

TEACHING SPEAKING

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WHAT DO STUDENTS NEED?

- ❑ Practice at using L1 (mother tongue) strategies, which they don't automatically transfer. ?
 - ❑ An awareness of formal / informal language and practice at ~~choosing appropriate language for different situations.~~ ?
 - ❑ The awareness that informal spoken language is less complex than written language. It uses shorter sentences, is less organised and uses more 'vague' or non-specific language. ?
 - ❑ Exposure to a variety of spoken text types. ?
 - ❑ The ability to cope with different listening situations. Many listening exercises involve students as 'overhearers' even though most communication is face-to-face. ?
 - ❑ To be competent at both 'message-oriented' or transactional language and interactional language, language for maintaining social relationships. ?
 - ❑ To be taught patterns of real interaction. ?
 - ❑ To have intelligible pronunciation and be able to cope with streams of speech.
 - ❑ Rehearsal time. By giving students guided preparation / rehearsal time they are more likely to use a wider range of language in a spoken task. ?
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Transferring L1 strategies

When preparing for a spoken task, make students aware of any relevant L1 strategies that might help them to perform the task successfully. For example, 'rephrasing' if someone does not understand what they mean.

Formal / Informal language

Give students one or more short dialogues where one speaker is either too formal or informal. Students first identify the inappropriate language, then try to change it. Also show students how disorganised informal speech is.

Vague Language

Using tapescripts of informal speech,
focus on examples of vague
language.



Example:

MG: Hello.

~~A : Hello. Is Lynn there?~~

MG: No, she's out at the moment. Who's that?

A : This is Adam. Do you know when she'll be back?

MG: About ten, I think. Can I Give her a message?

A : No...er yes. Can you tell her Adam rang?

MG: Sure, Adam

A : Thanks. Bye.

MG: Hello.

JM: Can I speak to Kate?

~~MG: I'm afraid she's not here.~~
Can I take a message?

JM: Yes please. This is Jane Metcalfe, the drama teacher.

Can you tell Kate that the next rehearsal is at three-thirty on Friday?

MG: The next rehearsal?

JM: Yes, for the school play.

MG: Kate's in a play?

JM: Yes. Didn't she tell you?

MG: No... I mean yes, of course she did.

JM: OK, then. We'll see her on Friday afternoon.

MG: Er...yes.





Different Spoken Text Types

Draw up a list of spoken text types relevant to the level of your class. Teach the language appropriate for each text type.

Interactive listening

Develop interactive listening exercises. Face-to-face listening is the most common and the least practised by course books. Any form of 'Live listening' (the teacher speaking to the students) is suitable.



Example:

A: What did you do last night?

B: Went to the cinema

A: Oh really?

What did you see?

B: Lord of the Rings

Have you been yet?

A: No. Was it interesting?

B: Yeah of course



Transactional and interactional language

Raise students' awareness by using a dialogue that contains both. It could be two friends chatting to each other (interactional) and ordering a meal(transactional).

Oral Communication

Spoken language is both interactional and transactional, but what should teachers focus on in class? Brown and Yule (1983) suggest the following:

- When teaching spoken language, focus on teaching longer transactional turns. This is because native speakers have difficulty with them and because students need to be able to communicate information efficiently whether in their country or in a native-speaker country.
 - Teach interactional language by using an awareness-raising approach. For example, with monolingual classes by listening to a recorded L1 conversation before a similar L2 recording.
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The nature of interpersonal communication (Shrum&Glisan, 2005)

- ❑ Two or more speakers are engaged in conversation and exchange of information, either a face-to-face discussion or a phone conversation.
 - ❑ It is spontaneous, not scripted, and read or performed as a memorized skit.
 - ❑ It is meaningful and has as its objective a communicative task or reason for communicating. Thus, doing mechanical grammar exercises ≠IC
 - ❑ There is usually an "information gap". One speaker doesn't know what the other is going to say or how s/he will respond. Thus, pair activities in which S. A and S. B know in advance how the other will respond ≠IC
 - ❑ Negotiating meaning is important to interpret meaning in IP, such as asking for repetition, clarification, or confirmation, or indicating a lack of understanding.
 - ❑ IP involves the use of gestures.
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Presentational Mode of Communication

(one-way communication)

- ❑ One person produces language/oral presentation for an audience of listeners/viewers.
 - ❑ Oral presentations are prepared in advance and may require research on a given topic.
 - ❑ Presenters may conduct an oral presentation while reading from a script, they may use notes periodically during the presentation, or they may deliver a pre-planned talk spontaneously.
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Types of PC (Shrum, 2005 & Macken-Horarik, 2002)

