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**The Communicative Language Teaching approach
in teaching English conversation.
Theoretical background and practice**

**Podejście komunikacyjne w nauczaniu konwersacji
w języku angielskim. Teoria i praktyka**

Abstract

The main goal of this paper is to indicate the significance of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in teaching English conversation. The first issue presented in this article is to explain the essence of conversation. Afterward, there is a demonstration of major distinctive features assigned to the CLT approach, functions of language and four categories of communicative competence. The following point is dedicated to learner's and teacher's roles determined by the CLT approach and a brief mention concerning three types of materials which enhance communicative capacity. Furthermore, there is a presentation and description of principles used for designing techniques including a checklist of microskills. On top of that, various categories and types of oral production are put forward. The last part of the article contains examples of exercises.

Key words: *conversation, CLT, functions of language, materials, techniques, microskills, categories and types of oral production.*

Abstrakt

Głównym celem tego artykułu jest wskazanie znaczenia podejścia komunikacyjnego CLT w nauczaniu konwersacji w języku angielskim. Pierwszą kwestią przedstawioną w tym artykule jest wyjaśnienie pojęcia konwersacji oraz ukazanie jej kwintesencji. Następnie zaprezentowano główne założenia przypisane podejściu komunikacyjnemu CLT, funkcje językowe i cztery kategorie kompetencji komunikacyjnej. Kolejny punkt stanowi opis ról przypisanych uczniom i nauczycielom w obrębie podejścia komunikacyjnego CLT oraz krótka wzmianka o trzech rodzajach materiałów, które zwiększają zdolności komunikacyjne. Ponadto, zaprezentowano i opisano zasady stosowane w projektowaniu technik, w tym listę mikro umiejętności. W dalszej części artykułu zaproponowane zostały różne kategorie i rodzaje aktywności werbalnej. Ostatnia część artykułu zawiera przykłady ćwiczeń.

Słowa kluczowe: *konwersacja, CLT, funkcje językowe, materiały, techniki, mikro umiejętności, kategorie i rodzaje aktywności werbalnej.*

Introduction

Conversation is commonly recognized as any spoken exchange of thoughts and ideas, pieces of information or feelings, which involves at least two interlocutors. In other words, this the moment when participants in a conversation can talk, listen to each other, share speaking time, react, respond or attend to each other. Naturally, conversation dies when these components are neglected. Therefore, simultaneous talking without any interruptions performed by two or more partakers ends in chaos. Then, there is no chance for coherent, comprehensible, audible and clear flow of information. And yet, the “purposes of conversation include the creation and maintenance of social relationships such as friendship; the negotiation of status and social roles, as well as deciding and carrying out joint actions”. (Nolasco, Arthur, 1987, p. 5) To obtain these goals Nolasco and Arthur (Nolasco, Arthur, 1987, p. 7) suggest implementation of the following rules of conversation:

1. One person should speak at a time.
2. The speakers should change.
3. The length of any contribution should be varied.
4. Techniques that allow the other party or parties to speak should be implemented.
5. The content or the amount of what you want to say should not be specified in advance.

It may be clearly affirmed that by acting in accordance with the mentioned rules, interlocutors smoothly cooperate during the course of conversation.

Moreover, Grice (Nolasco, Arthur, 1987, p. 7) describes four maxims which support development of cooperative behaviour. The first is called *the maxim of quality*, which states that what is said must be true and should be supported by an adequate piece of evidence. The second is *the maxim of quantity* where speaker's contribution should be as informative as required. The third is *the maxim of relation* which suggests relevant and timely contribution. Finally, the fourth principle is called *the maxim of manner* which articulates avoidance of obscurity and ambiguity.

Apart from the four maxims described above, there should be at least a short mention included about how language is used in social contexts. In this case the best example might be two-part exchange called *adjacency pairs*, which are considered the smallest chunks of conversation. This stimulus-response move consists of two utterances produced by two speakers where the second sentence is related to the first one. Adjacent exchanges may express the following content: question-answer, complaint-denial, offer-acceptance, compliment-rejection or greeting-greeting.

