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Transactional Speaking in the Classroom: Insights from Lower Secondary English Language Teaching

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This study examines the development of the speaking function talk as a transaction among lower secondary school learners and its implementation in English language classrooms. The research explores how this function is supported by course materials and actual teaching practices. A qualitative research approach was employed, incorporating three methods: (1) content analysis of textbooks and workbooks to identify activities promoting talk as a transaction, (2) classroom observations to assess how teachers implement these activities, and (3) interviews with teachers to understand their perspectives on teaching transactional speaking. Afterward, the research results are analysed and compared within each method. The findings indicate that dialogues, role-plays, information gaps, discussions, interviews, and surveys represent transactional speaking in the analysed textbooks. Despite the availability of these activities in textbooks, classroom observations revealed limited implementation. In 15 observed lessons, only a few instances of transactional speaking activities were noted: one dialogue activity and two information-gap activities. Interviews with teachers confirmed that both rely on textbook activities such as role-plays and dialogues, occasionally supplementing them with their activities (e.g., "Find someone who" tasks). While one teacher reported that students enjoy these interactive activities, the other observed a lack of enthusiasm due to language difficulties. The study concludes that while textbooks provide sufficient opportunities for developing transactional speaking skills, their practical implementation in classrooms remains limited. To enhance speaking skills, teachers are encouraged to incorporate additional role-plays and structured practice activities. These findings highlight the importance of balancing textbook-based instruction with creative, communicative approaches to foster more effective language use.

Keywords: communicative competence, talk as transaction, qualitative research, content analysis of textbooks, observation, interview

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INTRODUCTION

Communicative competence is considered to be the main principle of foreign language education. According to CEFR (2011), linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competencies are three major components. Luoma (2004, p. 100) explained pragmatic competence as "how utterances or sentences and texts are related to the communicative goals of language users and the features of the language-use setting", in other words, how much learners are familiar with principles of structuring and organizing sentences in order they create coherent and meaningful utterance. Gondová (2013) added another component of pragmatic competence called functional competence. This aims to use oral speech and written texts in communication for specific functional objectives (CEFR, 2011). The A2 level indicates that learners can express attitudes and beliefs, manage short conversations, follow thematic organization and logical word order, and use common phrases to structure a story logically (ISCED 2, 2014). Because productive speaking and writing skills are core elements of functional competence, they must be defined.

The Transactional Component of Speaking Skill

Homolová (2016, p. 66) described productive speaking and writing skills as *"putting a message together, communicating that message, and interacting with others."* Edge (1996) added that these skills allow learners' progress to be seen. While all communication skills are essential, many agree that speaking is the most challenging and sought-after skill. Riddell (2010) noted that around 90% of learners prioritize speaking. Thornbury (2005) defined speaking as an everyday activity combining words, phrases, and sentences to create meaningful utterances. Bailey (2005) saw speaking as a tool for transmitting meaning through verbal utterance. Thornbury and Slade (2007) emphasized that speaking is a fluid process requiring minimal time to think. Maley (1992) argued that being a good speaker demands practice, which requires knowledge and skill training (Bygate, 1987). Speaking research is broad, necessitating a focused approach. For this study, the functional component of communicative competence and speaking functions are the main focus. Function is *"the natural purpose of something, or the way something works"* (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). Blundell (1982) defined speaking functions as the purposes for which speech is used. Brown and Yule (1983) and Richards (2008) identified two types of interaction: talk as interaction and talk as transaction. Richards (2008) noted that these functions require different teaching approaches due to their distinct forms.

Teaching Talk as Transaction

The function of talk as a transaction is defined as *"information-related talk"* aimed at transferring messages and confirming the listener's understanding (Luoma, 2004, p. 23). Two types of transactional speaking exist. The first involves the direct giving and receiving of information, such as asking for directions. The second is related to social services, like ordering food, buying tickets, or discussing health with a doctor (Burns, 1998, In Richards, 2008). Burkart (1998) noted that transactional talk is often part of interactional talk, but unlike interactional talk, it focuses on clear messages to avoid misunderstandings. Brown and Yule (1983) emphasized that message transfer takes

priority over social relationships in transactional talk, making accuracy and specificity crucial. Without these, the transaction fails. Note-taking is a common strategy in these exchanges to capture important details (ibid). Bahar (2014) highlighted that communicants also use various strategies suited to their understanding of the message. Richards (2008) further mentioned that questions are often used to check understanding and encourage communication. Richards (2008, p. 27) also identified skills involved in transactional talk, such as *"explaining need or intention, describing something, asking questions and for clarification, confirming information, justifying an opinion, making suggestions and comparisons, agreeing and disagreeing."*

