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COMMUNICATIVE METHODS AND FUNCTIONS IN SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT.

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RESUMEN

El siguiente trabajo hace referencia a la manera como los profesores pueden enfocar la enseñanza de un idioma extranjero dentro del aula de clases de forma tal que los estudiantes puedan comunicarse de una manera consciente, teniendo en cuenta sus experiencias reales. Esta compilación analiza los métodos comunicativos en la enseñanza de idiomas extranjeros así como también premisas importantes, que siendo bien aplicadas, tienen un efecto excepcional en los estudiantes. Este material cubre también puntos de vista relevantes sobre el desarrollo de la expresión oral. Además, está dirigido a profesores de cualquier nivel que deseen dar a sus estudiantes oportunidades pare que estos se involucren en la comunicación oral en un contexto real. Esta colección de estudios previos fue seleccionada cuidadosamente con el propósito de que los profesores tengan una guía a su alcance cuando ellos necesiten diseñar planes de clase basados en los métodos comunicativos.

ABSTRACT

The following work refers to the way teachers can focus the teaching of the foreign language in the classroom in such a way that students can communicate in a conscious way, taking into account their real experiences. This compilation takes a look at the communicative methods to the teaching of foreign languages as well as important premises which, if applied correctly, have an enormous effect on students. This material also covers significant insights into speaking development. Moreover, it is intended for teachers of any level who want to provide opportunities in the classroom for their students to engage in real-life communication in the target language. This collection of pioneering studies was carefully selected in order that teachers have a handbook at reach when they need to design communicative - oriented lessons.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching English is, for many teachers, a matter of completing the syllabus of an English textbook on time. For others, the art of teaching consists of preparing lesson plans parallel to textbooks.

The purpose of this work is to provide a set of insights that can be used as a guide so that teachers can create more real life - centered lesson plans, making the most of the communicative methods and English Functions.

This compilation also supports the fact that teaching a foreign language, specifically speaking, requires certain elements that make the learning process more beneficial. The more realistic the setting of speaking exercises is the more motivating and efficient the acquisition of speaking competence is. This work is synthesized in the following order:

The First Chapter makes reference to the Communicative Methods; The Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning. It also points out the roles that teachers and students play when applying these communicative methods.

The Second Chapter focuses on Notional-Functional Syllabus design, the use of functions and exponents as well as appropriacy.

The Third Chapter analyses some premises on teaching speaking. It also provides strategies for developing speaking skills.

CHAPTER 1

1. COMMUNICATIVE METHODS AND FUNCTIONS IN SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT.

1.1 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Its origins are many, since one teaching methodology tends to influence the next. The communicative approach could be said to be the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods of foreign language instruction.

They felt that students were not learning enough realistic, whole language. They did not know how to communicate using appropriate social language, gestures, or expressions; in brief, they were at a loss to communicate in the culture of the language studied. Interest in and development of communicative - style teaching grew quickly in the 1970s; authentic language use and classroom exchanges where students engaged in real communication with one another became quite popular.

In the intervening years, the communicative approach has been adapted to the elementary, middle, secondary, and post-secondary levels, and the essential philosophy has produce different teaching methods known under a variety of names, including notional-functional, teaching for proficiency, proficiency-based instruction, and communicative language teaching.

Communicative language teaching makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication. The teacher sets up a situation that students are

likely to encounter in real life. Unlike the audio-lingual method of language teaching, which relies on repetition and drills, the communicative approach can leave students in suspense as to the outcome of a class exercise, which will vary according to their reactions and responses. The real-life simulations change from day to day. Students' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics.

Margie S. Berns, an expert in the field of communicative language teaching, writes in explaining Firth's view that ***"language is interaction; it is interpersonal activity and has a clear relationship with society. In this light, language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context, both its linguistic context (what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social, or situational, context (who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak)"*** (Berns, 1984 p. 5)

1.1.1 The Roles of the Teacher and Student in the Communicative Language Teaching

(Larsen-Freeman, 1986) ***"Teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more - becoming active facilitators of their students' learning".*** The teacher sets up the exercise, but because the students' performance is the goal, the teacher must step back and observe, sometimes acting as referee or monitor. A classroom during a communicative activity is far from quiet, however. The students do most of the speaking, and frequently the scene of a classroom during a

communicative exercise is active, with students leaving their seats to complete a task.