Besides, social context also refers to male and female differences in conversation. Nolasco and Arthur (Nolasco, Arthur, 1987, p. 11) claim that women display more interest in personal matters and they are better listeners. Moreover, women appear to be more helpful to the person they are speaking in developing a topic by asking additional questions and making encouraging remarks. Regarding men, they are more reluctant to reveal personal information and prefer to talk about more general, outside matters, e.g. politics, cars, hobbies or sport.

Naturally, the most significant issue present in the process of teaching English conversation is the communicative approach called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). It defines learner's and teacher's roles, materials used in communicative language teaching, principles for designing speaking techniques, types of communicative activities as well as examples of exercises.

Communicative Language Teaching

As it has already been mentioned, the communicative approach (CLT) aids development of communicative competence. Finocchiaro and Brumfit (Richards, Rodgers, 2001, pp. 156-157) enumerate a number of major distinctive features of Communicative Language Teaching, and these are:

1. Meaning is paramount.
2. Dialogues, if used, center around communicative functions and are not memorized.
3. Contextualization is a basic premise.
4. Language learning is learning to communicate.
5. Effective communication is sought.
6. Drilling may occur, but peripherally.
7. Comprehensible pronunciation is sought.
8. Any device that helps the learners is accepted – varying according to their age, interest, etc.
9. Attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning.
10. Judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible.
11. Translation may be used where students need or benefit from it.
12. Reading and writing can start from the first day, if desired.
13. The target linguistic system will be learned best through the process of struggling to communicate.
14. Communicative competence is the desired goal (i.e., the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately).
15. Linguistic variation is a central concept in materials and methodology.
16. Sequencing is determined by any consideration of content, function, or meaning that maintains interest.
17. Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language.
18. Language is created by the individual, often through trial and error.
19. Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: Accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.
20. Students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in their writings.
21. The teacher cannot know exactly what language the students will use.
22. Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated by the language.

Another linguist, Halliday (Richards, Rodgers, 2001, p. 160) being in favour of the CLT approach, demonstrates seven basic functions of language:

1. *Instrumental*, where language is used to express people's needs or to get things done.
2. *Regulatory*, where language is used to control others' behaviour, to tell them what to do.
3. *Interactional*, where language is used to interact and form relationship with others.

4. *Personal*, where language is used to express personal opinions or feelings.
5. *Heuristic*, where language is used as a tool to discover, gain knowledge about the world.
6. *Imaginative*, where language is used to create imaginary world.
7. *Representational*, where language is used to communicate information.

Canale and Swain (Richards, Rodgers, 2001, p. 160), after carrying out the analysis of communicative competence, have distinguished four dimensions: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. *Grammatical competence* is called linguistic competence and refers to grammatical and lexical capability. *Sociolinguistic competence*, as the name suggests, covers social context in which conversation takes place, relationships, shared information, and the purpose for the interaction. *Discourse competence*, where individual elements of a message are interpreted in terms of their interrelation and the way meaning is displayed in terms of the entire discourse. *Strategic competence* refers to conversational strategies which help interlocutors to accomplish oral communicative purposes. Brown (Richards, Rodgers, 2001, p. 276) suggests the use of the following:

- a) asking for clarification (*What?*)
- b) asking someone to repeat something (*Huh? Excuse me?*)
- c) using filters (*Uh, I mean, Well*) in order to gain time to process
- d) using conversation maintenance cues (*Uh huh, Right, Yeah, Okay, Hm*)
- e) getting someone's attention (*Hey, Say, So*)
- f) using paraphrases for structures one can't produce
- g) appealing for assistance from the interlocutor (to get a word or phrase, for example)
- h) using formulaic expressions (at the survival stage) (*How much does _____ cost?, How do you get to the _____?*)
- i) using mime and nonverbal expressions to convey meaning.

Furthermore, Harmer (Harmer, 2007, p. 344) adds the so called all-purpose phrase, which helps speakers to get round the problem if they do not know the exact word (*You know, it's a what-d'you-call-it*). Basturkmen (Harmer, 2007, p. 344) introduces multifunctional question forms, which serve both as suggestion and criticism (*Did you consider the possibility of an alliance with other organisations?*) and the piling-up of questions, which are an inseparable series of questions (*How much technology?, Who does it?, Is it the suppliers?*). Finally, Dörnyei and Thurrell (Harmer, 2007, p. 344) offer conversational openings (*How are you?*), interrupting (*Sorry to inter-*

rupt, but _____), topic shift (Oh, by the way, that reminds me _____) and closings (It's been nice talking to you _____).

