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Dramagrammar in Theory and Practice

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This article is composed of two separate, although overlapping, conference contributions, a paper and a workshop. Part I, the paper, introduces the concept of *dramagrammar* (drama in education for grammar teaching) and outlines its genesis in the context of third-level foreign language teaching in Britain and Ireland. Traditional problems of foreign language grammar teaching are described and solutions from dramagrammar are offered. A prototypical model of the dramagrammar lesson follows. Part II, the workshop, describes a practical dramagrammar session that took place at the conference. Moving from pantomime to dramatic play, workshop participants experienced dramagrammar as the inherently social activity that it is.

I. Dramagrammar as one possible solution to problematic aspects of the teaching and learning of foreign language grammar.

1. Introduction

Dramagrammar, or drama in education for grammar teaching, is a holistic teaching and learning approach that is closely connected with dramatic art forms. The idea of dramagrammar was derived from Manfred Schewe's innovative teaching concept of drama in education for foreign language teaching and learning (Schewe 1993).

Through drama techniques, grammar is experienced in hands-on situations that simulate reality. Students encounter contexts that require language in use and, at the same time, raise their awareness about appropriate linguistic structures. In other words, dramagrammar is concerned not only with *what* students say but also with *how* they say it. Fictional contexts inspire fantasy and creativity; students are relieved of their usual roles and responsibilities and can enjoy the 'freedom of being somebody else'.

Working with drama means incorporating into the learning process not only cognitive faculties but also other factors that have traditionally played a far lesser role in language teaching. Kinaesthetic, social, emotional and empathic learning moments make for

intensive and lasting experiences with the foreign language, grammar, literature and culture.

2. Grammar: A Blind Spot

The communicative approach of the last decades changed the nature of language teaching. It overrode both the stilted grammar-translation exercises and the imitative drills of the audio-lingual method. However, the trend of communicative language teaching has had its problematic aspects as well. Very often, grammar has been either completely neglected in schools and colleges, or taught in a rather *ad hoc* way, its main focus being the provision of communicative skills, with disregard for basic structures. And despite a general target of 'communicative competence', pupils have ended up with very limited foreign language skills, which all too often consist of the recital of their names, ages, places of residence, brothers and sisters, hobbies, favourite foods, and pets. At university level, we now reap the fruits of foreign language instruction being reduced to communicative bits and pieces. Young people coming to university with a sound grammatical knowledge are the exception; the majority have an inconsistent and scanty knowledge of grammar. It has increasingly become the job of universities to rectify this (cf. Durrell 1993:56).

When I taught at the University of Leicester, my teaching load featured a lot of *oral workshops*, small groups in which 'conversation' in the foreign language was supposed to take place[1]. In these classes, I was able to observe the effect of traditional grammar lessons on actual language production. Despite students' weekly grammar lessons with committed colleagues, little 'stuck'. Only in a very few cases could students convert cognitively learnt structures into appropriate linguistic action. What is more, my colleagues deplored the fact that they taught the second year students more or less the same material again as in the first year, so that hardly any long-term success was achieved. Discussions with other colleagues in Britain and Ireland confirmed this impression.

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[1] On the critical evaluation of the practice of conversation classes, cf. Schewe 1993:20-22.

The following becomes clear at this point: the problem is not that university students are taught no grammar. On the contrary, grammar in the traditional sense is taught continually on a weekly basis. What is more, almost all students have access to computer-assisted language learning facilities. Although there would be no sense in claiming that these grammar lessons showed no results whatsoever, it should nevertheless be asked why their success, considering all time and effort spent, remains at such a modest level. In all too many cases students fail to master the transition from theoretical linguistic knowledge to its adequate realization in communication.

Most students are aware of their lack of grammatical competence. Their linguistic uneasiness manifests itself in the desire for 'more grammar, more homework, more tests' – an attempt to replace one evil with another. This outlook on learning is mechanistic, based on the idea of input and output: the more grammatical facts are crammed into students' heads, the more they will know and the better their grades will be. The observation that acquiring grammatical facts was, in fact, often unrelated to real language acquisition was my starting point in the search for different approaches to grammar teaching.