- ❑ Descriptive/information report: describing someone or something, e.g. our experiences, our feelings, physical objects, places, people or events (their special characteristics).
 - ❑ Narratives: telling a story or describe an event.
 - ❑ Procedures: offering instructions on how to do something.
 - ❑ Explanatory: creating an understanding of a concept by providing evidence or justifying why something is so.
 - ❑ Etc.
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Example:

- Interpersonal/transactional    
 - Presentational communication 
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Real Interaction Patterns

Teach real interaction patterns. Introduce the following basic interactional pattern: Initiate, Respond, Follow-up. This is a simplification of Amy Tsui's work. See Tsui (1994)

The following interaction could be analysed as follows:



Example:

A: What did you do last night?	(Initiate)
B: Went to the cinema	(Respond)
A: Oh really?	(Follow-up)
What did you see?	(Initiate)
B: Lord of the Rings	(Respond)
Have you been yet?	(Initiate)
A: No it's difficult with the kids	(Respond)
B: Yeah of course	(follow-up)

Preparation and rehearsal

Before a spoken task, give students some preparation and rehearsal time. Students will need guidance on how to use it. A sheet with simple guidelines is effective.

Research by Peter Skehan on Task-based Learning shows that giving students preparation time significantly increases the range of language used in the performance of the task, whereas the accuracy of the language is not as influenced. If this is so, then it seems sensible to give students preparation time when encouraging them to use new language.

Try to use real-life tasks as part of your teaching.

Example:

Imagine you have been working on the language that would be useful for the following task: 'Having a conversation with a stranger on public transport'.

You have now reached the stage where you wish students to perform the task. Rather than just give students 10 minutes to prepare and rehearse the task, give students guided preparation time.

A simple preparation guide for the task could be a few key questions like:

How will you start the conversation?

What topics are you going to talk about?

How are you going to move from one topic to another?

How are you going to end the conversation?

After the preparation stage, students give a 'live performance'. This can be in front of the class or group to group in a large class of real-life stress.

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- Another way of encouraging students to use new language in a communication activity is to make a game out of it. Give students a situation and several key phrases to include. They get points for using the language.
 - Similarly, when working on the language of discussion, you can produce a set of cards with the key phrases/exponents on. The cards are laid out in front of each group of 2/3/4 students. If a student uses the language on a particular card appropriately during the discussion, he/she keeps the card. The student with the most cards wins. If he/she uses the language inappropriately, then he / she can be challenged and has to leave the card on the table.
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The cooking test

Richard Frost, British Council, Turkey

- This is a writing and speaking activity that is a lot of fun for students. It helps them to practise food and cooking related vocabulary as well as how to give instructions.
 - **Preparation**

Your students will need to know vocabulary associated with food and cooking. It is a good idea to teach them words for cooking utensils too (e.g. saucepan, knife) and verbs connected with cooking (e.g. fry, chop). You might also like to teach some language you find in recipes (e.g. imperatives, sequencers, quantifiers). You also need to photocopy and cut up or make your own ingredients cards.
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Procedures

- Tell the students that you are going to have a cooking competition to decide who the best chefs in the class are.
 - Put the students into pairs and give them a random selection of ingredients cards. Seven or eight in total is usually enough.
 - Ask the students to talk together and invent a new dish using all of the ingredients on their cards. When they have thought of one, give them a blank piece of paper and ask them to draw a picture of the meal and write the recipe below.
 - Ask the students to decide who is going to explain the recipe and who is going to listen to other people's recipes. Put the students into new pairs with a different partner and ask the speakers to present their recipes to the new partner.
 - Re- pair / group the students a number of times so that they have the chance to hear and tell about a number of recipes.
 - The students who have listened to all the recipes have to report back to their partner on what they have heard.
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Normal Ingredient Cards

mushrooms	An orange	Bread	Rice	Butter
A banana	A pear	Salt	Sugar	Oil
sausages	Strawberries	Eggs	Carrots	Potatoes
Jam	Peas	Chilies	Beef	Cheese
Onion	Tomatoes	Milk	Flour	Chicken

Strange Ingredient Cards

A sock	Shoelaces	A book	Mud
Grass	Paper	Plastic bag	Nails
Cigarettes	A shoe	Sticks	Money
Toothpaste	Shaving cream	Shampoo	gloves

Other example of speaking activities:

1. The function of the language and use an authentic or near authentic task (e.g. get them to sit back-to-back to practise speaking on the telephone).



Example:

www.teachingenglish.org.uk

Dialogue 9: Meeting an old friend

- Complete the missing part of the conversation.
- Sharon:
- Steve: I'm fine thanks. How about you?
- Sharon:
- Steve: Not a lot, actually. Busy at work of course

