Improvement of Project Managers’ Communication Competence in Foreign Language through Drama Techniques

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Abstract:
This paper analyses the possibility of using drama as one of the techniques of communication competence of Czech and Slovak project managers, non-native speakers, improvement. It is aimed at investigating the effects of drama techniques and their use in second language (English) acquisition. The essential of the study is not to inform about all the methods available, but to determine the beneficial outcomes of those practices. The search was carried out in 10 workshops Project management 3.0 realized by company Projectman. The participants were students of A2 to B2 language level.

It comprises of two parts: Theoretical part introduces generally known drama techniques and their possible use in the target language teaching and learning. Practical part encompasses detailed description of activities applied in workshops Project management 3.0 and their assessment.

The results of the study indicate that drama techniques are valid tools for developing project managers’ English communication competence. It also confirms project managers’ positive attitude toward those practices. Many interactive activities were used which helped to create an environment which was both, enjoyable and effective.

Keywords: Drama, Project Manager, Communication Competence, Drama Techniques, Multiple Intelligences, Motivation.

Introduction
Globalization and modern ITCs have brought opportunities to establish global contacts. The linguistic diversity we encounter every day and the need to communicate across language boundaries almost naturally reinforces people's desire to learn the language of neighbouring countries, as well as those used in the playground, at work and / or in the
market. This process is steadily growing, which is caused by internal and international migration, urbanization or the conclusion of exogamous marriages. In the linguistic field, there is a changing demography, where language shifting and learning are unfinished processes requiring new and creative ways of language management at all levels of education.

Part of this shift lies in communicative competence (instead of linguistic competence), which thus becomes an important success factor for individuals, institutions and companies. It is therefore important to look at communication from a broader perspective and to understand it as a function that encompasses and overlaps with everyday activities at individual or institutional level. Naturally, this issue does not concern the monolingual world. Communication is gradually beginning to be perceived as abstract capital, communication capital. Communication capital is undoubtedly part of the sphere of interest of intellectual capital.

However, the enormous funds that educational institutions and companies invested in language learning did not deliver the expected results. The reality is increasingly pointing out that communication practice reflected in genres is as important as the characteristics of the languages concerned. Thus, the genres of informal and formal communication practice follow the specific idiosyncratic rules of the culture. These can range from well-defined rules for strongly structured opportunities to fewer formal situations characterized by a choice of generic language means. Although genres define the framework of social interaction and how it interacts, they can never fully control or predict the meaning that the context will give to linguistic means. It is conditioned by the intersection of genres.

This paper analyses the possibility of using drama as one of the techniques of communication competence of Czech and Slovak project managers, non-native speakers, improvement.

Material and methods
We analyse the possibility of using drama as one of the techniques of communication competence of Czech and Slovak project managers, non-native speakers, improvement.

The presented paper has a classical structuring of the research work consisting of a theoretical and an analytical part.

The theoretical part is focused on the description of the current state of the problem with the use of research literature and analysis of documents, in this case professional-literary and electronic resources with the topic of project manager communication competence. Next this theoretical part refers to historical experience / theoretical context with drama techniques in education worldwide, especially in the countries with relatively long tradition of drama in education, such as the United Kingdom or USA, with strong tradition of school theatre and theatrical education activities, and a brief look into the history of education in the Czech Republic.

The study of these literary sources demonstrates the current level of knowledge of the problem, which is the absolute basis of any further research. Content-causal analysis was used.

The analytical part refers to the presence and use of drama techniques in education and language teaching of adults. We shall try to find answers on these key questions:

KQ1: Can the drama techniques help project managers become more interested and involved in workshop´s classroom activities, and integrate the newly acquired knowledge?

KQ2: Can these activities be considered helpful not only in English language acquisition, but also in preparing project managers for specific communicative situations and various roles that they can later encounter in their lives and professions?

KQ3: Can these activities improve the communication competence of project managers?

The research sample of the respondents was intentional, 113 respondents working as a project manager in various industry branches on national economy of Czech and Slovak Republic were addressed. The participants were mostly certified
project managers of B2 to C2 language level. The search was carried out in 10 workshops Project management 3.0 realized by company Projectman. The analyse of the possibility of using drama as one of the techniques of communication competence of Czech and Slovak project managers, non-native speakers, improvement was carried from January 2017 till July 2019.