Let me bring the discrepancy between grammatical knowledge and linguistic ability into sharper focus by the following observations:

2.1 Traditional Instruction

Grammar lessons are more often than not a completely cognitive exercise. Usually the teacher stands in front of a blackboard, presenting grammatical phenomena using grammar book, projector, and chalk, followed by various written exercises from the grammar book. Sometimes problem areas in students' essays or translation exercises might lead to a discussion of a specific grammatical problem. We have all, at some time or other, taught this way – sometimes with a somewhat guilty conscience when remembering the range of 'alternative' teaching and learning methods 'out there'[2]. However, there is a reason for teachers continually falling back on traditional grammar instruction. Traditional grammar lessons have the advantage of allowing teachers to go through a lot of material in a

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[2] For a detailed analysis of alternative teaching and learning methods cf. Ortner 1998 and Schlemminger et al. 2000.

comparatively short time, and both students and teachers get the impression that grammar has been taught 'properly' and a result has been achieved.

2.2 Low Status

It is implicitly assumed that everyone can teach grammar. University lecturers (unless they have a specific didactic interest) often like to delegate language and grammar lessons to lectors and language tutors. Grammar lessons have a lower status compared with lectures on literature, linguistics and area studies. Dealing with the problems and challenges of teaching grammar is not necessarily regarded as a form of serious research. Correspondingly, in most cases there are hardly any specific instructions as to how grammar can be taught in a more meaningful way.

2.3 'We don't have enough grammar!'

Students deplore their lack of grammatical knowledge, but also do not know how to go about rectifying it. Interestingly enough, the above quotation highlights the misconception that grammar is a possession that can be acquired as a complete package deal that students can 'have' – rather than an ability, whose use expands the abundance of expressions and the fun with the foreign language. Consequently, grammar simply remains a system of unrelated rules, the relevance of which is barely seen in actual communicative situations.

2.4 Inconsistent Attitudes

Judging by my experiences, grammar is very high on students' scale of priorities and is, at the same time, very low on their popularity scale[3]. They "kinda" see the necessity of grammatical knowledge, yet all too often they don't know what to do or they don't want to do it, having had negative experiences with grammar in school[4]. This attitude often goes together with the conviction that foreign language grammar is firstly incredibly difficult

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[3] Empirical investigations by Zimmermann (1995:184) into pupils' and adults' views on grammar support this. He talks of an "inconsistent and at the same time conflicting attitude" or "divided attitudes".

[4] On negative attitudes towards grammar and grammar lessons cf. Zimmermann 1995 and Mannix (in preparation).

and secondly incredibly important and only when, as if by magic, grammar has 'actually' been understood, can (and would) they speak.

2.5 The Year Abroad

The *Year Abroad*, which broadens oral competence immensely, does not automatically bring about an improvement in grammatical knowledge. According to an investigation by Riana Walsh (1998) at University College Dublin, success in learning grammar by staying in the target country for six months or a year is minimal, though this is often compensated for by increased oral fluency and refined avoidance strategies. Usually, students who have previously shown interest in grammar also profit from the experience abroad in a grammatical sense – whereas those who have found that foreign language grammar means nothing to them in the first two years of study, will still be in grammatical trouble after the year abroad, both in oral and written work.

2.6 Silence

In most British schools, the motto all too often is 'be quiet and listen to the teacher'. Mistakes are deemed undesirable, and it is the ability to learn something off by heart that is tested in examinations. Correspondingly, students tend to feel completely overtaxed when they advance to university with its emphasis on the ability to think critically, run intelligent risks and transfer knowledge onto new situations. And since we all tend to deal with problems as we have done in the past (even if this method has been counterproductive), students do just that: they simply fall silent – or stay away from lessons. For fear of making a mistake, many avoid speaking altogether – an attitude that naturally drives many foreign language teachers to distraction.