To best understand transactional talk, an example is provided by Bahar (2014, p. 11):

A: "Have you been waiting long?"
B: "About ten minutes".
A: "Did you notice whether the number seven bus has gone by?"
B: "Not, while I've been standing here. I'm waiting for the number seven."
A: "Good"
B: "Do you think that we've missed the bus?"
A: "No. It's always a little late, don't worry. It never comes exactly on the half-hour like it should".
B: "I see".

As he said, the main purpose of this conversation is nothing more than to find out information about the bus. Once the information is provided, the conversation finishes.

Brown and Yule (1983) mentioned the best way to practice transactional talk in the EFL classroom was through pair work, where one of the learners has information that another one does not. Brown and Yule (1983, pp. 35-36) also indicated that with lower levels it is better to use so-called *"deictic expressions"* in other words linguistic forms used to accomplish verbal pointing. These were among the first forms spoken by foreign language learners and guided them to provide relevant information. Those are personal or possessive pronouns (I/you/mine/yours), personal or possessive adjectives (my/your), demonstrative pronouns (this/that), and spatial/temporal adverbs (this-here; over there, on top/at the bottom), etc." (ibid). The CEFR (2011, p. 80) provided descriptors for transactional talk to measure and review a learner's proficiency in transactional speaking at a given level. They can: *"ask for and provide everyday goods and services; get simple travel information, use public transport: buses, trains, and taxis, ask and give directions, and buy tickets; ask about things and make simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks; give and receive information about quantities, numbers, prices, etc.; make simple purchases by stating what is wanted and asking the price; order a meal"*.

As Richards (2018) stated, teaching transactional talk is easier than teaching interactional talk due to the availability of materials. Most activities for transactional speaking are found in English textbooks, requiring less teacher preparation. Transactional practice involves *"shorter turns, simpler and more predictable language,"* such as asking for directions, brainstorming, group discussions,

information-gap activities, phone calls for specific information, ordering food, planning trips, making hotel reservations, problem-solving tasks, and shopping role-plays. Li et al. (2024) validated the effectiveness of role-plays in improving oral English skills by using English cartoon clips in a Chinese Grade Six class. Fu and Li (2025) conducted a meta-analysis of 12 studies with 907 participants, including 86 secondary school students, showing that role-play had a significantly greater positive effect on students' skills compared to traditional methods, especially by engaging them in various roles and scenarios. Pokrivčáková (2013) introduced and categorised various techniques which can be used to develop transactional speaking such as controlled, guided, free, open, or altering dialogues. Gondová (2013) suggested *"comparing pictures,"* where learners describe and identify differences through transactional talk. Richards (2008) noted that practicing communicative tasks focused on transactions depends on learners' accuracy levels. Both authors agreed that one learner's performance depends on the other's, so teachers must carefully consider pairing or grouping. If one learner is weaker or too dominant, role-playing may not work. Richards (2008) recommended steps to develop accuracy in transactional activities: pre-teaching the necessary linguistic forms, showing an example (e.g., video or dialogue), allowing time for task planning, and emphasizing constant repetition of the task.

Hardiansyah & Bharat (2016) tested speaking tasks for teaching transactional conversation to learners with different cognitive styles, focusing on reflective and impulsive learners. The study, involving 20 senior high school students (10 reflective, 10 impulsive), found that listing tasks were effective for both groups. These tasks helped learners gather words, practice through discussion, and create dialogues, reducing hesitation and improving accuracy. The comparing task also encouraged learners to use diverse vocabulary while discussing similarities and differences, boosting confidence. Hendrowati & Fatmasari (2023) evaluated the learning process for transactional conversation in class VII, aiming to increase learner participation and improve speaking skills. The study spanned two cycles, each with 6 sessions. In cycle I, pair work and free conversation were used, while cycle II included similar activities in different settings. The results showed improvement from a fair to a good level. Amir & Adijaya (2023) studied the effect of transactional dialogue on seventh-grade learners' speaking skills. The study, involving 35 students, found that transactional dialogue significantly enhanced their speaking skills and interest in learning, particularly in understanding modality, showing its effectiveness compared to traditional methods. Lita & Rahman (2024) investigated the use of YouTube videos for teaching transactional speaking skills to second-grade learners. The pre-experimental design, involving 30 students and pre-and post-tests, showed that using YouTube videos over three sessions significantly improved their speaking skills, proving the method's positive impact.