Table 1: Respondents’ characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>women</th>
<th>men</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level B2</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<td>Level C1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level C2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: own

Overview of the current state of the issue

Project Manager Competence

Before discussing the communication competences that the project manager should need to develop, we first take a closer look at the term ‘competence’. According to Weinert (2001), we know, in general, what the terms “competence”, “competencies”, “competent behavior” or “competent person” mean, without being able to precisely define or clearly differentiate them. Words given as synonyms or related terms are “skill”, “ability”, “capability”, “capacity” and “proficiency”. For example, “competence” is defined in Webster's dictionary as “fitness or ability”. If one considers the Latin roots and historical variations in meanings ascribed to competence, it also is understood to mean “cognizance” or “responsibility”.

Competence is generally defined as consisting of integrated pieces of knowledge, skills and attitudes as cited in Lizzio & Wilson (2004) or Baartman & de Bruijn (2011). Aligned with this ‘KSA’ definition, most standards for professional competence delineate cognitive, behavioral and emotional aspects of practice, including those that may not be measurable (Epstein & Hundert, 2002). The KSA definition of competence is sometimes also defined as “knowledge, skills and abilities” (Quiñones & Ehrenstein, 1997). And although the term “ability” may be considered as a synonym of “competence” (Weinert, 2001), making its mentioning redundant, this interpretation of competence became popular in the context of education and training, as it refers to the outcomes of learning (Quiñones & Ehrenstein, 1997). Some consider the “ability” interpretation of the “A” in KSA also ‘politically correct’ as “it may be deemed incorrect to change someone’s attitude if they behaved correctly” (Quiñones, 2012). However, it can be argued that in preparation of functioning as a professional, we need to look beyond present behavior, as a present correct behavior does not always equal a correct future behavior (Quiñones, 2012).

IPMA, in their ICB4 (2018), concur to the “abilities” interpretation of KSA, by defining competence as “the application of knowledge, skills and abilities in order to achieve the desired result”. By including the result orientation in this definition, IPMA emphasizes the functional approach (Weinert, 2001) to competence: competence is assumed to be prerequisite for adequate functioning on the job (Eraut, 1994; Hager et al., 1990). A potential explanation for IPMA’s preference for the “abilities” interpretation could be that “attitude” is extremely difficult to measure or assess, as was indicated by past IPMA vice-president Stacy Goff (Goff, 2006). And, as the ICB4 is used as baseline for professional certification, the measurement or assessment of the competences and competence elements is an important goal of the ICB. For the purpose of the analysis in this paper, we prefer the “knowledge, skills and attitudes” definition of competence, as it is the original definition of competence (dating back to Banathy, 1968), it relates to the well-known Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) of cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude) and psychomotor (skills) domains of learning (Laird, 1985) and it is the more complete definition. In fact, many consider “attitude” as the most influential component, thereby reformulating the “KSA” acronym to “ASK” (Attitude-Skills-Knowledge).

Interest in the role of the project manager and aspects of competence in that role can be traced back to an article by Gaddis in the Harvard Business Review of 1959 (Gaddis, 1959) and another Harvard Business Review article, by Lawrence and Lorsch, in 1967 on the ‘New management job: the integrator’.
then, much has been written in project management texts (Kerzner, 1998; Meredith and Mantel, 1995; Dinsmore, 1993; Turner, 1993; Pinto, 1998) magazine (Dewhirst, 1996) and journal articles (Einsiedel, 1987) about what it takes to be an effective project manager, culminating with Frame’s work on Project Management Competence published in 1999.

The primary research based reports on the subject began to appear in the early to mid-1970’s based on the investigations of Thamhain, Gemmill and Wilemon into the skills and performance of project managers (Cleland & King, 1988; Gemmill, 1974; Thamhain & Gemmill, 1974; Thamhain & Wilemon, 1977a; Thamhain & Wilemon, 1978). This research plus work by Posner (1987) in the 1980’s, Gadeken in the early 1990’s (Gadeken, 1990, 1991), Ford & McLaughlin (1992) and more recently by Zimmerer & Yasin (1998), and a major literature review based study by Pettersen (1991) constitute the primary research contributions to understanding of project management competence.

As for studies concerning project success factors, research based literature on aspects of project management competence draws primarily upon the opinions of project managers and others concerning the knowledge, skills and personal attributes required by effective project personnel (Posner, 1987a; Thamhain, 1991; Ford & McLaughlin, 1992a; Wateridge, 1996; Zimmerer & Yasin, 1998a, 1998b). Gadeken’s work (Gadeken, 1990, 1991) is based on critical incident interviews with sixty US and fifteen UK project managers from Army, Navy and Air Force acquisition commands. The findings relate solely to personal attributes with identification of six behavioral competencies that distinguished outstanding project managers from their peers; five demonstrated at a slightly lower level of significance; and seven that were demonstrated but with no significant differences indicated between outstanding and average performers. This remains the most important work on behavioral competencies of project managers, but the results should be addressed with some caution due to the focus on both acquisition and the armed forces.