2.7 Skepticism

Learning techniques and strategies that promote autonomous learning are not only less well known but are often rejected, not only by students but by teachers as well. The well-known counterargument is that 'you don't learn enough' using such methods. 'Learning' is seen as the accumulation and reproduction of factual knowledge, not as a process of analysis and

criticism. Students' linguistic success is measured in 'getting it right', not as an ability to do the best with one's current knowledge and going on from there.

To sum up: grammar is regarded as an integral part of university studies in foreign languages, but the quality and methods of grammar teaching are rarely reflected upon. Foreign language teachers generally use traditional methods of grammar instruction rather than learning styles that promote autonomy. Despite a regular supply of grammar lessons, students' knowledge remains sketchy and is seldom translated into appropriate foreign language production. Even prolonged residence in the target country does not necessarily lead to a marked improvement in grammatical competence.

3. Dramagrammar Teaching

After this broad overview of the 'grammar instruction reality' at many universities in Ireland and Britain, I would now like to introduce a model of the dramagrammar lesson. The typical course of a dramagrammar session can be presented in six teaching phases:

- The *phase of awareness-raising* introduces situations that require the use of specific grammatical structures that make learners aware of these structures (or of their lack thereof). As an example: a scarf is handed around from student to student in different ways, depending on what it is supposed to be (a baby? a hot frying-pan? the crown jewels?). Students are supposed to ask the next person in a polite way to take the respective object from their hands ("could you please …?" / "would you be so kind as to …" / "might it be possible that …"), thus introducing, practising or reinforcing the subjunctive for use in polite speech.

- In the *context-finding phase* learners work on real-life contexts in which these structures are put into concrete use in the form of short dramatic improvisations. The scene could now be a street, a dating bar, a petrol station etc. where requests are made and have to be acted upon.

- The *linguistic phase* cognitively examines forms and functions of the grammatical structures in question. This phase consciously interrupts the dramatic flow. Explicit

examination of grammar is put in the middle of the dramagrammar lesson instead of at the beginning, the advantage being that learners have already experienced the need for using certain structures. Their focus on grammar will now be deliberate and purposeful. Ideas from the former phases are taken up and possible linguistic realizations are examined. This is a collaborative activity; the teacher guides the learners towards working out grammatical forms and rules themselves. Only in the end does s/he summarize the results and settle open questions. In the case of the subjunctive, polite requests ("could you please…") and wishes ("I would really like to …") should be dealt with together since they are very close in meaning; this could easily lead to the distinction between reality (indicative) versus unreality (subjunctive). Depending on their competence, this phase is conducted either in the target language or in the students' mother tongue.

• The *phase of dramatic play* broadens contextual and structural knowledge. The grammatical phenomena are now being worked on dramatically; student groups design and rehearse longer, in-depth dramatic improvisations featuring the new structures. Drawing on the above examples, elaboration could take the form of just about any issue in which an agreement has to be reached (e.g. planning an excursion for a family whose members have very different ideas of what to do, or a conducting a discussion between parents and teenagers about career options and plans for the future, etc.)

• During the *presentation phase* the learners take the stage and make their dramatic improvisations public to the other participants.

• The dramagrammar session ends with a *reflection phase* in which learners have the opportunity to settle open questions, talk about what worked, what didn't, and why. It is a forum for language awareness and language learning reflection.

I taught dramagrammar over the course of a full academic year to a second-year group of students at the University of Leicester. Regular discussions with them about the *modus operandi* as well as final interviews at the end of the year yielded encouraging feedback about dramagrammar:

- Psychologically, students pointed out that they were less afraid of making mistakes and more inclined to take risks. They felt more self-assured and motivated, and enjoyed working closely with the other students, thereby forming deeper connections and friendships.

- Pedagogically, students experienced grammar in immediate use, which means that they understood it not only cognitively but also contextually, with mind as well as body, and in real-life situations – by listening to others, reacting to what they said, making verbal and non-verbal contributions that were significant to the ongoing dramatic situation. In the words of a student:

> I used to see grammar as a very dry, factual being imprisoned on paper and things. It seems to have got off the paper and into my head a bit more now. Into real life. Obviously we've always known that it's important for communicating in reality, in real situations but I think there's a difference between knowing something and realising it. (Tim K.)

