

أسلوب مسرحي حديث في تعليم المحادثة باللغة الأجنبية

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو شرح أسلوب مسرحي حديث في تعليم اللغات الأجنبية تم تطبيقه مؤخرا في البرنامج المكثف في قسم اللغة الأنكليزية وآدابها في الجامعة الأردنية في تدريس لغة المحادثة . الأسلوب يسمى « استراتيجية التخاطب » Strategic Interaction .

يعتمد هذا الأسلوب المسرحي على مبادئ ديناميات الجماعة كما انه يشجع انماط التدريس الموجه وغير الموجه في تعليم اللغة الأجنبية بحيث يقتصر دور المدرس على الإرشاد التأهيلي وليس على التسلط .
تم ادخال هذا الأسلوب مؤخرا في مناهج مبحث اللغة الأنكليزية المعدلة للمراحل الثانوية لتدريس المحادثة .

just for you. You discover that it is impossible for you to eat this kind of food for some reasons . How can you explain that to your ahosts. Your hosts insist on you to try to eat, since they are not convinced about the reasons you give for not being able to eat. What do you say to get out of this diffiult situation?

suffers from a heart problem. The parents try to exert pressure on the teacher to raise the grade, but the teacher doesn't want to make any changes. The parents and the teacher argue about this problem. How can they solve it?

6. Scenario title: A job outside Amman

You have been offered a new job and a promotion at the University of Yarmouk in Irbid. This means that your family have leave to Irbid with you. Your wife and children do not want to move. Should you accept the position in Irbid and advance in your career, or should you stay in Amman to please your family without any job promotion for the rest of your life? How can you convince your family about your plan?

7. Scenario title: Going to college

You have just graduated from high school and your parents expect you to attend the University of Jordan. Since your parents didn't have a chance to go to college (they want very much for you to get a good education in order to be a doctor or an engineer. However, you want to work only your family farm because you think that university education is not as promising as working on a farm. Try to convince your parents about your point of view.

8. Scenario title: The nursing home

You live with your father who has recently suffered a stroke and is confined to bed. He needs a lot of care and this has become very difficult for you since you only both live together. Your friends advise you to put him in a nursing home. If you don't, then you will have to quit your job. You finally decide to talk to him about the nursing home, but you are quite worried about his reaction to the idea. What are you going to do when you discuss the matter with him?

9. Scenario title: How can I say "no"?

You are on a study programme abroad in Italy and become close friends with an Italian friend, who invites you to his/ her house for dinner. When you arrive, your friend's mother greets you with great kindness and proudly announces that she has prepared her specialty

Appendix

1. Scenario title: Let me go home, please!
While travelling abroad, you hired a car from a rent car agent. After driving for several days in the foreign country, you are stopped by a traffic officer who discovers that your international driving licence has expired, He wants to take you for investigation at the police department, but you are bound to fly back home in two hours ' time How can you convince him that you must return the rented car first, and then catch your plane?
2. Scenario title: Military service
Just as you arrived at Amman International airport , you discover that you had forgotten to bring your military service postponement certificate. Only a few minutes were left for the take-off of the plane How can you convince the security officer to believe you before you miss our plane?
3. Scenario title: I need to work
Nawal thinks that her husband is old-fashioned, They've only been married a few months and he wants Nawal to quit her job as a bank employee. He doesn't want his wife to work at all . He thinks he makes enough money to support them both, but Nawal's job is very important to her, and would not enjoy sitting home all day with nothing to do. How can both of them solve this problem?
4. Scenario title: A test-tube baby?
A husband and a wife have been married for ten years . They have no children. Some of their friends talked to them about having a child through test-tube baby techniques , but the wife is confused, She is worried about the moral implications of this genetic operation. Her husband, however, likes the idea and has no objection to this at all.How can he talk to his wife's parents about this matter even if they disagree with him .
5. Scenario title: My grade is unfair, sir!
You are a high school teacher. You gave a student a low grade on his paper, and he becomes very angry. The student's parents are also angry . and think that the grade is quite unfair .The student

necessary to develop measure of performance evaluation in order to assess the speaking proficiency. A four-point scale was developed for this purpose. The four points used for rating included pronunciation, structure, vocabulary , and fluency . Two instructors participated in assessing a student's score in the final examination. The final examination was the only evaluation used towards the end of the term.

Conclusion:

Strategic Interaction, which draws from communicative trends in contemporary language teaching is an approach to language Instruction that aims at promoting learning through conversation. The approach requires that students create scenarios in which they act out problematic issues in a dramatic fashion. The dramatic tension and conflict presented in each scenario. provide students with an opportunity to experience emotional and personal involvement to play roles that fit their personalities. A good scenario based on real life roles can always create deep involvement in acting (5) .

