

Conversation in the classroom

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Motivations

- To speak a foreign language
- To join in and understand what they are going on about

Pragmatism

- Pressures on teachers to produce measurable outcomes
- So when people say this sort of thing ... we know why

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- Weaknesses in too many lessons, particularly in speaking, listening and reading ..
- Too much speaking still relied on writing ..
- .. opportunities for students to listen to and communicate in the target language were often limited by many teachers' unpreparedness to use it..

- Secondary schools should:
- broaden approaches to teaching and learning to enthuse students and increase their confidence, competence and ambition in modern languages
- consider, as a matter of urgency, the implications of recent developments in primary languages for their curriculum in Year 7 and how they build on students' prior attainment.

- What do we talk about?
- How much time do we give it? In contrast with other countries? / other skills?
- Is Talking the same as (AT2) Speaking?
- Who / Where are the models for Speaking?

Projects prioritising 'Conversation'

- The Talk Project
- Group Talk
- Several at this conference
- Programme of Study

Teachers thinking how to ..

- Structure and support a conversation (but not script it)
- Engineer spontaneity
- Encourage experimentation
- Put in the language we want them to bring out later on
- And then create the Spontaneity Moment for them to do that

- Ask questions (I have taught), offer opinions e.g. about a photo
- Is that you?
- Who is ...?
- .. on the left?
- Where is it?
- When was that?
- Have you been ..?



- Did you really have dark hair?
- What are you doing?
- How embarrassing!

What learners need to know

- Speaking is an important activity
- Speaking has an impact on other people and the situation you are in
- They are allowed to use words they have met elsewhere
- Talking involves Listening as well as Speaking
- A written script is of limited support

What learners need to know

- And we need to reinforce ...

What learners need to try

- Imitating pronunciation
- And intonation
- Seeing the link between grapheme and phoneme
- Using what they know and find around them

Speaking for effect

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGeKSiCQkPw>

Why bother with spontaneous pupil language?

“We have noted that the IRF exchange and the related pedagogical discourse mode of recitation are common in classroom interaction and present a number of advantages in terms **of control, efficiency of delivery of predetermined material**, and so on. However, we also saw how this efficiency comes at the cost of reduced student **participation**, less **expressive** language use, a loss of **contingency**, and severe limitation on the students’ employment of **initiative and self-determination**.” (Van Lier 1996, p. 184)

What is required for spontaneous pupil language to be achieved?

One learns to land in fog by landing in fog, not by landing in clear skies.

(Johnson, 1996, p.128)

Hence, for tasks such as spontaneous conversation where immediate access to knowledge is required, procedural knowledge is important.

(Johnson, 1996, p.85)

What is required for spontaneous pupil language to be achieved?

target language

+

something to talk about

“Target Language Lifestyle Position”

“someone's way of living; the things that a person or particular group of people usually do”
(Cambridge Advanced Learners dictionary).

maintained through

“Target Language Management”

“a collection of strategies and techniques to maintain the strong culture of target language use in the classroom”

plus

“Context Management”

“Target Language Lifestyle Position” (1)

T Stop! P1, tourne-toi, tourne-toi, tourne-toi vite, sinon...

T Excellent, parler en anglais. Continue! On ne va pas parler en anglais. Stop, stop, stop, stop stop! P1!, P12!. Qu'est-ce que tu fais, P1?

P1 Elle a dit “I don't give a s***”

Ps (gasp)

T P1! Sshh! P1!

P1 Elle a dit ça, elle a dit ça !

T (nods to point marker) Un point pour “elle a dit”. P, P ! Et le journal.

P6 Thingy, recorder.

T P1, sshh! P1, tu vas sortir ton journal après.

P1 **Comment dit-on** ‘play back the tape’?

(Year 11 top)

“Target Language Lifestyle Position” (2)

P3 Oh, mon deu. You see. Tu vois ça? Tu vois ça? Elle est mal polie. Trois croix pour P4. Oh mon deu. Triche, triche! Je m'en fiche, elle triche. Elle beaucoup triche.

T P3! (makes swapping gesture)

P3 Elle triche beaucoup. Elle n'y a pas polie, elle fait (gestures one finger) à moi

T P3! (gives P3 a cross)

P3 Ah non. Mon deu. Ça, c'est quoi elle fait

PF Une croix

P3 Look, look at the video!

(Year 11 top set)

Use of English: Spontaneous Translation

P6 (makes noise)

T Très rigolo. OK, alors. Une fois, c'était assez marrant, cinq fois ce n'est pas marrant

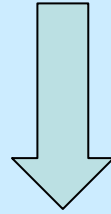
P16 Once you've done it, it's funny, five times you do it, it's not funny
(Year 11 lower)

Other uses of English:

- activities involving transfer of meaning
- asking for the TL
- “running commentary on lesson”

“tricheur/se!”; “menteur/se”; “égalité”; “changez le prof!”; “et moi!”

“un crédit pour la classe”; “deux points pour moi!”

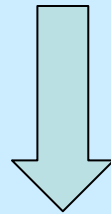


P27 Ce n'est pas juste!

T Ce n'est pas juste?

P22 Tais-toi, P27!

