



**Amsterdam University  
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*Centre for Applied Research in Education*

# **Effects of language-oriented vs interaction-oriented instruction on pre-vocational learners' EFL oral skills**

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# COMMUNICATIVE (INTERACTIONAL) ABILITY

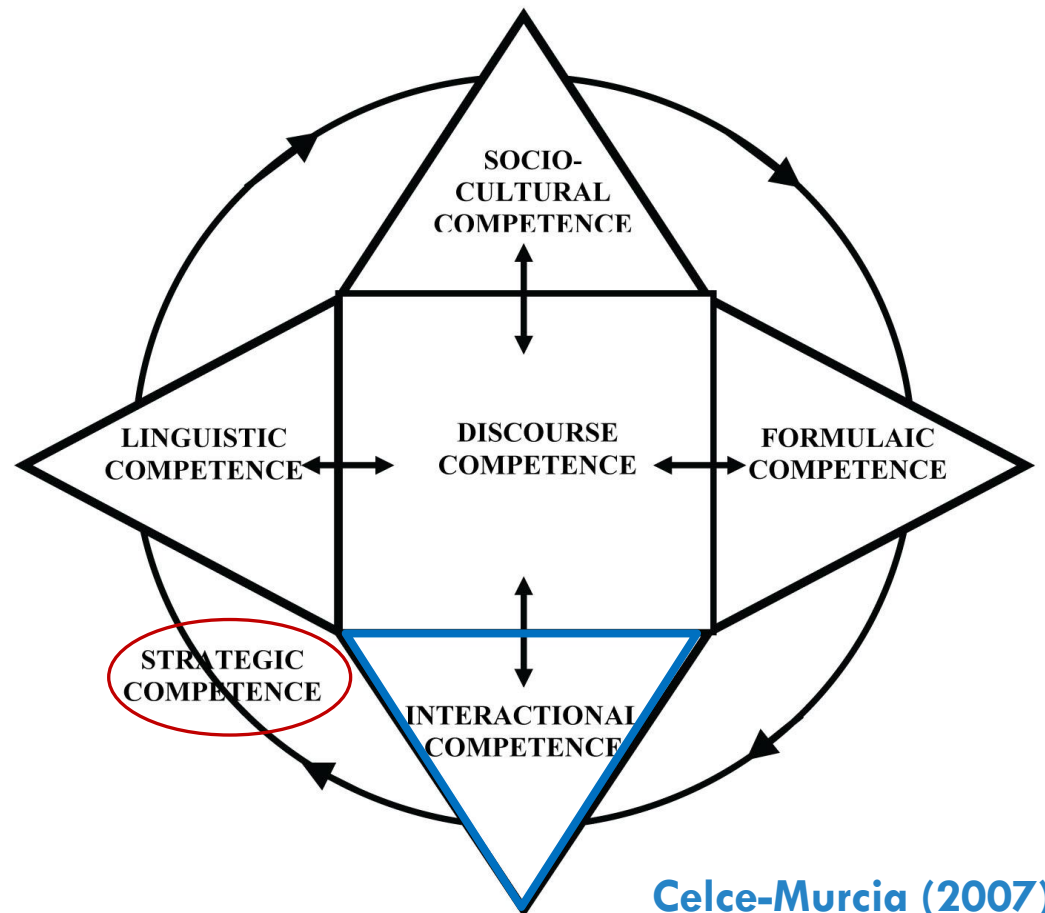
“The ability to convey and understand communicative intent...”

## Self-supporting

- compensation
- meaning negotiation

## Other-supporting

- adjust to listener's understanding



Celce-Murcia (2007)

# CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

## EFL teachers

- report feeling insecure about teaching oral skills
  - creating life-like situations that generate genuine interaction
  - methodological tools to *develop* oral skills
  - little guidance from course books

## Pre-vocational learners

- require strong interaction skills for future professional purposes
- underprepared for functional speaking in professional contexts
- pre-vocational training does not seem to transfer to vocational training

# EFL COURSE BOOKS

## ALMOST ALWAYS

Focus on language structures

Accurate language use

Prepared speech

Pre-structured, closed tasks

Generic language use situations

Integrated approach to speaking

## ALMOST NEVER

Focus on interactional strategies

Communicative success

Spontaneous interaction

Free speech; information gap tasks

Specific language use situations

Specific attention for speaking

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does receiving **specific** training in EFL oral interaction improve pre-vocational learners' ability to interact in dialogic speech tasks, compared to business-as-usual EFL instruction?
2. If so, what **type** of programme is most effective: language-oriented programmes, or interaction-oriented programmes with or without explicit strategies training?
3. Does the effect of speaking instruction received in a professional context **transfer** to performance in personal contexts?