Learner's and teacher's roles in CLT

The next issue discussed in the article refers to learner's roles within the CLT approach, which Breen and Candlin (Richards, Rogers, 2001, p. 166) depict in the following way: "the role of learner as negotiator – between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning – emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes. The implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way." Naturally, such cooperative mode where learners themselves are responsible for conducting an interaction without teacher's continuous supervision may be unfamiliar. Consequently, they may encounter certain difficulties which would result in loss of confidence and self-assurance. Therefore, this is the teacher who should gradually prepare learners to become more independent of him. Littlewood (Littlewood, 1981, p. 18) recommends certain solutions. One of them is introduction of undirected activity in small doses and observation of how a group of students responds. Another way is to explain, give clear instructions and demonstrate an activity to learners. Naturally, he must make sure that students understand what they are required to do. The third indication is to provide a group with language forms needed for accomplishing a task.

In Communicative Language Teaching, there are also several roles assigned for teachers. Breen and Candlin (Richards, Rogers, 2001, p. 167) state that "the teacher has two main roles: the first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. The latter role is closely related to the objectives of the first role and arises from it. These roles imply a set of secondary roles for the teacher: first, as an organizer of resources and as a resource himself, second as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities. ...A third role for the teacher is that of researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organizational capacities." Other roles assigned for teachers are a *needs analyst*, a counselor, and a group process manager. A needs analyst, is the role where the teacher responds to student language expectations. He

may talk individually with each learner through one-to-one session and gain information concerning preferred styles, strategies, and goals. The other possibility is to prepare a needs assessment instrument in the form of statements like: *I want to study English because it will be easier to get a job; I want to study English because it will allow me to converse with native speakers* and students' task is to reply on a 5-point scale *I strongly agree to I strongly disagree*. Another role assigned in CLT is that of a *counselor*, who helps students to correlate speaker's intention with listener's interpretation through the use of paraphrasing, confirmation, and feedback. The last role is called a *group process manager*. In this case the teacher organizes the classroom as a communication environment and prepares communicative activities. Besides, he monitors, supports and encourages students during an activity and afterwards, he assists them in self-correction discussions. (Richards, Rogers, 2001, pp. 167-168)

Materials supporting CLT

As for materials that support CLT and thus promote communicative language use, Richards and Rogers (Richards, Rodgers, 2001, p. 169) distinguish three types and define these text-based, task-based, and realia. *Text-based* materials refer to various texts present in coursebooks which aim at enhancing communicative capacity. They are in the form of exemplary patterns of dialogues and isolated sentences, drills, visual cues, pictures or sentence fragments which are used to initiate conversation. *Task-based* materials obviously apply to classroom speaking activities among which role-plays, simulations, games, acting from a script, discussions or questionnaires can be mentioned. The third type is called *realia*, which suggests the use of authentic, real-life materials in the classroom. "These might include language-based realia, such as signs, magazines, advertisements, and newspapers, or graphic and visual sources around which communicative activities can be built, such as maps, pictures, symbols, graphs, and charts". (Richards, Rogers, 2001, p. 170)

Principles for designing speaking techniques

Before designing speaking techniques, teachers should take certain factors into consideration like types of learners they work with, their interests, styles, needs and goals. For this reason, Brown (Brown, 2001, p. 275-276) sets a number of principles which are helpful in this matter. Accordingly, teachers should:

- a) use techniques that cover the spectrum of learners needs, from language-based focus on accuracy to message-based focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency,
- b) provide intrinsically motivating techniques,
- c) encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts,
- d) provide appropriate feedback and correction,
- e) capitalize on the natural link between speaking and listening,
- f) give students opportunities to initiate oral communication,
- g) encourage the development of speaking strategies.

