CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Film scenes and role-playing: Potentials and empirical findings on the use of audio-visual texts in foreign language teaching
Authors	Delius, Katherina
Publication date	2023
Original Citation	Delius, K. (2023) 'Film scenes and role-playing: Potentials and empirical findings on the use of audio-visual texts in foreign language teaching ', Scenario: A Journal for Performative Teaching, Learning, Research, 17(1), pp. 27-46. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.17.1.2
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	10.33178/scenario.17.1.2
Rights	© 2023, the Author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. - https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/
Download date	2026-11-06 02:58:49
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/14870

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Volume/Jahrgang 17, Issue/Ausgabe 1 (2023)
https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.17.1.2

Film scenes and role-playing

Potentials and empirical findings on the use of audio-visual texts in foreign language teaching

Katharina Delius

Role-plays are a popular task format in foreign language teaching, among other things to promote speaking. Teachers often assume that their learners have already acquired ideas about the scene to be portrayed or that they can draw on knowledge from their first language. However, this is not always the case. To successfully perform a role-play and thus an interaction, learners need knowledge about the underlying generic characteristics, such as the structure or the verbal, but also non-verbal design of the scene. Referring to a process model for learning social interaction situations (Hallet, 2015), this paper argues for the use of film scenes to model different kinds of interactions and prepare learners for role-playing activities. After a presentation of the theoretical framework, selected results from a design-based research study, which focussed on promoting speaking in two Year 6 English classes (a total of 52 learners aged 11-12 on a pre-mediate level) via a synthesis of genre- and drama-based approach, are presented.

1 Introduction

'And now: Act out the scene' – Role-plays are a frequently used task format in foreign language teaching (FLT) and popular in textbooks. They are supposed to promote speaking, at least that is the widespread expectation, since they open up interaction situations that are close to reality and thus make it possible to practice the entire speech act (Klippel & Doff, 2009). From the perspective of drama pedagogy, the successful implementation of a role-play requires appropriate preparation, in which the learners are attuned to taking on a role, but also targeted follow-up, in which they are guided out of the roles and reflect on their performance (Tselikas, 1999). However, further steps are needed to prevent learners from being overwhelmed and to achieve real learning gains in terms of their ability to interact. To master the complex process of speaking, besides grammatical, lexical and phonetic knowledge, discourse and content knowledge, knowledge of nonverbal phenomena and of the underlying genres is needed (Hallet, 2016). Especially these last two types of knowledge are often not actively addressed when implementing role-plays in FLT. This could be because of the implicit assumption that learners can draw on knowledge and experience from their first language.

Yet, as this paper will show based on the results of an empirical study, this is not always the case.

In fact, there are already approaches to prepare role-plays by offering phrases or chunks that may occur in certain interaction situations and that are meant to orient learners (Kurtz, 2015). However, these chunks are usually presented in a purely verbal and decontextualized way, i.e., without reference to the interaction in its entirety. In this respect, film scenes show great potential as so-called model texts according to the genre approach: They convey audio-visual information about the context and the concrete situation in which the interaction occurs, the speakers involved and how they communicate with each other (also nonverbally) (see also Lütge, 2007[1]). This article presents the promising approach of using scenes from feature films and series to prepare role-plays in FLT. For this purpose, first the theoretical considerations about how – at least to some extent – everyday interactions are based on implicit scripts are explained, from which the idea of considering the genre approach, when working with role-plays, is derived (Hallet, 2015). In a second step, the specifics of film scenes and their particular potential as model texts for oral interactions are discussed. Finally, a completed design-based research study (Delius, 2020) is presented, which focused on both the theory and practice of teaching speaking in FLT through an innovative synthesis of the genre approach with drama-based methods.

2 The scripts of everyday interactions

In a drama pedagogical understanding, role-plays in different forms aim at representing reality (Tselikas, 1999, p. 23). In these situations, learners can experiment with their own (linguistic) actions, and, if necessary or desired, behave differently than usual for the duration of the role-play. They take on roles that could also exist in real life and imitate scenes that correspond to reality or at least come close to it. Yet, taking on different roles is basically something commonplace: “In fact, each of us adopts a variety of roles; indeed, it is important to remember that we develop this capacity to role play from a very early age” (Jennings, 2010, p. 3). According to Mead (1934), children imitate and try out different roles during their developmental process in play and thereby learn the ability to adopt roles. This in turn provides an important basis for the ability to change perspectives, i.e., to put oneself in other roles. We use different roles to cope with the numerous situational conditions we encounter in everyday life and to present ourselves in the way we consider necessary or conducive in the

[1] Lütge (2007) convincingly demonstrates the potential that dealing with different film versions of a Shakespearean drama can have for students’ own scenic interpretation of the text. She shows, among other things, how learners can analyze the nonverbal level in particular by watching the film scenes and make it useful for their own performance (p. 135).

respective situation. Park also addressed this connection: "It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role" (1950, p. 249). In *The presentation of self in everyday life* Goffmann (1956) elaborated on this idea by extending it to the entire communication situation, including other people involved: “A social establishment is any place surrounded by fixed barriers to perception in which a particular kind of activity regularly takes place. ... Within the walls of a social establishment we find a team of performers who co-operate to present to an audience a given definition of the situation” (p. 152). The analogy between a theatrical performance and an everyday face-to-face interaction has been further illuminated from the perspective of both theater studies (e.g., Fischer-Lichte, 1998) and cultural studies (e.g., Storey, 2014). To some extent, all of our everyday interactions with others are based on social scripts to which all of us bring certain normative expectations such as how an interaction is structured, what and how the individual can and should say and behave (Storey, 2014, p. 107). According to Hallet, successful participation in social interactions requires both an awareness of their nature as being (partly) scripted and the ability to anticipate their scenic-dramatic courses as well as the ability to actively co-determine them oneself in a way that is appropriate to the situation (2010, p. 4). Behind the metaphor of a script used in this context lies the assumption that socio-culturally pre-shaped forms of interaction are cognitively acquired and can be retrieved in respective situations (Hallet, 2015, p. 52). Following this notion of the possibility to transfer experiences of social interactions into scripts, Hallet developed a cyclic model (see Fig. 1).

