained from Group Stamina (Adults):

After the market activity they laughed a lot. They liked the context of this activity because travelling is one of their biggest hobbies. They stated they would not be good customers at bargaining. Some students appreciated pretending to be Asian assistants because this role gave them the chance to use very simple English. They enjoyed the possibility not to use the correct language.

To summarise the students' opinions, most of them welcomed drama activities because they were unusual, interesting, and gave them opportunities to speak.

After I had evaluated the questionnaires (see Appendix IV), I confirmed my belief that students learn the language mostly for travelling abroad. They need English to understand and to be understood and they think that the biggest problems whilst speaking are: insufficient vocabulary, ability to understand, readiness to react, pronunciation, and inhibition to start to communicate.

Consequently, it vindicates the use of drama activities to improve students speaking skills because these activities can help them to lower or restrain the mentioned problems.

On the other hand, I was surprised by some of the children's responses. Their favourite activities were, for example, writing and translation. I found this understandable for the adult students but I did not expect it from the children.

Another fact resulting from the questionnaires was the wish for contact with a native speaker. Especially, Group Stamina (Adults) mentioned their satisfaction with the visit of my English friend in one of the lessons in the questionnaires (see Appendix V). Generally, most students miss the chance to try their English language in communication with a real English-speaking person. As the result, they are afraid to start a conversation with foreigners, and so the group of adults exploited the opportunity to talk to the native

speaker in the classroom, in their familiar territory, and valued it as the most interesting activity.

2. Supervisor Teacher's Comments

Since the supervisor teacher was present during the implementation of my project at basic school Husova, I could ask her for some comments. Her remarks were very helpful and rather positive. Although *The Cooking Competition* did not go as I had planned, she appreciated the students' involvement in the activity. In her opinion, all activities were successful and pleasurable for pupils. Further, she claimed that they corresponded with the aims: they got students to talk and provided secure environment for the pupils' affective sides. The supervisor teacher also welcomed thorough preparations of my lessons.

I also interviewed her to get her opinion on how to improve the students' speaking skills (for the questions see Appendix VI). She told me she used interesting topical resources to get pupils to talk. Afterwards, she sets projects to provide a purpose for speaking. Pupils search the information on the Internet and, then, present the findings in a lesson. Her students enjoy competitions, scenes, dialogues, and projects. She also takes advantage of drama activities successfully in language teaching because she thinks they help students to improve their speaking skills and provide a good framework for the participation of all the students, even the weaker ones, in her lessons.

3. My Comments

As for my own observations, I found out that the children at the basic school were enthusiastic about any kind of activity that was appealing and unusual enough to get them interested (even the activity I considered as very demanding for them). That was a very pleasant because I teach mainly adult students and sometimes I miss the enthusiasm and an ability to put their heart into an activity.

Surprisingly, I had no problems with discipline except for the roar of laughter during the recording (see Lesson Plan 4). But this can be attributed to the benefits of drama activities as well. As the pupils are interested and motivated enough for their participation in activities, they do not need to be naughty.

As for my adult students, I noticed that even the students who were usually passive during speaking practice got involved into the drama activities and did their best. They were not so eager as the children at basic school, but, in my opinion, they enjoyed their participation. They spoke more because the drama activities either provided a clear purpose and context or motivated them by their exclusivity.

Moreover, I think that all the students took pleasure in the movement connected with the actions. Especially, the activity with the flying saucer confirmed this assumption. Not only did the movement attract the students, but also the prompts as drawings, costumes and cooking aids encouraged them to speak.

Lastly, my observations showed that the effect of dramatising depends on the age and the previous drama experience of the students. Starting with drama activities at the students aged forty or students aged fourteen differs since thinking up a suitable activity, that will catch the attention of adults, is more demanding than inventing actions for children. Also, their reactions are not as creative and spontaneous as a children's ways of acting. However, I think that the regular use of appropriate drama activities can inspire them, in terms of their speaking skills improvement and development.

Finally, all these findings convinced me of authenticity of this Professional Project thesis.

B. MAJOR OUTCOMES

Evaluating the outcomes of this diploma work, the main findings, concerning the drama activities, which arose from my teaching experience can be summarised like this:

1. Drama activities can restrain inhibitions to speak by providing secure environment of groups, roles to hide behind, real objects, and special prompts to suggest ideas to talk about.
2. Dramatising gives students the opportunity to play with the language and thus explore it because..."the more we can experiment with different combinations of words, the better we can come to know the potential of the language we are learning" (Maley and Duff, 1982:3).
3. Drama activities set a balance between fluency and accuracy. Students have the chance to speak freely without an ongoing correction from the teacher.