Another issue that should be mentioned in this part of the article is a checklist of microskills which appear to be very helpful in the choice of appropriate techniques. Additionally, they help teachers to focus on clearly specified objectives and can be treated as testing criteria at the evaluation stage of oral communication. According to Brown (2001, p. 271), such a list allows students to focus on both forms and functions of language. In his opinion, “in teaching oral communication, we don’t limit students’ attention to the whole picture, even though that whole picture is important. We also help students to see the pieces – right down to the small parts – of language that make up the whole.” The list of microskills is presented below (Brown, 2001, p. 272):

Table 1: Microskills of oral communication

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce chunks of language of different lengths. 2. Orally produce differences among the English phonemes and allophonic variants. 3. Produce English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythmic structure, and intonational contours. 4. Produce reduced forms of words and phrases. 5. Use an adequate number of lexical units (words) in order to accomplish pragmatic purposes. 6. Produce fluent speech at different rates of delivery. 7. Monitor your own oral production and use various strategic devices – pauses, fillers, self-correctness, backtracking – to enhance the clarity of the message. 8. Use grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralisation), word order, patterns, rules, and elliptical forms. 9. Produce speech in natural constituents – in appropriate phrases, pause groups, breath groups, and sentences. 10. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.

11. Use cohesive devices in spoken discourse.
12. Accomplish appropriately communicative functions according to situations, participants, and goals.
13. Use appropriate registers, implicature, pragmatic conventions, and other sociolinguistic features in face-to-face conversations.
14. Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
15. Use facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language to convey meanings.
16. Develop and use a battery of speaking strategies, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, providing a context for interpreting the meaning of words, appealing for help, and accurately assessing how well your interlocutor is understanding you.

Lewis and Hill (Lewis, Hill 2002, pp. 118-121) present recommendations on how to proceed in the matter of teaching English conversation. According to them, planned conversations usually fail due to the choice of topics which may be too general on the one hand and too specific on the other. Therefore, Lewis and Hill suggest introduction of short and spontaneous oral interactions. This assertion is supported by the fact that out-of-class conversation often proceeds likewise. Hence, it should arise naturally and automatically from the text, the example or any situation that happens in the classroom or outside it. Another guidance is closely referred to the appropriate choice of topic. Most of all, it cannot be the one that fascinates the teacher only, primarily because these are the students who are in the center of attention and these are *they* who must be given a chance to talk about subjects that correlate with *their* interests. Otherwise, if the teacher insists on responding to some tedious issues he may be perceived as a bore. The next point says that teachers should encourage students' contribution without too much interference. "Encouragement can take the form of a general question, an enquiring look, a smile, and, perhaps most importantly of all, a pause during which students have time to formulate their thoughts and to decide what they wish to say, and how they wish to say it". (Lewis, Hill, 2002, p. 119) Also, the authors claim that conversation does not need to be about serious matters. And even if many textbook writers incorporate such topic areas thinking that these reflect interests of their readers, teachers should make prudent choices for they know it is easier to get response from students to less serious issues. The reason for not overloading students with serious matters is the fact that they are exposed to "one of the most difficult *total* skills of language use – the ability to combine the accurate expression of ideas with

its presentation in a social situation. Students are inhibited by lack of language, or they are unwilling to express their views on a subject about which they may not actually care". (Lewis, Hill, 2002, p. 119) Besides, students are better stimulated to produce language when they have to reply to provocative statements rather than answering questions. The question: *Do you think boys and girls should go to the same schools?* and the statement: *I think it's better for boys and girls to be in different classes* exemplify this assumption. Naturally, there are little chances to develop any discussion when a question is formulated. The only response the teacher can get is *yes* or *no* answer, whereas in the case of statement students become more willing to exchange their opinions and attitudes. Then, it leads to at least a short but still a spontaneous language production. Since conversation consists of the exchange of information, the implementation of problem solving activities is thoroughly justified. They are based on information gaps which prompt students to talk and use necessary information gathered both from lessons and from their own experience outside the language learning classroom. Lewis and Hill (Lewis, Hill 2002, p. 121) conclude as follows: "...the extraordinary thing is that students spontaneously respond to each other's opinions and ideas. Such responses are not, however, accidental – they are based on the fact that students bring into the classroom knowledge which they can use. They do not feel at risk in discussing a problem; it is within their linguistic capability; different people can, legitimately, have different opinions; people care enough to 'correct' others' opinions, but not *enough* to feel inhibited by the topic."

