

# Speaking - before, during, and after

## BELTA



# Acknowledgements

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# Speaking activities

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What, if anything, do you usually do:

- **Before** the students start speaking?
- **While** the students are speaking?
- **After** the students have finished speaking?

# Students not speaking

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- Why does it happen?
- Personal issues
- The task itself
- Students not adequately prepared for the task

# Preparing students to speak – some ideas

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1. Give students some thinking time before the task
2. Answer some of the questions in the task yourself
3. In monolingual classes (or with monolingual groups within classes), let students do the task in their own language first
4. Pre-teach or provide some useful language

# Pre-teaching useful language

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- Usually associated with reading / listening tasks
- Imagine your students doing the speaking task
- What kinds of things do you think they might try to say?
- What kind of language might be useful to help them say it?
  
- Think about what you would say if you were doing the task
- What kind of things would you say?
- Would any of the language you use be useful for the students?
  
- Give some of this language to students before the task?

# Speaking activity (B1)

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Talk to your partner and discuss some things you should and should not do during (or when preparing for) a job interview



- First and foremost, I think...
  - You should really try to.../to avoid (+ing)
  - I'd suggest (not) + ing
  - It's important (not) to...
  - What else?
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- It's just not done!
  - It's a real no-no!
  - It's an absolute must
  - That would give them a positive/negative impression
  - That would impress them
  - That would make you stand out
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- Yes, that's a good one
  - Why do you think so?

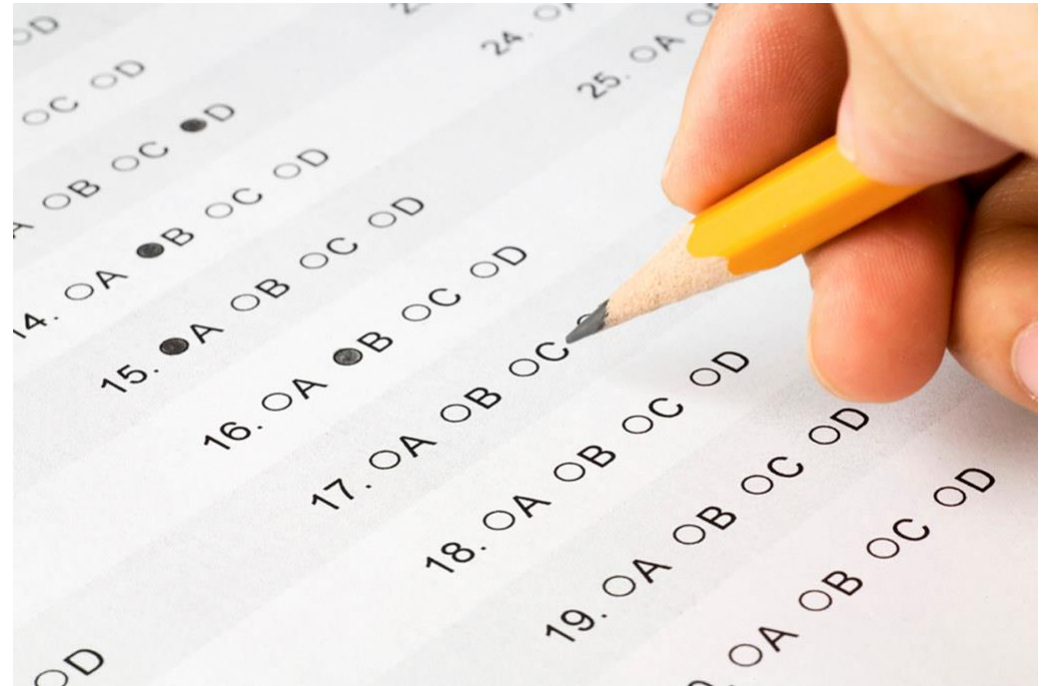


- **First and foremost**, I think...
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- Yes, that's a good one
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# What about this activity? (B1)

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Tell a partner about the last time you took an exam or test. How hard was it? Did you pass or fail? Why?



# Useful language

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- I took/did this test 2 years ago
- I had to do/take this test for my degree/licence/etc.
- I needed to get a pass/80%/band 7/etc.
  
- It was tough/a breeze/tricky/a piece of cake
- I scraped through / I just (about) passed
- I passed with flying colours / I aced it
- I failed miserably
- I hadn't studied / I wasn't prepared
- I stayed up all night studying/ I studied really hard

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- Pre-teaching language doesn't only have to be associated with reading/listening activities
  - We can also predict what language might be useful for a speaking activity and present it to students before they speak
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# The speaking activity itself

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- 'Just' speaking
- Practice
- Sharper students will learn from others and from your teacher talk
- Can build rapport
  
- **But!**
- The students don't really need you to do it
- Missed opportunity?
- Treat the speaking activity also as an opportunity to teach?

