Teaching English as a Second Language

Unit Two: Teaching Language as Communication Among People
The Communicative Classroom

- Use language proficiently
- Understand the language in a variety of settings with varying degrees of formality (with a friend vs. with a boss)
I. Linguistic Competence

- Knowledge of grammatical forms, spelling, vocabulary and pronunciation
- It is the building blocks of the language
Linguistic Competence: Phonetics

Different sound patterns

Consider:
1. Sound & form may not exist in native language. (e.g. /str/) Will create difficulties in spelling & pronunciation.

Tone differences

Consider:
I want to go home.
Understanding Tone

**Defined**
- Quality of sound produced by the voice when saying words
- Is an expression of speaker attitude at the time of speaking

**Use of Tone**
- Conscious or unconscious use
- Is a feature of non-verbal communication
- Varies by language
- Are the first elements used by children learning an L1
- ESL students struggle with tone
Linguistic Competence: Grammar

Sentence structure differences

The beautiful bird is flying slowly.

Article + adjective + noun + verb(s) + adverb
Linguistic Competency: Vocabulary

Word Does Not Exist in Native Language

Differences
II. Sociolinguistic Competence

The ability to use language, both verbal and nonverbal, appropriately in social contexts.

Sociolinguistic Competence

- Sociolinguistic Interference
- Interpreting Social Meaning
- Taking the Initiative
Sociolinguistic interference

In what social aspects does English differ from the native language?

Example 1:
‘Two adults and one child upstairs, please.”

Example 2:
“Hello, how are you” vs. “Hey, watcha been doing?”
Part A. Match these situations with the responses that you think would be most appropriate. Remember that silence is sometimes an appropriate response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>A Possible Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Getting out of a crowded bus.</td>
<td>How much is this, please?</td>
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<td>2. Wanting to leave a party.</td>
<td>Excuse me, please.</td>
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<td>3. Finding the cost of something.</td>
<td>Would you like some help?</td>
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<td>4. Asking for tickets at the cinema.</td>
<td>I’m sorry, I’m a stranger myself.</td>
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<td>5. Waiting at a bus stop with a stranger.</td>
<td>I think I’d better go now</td>
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<td>6. Seeing a friend for the first time since the death of his father.</td>
<td>Could you serve me, or are you busy?</td>
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<td>7. Trying to get a shop assistant to serve you.</td>
<td>Two adults and one child upstairs, please.</td>
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<td>8. Helping someone who has fallen over.</td>
<td>I was very sorry to hear that your father had died.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Someone asks you the way but you are new to town.</td>
<td>Are you all right? Have you hurt yourself?</td>
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<td>10. Seeing someone who is carrying many parcels.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part B. Now make up your own first remark for these situations.

a) You have picked up a purse that you saw someone drop.
b) Asking a friend to look after your child for two hours.
c) Asking a shop to deliver a chair you have just bought.
d) Telling a taxi-driver where you want to go.
e) Giving your name to a clerk who can’t spell it.
f) Complaining about something you have bought which is not satisfactory.
Interpreting Social Meaning

Example:

Situation: Bob and Susan are at an amusement park and have been riding the rides for many hours. Bob is now feeling rather ‘ill’ and would like to go home. He says:

Bob: Haven’t you had enough?
Interpreting Social Meaning: Implications

Part A: Read what ‘X’ says. Then, think of the implication of the remark in two or three different settings and then provide some possible replies: provide at least one where Y agrees with X and one where Y disagrees with X.

Example: X says.....

“Isn’t it awful weather?”

Implications: X thinks the weather is bad and expects Y to agree.

A possible reply for Y if he is agreeing with X: “It certainly is.”
A possible answer for Y if he is disagree with X: “Well it’s better than yesterday.”

