TEACHING SPEAKING AS A PRODUCTIVE SKILL

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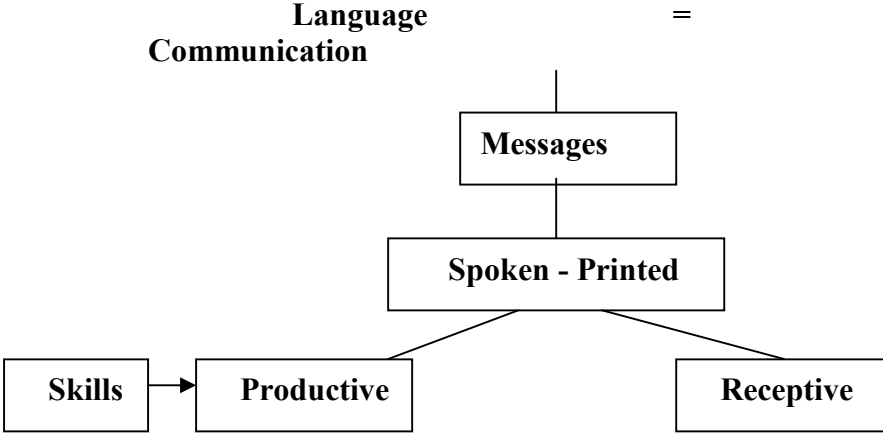
Introduction

The term of productive skills according to Harmer (2007) is the language skills where the students produce the language themselves. The language language skills that are categorized into productive skills are speaking and writing. While, reading and listening are as receptive skills.Both components of skills depict how language as means of communication works. These skill components are messages delivered through spoken and printed texts that are produced by language learners. The messages produced by students in spoken form are categorized as speaking; while the messages produced by students through written form are writing. Both skills are prescribed in the following chart.



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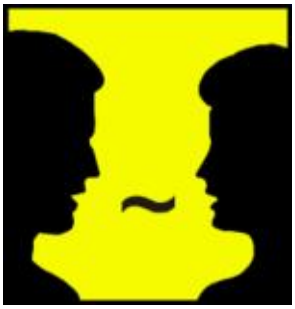

First of all, speaking is defined is an interactive
constructing meaningthat involves producing *a*
processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns &
form and meaning are dependent on the context
including the participants themselves, their coll
the physicalenvironment, and the purposes for s

Burns & Joyce, (1997) mainains that speaking is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Speaking also demands learners to be proficient in language functions (or patterns) that tend to recur in certain discourse situations such as declining an invitation or requesting time off from work can be identified and charted. For example, when a salesperson asks "May I help you?" the expected discourse sequence includes a statement of need, response to the need, offer of appreciation,

acknowledgement of the appreciation, and a leave-taking exchange.

Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary *(linguistic competence)*, but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways to produce language *(sociolinguistic competence)*. Finally, speech has its own skills, structures, and conventions different from written language (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Carter & McCarthy, 1995; Cohen, 1996).

1.1. What a good speaker does

A speaker's skills and speech habits have an impact on the success of any exchange (Van Duzer, 1997). Speakers must be able to anticipate and then produce the expected patterns of specific discourse situations. They must also manage discrete elements such as turn-taking, rephrasing, providing feedback, or redirecting (Burns & Joyce, 1997). For example, a learner involved in the exchange with the salesperson described previously must know the usual pattern that such an interaction follows and access that knowledge as the exchange progresses. The learner must also choose the correct vocabulary to

describe the item sought, rephrase or emphasize words to clarify the description if the clerk does not understand, and use appropriate facial expressions to indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service.

1.2. The skills and knowledge – speaking elements

According to Hammer (2007), there are other skills and knowledge as speaking elements (microskills of oral communication) that address in teaching speaking such as:

1. Ability to pronounce phonemes correctly;
2. Using appropriate stress and intonation patterns;
3. Speaking in connected speech;
4. Ability to speak in a range of different genres and situations; and
5. Using a range of conversational strategies.

Viewing the above speaking elements, a language teacher should monitor learners' speech production to determine what skills and knowledge they already have and what areas need development. The areas of development in speaking includes:

- Mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary): Using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation

- Functions (transaction, interaction and performance): Knowing when clarity of message is essential (transaction/information exchange) and when precise understanding is not required (interaction/relationship building)
- Social and cultural rules and norms (turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants): Understanding how to take into account who is speaking to whom, in what circumstances, about what, and for what reason.