4. Students can get involved in these activities even with a modest grasp of the language. The activities can be modified according to the level of the students' knowledge.
5. Drama activities offer reasons and context for purposeful speaking.
6. Dramatising is motivating. Students try to do their best to fulfil the task, even if the result is a speaking performance.
7. Drama activities are popular for the reinforcement of structures and vocabulary.
8. Students can get the communicated message across easily through dramatising. They can utilise shared knowledge, unspoken assumptions, speech fillers, pauses, nonverbal communication and so on, as in a normal conversation in their mother tongue.
9. Drama activities also help to improve students' listening skills.
10. Drama activities need careful planning not to fall flat.

C. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The research has convinced me that drama activities are effective tools for improving speaking skills (together with listening skills) and proved the validity of my thesis. Next, the practice appeared compatible with the theories presented in the first chapter of the diploma work. Last but not least, the practice showed that the students participated in activities and practised their speaking willingly. Therefore, all the data and experience gained during the Professional Project are beneficial for my present teaching practice.

Given that, I can greatly recommend the assistance of drama activities in the foreign language teaching because they work well if carefully prepared. Dramatising provides a never-ending source of activities. Although preparation can be demanding, the benefits are worth trying.

I would only suggest to start with the warm ups if the students are not used to exploiting drama activities in their learning. As they can put students into relaxed, uninhibited state in which they are more receptive and also help to prepare students for more demanding activities. In addition, dramatising is motivating on its own, and thus

enjoyable for students. It helps to overcome the students' barriers, positively influences the students' affective side and, hence, facilitates their learning process. Also, drama activities can be used for upgrading different students' skills and abilities. Despite the fact that there are still some topics to be investigated in greater depth, such as the impact of long-term use of drama activities in the foreign language teaching and the individual development of pupils, dramatising appears to be a very useful tool in the language classroom.

Finally, the outcomes of the Professional Project support the theory that drama activities provide good conditions for speaking and improving speaking skills because they are motivating and restrain inhibiting factors.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix I – Photos from the performance – The Stone Soup

Appendix II – Example of the cards with a recipe

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Appendix I – Photos from the performance The Stone Soup



Appendix II – Example of the cards with a recipe

INGREDIENTS:

100g POTATOS
100g CARROT
100g CELERY
100g PARSLEY
1 ONION
100g MAYONNAISE (SALAD - CREAM)
SALT

PUT THE BOWL INTO A
FRIDGE FOR TWO HOURS
⇒ FOR BETTER TASTE.

PUT EVERYTHING INTO
A BIG BOWL.

MIX IT AND ADD SALT
AND MAYONNAISE.

