Chapter 2

Authenticity in Oral Communication of Instructed L2 Learners

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Introduction

Speaking is widely considered to be the principal *skill* that stands for an overall knowledge of a foreign language. However, because of its transitory and thus elusive nature, it is challenging to both analyze the process of speaking itself and to observe the skill development in L2, not to mention its learning and teaching. In addition, the multiplicity of current theoretical approaches exacerbates such problems. Even though a clear-cut and comprehensive demarcation of these issues seems extremely difficult and even risky in such a short chapter, yet, such an attempt to formulate an integrative and didactically motivated view of the problems need to be undertaken. The concept of individual communicative competence (ICC), discussed later in the chapter, proposes a person-oriented view of the competence that claims to unify the social and individual aspects of learning and teaching L2 discourses, thereby providing, as it is claimed, a more integrative approach to the didactics of L2 speaking

The notion of communicative competence aims at such an integrative approach to the development of the speaking skill, as in proposing a person-oriented dimension, it aims to combine the individual and social dimensions of communicative competence. The person-oriented perspective views an L2 speaker and learner in terms of an individualistic approach, treating an individual as an independent and self-regulating actor both in communication and in learning.

The Complexity of Speaking: Expanding the Conceptual Framework

The difficulties of creating a comprehensive view of the speaking process become evident already on the level of concepts, which can be divided into the following two groups:

- The terms belonging to the colloquial register, characterized by a wide and highly imprecise spectrum of usage:
  - *speaking*: an observable, physical and more specifically, acoustic phenomenon, describing one of human activities (*speaking*

appears here on a par with other actions such as *walking, standing, doing something*);
- *expressing oneself*: a wider term since it can also concern written discourse; it suggests the connection between speaking as an activity and a speaking actor that produces it as an expression of his or her intentions, thoughts and feelings;
- *communication*: the term emphasizes rather a communicative sense or an effect and an aim of speaking.

- Specialized terms from language and communication research:
  - *text, utterance, discourse* – they indicate, respectively, a material 'product' of the speaking activity and connect it to the speaking person or the context of an utterance;
  - *speech acts/speech (communicative) actions, (communicative) interactions* – this group of terms defines speaking in a wider context, emphasizing their action aspect or a pragmatic value as it is viewed by an individual; this selection of terms focuses as well on the structures and dynamics of communication.

Without doubt, the terms themselves reflect the ways of comprehending speaking. However, for the purposes of this chapter, a more developed arrangement of conceptual landscape is proposed, as represented in Figure 2.1.

The upper plane of the schemata represents the society, understood as a *language community*, consisting of smaller communities (professional, social, generational, religious ones, etc.), differing in their way or style of

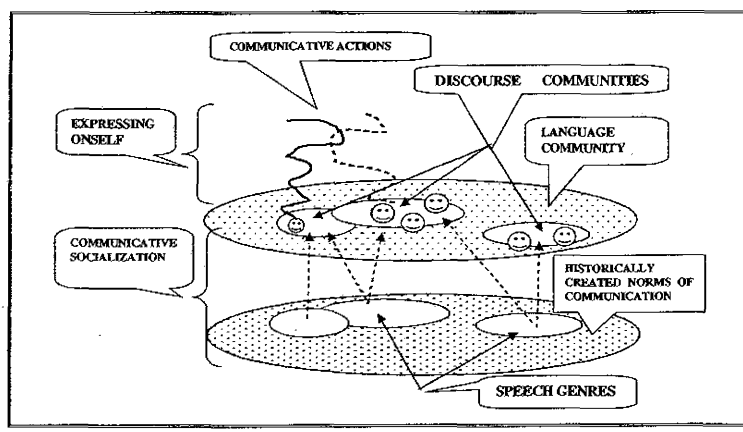

Figure 2.1 Schematic presentation of the main factors conditioning the L1 speaking skill.

'using' a given language, and more specifically, distinguished by their *discursive practices*. Practicing semiotic systems shared within a given community not only determines communication but also serves the purpose of marking one's identity and personal autonomy in relation to other communities. In the history of a given community, these practices are assigned to specific, important sociocommunicative functions, simultaneously shaping more or less ritualized forms of interaction and discourse types – genres. Social discourse practices fulfill certain social functions perceived by the members of a society as appropriate in a given context. Thus, they can be defined as having a social value in a given culture. On the level of communicative expectations, they are perceived as a part of norms and patterns that are present in education and that become criteria of evaluating social actions.

