# Classroom interactive tasks under the lens: Bridging Tradition and innovation

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**ABSTRACT**

The following article is a written summary of a plenary session at the *XLIX FAAPI Conference*. Its main objective is to evaluate the theoretical foundation underlying most EFL speaking tasks, introduce the associated key notions regarding the development of conversational competence and to assess the textual representation of dialogues and other interactive texts. Special attention is given to some technological and pedagogical advancements, with a special focus on Artificial Intelligence as the most recent tool.

KEYWORDS: speaking tasks, peer interaction, conversational competence

## INTRODUCTION

Teacher-student and peer interactions have long been studied with the ultimate purpose of identifying their structure, goals, and mechanisms. The theoretical knowledge of how these interactional dyads construct pedagogical and realistic dialogues has drawn from diverse theoretical frameworks. However, before delving into multiple conceptual approaches, a proper definition of interaction is required. Taking Symbolic Interactionism, the following principles of human interaction can be listed, as cited in Carter and Fuller (2016):

> (1) individuals act based on the meanings objects have for them, (2) interaction occurs within a particular social and cultural context in which physical and social objects (persons), as well as situations, must be defined or categorized based on individual meanings, (3) meanings emerge from interactions with other individuals and with society, and (4) meanings are continuously created and recreated through interpreting processes during interaction with others (Blumer, 1969).

A preliminary interpretation of the concept of interaction centres on the meaning-creation properties of each interaction, together with their human-dependent nature and unremitting and flexible characteristics. Goffman (1959b) even equates interaction with a theatrical performance, where actors' self-presentations presuppose "an attempt to control others' impressions to be seen positively" (Carter & Fuller, p. 9).

But it is another defining feature that identifies interaction as a social process: the concept of co-constructed discourse. In this sense, "co-construction is understood as the processes through which speakers cooperatively and collaboratively create meaning and joint understandings of their shared social context through interaction" (Czerwionka & Showstack, 2022). In other words, single-participant interactions appear to be non-existent as many of the joint mechanisms that take place during an interaction cannot operate. In fact, the generic representation of interaction, the dialogue is a cooperative joint activity, as participants are committed to the activity, by responding to intentions and actions, and offering mutual support for the success of the task (Pickering & Garrod, 2021).

In this regard, how are classroom-based interactions different from real-life exchanges? On the one hand, most classroom-based interactions observe planned, predicable patterns that facilitate learning and create ritualistic exchanges with institutional purposes. Spontaneous, real-life exchanges, by contrast, admit a more flexible language use but demand more fluent and swift cognitive operations for the turn-taking process. Scholars like Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) have studied classroom discourse and developed their IRF exchange structure model, in which the main exchange components are the Initiating Move (IM), the Response Move (RM), and the Follow-up Move (FM).

When compared to real-life exchanges, the adequacy of the adoption of the IRF model comes into question. According to Tsui (1989a), the first two moves are equally present in classroom discourse and colloquial interactions, but the third move remains compulsory only for the first one, since it mostly carries a response-evaluation function. Follow-up moves inscribed in real-life interactions, though not obligatory elements for such exchanges, display an array of pragmatic meanings and their inclusion or exception may have different conversational interpretations.

A more pedagogically oriented notion of interaction surfaces from more cognitive SLA-based theories, in particular, the Interactionist Approach. In a more recent description of Long's Interaction Hypothesis, Bowles and Adams state that "input from and interaction with interlocutors affords language learners opportunities to notice differences between their own target language production and the language of their conversational partners" (2015, p. 198). From this perspective, interaction can be classroom-based or the result of out-of-class exchanges. Most research in this theoretical line focused on the type of interactive participants as well as the linguistic resources that they use to promote language acquisition. However, the research results come with a caveat: early research centered on Native-speaker and Non-native speaker (NS-NNS) dyads, while more recent studies include NNS-NNS dyads, but only in immersion and/or L1 environments.

