

# **DRAMA METHOD AND CORPUS LINGUISTICS IN CLIL: THE POWER OF CONNECTION. AN EXAMPLE OF PRACTICAL APPLICATION IN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT “LORD OF THE FLIES” FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The project is inspired by the possible educational benefits of the collaboration between Corpus Linguistics and Drama method. The experience of a recent action research project on Drama in CLIL made the author design the new project, since one of the main findings was the necessity of a systematic and creative attitude towards teaching vocabulary, which can be carried out by means of Corpus Linguistics. The recent action research was developed with a control group of about 200 secondary school students within two months in Pamplona (Spain). Some of the results of the study were presented on the conference “Practical Approaches to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)” at the University of Navarra in February 2012. The proposal is based on about 8 years’ experience as language teacher (English, German, Spanish) and an approximate 3 years’ practice as drama instructor. On the basis of the experience of Ph.D. research for the University of Warsaw and simultaneous Master on teaching English on Secondary School level (Master Universitario de Profesorado) at the University of Navarra, it was decided to design a new version of the action research, a proposal based on the connection between Corpus Linguistics and Drama method.

## 2. RATIONALE

On the one hand, the benefits of the use of Corpus Linguistics for language learning have been made widely known thanks to recent publications (Romero 2008, Dudley-Evans & John 1998). Because of its systematic approach towards vocabulary it can prove especially beneficial for Content and Language Integrated Learning (Llinares & Romero 2008). On the other hand, the Drama method that offers a variety of communicative contexts has proved considerably useful for language learning, both according to academic publications (Maley & Duff 1982, Holden 1981) and recent theoretical and practitioner research (Vilanova 2009, Ronke 2005). The advantages of the methodology have inspired research in a variety of countries, including Spain (Universidad de Sevilla, Universidad de Murcia, Universidad de Barcelona) and doctoral thesis on the area (Vilanova 2009). According to the recent findings, there is a necessity of practical proposals and teacher training based on the Drama methodology (Navarro 2009).

Moreover, recent studies have revealed there is a connection between CLIL and Drama that can be beneficial for educational purposes in many dimensions. Susan Hillyard, a Coordinator for Teaching English through Drama of the Ministry of Education in Argentina developed a link between Drama characteristics and five CLIL components: Lantix, Learntix, Contix, Learning Outcomes and Engagement (Hillyard 2010). The connection between Drama and CLIL mainly consist of two aspects. On the one hand, they are both seen as motivating forces in the language classroom. On the other hand, they are both characterized by a holistic nature, that engages the whole learner in the learning experience. Therefore, the power of connection between CLIL and Drama can be seen, among others, in the following common characteristics: context and problem-focused approach, developing critical/analytical/interpretative skills, stimulating creativity and learning motivation by means of enhancing learner's autonomy, cross curricular character, development of linguistic functions, the importance of a comprehensible output. All things considered, a didactic proposal based on CLIL, Drama and Corpus Linguistics can prove efficient for language acquisition process and be a motivating force for the learners.

The methodology was developed according to the following learning pathway: Research-Practice-Improvisation (Johns 1991). There were practical applications of

Corpus Linguistics and the above mentioned pathway used as model examples (Thurstun and Candlin 1998). Nevertheless, the approach to develop a link between Drama method and Corpus Linguistics is quite innovative and not to be frequently encountered in academic publications.

Therefore, the overall project objectives focused on the two following. Firstly, as a result of it teaching materials on the basis of a written corpus of *Lord of the Flies* should be developed. Secondly, this way a link between Corpus Linguistics and Drama method will be established and based on a practical didactic approach. Consequently, the following class objectives were formulated. Firstly, the student's learning process will be condensed and intensified through exposure to multiple examples of the same vocabulary item in context. Secondly, the students will have increase their awareness of the importance of collocational relationships. Thirdly, the students will become acquainted with the notion of Corpus Linguistics and encouraged to use Corpus Linguistics programs.

### 3. METHOD

As regards the practical background of the research, the study is designed for 2nd grade Baccalaureate students (2º Bachillerato), aged 17-18. The part devoted to Drama activities has already been applied and analysed by means of an action research project on about 35 female students of a private primary and secondary school in Pamplona in Spain. The resources for the project consisted basically of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. The corpus exercises were developed on the basis of a written corpus of about 300,000 words, which basically consists of the book content. The concordance program "AntConc" was used to establish the frequency of use of particular items in the corpus, words as well as word chunks. Concordances of (100) characters were obtained for the student research and concordances of (400) characters were developed to apply in exercises and Drama activities. Though the class methodology is described in past tense, the corpus exercises part has not been applied in a classroom. The drama exercises part was applied and analyzed within a research project.

