MÓDULO/MODULE: Técnicas de dramatización en el aula de lengua extranjera/Drama Techniques in Foreign Language Teaching. (3 cr. ECTS).

Workshop 3: The Elements of Drama

Sound, Rhythm and Vocal Expression

Breathing

1. Place hands, palms inward, on the front of the waist so that fingers are almost touching. If breathing correctly, you will feel a tensing of the diaphragm and fingers will move apart indicating correct lateral movement of the lower ribs. Do not raise shoulder blades. Gradually increase the depth of breathing.
2. Imitate a yawn. Softly and lazily say a prolonged “AH!”
3. Breathe in on the ribs and whisper the following:

   One and one are two.
   (Breathe again)
   Two and two are four.
   Four and four are eight.
   (Breathe again)
   Eight and eight are sixteen.
   Sixteen and sixteen are thirty-two.

4. Repeat the above exercise this time breathing in on the diaphragm.
Resonance

For developing volume and quality the chief resonators, the mouth, the throat and the nose have an important effect on voice. The sound is amplified and made fuller and richer by passing through these hollow spaces.

1. Hum in unison concentrating the sound on the back of the throat. Gradually increase volume and then let the sound fade away.
2. Hum again, this time concentrating sound directly under the dome-shape of the hard palate. Gradually increase volume and let the sound fade away. You should experience a tickling sensation on the lips.
3. Hum again and then open your mouth and sound “AH!” without losing any resonance.

Articulation

Articulation is the muscular process by means of which we modify the voice or breath with the tongue, the teeth, the lips and other speech organs to produce speech sounds. Poor articulation will render speech indistinct or inaudible. Mumbling is the fault of not opening the mouth wide enough.

Exercises for the lower jaw:

1. Open the mouth to its fullest extent. Repeat action opening and closing a number of times.
2. Open mouth, shape lips and say AH as in father. Repeat several times.
3. Open mouth, shape lips and say EE as in free. Repeat several times.
4. Say AH, EE a number of times paying attention to the up-and-down movement of the lower jaw.

Exercises for the lips

The flexibility of the lips is very important for good articulation, and vowels as well as consonants may suffer from lack of lip mobility.

1. To improve the mobility of the tongue and lips, try this exercise:

   a. The tip of the tongue, the teeth and the lips.
   b. Hot coffee in a proper copper coffee pot.
   c. She sells sea shells on the sea shore.

Inflexion
Inflexion is the rise and fall of the voice. If a voice is dull and boring, it is usually because the inflexion is monotonous. To introduce a greater variety of inflexion one needs to develop the ability to pitch the voice register above the normal key. The following exercises will give students an opportunity to experiment with inflexion and thereby increase their range.

1. Count to ten in a level pitch.
2. Repeat but this time pitch voice above normal key.
3. Repeat again pitching voice below normal key.
4. Speak the numbers beginning “one” at a low key, “two” at normal, “three” at high and so on.
5. Count to ten again but this time say every third number with:
   a) surprise
   b) impatience
   c) great pleasure
   d) anger

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**Emotional Involvement in Acting**

**Potato in My Hand**

**U. 5. Mk Chant**

*1 minute, 35 seconds*
Little Boy was just getting into bed one night right near Halloween time. He had just pulled up the covers when he heard someone calling out from downstairs.

"I'm on the first step. Here I stand. I'm coming up the stairs with a potato in my hand."

Little Boy pulled the covers up over his head.

"I'm on the second step. Here I stand. I'm coming up the stairs with a potato in my hand."

Little Boy started shaking.

"I'm on the third step. Here I stand. I'm coming up the stairs with a potato in my hand."

"I'm on the fourth step. Here I stand. I'm coming up the stairs with a potato in my hand."

"I'm on the fifth step. Here I stand. I'm coming up the stairs with a potato in my hand."

All the way up the stairs came the voice.

Then ....

"I'm in the hall. Here I stand. I'm coming down the hall with a potato in my hand."

"I'm coming in the door. Here I stand. I'm coming in the door with a potato in my hand."

Little Boy was just quaking under those covers.

"I'm standing by the bed. Here I stand. I'm standing by the bed with a potato in my hand."

"TAKE IT!"

When Little Boy got the courage to pull down the covers and look
around,

there was nothing there ...

Just a big old potato lying at the foot of his bed!

**MIME**

Language teachers often use a lot of mime in their daily lessons to introduce new vocabulary, clarify and illustrate the meaning of words and expressions, indicate objects, express a wide range of emotions and attitudes, etc. Language teachers can learn a lot from the techniques mimes use to train their bodies.

Mime is known as the “art of silence”. It is silent because it uses a body to communicate, rather than a spoken word. The reason for this silence is not based on the hatred of words or just the pleasure of telling a story without words; the mime speaks what words cannot say and proclaims in a gesture what a writer would take a novel to tell. Mime searches for the gestures which communicate the essence of thought and feeling, capturing them in time and space and then releasing them to the audience to experience anew. Mime is not the art of mimicry; it is the art of recreation.

**Exercise 1: Facial expressions.**
Exercise 2: Sculpting the body.
Exercise 3: The flower & the rock.

Exercise 5: Illusion.
Big X

- Lie on your back.
- Press your body into the floor.
- Let your body float up toward the ceiling.
- Tense and relax each part of your body.
- Breathe deeply.
- Take a deep breath silently.
- Consider what your body is like when it’s silent.