Teaching mechanics in terms of pronunciation, students should be taught how to break words into the correct stress patterns using the syllables of the words. In English, we do not always say a word the same way we spell it.Pronunciation patterns or word stress patterns will also help students reduce their accent. When students are serious about learning English, they will have to learn how to form new patterns. Quick tips for teaching effective pronunciation are presented as follows:

1. Get students to listen to as many native English speakers as they can. Bring in guest speakers or play a variety of audio tapes either on the radio or television.
2. Get students to listen to interviews on the internet.

3. Teach your students the English alphabet very slowly and clearly so that they understand the sound and usage well.
4. Practice with English speaking friends as much as they can.
5. If students can, they should use a voice recorder to tape themselves and play it back. This is a great tool to hear strengths and weaknesses and to discuss in class where they think errors were made.
6. Read aloud to English friends or in class.
7. Students should take classes or a hobby where they have to communicate often. They should join a book club, debate or poetry society.

Another productive sub-skill is phonics, sounds of alphabet. Teaching the sounds and pronunciation of each letter of the alphabet is a very important first step as:

1. Students need to practice writing out the alphabet every day. As they do this, they say the letter aloud.
2. Listen to an audio recording as you write out each letter while expressing the sound as well.
3. Use a video lesson with the letters displayed along with a vocal instructor. As students follow it, they talk out loud.
4. Children's books with follow along audio recordings are excellent tools to familiarize themselves with letter sounds.

5. Get students to test one another with flashcards. They can even be creative and make their own with drawing or cutting out pictures

1.3. Speaking functions

The speaking functions concerning *interaction, transaction and performance* are described as follows.

Functions of Speak		
Interaction	**Transaction**	**Performa**
Opening & closing conv.	Explaining a need	Making a
Choosing topics	Describing something	Conducti debate
Making small-talk	Asking questioning	Giving a s welcome
Recounting experiences	Confirming information	Giving a l
Interrupting	Justifying opinion/making suggestions/clarifying understanding	Making a presentati
Reacting to others	Making comparisons	
	Agreeing/disagreeing	

Speaking functions or language functions also refer to functional categories of language. Mary Finocchiaro and Christopher Brumfit (1983) have placed the functional categories under five headings such as *personal, interpersonal, directive, referential,* and *imaginative.*

Personal categorymeans to clarify or arrange one's ideas; express one's thoughts or feelings: love, joy, pleasure, happiness, surprise, likes, satisfaction, dislikes, disappointment, distress, pain, anger, anguish, fear, anxiety, sorrow, frustration, annoyance at missed opportunities, moral, intellectual and social concerns; and the everyday feelings of hunger, thirst, fatigue, sleepiness, cold, or warmth.

Interpersonal categoryrefers toenable us to establish and maintain desirable social and working relationships. This category includes greetings and leave takings; inntroducing people to others; identifying oneself to others, expressing joy at another's success, expressing concern for other people's welfare; extending and accepting invitations, refusing invitations politely or making alternative arrangements; making appointments for meetings; breaking appointments politely and arranging another mutually convenient time, apologizing, excusing oneself and accepting excuses for not meeting commitments; indicating agreement or disagreement; interrupting another speaker politely; changing an embarrassing subject, receiving visitors and paying visits to others; offering food or drinks and accepting or declining politely; sharing wishes, hopes, desires, problems; making promises and committing

oneself to some action; complimenting someone; making excuses; and expressing and acknowledging gratitude.

Directivecategory relates with attempting to influence the actions of others; accepting or refusing direction. This category covers in making suggestions in which the speaker is included;making requests; refusing to accept a suggestion or a request but offering an alternative; persuading someone to change his point of view; requesting and granting permission; asking for help and responding to a plea for help; forbidding someone to do something; issuing a command; giving and responding to instructions; warning someone; discouraging someone from pursuing a course of action; establishing guidelines and deadlines for the completion of actions; and asking for directions or instructions

Referentialcategory includes talking or reporting about things, actions, events, or people in the environment in the past or in the future; and talking *about* language (what is termed the meta-linguistic function) such as identifying items or people in the classroom, the school the home, the community; asking for a description of someone or something; defining something or a language item or asking for a definition; paraphrasing, summarizing, or translating (L1 to L2 or vice versa); explaining or asking for explanations of how something works; comparing or contrasting things; discussing possibilities, probabilities, or capabilities of doing something; requesting or reporting facts about events or actions; and evaluating the results of an action or event.

