

HOW SPEAKING IS TAUGHT – AN OVERVIEW OF APPROACHES TO TEACHING SPEAKING

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Abstract

Oral dexterity, one of the most important aims learners and teachers strive for, is one of the main reasons students start learning a foreign language, yet it is also one of the most challenging and demanding of skills to develop. Although the development of speaking, has not always been the focus of teaching, current approaches to foreign language learning and teaching consider communicative competence to be one of the essential competences of an active agent of a human society.

The author of the paper provides a brief overview of approaches to teaching speaking. She introduces the topic by defining a notion of communicative competence as a concept including both static and dynamic parts. Further, she explores the Levelt's model of speech production (Levelt, 1995) so as to describe processes speakers' mind engages in while speaking. In the second section, she examines models of communicative competence suggested by linguists, methodologists, and practitioners who address linguistic and extralinguistic features involved in speaking a foreign language. In the final part of the paper, she tackles the area of direct and indirect approaches to teaching speaking with an emphasis on current trends that highlight a combination of features of both direct and indirect approaches. She concludes by giving an account of direct approaches focused on the accuracy of speaking and indirect approaches aimed at the development of fluency in speaking.

Key Words: Speaking Skills, Communicative Competence, Direct vs. Indirect Approaches to Speaking

Abstrakt

Zručnosť rozprávania, jeden z najdôležitejších cieľov pre študentov a učiteľov, je jedným z hlavných dôvodov prečo sa študenti rozhodnú učiť cudzí jazyk, ale je to taktiež jedna z najťažších a najnáročnejších zručností. Aj keď rozvoj zručnosti rozprávania nebol vždy hlavným cieľom učenia sa cudzieho jazyka, súčasné prístupy k vyučovaniu a učeniu sa jazyka považujú komunikatívnu kompetenciu za jednu zo základných kompetencií aktívneho aktéra ľudskej spoločnosti.

Autorka príspevku podáva stručný prehľad prístupov k vyučovaniu hovorenia. Tému uvádza definovaním pojmu komunikatívna kompetencia ako konceptu, ktorý obsahuje statickú a dynamickú časť. Ďalej opisuje procesy prebiehajúce v mysli hovoriaceho v procese rozprávania prostredníctvom Leveltovho modelu produkcie reči (Levelt, 1995). V druhej časti rozoberá modely komunikatívnej kompetencie navrhnuté lingvistami, metodológmi a praktikmi, ktorí sa zaoberajú lingvistickými a extralingvistickými charakteristikami hovorenia v cudzom jazyku. V záverečnej časti sa autorka zaoberá tematikou priamych a nepriamych prístupov k vyučovaniu zručnosti rozprávania s dôrazom na súčasné trendy zdôrazňujúce kombináciu charakteristík tak priamych ako aj nepriamych prístupov. Záverečnú časť uzatvára stručným opisom priamych prístupov zameraných na správnosť rozprávania a nepriamych prístupov zacielených na rozvoj plynulosti rozprávania.

Kľúčové slová: zručnosť rozprávania, komunikatívna kompetencia, priame a nepriame prístupy k rozvoju rozprávania v cudzom jazyku

Introduction

Learners often consider speaking the most demanding skill when learning a foreign language. The majority of them starts learning a language being motivated by the ability to speak, get their message across and interact with other speakers of a target language. They aim for accurate and fluent speech production that is appropriate to a given situation. Although speaking seems to be an effortless task, it is in fact cognitively highly demanding process involving ‘the myriad complex processes’ working interactively (Goh & Burns, 2012, p.35)

Historically, teaching speaking has not always been the main objective of language learning and teaching, but it is emphasised in current approaches and it is the skill that learners and teachers strive for and struggle with most often.

1 A model of speaking production

An advance of science and development of interdisciplinary branches, such as applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics and neuropsychology brought new insight into second language acquisition as well as foreign language learning (Lojová, 2005, pp. 16-17, 25). Nowadays much more is known about the functions and characteristics of the brain than at the beginning of the last century. Thanks to new technology, Magnetic Resonance Imaging, measuring electric activity of the brain and Positron Emission Tomography enabling scientists to observe the brain activity and notice functional changes in the brain directly during a particular behaviour, we are gaining invaluable information, which can help us facilitate and enhance processes involved in teaching and learning a foreign language (Lojová, 2005, pp. 43, 46, 76).

