

Training the Teacher Trainers

Four-day residential course

ESOL materials for Day 3, afternoon

res no.	style	title
3.7.1	OHT and Activity	Pre-session assignment marking activity

Consider the example assignment in relation to the assessment task and the assessment criteria.

Note on the marking sheet what you would want to include in written feedback to the candidate (and annotate the assignment itself, as a marker).

Bear in mind that the first and second markers do not always initially agree, particularly if an assignment is borderline, and would generally come to a decision following discussion.

res no.	style	title
3.8.1	OHT	Aim and learning objectives

Aim

For participants to:

- explore issues relating to marking assignments and giving written feedback to candidates.

Learning objectives

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- identified and examined key issues relating to marking and giving written feedback
- related their own ideas about marking and giving written feedback to key issues.

res no.	style	title
3.9.1	OHT and Activity	Marking and giving written feedback: task, and key issues to consider

Task:

In small groups, share your ideas from the notes you made for the pre-session task, i.e. what would you want to include in written feedback to the candidate?

Discuss with reference to the key issues below:

- a decision – would you pass this assignment? (does it meet the assessment criteria?)
- giving balanced feedback – in relation to strengths and weaknesses
- the extent of the feedback (i.e. length)
- clarity for the candidate (i.e. giving clear feedback about strengths and weaknesses, and if appropriate, what they need to do in order to pass).

res no. style Title

3.9.2a Activity Assignment task: ESOL

Assessment task

Investigate one aspect of discourse from both a theoretical and a practical perspective.

- a) Identify a particular area of discourse which is relevant to a group of ESOL learners that you are currently teaching
- b) write a short account from a theoretical perspective of the aspect of discourse that you have chosen using relevant terminology
- c) explain why this area of discourse is relevant to your specific group of learners and set appropriate learning objectives
- d) cross-reference the learning objectives to the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum
- e) design or significantly adapt two classroom activities, including materials, to meet the learning objectives
- f) try out these activities with your group of learners
- g) describe, reflect on and evaluate the taught activities and the materials, ensuring that theory and practice are explicitly linked.

[1500 – 2000 words]

continued...

Assessment criteria

Demonstrate the ability to:

- 1 demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical perspectives relating to the aspect of discourse chosen, using relevant terminology accurately
- 2 select appropriate learning objectives, related to the area of discourse chosen for a group of ESOL learners and cross-reference them to the ESOL curriculum
- 3 explain why the learning objectives chosen are appropriate for the group of ESOL learners
- 4 design or significantly adapt two activities, including materials, appropriate for the objectives set
- 5 describe and evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and materials, including reflection on learning of both tutor and learners
- 6 demonstrate the ability to make connections between theory and practice
- 7 apply the appropriate rules and conventions of written English to communicate clearly and effectively.

res no. style Title

3.9.2a Activity Example assignment: ESOL

ESOL Subject Specific Course: Discourse

Transactional and interactional analysis

Until the middle of the twentieth century the English language was primarily studied in terms of its written form, since research was limited to the materials available, thus conferring on it a high status. The arrival of recording facilities meant that the spoken word could become accessible to academic study and therefore raised from its position of inferiority. The spoken language has ... been largely under-described and under-theorised within linguistic science.¹

The analysis of transactional and interactional talk owes much to research into spoken discourse carried out by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975)², whose work in taping classroom interactions enabled them to identify structures which they designated 'transactions' within the classroom talk. These transactions consisted typically of teacher questions and pupil responses and were intended to convey knowledge. This was later challenged by Politzer (1980)³, whom McCarthy quotes as suggesting that the research's 'objectivity was inadequate to the task of properly describing classroom interaction and that a more socio-linguistics inspired approach was required.' Politzer said that 'casual and spontaneous talk appears to be a precarious haphazard exercise with interruptions, diversions unpredictable in its outcomes.'⁴

Transactional talk', says McCarthy, 'is for getting things done.... Interactional talk.....has as its primary functions the lubrication of the social wheels, establishing roles and relationships'.⁵ He suggests that transactional talk produces changes in the world. Brown and Yule suggest a similar definition⁶, designating 'language which is used to convey factual or prepositional information' as being transactional and placing the interactional view in the domain of the sociologists and sociolinguists who are 'concerned with the use of language to establish and maintain social relationships.'⁷

An analysis of most conversations, however, would reveal that it is rare to find one that is totally transactional or wholly interactional - they are a mix of both, even the 'most strictly transactional of settings'⁸. Indeed, McCarthy says that 'it is almost impossible to conceive of talk between two people that does not, in some small way, "change the world", even if that only means getting to know someone a little better.'⁹ Thus one should not be surprised to find, say,