Pettersen (1991) conducted a major literature review concentrating on American texts to develop a list of predictors, defined in task-related terms, intended for use in selection of project managers. Morris (2000) reports on the work of the Centre for Research in the Management of Projects at UMIST, on behalf of the Association for Project Management and a number of leading UK companies, which focuses on the knowledge required by project managers. Findings are based on interviews and data collection in over one hundred and seventeen companies, seeking their opinion as to the topics they considered project management professionals should know and understand in order to be considered competent. The same process as outlined for analysis of the research-based literature concerning project success factors was applied to the eight studies mentioned above.

The competence of project managers is clearly a vital factor in the success of projects, yet it remains a quality that is difficult to quantify. The majority of research and standards development conducted to date relating to project management competence is based on the opinions of project management practitioners and others. The research reported by Crawford (2000) has attempted to approach the profiling of the competent project manager from a potentially more objective viewpoint, by gathering data on project management knowledge and practices, using established project management standards, and then relating this to separately derived ratings of perceived workplace performance. Analysis suggests, however, that there is little direct relationship between perceived workplace performance and performance against either project management standards or previous research findings. An interesting area for further research is the effect of cultural differences and other contextual issues on perceptions of performance. Personality characteristics and application area specific technical issues are not addressed by the standards, suggesting a need for further investigation in these areas.


Projects are important to industry. Project manager competences are important in project success. Yet, current competence studies largely rely on small-sample, homogenous project manager surveys which could suffer from uncontrollable biases and may not be generalizable. Often, the studies disregard industry specificity. Chipulu et al. (2012) attempt to
address these issues by exploring the key competences employers require from project managers across multiple industry sectors. We code the contents of 2306 online project management job advertisements in the U.K., the U.S., Canada, China, India, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore for frequently occurring keywords. Using three-way multidimensional scaling (MDS), they extract six dimensions of competence present in the coded keywords:

1. industry-specific and generic skills over project management knowledge/expertise;
2. project management knowledge/expertise over industry-specific and generic skills;
3. (senior) managerial skills;
4. (positive) personal traits;
5. project management methodology experience and professional qualifications;
6. risk management over a project life cycle.

The authors (Chipulu et al., 2012) find that typically industry puts more weight on generic skills than project management knowledge/expertise, replicating previous PM survey-based results. They believe, however, that the main contribution is their finding that different industry sectors place significantly different levels of salience on the six dimensions.

Project managers play a crucial role in all kinds of projects and influence projects’ success (Wateridge, 1997; Crawford, 2005). Their role is unique in public sector projects, because public projects always deal with multiple, different stakeholders whose opinions can strongly influence the project. Progress in projectification of public sector creates an increasing need for developing competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) for public sector project managers. However, very little attention has so far been paid to the distinctive features of public sector project managers’ competences, especially in terms of competences necessary for team and stakeholders management.

Wirick (2009) highlights that project managers in public sector face team management challenges such as: the inability to clearly link performance and reward, compensation systems that are biased towards longevity, the inability to select project team members based on their expertise. In addition, public sector project managers work in environment which very often is not familiar with results-oriented project management and are constantly dealing with political interference in the management of projects and the challenges of working with political appointees.

Jalocha et al. (2014) identify the most important competences of public sector project managers. The authors, based on a literature study, propose a typology of competences, necessary for project managers dealing with specific circumstances of public organizations.

Despite the clear relevance of the Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) market in world economics and the evident lack of success of software projects, organizations devote little effort to the development and maturity of the software project manager profession. Ruano-Mayoral et al. (2012) analyse the figure of project manager from the perspective of the Team Software Process (TSP), and it considers the required skills, attitudes and knowledge for a software development project. The basis for the study was the analysis of relevant references from the literature for their subsequent categorization into different competency concepts. The results of the analysis were compared with the contributions which the Guide to the SWEBOK® and the PMBOK® Guide models provide of the profiles of the project manager. The results indicate that the literature relating to the Team Software Process is focused on the definitions of skills and attitudes, and to a lesser extent on knowledge components. The lack of the definition of the components which comprise competency constitutes a challenge for software development organizations that use TSP, whose project managers should confront the task with full capacities, and without the help of established and recognized competencies.