Theoretical references both to *discourse communities* defined in such a way and to the relations between them and within them broaden a general conceptual framework allowing us to grasp more comprehensively and accurately individual acts and communicative interactions. The speakers' performance appears not to be a merely spontaneous and completely arbitrary reflection of their internal states, but becomes a purposeful, intentional *action* or *coaction*. At the same time, an individual's specific communicative style, even though anchored within social norms, depends on his or her individually conditioned interpretation of and involvement in discourse. In relation to these norms, an individual's communicative style can be perceived as his or her selective and specific of each individual combination. It should be emphasized that *communicative practices* and *genres* (see 'Speech Structures and the Teaching of Speaking' section), as 'inherited' within given communities, despite undergoing a more or less visible evolution, on the whole, retain a relative stability of form, which makes them a significant reference in L1 and L2 studies.

Furthermore, another insufficiently appreciated but crucial fact is that our speech, in its individual and social dimension, is a part of our *self* or our personality. In natural or native culture conditions, an individual develops his or her language/discursive and sociocultural identity while gaining the membership in various social groups and discourse communities in the process of *socialization*, mainly, in the social interaction. This enculturation, however, in its semiotic-discursive dimension should be understood as a person's *individual* and *creative adaptation* to a given community (or communities). At the same time, the process is stimulated or even forced by educational activities, while outside the educational context, by social feedback or reactions to our communicative actions (e.g. incomprehension, critical reactions and disagreements, positive reinforcement and comprehension). Analogously, successful L2 learning on the whole also depends on the process

of identity construction in that language, but in most cases, because of the different context of enculturation and language learning as well as a person's aims and the already developed L1 identity, the process proceeds in a different and usually more conscious way, and often results in a more complex, multilingual or multicultural identity. This identity is essentially different from an L1 cultural identity and very rarely emulates the cultural identity of a native L2 speaker.

Such interpretation of the processes of social interaction closely corresponds to the ethnomethodological approach, which also perceives social identity as construed by its members and situated in social interactions (Coulter, 2001; Jayyusi, 1984; Sacks, 1992). Both in endolingual or monocultural and exolingual and/or intercultural interactions, the identity is a social and dynamic phenomenon happening as a practice situated in various interaction types and discourses. Thereby, from the speakers' emic perspective, their identity, existing on the level of macro-social structure, is reconfirmed, invoked as relevant, interpreted and in fact construed in interactions on the micro-level of communicative acts such as descriptions referring to social categories and types. Social identity concerns the meaning of social categories or social types that a person can be interpreted as belonging to. One can simultaneously belong to basic conversational categories (speaker/listener), as well as ethnic, gender, age ones or intercultural or institutional categories (native/nonnative speaker, teacher, epistemic expert, learner, novice), or type collectives (Catholics, Hell's Angels, nice persons), all of which become visibly oriented to or co-selected by interlocutors as relevant for sense-making in different moments and contexts of communication. Thereby, identity, although anchored in the so-called macro-social structures, is strongly discursive and thus it represents a cultural phenomenon perceived as actually happening on the micro-level of interactions or discourses of speech communities.

In comparison with the contexts of L1 identity creation described above, the impoverished L2 learning conditions do not open up many possibilities of identity construction in L2 or even significantly limit them. The predominant and immediate discourse community in institutional learning is usually the community of learners and the virtual L2 community, often limited at best to model native speakers observed in learning materials or represented by native teachers. The prevailing relational pairs of categories and types (see Sacks, 1992) in this context have been observed to be institutional ones such as learner/teacher, epistemic expert/novice, native speaker/nonnative speaker. That is why, especially in earlier stages of L2 learning, the learner tends to experience a general sense of a lack of authenticity, which can be understood as both a socially shared and individually perceived and gradable sense of estrangement from native situations of language/discourse learning and

processing (thinking, comprehending and production), and thus from his or her primary L1 identity.

Speaking: A Skill or Personal Competence?

The general perspective delineated above serves here as a background for the discussion of the following question: *how can contemporary studies of communicative actions in individual and interpersonal perspective influence the teaching of speaking?* This discussion takes into account the following domains of knowledge:

(a) the process of utterance construction, including complex and controversial problems of modeling speech production processes (see e.g. http://chat.carleton.ca/ ~ ceby/Serial.html);
(b) communicative cooperation – a process of interaction and co-construction of meanings and mutual interaction between communication participants;
(c) construing the competence – the process is understood as correlated with conscious and intentional actions undertaken by the learner with teacher's cooperation;
(d) the knowledge of an individual's control over (a) and (c), which is the result of the hereby proposed person-centered framework;
(e) the knowledge of how it can be supported didactically with a substantial cooperation on the part of the learner.