Strategic Interaction can be used with language learners at different levels of proficiency. The approach has been recently incorporated into the revised English curriculum of the secondary public school textbooks. It is also being used for teaching conversational skills in the Intensive English Programme at the University of Jordan.

(5) The Appendix includes nine scenarios which were used during a study term for students at the Intensive programme. The number of scenarios to be covered per semester is not usually planned in advance .

pre-SI implementation workshops could, for instance, be given to local high school language teacher ; these could be later complemented by follow-up sessions during which instructors using this method could share their experience and reflect on it in light of the original model . SI if carefully implemented, will prove to be a rewarding method for teachers who are truly concerned with promoting foreign language study and developing interacional skills in their students .

Difficulties in Implementing SI

Some skeptical students exhibited uneasiness about not having a textbook. This problem expected to arise since students in general, have been accustomed to using textbooks throughout their school education. Language study, even for practising the conversation skill, essentially requires a textbook according to those students. To handle this problem, it was necessary to tell students that Instead of following a structured book , an alternative would be chlogical logs – The logs contain all language forms and vocabulary items that are discussed and introduced in the scenarios. In other words, students were required to write down the language material that resulted from the real use in the classroom rather than from an imposed teaching mateiral of a textbook.

Another problem in implementing the teaching approach was that students with different language levels approached a scenario in different ways. Weak students tended to resolve the scenario conflict quickly, using short sentences and a mininum vocabulary . The waek students apparently felt unsecure and shy about their language . However, other student responded favorably to the scenario conflicts and spent langer time in acting as well as in attempting to use more vocabulary and structure . The instructor tried to handle this problem by assigning the compe- tent students to act with the weakones in developing the scenarios. In this way the linguistically insecure students got a better support from their competent classmates and possible conversation breakdowns during scenario performance were avoided .

The last problem in applying the SI Method was in making objec- tive evaluation of student progress. This problem was caused Owing to the difficult nature of oral language testing in general. It was. therefore,

planned, the debriefing stage can escalate into useful doses of language in put. The writer's experience suggests that students can acquire considerable language abilities via the scenario discussion alone. I usually ask my students to keep a personal notebook in order to write vocabulary and grammar items, idioms, and speech expressions which they have learnt, or which were significant to them .

- 2) The teacher can go over serious language errors which he had observed in student performances . Moreover, the teacher must explain grammar points when and as they relate directly to the communicative content of the performed scenarios .
- 3- Written follow-up, requiring students to write down their reactions comments, and observations about a particular scenario in a paragraph form. In this homework writing task, students can write what they liked or disliked about the scenario. In other words, students are asked to write their critique of what they have observed during the performance stage .

SI at Jordanian secondary schools :

Strategic Interaction has been recently introduced in the revised edition of the English textbooks of the public schools in Jordan as a supplementary activity for teaching conversational skills. Obviously, whenever a method is adopted , certain adjustments could be made while retaining the basic approach of the method, to meet the needs of both learner and teacher. SI is no exception . Any adjustment can be made as long as students are given a chance to generate and use language for the communication of real meaning.

Our experience has shown us that the SI design is capable of renewing class interest and enthusiasm at each scenario creation in the English classroom, Stated simply, the method encourages both teacher and student creativity and spontaneity. On this fact alone, SI deserves to be explained to the many instructors for whom the audiolingual method is unfortunately, still the answer to English language education(4) .

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- (4) SI was explained and demonstrated to Jordanian English language teachers at workshops organized by the Ministry of Education in Sept. 1988 . The workshops , which were given across the country aimed at introducing the revised Oxford course textbooks to the secondary stage teachers.

It should be emphasized here that on no account must the performance be interrupted by the teacher for correction in language use. Furthermore, the teacher must expect breakdowns in communication while students are performing, but he/she must not interfere in order to avoid creating a threatening class atmosphere. To handle communication breakdowns, I always allow performing students to consult others in the class for help or advice. This kind of consultation may provide a good opportunity for group learning process. The teacher may also observe some students experiencing a feeling of nervousness when performing in front of the class when they act for the first time. I usually tell my students to expect this kind of feeling since it is normal at the beginning of acting, but things can get better later. Experiencing a feeling of nervousness when performing could also be attributed to the conflicting nature of the roles in the scenario, which usually require a spontaneous verbal reaction. It could be precisely this kind of anxiety which, according to Gattengo, promotes mental energy that contributes to language growth. (3) Debriefing: This is a stage for evaluating performance and for learning. The teacher's role at this stage is more directive in nature than his/her role in the other stages.