Dias et al. (2014) describe a quantitative research approach for identifying key project managers’ competences for different types of projects. By identifying the perceived most valuable project manager competences, as having the most potential for increased contribution to project management performance, practitioners and organizations can select their priorities when developing their PM
practices. The 46 competences (technical, behavioural and contextual) provided by IPMA were surveyed through an online questionnaire. Three dimensions to distinguish project types were used: application area, innovation and complexity. Completed questionnaires were received from 96 project managers from Portugal. The results showed that 13 key competences (20%) were common to most of the projects. Most of these are behavioural competences, such as: ethics, reliability, engagement, openness, and leadership. It was also observed a clear correlation between technical competences and project complexity.

The building industry has been acknowledged as being vital in stimulating societal change toward sustainable development in a global context. From a theoretical perspective, study by Tabassi et al. (2016) extends leadership competencies and transformational leadership qualities as hierarchical, reflective constructs, integrating ten associated components. Their research analysis was completed using a sample population of 70 project managers in sustainable building projects. The model shows that leadership competencies, as well as the transformational leadership qualities of project managers as second-order reflective constructs experience a direct impact on the success criteria for sustainable buildings. In general, the authors extend some of the significant components from leadership assessment in the context of construction project managers in sustainable building projects and has generated a new model to facilitate the process of sustainability in the industry.


Project manager’s communication competence

Current research continues to establish the importance of communication in the management of projects. However, little is known about the behavioral aspects of project managers’ communication competency especially as they relate to crucial outcomes in virtual environments. Research made by Henderson (2008) reports on a survey-based research study of 564 respondents from the Chief Project Officer Web site that validates and extends a research model of project managers’ competencies in decoding and encoding communication, the satisfaction and productivity of their team members, and the degree of virtuality present in the project. The findings indicate that project managers’ competencies in decoding and encoding communication significantly contribute to team member satisfaction and productivity. In addition, geographic dispersion plays an unexpected and significant role in how project managers’ competency in decoding and encoding communication impacts team member satisfaction and productivity.

It is generally known that the best project performance is obtained when there is high collaboration between client and project manager, and medium levels of structure, when the project manager and project owner work together in partnership, and the manager is empowered. Unfortunately, this is not how it happens on many projects. There is mistrust, even conflict, between owner and manager, and the owner sets tight constraints within which the manager must work. Project owners mouth partnership and empowerment but implement conflict and tight control. Turner and Muller (2004) offer the principal-agency relationship between client and project manager as one reason for this, they offer communication between the client and project manager as a way of reducing this problem. They suggest what communication the client needs from the project manager, and what communication the project manager needs from the client to minimize the impact of the principal-agency relationship. They report the results of an international study into communication needs on projects. They establish that the communication needs of project participants are best served by a mixture of formal and informal communication, and of written and verbal communication.

It is recognized by academics and the community of practice that the communication plays an important role in project management. Recent people skills research, e.g. (Fisher, 2011), (Thomas & Mengel, 2008) or (Matveev & Nelson, 2004) expresses the need to develop a better communication competence.
of project managers in certain project environments such as IT or the construction industry. In Czech and Slovak conditions this is confirmed by Jiřincová (2010), Lojda (2011), Vymětal (2008) or Khelerová (2010).

**Language knowledge of project managers**

Based on the analysis and processing of the answers obtained from the questionnaire focused on the professional sphere, Delgadová & Sajgaliková (2008) summarized the most important genres and language competencies necessary for the effective work of the manager. If we notice a question in which all respondents rated the area as the least important and considering the frequency of the response "very important", we can highlight the following very important language competencies, based on the statistically substantiated data obtained, which should be addressed in particular:

1. The ability to enable the social interaction using all available means (ability to handle everyday situations, establish first contacts, contribute appropriately to social events);
2. The ability to find information and exploit information resources to the full (ability to use the library search system, the Internet, to request information of any kind, to respond to requests);
3. The ability to study and develop materials with a relatively narrow vocational focus (reading technical texts, analysing them and discovering important facts, processing information in the same genres typical for the field);
4. The ability to study and develop materials in a broader context (reading tender documents, analysing them and discovering important facts, processing information in the same genres typical of their own field);
5. The ability to work with different listeners outside their own professional circle, it means 'Translation' of a highly specialized specific language into a more general language (customer contact points, promotional activities, etc.).

The amount and diversity of contacts with partners, the frequency and intensity of international contacts at all levels today concern almost every job and the competence of intercultural communication is gaining more and more attention. Conflicts and misunderstandings are very often the result of the intercultural differences in communication. Communication without a cultural dimension is often difficult, since even simple words and expressions can be understood in part or only approximately, if the speaker does not express them adequately, which can cause complete misunderstanding or even insult to the partner. Since the need to communicate is very important, we need to avoid misunderstandings in order to communicate effectively, such as: in the case of business negotiation managers who are in an intercultural relationship at a given moment, it is necessary to learn how to communicate with metacommunication; to talk about the senses of our testimonies, but not only about their meanings, but also about the effects these should have. Culturally different rules affect the way members of a given culture behave in certain contexts (Lengyelfalusy & Králová, 2010).