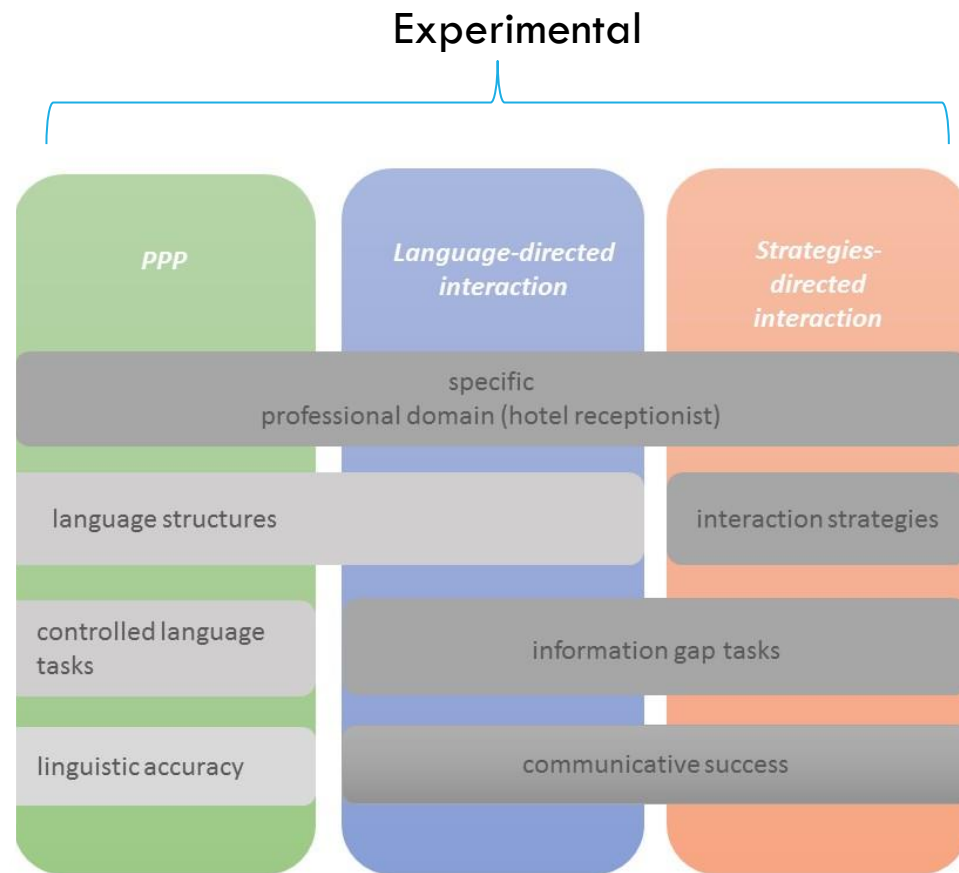
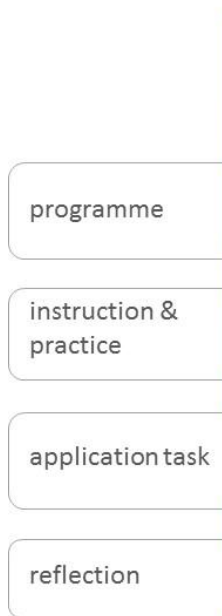
# PARTICIPANTS

- Three comprehensive schools in the Netherlands
- Pre-vocational learners ( $n = 199$ )
- Age 14-15
- ISCED level 2, CEFR A2
- Year 3 of a four-year Business & Administration programme in The Netherlands.