Because of the high complexity of the presented problems, it is almost an impossible task to discuss all these aspects here. For this reason, the following discussion focuses on the last problem (e), while the remaining ones are treated selectively as an indispensable and complementary background.

The notion of ICC, as proposed in earlier studies (Wilczyńska, 2002), becomes the main reference point for our considerations for the following reasons:

- such a perspective seems sufficiently extensive in that it takes into consideration the psychosocial determinants of *speaking/expressing oneself* and more generally, *communicating* and
- it is oriented at foreign language didactics in such a way that the process of learning and teaching integrates institutional aims with an individual's potential, focusing on personal effectiveness.

The premise of the following argument is that mastering and using communication skills is a person-tailored process, referring, on the one hand, to language-discourse patterns, and, on the other, to possibilities, needs and personal ambitions. Correspondingly, the term *competence* is understood as a set of personal skills. As an individual dynamically

adjusts to his or her aims, contexts and types of undertaken actions, these skills also become changeable and shaped under the influence of value systems and individual experiences (Wilczyńska, 2002: 74). Such a definition foregrounds the dynamic 'action-perspective' and does not constrain itself to general psychosocial factors. Furthermore, what is more important, the perspective seems to illustrate well the *coherence* and *economy* of ICC, as features perceived by the speaker as his or her communicative operationality.

What is essential from the point of view of language instruction and learners themselves, this theoretical perspective complies with the demand of *(self)didactic effectiveness*. Thus understood ICC suggests a key role for the learner's personal activity in its construction in all essential and mutually complementary aspects, such as his or her awareness as to the nature of the competence and its conditions, the knowledge of training techniques (especially the semi-creative ones) and, finally, his or her authentic communicative experience. In this perspective, developing the 'speaking skill' means consciously construing or making one's own chosen social communicative practices. This process is to a large extent linguistic in nature and does not merely come down to producing an idiolect, but rather aims at creating a personal communicative style tailored to one's possibilities and ambitions. The style becomes part of an individual's general style of functioning and should be seen as a set of complex strategies of developing and using one's communicative skills. Consequently, *internalizing* learning units implies an integration of two traditionally contradictory dimensions – an individual and a social one – and determines an autonomy and authenticity of personal actions. Their authenticity, in turn, must be founded on the sociopsychic identity of a multilingual person.

Contemporary Speaking Instruction: Positive Tendencies and Challenges

Our subsequent discussion of fostering the competence in L2 speaking focuses upon the sociopsychological context of teaching and learning. The three groups of difficulties in developing ICC are discussed one by one, taking especially into account the specificity of L2 *taught as a school subject* in an institutional context of L2 learning and teaching. The specificity is determined by the fact that the preparation for communication in an L2 affects the learner *personally*, as it encompasses his or her personal style of acting and mental-cultural habits. All this requires significant work expenditure, high personal and creative engagement and at the same time, a fully mature and a realistic approach on the part of the learner. Therefore, it is a challenge for the teacher – in that it requires an equally substantial assistance in the sense of creating

conditions for developing communicative awareness and accessibility of models as well as the organization of communication training.

Sociopsychological meaning of learning units

When meaning is considered from a foreign language speaker's perspective, in a natural context of language acquisition and learning, units of learning and their different formats (Wilczyńska, 1999) are claimed to be constituted in the reservoir of learner's communicative competence in a threefold relationship of meaning potential. An L1 or L2 learner acquires more easily those learning units in which all three meaning constituents are not perceived analytically as separate constituents but interpreted as unified and as producing one complex meaning. The most typical example of such learning units would be a (cluster) of context-sensitive formulaic expressions, their characteristic articulation and accompanying routine actions.