METHOD

A small-scale qualitative study at the lower secondary school level was conducted to investigate the functional component of communicative language competence, specifically *talk as a transaction*. Three research methods were used to triangulate the results. First, a content analysis of textbooks and a workbook was performed to determine the number of activities focused on the function of speaking *talk as a*

transaction. Fifteen non-participant observations were conducted to explore how these activities are taught in English lessons. Finally, an interview was carried out to gain a deeper understanding of the teachers' perspectives on teaching the examined speaking function.

Research Aims and Research Questions

To find out how the speaking function talk as transaction is taught, the following research aims were formulated:

- to identify which types of activities in the analysed textbooks and a workbook promote talk as a transaction (content analysis),

- to examine whether teachers focus on the development of the function of speaking talk as a transaction and how they promote this function (observation and interview).

The research questions were stated as follows:

1. Which activities in the analysed textbooks and a workbook promote talk as transaction?

2. Do the teachers implement activities focusing on the function of speaking talk as a transaction? If yes, how do they implement them? If not, why do they not implement them?

Participants and Research Material

The research subjects include the analysed textbooks and interviewed teachers. Teacher A uses *Project 5* (3rd edition) by Tom Hutchinson (2010), which consists of 6 units. Each unit includes sections on pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and communicative skills, followed by cultural pages, a revision section, a project, and a song. Teacher B uses *More! 3* by Herbert Puchta and Jeff Stranks (2008), which contains 12 units, each with an introduction, dialogue/text work, vocabulary and grammar, communicative skills, and sections on culture, CLIL, and progress checks every second unit. In Slovakia, the teachers' choices of textbooks are influenced by factors such as curriculum guidelines, institutional requirements, and available resources. The decisive factor is whether the textbooks are included in the list of approved and recommended textbooks, teaching materials, and workbooks eligible for Ministry of Education funding (2021). The analysed textbooks are part of this list. By analyzing the course books, the researchers aimed to assess their strengths and limitations in teaching transactional English, regardless of individual teacher preferences. Both teachers, with 15 and 30 years of experience, agreed to participate in interviews after the observations. The study aimed to explore differences in teaching approaches to *talk as a transaction*. The research took place in two schools with 9th graders over two months.

Data Collection Instruments

The data collected from three research methods provided a deeper understanding of how the speaking function *talk as a transaction* is taught.

The first method, *content analysis*, is a systematic description of the content, focusing on the internal properties of text units. Developed by Bereleson, this method uses social science measurement and quantification techniques. Content is examined based on selected features (Schulze, 2003). In qualitative analysis, a specific contribution is considered a measurement unit, focusing on content and language resources. In this study, content analysis involved identifying written material, creating codes, and categorizing them (Cohen et al., 2007). The analysis was conducted with two textbooks and one workbook, as Teacher A does not use a workbook. Speaking activities related to *talk as transaction* were identified, classified, and counted, with results summarized in tables. Further qualitative analysis explained the classifications and other codes, such as forms of work and examples.

The second method, *observation*, is used to capture data from "naturally occurring social situations" (Cohen, 2007, p. 396). It focuses on facts, behaviour, and events relevant to the research subject. A non-participant semi-structured observation was used for this study, aiming to establish prearranged categories while gathering data less systematically (ibid). This type of observation enables more objective analysis. Conducted after content analysis of textbooks, the observation aimed to assess whether teachers used activities from the textbooks and workbooks or their own to promote *talk as a transaction*. Teachers were not asked to implement additional speaking activities, as the goal was to capture real lessons. Data were collected through observation sheets, including basic information (date, school, class) and details on activities promoting *talk as a transaction*. This included the type of activity, whether speaking was the main or extra activity, form of work, materials, examples, and learner performance and reactions. Categories and codes from the observations were processed for further analysis.