#### 4. MATERIALS

The first part of the class consisted of guided research tasks. The students were first introduced to Corpus Linguistics, the way word concordance programs work and shown the word list of most frequent items in the book. Then they were given multiple examples of the vocabulary items in the context. They were supposed to analyse them and highlight word groups surrounding the key words, in order to make assumptions about their use. Then, they answered questions on the use of the key words in the context.

In the second part a guided language production followed. The presentation of the concordances and guided research tasks made the students acquainted with the basic notions of Corpus Linguistics. Then, they were requested to use the key words in guided practice exercises. The objective of the exercises was to ensure that they are using the item properly.

The third part was the culmination of the class, which involved free language production. The introductory and consolidating exercises were followed by creative and improvisational activities involving Drama method. The Drama activities are also developed in a language learning pathway leading from presentation through guided production to improvisation. The students go on from a mere mime presentation of the vocabulary (the Statue technique) through reflecting its situational context in a problem-focused pantomime (Frozen Image) to a practical application of the vocabulary while explaining their character's views and justifying their behaviour (5 Dimensions Analysis).

The first Drama activity was the "Statue" technique used as a warm-up. The students were said to stand still in a pose reflecting the words cried out by the teacher. The themes referred to the main ideas of the book and were meant to refresh the key vocabulary needed for the next exercise (eg. hunt, protect, chose the leader, watch the fire). Another role of the activity was to awaken mind schemata, stir up curiosity and motivation to explore the book. Then the Frozen Image technique was explained. The students created four groups; each group was given a different topic to present in a form of a "Frozen Image", i.e. a mime image similar to a photograph with an element of tension or conflict included in the scene. The topics were improvised by the students on the basis of the introductory lecture and the characters they identified most with. Some

of the subjects that appeared were: the boys are fighting for food (tension element: solidarity and group responsibility vs. hunger and need to survive), some of the boys want Ralph to be the leader and some Jack (tension element: trust towards one leader vs. another). The importance of the tension/conflict element for the Drama technique should not be overseen; therefore it is explicitly mentioned in the class outline to be found in the Appendix. Apart from practicing group work and speaking, the students are meant to become aware of the importance of the conflicts in the book and thus deepen their content understanding.

According to the methodology, it is advisable that the Frozen Image exercises were followed by the 5 Dimensions Analysis technique, in order not to let the students focus on the mere emotional level, but also to enhance their reasoning. While the students stood still in their images, every one of them was asked to reflect silently on the 5 Dimensions of the Frozen Image, according to the questions on the blackboard: Who are you? (character) What are you doing? (action) Why? (reason) What for? (purpose) What is important for you in life? (philosophy of life). The teacher circulated around the groups asking random students some of the questions. Her intention was to keep the students' attention focused on the problems analysed and maintain the tension of the Frozen Images. The objective was to analyse the multiple dimensions of the conflicts and reflect on their implications. Another aim that was later on commented in the recall sessions was to develop the speaking skill by practicing certain language functions.

There are some other optional Drama activities designed in the class outline. They can be found quite useful to deepen the content understanding. In the groups that were formed before, the students can improvise another Frozen Images "15 minutes before", "15 minutes after" the event (the time can be indicated by the instructor, depending on the plot). As follow-up writing activities they could do the following: give a title to every image; write down the dialogue between the characters; write down one sentence about what every character thinks in the moment of the Frozen Image ("Read My Mind" exercise).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The possible connection between Drama, CLIL and Corpus Linguistics can be considered a promising solution for a modern foreign language classroom. Therefore, a practical application of the proposal and its thorough analysis would be recommendable.

Drama strategies such as Teacher-in-Role, Mantle of the Expert and Drama techniques such as Statue, Frozen Image or Forum Theatre can prove beneficial for the language acquisition process. A systematic approach towards vocabulary teaching by means of Corpus Linguistics could make them even more effective. All things considered, an action research should be undertaken and lead to practical solutions that are necessary in view of the needs of the modern language classroom. Examples of exercises for the Corpus part of the project and an outline of the Drama part follow in the appendix. An outline of the Drama techniques and strategies useful for CLIL, one of the main findings of the author's research, presented during the conference on practical approaches to CLIL at the University of Navarra in February 2012 is to be found below.