The less commonly associated meaning entities can vary from a single word to a whole genre such as poems, proverbs or routine comments. The meaning unfolds on the level of phonetic, pragmatic and semantic realizations, such as for instance in a congratulation formula that can be expressed with a characteristic intonation and with the use of appropriate lexical formulae whose precise semantic meaning in this communicative situation is a rather background matter. Such learning units in their different formats become the bases for developing competence out of pragmatically oriented nets of meaning that grow out of it. This is not to imply the determining nature of learning units, as they leave a space for individual modifications. The specifics of learning units can be described as follows (see Figure 2.2):

- The first one, *pragmatic value*, can be defined as an action value or a pragmatic effect of a communicative action, as existing in the system of social customs and routines (i.e. a series of potential realizations in different communicative contexts, discourses and styles, in different forms). In fact, the pragmatic meaning is situated in actual communication context in the sense that is construed there 'online' and interpreted by interaction participants in the immediate context of social interaction. Thus, it somehow fuses with the linguistic referent, realizing the meaning of an utterance.
- The second one, *semantic meaning*, is also understood as a propositional or grammatical-lexical meaning. In other words, it refers to a 'dictionary meaning' of linguistic forms. However, pure propositional meaning appears to be only an analytical abstraction of its possible contextualized forms or uses in a communicative action. From the speaker's perspective, the lexical-grammatical

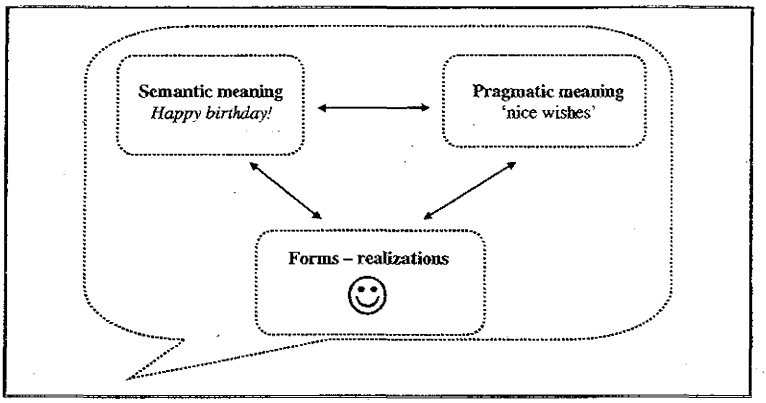

Figure 2.2 The threefold structure of the learning unit.

meaning extends paradigmatically to its uses in various contexts; namely, it allows the speaker to understand an utterance on a level of the linguistic code.

- Finally, *forms understood here as realizations in actual discourse*, where meaning is particularized in a phonetic form with its situation-specific intonation contours, a timbre of voice, characteristic mimics and so on that also display specific features of an individual's communicative style.

This threefold structure, which somehow reminds us of the Ogden-Richards' Triangle, corresponds to the analysis carried out from an etic or external perspective, resulting in a static and balanced model of meaning in its idealized form, while, actually, all these three dimensions overlap in a communicative act. The speaker initiates a communicative activity, being aware of a communicative value and the relations between learning units in a given language and finally, this activity assumes a concrete, physical form of discourse. Needless to say, for an L1 speaker, the processes of meaning interpretation, that is of connecting forms and their semantic or pragmatic meaning, run faster and more efficiently than in the case of L2 speakers (depending on their competence in L2). This fluency further develops on the basis of diversified and more intensive communicative experience in learning an L2. The impact of this interactional practice results in a learner combining three kinds of memory, that is motor, verbal and sociointeractional memory, the latter of which is considered here to be the most significant locus of fostering one's communicative competence.

Individual variability and conventions

For every individual who is competent in his or her native tongue, this threefold 'unit of meaning' is either strongly cohesive (internally integrated) and constitutes a continuum in the case of highly conventionalized sociocultural types of discourse or it can manifest relative openness, that is, some independence of these three dimensions. This openness, in turn, allows creativity of personal utterances in comparison to those more conventionalized or typical kinds. Consequently, the variability of utterances ranges from their relative typicality to creativeness. Contextualized observation of learning units as unified meaning entities makes it possible for the learner to develop an awareness concerning the degree of possible conventionality and openness to individualized realizations of those learning units.