To explain cognitive processes in speaking, methodologists (Goh & Burns, 2012; Thornbury, 2005; Walker & White, 2013) have used a model of speech production developed by Levelt (1995). The model consists of three stages: **1 conceptualisation, 2 formulation, and 3 articulation** and the ever-present process of **self-monitoring**. As Goh and Burns (2012, p. 36) emphasise, it is important to remember that all these stages interact with one another, may overlap and recur during speaking. Now it is known, that this happens when ‘interconnected neural networks in the brain are activated at about the same time’ (as cited by Bechtel & Abrahamsen, 1991 in Goh & Burns, 2012).

The following section briefly explains each stage of the process drawing from Levelt’s (1995), Goh and Burns’ (2012, pp. 37-40) and Thornbury’s (2005, pp. 3-6) insight. As they (Levelt, 1995; Goh and Burns 2012; Thornbury, 2005) elaborate, **conceptual preparation or conceptualisation** is a beginning stage during which the speaker plans what they are going to say in terms of the topic, or information they wish to say as well as the purpose of a message and a discourse type (Thornbury, 2005, p.3). Here they rely on their long-term memory and the stored knowledge about the world (the topic, language, context). Levelt (1995, 17) also highlights the importance of a perspective of a speaker taken in a conversation. Speakers, including language learners, have to think about what they ‘have to say before and while they are saying it’ (Goh &

Burns, p.37). The result of this conceptual preparation is a speaker's message i.e. some conceptual structure that the speaker will formulate (Levelt, 1995).

Once the content has been chosen, the speaker has to make decisions about how to convey their message across, which involves making decisions about discourse structure, grammar and vocabulary (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 38; Thornbury, 2005, pp. 3-5; Levelt, 1995, pp.17-21). During this **formulation process**, the speaker has to attend to grammar and phonology and phonetic encoding (Levelt, 1995). This process seems to be the most challenging for speakers (Levelt, 1995) as they have to enter their internalised system of language and make quick choices of appropriate words, which have to be connected and ordered into intelligible and meaningful utterances. Here learners access their mental lexicon and syntactic knowledge of the language (Levelt, 1995). At the same time, they have to choose an appropriate register and put their utterances into a coherent stretch of speech appropriate for a specific social context relying on their knowledge of a discourse structure (Levelt, 1995, pp.17-21; Thornbury 2005, pp. 3-5). After words with their syntactic characteristics have been selected, speakers' brains have to retrieve phonological codes for each word and utterance, combine them and transform them into actual articulation (Hagoort & Levelt, 2009).

The last stage of the given model, **articulation** is a physiological process during which speakers 'activate and control specific muscle groups of the articulatory system (consisting of the vocal tract, larynx, and lungs)' that allow for the production of sound waves carried to the listener (Goh & Burns, p. 38; Levelt, 1995, p. 21).

This complex set of processes succinctly described above happens very fast, in milliseconds (Hagoort & Levelt, 2009, p. 1). Moreover, all these stages are accompanied by a higher level **process of self-monitoring** (see also Goh & Burns, 2012, p.39; Levelt, 1995, p. 22; Thornbury, 2005, p.6) during which speakers check their speech for accuracy and appropriateness relying on their metalinguistic knowledge (for accuracy) and pragmatic knowledge (for acceptability).

As can be seen from the model of speech production, this process is highly complex and places cognitive demands on speakers. Although advances in science have brought new insights into and shed new light on this complex skill there are still dark places to be explored and questions to be answered. Current research focuses on the relationship between language production and comprehension and 'researchers seem to be in agreement that speech production and comprehension engage skills and representations that are distinct but tightly linked' (Meyer, Heutlig, & Levelt, 2016).

2 What does a speaker need to know?

To answer this question, I will examine models of communicative competence that recent theoretical and empirical research on communicative competence relies on (Bagaric and Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2007) that are the models of Canale and Swain, the model of Bachman and Palmer and the model introduced by the Common European Framework of Reference for

Languages. In addition to that, I will give a brief account of and compare models suggested by other practitioners, namely Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1995; Thornbury 2005; Goh and Burns 2012.

