

Talk in the development of academic uses of English. What is the role of teachers of ELLs?

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Good Morning!

Please sit at tables of four.

DO NOT MOVE CHAIRS,

Thanks,

Aída

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How does student oral production help language acquisition?

- It elicits feedback
- It forces syntactic processing
- It allows learners to test hypothesis
- It helps to appropriate explicit L2 knowledge
- It helps learners develop their discursal ability (the production of long turns)
- It enables learners to develop their personal voice by introducing their own topics in an interaction
- It serves as auto-input (learners pay attention to their own input)

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The role of teachers

- To construct invitations that deliberately maximize opportunities for students to actively engage in discipline-specific talk.
- To keep a keen focus on the balance among skills students possess, the demands of a task, and the supports offered: **FLOW** (Walqui and van Lier, 2010).
- To help students become aware of and reflect on how authors use language to convey their points of view or interpretive perspectives (Gibbons, 2009; Schleppegrell, 2009; Walqui and van Lier, 2010)
- To respond to students initially focusing on **fluency** and their appropriate use of the genre involved to then spiral back to issues of **accuracy** and **complexity**.

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The majority of classes are teacher-fronted

Every time we see an instance of teaching we need to ask ourselves:

Could this instance be transformed into one where all students are engaged in purposeful subject matter talk that provides them with apprenticeship into the academic uses of language, and consequently of important conceptual and academic understandings?

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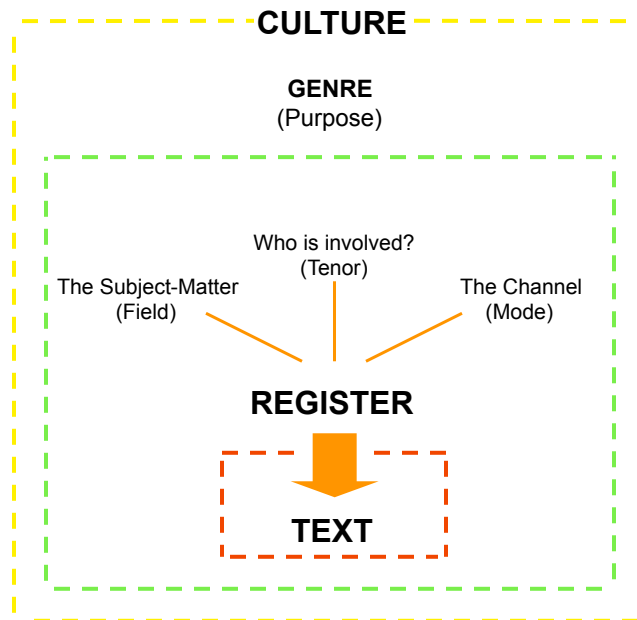
Academic uses of English

Involve constellations of features that together construct texts that are difficult for students because of:

- the *fields* of knowledge they appeal to
- the *tenor* of the interpersonal relationships they construct
- the modes in which students encounter them

These multiple variations result in academic language registers, or the linguistic variation that results according to contexts of use.

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Derewianka, 1990

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If we want students to gain appreciation of a particular genre and a critical stance toward it, we need to develop knowledge of :

- the communicative **purpose** the genre is commonly used to achieve
- the **appropriate forms** that are needed to construct and interpret text
- content (**field**), stance (**tenor**), **mode**, and **register** typical of the genre
- The contexts in which the genre is regularly found

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Genre: Definition

A staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture. They have schematic or generic structures that might include a typical beginning, middle, and end. Genres are staged, culturally purposeful activities that users of a language draw on to get things done. (Martin, 1992)



What is a task?

- A task is an activity that is carried out as the result of understanding communicative events.
- Tasks are concrete instantiations of support for student apprenticeship.
- A task usually ends in a performance and has a clear beginning and an end.
- Tasks engage students in predictable participation structures.



Tasks

Simple Tasks:

- Think-Pair-Share
- Anticipatory Guide

Complex Tasks:

- Oral Development Jigsaw

Think-Pair-Share



THINK:

- Carefully about the question
- Jot down your answers



PAIR:

- Find a partner
- Next to you or long distance



SHARE:

- Your answers orally
- Be ready to present both answers



Anticipatory Guide

Read the following statements and decide whether you agree with them or not

	Agree	Disagree
1. Some people do not feel guilt, that is, they do not feel bad when they do something wrong.	✓	
2. Keeping secrets can hurt you because it is not good to keep things inside.		✓
3. There is no such thing as fate, in other words, we CAN change our destiny.		
4. Committing one crime leads to committing more crimes.		
5. Ambition is a positive trait or characteristic.		

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The Oral Development Jigsaw Teacher scaffolds the process. Review of the genre: Description

- **Discussion of purpose:** why do people describe scenes to others?
- **Structure:**
 - Where does the scene take place?
 - Who is the central character(s) in the picture?
 - What does this person look like (approximate age, gender, height, face, hair, clothes)?
 - What is this person doing?
 - Any other relevant information?