• Isn’t there room for another?
• Wasn’t that a boring lecture?
• Did it really cost as much as that?
• Have you started to work yet?
• Have you stopped worrying about your son?
• Aren’t you tired?
• I’m rather busy at the moment.
• My daughter is very shy with strangers.
Part B: Choose one of the following pairs of sentences and give an appropriate response to each.

1. Can you swim?  
   Can’t you swim?

2. Have you read Oliver Twist?  
   Haven’t you read Oliver Twist?

3. Do you know Mary Brown?  
   Don’t you know Mary Brown?

4. Did you give me six?  
   Didn’t you give me six?
Taking the Initiative

1. practice in contributing material to a conversation,
2. in providing information which their conversational partner can pick up and
3. develop, and in taking responsibility themselves for developing a conversation.

The need to develop detailed interpretive responses.
Taking the Initiative

Consider the following exchange:

A: Good evening. Where do you come from?
B: From Vietnam.
A: Oh! Vietnamese, why have you come to Australia?
B: I’m a student.
A: Uh-uh. What are you studying?
B: Food technology.
A: How long have you been here?
B: One month.
A: How long will you stay?
B: Four years.
Taking the Initiative

When asked a question, answer it AND then ask a question yourself related to something in your answer.

A: Are you a student?

B: Yes, I’ve come to study Business. Are you a student?

OR

Yes, I’ve come to study Business. Do all American universities teach Business?
Taking the Initiative: Not able/unwilling to answer

Too personal

A. Are you feeling homesick?

B. I’m not sure. Many things are very different here. Have you ever lived in another country?

What are some questions that YOU think would be too personal to answer?
III. Discourse Competence

- To understand/construct monologues or written texts of different genres

Understanding Textual Discourse

Understanding what is going on & what is important

- Involves being able to relate information in a way that is coherent to readers & hearers

Improved abilities

- reading
- writing
- conversation
To Understand & Create Forms of the Language

The Space Cadets ate the rocket ship. It was delicious!!
How texts relate to the context or situation: Cohesion

- The car is in the driveway.
- The pencil is in the cup.
Consider:

‘The party was a blast! After Melvin opened his presents and everyone played with this new Star Wars light saber, it was time to eat. Melvin blew out the candles and the Space Cadets ate the rocket ship. It was delicious! Served with real astronaut ice cream. Melvin’s parents really knocked themselves out this time.’
#1 The theoretical discussions are excellent. Brew in any coffee maker. If you have questions about your symptoms call First help. Sam wants to know what twelve o’clock means. Miss Honey and her boyfriend Bruno called to take the children for a picnic in the park. Where can you buy this convenient flashlight?

#2 Phillip’s Chicken Pie. Delicious and ready in two minutes! Three tantalizing varieties available with your choice of noodles, mashed potatoes or our special mushroom gravy. Complete on-the-go meals for the busy gourmet!
Discourse Competency

**Top Down Processing**
- Knowledge and information a student brings with them

**Bottom Up Processing**
- Focuses on the specifics of the language (vocabulary, grammar, intonation, phonetics, etc.)

Look at this text:
Social Cultural Competency

- Able to adapt the use of English to the ways people in a culture interact

  - Affected by:
    1) history and culture
    2) holidays & famous people in history
    3) accents

- ‘9-11’
- ‘11-M’
  - Thanksgiving
  - The Songkran Festival in Thailand
IV. Strategic Competence

- Knowing what to do when you don’t know a word
- Knowing how to manage a social situation when you aren’t sure about the rules of etiquette
Degrees of Strategic Competence

- Gesture and facial expression
- Gesture
- Word coinage
- Circumlocution
- Give up!
Providing Opportunities for Students to Communicate in English

Precommunicative Activities
Quasi-communicative Activities

Structural Activities
e.g. I was very late for the film. But I wasn’t too late for the film.