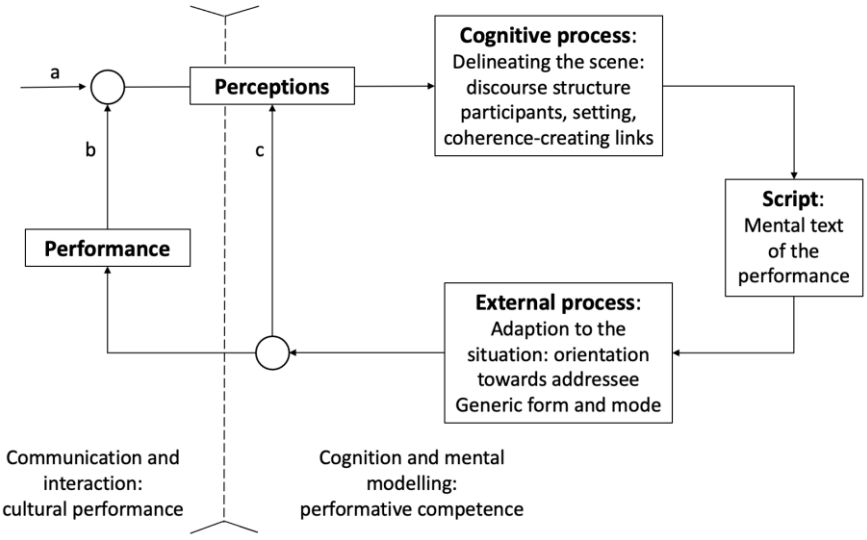


Figure 1 Process model of learning social interaction situations (Hallet, 2015, p. 65, transl. by author).

In the course of our lives, we observe either others (in the model: channel a) or ourselves (channel b) when performing interactions in various social situations. These perceptions are, first of all, abstracted in a cognitive process (the dashed line separates the level of real

interactions from the cognitive level) to the characteristics of a 'scene' with its situational embedding, the persons involved, its inner structure, etc. These various components are transferred into a script, the mental performance of an interaction. The script serves as the basis for externalization, which involves adapting the script to the specific conditions of a new 'scene' (channel b). However, it is possible that further revision loops are interposed (channel c), in which similar interaction situations are perceived and abstracted (Hallet, 2015, p. 65). In this way, the underlying characteristics of the interaction crystallize out further and further. The presented model can thus illustrate the process of cultural and language learning, but it also has practical implications, as Hallet points out: Similar to process writing, the model can be a process model of scenic-dramatic work in FLT that sees the practice of performing in a role play as a feedback loop, focusing not so much on the final product of perfect performances, but on the practice of scenic-dramatic forms of interaction and their cognitive modeling (Hallet, 2015, pp. 65-66). The model can therefore be seen as a suitable tool for exploiting the potential of role-playing to promote speaking.

3 Model texts for everyday interactions

From the principles of the process model, it can be deduced for the work with role-plays that learners need numerous perceptual possibilities to cognitively process a wide range of scripts and to have them available for their own performance. As Hallet states, one cannot assign students – not even with a creative task – to design and act out a scene if they have no idea of its discursive structure (2009, p. 133). When it comes to creativity, learners "need a framework in which to develop creative thinking skills, and it is usually helpful to provide a model or build up an example outcome with the whole class first. The framework delimits the scope of an activity and allows children to focus on their ideas" (Read, 2012, p. 29). Looking specifically at the use of role-plays in FLT, it can be furthermore assumed that a large proportion of learners needs support especially in the verbal, but also nonverbal realization of their own scenes. This is where the genre approach comes into play.

Underlying the genre approach is the assumption that all forms of communication, including oral interactions, follow the rules of specific genres (Hallet, 2016). A genre is to be understood as a mental construct to which certain characteristics and communicative goals can be assigned, but which only becomes textually manifest in a specific situation in a text type, also in a combination with other genres (Delius, 2020, p. 109). The genre 'story', e.g., has as its overriding communicative goal to tell a story with a focus on crisis/conflict and resolution and has a characteristic structure with an opening, main and closing section. This genre can manifest itself textually in a specific text type in all possible modes (oral, written, multimodal), such as in an oral story within a conversation between friends or in a written fairy tale. In order

to interact successfully with others and to realize our own communicative intentions, we need knowledge of the underlying genres of the target socio-cultural context (Hyland, 2004). A basic methodology of the genre approach is the teaching-learning cycle (Feez, 2002). Here, learners work out the generic characteristics of a text type by analyzing examples. Based on these model texts, the learners first develop contexts and situations in which the text type can occur, as well as its generic characteristics such as its structure or specific chunks. For oral text types, in addition to the knowledge of the linguistic-structural characteristics of the genre, its sociocultural embedding as well as the communicative goals, knowledge of the nonverbal aspects, e.g., the appropriate intonation or the use of facial expressions and gestures in connection with the verbal level, is required.

If we compare the principles of the genre approach with the process model for learning social interactions described above, parallels can easily be seen: The learners are first presented with concrete examples of a particular interaction, from which they abstract typical characteristics and transfer them into scripts, which in turn serve as the basis for their own communication.

At first glance the principles of the genre approach presented seem to contradict the nature of drama-based activities, which generally focus on free, spontaneous language use in connection with the use of one's own creativity and imagination. For it is precisely in the necessity to become active in language action spontaneously and under realistic time pressure that the potential for promoting foreign language interaction skills is seen (Jäger, 2011). However, the question arises on what basis learners can try out linguistic expressions, where they should get the linguistic, socio-culturally shaped knowledge that is needed to be able to express themselves appropriately in the foreign language and to interact with others or to imitate such an interaction in a scene. It is therefore likely that the potentials of the drama-based approach, especially with regard to role-playing, can unfold even better when the principles of the genre approach are integrated. Another critical argument against the genre approach is that it could have a prescriptive effect, i.e., it could give learners the impression of producing forms of expression only in a certain way and thus also reproducing normative expectations (Kay & Dudley-Evans, 1998). Indeed, it is important to be aware of this danger; however, a critical reflection on normative expectations of any interaction situation and also playing with them, for example in the context of role-playing activities, is only possible if you have also internalized the corresponding knowledge about the underlying genres yourself.