Imaginative category refers to discussions involving elements of creativity and artistic expression such as discussing a poem, a story, a piece of music, a play, a painting, a film, a TV program, etc; expanding ideas suggested by other or by a piece of literature or reading material; creating rhymes, poetry, stories or plays; recombining familiar dialogs or passages creatively; suggesting original beginnings or endings to dialogs or stories, and solving problems or mysteries.

Concerning the categories of language functions that serve as the communicative model of language teaching, instructors help their students develop this body of knowledge by providing authentic practice that prepares students for real-life communication situations. They help their students develop the ability to produce grammatically correct, logically connected sentences that are appropriate to specific contexts, and to do so using acceptable (that is, comprehensible) pronunciation.

1.4. Goals and Techniques for Teaching Speaking

The goal of teaching speaking skills is communicative efficiency. Learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, and to observe the social and cultural rules that apply in each communication situation.

To help students develop communicative efficiency in speaking, instructors can use a balanced activities

approach that combines language input, structured output, and communicative output.

Language input that gives learners the material they need to begin producing language themselves comes in the form ofteacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, andthe language heard and read outside of class.

Language input may be content oriented or form oriented. Content-oriented input focuses on information, whether it is a simple weather report or an extended lecture on an academic topic. Content-oriented input may also include descriptions of learning strategies and examples of their use. Whereas, Form-oriented input focuses on ways of using the language: guidance from the teacher or another source on vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar (linguistic competence); appropriate things to say in specific contexts (discourse competence); expectations for rate of speech, pause length, turn-taking, and other social aspects of language use (sociolinguistic competence); and explicit instruction in phrases to use to ask for clarification and repair miscommunication (strategic competence).

In the presentation part of a lesson, an instructor combines content-oriented and form-oriented input. The amount of input that is actually provided in the target language depends on students' listening proficiency and also on the situation. For students at lower levels, or in situations where a quick explanation on a grammar topic is needed, an explanation in English may be more appropriate than one in the target language.

Structured output focuses on correct form. In structured output, students may have options for

responses, but all of the options require them to use the specific form or structure that the teacher has just introduced. Structured output is designed to make learners comfortable producing specific language items recently introduced, sometimes in combination with previously learned items. Instructors often use structured output exercises as a transition between the presentation stage and the practice stage of a lesson plan. Textbook exercises also often make good structured output practice activities.

In *communicative output*, the learners' main purpose is to complete a task, such as obtaining information, developing a travel plan, or creating a video. To complete the task, they may use the language that the instructor has just presented, but they also may draw on any other vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies that they know. In communicative output activities, the criterion of success is whether the learner gets the message across. Accuracy is not a consideration unless the lack of it interferes with the message.

In everyday communication, spoken exchanges take place because there is some sort of information gap between the participants. Communicative output activities involve a similar real information gap. In order to complete the task, students must reduce or eliminate the information gap. In these activities, language is a tool, not an end in itself.

In a balanced activities approach, the teacher uses a variety of activities from these different categories of input and output. Learners at all proficiency levels, including beginners, benefit from this variety; it is more

motivating, and it is also more likely to result in effective language learning.

1. 5. Strategies for Developing Speaking Skills

Students often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process. Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies -- using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about language that they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. Instructors help students learn to speak so that the students can use speaking to learn.

Using minimal responses

Language learners who lack confidence in their ability to participate successfully in oral interaction often listen in silence while others do the talking. One way to encourage such learners to begin to participate is to help them build up a stock of minimal responses that they can use in different types of exchanges. Such responses can be especially useful for beginners. Minimal responses are predictable, often idiomatic phrases that conversation participants use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt, and other responses to what another speaker is saying. Having a stock of such responses enables a learner to focus on what the other participant is saying, without having to simultaneously plan a response.