# DESIGN

- Controlled experimental design
- Pre-tests (Vocabulary and Experience)
- Post-tests (6 validated interactive speech tasks)
- Random allocation within classes to
  1. PPP ( $n=52$ )
  2. Language-directed Interaction ( $n=50$ )
  3. Strategies-directed Interaction ( $n=53$ ).
- Two intact classes assigned to
  4. Business-as-usual group ( $n=44$ )

# CONDITIONS





# CONTROLLED LANGUAGE TASKS

## Business-as-usual

### Xpress yourself!

A Complete the conversation. Match the numbers 1 – 8 with the letters a – h. Fill in the letters.

- Allison** Hey. Can I come in?  
**Adam** No. ...**1**...  
**Allison** Please? I just want to help.  
**Adam** Help? ...**2**...  
**Allison** Well, I heard a rumour about someone who's doing really badly at school.  
**Adam** ...**3**... Thanks!  
**Allison** You can talk to me. ...**4**...  
**Adam** I don't need anyone to listen. I don't have anything to say.  
**Allison** I won't tell anyone. I won't ...**5**...  
**Adam** I don't believe you.  
**Allison** I promise! Cross ...**6**...  
**Adam** Well, anyway, I'm not the one ...**7**... It's Greg.  
**Allison** So it's Greg? That's a shame. ...**8**...  
**Adam** Me too.

- a who will still be in class 9 next year.  
 b What, and you thought of me! \*  
 c Permission refused.  
 d I'd hate to be in his shoes.  
 e breathe a word.  
 f What do you mean, help? I don't need any help.  
 g I'll listen sympathetically.  
 h my heart.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

B Now have the conversation with a classmate. Finished? Switch roles.

## PPP

Hello there. Are you being served?



Not yet, no. I was thinking of buying a jigsaw for my daughter, but I can't decide whether I should get this 2D of Holland, or the 3D Windmill.

### Compares 2D to 3D jigsaw

#### Number of pieces

Well, the 3D Windmill has \_\_\_\_\_ more pieces than the 2D.

#### Ease

But it's not an easy jigsaw. In fact, the 3D jigsaw is \_\_\_\_\_ than the 2D of Holland.

#### Age

This shows that the 3D Windmill is meant for \_\_\_\_\_ children than the 2D of Holland. In fact, it's a 12+ jigsaw.

	2D	3D
Pieces	150	260
Ease	★	★★★
Age	6+	12+

She's twelve, that's no problem. The Windmill sounds lovely. But is it not terribly expensive?

### Pitches 3D jigsaw

Yes, it's a little more expensive.

#### Beautiful

But when it's made, it's \_\_\_\_\_ beautiful souvenir of Holland.

#### Interesting

And with so many pieces, it's \_\_\_\_\_ interesting!



Yes, I guess you're right. It would be a much better gift for her. OK, I'll take the Windmill.

### Closes sale

#### Good choice

That is definitely \_\_\_\_\_ choice you could make!

Would you like me to wrap the present for you?

Yes, please. Thanks very much.

### Closes conversation

No problem. I'm glad I could help.

# INFORMATION GAP TASKS

## Speech Card RECEPTIONIST

You will play the role of **receptionist**.

A customer wants to buy a jigsaw for their niece. You have a 3D jigsaw for sale. Once the jigsaw has been made, you can play with it forever! This is the jigsaw you want to pitch to your customer.

Compare the two jigsaws overleaf, and persuade the customer to buy the 3D Windmill.

- First make sure that you know all the facts.  
Study the picture overleaf..
- Now check that you have understood all the information.  
Circle the correct answers below, and finish the sentence.

### Checklist

- The 2D jigsaw has *far more / far fewer* pieces than the 3D Windmill.
- Completing the 3D Windmill is a fair bit *more / less difficult* than completing the 2D jigsaw.
- The 2D jigsaw is suitable for *much younger / older* children than the 3D Windmill.
- The 2D jigsaw helps you learn *a great deal more / less* about The Netherlands.
- Some parts of the 3D Windmill *can / cannot* move when the wind is right.
- The 3D Windmill is *a good deal more / less* expensive than the 2D jigsaw.  
A good reason to buy it is .....


→ Now you are ready to do the task.


## JIGSAWS

€ 15,-


100

6+





A great way to learn the capital cities!



€ 30,-

216

10+

# ENHANCED INFORMATION GAP TASKS

## Compensation

Student A asks B after familiar concept for which word is unknown.



## Meaning negotiation

Student A asks B a question that contains an unknown word.