Many role-play tasks in textbooks lack appropriate models for learners to follow, as the example from a German textbook for second-year English learners shows. The task refers to a textbook character who has made a film with his friends: "Justin skypes with his father. What does he say about the film? Write a short dialogue" (Rademacher, 2014, p. 61). There is no example of such a Skype conversation provided. On the one hand, it is critical to question why

the actual oral target product should be written down. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether the learners are able to structure the required interaction, whether they have the necessary linguistic means at their disposal, and whether they have sufficient information about the relationship between Justin and his father to choose the appropriate register. Such aspects are, however, significant for a successful accomplishment of the task. It is rare to find detailed role descriptions in textbooks that provide information about the sociocultural context of the interlocutors. If model texts are presented, they are usually didactic (written) dialogues that do not necessarily correspond to the characteristics of spoken communication. Often the dialogues are based on written grammar, in which each utterance consists of a complete sentence, there are no sentence breaks or repetitions, and the syntax and lexis correspond to correct usage. Typical characteristics of informal spoken conversations such as feedback signals or filler words are hardly found (Burns et al., 1996, pp. 45–46). But what characterizes suitable examples of spoken language and how can they be integrated into the work with role-plays?

Since the genre approach traditionally focuses primarily on written text types, the predominant examples of its practical implementations refer to written products. Written model texts are usually easier to access as they are fixed and one-dimensional. Audio-visual texts in contrast offer the possibility for learners to perceive and cognitively process the complex interaction with its verbal and nonverbal expression. Which audio-visual texts are particularly suitable and how they can be integrated into FLT when working with role-plays will be discussed in the following.

4 Audio-visual model texts

Without going into detail about the potential of audio-visual texts for FLT in general (see Henseler et al., 2011), here are some central aspects that speak for their use as oral model texts in the context of generic teaching/learning processes.

- Language is perceived and experienced differently by watching a film scene than through a one-dimensional textbook dialogue. We can observe the close connection of verbal and nonverbal elements or realize the differences between oral and written language. This can be relevant for early FLT or in dealing with heterogeneity in the classroom: Due to their special form of mediation, which is based on a combination of images, speech and sounds, and which appeals to many different senses and forms of processing (cognitive and emotional) simultaneously during reception, films are often easier to understand than texts based on speech alone (Henseler et al., 2011, p. 9).
- Audiovisual texts have become an integral part of many young people's everyday lives, whether they watch feature films and series on streaming platforms or video clips on

YouTube or TikTok (sometimes in the original version) or even produce their own videos (Feierabend et al., 2022). These viewing habits and the motivation associated with them can be linked to well in FLT (see also Sievers, 2022, pp. 130-131).

- If the learners are emotionally moved by the content and characters appearing in the film, a desire to speak can be evoked in them (Henseler et al., 2011, p. 10). This motivational aspect plays an essential role in promoting speaking in FLT. In general, emotions are important for the learning process, as they influence the way information is processed (e.g., information associated with emotions is more likely to be remembered than without) (Sambanis, 2016, p. 57).
- Audio-visual texts offer insights into a wide variety of social situations in the respective discourse community with all their generic characteristics, access to which might otherwise remain closed to some learners (e.g., a courtroom scene) (Washburn, 2001, p. 22; see also Nelson, 2011).
- By having the learners observe the interaction from a distanced observer role, access to the analysis of its generic patterns can be easier (Washburn, 2001, p. 22).
- The development of audio-visual comprehension can be promoted by working with the medium of film. This is important since the perception of speech through both hearing and seeing is significant for successful speech reception, but also production.
- On the purely technical side, the medium enables the interaction to be seen and heard repeatedly. In this way, learners can observe and analyse the verbal and nonverbal phenomena such as accompanying facial expressions and gestures in more depth, which can help them to become more familiar with them (see also Lütge, 2007, p. 135).

While the points listed above apply to almost all possible film genres such as feature films, series, documentaries or animated films, the individual genres open up specific potentials (Delius, 2020, Chapter 5.2.2.4). Audio-visual texts can be placed on a spectrum between the two extremes of scripted and non-scripted speech (see Fig. 2). On the one side of the spectrum are educational films produced specifically for the teaching/learning context, which often only exhibit a few characteristics of spoken language. On the other side are unscripted audio-visual products such as live shows. Figure 2 contains examples of current film productions, without, however, claiming to consider all possible formats or production conditions (scripted series can be, e.g., just as planned and rehearsed as feature films).

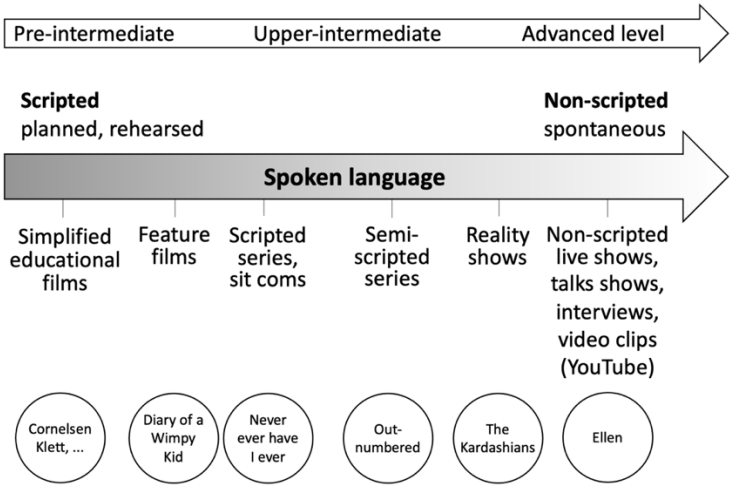


Figure 2: Audio-visual formats on the spectrum of spoken language (Delius, 2020, p. 231)

The nature of spoken language, therefore, depends on the extent to which utterances are based on a written script and have been rehearsed. It should be noted, however, that even supposedly spontaneous conversations may very well be scripted. To achieve the highest level of spontaneous speech, audio-visual recordings in which the interactants are not aware of the recording situation would be useful. Yet, such products are hardly accessible and, if so, usually associated with poor recording quality. In addition, ethical issues must be considered when using such video data.