Firstly, there seems to be a need to define **a notion of communicative competence** as there is a distinction in its specification in the academic world (Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell, 1995, p. 6). The term is not easy to define due to the complexity of communication itself. As Gert Rickheit et al. (2008, p.16) point out it is a complex term with a rich internal and external structure that researchers, linguists, and academics have tried to define by breaking it into components and subcomponents with practical applications. For the purpose of this paper, I will provide a brief overview of definitions and models of communicative competence that share more or less the same core competences. These might be labelled differently or might be more specifically defined and broken down to subcompetences depending on authors' applied approach and purpose of the provided model.

I will rely on the definition of the notion of communicative competence put forward by Hymes Dell (1972) and expanded by others (Bachman and Palmer 1996; Canale and Swain, 1980; Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell, 1995, p. 6; Goh and Burns, 2012).

A sociolinguist Dell Hymes (as cited in Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 51) defined the term communicative competence as a reaction to Chomsky's linguistic competence and his competence/performance dichotomy. Hymes (as cited in Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 51) considers performance and competence to be two sides of one coin. Simply put, competence is the ability to use language in communication, while the performance is the observable part of this competence i.e. the actual use of language (see also Rickheit, Strohner, & Vorwerk 2008, p.18; Ślęzak-Świat, 2008). According to Hymes (1972), there is a capacity for performance that he calls an 'ability for the effective use of language in actual communication. This ability consists of both *knowledge about the language and specific skills in using the language* (as cited in Goh and Burns, 2012, p.51).

Canale and Swain (1980, pp. 206-208) later Canale (1983) who expanded the concept suggested by Hymes (1972) in the field of second language learning, understood communicative competence as a system of knowledge. They distinguish three types of knowledge (as cited in Bagaric and Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2007, p. 96) knowledge about the language, knowledge about how to use the language in various social contexts and knowledge about how to combine utterances into larger coherent and cohesive units. Their understanding of the concept differs from Hyme's as they limit it to knowledge (Ślęzak-Świat, 2008, p.17). It seems to have just a static part. Although later, in Canale's (1983) understanding the skill referring to the ability to use language in actual communication is a part of the communicative performance and comprises of the underlying capacity and its performance in real communication. Whilst this framework has been criticized for not including an interactional component of the communication (see also Ślęzak-Świat, 2008; Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei &Thurrell, 1995) as well as for the lack of specification it has undoubtedly made a considerable impact on other models.

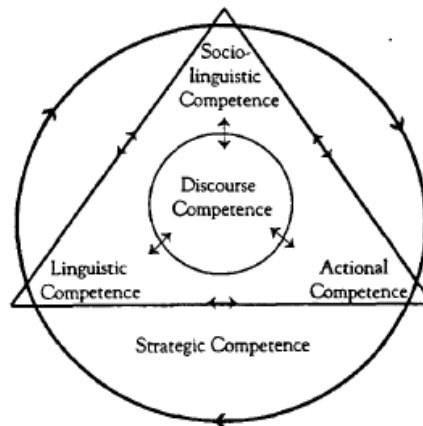
They (Canale and Swain 1980; Canale 1983) specified a number of components of communicative competence that create an interactive system. These include **grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competence**. Grammatical competence is defined as a mastery of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology of a foreign language i.e. the knowledge of the language code (see also Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei &Thurrell, 1995). Discourse competence as the ability to connect ideas into longer coherent and cohesive units and sociolinguistic competence as a mastery of the sociocultural code (Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei &Thurrell, 1995), i. e. norms and rules of speech acts in a social and cultural context of the target language. A second language learner does not only need to know the language, its grammatical structure, but they also need to know how to use the knowledge appropriately to express his or her intended meaning. Finally, they (Canale and Swain 1980; Canale 1983) emphasised the significance of communicative strategies, a set of verbal and non-verbal strategies, helping speakers of a foreign language to achieve their communication aim and overcome obstacles.

This model has been expanded and developed by other researchers (Bachman & Palmer 1996) and Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995) who by and large expanded sociocultural competence and provided a model with more specifically defined components of particular competences. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), communicative language ability comprises of two broad areas: the knowledge and strategic competence. They recognize two kinds of language competence: organizational and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence is related to the ability to control the language structures at the level of sentences or utterances and beyond. It includes grammatical and textual competence that correspond with Canale and Swain's grammatical and discourse competence explained above. Pragmatic knowledge refers to the ability to express and interpret one's intended meaning appropriately, that is as Bagaric and Mihaljevic Djigunovic (2007) put it, the ability for creating and interpreting discourse. It comprises two areas of knowledge: functional and sociolinguistic knowledge. The learner of a second language has to know conventions for language functions and for interpreting illocutionary force of the utterance and discourse, (functional knowledge) as well as the social convention for creating and interpreting utterances appropriately in various social contexts (sociolinguistic knowledge). Their strategic competence refers to metacognitive strategies (Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995) that are goal setting, assessment, and planning of communicative tasks. As can be seen, there are similarities between Bachman and Palmer's (1996) and Canale and Swain's (1983) models.

Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995) argued the theoretical models reflecting the complexity of communicative competence lacked methodological relevance with clear objectives. They (Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1995, p. 17) proposed a more detailed model of a communicative competence illustrated in Figure 1, with discourse competence at the centre of a triangle and sociocultural competence (similar to Bachman and Palmer sociolinguistic knowledge, Canale and Swain's sociolinguistic competence), linguistic and actional competence (similar to Bachman and Palmer grammatical and functional competence and Canale and Swain's grammatical and sociocultural competence) at the points of it. Arrows indicate relations existing

between these components as discourse determines the use of linguistic knowledge (words, grammar) for expressing certain functions in a given context as well as it is formed by all these components. Ever-present is the circle of strategic competence that is ‘the inventory of skills’ (Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995) that a speaker uses to ‘compensate for deficiencies in any of the underlying competences’.

Figure 1 Model of communicative competence suggested by Celcie-Murcia et al.



Source: (Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995, p.10)

Their breaking down of components into subcomponents with clearly defined specifications clearly had practical pedagogical applications, although it was not exhaustive as they themselves claim (Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell 1995, p. 17).

While Thornbury (2005, p. 11) treats speaking as a skill, like driving a car or riding a bike, he (Thornbury, 2005, p. 6), emphasises the importance of the knowledge base relevant to speaking that speakers draw on in the process of communicating. He (Thornbury, 2005, pp.11-24) categorizes this knowledge into extralinguistic knowledge, i.e. the knowledge of the sociocultural norms, culture, topic, the context and relationship to other speakers and linguistic knowledge that comprises of genre, discourse, and pragmatic knowledge. With reference to genre knowledge, he (Thornbury, 2005, p. 13) distinguishes between two main purposes for speaking: transactional and interpersonal (see also Richards, 2008). The former relates to conveying information and exchange of goods and services and the latter to creating and maintaining social relations. These purposes, as he (Thornbury, 2005, p. 14) highlights, generate a huge number of speech events that have developed their own conventional structures, known as genres. Learners need to know the structure of various genres as well as they need to be able to connect and organize utterances (Thornbury, 200, p. 14) into larger coherent and cohesive textual units. This knowledge is defined as discourse competence (see also Canale and Swain, 1983; Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995; Bachman & Palmer 1996).

Similarly to Canale’s (1983) sociocultural knowledge, Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell’s (1995) sociocultural and actional competence, and Bachman and Palmer’s (1996) pragmatic

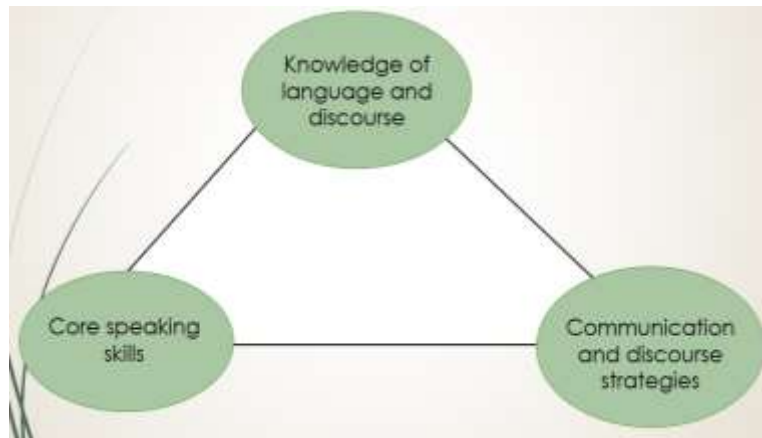
knowledge, Thornbury (200, p.15) defines pragmatic knowledge as the knowledge about how to do things with language while taking into account its context of use, meaning that learners are able to produce and their ability to recognise various speech acts (or functions), adjacency pairs, for example, question and answer and initiate-respond- follow-up, the so-called IRF exchange (Thornbury, 2005, p.17). This knowledge includes learners' awareness of politeness principles in the language and knowledge about what to talk about (the field of the context), of how to express the relationship between speakers (the tenor of the context), and of what channel of communication (mode of the context) to choose (Thornbury, 2005, pp.17-20).