The students also made steps towards learning autonomy by starting to self-monitor their own language learning process.

Students professed themselves as being much more at ease with the whole topic of grammar and more inclined to tackle grammatical phenomena in the foreign language. Their attitude to grammar had changed markedly to the positive:

> I wouldn't say I was completely confident about all the things we've done so far but I'm confident that I can actually learn it now, whereas before it was a massive mountain of grammar… (Jon M.)

> Well, before grammar was something… you sat down with a text book and thought 'right, ok I'm going to learn this. I'm going to do the exercises and then hopefully I'll know it and if I don't then I have to do more exercises to learn it.' And now grammar is less of a chore. Maybe it's just because I do know more but it just felt as if we weren't really learning, unconsciously learning, so in that respect it's changed my perspective on grammar. Before it was 'oh God I must know that, I'll have to sit down and learn it' and now I think I don't have to do that any more and I can just ask other people and have fun with it. [...] I think grammar doesn't have to be boring like it was before, I think my whole attitude has changed now. It's less of 'I don't want to sit down and do that thing', it's doing something with it. (Julie T.)

Dramagrammar is a combination of language in use and language reflection. It integrates dramatic acting with conscious language analysis. On the one hand, interaction in context

and negotiation of meaning propel language acquisition forward; on the other hand, explicit grammar instruction provides a firm anchorage of structures.

Traditional grammar knowledge is all too often 'dead knowledge', devoid of actual meaning in the real world, and only good for passing decontextualized exams. In contrast, dramagrammatical knowledge is practical and contextualized. It starts with concrete social situations that lead into intensive language analysis which is then fed back into meaningful language use in dramatic play. This dramagrammatical knowledge affords students added problem-solving skills and strategies that are also highly useful in exam situations.

Dramagrammar takes place in a social setting and requires teamwork – both interactive negotiation of meaning and linguistic analysis take place in self-organized groups. The language teacher is not so much the 'fount of knowledge' as s/he is a supporter and guide, taking up ideas and advising people how to put them into play, or helping to work out grammar learning strategies. This approach especially accommodates the requirements of adult learners who strive towards having control of their own learning process.

II. Workshop: *Rumour – gossip – hearsay*: Reported speech in the dramagrammar classroom.

Dramagrammar is an inherently social activity that takes place in and with a group of learners. It is therefore difficult to communicate in a theoretical paper the full sense of how dramagrammar works in practice. In order to impart a general idea of how grammatical structures can be taught through dramagrammar, I chose to also offer a prototypical dramagrammar workshop on indirect (reported) speech, designed for advanced language students. Even though it is not possible to capture the dynamics and the fun of the actual dramagrammar session *in situ*, I shall hereby present its outline in condensed form.

In the past, I have offered this workshop to teachers of German. Since the workshop participants at this conference were speakers and teachers of different languages, but all spoke English, I chose English as the language to be taught and adapted the workshop accordingly.

1. Awareness-raising – Pantomime

Chairs are set in pairs around a "stage" (presentation space). One chair of each pair is turned around so that the person sitting on it is facing away from the stage. The group is also divided into pairs, with each consisting of an "observer" who looks at the stage, and a "listener" who faces away from it. The teacher announces an exercise in three parts:

Part 1: The teacher enters the room as *Teacher in Role*[5] and performs a short pantomime[6], wearing a mask[7]. In the foreign language, the observers then describe the teacher's actions in as much detail as possible to the listeners, who are unable to see those actions for themselves.

Part 2: All the chairs now face the front. The teacher enters the room again, but waits just inside the door. The previous pantomime is then recreated by the listeners, who tell the teacher what to do and how to move. The teacher follows their cues.