Series, situational comedies (sitcoms), or feature films that were not explicitly produced for the teaching/learning context often do without certain typical characteristics of spoken language that make the dialogues more difficult to understand (e.g., repair measures). Such film formats still usually come much closer to natural language use than didacticized texts (Thornbury, 2005). At the same time, the reduction can be helpful for learners (Grant & Starks, 2008). With regard to the use of series, their motivational potential can be useful for FLT, too. The steadily increasing demand of series in the recent past and the resulting growing range of different series formats are reflected in the current viewing habits and preferences of young people (Feierabend et al., 2022; Henseler & Möller, 2017). When selecting film scenes as model texts for oral interactions, the age of the learners, their previous film experiences and the content and topics displayed should be taken into account. Targeted methods and support measures, such as activating prior knowledge or giving out specific observation tasks (Henseler et al., 2011), can reduce the complexity of the foreign language audio-visual products. Usually, the interaction depicted in a film scene is not very long. This has the advantage that it can be shown several times. However, to analyze the generic characteristics of the text type and thus to build an understanding of the genre behind it, the entire situational embedding and context of the narrative must necessarily become clear. The less complex the plot line is, the easier it will be to extract individual scenes from their respective context. Table 1 contains a shortlist

of selected feature films and series that are considered appropriate for the school context and offer potentially suitable scenes as oral model texts. The selection (with recent additions) is based on an in-depth analysis of suitable films and series in the context of the research project to be presented below. In this context, specific scenes were also compiled as possible model texts via a corpus linguistic search (Delius, 2020, pp. 234237).

Name	Feature film, series or sitcom	Short description	Comments
The Middle	Sitcom (2009–2018) Running Time: 20 minutes Created by: DeAnn Heline, Eileen Heisler Production companies: Blackie and Blondie Productions Warner Bros. Television	U.S. television sitcom that tells the turbulent and partly chaotic life of a family of five with three very different children. In particular, the two younger siblings repeatedly experience exclusion due to their behavior or character.	Suitable for pre-intermediate/intermediate/advanced levels; a depiction of everyday family life with a wide variety of communication situations involving children and adults alike (e.g., in the areas of school, leisure, friends, parent-child, mini-jobs, etc.).
Hank Zipzer	TV series (2014–2016) Running Time: 20 minutes Created by: Henry Winkler Production companies: Kindle Entertainment Walker Productions DHX Media	British television series that follows the everyday life of a twelve-year-old (with dyslexia) in London. The series is based on a literary model by Henry Winkler, in which the protagonist is repeatedly involved in difficult situations, from which he cleverly (among other things, through his powers of persuasion) gets out.	Suitable for pre-intermediate/intermediate levels; a depiction of everyday family and school life with a younger student with problems (e.g., of being excluded).
Heartstopper	TV series (2022–present) Running time: 30 minutes Created by: Alice Oseman Production company: See-Saw Films	British coming-of-age romantic comedy television series adapted from the webcomic and graphic novel of the same name by Alice Oseman. The series primarily tells the story of a gay boy at an all-boys school, who falls in love with a classmate.	Suitable for intermediate/advanced levels; everyday family, school life of a student with problems and issues of adolescents
Never Have I Ever	TV series (2020–present) Running time: 22–31 minutes Created by: Mindy Kaling, Lang Fischer Production companies: Kaling International, Inc. Original Langster 3 Arts Entertainment Universal Television	U.S. American coming-of-age comedy-drama television series that tells the story of a 15-year-old Indian-American Tamil high school student who is constantly struggling with new challenges in her life (mostly related to her own identity and relationships with others).	Suitable for intermediate/advanced levels; everyday problems and issues of adolescents in school, family and leisure time.
Atypical	TV series (2017–2021) Running time: 26–38 minutes Created by: Robia Rashid Production companies: Exhibit A, Weird Brain, Inc., Sony Pictures Television	U.S. American comedy-drama television series that focuses on the life of 18-year-old Sam Gardner, who is on the autism spectrum.	Suitable for intermediate/advanced levels. Since the protagonist often behaves differently or says something different from the social norm, the generic expectations of specific text types can be well analyzed. When used in the classroom, however, it should be critically reflected that the series has come under criticism for its sometimes inaccurate and stereotypical

			portrayal of people on the autism spectrum.
Outnumbered	Sitcom (2007–2014), Running time: 30 minutes Created by: Andy Hamilton, Guy Jenkin Production company: Hat Trick Productions, BBC	British sitcom following the everyday life of a middle-class family of five from West London, depicting a wide variety of everyday communication situations, mainly at home.	Suitable for intermediate/advanced levels; depiction of communication situations close to everyday life; especially due to its characteristic of being only semi-scripted, it is suitable for comparisons between natural and scripted language use.
Downton Abbey	Series (2010–2015), Running Time: 50–65 minutes Created by: Julian Fellowes Production company: Carnival Films	British television series, draws the picture of an aristocratic family and its staff in the transition to the 20th century with all its technical innovations and political upheavals (including women's rights, World War I, dissolution of the ruling structures).	Suitable for advanced levels; various English dialects; in part great differences to today's communication (especially in aristocratic circles), therefore very well suited as a comparison or awareness of possible changes in genres.
The Diary of a Wimpy Kid	Feature Films (*The Movie* 2010, *Rodric Rules* 2011, *Dog Days* 2012, *The Long Haul* 2017) Running time: each 90 minutes Prod.: Nina Jacobson, Brad Simpson Production companies: Color Force, Dune Entertainment, TSG Entertainment	U.S. feature film series based on a book series by Jeff Kinney, telling the turbulent life and coming-of-age of a boy who is repeatedly beset by misfortunes. The films deal with topics relevant to the everyday lives of young people (identity, family, friendship, love, etc.).	Suitable for intermediate/advanced levels; everyday problems and issues of children or adolescents in school, family and leisure time

Table 1: Selected feature films and series as possible sources for oral model texts.

