



The Use of Drama in Learning German as Foreign Language During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. During the COVID-19 pandemic, students study at home and do not interact with teachers and their friends in class. In language learning, the interaction between teachers and students or students with students is very important. Through this interaction, they can improve their communication skills. The use of drama is one way to create communication in virtual spaces, like zoom, in language learning during the covid-19 pandemic. This research aimed to explore the use of German drama in teaching German as a foreign language. This research also focuses on ways and strategies to create student-centered learning in virtual spaces to improve communication and public speaking skills using German. Two dramatic techniques used in this research are drama scripts and improvisation. The positive impact of teaching emotional language through drama is the physical, social, and cognitive development of students. This is because the use of drama has invited students to the real world or authentic situations.

Keywords: German as second language learning · drama · communication skills · motivation

1 Introduction

Classroom Interaction in learning a foreign language is very important because it can improve students' communication skills and strengthen social relationships and build students' self-confidence [1]. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, classroom learning is limited. Interaction between teacher and students and students with students moved to the virtual room.

This situation causes language teachers to think about how to create a virtual room that supports improving communication skills in foreign language learning. One of the chosen ways is to use literary works in a virtual room in learning German.

For German language teachers, German literature is one of the important materials that can be used to teach German as a foreign language. We know, Germany is one of the countries in Europe that has a good literary tradition. In Germany born great writers whose works are recognized by the world. Therefore, in learning German as a foreign language, literary texts have an important role. However, not all literary texts must be used by teachers in language learning. Teachers should choose literary texts that suit the

needs, level of language competence, and ages of learners so that literary texts will be effective for teaching and learning languages [2].

Literary texts can be explored in depth by the teacher and many benefits will be obtained. By utilizing literary texts the teacher not only develops language skills but also trains students' emotional and sensitivity skills and leads students towards more meaningful communication [3][4]. Through literary texts, students can identify, analyze, interpret and describe critical ideas, values, and themes that appear in the text [5].

The use of literary texts in teaching German as a foreign language can provide opportunities for teachers and students to explore grammar, phrases, and vocabulary, and at the same time, they discover new words, phrases, and expressions. Thus students' ability to understand and reflect on German texts from various perspectives can be improved and better.

Today we must realize that the world has no clear boundaries. Students also bring digitally mediated transnational, multicultural, and multilingual experiences into the classroom. Values in literature challenge readers to make independent interpretations, learn, and bring out creativity through language and culture in literary texts [6].

Literary texts that have been read will color students' perceptions of the world and develop insight. At least literary texts have four advantages. They are (1) to facilitate the training of intelligence and sensitivity; (2) to stimulate students' creative imagination; (3) to increase students' cultural awareness and; (3) to improve the psycholinguistic aspects of language learning. Literary texts can stimulate a person in language acquisition and learning activities because literary texts provide a meaningful and memorable context for processing and interpreting a new language [7]. In addition, the literary works studied can contribute to knowledge and understanding of the culture and society of the language studied. This cultural factor could be the main attraction for students to learn the language [6].

Of all other literary genres, drama can be a shorter and quicker way to guide teachers to develop students' speaking skills. Therefore, this study emphasizes the extent to which the use of drama techniques helps students improve pronunciation and intonation and overcomes students' fear of speaking in front of many people. Classroom Interaction in learning a foreign language is very important because it can improve students' communication skills and strengthen social relationships and build students' self-confidence [1]. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, classroom learning is limited. Interaction between teacher and students and students with students moved to the virtual room.

This situation causes language teachers to think about how to create a virtual room that supports improving communication skills in foreign language learning. One of the chosen ways is to use literary works in a virtual room in learning German. For German language teachers, German literature is one of the important materials that can be used to teach German as a foreign language. We know, Germany is one of the countries in Europe that has a good literary tradition. In Germany born great writers whose works are recognized by the world. Therefore, in learning German as a foreign language, literary texts have an important role. However, not all literary texts must be used by teachers in language learning. Teachers should choose literary texts that suit the needs, level of language competence, and ages of learners so that literary texts will be effective for teaching and learning languages [2].

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Research that is also relevant to the research of Mesra et al. [12] the results of his research explain that in online learning the class can be divided into offline class and online class, this is related to learning in various forms of methods such as drama methods, social media, and so on.

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2 Research Methodology

Participants

The participants of this research were twenty students of German Literature, Universitas Negeri Surabaya. The period for the study was three weeks (four hours per week). Students are divided into two groups. In each group, they play a different function according to the type of task assigned.

Research Instruments

The drama text used in this research is the first act of the play *der Besuch der alten Dame* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1956). This drama, which consists of three acts, is a drama in the tragic comedy category. The theme of love is very interesting for young foreign

language learners, especially when there is comedy delivered by the characters in this drama. This drama uses uncomplicated language and is appropriate to everyday life.