Finally, a *semi-structured interview* was conducted with prearranged questions that could vary based on the respondents' answers. The interview protocol was validated by both authors of the paper. The interviews, held after the observations, aimed to explore the teachers' attitudes toward teaching speaking, focusing on activities promoting *talk as transaction* and their application. The interview also sought to identify the materials teachers use for developing this function. Categories and codes emerged from the interview questions:

1. Which activities and techniques do you apply when teaching speaking?
2. Do you vary them?
3. Do you use activities and techniques suggested by the textbook or do you apply your ones?
4. Do you use extra materials? Why? For what purpose?
5. Do you consider the activities aimed at developing speaking provided in the textbook sufficient?
6. If not, why are they not sufficient?
7. Which activities do you use to develop speaking in situations, in which the learners have to buy something, order a meal in a restaurant, buy a train ticket, ask a foreigner to show them the way etc.?
8. How do your learners respond to these activities?
9. Do you think it is important to focus on these types of activities? Why?

10. Do you have any problems when practising these types of activities? Why? How can these problems be solved?
11. Do you think there is enough space given to teaching the speaking skill in these particular situations?

Before conducting the research, both teachers and headmasters approved the conditions of the research. With the permission of the teachers, interviews were recorded to keep all answers as accurate as possible.

FINDINGS

The content analysis of textbooks and workbooks was the first step, aiming to identify speaking activities categorized as talk as a transaction. By classifying these activities, researchers established a foundation for the next research phase. It provides a structured overview of how textbooks support transactional speaking. Without it, researchers would lack a reference point for evaluating classroom practices. For the analysis, tables were created within the *talk as transaction* category, and activities corresponding to this function were classified. The types of activities and their occurrences were then distinguished. The first content analysis focused on the *Project 5* textbook, and the second on the *More! 3* textbook and a workbook. While both textbooks and the workbook share the same category, they have different codes for activity types.

Talk as Transaction Project 5 and More! 3

The analysis yielded 21 activities in *Project 5*, covering 6 activity types, and 16 activities in *More! 3*, across 4 types. The *More! 3* workbook did not feature any activities promoting this function. While *talk as transaction* typically involves activities focused on obtaining goods or services, Richards (2008) also suggested activities aimed at sharing information. Additionally, activities like interviews and surveys, not mentioned by Richards (2008), were included in this category as they aim to gather tangible information.

Table 1
Content analysis Talk as transaction

	Textbook Project 5	Textbook More! 3	Workbook More! 3
Type of Activity			
1. Dialogue	5	5	-
2. Discussion	6	9	-
3. Information gap	3	1	-
4. Shopping role-plays	3	1	-
5. Interview	2	-	-
6. Survey	2	-	-
Total	21	16	-

Talk as Transaction (Project 5)

The first code, *a dialogue*, appeared 5 times. The dialogues relate to situations where learners need to gather information about services or goods. One dialogue in the Speaking section asks learners to work in pairs to ask for directions, using polite questions. Locations like a museum, bus station, and souvenir shop are suggested, and

learners perform a dialogue using questions like "Where?," "Open today?," "How much?," etc. Another 3 transactional dialogues were in Unit 5, section C, titled "Buying a ticket." In one, learners first complete listening tasks and then perform a dialogue about buying a ticket, using phrases such as "Single or return?" and "Here are your tickets." A later dialogue involves asking questions at the train station, with a table for destinations, arrivals, and platform numbers. At the end of Unit 5, learners perform another dialogue about buying a ticket, using information on destination, ticket type, and cost. The last dialogue, found in the Speaking section, involves practising arrangements, following a specific dialogue pattern:

A: Phone to change an appointment. Give a reason.
B: Suggest another day/time/date.
A: Refuse. Give a reason.
B: Suggest another day/time/date.
A: Accept.
B: Confirm the new appointment.
A: Say goodbye.

This dialogue pattern had to be applied to situations such as an appointment at the doctor, an arrangement for swimming with a friend, the time for an interview for a Saturday job, and an arrangement to play tennis with a friend. All these dialogues perfectly correspond with situations described in the theoretical background about Talk as a Transaction. However, Richards (2008) also suggests discussion and information gaps as activities through which information is passed.

The second code, *discussion*, appeared 6 times. In 5 cases, discussions were to be held in smaller groups, with topics such as: "What should people do about bullying?" and "Do you think there will be a perfect society? Why or why not?". The final topic was about jobs. Another discussion, found in the Reading section, focused on bullying, with the question: "Do you think all schools have the same problem?". A discussion in the Social studies section of English across the curriculum addressed TV, asking, "What should we do about the problems?". The last discussion, found in the Your Project section, was a whole class discussion on the question: "What are the biggest problems in the world today?".