- Thinking of how to upgrade what students are saying:
  - It's raining now but on TV they said the rain will stop later and it will be sunny.
  - **It's raining now but the forecast said it should clear up later.**
  - I'm very sure it was him. He is the only person I know with that t-shirt.
  - **It must have been him, he's the only person I know with that t-shirt.**
  - They're going to paint my house and make it look more modern.
  - **I'm having my house renovated.**
  - Upgrade can be lexical, grammatical, or a combination of both
  - Just because it's not wrong, it doesn't mean we can't upgrade it
  
- Thinking of how to reformulate what students are saying:
  - I was shy to talking to bar's clients in the first months but after 2 years in this job my skill to talking increased.
  - **I wasn't very good at communicating with customers at first, but after two years of working in the bar I got a lot better at it.**

# Upgrading students' language



Sorry I'm late, there were very many cars on the road this morning! (A1)

Sorry I'm late, I got stuck/caught in traffic!

I didn't eat anything all day, I'm so hungry. (A2)

I haven't eaten a thing today, I'm absolutely starving.

I have the old student's book, but I think there's a new one with new pictures and exercises. (A2)

I have the old student's book, but I think there's a new edition.

I am sad that when I was a child I never learned the guitar. (B1/B2)

I really regret not learning the guitar when I was a child.

I didn't really like my last boss. She was always checking what I was doing and watching me closely. It made me very uncomfortable (B2/C1).

I didn't really like my last boss – she was always breathing down my neck.

They need to change everything in that company and start again. (B2/C1)

That company is in need of a complete overhaul.



# Bonus idea

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Write down exactly what you hear students say

# Benefits of upgrading/reformulating

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- Explicit reformulations/upgrades are a form of language input that will sensitise students to the way English 'works' (if done frequently)
- There's an(other) clear point of speaking activities
- Doesn't only focus on errors
- Sharpens you as a teacher

# After speaking (1)

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- Repeat the task (with a different partner)
- Give feedback between attempts?

Repetition  
Repetition  
Repetition  
Repetition  
Repetition  
Repetition  
Repetition  
Mastery

# After speaking (2)

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Give students better versions of what they were trying to say



- Jana said she was late because there were a lot of cars on the road – what's another way to say this?

- Sorry I'm late, I got s\_\_\_\_\_ in t\_\_\_\_\_!

- Pawel said he didn't like his last boss because she was always checking what he was doing, which made him uncomfortable. What can we say?



- I didn't really like my last boss – she was always b\_\_\_\_\_ down my n\_\_\_\_\_.

## What you said

I couldn't communicate with new people very well but after 2 years in this job in a bar my skill to talking increased.

This man get very angry and start telling in angry voice go away from my shop, you never come in my shop in future!

## What I'd say

I wasn't very good at communicating with customers at first, but after two years of working in the bar I got a lot better at it.

This man got really angry and started shouting at me, telling me to get out of his shop and never come back!

# After speaking (3)

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- Record the language yourself and encourage the students to do so too
- Revisit it - do something with it in future lessons

# Some language from the week

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- There was a pretty good **turnout** at the match.
- Lisa and I? Oh yeah, **we go way back!**
- **I'm definitely coming down with something** – feel my head!
- I wouldn't do that if I were you – **it's frowned upon** here.
- His attention to detail really **struck me**.
- Your test results are **cause for concern**.
- Why are you always **at each other's throats**?
- 18 euros for a packet of batteries? That's **a bit steep**, isn't it?
- At first I thought she was a pain but **she's grown on me**.
- All this work **is cutting into** my family time.
- I hate being **cooped up** in this room all day.
- **I'm dreading** my driving test tomorrow.
- **I've got a lot on my plate** this week.



# 'Revisiting' language – some ideas

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- Write a personal sentence containing one of the words/phrases
- Choose one and draw a picture
- Choose 3 you like and tell a partner
- Choose 3 you can imagine yourself using and tell a partner
- Think of a typical situation in your life in which one/some of these will be useful
- Choose 3 that you want to make a special effort to remember and tell a partner
- Categorise them in some way

# Concluding thoughts

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- Just because it's a speaking activity/lesson, it doesn't mean we can't still teach language
- Just speaking - is it really enough?
- Not only errors can be worked on
- Just because something isn't wrong, it doesn't mean we can't still improve it

Is there anything from today's session that you would like to comment on, think about more, try out?



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