Types of activities

Two major categories of activities in Communicative Language Teaching are distinguished by Littlewood. He introduces *functional communication activities* and *social interaction activities*. The first category includes activities where students "are not required to attempt to choose language which is appropriate to any particular situation. It may not even matter whether the language they use is grammatically accurate. The main purpose of the activity is that learners should use the language they know in order to get meanings across as effectively as possible. Success is measured primarily according to whether they cope with the communicative demands of the immediate situation". (Littlewood, 1981, p. 20) This category is represented by tasks such as:

- a) identifying pictures,
- b) discovering activities (e.g., identical pairs, sequences or locations, missing information or missing features, 'secrets', differences or similarities),

- c) communicating patterns, pictures, models,
- d) following directions,
- e) reconstructing story-sequences (a picture-strip story without dialogues),
- f) pooling information to solve a problem. (Littlewood, 1981, pp. 23-27, 31-35)

As for the second category, students are required to use language which is not only functionally effective but also it is appropriately used in a particular social context. Littlewood (Littlewood, 1981, pp. 46-64) suggests implementation of more complex and thus linguistically demanding activities. These are conversation or discussion sessions, dialogues and role-plays, simulations, improvisations, and debates.

Moreover, Brown (Brown, 2001, pp. 134-135) displays three main categories of language-teaching techniques and these are: controlled, semi-controlled, and free:

Table 2: Taxonomy of language-teaching techniques (oral production)

<p>Controlled Techniques</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Warm-up</i>: This activity gets the students stimulated, relaxed, motivated, attentive, or otherwise engaged and ready for the lesson. 2. <i>Role-play demonstration</i>: Selected students or teacher illustrate the procedure(s) to be applied in the lesson segment to follow. Includes brief illustration of language or other content to be incorporated. 3. <i>Dialogue/Narrative recitation</i>: Reciting a previously know or prepared text, either in unison or individually. 4. <i>Question-answer, display</i>: Activity involving prompting of student responses by means of display questions. 5. <i>Drill</i>: Typical language activity involving fixed patterns of teacher prompting and student responding, usually with repetition, substitution, and other mechanical alterations. Typically with little meaning attached. 6. <i>Identification</i>: Student picking out and producing/ labeling or otherwise identifying a specific target form, function, definition, or other lesson-related item. 7. <i>Meaningful drill</i>: Drill activity involving responses with meaningful choices, as in reference to different information. <p>Semi controlled Techniques</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Brainstorming</i>: A special form of preparation for the lesson, like Setting, which involves free, undirected contributions by the students and teacher on a given topic, to generate multiple associations without linking them; no explicit analysis or interpretation by the teacher.

2. *Story telling (especially when student-generated)*: Not necessarily lesson-based, a lengthy presentation of story by teacher or student.
3. *Question-answer, referential*: Activity involving prompting of responses by means of referential questions.
4. *Cued narrative/Dialogue*: Student production of narrative or dialogue following cues from miming, cue cards, pictures, or other stimuli related to narrative/dialogue.
5. *Information exchange*: Task involving two-way communication as in information gap exercises, when one or both parties (or a larger group) must share information to achieve some goal.
6. *Wrap-up*: Brief teacher- or student-produced summary of point and/ or items that have been practiced or learned.
7. *Narration/exposition*: Presentation of a story or explanation derived from prior stimuli.
8. *Preparation*: Student study, silent reading, pair planning and rehearsing, preparing for later activity. Usually a student-directed or -oriented project.