(Year 8)



“Je ne suis pas d'accord parce que P15 faire le prof pour, pour deuxième leçon.” (Year 11 lower)

“Non, ce n'est pas juste parce que, er, plus de les filles” (Year 10 top)

“Est-ce que tu peux promettre, promettre ne triche, ne tricher pas?”

P11 Madame, la grand-mère de P12 est quatre-vingt-sept ans.

T La grand-mère de P12 a quatre-vingt-sept ans?

P11 C'est incroyable, non?

T Oui, c'est très impressionnant

P11 Elle doit avoir un coche

Ps (laugh)

...

P3 Je n'ai pas un grand-mère

T C'est dommage, c'est triste

P12 C'est triste

...

P11 Madame, j'ai deux grands-mères. J'ai deux grands-mères. Je dois avoir deux coches

Ps (laugh)

P12 Personne âgée

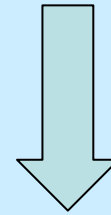
T ?? personne âgée

P3 Je déteste toi, P11

T (laughs). Deux grands-mères. Deux coches pour tes deux grands-mères

P12 Je n'aime pas les personnes âgées

P3 Cinq points pour P11!



...

T Madame (name of HoY) va me tuer si je donne deux coches pour avoir deux grands-mères

P11 Pourquoi? Qu'est-ce que le problème avec mes grands-mères?

Ps (laugh loudly)

T C'est pas tes grands-mères, c'est le problème avec madame (name of HoY)

P3 Madame (name of HoY) est une grand-mère?

T Tu vas demander à madame (name of HoY) et monsieur

P11 OK

T OK. On va continuer, même si c'est très intéressant, vos grands-mères. Ce qui est important, c'est le, les tables stables, la stabilité, la sécurité, le partage, le respect, et, c'est un peu difficile parce que ça n'existe pas trop

“Target Language Management”

1. Scaffolding in terms of Language:

- A. Teacher’s own planned target language use and planning for pupil target language use through taught routines and drilling
- B. Prompting the pupil by offering alternative responses or visual support
- C. Use of the “linguistic lifebelt” device

2. Scaffolding in terms of Affect

- A. “Assiduity” in reminders about TL use, praise and reward of TL use and sanctioning use of English
- B. As the pupil is speaking, using encouragement, through echoing, and praise
- C. Use of the “linguistic lifebelt”
- D. “Teacher Target Language Talkback”

“Context Management”

1. Creation of a “Communicative Classroom Context”
 - competition, challenge
2. Creation of “Communicative Space”
 - “co-communicator” (Littlewood 1981, p.47)

... you, you naturally do pick it up

You can start... for the first few weeks it seems a bit tough and then you will just naturally get it, so instead of spending, if you spend a lesson on it, you seem to rely on what you've learned rather than what you've picked up, if that makes sense. So, by picking it up, you've kind of got that and you can understand that and mix it around but if you're taught it, you're taught it to a certain level, if that makes sense

suddenly I picked up so much French because he made the lesson so interesting and he'd go off topic but in French so that you just, you just naturally picked it up, it was so good

And because we were just expected to know all these things, I just picked them up naturally

Um, it's kinda like a great big group of friends cos we just talk and play games and generally have a laugh. It's quite good fun really

emerging classroom L2 conversational competence

Instructional Conversation

(Tharp and Gallimore, 1991)

P2 Pourquoi devrais, ce n'est pas pourrais?

T Pourquoi c'est devrais et ce n'est pas pourrais, excellent. Erm, quelle est la différence, un point pour toi, deux points pour toi, une très bonne question.
(Year 11 top)

T Pourquoi tu veux faire le prof?

Ps Non, il est triche

T Il triche. P11, pourquoi tu veux faire le prof?
(Year 10 top)

P11 Si j'étais prof

T Oui

P11 Pas d'article
(Year 11 lesson 1 data)

P22 Mademoiselle, c'est très intelligent

T Mademoiselle? (mimes 'est')

P22 Est très intelligent

T Très intelligente. Fantastique. C'est super travail (??), P. ?? points

P16 Oui, mais moi! Oui, mais moi!

T Oui, écoutez P

P16 Oui, mais moi, c'est fantastique

T Mais moi? (mimes 'je suis')

P16 Je suis fantastique et

T Oui

P16 Pour Madame T

T Je suis fantastique pour Madame T. C'est vrai, c'est correct. Pour moi, tu es fantastique...

(Year 8)

“the classroom may be viewed as an ecological environment in which “lesson” and “conversation” are relational to each other, needing one another for ecological balance” (Bannink 2002, p.285)

“ ‘long-term view’ of language learning” (Lawes 2007, p.31)

“confident communicators” (Teacher)

- Confidence and competence

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- Too many of the students ... were ... 'rote learning' ... and (relied) on written work. Although they generally gained good results, this did not necessarily equate to competence in a language ..

- Andrew Motion – Off By Heart
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/teachers/offbyheart/video/sam_bloom_leisure.shtml
- ‘Time to stand and stare’
- Recital - Opposite of spontaneous
 - but training in confidence and competence
- Rehearsal, memorisation

Getting ready to perform

- Memorising
- Practising
- Refining
- Evaluating
- Making mistakes, improving
- Words, spelling?
- Pronunciation, flow
- Adding ideas
- **Listening to each other**
- Doing it again