Conversation Strategies and Communicative Competence

Christian Jones

CANDLIN
& MYNARD

Appendix 3A

Materials

Material 1

Conversation strategy: Managing your turn

1. Think of words adjectives and nouns connected to the weather, e.g., 'heavy rain,' 'deep snow' etc. Make a list with a partner.
2. Do people commonly talk about the weather in your first language? What do they say? Discuss with a partner.
3. Here is an example of a British chat about the weather (based on a sample from the spoken section of the BYU BNC https://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/). How is this different to your conversation?

    > *A It's mild today, isn't it?*
    > *B. Yeah*

4. You are going to look at a text where two speakers are talking about the weather. It is in a mixed-up order. Put it together so it makes sense. The complete extract is on the next page for you to check. This is taken from a book by Jonathan Coe, a modern British novelist.

    > A. It's my favourite sort.'
    >
    > C. 'I don't mind summer rain.
    >
    > F. I remember that she was frowning, and pondering these words, and then she announced:
    >
    > B. 'Your favourite sort of rain?' said Thea.
    >
    > E. 'Well, I like the rain before it falls.'
    >
    > D. In fact I like it.

(Complete extract)

'I don't mind summer rain. In fact I like it. It's my favourite sort.'
'Your favourite sort of rain?' said Thea. I remember that she was

frowning, and pondering these words, and then she announced: 'Well, I like the rain before it falls.'

— Jonathan Coe, The Rain Before it falls

Extract from Coe (2007, pp. 161–2).

> 'I don't mind summer rain.
>
> In fact I like it.
>
> It's my favourite sort."
>
> 'Your favourite sort of rain?' said Thea.
>
> I remember that she was frowning, and pondering these words, and then she announced:
>
> 'Well, I like the rain before it falls.'

5. How did you decide on the order? Discuss as a group.
6. How do you know this is taken from a novel?
7. What does the speaker mean when they say 'the rain before it falls'? Do you have a favourite sort of rain? What kind of people do you think these speakers are? Would you like to meet them?
8. Find and underline 'in fact'. Why does the speaker use this? What does it mean? Can we use this at the start of a conversation e.g. 'In fact, it's mild today'?
   Do you use this in English? Do you have an equivalent in your first language?
9. Find and underline 'well'. Why does the speaker use this here? What does it mean? Do you use this in English? Do you have an equivalent in their L1? Both 'in fact' and 'well' are commonly used when we want to organise what we are saying in conversations. We can use 'well' to give an unexpected answer or when we do not wish to say 'yes' or 'no.' 'In fact' can be used to give more information about something we have just said.
10. Practice #1 Choose 'in fact' or 'well' to the replies in these short conversations:
    A.
    Do you like cold weather?
    Well/In fact it's ok I guess but I prefer warmer weather.

B.
Do you enjoy watching films?
Not really, no. **Well/In fact**, the last time I went to the cinema was about 10 years ago.
Really? That's a long time.

C
Do you live near here?
Well/In fact, quite near I guess. **Well/In fact** it's about twenty minutes by bus.

D
Do you tend to go out much at weekends?
Not really. How about you?
No, I tend to stay at home. **Well/In fact,** I can't remember the last time I went out.

11. Practice #2
    Ask each other the questions above. Give true answers and use 'well' or 'in fact' when you need to.
12. Go back to the conversation. Change the conversation as if you are the speakers. You can use the vocabulary from the start of the class if you wish to, e.g.,
    I don't like really heavy rain. In fact, I hate it etc.
    Then act this out for the class.

Material 2

Conversation strategy: Showing good listenership

1. Think of a good or bad meal you have had. It could be at home, when eating out or at a friend's house. Prepare to tell your partner about it. Write up to ten key words on a piece of paper to help you. The teacher will help you with vocabulary.
2. Tell your partner about this meal. S/he will also tell you about a good or bad meal s/he has had. Ask each other any questions you like as you listen.
3. Compare and discuss – what was similar about your stories? What was different? Think of three similarities and three differences.
4. Tell the class what these were.
5. Now listen to a similar conversation. What is different about this story compared to yours?
6. Now listen again and look at the transcript as you listen. What language is different compared to the language you used?

Transcript

A. *So, can you remember a good or bad meal you've had?*
B. *Well, it's tricky err…to remember good meals! I can definitely remember a really bad one!*
A. *Uh huh.*
B. *Yeah, it was in London, recently.*
A. *Right.*
B. *Basically, the food was quite expensive and took a long time to arrive. I mean, not forever but at least 45 minutes.*
A. *Really? That's bad. Why was that?*
B. *Well, err, not sure but it was quite busy. But when it finally came it was not very good – the portions were really small and it tasted, you know, salty. We were pretty disappointed.*
A. *Yeah, I can imagine. That's disappointing.*
B. *Anyway, what about you? Have you got an experience like this that you can remember?*
A. *As you said, it's, sort of easy to remember bad ones! I can remember some awful meals, for sure!*

7. Notice how speaker A shows she is listening to speaker B. Underline words and phrases which are used. Are these the same in your first language?
8. List words or phrases here which show:

We are listening and understanding: *Uh huh,*

We are listening and want to make a comment about what the other speaker is saying, to show surprise, for example:

9. Which of these phrases do you use when listening? Why do we need to use them?
10. Practice #1
Add some words or phrases to show speaker B is listening and interested.

A. *So, can you remember a good or bad meal you've had?*
B. *Well, it's tricky. But I can definitely remember one good meal I had recently. We went out for my birthday to a new place in town.*
A. _____
B. *Yeah, it was a bit expensive but well worth it and it was a special occasion.*
A. _____. *What kind of food was it?*
B. *Italian. Mainly pizzas but they also had pasta dishes.*
A. _____. *What did you have?*
B. *A pizza and a salad. Sounds basic but it was really good.*
A. _____. *I really like Italian food. Would you go there again?*
B. *Definitely. I can send you a link to the website if you like.*
A. *Thanks, that would be great!*

11. Practice #2
Work with a different partner. Tell them about a good or bad meal you have had, as you did at the start of the class. Show you are listening/interested and make comments on what they say.

12. What was similar about your stories? What was different? Think of three similarities and three differences.