Free Techniques

1. *Role-play*: Relatively free acting out of specified roles and functions.
2. *Games*: Various kinds of language game activity.
3. *Report*: Report of student-prepared exposition of books, experiences, project work, without immediate stimulus, and elaborated on according to students interests.
4. *Problem solving*: Activity involving specified problem and limitations of means to resolve it; requires cooperation on part of participants in small or large group.
5. *Drama*: Planned dramatic rendition of play, skit, story, etc.
6. *Simulation*: Activity involving complex interaction between groups and individuals based on simulation of real-life actions and experiences.
7. *Interview*: A student is directed to get information from another student or students.
8. *Discussion*: Debate or other form of grouped discussion of specified topic, with or without specified sides/positions prearranged.
9. *A propos*: Conversation or other socially oriented interaction/speech by teacher, students, or even visitors, on general real-life topics. Typically authentic and genuine.

Apart from categorization of techniques, Brown (Brown, 2001, pp. 271-274) additionally introduces six types of oral production. The first of them is called *imitative* and its purpose is to practice some particular elements of language forms like a certain vowel sound, intonation or strings of discourse. Drills, which give an opportunity for repetition in a controlled manner, are

a good example. This type of exercise is considered effective when:

- a) it is short,
- b) it is simple,
- c) it is 'snappy',
- d) its use is justified,
- e) it is limited to phonology or grammar points,
- f) it thoroughly leads to communication,
- g) it is not overused.

The second type of oral production that goes beyond the imitative one is labeled *intensive*. It includes any speaking performance designed for practicing different aspects of language and it can be self-initiated or can form a part of pair work activities. Another type, known as *responsive*, refers to short replies to teacher- or student-initiated questions. Even though such speech is authentic and meaningful, it does not extend into dialogues, for instance: *How are you today? Pretty good, thanks, and you?* The more extended form of a responsive type and thus, taking the structure of a conversation is called *transactional*. It includes a form of negotiation where the transmission of facts and information is essential. Moreover, it can be a part of group work activity. The other form of conversation is interpersonal dialogue which aims at maintaining social relationships. This type of oral production may be more intricate for students because it includes additional factors which are constituent parts of interpersonal dialogues. These are:

- a) casual register,
- b) colloquial language,
- c) emotionally charged language,
- d) slang,
- e) ellipsis,
- f) sarcasm,
- g) covert 'agenda'.

And, the last type is referred to as *extensive* where students are asked to perform monologues "in the form of oral reports, summaries, or perhaps short speeches. Here the register is more formal and deliberative. These monologues can be planned or impromptu". (Brown, 2001, p. 274)

Summary

On the basis of the above elaborations, it may be clearly stated that Communicative Language Teaching has a rich theoretical base. Supported by a number of distinctive features, it becomes fundamental in developing

oral production. Even though the main goal of this approach is to acquire fluent, authentic and meaningful exchange of information, it also proves that communication is not only about speaking. It combines other skills which need to be simultaneously developed. What is more, the CLT approach assumes that students need to be given a context so that they know what language to use to reflect a given situation. Additionally, it suggests that learners should be acquainted with the purpose of conversation in order to create clear messages that are easily comprehended by other partakers. Thus, to make them competent interlocutors in oral production, teachers have a wide variety of conversational strategies, materials, techniques and activities supporting assumptions of CLT approach at their disposal.

Exemplary exercises:

I. Identity cards

<i>Aims</i>	<p><i>Skills</i> – speaking (writing)</p> <p><i>Language</i> – questions about personal data</p> <p><i>Other</i> – introducing someone else to the group, getting to know each other</p>
<i>Level</i>	Intermediate
<i>Organisation</i>	Pairs
<i>Preparation</i>	As many identity cards as there are students
<i>Time</i>	10-30 minutes
<i>Procedure</i>	<p><i>Step 1:</i> The students are grouped in pairs and each of them receives a blank identity card.</p> <p><i>Step 2:</i> The two students in each pair now interview each other in order to fill in the blanks on the identity card.</p> <p><i>Step 3:</i> Each student introduces his partner to the class using the identity card as a memory aid.</p>
<i>Variations</i>	<p><i>1:</i> The paired interviews can be conducted without identity cards. Each student must find out those things from his partner which he thinks are important or interesting.</p> <p><i>2:</i> The task 'Find out five things about your partner that one could not learn just by looking' can be given before the interview starts.</p> <p><i>3:</i> Each student draws a portrait on the identity card. All the cards are exhibited on the classroom wall.</p> <p><i>4:</i> If these interviews are done at the beginning of a course or seminar a question about individual expectations can be added.</p>

5: With a very simple identity card this activity is suitable for beginners as well. An appropriate card might look like this.