While academia attempts to unveil the organizational patterns of classroom-based or immersion-based interactions, learners engage in other types of interactions. Most of these function on the manipulation of linguistic and paralinguistic resources but have incorporated new conduits of personal expression. Consequently, everyday interactions are currently dominated by the development of new digital genres, spurred by technological advancements, where multimodality (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001) is the norm. When humans interact with each other, according to Turk (2014, p. 180), they:

> employ multiple senses, both sequentially and in parallel, to passively and actively explore our environment, to confirm expectations about the world and to perceive new information. We experience external stimuli through sight, hearing, touch, and smell, and we sense our internal kinesthetic state through proprioception.

This latter insight into new interactive processes prompts consideration as to what extent these technology-mediated interactions have been incorporated or emulated in EFL classrooms and classroom-based speaking tasks.

**Interactional micro- and macro-constituents**

An agreed-upon consensus among all scholars is that the participants in an interaction utilize the basic structural components of a language: its grammar, phonology and lexis. In the case of NS-NSS, or NNS-NNS, the breadth and depth in the use of those linguistic components reveals additional contrastive levels of linguistic proficiency. For Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008,

cited in Lowie et al., 2018, p. 108), "the components of the L2 speaker's language system, like the vocabulary, the grammar, the phonological system, but also the articulation are all interrelated and contain integrated aspects of the L1 and the L2 linguistic systems". But the students' mastery of these linguistic components does not presuppose a successful interaction.

A more comprehensive approach to analyse the basic units of interactive experiences entails a conceptual exploration regarding how these linguistic bits constitute larger interactive units, which we can term as the macro-constituents of interaction.

The first basic units are the *formulaic linguistic units*. In first language acquistition, children include in their language development holophrases, which are "learned, stored, retrieved, and used as if they were single lexical items and without regard for their internal grammar" (Thornbury & Slade, 2006, p. 192).

Unfortunately, most L2 learners do not undergo similar developmental sequences in the development of their linguistic repertoire, especially when their incorporation of the L2 occurs at a later stage in their lives. Some research studies, like Myles (2012) show that L2 learners, during their first stage of learning, students incorporate formulaic sequences which will be syntactically analysed (modified) at later stages of acquisition. However, some students show fossilized dependence on FS. The only caveat is that Myles (2012) performed his experiment with L2 French learners. Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) assign an important role to formal education, since they postulate that "breadth and depth of knowledge (on formulaic language)" is ultimately dependent on the pedagogical intervention for the teaching of L2 formulaic sequences (p. 88).

A related notion involves *conversational routines* and *discourse markers*. Conversational routines (or CRs) are equivalent to other notions, such as pre-fabricated expressions, conversational gambits, or language chunks. Some examples are shown in Fig. 1 (extracted from Aijmer, 1996, p. 2)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I | Idioms | (*to smell a rat*) |
| II | Proverbs | (*A watched pot never boils.*) |
| III | Stock phrases | (*a vicious circle*) |
| IV | Catchphrases | (*What do you think of it so far?*) |
| V | Allusions/Quotations | (*You've never had it so good.*) |
| VI | Idiomatic similes | (*as sober as a judge*) |
| VII | Discoursal expressions | (*How do you do?*) |

Fig. 1. Examples of conversational routines and discourse markers

Aijmer (1996) further distinguishes CRs from discourse markers (or DMs) by stating that CRs are illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), while DMs contain discourse-organizing functions. In addition, she outlines the following properties that both CRs and DMs own:

- Psychological: they are easily retrievable from long-term memory;
- Sociological: they belong to ritualized speech events;
- Linguistic: they are constituted by lexicalized, grammaticalized or idiomaticized expressions;
- Discoursal: they are the vehicles of supra-sentential meanings;
- Compositional and Prosodic: they have syntactic and prosodic fixity, i.e., a modification of their components or a choice of a marked prosodic choice may affect their conversational meaning;
- Conversational: their use is subject to conversational turn-taking and preference.

In sum, their contribution to the development of L2 learners' conversational competence is undoubtedly evident. More specifically, if teachers integrate the teaching of CRs and DMs in their curriculum, students will possess more efficient tools when involved in speaking tasks. Like the

formulaic sequences mentioned above, CRs and DMs seem to require less high order cognitive processing and if their compositional or prosodic fixity features are learned, we can hypothetically assume that L2 learners may have faster lexico-grammatical memory retrievals. However, the close-knit association between CRs and illocutionary meanings may pose a challenge for both teachers and learners.