Part 3: Everybody is sitting in a circle. The observers are called to describe the differences between the teacher's original pantomime and the one later recreated according to the listeners' directions. The participants are encouraged to use reported speech, e.g. *I told John that the person was walking around for a while until she sat down, but John said she immediately sat down*. Then the teacher performs the original pantomime again. Everybody observes closely. Afterwards, the listeners tell the observers what they didn't tell them, e.g. *Alex, you said she was touching up her make-up but you didn't tell me how – that she reapplied lipstick, pinched her cheeks etc*.

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[5] The drama technique *Teacher in Role* is explained in Even 2003:166f.

[6] The pantomime can be any short scene that would open itself to interpretation. In this workshop, I walked into the room with a swinging step, took a few dance steps, and eventually sat down on the chair straightening my clothes and touching up my make-up. After a while I started looking at my watch, looking at the door, drumming my fingers. The phone rang and I jumped up to answer it. While I was listening, my shoulders drooped and I looked at the floor. I hung up the phone and discovered a written note. I took it out of its envelope and read it. I let it fall to the floor, got up and slowly shuffled to the door. I turned around, looked at the letter on the floor again, went back, picked it up and tore it into pieces before I left the room.

[7] Since the masks hides facial expressions, the observers are forced to pay close attention to body language.

In this exercise the participants have to either describe a sequence of events (observers) or retell something that has been told to them (listeners). Everybody will be aware of how much original and copy differ. The observers will experience how difficult it is to stick to what is seen on stage and not immediately jump to interpretations ("her body slumps down", as opposed to "she looks sad"). The listeners might feel the need to defend their descriptions and make clear that they were only repeating what they themselves had been told.

2. Linguistic Phase – Grammar talk

The above conversation leads into a discussion of indirect / reported speech. The teacher chooses a few examples from the former exchanges and writes them on the blackboard. In small groups, the participants are encouraged to examine the grammatical structures of the examples, work out the rules of indirect speech and / or apply previously learnt grammar rules to the examples. Each group writes their results (and their questions!) on large pieces of paper and presents them afterwards to the whole group.

Nota bene: Different foreign languages have different ways of dealing with reported speech (tense-shifts, forms of the subjunctive). Consequently, this phase of linguistic examination needs to be carefully prepared in terms of language, previous grammatical knowledge, intended time spent on explicit grammar, and intended depth of grammatical insight.

3. Context-finding – Chinese Whispers

In the well-known childrens' game *Telephone* (also know as *Chinese Whispers*) a sentence is whispered around the circle from ear to ear. Since everybody understands it a little differently, the end result differs markedly from the original utterance.

A variant of the game is introduced. This time, sentences are not whispered, but spoken aloud, the point being not to report exactly what you heard but to change the information a

little bit each time. The participants are encouraged to pass on the information using forms of reported speech.

Impulse: "Yesterday I went to the new bistro around the corner. It's quite expensive

there, but the waiter looks sooo cute ……!"

Report 1:   "Susanne said she went to the new bistro yesterday. She told me it was very expensive there but I think she has an eye on the waiter. She thought he was real hot …"

Report 2:   "Mark told me that Susanne has fallen in love with the waiter in the new bistro. He said it was extremely dear there but what does she care. Maybe she now gets her drinks for free …"

Report 3:   "Sara told me that Susanne got free drinks at the new expensive bistro! Anne implied that she charmed the waiter – or maybe he was charmed by her? In any case, I wonder what's going on between the two of them …"[8]

At the end of this, there might be more questions about appropriate uses of reported speech. These questions should be addressed before going on to the following activity.

4. Dramatic Play – Rumour-mongering

This phase takes up the former activity. This time, the students are supposed to work out a nice, juicy rumour in small groups and present its development not only verbally but also in visualizing tableaus[9].

Example:

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[8] These are just some of an endless array of possibilities here. In the workshop, amongst other things, there was talk about marriage, prostitution and sex changes! The boldness of ideas will vary from group to group, depending on how comfortable the participants are with each other.

[9] Also known as 'still images'. For a description of the drama technique *tableau* cf. Even 2003:164f.