5 The empirical perspective: Results from a design-based research Study

In what follows, I will now expand on the considerations presented from an empirical perspective. A closer look will be taken at a design-based research (DBR) study (Delius, 2020) the aim of which was to investigate both the theory and practice of teaching speaking in FLT through an innovative synthesis of the genre approach with drama-based methods. First, the design and implementation of the study will be outlined before presenting selected findings, focussing on the research question to what extent the audio-visual model texts helped the participating students to master their role-playing tasks.

5.1 Design and implementation of the DBR study

The main goal of the study was to develop teaching units for the effective and structured promotion of speaking, and, at the same time, to reflect on the possibilities and limits of their implementation in the classroom. The various people involved in FLT were to play an active role in the research process. Behind this is the hypothesis that changes in the educational system can only be successful if the practical experiences of teachers and learners are included in the developing process and if research and practice are mutually dependent in this way

(Reinmann, 2005). The didactic design was based on the assumption that the learning of generic structures in combination with drama-based methods helps to promote speaking in FLT. Since there was insufficient knowledge at the beginning of the study about this particular design, the study aimed to link the empirical findings back to the theoretical contexts and thus contribute to a theory extension.

Because of the presented dual objective of the study and the intended close cooperation between research and practice, design-based research was chosen as the overarching research approach. The focus of DBR is to develop an innovation that provides a potential solution to a real-world problem (Campanella & Penuel, 2021). In contrast to action research, which has many parallels to DBR, the results of a DBR study can be transferred to other contexts. In addition, practitioners in action research usually do most of the research themselves, whereas in DBR the participatory focus is more on co-design, execution and evaluation in a team of researchers and other experts. Finally DBR aims to expand theory or knowledge related to the subject-specific teaching-learning process (Campanella & Penuel, 2021). DBR is, however, more of a "methodological framework" (Reinmann, 2020), the implementation of which may vary in specific projects. Differences can arise with regard to the methods used to evaluate the design, but also with regard to the results (e.g., reference designs, design principles, local theories, or conjecture maps).

In DBR, design principles are constructed at the beginning of a research project based on a thorough literature review. They are continuously developed in the cyclical research process until they are judged to be mature (Van den Akker, 1999). Design principles, therefore, exhibit dependencies on situational factors, but should be transferable to other contexts through their multiple testing. In the present study, the design principles developed serve teachers as recommendations for both developing and implementing teaching units for promoting speaking in FLT. In the beginning of the study, the preliminary design-principles (Delius, 2020, Chapter 7.1) served as the basis for a prototype of the design, which was piloted in practice. The main development took place over the course of three cycles in two Year 6 English classes taught by the same teacher. The age of the learners (a total of 52) ranged from 11-12 years. At the beginning of the project they had been learning English for one to three years (average level of A1+). One design cycle consisted of constructing, testing and evaluating a teaching unit in the two parallel classes, as well as refining the design principles. Depending on the phase, the collaboration between the teacher and the researcher varied, as did the roles taken (Delius, 2023).

Since DBR is not bound to specific data collection and evaluation methods (Reinmann, 2020), a specific evaluation concept had to be developed (see Delius, 2020, Chapter 8.3). In addition to participant observation, collection of learner products in portfolios and written evaluation

by the learners, all lessons were videotaped. Furthermore, groups of learners and the teacher were interviewed at the end of each unit. These data were analyzed in different ways: For the transcribed interviews, a content-analytic approach was adopted; the video recordings were sequenced and relevant excerpts analyzed via the conversation analysis; the written questionnaires were evaluated quantitatively or, in the case of the open-ended questions, content-analytically. At the end of the research process, there are reference design, the optimized design principles, as well as a local theory. This theoretical output refers to questions about the didactic approaches and their synthesis. To develop a better understanding of how the design was implemented in practice, a rough plan of the units will be outlined in the following.

5.2 Implementing the design: The teaching units

The three successive teaching units each focused on a different oral text type: the invitation, the apology and the scary story. The beginning of each unit served as an introduction to the overall theme (e.g., in the first unit 'Celebrating your birthday') and the focused text type. In this contextualization, students learned about the contexts in which the text type can occur, incorporating their own experiences. To reflect on their existing individual knowledge and widen their shared knowledge, the learners were asked to improvise short scenes in German, in which the focused text type occurs. Furthermore, they worked with all kind of different media such as photos, music or short video clips to introduce contexts, situations, people involved, but also emotions. Drama-based methods in this phase allowed the students a more affective introduction to the specific text type. To introduce scary storytelling, e.g., the students were asked to move to scary music in a dark classroom in different ways (very slowly, as a scared child, etc.). Afterwards students reflected on their different body movements, gestures and facial expressions, as well as on specific words that they would link to the depicted situations. These words were used as the starting point to develop a mind map, in which the learners collected words and chunks linked to scary storytelling during the course of teaching unit.

In the next phase, students worked with the model texts to become familiar with the underlying generic characteristics of each text type. Based on the theoretical assumptions presented above, audio-visual model texts were preferred. In all three units, such texts were found with the help of a database of selected feature films and a corpus-linguistic search (see Delius, 2020, pp. 234-235). In the first and second teaching unit, students worked with scenes

from the animated series *Peppa Pig*[2], the series *The Middle* and the series *Hank Zipzer*, in the third unit with scenes from the feature film series *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Before starting to watch the scenes, the students were introduced to the specific socio-cultural context of the respective series and the concrete situation of the chosen scene. Methods for approaching understanding of the scenes ranged from activities such as silent viewing to using a transcript with vocabulary help. Students analyzed the model texts with regard to their underlying discursive structure, grammar and lexis, as well as communicative intentions. By comparing two to three model texts (including written dialogues or audio recordings for comparison purposes), they were able to determine the generic characteristics of the text type. These features would later on serve as the main criteria for developing and assessing their performances.