Within the ongoing attempt to identify conversational units, the *speech act*, which is the basic pragmatic unit, proves to be the most complex concept. Imbued with illocutionary force, speech acts are "the ways in which people carry out specific social functions in speaking such as apologizing, complaining, making requests, refusing things, invitations, complimenting, or thanking" (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 6). The intricate nature of speech acts lies in the fact they expand linguistic meanings to include context-dependent social meanings. Their vehicles of expression may encompass ritualized conversational routines, but interaction participants may choose to express their illocutionary forces by non-formulaic means as well. A further complication involves their lexico-grammatical composition or their conversational turn distribution (i.e., speech acts may be conveyed in one turn or require more than one turn).

L2 English learners are already pragmatically competent in their L1, but L2 speech act comprehension or use may be based on their experiential knowledge or their socially bound exposure to real-life exchanges. The students in formal instruction settings, unlike those in immersion settings, have a circumscribed L2 speech act input, provided generally by conversational extracts in most EFL textbooks. Additionally, while L1 CRs and other illocutionary force devices may be translatable into the L2, specific inconsistencies regarding the inappropriate compositional structure or prosodic choice may still cause communication breakdowns or pragmatic misunderstandings.

Some authors, like Wong and Waring (2010) place the focus not on the identification of a conversational unit, but on the development of *interactional practices*. In Fig. 2 below, the main components of what they call the tenets of their model of interactional practices are displayed.

| **Linguistic system** | **Conversational system** |
|---|---|
| phonology,<br>morphology,<br>syntax,<br>semantics,<br>and discourse | (1) **Turn-taking practices**: Ways of constructing a turn and allocating a turn.<br>(2) **Sequencing practices**: Ways of initiating and responding to talk while<br>performing actions such as requesting, inviting, story-telling, or topic initiation.<br>(3) **Overall structuring practices**: Ways of organizing a conversation as a whole as in openings and closings.<br>(4) **Repair practices**: Ways of addressing problems in speaking, hearing, or understanding of the talk |

Fig. 2. Components of the model of Interactional Practices (extracted from Wong & Waring, 2010, p. 8)

A first analysis of both the linguistic, and the conversational system, in their model, may result in a comparison between the micro-constituents of every interaction and the conversational

mechanisms that make those interactions feasible. As a result, for an L2 English learner, as mentioned above, a native-like command of the formal properties of language requires an additional acquisition of the conversational instruments for every social interaction. In other words, the L2 learner should not only be a L2 user but also a conversationalist who can employ the linguistic resources and adapt them to the various social speech events with the sufficient dexterity. In NNS-NNS interactions, the students are responsible for both the creation of co-constructed discourse but also the smooth continuation of the conversational phenomenon and the repair of any obstacle against its successful completion.

Given that speech acts represent an intricate stage in the search, but also in the acquisition of the macro-components of interactions, other broader segments may be explored. Thornbury and Slade (2006) describe two substantial conversational genres which are included in most casual conversations: *narrative* (or storytelling) and *gossip* segments. And they can be attributed the following characteristics:

a) Storytelling genres (like narratives, anecdotes, exempla and recounts) are subject to context and cultural variations. They also differ in terms of their function and structure, which, in turn, impact the narrators' lexico-grammatical choices. A common feature shared by these genres is the existence of an evaluative section. Finally, their presence in a conversation signals a closer degree of familiarity between the storyteller and the audience.
b) Gossip is a decidedly interpersonal oral construction but at the same time a group membership validation mechanism where the gossiping object or subject may be external to the group. Additionally, the gossiping group shares some social intimacy. Like storytelling, gossip employs similar conversational routines and speech acts, but the turn management organization may not be exercised by a single participant.