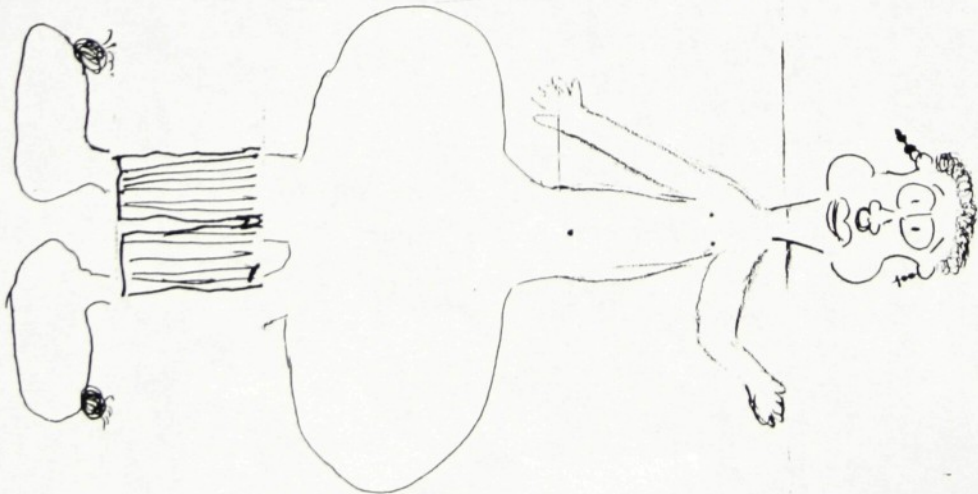
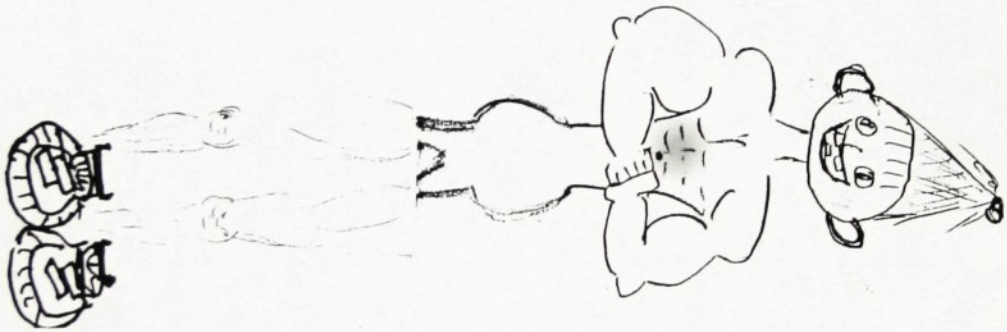
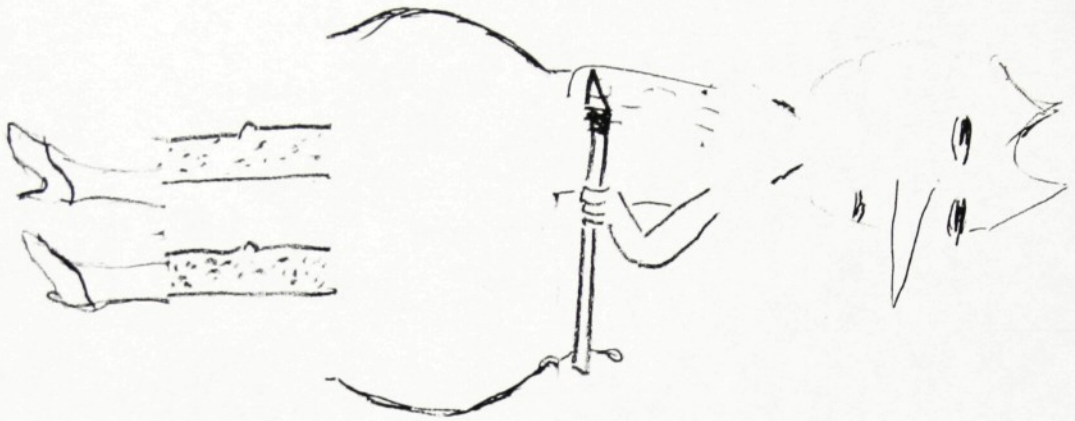
COOK VEGETABLE AND
POTATOES SEPARATELY.

SLICE (OR CHOP) POTATOES
AND VEGETABLE.

CLEAN AND WASH
POTATOES AND
VEGETABLE.

PEEL COLD POTATOES.

Appendix III – Example of students' drawings



Appendix IV - Evaluation: Tables and Graphs

Tabulka č. 1: Využití anglického jazyka

	cestování	studium	bydlení v zahraničí	práce na PC	práce v zahraničí	čtení a poslech textů v originále	ostatní	celkem
1. Skupina	6	3	3	1	4	0	1	18
2. Skupina	11	2	0	2	8	2	1	26
3. Skupina	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	6
Celkem	20	5	3	3	12	3	4	50

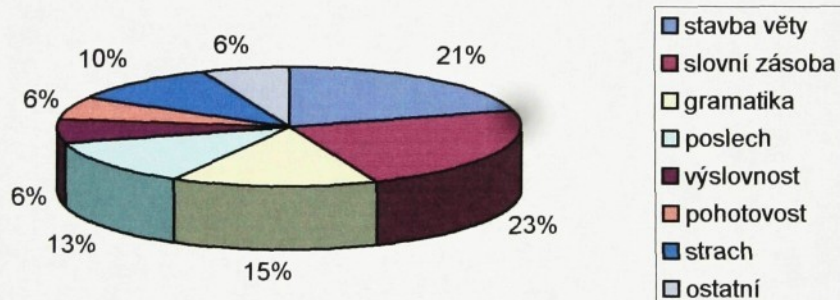


Vysvětlivky: 1. Skupina - Group Husova (Children); 10 respondentů
 2. Skupina - Group Stamina (Adolescents); 14 respondentů
 3. Skupina - Group Stamina (Adults); 5 respondentů