Intercultural communication competencies are an important part of business and social communication. The expert / manager must be able to:

- Establish relations between one's own culture and the target national culture:
  - use different strategies to establish contact with people of other cultures;
  - identify and accept intercultural differences in communication and discussion styles;
  - understand and correctly interpret non-verbal communication of the target national / professional culture;
  - to react appropriately and address conflict situations and cultural misunderstandings;
  - to act as a cultural mediator between national culture and national culture;
  - to overcome stereotypes;
  - To understand and apply most of the habits of the target national / professional culture.

Research suggests that in practice and in practical education, the focus should be on mastering the following genres and language competencies:

- Negotiations with business partners.
- Preparation and presentation of presentations (products, production processes, services, companies).
- Projects.
- Workshops, workshops and discussions.
Drama as an alternative way of learning

Drama is used as an alternative way of learning. It can make teaching different subjects more interesting and sufficient. According to Valenta (1998, p. 50) “specifics of the methods of drama in education stem from the roots of the theatre itself. Since it is based on the principles of the art of drama and theatre, it can be expected, that the method will try to use the techniques of drama and theatre“. Personality development is the main goal of drama in education, which is done through different situational games or role plays. There is no audience, but the presence of peers helps students to develop self-confidence and the ability to work in team and prepares them to communicate easily in real-life situations (Gabnai, 1999). Drama games also provide collective experience. The socializing effects of drama can help cope with the differences between the school education and real life, because they can help students to acquire the necessary skills, behaviour and knowledge to improve their future performance in different professions and their ability to perform certain specific roles in real life. O’Neil & Lambert (1998, p.103) state that ”drama in the classroom is a way of learning. Active identification with the fictional roles and situations allows pupils to learn in drama to explore controversial issues, events, and relationships. To participate in drama activities, pupils do not need to have a theatrical skill”.

Why to use drama techniques in language teaching

Drama has always had a close relationship with the teaching of the English language. In second language acquisition we mainly aim to be able to communicate in the language and drama is a powerful tool in developing students ’communicative abilities.

Role-plays and drama techniques have always been present along the history of language teaching, but they have been used to various extents by means of different method. In the history of language teaching many methods have been used, as for example grammar translation method, which gave teacher and learners of foreign language few opportunities to include innovatory techniques encompassing communicative activities.

Bowen (2012) states that “at the height of the Communicative Approach to language learning in the 1980s and early 1990s it became fashionable in some quarters to deride so-called "old-fashioned" methods and, in particular, something broadly labelled "Grammar Translation". There were numerous reasons for this but principally it was felt that translation itself was an academic exercise rather than one which would actually help learners to use language, and an overt focus on grammar was to learn about the target language rather than to learn it”.

Gradually, language teaching theorists tried to introduce new approaches. Those natural approach methods place emphasis on the importance of speaking practice as opposed to grammar and translation exercises, encouraging communication and physical activity and change of seating in the classroom.

Together with the new techniques, drama methods have become important and popular tools in second language teaching. For example, the main principle of the direct method was the use of the target language and the avoidance of the mother tongue, therefore, the use of body language, mime and gestures was needed.

The inclusion of drama activities into language education must be done slowly and carefully, as many of the students, especially when Drama is not part of the school curriculum, do not have experience with acting. Teacher should select the activities, starting with simple techniques, proceeding to more elaborated ones. From our experience, once the learners become familiar with drama activities in their lesson, they start to enjoy such activities and to benefit from them.

According to Wan (1990), although some teachers have tried using drama in their classrooms, they are still in the state of confusion. This is not because they do not know how to use it, but simply because they are not sure about its purpose in education. The use of the communicative approach is to
communicate with another person in the classroom and in the long term - the society. Drama activities draw on the natural ability of every person to imitate, mime, improvise and express themselves.

Communicative activities are the basic of drama techniques. Examples of such activities are games, miming, drama and role play, performance rehearsal, which make use of the target language. These activities in language education are characterized in Dougill (1987, p.13), Hayes (1984, p. 28), Allen (1983, p. 39), Maley & Duff (2006) and Mc Callum (1980) or Byrne (1988).

According to Wan (1990), communicative activities have the following characteristics:

- They are purposeful. They are beyond strictly practising structures.
- They are interactive. The activities are often conducted with others and often involve some form of discussion.
- Authentic materials are used. The situations in which the learners have to use language should be as realistic as possible. The language models given should be real.
- They are based on information gap principle.