If they have a pervasive occurrence in casual conversations, as claimed by Thornbury and Slade (2006), the question arises as to the reasons for their minimal inclusion or omission in the ELT pedagogical material. This is especially evident for the teaching of the discourse tools for the creation of anecdotal or gossip segments. Some conjectural explanations may reside in the premise that L2 learners may transfer the needed knowledge and strategies to conduct them, or that becoming competent in these genres is not a necessary skill to be fostered.

A last assumption would be that these genres are underrepresented in the ELT publishing material because other speech events, and their written transformations, align more closely with the publishing companies' format conventions and specific teaching themes and objectives. Thus, a casual conversation which includes a seemingly unending gossip segment may rarely occupy more than one page of an ELT textbook.

But gossiping and narrative segments may be found in broader everyday conversational segments called speech events (Hymes, 1974), or in what Levinson (1979) called an *Activity Type* (henceforth, AT). For Levinson, an AT is a goal-defined event which is socially constituted and sets constraints on the participants or settings. Some typical examples include teaching, job interviews, jural interrogations, football games or a dinner party. ATs involve both an interactional and a cognitive side, in particular, the participants' schemata activation about those ATs.

Even though the hierarchical relationship between ATs and (oral) genres is not definite (Archer et al., 2021), their role in the teaching of interactional competence is particularly relevant. ATs can be considered as speech act containers or defining frameworks, since each social AT will employ a characteristic set of speech acts and the participants will assume associated roles. For instance, in the doctor consultation AT, the doctor and patient undertake the task of co-constructing a dialogue about a specific medical condition, but the participants' speech acts and the general turn-management organization are stipulated by the AT conditions.

A final conversational macro unit mentioned in this paper entails Biber et al's (2021) notion of *Conversational Discourse Types* (or CDT, for short). Unlike the former conversational unit proposals, their concept derives from a corpus-based analysis of the British National Corpus (2014) oral genres, more specifically, the informal face-to-face interactions between two or three participants. To identify and categorise these larger conversational discourse units, they established that CDTs should be higher level conversational units where an evident shift in communicative goals or topics was observed. As a result, the following types were established and described:

1. **Situation-dependent commentary (SDC)**. Purpose  commenting on people or objects that are present, or events that are occurring in their shared situational context.
2. **Joking around (JOK).** Purpose  lighthearted and darker humor + good-humored banter, teasing and flirting.
3. **Engaging in conflict (CON)**. Purpose  disagreement of any type (lighthearted debate / serious quarreling.
4. **Figuring-Things-Out (FTO).** Purpose  exploring or considering options or plans, including discussion about how things work and what the best solution to a problem may be.
5. **Sharing feelings and evaluations (FEL).** Purpose  discussion about feelings, evaluations, opinions, and beliefs, including the airing of grievances and the sharing of personal perspectives.
6. **Giving advice and instructions (ADV).** Purpose  offer directions, advice, or suggestions to another speaker.
7. **Describing or explaining the past (PAS).** Purpose  narrative stories about true events from the past or other references to people or events from the past.
8. **Describing or explaining the future (FUT).** Purpose  descriptions or speculations about future events and intentions, including those that are planned and those that are more hypothetical.
9. **Describing or explaining (time-neutral) (DES).** Purpose  Descriptions or explanations about facts, information, people or events where time (past or future) is either irrelevant or unspecified.

(Adapted from Biber et al., 2021)

However, exhaustive their conversational types may seem, a preliminary interpretation may relate them to the concept of *speech act sets*. Ishihara and Cohen (2010, paraphrasing Olshtain & Cohen, 1983), when defining speech act sets, state that "the performance of common speech acts usually involves choosing from a set of possible strategies, some of which may involve the use of what could be viewed as other distinct speech acts" (p. 8).

A further striking difference between CDTs and ATs is their intrinsic properties. On the one hand, ATs presuppose a role delimitation between speakers and a clear division of the participants' use of speech acts while CDTs focus their attention on the communicative goals notwithstanding the participants' social action. On the other hand, ATs require a structural organization where more formulaic speech acts are to be found in the opening and closing segments while more fact-oriented speech acts constitute the body segment. In this sense, CDTs do not seem to be structurally complex or be limited to a particular structural segment.

## CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF SPEAKING TASKS

In this section, EFL speaking tasks will be assessed regarding their alignment with certain recognized reference frameworks and their inclusion of the previous micro- and macro-components. To start with, it is worth noting that most speaking task genres in EFL textbooks are CEFR descriptor-based. Following a functional or competence-based approach, these descriptors are unambiguously outlined for each (pre-A1 to C2) level. The following analysis displays the main features for the speaking tasks:

- The associated modes of communication are called *production* and *interaction*
- Within the oral production (activities, strategies or competences) descriptors, from pre-A1 to A2+ there is a predominance of monologic genre production aims and a restricted role for dialogic participation (i.e. respondent roles).
- Within the oral production (activities, strategies or competences) descriptors, from B1 to C2, monologic genres are expanded, both in terms of audiences but also regarding their structural complexity, theme variety and speech act use. There is also a restricted respondent role for students in this level.
- Within the oral interaction (activities, strategies or competences) descriptors, from pre-A1 to A2+, most tasks include the usage of formulaic expressions to express an ample range of factual ideas and opinions. Students are expected to have a simple, yet appropriate command of conversational routines that respond to various situational demands, including the use of transactional language. Narrative segments are discretely mentioned in the descriptors, but other speech acts, alongside their instrumental conversational routines, are assumed to be acquired at this stage. However, some communication breakdowns may be anticipated, given that the students cannot perform extended conversational segments due to their limited language proficiency.
- For the oral interaction (activities, strategies or competences) descriptors, from B1 to C2, formulaic routines give way to more creative expressions that convey graded levels of emotions and facts. These descriptors depict students who can interpret but also produce nuances of meanings, varied speech acts or even speech act sets. They are also expected to master an extensive range of register-exclusive terms in various social situations, and if necessary, lead the turn-management process. Communication breakdowns are not expected in these levels, since students should display higher proficiency in linguistic accuracy and fluency and higher interactional competence. The descriptors for these levels, included in the telecommunications scale, incorporate technology-mediated interactions as exclusive competences that can be attained at this stage.

When associated with the previous theoretical notions about interaction components, the descriptors comprise formulaic expressions and basic conversational routines for the lower levels and more cognitively challenging but also nuanced speech acts for the higher levels. The situational approach gradually incorporates lower-level learners' experiential learning scenarios, mostly academic-based, alongside the most prototypical transactional situational experiences. For higher-level students, these settings are either multiplied or intricate enough to display more engaging speech acts. Even though many of the scenarios represented by each descriptor may concur with the concept of speech events or Activity Types defined above, the descriptor formulation does not explicitly state this relationship.

Biber et al.'s (2021) Conversational Discourse Types seem to match the descriptors more closely since, as mentioned above, they are specified without any reference to a precise Activity Type. An exacting disadvantage of the descriptor depiction is the absence of speaker role specifications, as the speech acts (or conversational contexts) are displayed, but the students are probably expected to be familiar with the role to be assumed in those interactional scenarios.

Regarding Wong and Waring's (2010) Interactional Practices, the descriptors display a gradual teaching (or learning) of basic conversational strategies which are constructed along with the students' acquisition of lexico-grammatical competences. For higher levels, students are encouraged to adopt a more flexible approach to conversational turn management: i.e., they are not only capable of providing more elaborate responding moves but can initiate turns, provide appropriate follow-up moves, or even create conversationally competitive interruptions or overlaps.

## EVIDENCE OF TEXTBOOK ACTIVITY TYPES

Most EFL textbooks include dialogues which may be linked to real-life activity types, speech acts and participants. However, their textual representation in instructional materials may be inaccurate for the following reasons:

- dialogues are presented with an elaborate syntax; the conversational turns include complete sentences and redundancy,
- conversational texts may present generalizations: students may acquire misconceptions about the pragmatic norms of particular language varieties or social norms,
- some conversation structural elements may be omitted or misrepresented: some speech act sets are reduced or only those belonging to the body of a conversation are presented,
- textbook dialogue participants may assume roles and use speech acts which do not emphasize the cooperative nature of conversation: the speech acts employed, like complaints, are radical examples of non-negotiable speech events and no strategies for restoring social harmony are presented.
- EFL teachers may take these dialogues as representative models of native-like interactions: on the one hand, they may employ these textbook conversations as the only source of pragmatic knowledge, but, on the other hand, if they realize about their pragmatic failure, they may not complement this material with non-textbook conversational texts or videos.