Because of the increased responsibility to participate, students may find they gain confidence in using the target language in general. (Larsen-Freeman, 1986) ***"Students are more responsible managers of their own learning."***

1.1.2 Applying Communicative Teaching Method in English-Teaching Classroom

Communicative language teaching is generally accepted in the field of second language teaching. There are some practical requirements and methods in the application of this model.

1.1.3 Communicative Approach Activities

Littlewood, (1981), divided the communicative approach into pre-communicative and communicative activities. Here is a visual of his way of teaching.

Pre-Communicative Activities	=	Structural Activities
Communicative Activities	=	Functional communication activities
		Social interaction activities

The pre-communicative activities are preparatory steps towards communicative activities. The teachers should analyze all the communicative abilities and then let the students practice them one by one. The aim is for

learners to practice using language they will need when actually communicating.

There are two types of pre-communicative activities. The first type mainly concerns about structural activities. These are much like the grammar exercises in which the teacher teaches the students how to use grammatical rules in their communications. For example, the teacher may teach the students how to use intensifiers by making sentences like the following: I was very late for the film. But I wasn't too late for the film. These two sentences show the differences of "very" and "too". We can also use audio-visual ways of teaching, asking students to do substitution exercises, repetition exercises, etc. The second type is quasi-communication activities which are intended to help learners relate the structures they are studying to the use of the language. Some quasi-communicative activities include: (1) Situational dialogues; (2) Open-ended dialogues; (3) Timetable, map, food list, shopping list, etc. There are two types of communicative activities:

1.1.3.1 Functional Communicative Activities:

Include such tasks as learners comparing sets of pictures and noting similarities and dissimilarities; working out a likely sequence of events in a set of pictures; discovering missing features in a map or picture; one learner communicating behind a screen to another learner and giving instructions on how to draw a picture or shape, or how to complete a map by following directions. Social interaction activities include conversation and discussion sessions, dialogues and role-play, simulations, skits, improvisations and debates. The purpose of these kinds of activities is to let the learners use the

language they have learnt to put across their ideas in oral presentations. Learners have to solve problems, seek information and make decisions about what is proper to say or to do.

1.1.3.2 Social Interaction Activities:

The main purpose of this activity is to give the learners an opportunity to use the language in an appropriate social context, to create a variety of social situations and relationships, such as having pair work, group work, having conversations, simulations and role-playing and so on and so forth.

1.1.4 Authentic Materials Are Useful to Teach Students to Communicate in English

The intention of authentic materials is to fulfill some social purpose in the language community. As a teacher, we quite often find ourselves so closely bound by the textbook that we ignore how useful other material can be. It is necessary to point out that students need exposure to lots and lots of authentic materials. Real communication in English takes place around very real materials.

Using authentic material in the classroom, even when not done in an authentic situation, provided it is appropriately exploited, is significant for many reasons, among which are:

Students are exposed to real discourse, as in videos of interviews with famous people where intermediate students listen for gist.

Authentic materials keep students informed about what is happening in the world, so they have an intrinsic educational value. As teachers, we are educators working within the school system, so education and general development are part of our responsibilities (Sanderson, 1999).

Language changes are reflected in the materials so that students and teachers can keep pace with such changes.

Reading texts are ideal to teach/practice mini-skills such as scanning, skimming. For example, students are given a news article and asked to look for specific information. The teacher can have students practice some of the micro-skills mentioned by Richards (1983), e.g. students listen to news reports and they are asked to identify the names of countries, famous people, etc. (ability to detect key words).

It is highly motivating if students are given the chance to choose the topics and kinds of authentic materials in which they are interested.

As can be seen, using authentic materials is a relatively easy and convenient way of improving not only the students' general skills, but also their confidence in a real situation. Teachers can easily find their authentic materials from newspapers, TV programs, menus, magazines, Internet, movies, songs, brochures, comics, literature (novels, poems and short stories), and so forth. The recommendation is that teachers need to choose some material, the vocabulary of which might be relevant to the students' English level. (Krashen and Terrel, 1983: 31) ***"An acquirer can move from a stage I (where I is the acquirer's level of competence) to a stage***

i+1(where i+1 is the stage immediately following i along some natural order) by understanding language containing, therefore, the materials chosen should be a little bit challenging compared with the students' English level". The authentic materials will motivate learners. It is a constructive way in applying CLT in classrooms.

1.1.5 Group Work

1.1.5.1 The advantages of group activity in communicative teaching classes

Interdependence of the members in the group: Group members will need to rely on one another to finish the assignments on time.

Individual responsibility: Members of the group will have their own responsibility for doing their share of the work.