¹ Carter (2002) p.2

² As described by McCarthy in Carter and Nunan,(2001) p. 50 from Sinclair J. and Coulthard M. Towards an Analysis of Discourse (1975) OUP

³ Ibid p.50 quoting Politzer R. Requesting in Elementary School Classrooms TESOL Quarterly 14(2), 165-174

⁴ Ibid p. 50

⁵ McCarthy (1991) p. 136

⁶ Brown and Yule p. 1

⁷ Ibid p.2-3

⁸ McCarthy (1991) p. 136

⁹Ibidp.136

an unexpected interjection on the British weather, a naturally unpredictable subject, appearing in formal transactional speech.

Brown and Yule note that linguists generally consider the transactional function is the most important¹⁰, which is borne out by McCarthy, who says that, "there is no doubt that some teaching materials are imbalanced between the two types of talk"¹¹ and he quotes Belton (1988) as criticising what he sees as a tendency in language teaching ... "to overemphasise transactional language at the expense of interactional and makes a plea for a better balance between the two."¹²

This has considerable implications for the teaching of English as a second language. Cook highlights the difficulties: '...features of conversation ...include greater spontaneity and freedom and a greater equality among participants... All these features are at odds with the nature of the classroom, where language is directed towards a specific purpose, and where one person (the teacher) is traditionally in charge...'¹³ Training materials err on the side of the transactional, perhaps, regrettably, because it is easier to produce predictable conversation activities than unpredictable ones. Unfortunately, students regularly report¹⁴ that interactional conversations are the hardest in which to participate and for which to learn the techniques (of which there are many). Those interactional conversations that are attempted in the classroom are all too often stymied by, for example, unforeseen issues of gender of participants or cultural differences where features such as ellipsis, discourse markers or vague language do not exist or exist in very differing forms.

Often the whole notion of the difference is not realised until it is made transparent by teachers. Thus it is incumbent upon English teachers to build in 'noticing' exercises before moving on to providing opportunities for unpredictable interactional talk, ideally using authentic speech and training in features such as turn-taking (which involves cross-cultural issues).

There are some very positive reasons for highlighting the whole area of interactional speech, according to Roskvist. A number of features actually help with comprehension, for example repetition and discourse markers. She quotes McCarthy¹⁶ as suggesting from research that where 'spoken discourse lacks a normal distribution of markers, it can create problems of comprehension as well as being unnatural.' Use of the features, she says, on the other hand, can spare the listener processing effort and leads to naturally sounding speech.¹⁷

¹⁰ Brown and Yule p.2

¹¹ McCarthy (1991) p. 137

¹² Ibid p. 137 quoting Lexical naturalness in native and non-native discourse. Belton, A. English Language Research Journal (1988) "Cook, p. 116

¹⁴ Certainly those of the writer do!

¹⁵ Roskvist p.8-9

¹⁶ Roskvist p.8, quoting What should we teach about the spoken language? McCarthy M. in ARAL, 17, 2:104-120 (1994)

¹⁷ Ibid p. 8

Native speakers, or expert users, are not error-free. Knowing this will encourage students to experiment, resulting in increased usage, which leads to fluency, particularly if they can use 'pre-fabricated chunks' of language which require little encoding work, taking the stress off production so that the student doesn't have to focus on every word.¹⁸ Roskvist also believes that observation of authentic language provides a context for developing understanding of the culture and an understanding of the cultural norms associated with speech acts.¹⁹

Roskvist quotes McCarthy and Carter: 'there can be little hope for natural spoken output on the part of language learners if the input is stubbornly rooted in models that owe their origin and shape to the written language.'²⁰

The teaching of spoken English must allow students to develop skills in interactional speech if they are to participate fully in naturally-occurring spoken English.

The class (see Appendix 1 for full details of students) This is a new class designed to prepare students for a health and safety 'award with embedded ESOL. It is a small group, ranging from E2 to E3, but all with fairly 'spiky' profiles. It is based in a densely populated, multi-cultural area in East London.

Since so many of them have expressed a desire to improve their spoken English, I felt it would be useful to begin to explore the whole area of the difference between transactional and interactional speech - to help them to notice it for the very first time, with a view to empowering them to hold authentic, fluent conversations.

The two activities are designed to move directly from one to the other, so that the contrast between the two functions of speech can be more easily observed.

I took time at the end of each of these activities to elicit feedback in more detail than the group are used to and found that in itself to be beneficial to my reflection on the activities and indeed on my planning for the future.