### WISHLIST

#### You want to buy a present

- that matches your parent's old-fashioned (= ouderwets) house.
- that your mother can use every day.
- of very good quality.
- .....



#### You want to know

▽ what the clock's **hands**\* are made of.

*\* zorg dat je het woord **hands** in ieder geval gebruikt. Alleen als je klasgenoot om verduidelijking vraagt, mag je een omschrijving geven. Kijk hiervoor goed naar het plaatje. Bereid de omschrijving vast voor.*

## Audience awareness

Student A en B are given conflicting information (e.g. about the price of a product).

# INTERVENTION

## **Lesson series *Hotel Magnolia***

- 9 weeks
- 3 blocks: instruction, advice, sales
- 2 post-tests after each block

# MEASURES

## 1. ORAL INTERACTIONAL ABILITY

*Professional and personal interactive speech task after lesson 3, 6 and 9 (six tasks in total)*

- ❖ Task Achievement (professional:  $\alpha = .76$ ; personal  $\alpha = .79$ )
- ❖ Linguistic Accuracy (professional .81; personal .83)
- ❖ Interactional Ability (professional .69; personal .77)

## 2. VOCABULARY

*Peabody Picture Vocabulary test adapted for L2 use (46 items,  $\alpha = .85$ )*

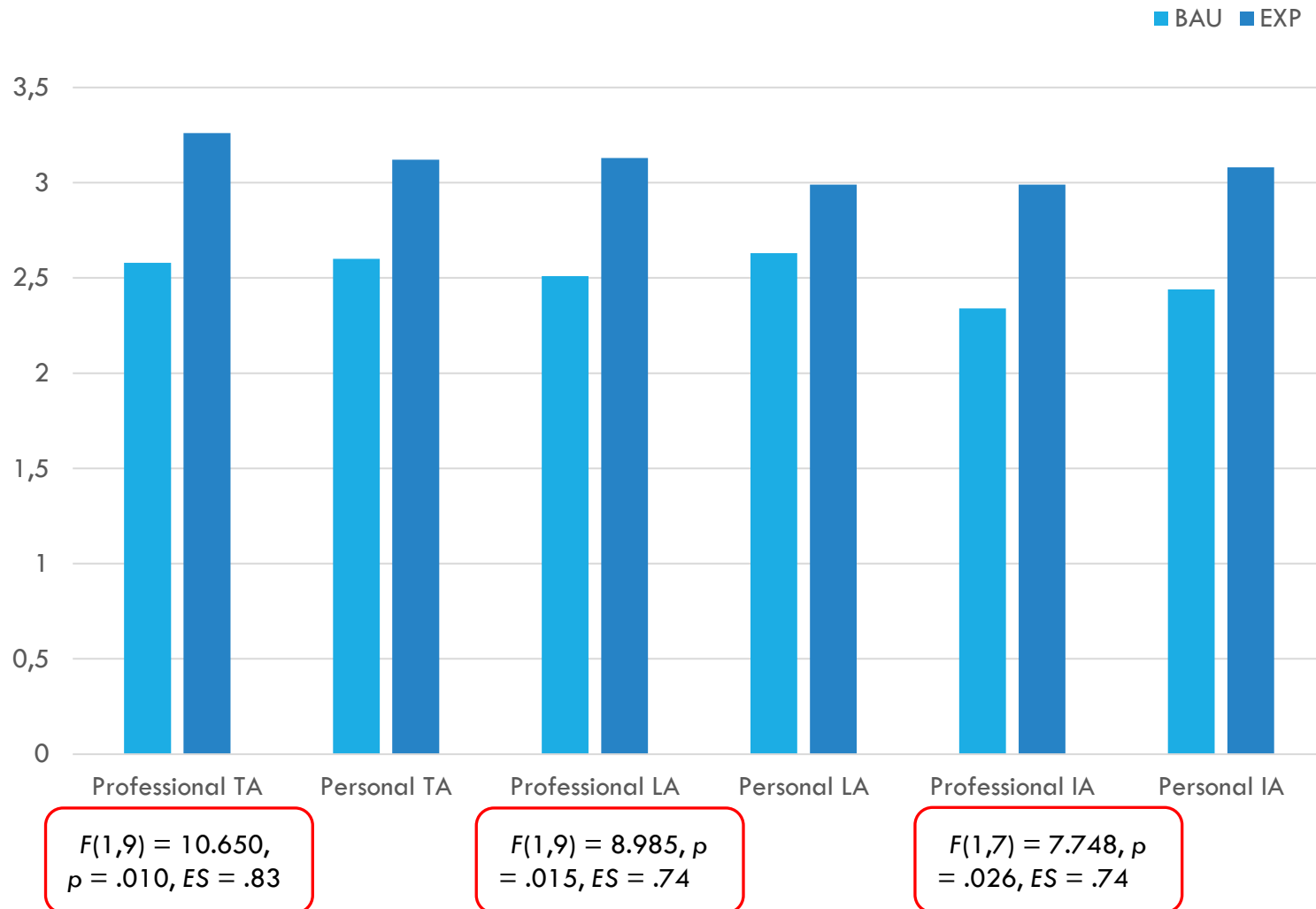
## 3. EXPERIENCE

*Questionnaire indicating level of experience in interacting in English in- and outside of classroom, with adults and peers (6 items,  $\alpha = .73$ )*