Appropriate use of interpersonal skills: Students will gain skills in leadership, decision-making, communication, and conflict management, all abilities that will be crucial for them to master when they go out into the "real world."

1.1.5.2 Requirements for group work

Create group tasks that require interdependence. The students in a group must perceive that they are in the same boat that each member is responsible to and dependent on all the others and that one cannot succeed unless all members in the group succeed. ***Knowing that peers are relying on them is a powerful motivator for group work*** (Kohn, 1986). Strategies for promoting interdependence include specifying common rewards for the

group, encouraging students to divide up the labor, and formulating tasks that compel students to reach a consensus. (Johnson and Smith, 1991)

Make the group work relevant. Students must perceive the group tasks as integral to the course objectives, not just busy work. Some teachers believe that group work is most successful if it involved the work with making judgment on the part of the students. For example, in an engineering class, the teacher gives groups a problem to solve: Determine whether the city should purchase twenty-five or fifty buses. Each group prepares a report, and a representative from each group is randomly selected to present the group's solution to the class. The approaches used by the various groups are compared and discussed by the entire class. Then the whole class comes to a decision.

Create assignments that fit the students' skills and abilities. Early in the term, assign relatively easy tasks. As students become more knowledgeable, increase the difficulty level. For example, a teacher teaching research methods begins by having students simply recognize various research designs and sampling procedures. Later, team members generate their own research designs. At the end of the term, each team prepares a proposal for a research project and submits it to another team for evaluation. (Cooper and Associates, 1990)

Assign tasks that give every member of the group a share of the work. Try to structure the tasks so that each group member can make an equal contribution. For example, one teacher asks groups to write a report on alternative energy sources. Each member of the group is responsible for

research on one source, and then all the members work together to incorporate the individual contributions into the final report. Another teacher asks groups to prepare a "medieval newspaper." Students research aspects of life in the Middle Ages, and each student contributes one major article for the newspaper, which includes news stories, feature stories, and editorials.

Students conduct their research independently and use group meetings to share information, edit articles, proofread, and design the pages. (Smith, 1986; Tiberius, 1990)

Teachers should also set definite rules for each group with each member of the group has his certain responsibility. Teachers should fill in the progress form regularly and also make assessment during the process. Thus the students will have a sense of achievement.

As a teaching approach, communicative language teaching is gaining more and more importance in the ESL classrooms. As it is the case, many things are connected with each other, so the successful use of communicative teaching approach depends on the confidence and motivation of the students, depends on the teaching atmosphere of the classrooms, depends on the authenticity of the materials and even the cultural or educational background of the student.

Therefore, as an extension of the notional-functional syllabus, CLT places great emphasis on helping students use the target language in a variety of contexts and places great emphasis on learning language functions. Unlike the ALM, its primary focus is on helping learners create meaning rather than

helping them develop perfectly grammatical structures or acquire native-like pronunciation. This means that successfully learning a foreign language is assessed in terms of how well learners have developed their communicative competence, which can loosely be defined as their ability to apply knowledge of both formal and sociolinguistic aspects of a language with adequate proficiency to communicate.

CLT is usually characterized as a broad approach to teaching, rather than as a teaching method with a clearly defined set of classroom practices. As such, it is most often defined as a list of general principles or features. One of the most recognized of these lists is David Nunan's (1991) five features of CLT:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.

2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.

3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the Learning Management process.

4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.

5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

These five features are claimed by practitioners of CLT to show that they are very interested in the needs and desires of their learners as well as the connection between the language as it is taught in their class and as it used

outside the classroom. Under this broad umbrella definition, any teaching practice that helps students develop their communicative competence in an authentic context is deemed an acceptable and beneficial form of instruction. Thus, in the classroom CLT often takes the form of pair and group work requiring negotiation and cooperation between learners, fluency-based activities that encourage learners to develop their confidence, role-plays in which students practice and develop language functions, as well as judicious use of grammar and pronunciation focused activities. Here are some examples of classroom activities used in CLT.

- Role play
- Interviews
- Information gap
- Games
- Language exchange
- Surveys
- Pair work
- Learning by teaching

However, not all courses that utilize the communicative language approach will restrict their activities solely to these. Some courses will have the students take occasional grammar quizzes, or prepare at home using non-communicative drills, for instance.

1.2 Task-Based Language Learning

Task-based language learning (TBLL), also known as task-based language teaching (TBLT) or task-based instruction (TBI) focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to do meaningful tasks using the target language. Such tasks can include visiting a doctor, conducting an

interview, or calling customer service for help. Assessment is primarily based on task outcome (in other words the appropriate completion of tasks) rather than on accuracy of language forms. This makes TBLL especially popular for developing target language fluency and student confidence.