A vitally important feature of mature communicative competence is an individual's sensitivity and awareness as to what extent a given format can be treated as a strongly conventionalized discourse type and to what degree it permits individual variation or a more creative interplay with conventions, that is, if it allows a less conventionalized interpretation and realization of norms. The choices that an individual tends to make in those respects reflect his or her cognitive and communicative style. An individual communicative style does not manifest itself only through lexical or grammatical choices that constitute only one of its aspects. It may also be seen in pragmalinguistic choices concerning, for example, the directness of expression visible in the usage of hedges or discourse markers or even on the level of preferred genres. There are speakers who tend to prefer less typical realizations even in highly conventionalized discourses; however, risking a misunderstanding or a communication breakdown, they cannot allow themselves for completely arbitrary performance. Thus, in this sense, the norm always remains a communicative reference point, a determinant of shared communicative competence, that is an open-ended, situated in practice and individually interpretable but nevertheless obliging communicative traffic sign, to use Goffman's analogy (cf. Goffman et al., 1997).

Developing L2 speaking skills in an institutional environment

For the most part, L2 learners study a foreign language in an institutional context, which, although variable depending on the specific aims of a given institution, and in consequence also on the teaching approach adopted, is characterized by relatively stable limitations. As far as the development of speaking skills is concerned, the source of those limitations resides, on the one hand, in learners' and instructors' attitudes concerning the development of speaking skills and, on the other, in the process of L2 speech learning and at the same time in

interactional institutional practices. As far as the former are concerned, probably because of the relative impalpability of speech and the complexity of communication processes and, ironically, because of the assumption of the Communication Approach that the acquisition of both the L1 and L2 can take place subconsciously, there is a widespread belief visible in teaching and learning practices about the incidental nature of speech learning. According to this belief, L2 speaking skills can only be acquired in the same way as in the mother tongue, which ignores the fact that the learner is not provided with ample exposure to concrete speech learning units in the way allowing for their systematic observation, practice and also for their evaluation as a measurable aspect of his or her expertise in L2.

Those interactional limitations concern both students' opportunities for getting engaged in authentic L2 communication and learning various L2 discourses. One of the features of the L2 classroom discourse that distinguishes it from other school subjects is the foreign language being both a vehicle and a subject of instruction and communication (Seedhouse, 2005). This, in turn, implies the existence of different types of interactions creating various types of contexts for learning a foreign language in training institutions. The well-known IRE (Initiation – Response – Evaluation) sequence characterizing teacher–student talk prevails in L2 discourse in many instructional settings (cf. Mehan, 1998). Even though it has justifiable instructional purposes, it has already justly earned an infamous reputation for itself as limiting students' possibilities of learning and practicing L2 communication, since the first initiating and the third evaluating turns in the sequence always belong to an instructor, thereby leaving the learner in a passive and reactive role. If teachers were to focus mainly on this form of interaction, it would undoubtedly result in serious constraints for learners when it comes to construing meaningful and intentional communication, thus further exacerbating the already existing rift between the forms and their meaning in the comprehension and production of L2 discourse. Taking into account the existence of a very limited context for authentic L2 practice in institutional conditions, the need to depart from the domination of asymmetrical interactions and to train students in diversified types of discourses becomes an even more apparent necessity.

It would be highly unrealistic to expect a complete recreation in the classroom of natural conditions in which an individual would develop his or her personal communicative competence by acquiring discourse norms in the process of socialization/enculturation and at the same time shaping language and discourse identity, because of students' age and, in most cases, because of the discussed limitations of institutional learning. When learning an L2 or L3, the learner has already developed some discourse competence and identity in the L1 and mostly learns the

language in institutional settings. While it is true that some types of discourse community of L2 language learners/speakers, sharing some forms of lingua franca discourse, can be observed to come into being, especially in foreign languages departments, when compared with natural acquisition, this context seems to lack both the intensity of submersion and the diversity of discourse types available to learners.

In order to remedy the deficiencies of an instructional setting, L2 instruction should focus on such tasks as project work and other semi-creative task types, opening up space for more personalized self-expression, such as, for example, discussions and mini-presentations that, even in institutional conditions, require a substantial degree of communicative authenticity. This includes as well the pragmatic authenticity of the lexis and grammatical forms used, whose control in communication, as Niżegorodcew observes (2007: 148–168), has been systematically disregarded in some classroom applications of the communicative approach. Hence, another major challenge for the teaching of L2 speaking is the problem formulated by some researchers as the inclusion of *focus on form* in communication (Pawlak, 2009). Authors working within the framework of conversation analysis (see e.g. Markee, 2000; Seedhouse, 2005) use the conversation analytic, constructivist, dynamic framework to explore the interactional conditions of usage and control of forms in interactional contexts, as they get construed, oriented to or interpreted by interaction participants themselves.