Using drama techniques and activities has apparent advantages for language learning, as cited in Stevick (1982). It encourages students to speak, it gives them the chance to communicate in target language, even with basic knowledge of the language, using non-verbal communication, such as body movements, gestures and facial expression. There are also a number of other factors which make drama a very powerful tool in the language classroom. When using drama, the goals can be more than linguistic, teachers can use topics from other subjects: the students can act out scenes from history or presence, they can work on ideas and topical issues that are part of the curriculum, implying cross-cultural approach or CLIL. Drama can also be used to introduce the culture background of the target language, through stories and customs and plays.

Drama techniques and activities can be promoted to develop communication skills through fluency, pronunciation, cooperative learning and self-esteem building.

Maley & Duff (2006, p. 6) make the point that” dramatic activities are not the performance of plays before passive audiences; the value of these activities lies "not in what they lead up to but in what they are, in what they bring out right now”.

This argument can be understood as meaning that students do their drama activities for language learning and not for performance. However, teachers should occasionally give students opportunities to exhibit their scenes to their peers because they usually wish to show the rehearsed drama activities to rest of the class as they find it challenging, and enjoyable (Maley and Duff, 2006).

Drama is an appealing teaching strategy which promotes cooperation, collaboration, self-control, goal-oriented learning as well as emotional, linguistic, kinaesthetic and other intelligence skills. The drama and theatre in education creates a bridge between the areas of applied drama and theatre and education, using the acting training strategies to develop personality, and to respect diversity in learning. Drama bridges the gap between course-book dialogues, which would lack authenticity without being used context and can also help to bridge a similar gap between the classroom and real-life situations. One of the greatest advantages to be gained from the use of drama is that it helps students to build self-esteem, to overcome fear of public speaking and to become more confident in their use of English by experiencing the language in natural communication. It can become a main aid in the acquisition of communicative competence (McCallum, 1980).

Drama in the English education is quite essential since it gives learners the opportunity to imitate and express themselves, and if well-managed and prepared, it should awaken interest and imagination. Drama encourages adaptability, fluency, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. They techniques push students to use imagination and improvisation, drill phrases, work in role and in real life situations and by giving learners experience of success in real-life situations, it should help them to...
deal with the real language environment outside the classroom (Write, 1990, p.2).

Although drama activities are particularly strong in teaching communication in general, and experience at school led us to realize that drama is one of the most effective ways of teaching practical language, they aim little else. They develop the personality of everyone in the classroom, build relationship full of trust between the teacher and the students, arouse interest in learning. Moreover, there are activities from which students attained cultural knowledge and social skills. Drama tends to be something specific which requires teachers to have theatrical and acting knowledge and skills, or on the other hand, as just a simplistic fun task without any educational purpose (McCashin, 1990).

Additionally, drama brings fun into the classroom and thus has a positive impact on students’ motivation, which plays a crucial role. Drama in education can be regarded as an effective, alternative tool in developing communicative competence, and the ability to perform certain roles in everyday life (Kovacs, 2013).


**Brief look into the history of drama education in Czech Republic and Slovakia**

Some countries such as the USA and Great Britain have a long tradition and experience in the field of drama education. The development of drama in education in the United Kingdom has the longest and richest tradition. Since nearly the beginning of our century, the presence of drama issues could be observed in Government’s programs and resources, and drama was becoming a necessary part of general education, as an ability of movement and speech, and value of group work and personal development began to be emphasised. “Theatre and Drama in English schools were traditionally connected with the study of literature, with the exploration of language skills in order to achieve the possible means of communication and understanding of what is communicated. The origins of drama in education merged with the development of English teaching, and Drama was strongly connected with the presence of Arts in education” (Coggin, 1956). Variety of approaches have been developed and the constant research for improvement meant that drama has gradually became an accepted teaching/learning methodology recognised by many schools. The subject of drama education today is a common part of the school curriculum from the basic to high school education around the world.

In the history of Czech and Slovak education, the first efforts to use drama methods are directly provided in the work of Jan Amos Comenius, with its emphasis on direct experience of children in the learning process, and his widely known work of the School play. Although such games may be considered the roots of our home inspiration for the drama techniques known today, his concept is in many ways different from the concept of the current education. In the Czechoslovakia it was not until 1989 that there were first attempts to include dramatic education in schools in addition to music and art education, but drama education was not promoted, mainly due to the utter lack of teachers and resources. The only part of drama in education curriculum could be found in kindergartens. Drama education has made great rise in popularity; however, it still has not been fully accepted as a part of the Czech and Slovak National School Curriculum (Synková, 2012)

Although the subject of drama in education has not been fully adopted, logically appeared other possible ways to include drama in education. Gradually, using the methods of drama in other subjects became popular. Currently, many teachers of primary and secondary schools and universities use the methods of drama in their subjects as a modern teaching method with many advantages (Martin, 2011).