Activities at this stage may take a variety of forms:

- 1) A guided discussion of different group performances in terms of language structure and content. Discussion of language includes suggested changes to make structure reflect the informal level of spoken English. It also includes changes for using appropriate words or expressions. On the other hand, discussion of content is meant to make the performed scenarios closer to real-life roles in case there were inappropriate actions for a particular role. The discussion can also include suggestions for alternate directions a specific scenario could have taken. The worksheets prepared by non-participating students during the performance stage can be used as a basis for discussion. This kind of guided discussion in itself provides all students with another opportunity for speaking in the target language in addition to playing roles in a scenario. Therefore, if carefully
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- (3) Gattengo, C. The common sense of Teaching Foreign languages. New York: Educational Solutions, Inc. 1976, p. 9.

He wants to take you for investigation at the police department, but you are bound to fly back home in two hours' time. How can you convince him that you must return the rented car first, and then catch your plane?

By working through this kind of interactional confrontation in the target language, students need to find verbal expressions and conversational features appropriate to the scenario strategies. Different personalities of students will emerge when they work together in assigning roles, discussing plans for winning the encounter, and solving problems. Competent and extrovert students will likely to support the work of the weaker and quieter ones by explaining to them the content of a message, or by creating for them minor roles to be played during the rehearsal stage.

During the rehearsal stage students work in groups of no more than 8-10 (a class of 30 students can be divided into three groups, and each group meets with the instructor once a week). Students then start developing roles they choose to play. They plan possible strategies or counter strategies that could be used effectively during interaction. As an instructor, I only act as an advisor at this stage, answering language questions which deal with the scenario situation - questions regarding vocabulary items, structure, or verb forms. The rehearsal period can last from five to ten minutes with advanced level students such as in the case of our students in the programme. However, intermediate or beginning students may need a longer period of time.

Performance: Each group of students performs its scenario, while the rest of the students observe performance. The teacher's role at this stage is that of an evaluator. The teacher is also joined in the evaluator role by those students not performing. Observing students are given worksheets to help with the task of role analysis, language use, or any remark about performances. Their remarks on the answer sheet require answering questions such as: 1) was the scenario conversation realistic? What changes should be made? What language errors were observed?

These remarks are later brought up for discussion at the debriefing stage in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the scenario played, or to see how well speakers played their assumed roles. I sometimes asked non-participating students to write down their reactions to a performance in a form of a paragraph to be given as homework in case there was no time to discuss all their comments during the debriefing stage.

in such a way that they must make a decision. The following is an example of the scenario which was first given to students.

Title: Give me the news straight!

Role A: You've just had a rather serious heart attack and are confined to the hospital. Your doctor seems hesitant to tell you about your condition. Work out a plan to get him/her to tell you what your chances for a complete recovery.

Role B: You are a doctor who is treating a patient with a heart condition. This patient has just had a heart attack and is in the hospital. He doesn't know it yet, but he has just won the national lottery and is a rich man. How will you tell him this news without exciting him so much that he might have another heart attack?

Students were reminded that the element of tension in the scenario was intended to motivate them to talk about something in a serious way. Namely, the tension was to be created by dissimilar vested interests of personalities who happen to encounter each other and the aim is to gain this encounter by using strategies and counter-strategies. Students were then directed to work in groups and prepare roles required by the scenario. These roles involve a misunderstanding. They are roles many people could find themselves in. Moreover, this scenario is open-ended in the sense that it presents alternatives to players while acting, and the exact course of the scenario can not be predicted. The interaction between students playing the two roles often begins in a state of ambiguity. For example, students with the role of the patient need to use strategies or tactics in order to get the information desired about his/her health. At the same time, the doctor-player needs to think of ways to give the patient the news about winning the lottery very carefully. Language, then, is generated from the use of strategies and counter strategies in order to motivate actions to personal goals. I have found out that scenarios having a lot of tension can be very interesting and challenging to students. For example, the following scenario is a favourite one among students:

Title: Let me go home, please!

While travelling abroad, you hired a car from a rent car agent. After driving for several days in the foreign country, you are stopped by a traffic officer who discovers that your international driving licence has expired.

invitations. The transactional dimension is reflected by the response the speaker chooses, thus allowing him/her to exercise his/her options and take a position. The interactional dimension colors the response of the speaker, and assigns to it a role reflecting either a willing, enthusiastic companion (response 1), and unwilling but polite friend (response 2), or an indecisive but probably unwilling acquaintance (response 3).

Applying the SI model :

The SI model was used with the intensive program students during the 1987/1988 academic year. On the first day of class, instructors presented an outline about the nature of the course to the students, explaining objectives and procedures. The students were familiarized with the methodology and the basic philosophy of SI. The following brief introduction was read out to the students:

Strategic Interaction is more than an English grammar course filled with drills and rules for language formation. We will be more interested this year in using English to convey meaningful messages in the framework of conversation .