Research Procedure

Drama can be easily implemented in the German learning syllabus because of its relevance to the language used. The drama that has been read and discussed is then displayed by the students. By using the speaking skill assessment instrument on the aspects of pronunciation and intonation the teacher can conduct an assessment of students.

Before performing, students are given allowed opportunity to understand the story, setting, and characters in a drama. In the next stage, the students will show a performance, while the teacher will give an assessment. After learning is complete, the teacher gives a questionnaire to find out the responses and motivation of students.

3 Findings

The selection of dramas to be discussed is based on ease of accessibility and suitability for students' language skills and their interests and needs. In a virtual classroom that uses a zoom cloud meeting, students are divided into two groups in different breakout rooms, while the teacher acts as a facilitator. In four meetings in the first-week students were asked to read the text and then discuss difficult words with the teacher. In the next stage, students discussed the setting and characters in the first act of the drama *der Besuch der alten Dame*. As a facilitator, the teacher enters the breakout room to ask questions about what they have read and understood from the setting and characters in the play. After students understand the setting and characters, they are asked to read aloud a certain part of the text. The goal is that students can show the right mood and intonation. Next, students discuss the division of roles for each student and prepare a performance that will be witnessed by the teacher and other groups.

In the second week, they prepare for the performance. They practice independently. The texts don't need to be memorized, but it would be better if they memorized a few phrases. They practice conveying the message correctly, intonation, and facial expressions are right. Meanwhile, other body languages such as footwork and are not needed due to the limitations of the media used.

In the third stage in the third week, each group takes turns performing in front of other groups. This stage is important because students can express the feelings of the characters they play. In addition, the teacher can also assess students' pronunciation and intonation. Through the virtual zoom room, the teacher can observe and listen to students' speaking abilities.

The interaction in the classroom was moved to a virtual room, it turned out that it did not cause complex problems, especially in improving students' speaking skills. Through the zoom application, students can still improve their speaking skills, because they can still express the feelings and thoughts of the drama characters they play. Through planned exercises and mentoring from the teacher, students can pronounce words and sentences correctly.

In addition, drama can also reduce students' fear of speaking in front of the public, because students convey something that already exists. This is an important point when

they dare to speak a lot in public. Getting rid of fear takes a long process and drama can be one way.

The activeness and involvement of students are also a concern of the teacher. Through drama, there are no passive students. All students become active because they are invited by the teacher to discuss the setting and characters in the drama or the characters they play. Students show great interest in learning by using this drama because they can communicate with the teacher and their peers. Group work is also very important because students can help, support and improve one another. It can be understood that students enjoy learning even though they played in a virtual room.

4 Discussion

Indeed, the use of drama in language learning classes is nothing new. For a long time, language teachers have used literary texts for language learning, because literary texts do not only contain things related to language but also related to students' lives. Therefore, in the future, literary texts will still be used in language learning.

The use of drama in foreign language learning will greatly benefit students, even though students are not present in real classes. Through drama, the teacher can explore the text and relate it to the lives and experiences of students. The class becomes more lively because students actively discuss the setting, characters, and other possibilities in the text. As a facilitator, of course, the teacher focuses on student-oriented learning. Students should be more active through drama texts.

By using drama in language learning classes teachers can assess students' speaking skills, especially aspects of pronunciation and intonation. Pronunciation and intonation are indeed a problem for students learning foreign languages as their second language. But with regular practice using several methods, students will be able to pronounce words correctly.

Through drama, students can know the intonation goes up, down, or horizontally. Intonation is important because intonation relates to "a combination of acoustic parameters, including duration, intensity, and tone used to communicate the meaning of discourse" [11]. The right intonation will make it easier for the other person to understand the discourse.

Another important aspect is cross-cultural understanding. Students know the culture of the language they are learning and compare it with their culture, life, and experiences. This cultural aspect will shape students into people who have broad insight and are wise.

5 Conclusion

Drama is a tool that can be used to improve students' language skills. One of the skills that can be improved is speaking skill. Students can express the feelings and thoughts of the characters they play. A good understanding of the setting and characters in the drama will make students understand the right intonation. So, the drama technique is very helpful for teachers and students in foreign language learning activities.

Even during the pandemic, teachers can still use drama techniques in foreign language learning. Teachers can take advantage of distance learning applications, such

as zoom, google meet, and others. Through this application, students play their roles according to the characters in the drama text. Interaction between teachers and students and students with students still occur.

The title “ACKNOWLEDGMENTS” should be in all caps and should be placed above the references. The references should be consistent within the article and follow the same style. List all the references with full details.

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