There are some reserves in the development of communication skills of project managers. We believe that drama is an alternative way to education of creative and motivated personality of them. We shall later try to find the connections and relations that link drama methods to education, particularly for the purpose of second language acquisition.

In Czech and Slovak Republic is this topic solved by Vodičková (2009), Hornáčková (2016), Oberuč et al. (2016), Hanuliaková et al. (2016), Porubčanová & Vojteková (2014) or Tůmá & Pišová (2013).
Improvement of Project Managers’ Communication Competence in Foreign Language through Drama Techniques

The analytical part of this paper analyses the possibility of using drama as one of the techniques of communication competence of Czech and Slovak project managers, non-native speakers, improvement. This analysis was carried from January 2017 till July 2019. The research sample of the respondents was intentional, 113 respondents working as a project manager in various industry branches on national economy of Czech and Slovak Republic were addressed. The participants were mostly certified project managers of B2 to C2 language level. The search was carried out in 10 workshops Project management 3.0 realized by company Projectman.

Two objectives were set:

1. to implement drama techniques mentioned in the theoretical part of presented paper into the syllabus of the course, in accordance with descriptions of what project managers should be able to do in terms of the competences by the end of their workshop,
2. to offer alternative teaching methods which would support the effective use of acquired knowledge and skills in real life situations, respecting the fixed syllabus. The activities are mostly used as a follow up to the teaching of specific language structures and they are designed to provide practice for project managers. The language is meant to be reviewed and consolidated. Moreover, project managers should be motivated and encouraged to use more elaborate language forms. The timing of each activity is rather flexible depending on project managers’ interests, language needs and the course timetable.

The following six drama techniques were used to develop communicative competence of project managers in English as part of the experimental teaching at Project Management 3.0 workshops:

1. Mime your job

   a. Commentary / Reflection: Some of the project managers enjoyed performing in front of the class, which encouraged the rest of the class to take part in the activities. Project managers appreciated the variety of activities from moving activities to desk work.

b. Communication competence improvement:

   i. Productive language skills: create texts on a wide range of topics and express attitudes employ monolingual dictionaries when writing on selected topics.

   ii. Interactive language skills: express and defend ideas, opinions and attitudes using appropriate written as well as oral forms.

2. It’s a Heat Wave: Drama techniques: Role play, teacher in role, making and acting a dialogue, think about relationships and feeling, improvisation.

   a. Commentary/ Reflection: This activity worked well with project managers as they enjoyed learning and using the expressions from the activity. They found the language authentic and useful. Moreover, it was new experience for them to be able to express their feelings in the target language with the help of those expressions. Leading the managers in by visualisation technique was very helpful for topic introduction, and it motivated them to get involved in further stages and role playing.

b. Communication competence improvement:

   i. Receptive language skills: understand the main points and ideas of an authentic oral expressions, distinguish between individual speakers in a discourse, identify different styles, emotional tones, opinions and attitudes of the individual speakers.

   ii. Productive language skills: formulate opinion in such way that is understood, using correct grammar, spontaneously and coherently, reproduce freely and coherently an authentic text with vocabulary and language structures characteristic of a text which he/ she has read

   iii. Interactive language skills: react spontaneously and using correct grammar in more complicated, less common situations while using appropriate phrases and expressions, communicate fluently on abstract as well as specific topics in less common or specialised situations, respecting the rules of pronunciation.

a. Commentary/ Reflection: Having the opportunity to experience the tribunal hearing and making judgement on other peoples’ behaviour, fosters managers’ sense of responsibility, decision-making and problem-solving skills.

b. Communication competence improvement:
   i. Receptive language skills: understand the main points and ideas of an authentic oral expression with a rather complex content on a current topic and express its main as well as complementary information, understand the main points and ideas when reading an authentic text or written expression with a rather complex content on a current topic, infer the meaning of unknown words based on already acquired vocabulary, context, knowledge of word formation and cognates, utilise various types of dictionaries, informative literature, encyclopaedias and media, read literature in the language of study with comprehension.
   ii. Productive language skills: reproduce freely and coherently an authentic text with vocabulary and language structures characteristic of a rather demanding text which they read or listened to, present a coherent speech on an assigned topic, create lucid text on a wide range of topics and express attitudes, receive information of a rather complex content with a good degree of comprehension and be able to convey it in such a way that is understood.