In the next phase, the learners approached their own text production, firstly under the close guidance of the teacher and with different kinds of scaffolding, then more independently. Students worked with fixed dialogues or text scaffolds, which they had to complete and then perform. On a voluntary basis, they performed the role-plays in front of the class and received feedback from their classmates and the teacher. At the end of each teaching unit, the students were asked to deal with the respective text type more freely by improvising a dialogue. The following example from the unit on apologies gives insights into the instructions. Students received role cards (see Fig. 3) with different levels of support, giving them a specific communicative goal to achieve.

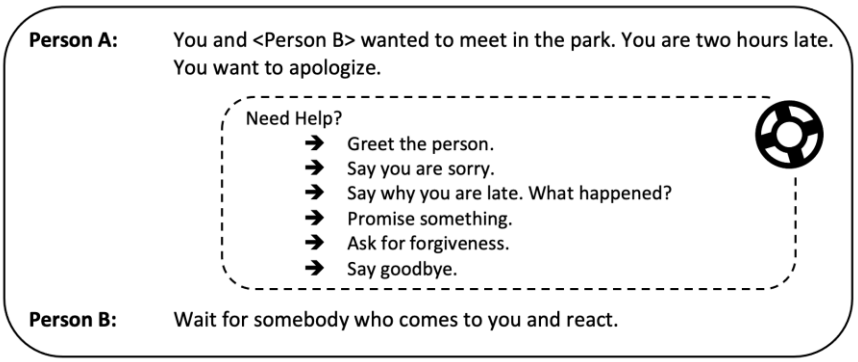


Figure 3: Role Card for an apology.

To be able to successfully perform the role-plays, the students were prepared to take on roles and also guided out of them accordingly. In addition, all drama-based activities were reflected upon to enable actual learning growth. Finally, the students were given (peer-)feedback or assessed by the teacher based on the jointly developed generic criteria.

[2] Despite an intensive search, no live-action film scenes depicting an oral invitation could be found, which is why a scene from *Peppa Pig* was chosen. Although its drawing is highly reduced, the scene at least provided learners with insights into the context of birthday and birthday invitations and introduced useful chunks.

5.3 Selected results from the DBR study

In the following, selected findings from the study will be presented. These findings are part of the local theory, a theory closely linked to the specific design context of the study and therefore without a generalization claim. The aim of this subchapter is to clarify how the audio-visual model texts affected the learners and what significance they had for the learners' subsequent own role-plays. Furthermore, in reference to the presented process model of learning social interaction situations, I will look at the different sub-steps between the modeling phase and the actual transfer of the cognitive script to new situations.

First, it is helpful to turn to the short improvisations that were performed at the beginning of each unit. Here, the students were asked to improvise the focused interaction in German, which allowed insights into their pre-existing genre knowledge. It became clear that the majority of the learners had, if at all, only rudimentary ideas about the respective interaction (situations, structure, verbal/nonverbal design), even in German. In the first unit on verbal invitation, two learners indicated that they had never invited anyone orally before. In the second unit on apologizing, none of the improvised role-plays contained any structural elements, such as a reason or a promise, other than the mere utterance of the word 'Entschuldigung' ('sorry' in English). These observations can be linked to the previously stated hypothesis that teachers cannot assume existing genre knowledge of their learners.

The results of the study were able to confirm many of the potentials of film scenes listed in the theoretical considerations (see Section 4). The scenes proved to be a source of motivation, since they reflected excerpts from a familiar everyday life. Many learners were able to identify with the similarly aged characters from the scenes and to understand their problems mentally and emotionally. In fact, the emotions portrayed seemed to play a special role, enabling the students to build bridges to their own experiences. This aroused the interest of many to talk or write about what they had seen and heard. The students seemed to understand the depicted interactions from the live-action films and series as representations of reality, which is supported by statements from the interviews such as "there you can see how it is when you really apologize" (Interview transcript 'Apology', Class B). Although it can be considered positive that the learners believed that they could see in the audiovisual texts such a correspondence with reality, the question of the realistic representation of language use in feature films and series should be explicitly addressed and discussed at least with advanced foreign language learners, since audiovisual texts, as explained, can show great differences in this respect. It was interesting to see how the scene from the animated series *Peppa Pig* proved to be less suitable as a model text than the live-action scenes: Less than a model for their own performances, the learners connected the scene from the animated series with aspects about the context of the birthday party (Delius, 2020, p. 349).

With regard to the question of what significance the selected model texts had for the students' performances, different observations could be made. At the end of the first unit, the learners were asked to invite each other to their own dream birthday party. In advance they had prepared their utterances based on the previous analysis of three model texts (one audio text, one animated scene, one written didactic text). It could be observed in the implementation of these more or less improvised role-plays that the learners closely followed the structures, chunks and also the content primarily of the one model text, which they had rehearsed as a role-play before. Alternative courses of conversation or deviating content could hardly be heard, which made the learners' interactions seem less convincing for the most part. The learners often looked at their worksheets and did not seem to develop any real interest in what their counterparts were saying, which sometimes led to inappropriate reactions. Although the orientation to the one model texts seemed to be an important support, especially for lower-performing students, the results were not satisfactory since a large part of the learners were not able to fully interact with their partners.

At the end of the second teaching unit, the students were asked to improvise a role-play, in which they would apologize to each other (see Fig. 3). Despite great individual differences, interactions came about that were convincing both in their verbal and nonverbal form. The in-depth analysis of the recorded learner products revealed that many students were able to successfully pursue their communicative goals in the interaction, making use of some of the generic characteristics they had worked out with the help of the different model texts. In the example (Table 2), the expressive apology of student A – both on the verbal and nonverbal level – is particularly noteworthy. It can be related to one of the selected model texts (scene from the series *The Middle*) as well as to working with the *chunk* 'I am (so) sorry' in different drama-based activities. In general, the students seemed especially confident with elements from the model texts that they had already internalised previously via the drama-based activities and the task types that had provided a high degree of support. Again, it was possible to identify an orientation of the learner products to the content of the models (e.g., in terms of the excuses made or promises given such as "I promise. I will never do this again").

When reviewing the recorded products from the unit on scary stories, a large number of generic aspects could be identified which had been developed in advance on the basis of the two film scenes, such as the structure of the text type, characteristic chunks as well as content-related aspects. The use of certain nonverbal means to create a scary effect such as scary facial expressions and gestures, which the learners transferred from the models to their own texts, also played a special role.