TBLL was popularized by N. Prabhu while working in Bangalore, India. Prabhu noticed that his students could learn language just as easily with a non-linguistic problem as when they were concentrating on linguistic questions.

According to Jane Willis, TBLL consists of the pre-task, the task cycle, and the language focus.

✓ **In practice**

The core of the lesson is, as the name suggests, the task. All parts of the language used are deemphasized during the activity itself, in order to get students to focus on the task. Although there may be several effective frameworks for creating a task-based learning lesson, here is a rather comprehensive one suggested by Jane Willis.

✓ **Pre-task**

In the pre-task, the teacher will present what will be expected of the students in the task phase. Additionally, the teacher may prime the students with key vocabulary or grammatical constructs, although, in "pure" task-based learning lessons, these will be presented as suggestions and the students would be encouraged to use what they are comfortable with in order to

complete the task. The instructor may also present a model of the task by either doing it themselves or by presenting picture, audio, or video demonstrating the task.

✓ **Task**

During the task phase, the students perform the task, typically in small groups, although this is dependent on the type of activity. And unless the teacher plays a particular role in the task, then the teacher's role is typically limited to one of an observer or counselor thus the reason for it being a more student-centered methodology.

✓ **Planning**

Having completed the task, the students prepare either a written or oral report to present to the class. The instructor takes questions and otherwise simply monitors the students.

✓ **Report**

The students then present this information to the rest of the class. Here the teacher may provide written or oral feedback, as appropriate, and the students observing may do the same.

✓ **Analysis**

Here the focus returns to the teacher who reviews what happened in the task, in regards to language. It may include language forms that the students

were using, problems that students had, and perhaps forms that need to be covered more or were not used enough.

✓ **Practice**

The practice stage may be used to cover material mentioned by the teacher in the analysis stage. It is an opportunity for the teacher to emphasize key language.

1.2.1 Task-based language learning : Advantages and Disadvantages

1.2.1.1 Advantages

Task-based learning is advantageous to the student because it is more student-centered, allows for more meaningful communication, and often provides for practical extra-linguistic skill building. Although the teacher may present language in the pre-task, the students are ultimately free to use what grammar constructs and vocabulary they want. This allows them to use all the language they know and are learning, rather than just the 'target language' of the lesson. Furthermore, as the tasks are likely to be familiar to the students (eg: visiting the doctor), students are more likely to be engaged, which may further motivate them in their language learning.

1.2.1.2 Disadvantages

There have been criticisms that task-based learning is not appropriate as the foundation of a class for beginning students. Others claim that students are only exposed to certain forms of language, and are being neglected of

others, such as discussion or debate. Teachers may want to keep these in mind when designing a task-based learning lesson plan.

CHAPTER 2

2. The Notional-Functional Syllabus

A notional-functional syllabus is more a way of organizing a language learning curriculum than a method or an approach to teaching. In a notional-functional syllabus, instruction is organized not in terms of grammatical structure as had often been done with the ALM, but in terms of "notions" and "functions." In this model, a "notion" is a particular context in which people communicate, and a "function" is a specific purpose for a speaker in a given context. As an example, the "notion" or context shopping requires numerous language functions including asking about prices or features of a product and bargaining. Similarly, the notion party would require numerous functions like introductions and greetings and discussing interests and hobbies. Proponents of the notional-functional syllabus claimed that it addressed the deficiencies they found in the ALM by helping students develop their ability to effectively communicate in a variety of real-life contexts.

2.1 How to Design a Functional-Notional Syllabus

A functional-notional syllabus is based on learning to recognize and express the communicative functions of language and the concepts and ideas it expresses. In other words, this kind of syllabus is based more on the purposes for which language is used and on the meanings the speaker wanted to express than on the forms used to express them.

2.1.1 Benefits

The benefits of a functional-notional syllabus are as follows:

- ✓ The learners learn how to use language to express authentic communicative purposes.
- ✓ Learners may be motivated by the opportunity to use language to express their own purposes, ideas and emotions

2.1.2 Warning

Here are some potential disadvantages of the functional-notional syllabus:

- ✓ Functions and notions are quite abstract and some learners may have difficulties thinking of communicative functions outside a specific context.
- ✓ Different kinds of structures are often used to express the same communicative function, so that it is difficult to follow a progression from simpler to more complex structures.

