Teaching Speaking Theories and Methodologies

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Typical learner problems

- Cannot sustain spoken interaction beyond short segments
- Frequent communication breakdowns and misunderstandings
- Lack of vocabulary needed to talk about common utterances
- Lack of communication strategies
Typical learner problems

- Speaks slowly and takes too long to compose utterances
- Cannot participate actively in conversation
- Spoken English doesn’t sound natural
- Poor grammar
- Poor pronunciation
Reasons for poor speaking skills

- Lack of curriculum emphasis on speaking skills
- Teachers’ limited English proficiency
- Class conditions do not favor oral activities
- Limited opportunities outside of class to practice
- Examination system does not emphasize oral skills
Aspects of oral fluency

• Use of conversational routines (Example)
CONVERSATION  Actually, I have.

A  Listen and practice.

Peter: I'm sorry I'm late. Have you been here long?
Mandy: No, only for a few minutes.
Peter: Have you chosen a restaurant yet?
Mandy: I can't decide. Have you ever eaten Moroccan food?
Peter: No, I haven't. Is it good?
Mandy: It's delicious. I've had it several times.
Peter: Or how about Thai food? Have you ever had green curry?
Mandy: Actually, I have. I lived in Thailand as a teenager. I ate it a lot there.
Peter: I didn't know that. How long did you live there?
Mandy: I lived there for two years.

B  Listen to the rest of the conversation.
Where do they decide to have dinner?
Aspects of oral fluency

- Use of conversational routines
- Use of short and long turns
- Topic range
- Mastery of basic functions (Example)
CONVERSATION  Making plans

A  Listen and practice.

Lynn: Say, Miguel, what are you doing tonight? Do you want to go bowling?
Miguel: I’d love to, but I can’t. I’m going to a soccer match with my brother.
Lynn: Oh, well maybe some other time.
Miguel: Are you doing anything tomorrow? We could go then.
Lynn: Tomorrow sounds fine. I’m going to work until five.
Miguel: So let’s go around six.
Lynn: OK. Afterward, maybe we can get some dinner.
Miguel: Sounds great.

B  Listen to the rest of the conversation. When are they going to have dinner? Who are they going to meet after dinner?
Aspects of oral fluency

• Use of conversational routines
• Use of short and long turns
• Topic range
• Mastery of basic functions
• Use of adjacency pairs
Aspects of oral fluency

- Use of casual and formal language (politeness)
- Turn-taking skills
- Back channeling (verbal and non-verbal) (Example)
CONVERSATION  She’s very tall.

A  Listen and practice.

Emily: I hear you have a new girlfriend, Randy.
Randy: Yes. Her name’s Ashley, and she’s gorgeous!
Emily: Really? What does she look like?
Randy: Well, she’s very tall.
Emily: How tall?
Randy: About 6 feet 2, I suppose.
Emily: Wow, that is tall. What color is her hair?
Randy: She has beautiful red hair.
Emily: And how old is she?
Randy: I don’t know. She won’t tell me.

B  Listen to the rest of the conversation.
What else do you learn about Ashley?
Aspects of oral fluency

• Use of casual and formal language (politeness)
• Turn-taking skills
• Back channeling (verbal and non-verbal)
• Use of communication strategies
Three major speech types

- Interactions
- Transactions
- Performances

- Examples of spoken genres or “text types”
Features of interactions

• Create social interaction
• Address the face needs of participants
• Focus on participants and their social needs (Example)
Making small talk

A Small talk is light conversation with friends, acquaintances, or strangers. Check (√) the topics that are appropriate for small talk.

- [ ] Children and family
- [ ] Health problems
- [ ] Salaries
- [ ] Current affairs
- [ ] Hobbies
- [ ] Sports
- [ ] Entertainment
- [ ] Marital status
- [ ] The weather

B Group work Imagine you are at a party. Start a conversation, keep it going for one minute, and bring it to a close. Then find a new partner and repeat.

“Hi. How’s it going?”
“Pretty good. Hey, did you see that soccer game last night?”
“I did! It’s amazing to see our team play so well.”
“I know! Hey, I should get going, but I’ll call you later.”