Marionette.

- Stand, bent over at the waist.
- Bounce up and down.
- Your back string pulls you up to standing position.
- Your head falls forward.
- One shoulder string pulls your shoulder up and forward.
- One string pulls an elbow up.
- Your wrist strings lift both arms out.
- One knee string pulls up and rotates your upper leg.
- All strings on the right side pull up.
- You are lifted completely off the ground.

- Now try this exercise with a partner: standing on a chair behind you and pulling on your strings. You are actually the one initiating the movement, and the puppeteer follows. Move slowly so your partner can move with you.

Face Passing

- Everyone sit in a circle, facing the back of the person in front of you. Your faces are in neutral.
- One of you create a face: Turn around and show it to the person behind and return to neutral. The movement is quick and precise.
- The receiver imitates the face and passes it on: The face continues around the circle until it reaches its original creator who shows the group the ending face—and the starting face. With practice, the same face will make it all the way around.
- For variation, everyone sit facing the centre of the circle. One of you make a face. Throw the new face to someone else who receives it, changes it, and passes it on. Metamorphosis!

**Magic Shoes.**

- Pick up a pair of magic shoes.
- Examine them curiously.
- Put on one shoe.
- Be sure you’re sitting or in a well-balanced stance, because as soon as the shoe is laced and tied, your foot goes into action! It flutters, kicks, wiggles as if it had a life of its own (the foot moves as if isolated from the rest of your body).
- Try to stop your frenetic foot by grabbing it: Nice try—but now your hands are moving, too!
- Remove the shoe
- Instantly your foot becomes still.
- Put on both shoes: Tap dance, jump, cavort! Take your magic shoes off. Rest.

**Robot**

- Stand straight and rigid: you are a robot made up of solid units, connected at a few main joints.
- Lift your foreman in a series of five jerks snap into each movement, emphasizing the start and the stop. Lower your arm in the same way.
- Test all your body parts, one by one. Turn your head and neck jerkily (like an android). Jerk your shoulders up and down. Turn at the waist in a series of jerks, and so on down your whole body. Only one part moves at a time, starting and stopping with precision.
- Now gather together a group of robots and let a human press your buttons. It works best for the buttons to be on the side or front so you can see what’s happening.
- Take a walk: If you’re on a collision course with another robot, snap into a different direction. If you hit a wall, move in place until your human turns you. If you fall down, keep your feet moving in the air until you’re rescued.
- Wind down: Your movements gradually slow to a stop.
**Midnight Snack**

- With closed eyes, visualize a refrigerator, stocked with your favourite munchies. Consider the shape, colour and texture of each food. How might each one taste?
- Open your eyes and open the refrigerator: Take out everything you’ll need to concoct a midnight snack.
- Feel each food in your hand: Is it bumpy or smooth? Soft or fuzzy? Peel, unwrap, slice, spread, or stir as necessary.
- Take a bite; have a slurp: Is it just what you imagined?

**Finish Line**

A switch – the contestants run in place as the finish line moves toward them! The two people holding the line move closer and closer to the racers until one runner surges forward to leap the line or break the tape with a swelling chest. The winner!

**Tightrope Wobbling**

As you inch your way across an illusory tightrope, flex your knee to indicate the spring of the rope.

**Balloon Flight**

Stand with your knees, slightly bent. The balloon you’re holding on a string starts pulling your arm up, stretching it higher and higher. Your body follows up...up...up...to your tip toes. You’re floating in space. Look down to see how far you’ve come (about three inches).

**Stuck Door**

If you pull your hand back and forth trying to open a stuck door, you’ve created an elastic doorknob! Instead, keep your hand stationary, and jerk back and forth through your chest to create the pull.

**Getting Stuck**

Bump into someone or something as if it were sticky. At the point of contact, push while the rest of your body appears to pull away, struggling to get unstuck.

**A Day in the Life**
Mime through a day in the life of a specific character. Leap out of bed—or drag your body out on the wrong side. Eat your breakfast daintily or with the gusto of a champion. Check the newspaper for today’s headlines. Type of the office or dig a trench. As the day closes, go out on the town, settle in with a good book, or crash in an exhausted heap. It all depends upon whom you have chosen to be.

On the Bus

**Explore the bus.** Walk down the centre aisle, hang from the overhead strap, look out of the window. Remember to stay in character. Follow your driver’s lead. Vibrate your body with the motor; stop when it’s turned off. Lean with the driver as he goes around curves and over bumps. Jerk with the stops and starts. Signal to get off. Exit, still in character.

Split Personalities

**Two People.** Begin as a short person. Turn to your left and look up into the face of an illusory tall person. Slowly turn back to your right. When you turn you grow tall. As the tall person, lower your gaze to look down into the face of the short person you just were. As you alternate characters, be sure you look up or down to the same point in space each time. Now revolve completely around as you switch characters. While your back is to the audience, change your facial expression. Experiment with basic opposites—happy and sad, menacing and frightened, lecturing and penitent, angry and apologetic, lovelorn and uninterested.

Give and Take

Create two characters. One will be the giver and the other the receiver. Begin as the giver. Create an object. Turn to your right and hand the object to your illusory receiver. Revolve to your right. While your back is to the audience, change your hand positions and facial expressions to become the receiver. Be sure to receive the same object that was offered and from the same place in space. Throw a punch at your second character. Revolve to receive the blow. Kiss your alter ego. Revolve to receive it. (Narcissism!)