(adapted from Ishihara & Cohen, 2014)

But the best illustration of classroom-based dialogue teaching can be found in modern multimedia texts. Here is an example:

https://www.tiktok.com/@rojstar/video/6976825269348814086

This memic parody video used the original audio of the dialogue between two adolescent students who are interviewing each other. Within this conversational interaction, the interview activity type includes two participants who exchange elicitation and response speech acts without distinct interviewer and interviewee roles. In addition, however engaged both of them sound, there is a lack of conversational routines or topic transition discourse markers. As stated above, this video extract exclusively displays the body of the interaction.

This video elucidates the effect of a traditional EFL classroom-based speaking task where the participants evidence some expected linguistic proficiency. Added to this, the structural composition of their interactional performance is limited, and it even integrates some inappropriate genre features, like the follow-up moves, which are evident indicators of classroom discourse.

## AI AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN CLASSROOM SPEAKING TASKS

Real-life and textbook dialogues, in the sections described above, seem to converge in the inclusion of certain speech acts but diverge in their structural composition, pragmatic competence development or participant role definition. When technology enters the classroom scene, speaking tasks are then assumed to enhance those similarities or discrepancies.

The most recent innovative technological development, Artificial Intelligence (or AI), has now permeated most daily social actions and the educational praxis is no exception. With an increasing display of AI-based instruments, everyday interactions make use of multimedia resources for social and transactional purposes, and those interactions also consider AI tools as dialogue participant in cross-linguistic real-time translations or student-bot exchanges.

Regarding the last type of AI bot-human interactions, in a meta-analytic study, Lampropoulos (2025), concluded that "social robots can constitute intelligent tutoring systems that can effectively play the role of a tutor or peer learner offering affective and personalized learning" (p. 24). These specific studies emphasize the out-of-classroom roles for these AI-based roles and, at the same time, the predominant research paradigmatic frameworks which link these special interactions with notions of user motivation, linguistic assessment tool, among others. This tutoring role for the AI-based bots (also known as Conversational Assistants) is further confirmed by Khosrawi-Rad et al. (2022), since they claim that "despite some mature pioneers (e.g., Replika) that already embody an evolution from purely assistive CAs to virtual companions, this dimension is currently hardly considered in the educational context and requires further research" (p. 12).

In consequence, it can be assumed that, for classroom group or whole class interactions, AI-based tools perform a secondary or complementary role. But their genuine relevance lies in the flexibility of their usage in the design or implementation of those EFL speaking tasks.

For lower-level students, AI-enhanced activities may include the following:

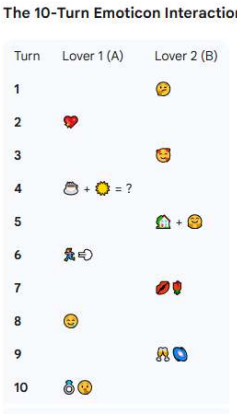


Fig. 3. Emoticon-based interaction (Author's creation)

In Fig. 3, the result of an AI-prompt to incorporate emoticons for students to co-construct a dialogue is presented.

To expand the linguistic repertoire of speech acts for conversation starters or icebreakers, An AI prompt produced the following result:

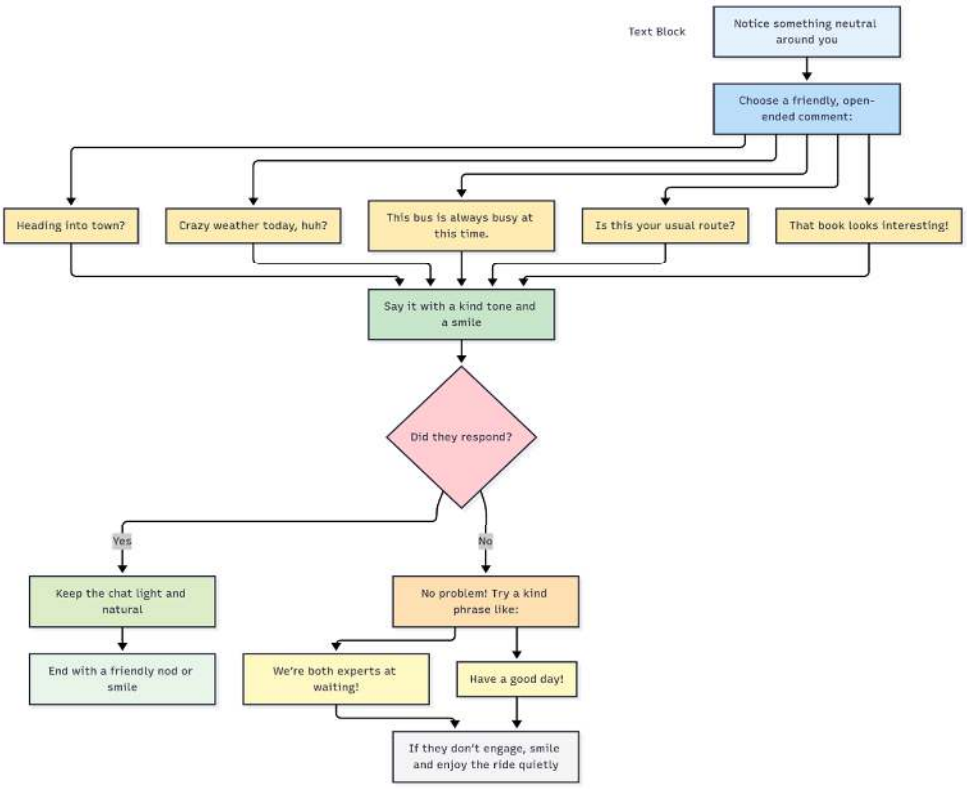


Fig. 4. CR selection for conversation starters (Author's creation)

This figure shows a flowchart with contextually bound conversational strategies and suggestions for turn-management allocation.

AI-based tools can also promote both linguistic enrichment and conversational competence development. Non-traditional activity types (e.g. interacting with people while you are walking your dog or chitchatting at the hair salon) or non-textbook speech acts can be incorporated into

the classroom with the assistance of these technological instruments. Figure 5 below exemplifies the potential use of AI as a source of information in video pre-production stages of the following examples of non-textbook interactional multimodal genres:

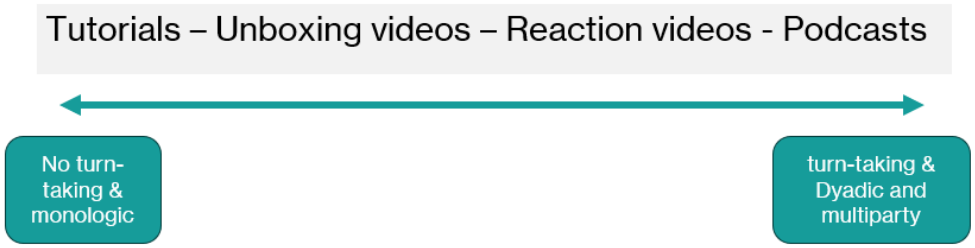


Fig. 5. Non-traditional new digital genres

However, the following limitations highlight the importance of implementing technology-mediated resources with a pedagogical purpose:

- AI-based tools have no direct impact on classroom speaking tasks and may not promote real-time interaction.
- Both teachers and students may require AI usage training, especially regarding AI bot affordances and limitations.
- AI-based materials require a thorough examination and adaptation before their pedagogical implementation.
- If not employed with that particular purpose, AI-based material can contain gender-specific or sexist language.
- When used for out-of-class conversational practice, AI bot may contain conversational strategies like recasts and metalinguistic correction, which resembles the class activity type, but lack the conversational strategies of real life interactions.
- This last example also underlines the scarcity of turn-taking features or the learning of conversational strategies for turn management roles.
- Added to this, AI bot-human interaction may affect the construction of the students' linguistic identity, that is, their EIL or EFL student identity or variety preference.
- Although AI-produced dialogues may contain authentic instances of speech act production and a diversity of activity types, the same caveats for textbook dialogues remain, mainly whether they observe all the pragmatic conditions that make a dialogue real or realistic enough.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The purpose of the plenary presentation and this paper was to analyze the theoretical grounding for most EFL speaking tasks, describe the notions underlying their aims and to examine the textual representation of dialogues and other interactive texts, especially in view of recent technological incorporations, like that of Artificial Intelligence. From the discussion above, it can be concluded that a focus on macro-components of conversations and interactions may help learners relate them

to their background knowledge about the own experiential activity types or to extrapolate them to similar real-life dialogic experiences.

Substantial evidence indicates that certain activity types, genres or speech acts extend beyond the classroom environment. Either because they are the focus of repetitive pedagogical practice, the teachers' preferential speech events or the result of teaching material influence, some conversational genres, like the interviewing speaking tasks or some exam speaking component features, are present in the students' activity type repertoire, with varying degree of linguistic mastery.

As stated above, speech genre learning is not straightforward. Some speech acts, which are the object of most CEFR level descriptors, are easily acquired, but some speech acts (or speech act sets), if not linked to other pragmatic conditions, like the speaker role association, may remain as unfulfilled objectives. Furthermore, when students are not aware of the relationship between those speech acts and the conversational turn management organization or preference, the acquisition of interactional or conversational competence may be limited or create misconceptions about their pragmatic force.

EFL materials or teachers should consider the inclusion of other spoken genres, like gossiping or the diverse narrative text types (Thornbury & Slade, 2006)) in the curriculum. These oral discourse representatives are more attuned to the students' contextual needs and encompass new digital texts like "story-time" TikTok© videos. Gossiping texts involve the usage of multi-party membership linguistic and social strategies, and therefore constitute a valuable source of conversational competence acquisition or practice.

Whether traditional teaching of classroom speaking encompasses more conversational genres than AI-mediated interactions is a potential niche for research. Given that traditional speaking tasks are rooted in EFL teaching materials, the proposed oral genres are circumscribed to the material goals, students' language proficiency levels but also to editing conditions. AI generation of spoken genres is apparently inexhaustible, but the end product is subject to the Large Language Models (or LLMs) that each AI tool incorporates. In effect, an LLM may contain a vast amount of written discourse or oral discourse written representations, so their prompt responses on how to reflect oral interaction or how to develop interactional practices may not be appropriate for the EFL learner.

Traditional and AI-mediated approaches to speaking may purport to remedy the learners' unsuccessful knowledge or lack of competence regarding interaction micro- and macro-components. But textbook-based dialogue characters and some speaking tasks may end up turning them into archetypes rather than promoting interactions that recognize them as individuals with diverse linguistic and socio-cultural identities. Most AI bot – human interactions, on the other hand, display features of interactionist approaches (comprehension checks, clarification requests, recasts) and even CA and classroom discourse features.

But AI tools are exceedingly topic-dependent and there is absence of training on activity type recognition or analysis. Human-bot interactions can be considered a NS-NNs dyad, representing a potential means to enhance language acquisition. However, a NNS user-EIL/EFL NNS bot dyad is currently not feasible, as there are no existing bots which can interact with a student while adopting a EIL/EFL linguistic competence.

Although the influence of AI tools on classroom-based speaking tasks may be limited, educators are advised to promote a critical adoption of these technologies, both in classroom-based and out-

of-class scenarios, rather than disregarding the unavoidable pervasiveness of AI tool usage in real life and pedagogic settings. Ultimately, their primary influence may stem from developing specific linguistic repertoires or interactional competence strategies, thereby indirectly facilitating speaking task completion.

Finally, integrating traditional teaching theories with innovative technology may complementarily enhance students' language learning experiences. In this sense the combination of traditional and innovative tools which tap into the students' communicative interests and needs, both in classroom-based and out-of-class interactions may contribute significantly to the development of their interactional competence.

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