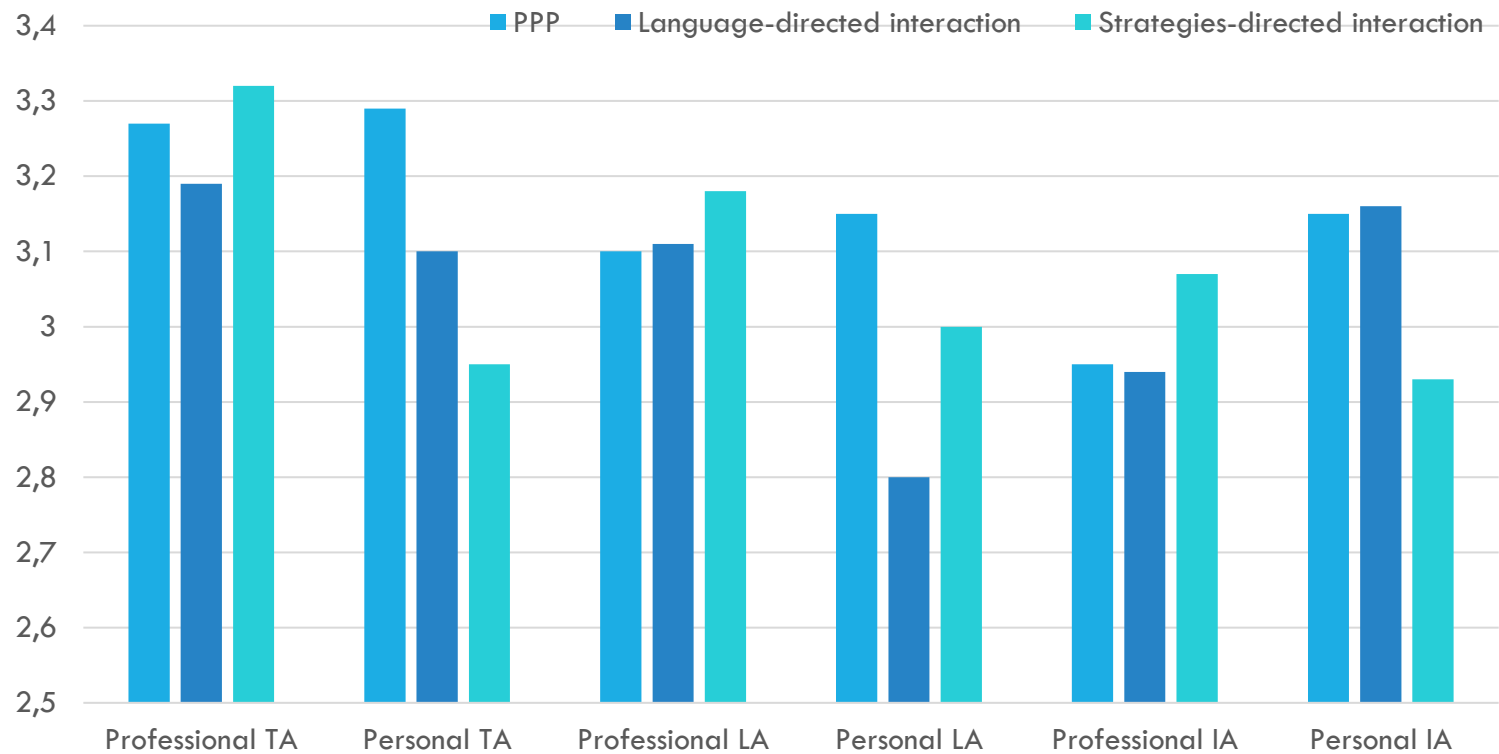
# ANALYSIS

- Multilevel ANCOVA
  - ❖ DV *Professional Task Achievement, Linguistic Accuracy, Interactional Ability; Personal Task Achievement, Linguistic Accuracy, Interactional Ability;*
  - ❖ IV *Condition*
  - ❖ CV *Vocabulary, Experience*
  - ❖ Random factor *Class*
- Analysis 1: Main effects (BAU vs EXPERIMENTAL)
- Analysis 2: Differential effects (EXPERIMENTAL)

# RESULTS ANALYSIS 1



# RESULTS ANALYSIS 2





# CONCLUSIONS

1. Receiving **specific** instruction in EFL oral interaction **positively** affects pre-vocational learners' ability to interact in dialogic speech tasks.
2. Language-oriented and interaction-oriented instruction are **equally successful** in developing EFL interactional ability.
  - Developing L2 interactional ability requires focused attention (Schmidt, 1990)
  - Effects of practice are mode-dependent (DeKeyser, 2007)
  - Developing interactional ability is not dependent on instruction, but on repeated practice of language (and strategies) retrieval (Thornbury, 2005)
3. **Gains of instruction in a professional context do not transfer to personal contexts.**
  - Sustainable transfer of learnt skills requires training context and language use situation should be closely matched (Lightbown, 2008)
  - Language learning operates differently in different discourse domains (Long, 2015)
  - Oral performance is context-bound\* (Bygate, 1987) →

Trend effect for *Interactional Ability* suggests transferability to other domains.

# LIMITATIONS

- Curriculum implementation
  - ❖ Limited implementation of second speech task in both interaction groups.
  - Effects of fully implemented programmes should be compared to gain more in-depth understanding of interaction-oriented teaching.