Anne to Bob: "Yesterday, Tom was in a lousy mood when he came home. I don't really know what's going on – this has happened quite a lot lately, and I don't want to say anything … he might get angry …"

Bob to Cindy: "Anne said that Tom had been in a really lousy mood when he came home. She told me she didn't really know what was going on, but didn't want to say anything because she was afraid, and that this had happened quite a lot lately…"

Cindy to Dan: "Bob told me that Anne's boyfriend Tom had been in a godawful mood when he came home, and that he shouted at her. Anne also told him that this had happened a lot lately, and that she was terribly afraid …"

Dan to Earl: "Cindy mentioned to me that Anne and Tom had a terrible fight. Anne told Cindy said that this was more and more the case lately and that she feared things were breaking up between them …"

Earl to Fran: "Dan said Anne's boyfriend had come home drunk. He might have even hit her, don't you think? Anyway, she told Bob that she was afraid of Tom since this happened all the time. I wonder whether she has the courage to leave him…"

Fran to Gene: "Earl said Anne's boyfriend had come home completely plastered and knocked her around! I wonder if she has to go to hospital. He said she might be leaving him soon…"

In groups of about six, participants work on their rumour and its verbal / visual presentation. They design a tableau to go with each new variant of the rumour. They are supposed to invent at least three variants. While some group members enact the enfolding rumour, others present its development in still images.

After the groups have designed and synchronised their rumours and tableaus, they present their results to the other groups. After each presentation there is opportunity for questions and comments.

5. Homework – Reading comprehension and written composition

Homework can be extremely beneficial, making the students rethink grammar structures that have been discussed, presented and enacted in the classroom, and transfer them to different contexts. The following text presents ample opportunities to identify and examine indirect speech. Since I am a teacher of German as a Foreign Language, I present a German text at this point. The following excerpt was extracted from a novel by Simone Borowiak: *Frau Rettich, die Czerni und ich* (1992: 181-200). The excerpt is introduced by a short contextualization.

> Frau Rettich, Frau Czerni und die Erzählerin sind Freundinnen. Frau Rettich bringt den beiden anderen seit einiger Zeit Spanisch bei. Aber Frau Czerni lernt eigentlich gar nicht, sondern trinkt nur Wein. Die drei Freundinnen fahren am nächsten Tag in den Urlaub nach Spanien, wo Frau Rettich ihren neuen spanischen Freund treffen will.

Das Telefon klingelt. Rettich hebt ab und redet sehr schnelles Spanisch. Dabei dreht sie uns den Rücken zu, wegen der Diskretion. Völlig unnötig, wir verstehen ja doch kein Wort. Frau Czerni tippt mich an: "Na los, Streberin, übersetz mal! Ich will wissen, was die Rettich sagt. Du lernst doch immer heimlich. Was sagt sie denn ihrem Verlobten?"

Ich muß mich konzentrieren. Jetzt gilt's. Der Frau Czerni zeige ich's. Nie darf die mittlere Reife, die Handelsschule, triumphieren über das große Latinum! Was redet die Rettich bloß?

"Sie sagt, wir fahren erst nach Sitges, zu diesem Papa Alfredo."

"Aha. Und jetzt?"

Im Augenblick lacht Frau Rettich blöde ins Telefon. Ich übersetze Czerni: "Sie lacht gerade blöde."

"Ach was. Und worüber? Na, das klappt wohl doch nicht so, Streberin."

"Der, äh, der Novio hat einen Witz erzählt, un chiste, und Rettich hat gesagt, den hätte sie noch nicht gekannt, irgendwas von einem Schotten, der zum Arzt geht. Sagt der Schotte, Herr Doktor, sagt der Schotte, äh…"

"Ha! ich glaub dir kein Wort."

"Jetzt reden sie über das Wetter. Und daß sie sich schon freut und es gar nicht mehr erwarten kann."

Herrgottsakra, was reden Verliebte denn so am Telefon!

"Sie nennt ihn jetzt Spatzl, Schnuckl und Pupsi. Sie bete ihn an und habe schon alles gepackt: die Kostüme, die Dessous, die Schuhe, das Sonnenöl – mit hohem Schutzfaktor, wegen der Klimakatastrophe."