Verbal Level	Nonverbal Level	Interpretation/Comments
A: hi B: hi! A: im sO: sorry! B: why? what happened? A: i was twO: hours late because i was with /'wɪz/ my friends in the /sə/ swimming hall (-) and then /sɛn/ (-) i forgot the time B: oh (-) no problem A: i promise that /sæt/ i never do this /sɪs/ again! can you forgive me? B: yes! dont worry A: bye! B: bye	A looks at B B smiles A squints his eyes, very stressed A a little excited, gesticulating B very calm A again supporting with hands, slightly pleading B very calm A smiles A smiles	Mimic support of the verbal expression

Table 2: Example of a role-play by two students (A and B). Transcription according to GAT2, simplified plus accompanying actions (Delius, 2020, p. 441).

In summary, it can be cautiously concluded from the described observations that the jointly analyzed and compiled generic characteristics helped the learners to successfully perform the respective interactions at the end of the teaching units. Drawing back on Hallet's process model of learning social interaction situations (see Chapter 2), the learners were, therefore, first of all able to cognitively abstract the information gathered in the observation of the interactions displayed in the model texts. This information must have been transferred into a script, or must have extended an existing script (e.g., from the learner's first language experience). Most of the students were able to successfully implement those scripts into their own performances. What seemed, however, an important intermediate stage, was a practice or rehearsal phase, in which the learners were able to focus on, e.g., individual chunks or the nonverbal level or the interaction, and therefore internalize the script. I will now have a closer look at how learners dealt with those kinds of activities and tasks in particular.

After the modelling phase the students were slowly guided towards their own text production, starting with fixed or semi-structured role-plays. Here, it could be observed that the majority of the learners succeeded in presenting convincing interactions: They appeared convincing in the sense that the learners showed a real interest in communication and expressed their preformulated utterances both verbally and nonverbally in a manner appropriate to the situation. This observation was made primarily when learners were given sufficient time to complete the tasks and rehearse their role-play. Presumably, this is because of the fact that in these task formats – unlike in spontaneous interaction – they had the opportunity to deal with the different levels of communication over a longer period of time. Thus, they could first familiarize themselves with the linguistic level, and then build on this to deal with the nonverbal level. In both cases, they transferred elements from the model texts to their own interactions. Still, the students were able to contribute their own ideas regarding the content and language of the dialogues and their situational embedding, which had an observable positive effect on their motivation.

The learners found it difficult to varying degrees to master those tasks that placed greater emphasis on improvisation. Some students were already able to engage very well in spontaneous speech production. It could be observed that these learners also reverted to chunks from the model texts, whereby this mainly happened in the beginning and end parts of the dialogues. In the middle part, which usually had to be formulated depending on the situation, these learners showed greater difficulties, too. They faltered, reverted to German or neglected the paralinguistic level. According to the teacher, it became clear that the spontaneous and free interaction was still a great challenge even for the best-performing students of both learning groups. Nevertheless, from the perspective of all participants, these task formats proved to be important exercises. Only in such open formats could they practice the freer use of the linguistic repertoire they had already acquired and adapt it to new interaction situations. In addition, these tasks had a very motivating effect on many learners, possibly because they were able to combine something new and unfamiliar with something familiar. The fact that this still resulted in many linguistic errors should rather be regarded as a necessary intermediate step in the learning process.

In conclusion, the experiences of the classroom testing ultimately permit a positive view: the characteristics explicated via the genre approach served the learners as an important orientation for the implementation of their own performances. The repeated speaking of certain chunks with consideration of the nonverbal phenomena helped the learners to internalize the scripts and to fall back on them in the later free production. This observation can be well reconciled with the circumstance that even first language speakers predominantly fall back on fixed chunks in spontaneous interaction. For foreign language learners, this means that they need to build a repertoire of scripts as their language skills increase in order to move closer to the goal of successful, spontaneous and creative language use. After the practical testing, there is reason to believe that the participating learners started expanding their repertoire of scripts and their performative mastery through the innovative didactic approach.

6 Conclusion and outlook

This paper addressed the question of how learners can acquire the knowledge and skills, both verbal and nonverbal, required for the convincing portrayal of a foreign language interaction within a role-play. In the first part, a case was made for linking drama pedagogy with the genre approach and, in particular, for the use of audio-visual model texts. In the second part, selected results of a DBR study provided insights on the extent to which such a connection actually offers potential. The film scenes not only functioned as a source of motivation to deal with the focused interactions and their associated characteristics, but also offered the learners an orientation on various levels. In reference to Hallet's process model for learning social

interactions, it became clear that the possibility to observe different representations of the same form of interaction and to transfer its main characteristics into a script represented an important step towards one's own performance. However, it also proved relevant for the internalization of these scripts that the learners could transfer them to concrete situations via different task formats and thus practice them.

In the context of the presented DBR study, design principles were developed in close cooperation between research and practice, with the help of which foreign language teachers can design and implement their own teaching units for promoting speaking (Delius, 2020, Chapter 11). However, these results can also be useful to those teachers who want to work with role-plays for different learning purposes and draw on the innovative approach presented. The principle remains that learners should be prepared appropriately for all kinds of learner products including more creative formats such as role-plays. It must be emphasized in this context that no generalization claim can be made with the results presented, including those of the local theory, since they were generated in a limited context. Yet, there is already initial positive feedback from teachers who successfully implemented the design principles in their own teaching (Latzel, 2022). It is important to continue this development and to further differentiate the design principles by applying them in different grades, at different schools and with different teachers and students. With the help of these diverse perspectives, the potential of the didactic approach can be further explored and the innovation can be implemented in a sustainable manner.

Bibliography

Burns, A., Joyce, H., & Gollin, S. (1996). *'I see what you mean'*. National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.

Campanella, M., & Penuel, W. R. (2021). Design-based research in educational settings. Motivations, crosscutting features, and considerations for design. In Z. A. Philippakos, E. Howell, & A. Pellegrino (Eds.), *Design-based research in education: Theory and applications* (pp. 3-22). The Guilford Press.