- Group sizes
  - ❖ Discrepancy group size BAU (19-25) and EXP (5-8) conditions.
  - Conducting the study with more comparable group sizes would help demonstrate whether the obtained results are retained under such circumstances.
- Delayed effects were not measured (John Morris)

# IMPLICATIONS

Practitioners could

- complement their course book-based curricula with **focused speaking practice**;
- capitalise on **curricular flexibility** by using both controlled, language-oriented speech tasks *and* information gap tasks;
- Ensure **contextualised skills development** by adding a selection of vocation-specific activities that match their learners' future language use situations.

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# CORRESPONDENCE

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Scripted tasks comprising standardized linguistic and interactional challenges (Van Batenburg et.al., 2016)

	<b>Block 1 Instruction</b>	<b>Block 2 Advice</b>	<b>Block 3 Sales</b>
	<i>Explain to me...</i>	<i>Advise me on...</i>	<i>Convince me to...</i>
<b>Professional</b>	how to open my door using a hotel key card	the hotel room I should choose	buy a gift in the hotel gift shop
<b>Personal</b>	how to bake apple cake	the film I should see	buy your second hand headphones

# SEQUENCING PPP & IMPLICIT INTERACTION

1. modelling



Paul Jennings: Hmm. We don't cycle that often in England. We're not as experienced as you are. Cycling in the city center might be too difficult for us. Is there another option?  
Jim: Yes, if you are looking for a more quiet trip, I recommend the countryside in the north of Amsterdam. You can take your bike on the ehh... - wat is de veerpont ook alweer? - the boat that goes back and forth all day?