4. Interview with a famous person: Drama techniques: Role play, dramatization of course book, improvisation within a text, dialogue (short script writing).

a. Commentary/ Reflection: The success of the role play often depends on the effort put in it. It is therefore important to give students plenty of time to prepare the interview. Stronger classes enjoyed creating their own interviews, however less advanced learners were provided with the handout containing questions. Dramatizing the course book dialogue is very useful, as it gives the learners opportunity to use the target language in more natural way, involving gestures, body language and concentrating on rhythm and pronunciation. Course book dialogues (even the very simple ones) can become meaningful, humorous and motivating, when gestures, facial expression, eye contact and other means of natural communication are involved.

b. Communication competence improvement:
   i. Receptive language skills: understand the main points and ideas of an authentic oral expression, understand the main points and ideas when reading or listening individuals and cooperation within a group, values, stances, practical ethics.
   ii. Productive language skills: create texts on a wide range of topics, structure formal as well as informal written expressions logically and clearly, use a broad general vocabulary to develop argumentation.
   iii. Interactive language skills: communicate fluently on abstract as well as specific topics in less, common or specialised situations, respecting the rules of pronunciation, begin, carry on and end conversations with native speakers and join in, active discussion on various topics concerning more specialised interest.

5. The Lost Boys of Sudan: Drama techniques: Structured drama, role play, still image, teacher - in role.

a. Commentary/ Reflection: This lesson plan is especially designed for Social Studies (Civics) with integration of English Language. We have been teaching this subject for four years, and we still find the activities challenging, but extremely useful and effective in both areas (civic competencies and second language acquisition).

It develops cultural understanding, and the experienced events and stories help managers understand and respect self, and others, related to human development and relationships. Nevertheless, this plan is suitable for any ELS learners because apart from practising many of language skills and improving communicative competence, it teaches them to respect themselves and others through participating in a process drama and journaling their responses. It
was very new experience for my learners, all of
the managers were involved and took part in
problem - solving and decision - making
activities.

b. Communication competence improvement:
i. Receptive language skills: understand the main
points and ideas when reading or listening to
an authentic text or written expression with
rather complex content on a current topic, infer
the meaning of unknown words based on
already acquired vocabulary, context,
knowledge of word, read literature in the
language of study with comprehension,
describe the plot and sequence of events in a
film or play.

ii. Productive language skills: formulate opinion
in such a way that is understood, using correct
grammar, spontaneously.

iii. Interactive language skills: express and defend
ideas, opinions and attitudes using appropriate
written as well as oral forms, react
spontaneously in more complicated, less
common situations while using appropriate
phrases and expressions.

6. Lonely Island: Drama techniques:
Improvisation, mime, role play.

a. Comments /Reflection: Managers enjoyed the
lesson. Warm-up and pre-drama activities have a
lot of body movement and may be alternatively
used in any lesson, particularly after prolong
desk work. Generally, it helps to develop
learners´ imagination and creativity.

b. Communication competence improvement:
i. Receptive language skills: read literature in
the language of study with comprehension,
describe the plot and the sequence of events
in a play, film or book.

ii. Productive language skill: formulate ideas in
such a way the is understood, using complex
content on a current topic.

iii. Interactive language skills: comment and
discuss various opinions on non-fictional and
fiction text adequately.

Conclusion
In general, we can say that the variety of activities
introduced in the analytical part of the paper proved
to be workable, and they were used successfully and
effectively in the workshops. Some techniques, of
course, were more or less successful depending on
the linguistic competence of the participants.

Project managers were more open to role-play and
improvisation techniques, on the other hand, they
considered mime and still images less linguistic
beneficial. They appreciated activities which
emphasise performance rather than experience.

Project managers participated more fully in activities
with greater exposure to authentic materials, such as
play scripts, dialogues, literature and video materials.

They enjoyed taking part in discussions, problem
solving and decision – making.

Lower level project managers entered variety of
activities such as role-play, mime, freeze framing
with endless enthusiasm, though they needed more
guidance in their attempts. They enjoyed activities
through which they could experience real-life
situations by stepping into someone else´s shoes.
They were able to use English in simple role play
activities. Inclusion of the target language in debates
and problem-solving activities was rather
demanding at the beginning, but a great
improvement has been achieved during the
workshops.

During studying of variety of sources of literature,
and implementing of activities, drama in education
proved to be powerful alternative tool in developing
personal, social, multicultural and communicative
competencies of project managers. Above all,
teaching methods can reach their purpose only if
they are done in enjoyable and motivating way.

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