Linguistic knowledge proposed by Thornbury (2005, pp. 20 -21) refers to grammar, vocabulary, and phonology. In relation to grammar, he (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 20-21) emphasises the importance of a distinction between written and spoken grammar for natural sounding speech.

Long-term research and latest developments in language education have resulted in the creation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning teaching, assessment (CEFR, 2001), used in the assessment, learning and teaching of foreign languages worldwide. As it reflects the complexity of language use and current developments it seems relevant to include it here. The framework describes (2001) a model of language use (Using CEFR Principles of Good Practice, 2011, pp. 5-6) based on action-oriented and socio-cognitive approach emphasising cognitive processes in language use as well as highlighting the importance of the context in which the language is used (Using CEFR Principles of Good Practice, 2011, p. 7). Comparably to previously mentioned models, the CEFR (2001, p.108) describes a model of communicative language competence that comprises of three basic components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. These are broken down to subcomponents that are described more specifically. Although the CEFR (2011) is by no means a completed work but rather a work in progress, it provides clearly defined competences and skills that learners need to have in order to accomplish various tasks in real life. Whilst more research and empirical studies are in progress, it relies on a decade of solid research and is thus a good reference for practitioners and teachers.

The last model that seems relevant to this paper is the model described by Goh and Burns (2012, p.53). Based on a holistic approach to language teaching and learning it includes the knowledge of language and discourse, core speaking skills and communication strategies (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 A model of communicative competence suggested by Goh and Burns



Source: Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 53

‘Knowledge of language and discourse encompasses knowledge of structure, meaning and use’ (Go and Burns, 54) (see also Canale and Swain, 1983; Thornbury, 2005; Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995). According to them (Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 55) it includes: lexical, grammatical, phonological and discourse knowledge.

Lexical knowledge – is learner’s mental lexicon or vocabulary they know (productive vocabulary being smaller than receptive). Learners’ mental lexicon comprises of words and their meanings. These include single words as well as the so-called chunks (Thornbury, 2005, p. 25) known as fixed formulaic expressions and idiomatic expressions that enhance learners’ speech (Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 55).

Grammatical knowledge (Goh & Burns, 2012, 54), the internalized linguistic system of the language that enables learners to string the words together into sentences or utterances to express their desired meaning comprises of the knowledge of morphology and syntax of the target language. As they (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 50) point out this is important during the formulation stage as well as self-monitoring in speech processing. Needless to say, that learners of the second language need to know specifics features of spoken grammar to sound natural (see Thornbury, 2005; Hughes, 2011).

Phonological knowledge (Goh & Burns, 2012, 55) – ‘the knowledge of phonology – the sound system of the target language’ that is necessary at three levels of production: words, utterances, and discourse. Speaking a foreign language, learners have to be aware of segmental (micro) – at the level of words, and suprasegmental (macro), beyond the word level – stress, rhythm, intonation, features of speech.

Thornbury (2005, p. 24) considers it to be the lowest level of knowledge learners have to draw on, as the sounds of the words and their meanings are stored in internalized language systems and learners do not always have to make conscious choices to pronounce the words and utterances.

Discourse knowledge (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 56) – the knowledge of the structure of spoken genres that serve different communicative purposes and social contexts (see also Celcie-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell 1995; Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Canale and Swain, 1983 and others). As mentioned above, learners have to be aware of the conventional scripts of speech events and they also have to rely on linguistic resources to produce logical and smoothly running utterances, such as retelling a story, or telling a joke etc. (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 56).

As Goh and Burns (2012, p. 57) maintain all these types of linguistic knowledge are closely linked to speech production and learners draw on it. This clearly has teaching implications and the teacher should use tasks that make realistic demands on this knowledge as well as the tasks that develop learners' existing knowledge (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 57).

This given knowledge specified and categorised by linguists and practitioners more or less in a similar way depending on their view of and approach to language might be considered as a 'static' part of communicative competence. By static, we mean the network connection in the brain created by learning process (Lojová, 2005).