2. noticing



3. presentation



4. practice

5. speech task

6. reflection

7. speech task

8. reflection

		True	False
1	I recommend you use one of the larger banks. <i>Jim zegt dat als hij Tom was, hij een grotere bank zou gebruiken.</i>		
2	If I were you, I would take some cash with you from America. <i>Jim zegt dat het verplicht is om contant geld bij je te hebben.</i>		
3	I strongly advise you not to use an agent. <i>Jim raadt het gebruik van wisselkantoren sterk af.</i>		
4	You'd better wear a money clip. <i>Jim probeert Tom over te halen om een geldclip te gebruiken.</i>		

# SEQUENCING EXPLICIT INTERACTION

1. modelling →

2. noticing

3. **speech task** (subconscious attempt)

4. reflection →

4. awareness-raising

5. presentation

6. practice

7. **speech task** (conscious attempt)

8. reflection

Paul Jennings: Hmm. We don't cycle that often in England. We're not as experienced as you are. Cycling in the city center might be too difficult for us. Is there another option?

Jim: Yes, if you are looking for a more quiet trip, I recommend the countryside in the north of Amsterdam. You can take your bike on the ehh... - wat is de veerpont ook aiweer? the boat that goes back and forth all day?

c. Jim moet uitleggen hoe je vanuit de stad naar Amsterdam Noord komt. Hoe doet hij dat?

Zet een kruisje bij het juiste antwoord.

- Jim zegt gewoon in het Engels dat je de veerpont moet nemen.
- Jim weet het woord voor veerpont niet, dus hij vertelt het maar niet.
- Jim weet het woord voor veerpont niet, dus hij vertelt wat een veerpont doet.



Begrijpt Paul wat Jim bedoelt?

Ja / nee, want.....



# COMPENSATION STRATEGIES

Leg uit **hoe het eruit ziet**  
*It looks like a duck but it's white and it's bigger (zwaan)*

Leg uit **waar je het voor kunt gebruiken**  
*You can put tea or coffee in it to keep it hot for a long time (thermosfles)*

Leg uit **hoe het werkt of wat er gebeurt**  
*It becomes water (smelten)*

Leg uit **waar je het kunt vinden**  
*You can find them on the beach (schelpen)*

Leg uit met een **tegenovergesteld woord**  
*He's not happy (sad)*  
Blij is het tegenovergestelde van verdrietig, iemand die verdrietig is, is dus niet blij.

Leg het uit **met een voorbeeld**  
*When you can't sleep because it's your birthday tomorrow and you know that you will get presents (excited)*

Leg het uit met een **algemener woord** of een woord **dat ongeveer hetzelfde betekent**  
*I gave the animal a bone (hond)*

BORING



Truc 1: tegenovergesteld woord

.....

Truc 2: voorbeeld

.....

CARROT



Truc 1: algemeen woord

.....

Truc 2:

.....



# MEANING NEGOTIATION

## SIGNAL

Apologise and say **what** the problem is:

- *I'm sorry, I **didn't hear** what you said.*
- *I'm afraid that was **too fast** for me.*
- *Apologies, sir, but I **don't know what** .... **means**.*
- *Sorry, miss, I'm what **not sure what you mean by**...*

## SOLUTION

Say what you need to **solve** the problem:

- *Could you **repeat** that, please?*
- *Could you **speak more slowly**, please?*
- *Could you **explain** .... to me, please?*
- *Could you say I **tell me more** about ....., please?*
- *Could you **give an example** of ....., please?*
- *Perhaps you could **describe** .....*

# MEANING NEGOTIATION



Je moet je kamer nog opruimen, maar je weet niet waar je de spullen moet laten. Jouw klasgenoot weet dat wel.  
Stel alle vragen die nodig zijn om de spullen hieronder op de juiste plek te krijgen.  
Gaat het je lukken?



Je klasgenoot moet zijn/haar kamer opruimen, maar weet niet waar hij/zij de spullen moet opbergen. Jij weet dat gelukkig wel. Beantwoord zijn / haar vragen op de volgende manier:

1. Geef eerst gewoon de aanwijzingen die hieronder staan. Je ziet hier ook hoe je de woorden moet uitspreken.
2. Alleen als jouw klasgenoot om hulp vraagt, geef je die. Je kan dan bijvoorbeeld de zin herhalen, langzamer praten, de moeilijk woorden omschrijven of extra informatie geven.



## Aanwijzingen

- Put the **teddy bear** on the **top bunk** [top bank]
- Put your **socks** in the **chest of drawers** [tjest of drawwers]
- Put your **shoes** on the **rug** [rak]