Useful expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation openers</th>
<th>Conversation closers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How’s it going?</td>
<td>See you later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you believe this weather? It’s awful!</td>
<td>Sorry, I’ve got to run. Talk to you soon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s a great (jacket).</td>
<td>It was great to meet you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know many people here?</td>
<td>I should get going, I’ll call you later.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Features of interactions

• Create social interaction
• “Face” the needs of participants
• Focus on participants and their social needs
• Interactive, requiring two-way participation
Features of interactions

- Feedback and response
- May be casual or formal
- Reflect patterns and rules
  - e.g., for openings, topic choice, and closings.
- Include greetings, small talk, compliments, personal recounts, and narratives
Teaching talk as interaction

• Dialogs to model small talk
• Open dialogs to practice feedback responses
  ▪ I’m going to Hawaii for my next vacation,
  ▪ _____
  ▪ A. Yeah, my parents are taking me there as a graduation present.
  ▪ B. _____ And what do you plan to do there?
  ▪ Well I guess I’ll spend a lot of time on the beach.
  ▪ _____
  ▪ A. But I also want to do some snorkling.
  ▪ _____
Teaching talk as interaction

• Practice conversation starters
  – “I need to get more exercise.”
  – “The weather is really hot these days.”

• Practice topic fluency with question sheets
Teaching talk as interaction

- Do you like cooking?
- How often do you cook?
- Are you a very good cook?
- What sort of things do you like to cook?
- Do you follow a recipe?
- What was the last meal you cooked?
Features of transactions

• Giving or obtaining information, or getting goods and services
• Focus on message
• Communication strategies
  – Not dependent on grammatical accuracy (Example)
CONVERSATION  Could you tell me . . . ?

A  Listen and practice.

Erica: Excuse me. Could you tell me where the bank is?
Clerk: There’s one upstairs, across from the duty-free shop.
Erica: Do you know what time it opens?
Clerk: It should be open now. It opens at 8:00 A.M.
Erica: Oh, good. And can you tell me how often the buses leave for the city?
Clerk: You need to check at the transportation counter. It’s right down the hall.
Erica: OK. And just one more thing. Do you know where the rest rooms are?
Clerk: Right behind you. Do you see where that sign is?
Erica: Oh. Thanks a lot.

B  Listen to the rest of the conversation. Check (√) the information that Erica asks for.

☐ the cost of a taxi to the city  ☐ the cost of a bus to the city
☐ the location of the taxi stand  ☐ the location of a restaurant
Features of transactions

• Information oriented:
  – asking for directions
  – describing how to use something
  – sharing opinions and ideas
  – discussing plans

• Goods and services oriented:
  – focus on achieving a goal or service
  – checking into a hotel
  – shopping
  – ordering a meal
Teaching talk as transaction

• Examples:
  – Information-gap activities
  – Role plays
  – Group discussions

• Provide language support and follow-up activities to focus on accuracy.
Features of performances

• An audience
• Speaker creates a “product”
• A single speaker
  – produces longer stretches of discourse
• Recognizable “scripts”
  – e.g., welcome speech, business presentation, class talk (Example)
Creating a story

A These phrases are used to tell a story. Put them in the columns below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning a story</th>
<th>Continuing a story</th>
<th>Going back in a story</th>
<th>Ending a story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ll never forget the time...</td>
<td>Meanwhile...</td>
<td>And in the end...</td>
<td>To make a long story short...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The thing you have to know is...</td>
<td>That reminds me of when...</td>
<td>The next thing we knew...</td>
<td>I’ve got to tell you about...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It all started when...</td>
<td>So later on...</td>
<td>The other thing is...</td>
<td>So finally...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What happened was...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I forgot to mention that...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B Pair work Tell a story about yourself. Use these story ideas and the phrases above. Ask follow-up questions.

Story ideas
- You tried something for the first time.
- You did something really exciting.
- You forgot something important.
- You had a surprising experience.
- You met a strange person.

“I’ll never forget the first time I cooked a big dinner by myself. I had always helped my mother cook, so I thought it would be easy.”

“Why were you cooking a big dinner?”

“Well, I had invited all my friends over, and...”

C Group work Share your story with another pair of students. Then choose one of your group’s stories and tell it to the whole class.
Features of performances

• An audience
• Speaker creates a “product”
• A single speaker
  – produces longer stretches of discourse
• Recognizable “scripts”
  – e.g., welcome speech, business presentation, class talk
• Accuracy of language
  – speech is monitored for accuracy
• Language more formal
  – more like written language
Teaching talk as performance

- Use model speeches, presentations, and other model texts
- Examine discourse and grammatical features
- Ss construct and practice parallel texts
Goals for a successful speaking lesson/course

- Activities address specific aspects of oral skills
  - e.g., talk as interaction, transaction, or performance
- Sufficient language and other supports for tasks
- Balance of accuracy and fluency activities
- Modeling for speaking activities
Goals for a successful speaking lesson/course

• Activities are suitable for students of different proficiency levels
• Ss have ample talking time
• Ss participate actively in lessons
• Grammar and pronunciation errors are addressed appropriately
Goals for a successful speaking lesson/course

• Activities have take-away value
• A progression from controlled practice to freer practice
• Opportunities for personalization
• Ss experience success
• The pleasure factor
Thank you

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