2.1.3 Steps

Follow these steps to design a functional-notional syllabus:

1. Make a list of communication functions you want to include in your syllabus.
2. Make a list of the semantic notions you want to include in your syllabus.

Since notions deal with meaning, and not the specific way that meaning is realized in a given language, it is possible to make a list of general notions

that should hold for any language. Specific notions, however, will differ from language to language, because they are based on the cultural framework and the kinds of distinctions people in each culture need to make.

3. Group the functions and notions together into sets of objectives that will form the basis for your units.

2.2 Functions

A function is a reason why we communicate. Every time we speak or write, we do so for a purpose or function. Here are some examples of functions.

- Apologizing
- Advising
- Thanking
- Greeting
- Agreeing
- Interrupting
- Clarifying
- Disagreeing
- Expressing obligation.
- Inviting
- Refusing
- Expressing preference

Functions are a way of describing language use. We can also describe language grammatically or lexically (through vocabulary).

When we describe language through functions we emphasize the use of language and its meaning for the people who are in the context where it is used.

2.2.1 Why teach functions?

By introducing students to functional language we can enable them to perform tasks, rather than simply talk about the past, present or future. Even, beginner levels can learn how to greet people, make an offer (Would it help if I....?) or make a suggestion (Why don't we....). The meaning of the functional language is clear from the context in which it is used, a context which is familiar to all language students. Presenting the language through a clear situation makes the learning experience authentic (real) and more memorable for the students. It helps capture their interest, which increases motivation and, subsequently, aids learning. Being able to ask for something in a shop, after just a short language session, can be a very rewarding experience for any student. The idea of, say, visiting London becomes less daunting if they have their own internal phrase book.

Important points to remember when teaching functional language are:

1. Remember that functional language does not appear in isolation. A request, or invitation, needs a reply. So, to equip the students for the task, these should be taught in appropriate pairs.

2. Intonation is very important in spoken English when presenting functional language. The cadence (rise and fall) and emphasis is just as important as the particular choice of words. For example, "Could I have.....your attention?" spoken in class, even though couched as a request, is a demand. "Could I have...the spaghetti?" spoken in a restaurant, would be merely a polite request. The first would have flat intonation and emphasis

on 'attention'. The second would have a rising intonation at the end on 'spaghetti'.

3. Remember the aspect of appropriacy. It is really important that the students are aware of the different situations which either call for formal English or allow for a less formal option. In a restaurant, "Can I have the beef?" is less polite and less formal than "Could I have the beef, please?"

A final point, but no less important, is the relationship between the language function and the language structure. For example;

✓ **One structure can have many different language functions.**

1. If you say anything, I will tell your parents. (Function – Threat/Warning)
2. I'll do the hoovering, if you will do the washing up. (Function – Negotiation)
3. I'll go to the shops for you. (Function – Offer)

✓ **One function (for example, giving advice) can be expressed using several different language structures.**

1. If I were you, I'd..... (2nd conditional)
2. Why don't you..... (Present tense – question – negative)
3. You should/ought..... (Modal/auxiliary verb)

Looking at the table an "exponent" is

Context	Exponent (in speech marks)	Function
A boy wants to go to the cinema with his friend tonight.	The boy says to his friend: " Let's go to the cinema tonight"	Suggesting/Making a suggestion about going to the cinema.
A girl meets some people for the first time. She wants to get to know them.	The girl says to the group: "Hello. My name is Emilia."	Introducing yourself
A customer doesn't understand what a shop assistant has just said.	The customer says to the shop assistant: "Sorry, What do you mean?	Asking for clarification; asking someone to explain something.
A girl writes a letter to a relative thanking her for a birthday present.	The girl writes "Thank you so much for my lovely....."	Thanking someone for a present

Table 1

2.2.2 Exponents

The language we use to express a function is called an exponent. The pieces of direct speech in the middle column in the table above are all examples of exponents. In the third column, the functions are underlined. The words after the function in the third column are not the function. They are the specific topics that the functions refer to in these contexts.

An exponent can express several different functions. It all depends on the context it is used in. For example, think of the exponent " I'm tired". This could be an exponent of the function of describing feelings. But who is saying it? Who is he saying it to? Where is he saying it?. What is the context which it is being said? Imagine saying " I'm so tired in these two different contexts:

Context	Function
A boy talking to his mother while he does his homework.	Requesting to stop doing homework.
A patient talking to the doctor.	Describing feelings.

Table 2

One exponent can express several different functions because its function depends on the context. One function can also be expressed through different exponents.

Here are five different exponents of inviting someone to lunch. How are they different from one another?