The contextual communicative scarcity of L2 institutional settings needs to be dealt with by exploring multiple and diversified L2 discourses and genres in institutional learning. Such exploration should aim at developing a learner's *awareness* of communication processes in the L2 in tasks focusing on communication or language in action, which in institutional conditions can be implemented by guided observation of audio and video recordings of media texts or everyday conversations. These tasks, however, require defining new objectives of learning, distinguished by the degree of generality in reference to the process of communication. For example, CA-based objectives of learning (Brouwer & Wagner, 2004: 30, 40; Kasper, 2006: 83–99) include such universal but culturally variable interactional actions as turn-taking, repair strategies, turn shapes and discourse-specific actions. In the L2 context, they become targets of learning or more complex skills that only partially and only sometimes can be transferred from native discourse and because of context scarcity in the L2 language, for the most part, they need to be observed and used consciously to be learned (Kasper & Rose, 2003: 260–261).

On the psycholinguistic level of speech production, the conscious nature of skill development in an L2 correlates with an L2 speaker's difficulty with sign processing. This concerns both the phonetic and the

lexico-grammatical encoding. In addition, the encoding difficulty concerns not only the lexis and structures but also interactional learning targets such as discourse strategies. One can presume that meaning creation consisting in connecting the signifier and the signified, the form and its content in context, also in the case of discourse strategies takes more time and is a more conscious process in the L2 than in the L1, both in discourse comprehension and production. In addition, in the case of learners opting for mental translation from the L1, the process is accompanied by an intensified processing especially on the level of lexis and structures. If the L2 differs from learners' native language in the speech rate, it further impedes comprehension and speech production in the L2, as the learner has difficulty with auditory-articulatory adaptation to the L2. Hence, the importance of intensive listening as well as repetitions and extended memorization practice aimed at developing the basis for articulation, which consequently results in accelerating the conceptualization processes in the L2 and enhances the fluency in the use of target language forms. Furthermore, the targeted structures need to be simultaneously adapted by the learner to create his or her individual communicative style, which translates into communicative competence.

The relationship between spoken and written discourse

Genuine oral discourse should be seen as distinct from what is labeled as the 'spoken language.' Spoken language does not always equal actual physical speech production, as can be observed in written and stylized renditions of oral discourses frequently encountered in the literature. They aim more at highlighting certain personality and community traits of a represented character, rather than retaining the exact transcript of speech. Besides that, thanks to such stylized and *written* form, utterances become more comprehensible for readers than actual accurate transcripts. This peculiar paradox points to essential features of communication, since authorial translation interprets for the reader the possible interpretation of the listener, as he or she would comprehend the speech of a given character in actual social interaction. On the other hand, oralization or expressing the written text (i.e. reading it or reciting from memory) differs significantly from casual talk, both in terms of structure and the mode of creating it (e.g. a TV presenter in fact reading out a text visible to him or her on the screen would be commonly perceived as just talking). This does not mean that speaking manifests itself in the most complete manner or solely in the so-called free oral expression, but full spontaneity remains its key attribute.

In fact, the difference between speech and writing does not concern the form of expression alone, as is often emphasized in comparisons between written and spoken texts (the latter in the form of transcripts).

This indeed striking distinctness actually reflects the mode of construing and processing or comprehending verbal utterances in communicative interactions. Both of these aspects show their own specificity in the L2, which becomes evident in higher redundancy in production and in the so-called verbocentrism (with the lesser share of guessing in reception). Incidentally, the same features can be observed in communicative actions in L1. However, the most important factor is efficiency, as the procedural schemata cannot be formed if an utterance is not anchored in comprehensive action schemata.

Taking into consideration the above observations, the so-called spoken language as it appears, for example, in literary works frequently differs from instances of genuine oral discourse, which in literature are processed and stylized. Our beliefs about the spoken language and the teaching of speech remain under the influence of the teaching of writing. It exposes certain patterns but also the processes of their formation and understanding in reading. The analysis of utterance, such as those in video recordings, in the native language on the basis of appropriately detailed transcripts can help one realize these differences.

Speech Structures and the Teaching of Speaking

Recent research on speaking clearly shows an evolution of our beliefs as to the spontaneous nature of everyday interaction. Once research focused mainly on the written discourse, as it was driven by a pervasive conviction that, in contrast to writing, speaking is too spontaneous and disorganized to be observed systematically. Currently, empirical studies focus on the structures of speech, exploring their most ritualized and stabilized aspects manifest especially in genres. Consequently, L2 speaking instruction refers to them and to other speaking practices, at the same time observing how our individual utterances inscribe into them and possibly modify those patterns.