¹⁸ Ibid, quoting Two puzzles for linguistic theory: Native selection and nativelike fluency' Pawley A. and Syder FH. in Richards, J. and Schmidt, R. (eds) Language and Communication. London: Longman

¹⁹ Ibid p.8-9

²⁰ Ibid p.11

Bibliography

Discourse analysis for Language Teachers, McCarthy, M. OUP (1991)

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Discourse Analysis, Brown, G and Yule, G. CUP (1983)

Language as Discourse, McCarthy, M. and Carter, R. Pearson Education: Longman (1994)

Discourse, Cook, G. OUP (1989)

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, edited Carter, R. and Nunan, D. CUP (2001)

"..and stuff like that" Roskvist A. NATECLA Language Issues Volume 14 Number 2 (2002)

The Grammar of Talk: Spoken English, Grammar and the Classroom, Carter R. NATECLA Journal Language Issues Vol 14, No.2 (2002)

Objectives for the activities:

- a) Students will be able to form question words in the present simple and past simple tenses for asking for personal information and be able to give responses in conversations. This will provide them with the 'mechanics' of sentence formation. Sc/E2.2c, 2d,3b; Sd/E2.1a; Lr/E2.5b,6b
- b) Students will practise conversations that contain both transactional and interactional speech. This will provide them with opportunities for the 'unpredictability of transactional speech as well as the predictability and as far as possible to expose them to authentic speech. Sc/E2.2,2d,3b;Sd/E2.1a;Lr/E2.5b,6b
- c) Students will be able to recognize the difference between the transactional elements and the interactional elements ('noticing') of the given tasks. Sd/E2.1a.1b,1c,1d, Lr/E2.6b,6c

Activity 1

Source Materials: ESOL Skills for life Entry level 2 Unit 7 page 3 and teachers' notes. Hand made cue cards.

Task 1. Ask a mixture of general questions to students to elicit personal details in the present and past tenses in order to activate the general schema of getting to know your classmates better.

Task 2. Elicit examples of question words. Highlight differences in present and past tenses (e.g. Did/do; is/are/was/were)

Task 3. Using task 1 in the workbook, identify whether questions are about *now* or *in the past*, e.g. By spotting *do* and *did* in questions.

Task 4. In pairs, each partner chooses a card from set 1 and from set 2 and then asks the other student a questions based on the words they have drawn out, e.g. *Where did you work? What time do you have lunch? Where do you work now? Where did you work before?* This will begin to build in an element of unpredictability. It also provides scaffolding in the form of 'pre-fabricated

chunks' of language as mentioned by Roskvist (see page 3 of discussion on theoretical perspectives), which takes the stress off production.

Task 5. Changing partners, ask students to look at task 2 in the workbook and prepare some questions to find out some personal information about their partners. Take turns to ask and answer these.

d) Activity 1: describe and evaluate the activities and materials

This activity provided an opportunity to allow the students to engage in a piece/of interactional conversation. They felt very comfortable with the style of speech and readily proffered examples of question words in past and present. They enjoy working in pairs and, because of the small size of the group, it is very good for them to be constantly mixing together, rather than depending on me!

I have observed before that they enjoy the tactile nature of handling cards, and was pleased that the task using these went very well in as much as the students were alert and keen to work. However, I did find myself giving lots of examples of how they could use the selected words/phrases to create questions and make a conversation. Although I had modelled examples on the board, I think I would need to do more examples to help the less able / students, particularly as this class covers two levels. Also, the class as a whole could perhaps have suggested a further question(s) as an exemplar.

The activity from Skills for Life felt rather limiting, as it did not enable students to enlarge upon responses, but simply to produce a product - a standardised response to fairly basic questions. It was limited to the extent of the skills of the students themselves. Beyond this, there was little scope for developing the product into an authentic conversation such as they might have with a native speaker.

The students fed back that they had found the activity helpful and that it would help them to make conversations. They felt that it would make them think carefully about which tense to use, so that their conversations were more accurate. One lady said that, although she knows the correct tenses in class, she often gets muddled in conversations, and forgets to change tense. Another lady agreed with her - she has a high level of fluency, with an incredibly low level of accuracy - she has been in the UK for at least 20 years. In *her case*, I probably need to work on small elements of accuracy at a time. I noticed that the European students found it easier to produce interactional conversation than the Indian students - it could be that culturally they are closer to the British speech - this is an area for me to investigate further and, if necessary, make allowances for.

I feel that the students had made some progress with achieving objective (a) and to a certain extent objective (b). However, this is merely an initial step towards a place of being able to produce authentic speech; Activity two is planned to develop this on to the next stage.