Example:

name:	three things I like:
family:	
hobbies:	three things I don't like:
something I'd like to do:	

Example 1: Warm-up exercise (Klippel, 1985, p. 16).

II. 'Cued dialogue'

Partner A

You meet B in the street.

A: Greet B.

B:

A: Ask B where he is going.

B:

A: Suggest somewhere to go together.

B:

A: Accept B's suggestion.

B:

Partner B

You meet A in the street.

A:

B: Greet A.

A:

B: Say you are going for a walk.

A:

B: Reject A's suggestion. Make a different suggestion.

A:

B: Express pleasure.

Example 2: A 'cued dialogue' exercise. (Littlewood, 1981, p. 14)

III. Rescue

Aims

Skills – speaking

Language – stating an opinion, giving and asking for reasons, agreeing and disagreeing, comparisons

Other – thinking about one's values

Level

Intermediate/ advanced

Organisation

Groups of five to eight students

Preparation

None

Time

10-20 minutes

Procedure

Step 1: The teacher explains the situation: 'The Earth is doomed. All life is going to perish in two days due to radiation. A spaceship from another solar system lands and

offers to rescue twelve people, who could start a new world on an empty planet very much like Earth. Imagine you are the selection committee and you have to decide who may be rescued. Think of a list of criteria which you would use in your decision.'

Step 2: Each group discusses the problem and tries to work out a list.

Step 3: Each group presents its list of criteria to the class. The lists are discussed.

Variations The task can be made more specific, e.g. 'Find ten criteria.' You can award up to 100 points if a candidate gets full marks on all accounts, e.g. appearance 5, intelligence 30, fertility 15, physical fitness 20, etc.

Remarks Although the basic problem is rather depressing one, it helps students to clarify their own values as regards judging others.

Example 3: Problem solving exercise. (Klippel, 1985, p. 104)

IV. The expert

A student plays the role of 'expert' and talks to the rest of the class on a subject he or she knows something about.

<i>Level</i>	Intermediate upwards
<i>Time</i>	20 minutes
<i>Aim</i>	To channel students' own experience into a more structured and demanding activity than simple conversation.
<i>Language</i>	Various, according to the topic chosen. For example, a sport topic, such as wind-surfing, would involve describing the activity, whereas a political topic, such as the probable result of an election, would involve making hypotheses.
<i>Organization</i>	The whole class, or groups of about twelve.
<i>Preparation</i>	None
<i>Warm-up</i>	Elicit answers to the following questions from the whole class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What is an 'expert'?</i> - <i>How do you become an 'expert'?</i> - <i>What do 'international experts' from the United Nations or from UNESCO do?</i>

- Procedure*
- 1: In a very large class, make sub-groups of twelve students or so. Otherwise, ask the class to form a circle round a volunteer 'expert'.
- 2: Tell the rest of the class that they are journalists, and they are asking the expert questions for an article for their newspapers. After a few general questions the students should be encouraged to make them more detailed. An example might be:
An expert on the health of top class athletes might be asked the following questions:
- How do top class athletes stay fit?
 - What are the long-term health risks in different sports?
 - Can you describe the medical check-ups made on athletes for the three month period before an important event, such as the Olympics?
 - What are the drugs that top class athletes take, and what exactly are the effects on their bodies?
- 3: Stop the interview after a previously fixed time limit.
- 4: If you think it desirable, re-run the activity with another volunteer 'expert' on a different topic.
- Remark*
- The 'experts' can prepare their topics for homework. The journalists should decide what kind of paper they work for, e.g. left-wing, or right-wing, a quality or popular newspaper. This will influence the type of questions they ask.
- Follow-up*
- Present the class with different newspaper articles on the same theme and discuss the difference in style. Then ask the students to write up the expert's answers in the form of a newspaper article for the type of paper they had chosen. Blu-Tack the reports to the wall, and ask the students to identify the styles, and types of newspapers. If necessary, correct errors in style.

Example 4: Role-play exercise. (Ladousse, 1987, pp. 119-120)

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