- ✓ Coming for lunch?
- ✓ Come for lunch with us?
- ✓ Would you like to come for lunch with us?
- ✓ Why don't you come for lunch with us?
- ✓ We would be very pleased if you could join us for lunch?

These exponents express different levels of formality, more or less ways of saying things. Generally speaking, formal (serious and careful) exponents are used in formal situations, informal (relaxed) exponents in informal situations and neutral (between formal and informal) exponents in neutral situations. It is important to use the level of formality that suits a situation. This is called appropiacy. A teacher who greets his class by saying "I'd like to wish you all a very good morning" is probably using an exponent that is too formal. A teacher who greets a class by saying "Hi guys" might be using language that is too informal. Both of these can be examples of inappropriate use of language. It would probably be appropriate for the teacher to say "Good morning, everyone" or something similar.

CHAPTER 3

3. 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 comes in the form of teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read outside of class. It gives learners the material they need to begin producing language themselves. 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.

- 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.

3.1 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 - which they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. These instructors help students learn to speak so that the students can use speaking to learn.

3.1.1 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.

3.1.2 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.

3.1.3 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.

3.2 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.

3.2.1 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.

3.2.1.1 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.

3.2.1.2 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.

3.2.2 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*.

3.2.2.1 Role plays

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.

3.2.2.2 Discussions

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.

CHAPTER 4

4. COMMUNICATIVE LESSON PLAN SAMPLES

4.1 LESSON PLAN 1

4.1.1 Getting Ready to Teach the Lesson

A. General topic of lesson

Reporting personal information

B. Goals

- **General unit goal:** Students will understand and produce spoken and written language from the context of daily life
- **Goal of this lesson:** Students will be able to fill out a personal information form and report the same information in paragraph form

C. Student learning outcomes for this lesson

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Use personal information vocabulary
- Scan for personal information
- Form sentences about personal data
- Put the sentences together to form a cohesive paragraph about themselves

D. Vocabulary and other key language to be taught in this lesson

Vocabulary related to personal information (e.g., *form, age, gender/sex, height, nationality,* and *marital status);* typical patterns for reporting personal information in sentence form.

E. Materials

Whiteboard markers, driver's license, handouts on superheroes/celebrities, personal information forms, pictures of characters (not included here), worksheet for converting data to sentences

4.2 Teaching the Lesson

Activity 1:

Warm-up (10 minutes)

- T holds up his/her driver's license and asks the class what it is, whether they have one, etc.
- T asks class to list information that is on a driver's license (for example, date of birth, height, hair color, eye color). Each student who answers is asked to write the category or an example on the board.
- T tries to elicit anything major that class has missed and provides explanation if necessary.
- T asks which students/how many have various characteristics.

- T holds up a personal information form, introducing the word *form,* noting that while many people do not like forms, they will be doing a FUN activity with them.

Activity 2:

Information gap with celebrity statistics (25 minutes)

- T tells Ss that they will read a paragraph about a famous person and fill out a personal information form for that person. T passes out a handout about a different superhero/celebrity to each group (Appendix A).
- T asks groups to read through the information together.
- T passes out blank personal information worksheets (Appendix B).
- T asks each group to work together to fill out the forms for each superhero/celebrity.
- Ss work together as T circulates around the room to monitor progress and field questions.
- While Ss are finishing up, T distributes pictures of characters to groups (not the same character of whom/which the group has a description).
- When all the groups have completed their forms, T asks for a volunteer from each group to read through the information, noting any information they could not find.

- When each student finishes reading, T asks which group has the picture of the superhero / celebrity that has been described; in this way, the superheroes' / celebrities' identities are revealed.

- T asks questions of the class, such as - *Who is the youngest? Who has black hair?* etc.

Activity 3:

Convert personal data to sentences (15 minutes)

- T tells Ss that they will practice writing complete sentences to convey their personal information to a prospective employer. T passes out worksheets for converting personal information data to sentences (Appendix C).

- T asks Ss each to write five sentences (a paragraph) using their own information to introduce themselves to an employer and directs their attention to the example at the bottom of the worksheet.

- While Ss are working on this task, T writes five sentences to a prospective employer on the board as a model, using his/her own information.

- T asks for volunteers to read their sentences.

- Homework assignment: Write a paragraph about a celebrity (5 minutes)

- Ss will find information from newspapers, magazines, television, or the Internet, about a celebrity from the US or from their country.

- Ss will write a paragraph in English to make people interested in their celebrity, using that celebrity's personal information, including job/what he/she is famous for.