Recognizing scripts

Some communication situations are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges -- a script. Greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations, and other functions that are influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts. So do the transactional exchanges involved in activities such as obtaining information and making a purchase. In these scripts, the relationship between a speaker's turn and the one that follows it can often be anticipated. Instructors can help students develop speaking ability by making them aware of the scripts for different situations so that they can predict what they will hear and what they will need to say in response. Through interactive activities, instructors can give students practice in managing and varying the language that different scripts contain.

Using language to talk about language

Language learners are often too embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand another speaker or when they realize that a conversation partner has not understood them. Instructors can help students overcome this reticence by assuring them that misunderstanding and the need for clarification can occur in any type of interaction, whatever the participants' language skill levels. Instructors can also give students strategies and phrases to use for clarification and comprehension check.

By encouraging students to use clarification phrases in class when misunderstanding occurs, and by responding positively when they do, instructors can create an authentic practice environment within the classroom itself. As they develop control of various

clarification strategies, students will gain confidence in their ability to manage the various communication situations that they may encounter outside the classroom.

1.6. Developing Speaking Activities

Traditional classroom speaking practice often takes the form of drills in which one person asks a question and another gives an answer. The question and the answer are structured and predictable, and often there is only one correct, predetermined answer. The purpose of asking and answering the question is to demonstrate the ability to ask and answer the question.

In contrast, the purpose of real communication is to accomplish a task, such as conveying a telephone message, obtaining information, or expressing an opinion. In real communication, participants must manage uncertainty about what the other person will say. Authentic communication involves an information gap; each participant has information that the other does not have. In addition, to achieve their purpose, participants may have to clarify their meaning or ask for confirmation of their own understanding.

To create classroom speaking activities that will develop communicative competence, instructors need to incorporate a purpose and an information gap and allow for multiple forms of expression. However, quantity alone will not necessarily produce competent speakers. Instructors need to combine structured output activities, which allow for error correction and increased accuracy, with communicative output activities that give students opportunities to practice language use more freely.

Structured Output Activities

Two common kinds of structured output activities are *information gap* and *jigsaw* activities. In both these types of activities, students complete a task by obtaining missing information, a feature the activities have in common with real communication. However, information gap and jigsaw activities also set up practice on specific items of language. In this respect they are more like drills than like communication.

Information Gap Activities

- Filling the gaps in a schedule or timetable: Partner A holds an airline timetable with some of the arrival and departure times missing. Partner B has the same timetable but with different blank spaces. The two partners are not permitted to see each other's timetables and must fill in the blanks by asking each other appropriate questions. The features of language that are practiced would include questions beginning with "when" or "at what time." Answers would be limited mostly to time expressions like "at 8:15" or "at ten in the evening."
- Completing the picture: The two partners have similar pictures, each with different missing details, and they cooperate to find all the missing details. In another variation, no items are missing, but similar items differ in appearance. For example, in one picture, a man walking along the street may be wearing an overcoat, while in the other the man is wearing a jacket. The features of grammar and vocabulary that are

practiced are determined by the content of the pictures and the items that are missing or different. Differences in the activities depicted lead to practice of different verbs. Differences in number, size, and shape lead to adjective practice. Differing locations would probably be described with prepositional phrases.

These activities may be set up so that the partners must practice more than just grammatical and lexical features. For example, the timetable activity gains a social dimension when one partner assumes the role of a student trying to make an appointment with a partner who takes the role of a professor. Each partner has pages from an appointment book in which certain dates and times are already filled in and other times are still available for an appointment. Of course, the open times don't match exactly, so there must be some polite negotiation to arrive at a mutually convenient time for a meeting or a conference.

Jigsaw Activities

Jigsaw activities are more elaborate information gap activities that can be done with several partners. In a jigsaw activity, each partner has one or a few pieces of the "puzzle," and the partners must cooperate to fit all the pieces into a whole picture. The puzzle piece may take one of several forms. It may be one panel from a comic strip or one photo from a set that tells a story. It may be one sentence from a written narrative. It may be a tape recording of a conversation, in which case no two partners hear exactly the same conversation.