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Preferred language: Teacher offers models of language that students may use:

This scene takes place in ...

My picture shows ...

The picture I have shows a ...

The central character in my picture is

In my picture you can see a ...

Jigsaw Project

BASE GROUP

Students work in heterogeneous groups and review the genre of description



EXPERT GROUP



Students describe their pictures following guidelines and models

Jigsaw Project

BASE GROUP

Students work in heterogeneous groups and review the genre of description: purpose, structure, linguistic characteristics

EXPERT GROUP

Picture A

Picture B

Picture C

Picture D

BASE GROUP

A B C D A B C D A B C D A B C D

Students share their descriptions. Then discuss the genre of narrative to create one



Text organization of narratives: Orientation

Narratives usually begin with an **orientation** where the writer attempts to sketch in or create the “possible world” of the particular story.

The reader is introduced to the main character(s) and possibly some minor characters. Some indication is generally given of **where** the action is located and **when** it is taking place. An “atmosphere” is usually established and there is often some foreshadowing of the action to follow, drawing readers into the story and making them want to become involved. The **orientation** may be brief or it may extend for several pages. Details included are those which will enhance the later development of the story (personalities, type of situation, relationships).



Text organization of narratives: Complication

The story is pushed along by a series of events, during which some complication or problem arises

This complication involves the main characters and often serves to (temporarily) thwart them from reaching their goals

Narratives tend to mirror the complications we face in life and tend to reassure us that they are resolvable

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Text organization of narratives: Resolution

The complication may be resolved for better or for worse, but it is rarely left completely unresolved

There may be a major complication in the narrative which is not resolved until the end, with a number of minor complications along the way, which might be resolved in part or whole as they arise or later in the story. These are usually related to the major complication and serve to sustain the interest and suspense, leading to a crisis or climax

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Narratives: Language Features

Many **linking words** to do with time: first, after that, suddenly, while, finally...

Dialogue often included, during which the tense may change to the present or future

Descriptive language chosen to enhance and develop the story by creating images in the reader's mind

Can be written in the first person (I, we) or third person (he, she, they)

The Oral Development Jigsaw in Roza Ng's Class

Discussion of the purpose and generic structure of descriptions

Students jointly create a description

Individually students share oral descriptions with new groups

Discussion of the purpose and generic structure of narratives

Collaboratively students construct an oral narrative

Students jointly write their narrative

Narratives are performed

Independent written narrative





Video Exemplar

Teacher: Roza Ng

School: MS 131, Chinatown, NYC

Class: Intermediate ESL

Students: Between 6 months and 2 ½ years in the U.S.



Assessing the difficulty of a task

adapted from: Brown, Anderson, Shillcock, and Yule. 1984. Teaching Talk. Strategies for Production and Assessment. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Degree of difficulty



Static task

Dynamic task

Abstract task

Task A →

Task B →

Task C

Description of one scene

Description of 4 different scenes

Construction of a narrative

Degree of difficulty ↑

Many elements, relationships, characters, etc.
(more difficult)

Few elements, relationships, etc.
(less difficult)



What to focus corrective feedback on? Three major domains in oral production (Skehan, 1998) :

- Fluency
- Complexity
- Accuracy

Because second language learners have limited processing capability, when they are engaged in activity, they cannot attend to all aspects simultaneously, so they prioritize and derive differential results from their choices. In particular there is tension between complexity and accuracy.



Fluency

Fluency is the extent to which the language produced in performing a task manifests pausing, hesitation, or reformulation

Measures of fluency:

- Number of syllables per minute
- Number of pauses of one-two seconds or more
- Number of repetitions
- Number of false starts
- Number of reformulations
- Length of run (number of words per unit bounded by pauses)



Complexity

Complexity refers to the extent to which the language produced by learners when performing a task is elaborate and varied. It is measured by:

- Lexical richness (for example, number of word families used, percentage of lexical per structural words, type-token ratio)
- Amount of subordination



Type-Token Ratio

The ratio of the number of different words, called types, to the total number of words, called tokens.

For example, in a text the number of different words may be 1,000; the total number of words 5,000. The type-token ratio is $1/5$ or 0.2

A ratio of .5 indicates frequent repetition of words. A ratio of 1 indicates no repetition of words.



Accuracy

Accuracy is defined by the extent to which the language produced in performing a task conforms with target language norms

Indicators of accuracy include:

- Percentage of error-free clauses
- Target-like use of verb tenses
- Target-like use of articles
- Target-like use of prepositions



What kind of language production do different tasks promote?

There are big differences between planned (when students have time to think about what they will say) and unplanned oral production (when they have to respond on line).

Which moments in the oral development jigsaw you just saw are more planned, and which more unplanned?



Academic Uses of English Development Continuum

This development should be tracked over a unit of work that takes place over several classes.



Gibbons, (2009); Walqui & van Lier, (2010)



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