4.3 LESSON PLAN 2

4.3.1 Getting ready to teach the lesson

A. General topic of lesson

Composing an email invitation

B. Goals

- **General unit goal:** Students will understand and produce spoken and written language from the context of daily life
- **Goal of this lesson:** Students will create an email account and compose an email invitation

C. Student learning outcomes for this lesson

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to

- Understand and use English email terminology
- Use email and fill in the appropriate fields
- Write a personal invitation that includes the answers to question (wh-) words

D. Vocabulary and other key language to be taught in this lesson

Vocabulary related to email (e.g., *account, email address, subject,* and *reply);* wh-words

E. Materials:

Overhead projector, computers connected to the Internet, handout on wh-words, sample (authentic) invitation card.

F. Other preparation:

- The class should meet in the computer lab.

4.4 Teaching the Lesson

Activity 1:

Warm-up (5 minutes)

- T says that many people use email every day - it is becoming so popular that personal information forms, such as those for job applications, membership registration, and even medical records, often ask for an email address.
- T asks if anyone already has an email account and, if so, how often he/she uses it; most likely, not all of the Ss will have an email account—if this is the case, the T explains that everyone will create a new one

- T explains that the goal of today's class will be, after they have created a new email account, to use some of the personal information from the last class and to write an email invitation to someone in the class.

Activity 2:

Create an email account (20 minutes)

- Using the overhead projector, T guides Ss through the steps of creating a Hotwire email account. (Hotwire is a good choice for this purpose because setting up a Hotwire account is free, fast, and easy; another popular option is Yahoo!)

- T goes around checking to see whether Ss are on the right track and making progress filling out their personal information.

- When everyone has successfully created an account, T congratulates them and asks them to write down their new email address and those of the people on their right.

Activity 3:

Introduce the use of wh-words in invitations (10 minutes)

- T explains that everyone will be writing an invitation to the student on his/her right. T asks if anyone knows what an invitation is; if no one knows, or if anyone is unsure, T demonstrates with an authentic example invitation card.

- T elicits from the class what information they think should be contained in an invitation. T writes their ideas on the board, then passes out a handout on wh-words (Appendix D). T explains that wh-words can help people remember what to put on an invitation. T goes through *wh*-words and examples of each type of information and asks if anyone has any questions.

Activity 4:

Write an email invitation (20 minutes)

- T that everyone will write an email to the person on his/her right.
- The subject of the email will be an invitation to see a movie or to do something else they like to do (e.g., go out to dinner or watch a sporting event); T explains that these are not real invitations.
- T reminds the class to use the *wh-* words, remembering to include who they are, what they want to do (which movie?), when they want to do it, and where.
- If Ss have trouble getting started, T suggests that a good way to start an invitation is *Hi, [recipient's name]. It's [sender's name]. Would you like to . . .?* and points them to the sample invitation on the *wh*-word handout.
- Ss compose emails to their neighbors while T circulates around the room, checking Ss' progress and fielding any questions.

- Once all Ss have finished, T suggests that they reply to the invitations with yes or no. If they choose to refuse the invitation, they will need to provide a reason (i.e., a *why).*

Homework assignment: ***Email the teacher (5 min)***

- Ss will email the T with an interesting fact, story, or piece of information about themselves; the email should be at least four sentences.
- T will reply before the next class.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS:

- The learning process becomes more meaningful if class activities are meaningful to students.
- Successful speaking production comes from planned input activities.
- Speaking development can be achieved if students speak more in class.
- Students learn to speak faster if they make their personal experiences part of their learning process.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Teachers need to provide students with practical exercises. As a result, students should feel challenged when performing a task.
- When planning lessons, teachers need to select the most useful and meaningful activities with the correct input so that students feel comfortable and confident when carrying out a task.
- It is time for teachers to speak less in class. When applying communicative activities, it is the students who need to speak more. Moreover, teachers become only monitors of their students' work.
- If class activities are appealing to students, they work willingly and try to do their best; therefore, teachers need to look for activities concerning real life situations.

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ELECTRONIC ARTICLES:

1. www.mindtools.com

2. www.yourdictionary.com

3. www.resolvegb.com

4. www.ambalux.com

ANNEXES

APPENDIX A

1. Who am I?

I have green skin, eyes, and hair. I am seven feet tall and weigh 1,040 pounds. My real name is Robert Bruce Banner. I am currently unemployed, but I used to work as a nuclear physicist (scientist). I was born on April 13, 1962 at Marvel Comics. If you want to contact me, you can call me on my cell at (555) FOR-HULK, or write to me, c/o Marvel Comics, at 417 5th Ave., New York, NY 10016.