Activity 2

Source materials: Role play cards; taped conversation (see transcript "Phoning for a pizza"); CD of conversation (Skills for Life ESOL Unit 2 page 17 - Asking about the past. See transcript)

Task 1. Explain that students will hear two taped conversations. Use listening exercises to facilitate enhanced comprehension.

Task 2. In pairs, discuss what are the differences and similarities between these two conversations. Feed back to class. Things to look out for: friendly/ unfriendly; polite/friendly; just chatting/getting a job done; both on the phone; both mention cars; both use question words. Which is easier to do - phone for a pizza or phone for a chat (in English, not your own language)? Why? Which one can you prepare for? Is listening easier/harder? Collate responses on whiteboard. Show how some conversations are to get a job done, whilst others are to build friendships / get to know people. We need to be able to use both kinds.

Task 3. In pairs, choose a role play card. With your partner prepare and act out the conversation. Decide whether your role play is 'getting a job done' or 'building a friendship'. Swap role play cards so that pairs get to do the other kind of speech. Demonstrate one or two examples to whole class to illustrate the difference between transactional and interactional conversations. Ask which role play is which kind of speech to check learning. Re-state the features of the two kinds of conversations.

Activity 2: Describe and evaluate the activities and the materials

These students are not used to talking about what is actually happening in the classroom, and why the teacher is doing certain things, so would need to be overtly made aware of the differences between transactional and interactional speech. An activity such as this helps to bring this much-needed transparency. Feedback at the end demonstrated that a large proportion of the class prefer to have transparency - they appreciate a mature approach to their learning.

The two listening activities went very smoothly - the class found the simple listening exercises really useful in enabling them to focus on what they were hearing. From past experience I have found that 'less is best' when it comes to developing these activities, rather than a long list of questions with too much to listen for! As a result the students were able to compare similarities and differences with a considerable amount of thoughtfulness and insight. We were quite soon able to identify clearly that the pizza conversation was for making something happen, that the people did not know each other and that students felt this conversation might be easier, because you could get prepared for it. They were clear that the conversation with the two women chatting was not something you could get prepared for, and that it was all about two friends supporting each other - building friendship. By questioning

around the room, I was very pleased to see that all students had been able to quickly identify the differences between the two styles. After some deliberation (although not initially planned) I decided to risk offering to tell them the technical terms for these types of conversation (on the basis that there are at least two students in the group with university level education, and also that they were all in such a responsive and highly motivated mode, but prefacing this with the reassurance that it would never be required in any assessments with me!). I was intrigued to find that they nearly all wanted this information, and were able to use it (despite stumbling over pronunciation!) to label the types of conversations in further discussion. Although this might be a contentious approach, I feel that, my main objective was to enable noticing of the two styles, this was yet another method of allowing noticing to take place for some students, although not for all. If I were to repeat this activity I would not normally assume that I could follow through in this manner - it would always have to depend upon the make-up of the specific grouping.

When we demonstrated the role plays, it became obvious to all that students were struggling to extend the interactional elements of the conversations. Even the conversation between friends in Tesco's was stilted and students were finding it hard to develop it into a resemblance of authentic speech. In discussion afterwards the students all agreed that this kind of conversation is more difficult for them, and that they lacked confidence in this area.

We had a feedback session at the end of the activities so the students could express their views on the activities. The whole group had found themselves to be wanting and needing further practice in speaking. One woman said that practice in class would enable them to be less shy when speaking English in conversations. I asked the class how they would like me to help them, and it was suggested that we do a little bit every lesson to enable them to get through the hurdle of embarrassment. This I have now implemented and it is being received very favourably by the class. They also highlighted a need for help with pronunciation, which will be another area for me to develop.

It is worth noting that finding a conversation from the Skills for Life material to highlight interactional speech was not easy - there is a tendency on the part of the authors to select scenarios that lend themselves to conversations which are predominantly transactional, or which, although containing interactional elements, are not sufficiently clear enough to highlight the differences. The dearth of material is to be deplored, as clearly the students are crying out for support in this area.

We have yet to broach the fact that it is normal for elements of both transactional *and* interactional speech to occur in most conversations and to that extent did not fully meet objective (b), although in other aspects, including the notion of 'unpredictability'¹, it was met. There were certainly plenty of conversations being practised, too! I feel that my next step for development would be to pursue the aspect of both types of speech being together in conversations.

However, students did demonstrate clearly that they had achieved objective (c). Our discussion at the end showed that the students had never thought about differing types of speech before and I feel that this is but the first tiny step on a 'many-runged ladder' to facilitating authentic conversation where the student can switch from transactional to interactional speech (and back again!)