Observing and practicing oral utterances as threefold meaning units in their diverse forms appears to be an important preliminary condition of effective teaching of speaking. Frequently, classroom practice revolves around the so-called 'talking exercise,' which, in fact, proves to be a nonspecific school type of talk, unconnected to any type of discourse community practice other than the school one, and devoid of any communicative relevance other than a vaguely instructional one. This kind of exercise represents too broad a category to be useful for a learner who is often unaware of the diversity of interaction types. Hence, it would be useful to refer to some typology of talk such as, for instance, the one proposed in the theories of genres and text types. However, the development of communicative competence requires some degree of metalingual and metacommunicative awareness.

Unfortunately, in Polish education, especially at advanced levels of learning, these bases of communicative competence development are either insufficiently allowed for or even omitted. Anyway, from the perspective of the current discussion, it would be extremely valuable to integrate into L2 teaching the practice of at least general reflection concerning the conditions of communicative actions and their specificity.

Genres

Geneva center researchers (Bronckart & Plazaola Giger, 1998; Schneuwly, 1995) define genre as an autonomous entity integrating (a) certain content, (b) characteristic communicative and semiotic structures and (c) a specific arrangement of textual-discursive elements that exert a certain influence on the speaker. Genres are treated as a characteristic bridge between social communicative practices and a speaker's speech activities and imply a type of realization, its assessment and relevant expectations. This stability of the genre is a fundamental tool in the creation of coherent speech behavior and its interpretation. Mastering a genre by an individual can constitute an important element of his or her communicative competence; it also determines the effectiveness of communicative competence with respect to operative action schemata (situation/communicative value/utterance). The existence of genre patterns is also motivated by the existence of more or less deliberate deviations from the norm, ranging from casual via semiformal to formal styles.

So far the best explored and thus most clearly defined oral genres are *formal ones* such as speeches, oral presentations (fr. *exposé*), debate, discussion and a semi-formal interview. As was already mentioned, everyday conversation passes as the most casual type that can be treated as a general genre with certain subtypes (e.g. a neighborly or a party chat). In the conversation analysis framework, *face-to-face conversation* is considered to be a primary and basic form of social interaction. All other genres, especially institutional interactions, are treated as its transformation created by discourse communities for specific social aims; thus, genre-specific features are often analyzed against the background of conversations (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Schegloff, 1992). This typology comes in handy when analyzing actual discourses; however, the so-called pure genres are rarely encountered beyond formalized communicative situations. Representations concerning pertinent models determine not only concrete realizations but also our expectations and evaluations.

Text types

Text types fulfill certain discourse functions: one speaks in order to *describe, tell, compare, explain* and *justify something*. As opposed to genres, text types rarely exist separately in a pure form but they tend to

intermingle in larger texts, as is the case, for instance, in discussions where descriptions interchange and fuse somehow with narrative and argumentative passages.

Routine interactional sequences

Routine interactional sequences are typical comments or reactions in common, everyday situations. They tend to be highly predictable with a rather limited range of possible modifications. Within the framework developed here, metalinguistic and metacommunicative awareness should be anchored in the learner's L2 identity, which finds its expression in his or her communicative style. As has already been pointed out, an individual should be allowed certain autonomy in adjusting himself or herself to 'norms.' This adaptation to norms in some less formalized genres can even become desirable though never completely arbitrary.

Speech structures–based didactics of speaking

According to Geneva researchers, genres epitomize a relatively stable form and a way of functioning; that is why, they may prove useful in the process of L2 speaking instruction. Their application can be observed in L2 teaching in the Canadian province of Québec; however, the genres taught there represent public rather than private communication types, so being relatively rare, they will not be all necessarily useful for learners. If one were to limit instruction to such patterns alone, this could, in fact, result in the distortion of the image of speech genres as always being subject to such highly formalized patterns whereas equally important is also developing lower-level scale skills, used in different genres and situations (e.g. finding out information in interviews, formulating questions in debates and conversations).