2. Who am I?

I am a famous Hollywood actress originally from Coatzacoalcos, Mexico. I am 39 years old; I will be 40 on September 2. I was in the film Frida about an artist named Frida Kahlo. I have dark brown hair and eyes and am 5 feet and 2 inches tall. I weigh 115 pounds. My home telephone number is (555) YOU-WISH. You can call me anytime. Or, if you want to write me a letter, here's my address:

151 El Camino Dr.
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

3. Who am I?

I am a very popular comic book character. My real name is Peter Parker, and (when I'm not fighting crime), I work as a teacher in New York City. I was born on August 10, 1962. I am 5'10 and weigh 165 lbs. I have hazel eyes and

brown hair. My closest relative is my aunt, May Parker. My costume is blue and red. If you want to call me, my work number is (555) 4SPI-DER. If you want to write to me, here's my address at Marvel Comics:

417 5th Ave.
New York, NY 10016

4. Who am I?

I can fly. My parents tell me I am 29 years old. My height is 6 feet, 3 inches and my weight is 225 pounds. My real name is Kal-El, but people on Earth call me Clark Kent. I work as a reporter for The Daily Planet. I live at 344 Clinton St., Apt. 3-D, in Metropolis. My hair is black, and my eyes are blue. My costume is blue, red, and yellow. My Social Security number is 123-45-6789. My adoptive parents are Martha and Jonathan Kent. Their Cell Phone number is (555) Mom-NDad.

5. Who am I?

I am a famous basketball player. I play for an American team, the Houston Rockets, but I am from China. I am seven feet and five inches tall (2, 26 m), and I weigh 296 pounds (134, 3 kg) more than Shaq! My parents, the Yaos, are very tall, too; my father is 6'7" and my mother, who used to play for China's national basketball team, is 6'3". I have black hair and brown eyes. I have been playing in the NBA for a few years but I am only 25 years old. My birthday is September 12. You can email me at fanear@rocketball.com, or write to me at:

Houston Rockets

1510 Polk St.
Houston, TX 77002

APPENDIX B

PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

- Name: _____
  Last First MI Suffix (Jr., II, etc)

- Address: _____
  Street City State Zip

- Email _____ @ _____

- Home(____) _____ Work(____)_____ Cell(____) _____

- SSN___-__-____ DOB ___/___/__ Age ___
  Gender_____
  ###-##-#### mm/dd/yy M/F

- Height _____ Weight _____ Eye color _____ Hair color_____

- Employer _____

- Emergency contact (friend or relative) _____
  Name
  _____
  Address
  _____
  (Line 1)
  _____
  (Line 2)
  _____
  Phone

APPENDIX C

Make Sentences with Your Personal Information

INFORMATION	SENTENCE
Name	• My name is _____. • I am _____.
Gender (male or female)	I am (a) _____.
• Age • Country of origin	• I am ____ (years old). • I am from _____. • I was born in _____.
Job/occupation	• I work as a/an _____. • I am a/an _____.
Height	I am _____ feet (and) _____ inches tall.
Weight	• I weigh _____ pounds. • I am _____ pounds.
Hair color	• My hair (color) is _____. • I have _____ hair.
Eye color	• My eyes are _____. • I have _____ eyes.
Marital status (single, married, divorced, or widowed)	I am _____.
• Address example: 123 Main St. Durham, NC 27707 • Telephone number/email address	• I live in a house/apartment in Durham, North Carolina at 123 Main Street. My zip code is 27707. • My telephone number/email address is _____. • You can contact me at _____.

Table 3

Example: Hi! My name is Maria Nunez. I am a 38-year-old, single female from Nicaragua. I work as a bus driver in Raleigh, North Carolina, but I live in an apartment in Durham. I am 5 feet, 3 inches tall. I have black hair, and my eyes are dark brown.

APPENDIX D

Wh- Words: All the Information You Need

✓ ***Person***

Who? student, teacher, Jose, Maria, baby, Tom Cruise

✓ ***Activity***

What? movie, election, birthday party, basketball game

✓ ***Day/Time***

When? Sunday, 8:00 in the morning, tonight, 10:35 p.m.

✓ ***Place***

Where? home, school, movie theater, bank, gas station

Email address: _____

Partner's email address: _____

Sample invitation: Hi, Miguel! Would you like to go to dinner with me at Torero's on Friday at 6:30? The food is very tasty. What do you think? Please email me back.

Carlos