Delius, K. (2020). *Förderung der Sprechkompetenz durch Synthese von generischem Lernen und Dramapädagogik. Eine Design-Based Research-Studie im Englischunterricht*. Metzler. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-62738-9

Delius, K. (2023, submitted). Implementing an innovation to foster oracy – On the research-practice cooperation in a design-based research study in foreign language teaching. In P. Siepmann, J. Reckermann & F. Matz (Eds.), *Oracy in foreign language education: Perspectives from practice-oriented research*. Springer.

Feez, S. (2002). Heritage and innovation in second lanuage education. In A. M. Johns (Ed.), *Genre in the classroom. Multiple perspectives* (pp. 43-69). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Feierabend, S., Rathgeb, T., Kheredmand, H., & Glöckner, S. (2022). *JIM-Studie 2022: Jugend, Information, Medien: Basisuntersuchung zum Medienumgang 12- bis 19-Jähriger*. Medienpädagogischer Forschungsverbund Südwest.

Fischer-Lichte, E. (1998). Inszenierung und Theatralität. In H. Willelms & M. Jurga (Eds.), *Inszenierungsgesellschaft* (pp. 81-90). Westdeutscher Verlag. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-322-89797-8_3

Goffmann, E. (1956). *The presentation of self in everday life*. University of Edingburgh.

Grant, L., & Starks, D. (2008). Screening appropriate teaching materials Closings from textbooks and television soap operas. *IRAL - International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, *39*(1), 39-50. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.39.1.39

Hallet, W. (2009). Available Design. Kulturelles Handeln, Diskurstüchtigkeit und generisches Lernen im Englischunterricht. In D. Abendroth-Timmer, C. Lütge, D. Elsner, & B. Viebrock (Eds.), *Handlungsorientierung im Fokus: Impulse und Perspektiven für den Fremdsprachenunterricht im 21. Jahrhundert* (pp. 117-142). Lang.

Hallet, W. (2010). Performative Kompetenz und Fremdsprachenunterricht. *Scenario*, *4*(1), 4-17. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.4.1.2

Hallet, W. (2015). Die Performativität und Theatralität des Alltagshandelns: Performative Kompetenz und Kulturelles Lernen. In W. Hallet & C. Surkamp (Eds.), *Dramendidaktik und Dramapädagogik im Fremdsprachenunterricht* (pp. 51-68). WVT Wiss. Verl. Trier.

Hallet, W. (2016). *Genres im fremdsprachlichen und bilingualen Unterricht*. Kallmeyer.

Henseler, R., & Möller, S. (2017). Previously On. Mit TV-Serien narrative Kompetenz und Spracherwerb fördern. *Der Fremdsprachliche Unterricht Englisch*, *145*, 2-8.

Henseler, R., Möller, S., & Surkamp, C. (2011). *Filme im Englischunterricht: Grundlagen, Methoden, Genres* (1st ed.). Kallmeyer.

Hyland, K. (2004). *Genre and second language writing*. The University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.23927

Jäger, A. (2011). *Kultur szenisch erfahren: Interkulturelles Lernen mit Jugendliteratur und szenischen Aufgaben im Fremdsprachenunterricht*. Lang.

Jennings, S. (2010). *Creative drama in groupwork* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Kay, H., & Dudley-Evans, T. (1998). *Genre: What teachers think*. *ELT Journal, 52*(4), 308-314. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/52.4.308

Klippel, F., & Doff, S. (2009). *Englischdidaktik: Praxishandbuch für die Sekundarstufe I und II* (2nd ed.). Cornelsen Scriptor.

Kurtz, J. (2015). Fostering and building upon oral creativity in the EFL classroom. In A. Maley & N. Peachey (Eds.), *Creativity in the English language classroom* (pp. 73-83). British Council.

Latzel, F. (2022). *Testing the transferability of design principles: Design, implementation and reflection of a teaching unit to promote speaking in the EFL classroom*. Universität Osnabrück.

Lütge, C. (2007). 'And lose the name of action'? Überlegungen zur Schüleraktivierung mit Drama und Film im Shakespeare-Unterricht. *Scenario*, *1*(1), 126-141. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.1.1.7

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self & society*. Univ. of Chicago Press.

Nelson, E. M. (2011). Lola ReRuns in the classroom: Dramatic improvisations on the film Run Lola Run for intermediate German instruction. *Scenario*, *5*(2), 90-103. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.5.2.7

Park, R. E. (1950). *Race and culture*. Free Press.

Rademacher, J. (2014). *English G access 2*. Cornelsen.

Read, C. (2012). Seven pillars of creativity in primary ELT. In A. Maley & N. Peachey (Eds.), *Creativity in the English language classroom* (pp. 29-36). British Council.

Reinmann, G. (2005). Innovation ohne Forschung? Ein Plädoyer für den Design-Based Research-Ansatz in der Lehr-Lernforschung. *Unterrichtswissenschaft*, *33*(1), 52-69.

Reinmann, G. (2020). Outline of a holistic design-based research model for higher education. *EDeR. Educational Design Research*, *4*(2), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.15460/eder.4.2.1554

Sambanis, M. (2016). Dramapädagogik im Fremdsprachenunterricht—Überlegungen aus didaktischer und neurowissenschaftlicher Sicht. In S. Even & M. Schewe (Eds.), *Performatives Lehren Lernen Forschen – Performative Teaching Learning Research* (pp. 47-65). Schibri-Verlag.

Sievers, U. (2022). Inviting performance into the English foreign language classroom. *Scenario*, *16*(1), 124-132. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.16.1.9

Storey, J. (2014). *From popular culture to everyday life*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203077023

Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Longman.

Tselikas, E. I. (1999). *Dramapädagogik im Sprachunterricht*. Orell Fuessli.

Van den Akker, J. (1999). Principles and methods of development research. In J. Van den Akker, R. Branch, K. Gutsafson, N. Nieveen, & T. Plomp (Eds.), *Design approaches and tools in education and training* (pp. 1-14). Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Washburn, G. N. (2001). Using Situation Comedies for Pragmatic Language Teaching and Learning. *TESOL Journal*, *Winter*, 21-26.