- In one fairly simple jigsaw activity, students work in groups of four. Each student in the group receives one panel from a comic strip. Partners may not show each other their panels. Together the four panels present this narrative: a man takes a container of ice cream from the freezer; he serves himself several scoops of ice cream; he sits in front of the TV eating his ice cream; he returns with the empty bowl to the kitchen and finds that he left the container of ice cream, now melting, on the kitchen counter. These pictures have a clear narrative line and the partners are not likely to disagree about the appropriate sequencing. You can make the task more demanding, however, by using pictures that lend themselves to alternative sequences, so that the partners have to negotiate among themselves to agree on a satisfactory sequence.
- More elaborate jigsaws may proceed in two stages. Students first work in input groups (groups A, B, C, and D) to receive information. Each group receives a different part of the total information for the task. Students then reorganize into groups of four with one student each from A, B, C, and D, and use the information they received to complete the task. Such an organization could be used, for example, when the input is given in the form of a tape recording. Groups A, B, C, and D each hear a different recording of a short news bulletin. The four recordings all contain the same general information, but each has one or more details that

the others do not. In the second stage, students reconstruct the complete story by comparing the four versions.

With information gap and jigsaw activities, instructors need to be conscious of the language demands they place on their students. If an activity calls for language your students have not already practiced, you can brainstorm with them when setting up the activity to preview the language they will need, eliciting what they already know and supplementing what they are able to produce themselves.

Structured output activities can form an effective bridge between instructor modeling and communicative output because they are partly authentic and partly artificial. Like authentic communication, they feature information gaps that must be bridged for successful completion of the task. However, where authentic communication allows speakers to use all of the language they know, structured output activities lead students to practice specific features of language and to practice only in brief sentences, not in extended discourse. Also, structured output situations are contrived and more like games than real communication, and the participants' social roles are irrelevant to the performance of the activity. This structure controls the number of variables that students must deal with when they are first exposed to new material. As they become comfortable, they can move on to true communicative output activities.

Communicative Output Activities

Communicative output activities allow students to practice using all of the language they know in situations that resemble real settings. In these activities, students must work together to develop a plan, resolve a problem, or complete a task. The most common types of communicative output activity are *role plays* and *discussions*.

In role plays, students are assigned roles and put into situations that they may eventually encounter outside the classroom. Because role plays imitate life, the range of language functions that may be used expands considerably. Also, the role relationships among the students as they play their parts call for them to practice and develop their sociolinguistic competence. They have to use language that is appropriate to the situation and to the characters.

Students usually find role playing enjoyable, but students who lack self-confidence or have lower proficiency levels may find them intimidating at first. To succeed with role plays:

- Prepare carefully: Introduce the activity by describing the situation and making sure that all of the students understand it
- Set a goal or outcome: Be sure the students understand what the product of the role play should be, whether a plan, a schedule, a group opinion, or some other product
- Use role cards: Give each student a card that describes the person or role to be played. For

lower-level students, the cards can include words or expressions that that person might use.

- Brainstorm: Before you start the role play, have students brainstorm as a class to predict what vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions they might use.
- Keep groups small: Less-confident students will feel more able to participate if they do not have to compete with many voices.
- Give students time to prepare: Let them work individually to outline their ideas and the language they will need to express them.
- Be present as a resource, not a monitor: Stay in communicative mode to answer students' questions. Do not correct their pronunciation or grammar unless they specifically ask you about it.
- Allow students to work at their own levels: Each student has individual language skills, an individual approach to working in groups, and a specific role to play in the activity. Do not expect all students to contribute equally to the discussion, or to use every grammar point you have taught.
- Do topical follow-up: Have students report to the class on the outcome of their role plays.
- Do linguistic follow-up: After the role play is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.

Discussions, like role plays, succeed when the instructor prepares students first, and then gets out of the way. To succeed with discussions:

- Prepare the students: Give them input (both topical information and language forms) so that they will have something to say and the language with which to say it.
- Offer choices: Let students suggest the topic for discussion or choose from several options. Discussion does not always have to be about serious issues. Students are likely to be more motivated to participate if the topic is television programs, plans for a vacation, or news about mutual friends. Weighty topics like how to combat pollution are not as engaging and place heavy demands on students' linguistic competence.
- Set a goal or outcome: This can be a group product, such as a letter to the editor, or individual reports on the views of others in the group.
- Use small groups instead of whole-class discussion: Large groups can make participation difficult.
- Keep it short: Give students a defined period of time, not more than 8-10 minutes, for discussion. Allow them to stop sooner if they run out of things to say.
- Allow students to participate in their own way: Not every student will feel comfortable talking about every topic. Do not expect all of them to contribute equally to the conversation.