Core speaking skills –learners' knowledge about the language and communication that is put into action in speech production (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 58), is categorized into four broad categories that are then more specified by microskills. Although the list suggested by the authors (Goh & Burns 2012, p. 58) is by no means exhaustive, it might be beneficial for teachers and practitioners. Their view of core speaking skills is illustrated by Table 1 in the Appendix.

Communication strategies (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 67) enable learners 'to overcome lexical gaps, negotiate meaning, repair communication breakdowns, and enhance the discourse that they and their interlocutors are jointly producing.' They (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 63) distinguish two types of strategies with regard to their purpose: avoidance and achievement strategies (see also Dörnyei, 1995; CEFR, 2001). The former ones help learners reduce communication or abandon it if they lack necessary resources. The latter ones help learners get their message across and maximise their speaking opportunity.

The above-mentioned models reflect the complexities of what learners need to know to communicate in a foreign language. Specifications and descriptions of subskills and components that learners draw on appear to be conducive to the process of teaching a foreign language. In spite of the fact that the work on it is by no means exhaustive and empirical studies and research add more knowledge to this area, the awareness of what knowledge and skill base learners rely on when producing a language should improve and enhance the process of teaching speaking. The following section deals with current approaches applied by practitioners.

3 Approaches to teaching speaking

Looking back at the history of language learning methodology, we can see that approaches to teaching speaking skills have reflected the existing theories of and approaches to language and language learning that have not always considered speaking a primary goal (see grammar-translation method, cognitive approaches and comprehension approach).

With reference to theories of second language acquisition and learning, Thornbury (2005; see also Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Brown 2007) highlights three theories of language learning that are relevant to the teaching of speaking: *behaviourist, cognitivist and sociocultural theory*.

Behaviourist theory is based on the belief that the language is learned by ‘forming good habits through reinforcement (Thornbury, 2005, p. 38).’ The elements of learning, labelled presentation, practice and controlled production were used to develop speaking skills. The main aim of the process was to develop automatic habits. Learners were presented a language (listening to a teacher, a taped dialogue) that was practiced by drilling, memorisation and finally performed in the class. This is related to a behaviourist view of mind that is according to Thornbury (2005, p. 39) considered to be a brain that is to be moulded.

Cognitivists (Thornbury, 2005, 38; Lightbown & Spada, 2006, pp. 4-39) view language learners’ minds as a black boxes with information processing capacity and a complex skill like speaking is believed to be developed through stages ranging from controlled to automatic. Learning focuses first on awareness-raising of particular stages of a procedure, then it moves on to integrating newly acquired knowledge to the existing one (proceduralization) via practice and ends by autonomy, the stage in which new language is readily available for use (Thornbury, 2005, p. 38; Lightbown & Spada, 2006, pp. 4-39).

Sociocultural theory (Thornbury, 2005; Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 47) emphasises the sociocultural context in learning and believes learning is mediated through social interaction with other learners. Learners need other-regulation, mediation of someone with better knowledge who provides a supportive framework (scaffold). They interact with peers, teachers etc. and this interaction allows them to jointly construct new knowledge until they appropriate it – make it their own and they are able to function on their own (self-regulation) (Thornbury, 2005:38).

Nowadays the development of speaking skills as a productive skill is largely emphasised and communicative language competences are considered to be key competences in the development of an engaged individuals who are actively involved in a social life and development of ones’ community and society (CEFR, 2001a). The latest advances in discourse analysis, conversational and corpus analysis, as Richards (2008) points out, have revealed a great deal about spoken discourse and the complexity of a spoken interaction (2008, p. 19). ‘The theory of communicative competence prompted proposals for the development of communicative syllabuses, and more recently for task-based and text-based syllabuses and methodologies’ (Thornbury, 2011) that as he (2011) claims should inform approaches to teaching and learning speaking. These range from direct to indirect ones (Burns, 1998 in Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 134; Thornbury and Slade, 2006; Brown, 2007; Richards 2008; Straková, 2014).

3. 1 Direct/controlled vs. indirect/transfer

This distinction relies on the dichotomy of learning vs. acquiring the language with a number of proponents and opponents of both theories of language learning (Lojová, 2005).