Pre-communicative Activities

Quasi-communicative Activities

Situational dialogues, open-ended dialogues, timetable, map, food list, shopping list, etc.
Communicative Activities

Functional:
- Task based: comparing sets of pictures and noting similarities/differences; sequencing events, discovering missing features

Social Interaction:
- Social interaction based: conversations, dialogues, role plays, simulations, skits, debates
Factors Contributing to a Communicative Classroom
Factor One: Reduce the Role of the Teacher

Increase student participation

Reduce the role of the teacher
Factor Two: Appreciate Student Uniqueness
Factor Three: Provide Students with Opportunities to Communicate

- Expression of thoughts and ideas
- How to negotiate meaning
- Clarification, confirming, asking/answering questions and responding appropriately
Factor Four: Give Students Choices
And Making Appropriate Choices

**Clip 1:**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2tQtIaQSY4

**Clip 2:**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4moqO1uTE4
The Role of the ESL Teacher

Language abilities

Meaningful interactions
Language Ability Roles

- Language authority
- Cultural informant
- Model English speaker
Culturally Sensitive Questions

- How do I ask a girl/boy out on a date?
- What do American families do on the Fourth of July?
- Can same sex friends hold hands in public?
- How much money do you make?
- How do I use the bus/train/subway?
- How much do you weigh?
Meaningful Interactions Role

- Needs assessor
- Classroom manager
- Text adaptor
- Entertainer
Needs Assessor Role

- Teacher interviews
- Dialogue journals
- Questionnaires
NEEDS ASSESSMENT
for the ESL Beginning Low Course

PLEASE CHECK ✔ ONLY 3 PICTURES.

I want to study English for ____________.

Social Conversation  Work  Forms and Tests

School and Children  Shopping and Money  Signs and Labels

Time and Calendar  Health and Safety  Transportation and Maps

PLEASE CHECK ✔ ONLY 2 PICTURES.

I want to practice ____________ in English.

Listening  Speaking  Reading  Writing
Classroom Manager

- Control the amount of ‘teacher talk’ that goes on in the classroom
- Manipulate questioning behaviors
- Control the way we give instructions
- Orchestrate group and pair work
- Keep learners on task
- Make language comprehensible to students
- Handle affective variables of classroom life
Text Adaptor

- Adding additional materials
- Games
- Dialogues
- Skits
- Vocabulary adjustments
Entertainer
Problems Faced by ESL Teachers when Teaching

The Bandwagon Problem
The Overly Anxious Problem
The Engagement Problem
The Bandwagon Method of Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defined</th>
<th>Positives</th>
<th>Negatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The latest teaching methodologies</td>
<td>Provide confidence &amp; useful techniques</td>
<td>Can be problematic if teachers cannot see beyond the ‘in way’ of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are fashionable, most up to date methods, materials, &amp; techniques</td>
<td>Easy to share ideas with other instructors who follow the same thought</td>
<td>May stem teacher creativity</td>
</tr>
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</table>
What is Anxiety?

How would you define anxiety?
- Fear
- Apprehension
- Uneasiness
- Self-doubt
- Worry

Why do you think ESL students show anxiety in the ESL classroom?
- Inability to pronounce sounds and words
- Not knowing the meaning of words or sentences
- Reputation of the language class as a place for failure
- Peer criticism
- Not knowing or understanding course goals or requirements
- Testing, especially oral testing
- Previous unsuccessful language-learning attempts
- Encountering different cultural values and behaviors
Facilitating Anxiety

- Do not criticize, but encourage language production/use through paraphrasing student responses
- Do not single students out for error correction
- Pair strong with weak students
The Engagement Problems

- Teacher relinquishes some control over the communicative tasks to the students
- Atmosphere conducive to interactions
Homework: Choose one of the following and write a one-two page response

1. Design your own pre-communicative activity.

2. Reflect on the kinds of roles ESL teachers play in the classroom. Which role(s) would you feel comfortable playing? Which ones would you not feel comfortable in? What do you need to learn to play some roles more professionally?

3. Research some of the sociolinguistic interferences an English language learner from Mexico, Japan or South Korea may have.
References