Another important aspect of genre-based teaching is allowing students to develop speaking skills in task situations constructed on the level of complexity adjusted to students' abilities (within Vygotsky's zone of proximal development) (Vygotsky, 1978). Tasks should open up the possibilities of developing such discourse features as dynamics, interactivity, totality, spontaneity and negotiability. One should not forget as well that the task should be perceived as a dynamic co-construction of participants rather than a determinant of what is happening in task interactions; in other words, the task features are, in fact, determined by interaction (task) participants as relevant in varying degrees in different interactional moments or tasks phases. While authentic school genres such as already-mentioned *casual school talk, lecture* and *presentation* are rehearsed somehow 'naturally' in institutional settings, training in communication genres, normally practiced in contexts other than L2 classroom, still seems to be a challenge. On the whole, there appears to exist a discrepancy between discourse genres as subjects taught in the

instructional setting and their social functioning as communication tools, hence, a certain social fictitiousness of discourses practiced in the institutional context.

A tool that can prove very useful in making learners aware of differences between written and spoken genres is a guided observation of both audio–video recordings and their transcripts. They can be contrasted with written discourses or written stylizations of spoken utterances, such as, for example, literary ones. An important constraint is that these texts should not be the only tool of teaching but should rather serve the purpose of sensitizing students to essential elements of speech, such as concrete communicative actions observed and practiced by students in model genre contexts in different stylistic configurations. The tasks can focus, for instance, on such interactional objects as turn-taking and turn-holding in talk, culture-dependent repair strategies, turn shapes and sequences such as pre-/closure and opening formulas, audience-oriented strategies in presentations, interview information seeking turns, intercultural differences in argumentative turn shapes and specific speech acts such as apologies and requests, meta-textual signals and structures used to control the course of talk, indirectness and politeness formulas, hedges and discourse markers. Discourse observation practice appears to be more effective when accompanied by corresponding production tasks such as conversations, discussions and game-oriented role plays in L2. In addition, practicing shorter sequences or text types aimed at the controlled use of chosen interactional objects can prove to be an important phase in building students' fluency in chosen forms before letting them practice more complex genres. It needs to be emphasized that this latter apparently uncomplicated task also rests on identity construction in L2.

If one is to create genre-specific communicative actions in the L2, one needs to be aware of roles or social categories. More specifically, they are supposed to understand how members of a given speech community use a genre as a tool to realize its specific communicative and professional aims. This all translates into the awareness of communicative actions considered to be socioculturally normative for given person categories. Since, as was discussed above (see 'Introduction' section), these categories somehow comprise an individual's social identity and are culturally bound, the learner is faced with the challenge of negotiating, selecting and construing one's social identity in L2 also in this dimension, when the simple transposition of categories from L1 or a complete emulation of L2 roles is possible only in very rare cases. Thus, some learners' problems in producing genre- or even conversation-related actions, as well as developing a good, native-like pronunciation in L2, may have their roots in the sense of 'sociocategorical' estrangement or a strong identification with L1 categories.

A separate issue is the *evaluation* of students' competence in terms of oral discourse. Such assessment frequently concerns only the contents and linguistic accuracy of discourse without a special focus on discourse or genre forms. Clear criteria of evaluating oral discourse and communicative competence still remain to be developed, while research, mainly concentrating on examination assessment, has only recently begun to explore possible interactional and discourse criteria and in such situations (see Egbert & Seedhouse, 2006; Lazaraton, 2002). All in all, what remains open is the issue of learning progress, that is how L2 learning translates into a learner's out-of-classroom discourse and how such communication can be actually observed and evaluated.

Conclusion

The perspective of ICC discussed in this chapter proposes to evaluate the authenticity of learner's activity in the framework of integrated individual and sociocultural determinants of communicative actions. The major challenge of the L2 speaking instruction on all levels of learner's proficiency still appears to be its decontextualization, which in the long run negatively influences communicative authenticity and hinders the development of socially contextualized speech behaviors. Fostering communicative competence requires a pragmatic context for the learner to perceive the learning target as an integrated entity emerging in the connection between forms and their semantic and pragmatic meaning. Equally necessary appears to be anchoring of the teaching of speaking in social-functional models such as genres. Therefore, what emerges is the need to discuss the problems of approach to defining possible learning objectives in developing L2 speaking skills and determining their progression, that is the optimal sequence of learning. The learning units should be selected and prepared for use in the classroom to support their effective memorization and usage. Further studies of these units would benefit from a focus on individual perception of not solely semantic, pragmatic or phonetic meanings but on their combination in a meaningful unity as well.

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