Eben bückt sich Frau Rettich, um die Katze zu streicheln.

"Sie sagt, daß es der Katze gut gehe, daß sie immer fetter wird und bald aus dem Pelz platzt. Wenn sie sich auf ihren Liebslinggstuhl setzt, dann krachen schon die Pelznähte und…",

– jetzt komme ich in Fahrt, so macht Übersetzen Spaß –,"

… und sie frißt doch so gerne, die Katze, also Nierchen und Pansen, und Kutteln und Buchteln, davon kann sie nie genug kriegen, von Nierchen und Pansen und Kutteln. Auch die Buchteln verschmäht sie nicht, ist ganz gierig auf Nierchen…"

Frau Rettich legt auf und berichtet: "Das war Papa Alfredo. In Sitges geht alles klar, das Wetter ist klasse, Greta hat schon wieder Junge! Meine Damen, packt die Koffer! Morgen um sieben Uhr! Pünktlich!"

Noch auf der Treppe höre ich die Czerni johlen. Es fallen mehrmals die Worte Nierchen, Pansen und Pupsi.

Ach Gott, sie weiß es halt nicht besser.

Vokabelhilfen

Streber(in)	jemand, der immer alles lernt und weiß
der/die Verlobte	*fiance(e)*
Jetzt gilt's.	Jetzt geht's um die Wurst! *(Now the game's on!)*
mittlere Reife (f.)	*GCSE exams*
Handelsschule (f.)	*commercial school or college*
das große Latinum	*A-level latin*
Novio (span.)	der Neue (hier: Frau Rettichs neuer Freund)
Herrgottsakra	*My goodness!*
Spatzl, Schnuckl, Pupsi	*(silly) terms of endearment*
Kostüm (n.)	*two-piece suit for women*
Dessous (franz.)	*sexy underwear*
Schutzfaktor (m.)	*sun screen*
Naht, Nähte (f.)	*seam(s)*
in Fahrt kommen	*to get going*
Nierchen, Pansen	*kidneys, rumen*
Kutteln, Buchteln	hessische Spezialitäten

verschmähen	nicht mögen; *to reject*
gierig sein auf	etwas sehr gerne mögen; *to be extremely keen on*
Junge haben	to have pups/kittens
johlen	laut lachen; *to howl (here: with laughter)*

As homework, the students are supposed to find all the forms of indirect speech in the excerpt and identify them according to what form of the subjunctive has been used. (In German, indirect speech is realized usually by a mixture of indicative and subjunctive forms.) This exercise puts its emphasis on *recognizing* indirect speech. For more advanced students who are supposed to *use* forms of the subjunctive in their oral and written production, I suggest a formal exercise in which all instances of indirect speech in the text are to be put into the subjunctive. As a follow-up, students might compose a conversation between Czerni and another friend of hers whom she tells about this failed 'translation'.

Impulse: Die Czerni trifft ihre Freundin Hildegard in einem Café. Schreiben Sie den Dialog zwischen den beiden zu Ende:

Czerni: Hildegardchen, ich muss dir was Komisches erzählen! Du kennst doch Renate, die mit mir bei Frau Rettich Spanisch lernt, nicht wahr? Also, wir sitzen wieder zusammen und da klingelt das Telefon. Frau Rettich geht ran und das ist jemand aus Spanien. Natürlich redet sie Spanisch, und ich versteh' kein Wort. Also sag' ich Renate, sie solle doch mal übersetzen, die alte Streberin. Und da sagt sie, dass ………

6. Concluding thought

It was interesting to see how different competences came to bear during the workshop. Native speakers of languages other than English had a fair idea how reported speech works in English, having had to learn the grammatical rules. However, native speakers of English had to reflect on the rules from a different angle, having always applied them intuitively. This situation, in my opinion, came close to simulating the usual state of affairs in a foreign language classroom; while some students might know rules off by heart (but do not necessarily know how to put them into practice), others might not be aware of them (and

just talk with varying degree of correctness). Thus, different abilities and knowledge are fused together in the learning process.

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