Tabulka číslo 2: Největší problémy při mluvení v anglickém jazyce

	stavba věty	slovní zásoba	gramatika	poslech	výslovnost	pohotovost	strach	ostatní	celkem
1. Skupina	6	2	3	1	2	0	1	2	17
2. Skupina	3	7	2	3	1	3	1	1	21
3. Skupina	1	2	2	2	0	0	3	0	10
Celkem	10	11	7	6	3	3	5	3	48

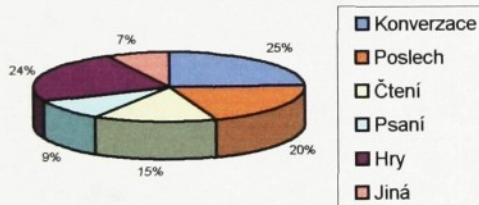
Podíl největších překážek při mluvení v anglickém jazyce - souhrn za všechny dotazované skupiny



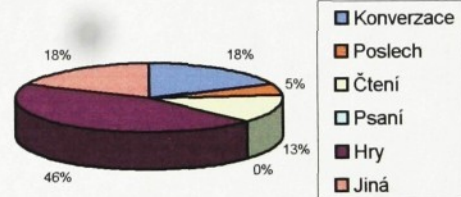
Tabulka č. 3 Nejoblíbenější aktivita versus ideální hodina anglického jazyka

		Konverzace	Poslech	Čtení	Psaní	Hry	Jiná
1. Skupina	oblíbená aktivita	6	4	5	5	3	1
	ideální hodina	3	2	2	0	7	3
2. Skupina	oblíbená aktivita	6	7	1	0	7	2
	ideální hodina	1	0	1	0	8	3
3. Skupina	oblíbená aktivita	1	0	2	0	3	1
	ideální hodina	3	0	2	0	2	1
Celkem	oblíbená aktivita	13	11	8	5	13	4
	ideální hodina	7	2	5	0	17	7
Souhrn		20	13	13	5	30	11

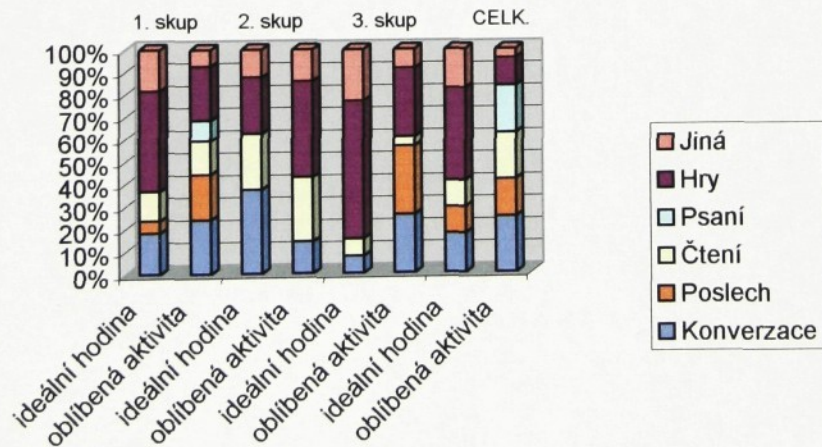
Podíl aktivit, které studenty nejvíce baví ve výuce anglického jazyka - souhrn za všechny dotazované skupiny



Podíl aktivit v "ideální", studenty navržené hodině - souhrn za všechny dotazované skupiny



Porovnání priorit oblíbenosti aktivit ve výuce anglického jazyka u jednotlivých studentů



Appendix V – Example of questionnaires

1. Group Husova (Children)

1) K čemu byste chtěli využít anglický jazyk?

Hodlám se přestěhovat (třeba do USA), kde by se to mohlo hodit, či v zahraničním obchodu nebo studium v zahraničí

2) Pokud mluvíte anglicky, co vám dělá největší problémy?

Slovní zásoba, gramatika, tzv. "obalování" vět (přidáváním přívlastků, předmětů atd. ...)

3) Jaký typ aktivit vás v hodině anglického jazyka nejvíce baví?

- a) MLUVENÍ
 b) POSLECH
 c) ČTENÍ
 d) PSANÍ
 e) JINÁ (KTERÁ?)

4) Která konkrétní aktivita vás bavila a rádi jste se do ní zapojili?

Knihy - protože zpravidla vyprávím
 Divadlo - protože mě to baví

5) Jak by vypadala hodina anglického jazyka, kterou si sami vymyslíte?