Drama activities applicable in CLIL – 3 stages.
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. Drama games stimulating concentration (Guiding the Blind, Hearing the Sounds, the Pose)</li><li>II. Content-introducing Drama games (on the basis of the key vocabulary: the Pose, Improvisations in Pairs focused on a problem-solution)</li><li>III. More advanced Drama activities: Frozen Image with an Interpretation and Written Description, role-plays using the Mantle of the Expert, Forum Theatre (Augusto Boal)</li></ol> |
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APPENDIX I: LIST OF THE LINGUISTIC FUNCTIONS DEVELOPED AS OBJECTIVES OF THE  
ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT “THE LORD OF THE FLIES”, BY WILLIAM GOLDING

**Linguistic functions** introduced or developed in the project, as objective of specific  
**Drama exercises:**

1. In the Statue exercise:  
key vocabulary involving action verbs, needed for the Frozen Image exercise  
(eg. hunt, protect, chose the leader, watch the fire, fight for the food)
2. In the Frozen Image 5 Dimensions Analysis exercise:  
describing actions and emotions, giving reasons for actions, making assumptions  
about the general philosophy of life
3. In the Hot Chair exercise:  
open-ended questions and w-questions instead of closed-ended questions

**Linguistic functions** introduced or developed in the project, as objective of the  
**theoretical lecture:**

- key vocabulary related to the main concepts of the book, such as civilization  
versus savagery, chaos and anarchy, law and order
- the vocabulary needed to describe the features of the main characters, such as  
Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon
- key vocabulary related to the main symbols, eg. Piggy’s glasses, the conch

The linguistic functions mentioned above are related either to the content of the book or  
to the language taught during the class, as the class is carried out within the Content  
Language Integrated Learning methodology.

**Linguistic functions** introduced or developed in the project, relating directly to the  
**content:**

- key vocabulary involving action verbs: eg. hunt, protect, chose the leader, watch  
the fire, fight for the food
- key vocabulary related to the main concepts of the book, such as civilization  
versus savagery, chaos and anarchy, law and order
- the vocabulary needed to describe the features of the main characters, such as  
Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon
- key vocabulary related to the main symbols, eg. Piggy’s glasses, the conch
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APPENDIX II: CLASS OUTLINE OF THE ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT  
“THE LORD OF THE FLIES”

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Class characteristics: 2º Bachillerato, about 35 female students

Course: English Literature (CLIL, taught in English)

CLIL unit: William Golding “The Lord of the Flies”

Form: T-Ss stands for interaction teacher-students, T-Ss stands for interaction between students.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

- Students learn the new content unit about W. Golding’s “Lord of the Flies”
- Students become aware of the importance of the conflicts in the book and thus deepen their understanding of the main concepts of the book (thanks to the quality of Drama being problem-focused).
- Students learn to focus on the problems in the content they work on, analyse their multiple dimensions and make assumptions about their implications (Frozen Image 5 Dimensions Analysis technique)
- Students develop linguistic functions in English, especially in the speaking skill, while practising group work (describing actions and emotions, giving reasons for actions, making assumptions about the general philosophy of life).
- Students have their learning motivation stimulated through personal implication in the Drama activities
- Students are encouraged to improve their English skills, especially speaking, by being challenged by communicative situations in Drama (vocabulary needed to communicate their character’s views and justify their behaviour; open-ended questions and w-questions instead of closed-ended questions).
- Students stimulate their creativity by means of improvisation

## CLASS 1

Timing: a total of 60 min, including first 30 min of a lecture as an introduction to the book content, done by the CLIL teacher, as a result the Drama class lasts for 30 min

Before the Drama class: introduction by the CLIL teacher (main concepts of the book: civilization vs. savagery, chaos and anarchy, order, etc.; main characters and their features: Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon; key symbols: Piggy's glasses, the conch)

Activity	Objective	Timing	Form
Warm-up: (Drama technique: Statue) students stand still in a pose reflecting the words cried out by the teacher (eg. hunt, protect, chose the leader, watch the fire)	Refreshing the key vocabulary for the class  Awakening mind schemata  Stirring up curiosity and motivation	5	T-Ss
(Frozen Image technique) the students create groups of 4-5 and invent a conflict scene with the book characters to present in a form of a "Frozen Image", i.e. a mime image similar to a photograph with an element of tension/conflict	Becoming aware of the importance of the conflicts in the book and thus deepening the understanding of the main concepts of the book  Practicing group work  Practicing speaking  Developing creativity	5	Ss, groups
Presentation of the "Frozen Images" (everybody stands still in their images simultaneously)	Stimulating awareness of the importance of group work  Rising concentration level	5	Ss

<p>(Frozen Image 5 Dimensions Analysis technique) while the students stand still in their images, every one of them is asked to reflect silently on the 5 Dimensions of the Frozen Image, according to the questions on the blackboard: Who are you? (character) What are you doing? (action) Why? (reason) What for? (purpose) What is important for you in life? (philosophy of life). The teacher circulates around the groups that keep standing still, asks random students some of the questions.</p>	<p>Focusing on the possible problems in the content they work on, analysing their multiple dimensions and reflecting on their implications (Frozen Image 5 Dimensions Analysis technique; language functions needed to communicate their character’s views and justify their behaviour)</p> <p>Deepening their understanding of the main concepts of the book</p> <p>Practicing speaking</p> <p>Stimulating creativity</p> <p>Stimulating learning motivation through personal implication</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>Ss, groups, T-Ss</p>
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Optional additional Drama activities: in the groups that were formed before, in order to deepen their understanding, the students can improvise another Frozen Images “15 minutes before”, “15 minutes after” the event; give a title to every image; write down the dialogue between the characters; write down one sentence about what every character thinks in the moment of the Frozen Image (“Read My Mind” exercise)

Between CLASS 1 and 2 there was another class of 60 minutes, where the CLIL teacher continued with the book content and interpretation.