- Do topical follow-up: Have students report to the class on the results of their discussion.
- Do linguistic follow-up: After the discussion is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.

Through well-prepared communicative output activities such as role plays and discussions, you can encourage students to experiment and innovate with the language, and create a supportive atmosphere that allows them to make mistakes without fear of embarrassment. This will contribute to their self-confidence as speakers and to their motivation to learn more.

Acting out role-plays

Other activities that may develop students' participation in role playing, learners are directed to act out role plays about:

1. General daily conversations with friends, family, school teachers, co-workers and new people you meet.
2. Answering and talking on the telephone at work. This can be used as a great role playing game in class. Get two students to pretend they are having a telephone conversation using business English. They can learn practical greetings this way and the class can discuss the topic afterwards.

3. Telephoning the police, ambulance or firemen for help in dangerous or medical emergency situations. This too is great to act out in class. An emergency phone call where one student pretends they need help and the other student responds accordingly.
4. Asking for directions to catch a bus or find a particular location.
5. Dealing with money transactions in stores and banks.
6. Expressing yourself in songs, plays, debates and reading aloud. Play songs for students and have the lyrics on hand. Work on the song a little each day until the whole class is eventually singing along and understands what the song is about.
7. Giving speeches at special events like weddings, funerals and graduations.
8. Talking to locals, taxi drivers, tour guides, hotel and restaurant staff while on vacation.
9. Making an announcement over an intercom or radio broadcast.
10. Teaching or leading groups of people.

Speaking especially conversations, is about getting the message across and conveying information in the shortest possible way. So, students need to get out and about and have conversations in as many practical situations as possible. There are a few valuable tips to teach students for speaking:

1. Talk slowly and ask questions.

2. Use hand gestures or facial expressions to help get your message across.
3. Practice speaking as much as they can in as many different practical situations as they can.
4. Ask someone to write down a word or spell it out for them if they didn't understand it.
5. They need to tell people they are learning English. They can then slow down their conversation.
6. Talk with English friends on a regular basis.
7. When they go to a party or event where there are a lot of people, they should practice introductions and saying hello. Get students to pretend they are meeting for the first time and introducing themselves to one another.
8. Their confidence will grow if they start with short, easy conversations.

1.7. Developing Classroom Speaking Activities

In-class speaking tasks

Although dialogues and conversations are the most obvious and most often used speaking activities in language classrooms, a teacher can select activities from a variety of tasks. Brown (1994) lists six possible task categories:

- *Imitative*-Drills in which the learner simply repeats a phrase or structure (e.g., "Excuse me." or "Can you help me?") for clarity and accuracy;
- *Intensive*-Drills or repetitions focusing on specific phonological or grammatical points, such as minimal pairs or repetition of a series of imperative sentences;
- *Responsive*-Short replies to teacher or learner questions or comments, such as a series of answers to yes/no questions;
- *Transactional*-Dialogues conducted for the purpose of information exchange, such as information-gathering interviews, role plays, or debates;
- *Interpersonal*-Dialogues to establish or maintain social relationships, such as personal interviews or casual conversation role plays; and
- *Extensive*-Extended monologues such as short speeches, oral reports, or oral summaries.

These tasks are not sequential. Each can be used independently or they can be integrated with one another, depending on learners' needs. For example, if learners are not using appropriate sentence intonations when participating in a *transactional* activity that focuses on the skill of politely interrupting to make a point, the teacher might decide to follow up with a brief *imitative* lesson targeting this feature.

When presenting tasks, teachers should tell learners about the language function to be produced in the task and the real context(s) in which it usually occurs. They should provide opportunities for interactive practice and build upon previous instruction as necessary (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Teachers should also be careful not to overload a speaking lesson with other new material such as numerous vocabulary or grammatical structures. This can distract learners from the primary speaking goals of the lesson.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a language teacher should design his/her speaking lesson within the considerations of (1) what a speaker does, (2) speaking elements, (3) speaking finctions, (4) goals and techniques for teaching spekaing, (5) strategies for developing speaking skills, (6) developing speaking activities, and (7) developing classroom speaking activities.

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