Ne moc psaní, lehké procvičování popř. nové látky ke které budeme něco odpočinkového (kny ...)

1) K čemu byste chtěli využít anglický jazyk?

v práci, v Anglii - cestování

2) Pokud mluvíte anglicky, co vám dělá největší problémy?

dát ~~na~~ tu větu dohromady, přeložit si to správně, že mně někdo rozumí

3) Jaký typ aktivit vás v hodině anglického jazyka nejvíce baví?

- a) MLUVENÍ
 b) POSLECH
 c) ČTENÍ
 d) PSANÍ
 e) JINÁ (KTERÁ?)

4) Která konkrétní aktivita vás bavila a rádi jste se do ní zapojili?

Ukoně úsp - bylo to jiné než normální hodina v učebně

5) Jak by vypadala hodina anglického jazyka, kterou si sami vymyslíte?

Knihy, poslech, čtení, jít na

Appendix V – Example of questionnaires

2. Group Stamina (Adolescents)

1) K čemu byste chtěli využít anglický jazyk?

cestovat, lepší využít internetu,
možnost přeložit do anglicky psané texty

2) Pokud mluvíte anglicky, co vám dělá největší problémy?

nedostatek slovíček, největší problém při je
poslech

3) Jaký typ aktivit vás v hodině anglického jazyka nejvíce baví?

bez gramatiky, se zajímavým tématem, ~~žádná~~
opakování

4) Která konkrétní aktivita vás bavila a rádi jste se do ní zapojili?

čtení a výtvarných činností postav

5) Jak by vypadala hodina anglického jazyka, kterou si sami vymyslíte?

žádná a v rámci školy možná

1) K čemu byste chtěli využít anglický jazyk?

Anglický jazyk bych chtěla hlavně využít, když budu cestovat.
Také až se budu ucházet o zaměstnání.

2) Pokud mluvíte anglicky, co vám dělá největší problémy?

Když mluvím anglicky, tak mi dělá problém výslovnost a také
uspořádání slov ve větě.

3) Jaký typ aktivit vás v hodině anglického jazyka nejvíce baví?

Hry se slovy, rčení, kufi, nebo když mi někdo vysvětluje slova jiným
výrazem.

4) Která konkrétní aktivita vás bavila a rádi jste se do ní zapojili?

Hra se slovy. V parku s létajícím balónem.

5) Jak by vypadala hodina anglického jazyka, kterou si sami vymyslíte?

Nejprve slovní hřídky, dále konverzace na vybrané téma.
Také vysvětlení nějakých frází, které se dají využít v běžném
životě.

Appendix V – Example of questionnaires

3. Group Stamina (Adults)

1) K čemu byste chtěli využít anglický jazyk?

Být schopni se dohodnout na cestě o dovolené,
umět si přečíst základní informace

2) Pokud mluvíte anglicky, co vám dělá největší problémy?

průběh

3) Jaký typ aktivit vás v hodině anglického jazyka nejvíce baví?

hra, konverzace, gramatika

4) Která konkrétní aktivita vás bavila a rádi jste se do ní zapojili?

Konverzace o pravidelné měření

5) Jak by vypadala hodina anglického jazyka, kterou si sami vymyslíte?

učbu gramatiky, konverzace na praktický témata
hra

1) K čemu byste chtěli využít anglický jazyk?

z dohledování VS

2) Pokud mluvíte anglicky, co vám dělá největší problémy?

rozvojem mluvením slova, rozumím se vyjádřit,
při jazykové samoplérování = sloky

3) Jaký typ aktivit vás v hodině anglického jazyka nejvíce baví?

čtení

4) Která konkrétní aktivita vás bavila a rádi jste se do ní zapojili?

rozbor o podléhání mluvením

5) Jak by vypadala hodina anglického jazyka, kterou si sami vymyslíte?

slovníček a spojení věty - poslechni
čtení
rozbor
radat psaní DV

Appendix VI – The questions for the interview

The questions used for the interview with the supervisor teacher (I interviewed her in Czech):

- 1/ Jak se snažíte rozvíjet mluvení v hodinách anglického jazyka?
- 2/ Jaké činnosti či aktivity se Vám osvědčily nejvíce? Z jakých důvodů?
- 3/ Zapojují se studenti do aktivit rozvíjejících jejich mluvní dovednosti ochotně?
- 4/ Máte zkušenosti s použitím dramatických aktivit ve výuce anglického jazyka?
- 5/ Jaké druhy dramatických aktivit používáte a s jakými úspěchy?