The students responded enthusiastically to the prospect of having an opportunity to speak English. The students were made aware that there was no syllabus to be followed and that the English course would grow out of their input in the creation of scenarios and other class activities.

The group process in SI is a central component since small group work allows students to profit from each other's knowledge of English in the creation of scenarios and it also enhances a spirit of cooperation. Moreover, since all students had studied English for at least six years, the concept of group work can be a good means of tapping what is already in their linguistic repertoire and of expanding their knowledge. The following is a description of how classroom activities were followed in implementing - the method .

Phases of Instruction:

The management of time in the classroom was divided into three stages: rehearsal, performance and Debriefing. During the rehearsal phase, students were presented with a scenario which contains an element of dramatic tension. Tension-building situations help learners to be involved

Strategic Interaction:

SI is a recently developed teaching method which can be characterized as predominantly communicative. This approach, which stresses language use and interaction in discourse, underlines the fact that learning can best be promoted if students use language strategically in a purposeful way. Furthermore, it emphasizes that learners rather than teachers or syllabuses are the ones who decide what learning needs are in a foreign language instruction. By giving equal importance to both language forms and functions, the SI classroom activities depend on involving students in conversation through scenarios. The yardstick for successful and authentic interaction in SI depends on the open-ended scenario in which students have a stake in achieving a desired outcome. To do this, learners are given distinct communicative goals to achieve. They are free to follow different solutions in order to reach these goals.

Di Pietro (1982) identifies three dimensions of conversational language (1):

1. informational, which contains the grammatical and the semantic elements;
2. transactional, the means by which actions are motivated in order to achieve a goal through the use of strategies and counterstrategies in solving problems and
3. interactional, which shows what to send in a message in order to fulfill a need and execute roles of various types.

An example of these three dimensions at work simultaneously in a linguistic encounter may be seen in the following exchange:

Would you like to eat at a restaurant?

(1)	(2)	(3)
Yes, Why not?	I can't, I'm too busy.	I don't know; let me think .

Each response embodies all three dimensions of language use as outlined by Di Pietro. On the informational level, the replies suggest the necessity for knowledge of linguistic forms that are used for accepting or declining

- (1) Robert Di Pietro. 1982. The Open-Ended Scenario : A New Approach to Conversation. In TESOL Quarterly, volume 16, number 1, 15-20.

not stem from unmotivated learners whose dearth of grammatical knowledge impedes their foreign language growth. How much longer can we give our students years of English language learning that yield only minimum returns for their investment? If students and teachers agree that language learning and teaching should be firmly rooted in a philosophy of language in which communication of meaningful messages is central, then new teaching and learning designs for classroom use will emerge to lead them to their goal.

The Intensive program:

This programme is administered and staffed by the English Department and its faculty members. The programme offers instruction ten months a year including a summer term. Students who enroll in the programme expect to apply for undergraduate study to major in English. The length of study is fifteen weeks, and by the end of the term students are required to sit for an examination which determines whether or not they can join the English Department. Students are usually scheduled for a minimum of twenty hours of EFL instruction per week. Instruction covers courses in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The conversation course:

It was decided at the outset that the English syllabus for the speaking skill must move away from the character of traditional school education, that is, to avoid much as possible features such as:

1. English viewed as a content course (lecturing) rather than a skill;
2. a disproportionate ratio of teacher talk to student talk;
3. teaching for recognition but not necessarily for language use and production;
4. an emphasis on covering a certain set of linguistic items without much flexibility concerning students' needs.

It was, therefore, decided to adopt a theatrical approach for teaching conversation. The nonconventional approach to be followed was Strategic Interaction (SI) by Robert Di Pietro (1987) (1).

(1) Di Pietro Robert. 1987. Strategic Interaction: Learning languages Through scenarios—Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

A Theatrical Approach For Teaching Conversational skills

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to report an application of an innovative teaching method, Strategic Interaction (SI), which aims at developing oral language proficiency. SI is built on the principles of group dynamics. It advocates the use of both directive and nondirective teaching modes, casting the teacher in the role of a guide. The author taught and developed instructional procedures representative of SI for teaching conversation skills for students of the Intensive English Programme at the University of Jordan. SI has also been incorporated into the English curriculum of the government secondary stage textbooks.

Introduction:

Complaints about the inability of our students in many Jordanian public schools to use English in speaking and in writing raise some important questions on current classroom procedures for teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Why, after eight years of language learning, are students unable to communicate effectively using the language they have so painstakingly studied? How often have we heard students say that they can at best read and translate their second language, but would be incapable of conveying orally basic needs and desires so important in the activity of daily life? Students often report that they are afraid of being required to perform spontaneously in class, a formidable task for anyone whose only exposure to a foreign language is structure drills, grammar rules, and reading translation. It is becoming obvious to English teachers that the failure of their students to acquire some ability in communication does