2005 Activity 2 Discourse module

Role Play Cards

Invite your friend to come shopping with you.	Buy tickets to Birmingham for next Saturday.
Offer to get your classmate a cup of tea.	You are in a chemist shop. You have a sore throat. Ask for something to help it.
You are a teacher. Welcome your student on his/her first day.	You are in Tesco's. You meet a friend. Have a conversation

Phoning for a pizza: transcript

- A Good evening. Pizza Hut. You're speaking to Mike, can I take your order?
- B Hi! I'd like a large margherita pizza with extra onions and cheese, please.
- A OK, anything else?
- B Yeh – 4 regular fries and 2 large cokes.
- A OK. Is that it?
- B Yes, thanks.
- A Right – so that's one large margherita with extra onions and cheese, 4 regular fries and 2 large cokes. Is that for collection or delivery?
- B Delivery please – my car's just broken down!
- A OK – that'll be £15.99. What's your address, please?
- B 10, Green Lane, Ilford, Essex.
- A OK. We'll be with you in half an hour.
- B Thanks a lot, bye.
- A Bye.

[2005 Discourse module Activity 2]

Phoning for a pizza: listening task

1. What is the name of the shop?



Pizza House

Pizza Hut

Pizza Palace

2. What size pizza do they order?

Large Medium Small

3. Why do they choose delivery?

It's too far to walk

They are lazy

The car's broken down

4. How much is the order?

£9.99

£5.99

£15.99

Asking about the past: transcript

Emma Hello

Cristina Oh, hi, Emma. I just wanted to talk to someone. I'm so fed up. I'm... having a terrible day!

E Heh! What's wrong?

C Well, I got to work really late.

E That's not like you. Did you wake up late?

C No, I got up early. I got the children ready for school and made their sandwiches. Everything was fine, but then I had a problem with the car. It didn't start again. I really must get another one.

E Oh, no! How did you get to work?

C I took the bus, but it was really slow. The traffic was terrible.

E Were you very late?

C Yes, I was. I didn't get to the office until ten.

E Well, that's OK. You can stay a bit later this afternoon.

C Yes, but that's not all, Emma. My computer crashed.

E Oh, no! Did you lose all your work?

C Yes, everything.

E Poor you. I hope you have a better afternoon.

C So do I. Thanks for listening. I'll talk to you soon.

E No problem! Bye!

[2005 Discourse Module Activity 2]

Asking about the past: listening task

1. Why did Cristina phone?

To talk to someone []

To book a holiday []

To buy a car []

2. Did she:

Get up early []

Wake up late []

3. How did she get to work?

Car []

Bus []

Walk []

4. What happened to her computer?

She lost it []

She broke it []

It crashed []

res no. style Title

3.9.4a Activity ESOL blank marking sheet

Name of module:	Discourse for ESOL Teachers
Name of candidate:	
Name of assessor:	
Date:	

1. Assessment of Content:

This assignment demonstrates:	Criterion met?	Comments
1. an understanding of the theoretical perspectives relating to the aspect of discourse chosen		
2. ability to select appropriate learning objectives for a group of ESOL learners, which are directly linked to the aspect of discourse chosen, and cross-reference them to the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum where possible		
3. ability to explain why the learning objectives chosen are appropriate for the group of ESOL learners		
4. ability to design or significantly adapt two activities, including materials, appropriate for the objectives set		
5. ability to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and materials, including reflection on learning of both tutor and learners		
6. ability to make connections between theory and practice		
7. accurate use of relevant terminology		

2. Assessment of Presentation:

This assignment demonstrates:	Criterion met?	Comments
1. Select appropriate reading to inform the assignment		
2. Read and understand appropriate texts and apply the content of them to the topic of the assignment		
3. Write in an appropriate style for the audience and the topic of the assignment		
4. Present information and arguments clearly		
5. Write coherently and with grammatical accuracy		
6. Use spelling and punctuation accurately		
7. Adhere to the word count and select the right amount of information to meet the requirements of the assignment		
8. Refer to sources and provide a bibliography, following academic conventions		

<p>Overall comment</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>This assignment does not yet meet the pass criteria. To meet the criteria, the following points should be addressed:</p>
<p>Signature of assessor</p>

res no.	style	title
3.12.1	OHT and Activity	Developments in teacher education

Task:

Group according to role e.g. teacher trainer for generic training, training for subject support, manager of Skills for Life courses.

Discuss questions that interest your group.

Either

- Find answers to queries from among the group members.

Or

- Use the documents given to find answers.

For the plenary session:

Note down

Either

- One question that you still feel needs answering.

Or

- One point that you think should be raised with the whole group.