### CLASS 2

Timing: a total of 60 min, including the first 30 min of a lecture as an introduction to the book content, done by the CLIL teacher, as a result the Drama class lasts for 30 min

Activity	Objective	Timing	Form
Evaluation criteria – explanation	Becoming aware of the importance of their work and the way it affects evaluation	5	T-Ss
Warm-up: (“Statue” on the basis of the “Frozen image”) students stand still in a pose reflecting the role they had in the last class “Frozen images”	Activating mind schemata Raising concentration level	5	Ss
(“Frozen image”) 5 volunteers present a conflict scene: boys in amok before Simon comes	Focus on the possible problems in the content Introduce the element of tension	5	Ss
(“the teacher on a Hot Chair”) (answering questions in the role) the teacher runs into the class and answers the students’ questions as Simon coming into the scene and wanting to share the news about the parachuter	Practicing speaking and listening comprehension Focusing on the problem and deepening the students’ understanding of the main concepts of the book Stirring the tension level Being encouraged to learn English, especially speaking, as they are challenged by communicative situations to use certain language functions (open questions and w-questions instead of closed questions) Stimulating creativity	5-15	T-Ss

Optional Drama activity: Forum Theatre (a problem analysis activity: the students are acting out a scene and can be interrupted any time by the teacher or any student who claps their hands and goes into the scene replacing another student, takes up one of the roles in order to solve the problem situation; this activity wasn’t done in the Drama

class, but it was planned and introduced to the subject teacher): the students from the “Frozen image” are joined by a volunteer in the role of Simon coming in and wanting to share the news, they continue acting out the scene aloud, until the moment that the boy is bullied and killed

CLASS 3: exam

APPENDIX III: EXAMPLES OF EXERCISES FOR CORPUS PART OF THE PROJECT  
“THE LORD OF THE FLIES”

1. Analyse the word frequency list from “AntConc” program. How do you think, which words are in generally most frequent in English? Why? Which words from the list are particularly frequent in the book? Why?
2. Look at the word concordancers. Underline the central group of words, which is the group that can stand on its own. Analyse which words can be frequently related to the word in the middle. Which prepositions do most frequently follow it?
3. Do you know what are clusters and collocates? Write down the definitions given by the teacher. Look at the clusters of the word “leader”.

a leader

leader this

leader was

obvious leader

Why can analysing clusters be useful for learning?

Use the concordance program to find the collocates.

4. What are concordances? Look at the concordances of the word “fire”. In groups chose one of the concordances and imagine a story in which it could be used. Write it down in main plot points and compare it to the real context in the book.

...Fire on the Mountain. By the time Ralph finished blowing...

...Eric sniggered. “Wasn’t he waxy?” “About the—” “Fire and the pig.” “Lucky he went for Jack, ’stead of...”

Write down possible collocations with the word “fire”, eg. set up a fire, extinguish a fire, fireman, firebrigade.

Why can analysing concordances be useful for learning?

5. The notion of a leader is important in the book. Knowing the main plot points, why do you think is it important? Knowing the main characters and their features, how do you think, who could be the best leader? In groups brainstorm on 3 possible leaders and write down 1 feature for each that would make them a good leader.

Write down possible collocations with the word “leader”, eg. leadership, choose the leader.

Now look at the concordances of the word “leader”. In groups chose one of the concordances and imagine a story in which it could be used, possibly close to the real plot of the book. Write it down in main plot points and compare it to the real context in the book.

...while the most obvious leader was Jack. But there was a stillness...

...close fuss or disbelief. Henry was a bit of a leader this afternoon, because the other two were...

6. One of the main symbols of the book is a conch. Can you find on the word frequency list how many times does it occur in the book? Why is it so frequent? Find examples in the book and do a brainstorming in groups on the possible meanings and interpretations of the word.
7. Do you know any Corpus? Enter the British National Corpus website. Chose 5 words from the book word frequency list and compare their frequency and collocations with the National Corpus. Find a list of most frequent words in BNC and compare it with the book list. What are the differences? Why?

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