Authors (Goh & Burns, 2012, p.134; Thornbury & Slade, 2006; Brown, 2007; Richards, 2008; Straková, 2014) maintain that a **direct approach** focuses on the development of isolated speaking skills, micro-skills (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.276). It is concerned with a structural accuracy and emphasises the use of language forms. It also provides space for language analysis, raising learners' awareness about grammar, discourse structures, and routines (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.276).

An indirect approach (Goh & Burns, 2012, p.134; Thornbury & Slade, 2006; Brown, 2007; Richards, 2008; Straková, 2014), on the other hand, focuses on the development of fluency of speech. It encourages learners to use language by engaging them in communicative activities (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 134). It is believed that learners will acquire speaking skills by communicating with each other (see also Thornbury & Slade, 2006, p. 275) and they will be able to transfer those skills to real-life situations (Goh & Burns, 2012, p.135).

Direct and indirect approaches to learning correspond with a part versus whole dichotomy with the first one concentrating on the components of language and the latter one focusing on a context of use (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 279).

There are proponents of both approaches (Thornbury & Slade, 2006, p. 276). According to Goh and Burns (2012, p.135), there are limitations in both approaches. As the direct approach does not take into account that the accurate use of language form is developed through face-to-face communication. The indirect approach, on the other hand, neglects the development of accuracy.

The latest development in learning and teaching speaking has shaped current thinking emphasising a **combination of features in both approaches**.

Recently Thornbury (2005, p. 11) advocated a **general approach to teaching speaking** skills. He proposed (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 40-111) three stages of learning speaking: awareness-raising, during which students familiarise themselves with new knowledge. Appropriation, during which students integrate the new knowledge into the existing one and autonomy, allowing students to use this newly constructed knowledge in real-life situations without any assistance. During the appropriation stage, that he labels (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 63-88) practiced control, learners are provided a supportive framework in which they can practice control over their speaking skills. Activities at this stage are typically used within direct and indirect approaches.

Teaching conversation Thornbury and Slade (2006, p. 295) advocate for **an indirect approach plus** that allows a lot of opportunities for exposure to and participation in authentic conversation and explicit instruction. This view of teaching conversation may be applied to teaching speaking in general and it is supported by other authors (Pokrivčáková, 2014; Thornbury & Slade, 2006; p. 296). Although called indirect approach plus it encompasses activities typical for direct approaches, i.e. the ones' focused on language form.

All in all, good practice in teaching speaking advocates for an approach that combines features of direct and indirect approaches. In practice, this is reflected in coursebooks with one or the other approach prevailing (Goh & Burns, 2012, p.137).

Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper is to provide a theoretical overview of three areas related to teaching oral speaking proficiency. It looks into what is happening in learners' mind when they speak by exploring Levelt's model of speech production. Furthermore, it answers the question what learners need to know to get their message across by examining models of communicative competence introduced by practitioners, methodologists, and researchers. Finally, it briefly describes the current state of approaches to teaching speaking in a foreign language. The theoretical account of the concept of speaking a foreign language will underpin the author's research interest in enhancing the development of speaking skills by using technologically-enhanced environment, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

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Appendix:

Table 1 Core speaking skills suggested by Goh and Burns

Core skills		Specific skills
a Pronunciation	Produce the sounds of the target language at the segmental and suprasegmental level	<p>Articulate the vowels and consonances and blended sounds of English clearly.</p> <p>Assign word stress in prominent words to indicate meaning.</p> <p>Use different intonation patterns to communicate new and old information.</p>
b Speech function	Perform a precise communicative function or speech act	<p>Request: permission, help, etc.</p> <p>Express: encouragement, thanks, etc.</p> <p>Explain: reasons, purposes, etc.</p> <p>Give: instructions, directions, etc.</p> <p>Offer: advice, condolences, etc.</p> <p>Describe: events, people, etc.</p> <p>Others.</p>
c Interaction management	Regulate communications or discussions during interactions	<p>Initiate, maintain and end conversations.</p> <p>Offer turns.</p> <p>Direct conversations.</p> <p>Clarify meaning.</p> <p>Change topic.</p> <p>Recognise and use verbal and non-verbal cues.</p>
d Discourse organization	Create extended discourse in various spoken genres according to socioculturally appropriate conventions of language	<p>Establish cohesion and coherence in extended discourse through lexical and grammatical choices.</p> <p>Use discourse markers and intonation to signpost changed in the discourse.</p> <p>Use linguistic conventions to structure spoken texts for various communicative purposes.</p>

Source: Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 59