The third code, *the information gap*, appeared 3 times. The first instance was a vocabulary exercise where learner A selects something related to a sport and learner B guesses what it is and the sport it's connected to. They were given this example dialogue:

A: It isn't very big. There are white lines around it and it has got a net in the middle.
B: It's a tennis court?
A: No, it's indoors and the net is quite high.
B: Is it a badminton court?
A: Yes, it is. (Project 5 2010, p. 6)

Another information gap, found in the Vocabulary section, involved transferring information. Learner A closed their book, and learner B asked about the object using

questions like: "A: What's wrong with the mobile phone? B: The battery is dead". The final information gap activity, "Find someone who," asked learners to circulate the class and, through brief exchanges, find someone who: watches the news on TV, can play guitar, went to the cinema yesterday, etc. This activity, found in the Speaking section, aimed to practice question asking and learning about each other.

The fourth code, *role-plays*, included 3 transactional activities. The first, found in the Speaking section, involved creating dialogues between a customer and an assistant in four different scenarios, such as receiving a burnt pizza or a faulty calculator. The goal was to address problems. Learners were first exposed to a similar dialogue. The second role-play had learners pretending to be a receptionist and a patient making a dental appointment using phrases like "let me see," "Oh, of course," and "we'll see you at." The final role-play, in the Revision section, had learners act as a receptionist and patient trying to change appointments at the dentist's and optician's, without the provided phrases.

The last two codes, *interview* and *survey*, represent activities where learners communicate to transfer or obtain information. Although Richards (2008) does not mention these, they were included in the category talk as transaction.

The *interview* activity appeared twice. In one, found in the Grammar section, learners worked in pairs to conduct an interview based on a text they had read, with suggested questions requiring them to construct correct ones. For example: "How big/ the ship/ be?", "Where/ all the people/ come from?". The second interview, in the Speaking section, had learners work in groups to create questions for a radio station interview and then interview each other, asking questions like: "Have you got…?", and "What radio station/ listen to?".

Project 5 also included two *survey* activities. The first, a pre-reading activity in the CLIL section, had learners survey their class using questions like "How many hours a day do you watch TV?" and "What are your favourite programmes?". The second survey, a post-reading activity in the Culture section, asked learners to gather information about their classmates' interaction with English culture, covering topics like websites, books, movies, and music.

Talk as Transaction (More! 3)

In *More! 3,* the first code, *dialogue*, appeared 5 times. Since transactional talk involves situations where learners ask for goods or directions in social contexts, we focused on identifying such scenarios, which resulted in a relatively low number of transactional dialogues. These dialogues were taught using techniques like drilling, reading aloud, and performing. The first 3 dialogues, found in Unit 5 on tourism, used all these techniques. Learners practised phrases like "Excuse me; What's the name of the famous palace near here?" and "What is next to…?" by reading the dialogue, drilling phrases, and then performing in pairs with phrases and photos. The unit also featured dialogues about asking for information at the cinema, where learners drilled phrases like "Excuse me. I'd like a ticket for Star Trek 3 please" and then performed the dialogue in pairs. Besides transactional talk, learners also practised question tags in this unit.

The second code, *discussion*, appeared 9 times. It was found 4 times in the Culture sections under "Over to you!", where learners worked in pairs to discuss topics like voluntary work, mega-cities, using the internet, and saving energy. One discussion in the Vocabulary section, about outdoor activities, was a whole-class activity where learners ranked activities by preference and then discussed their choices. Two discussions in the Writing section served as pre-writing activities. In one, learners discussed hometowns with questions like "How do I get to your hometown?" and "What are the interesting places in your hometown?" In the other, they discussed inventions with questions like "What's the invention you chose?" and "Why is it important?" The last two discussions were part of post-reading activities about waste and recycling.

The code, the *information gap* activity, appeared once, related to the topic of cinema. Learners worked in pairs to discover missing information about opening and closing times for places like museums, castles, and concerts. They filled in tables based on their preferences and then guessed the correct details, practising phrases like "You're right" and "No, you're wrong," as well as question tags.

The code, *role-play*, was also found once in the Communication section. Learners took on the roles of a career counsellor (A) and a job seeker (B) to find the best job based on preferences, such as writer, mechanic, nurse, or waiter. They created their questions and answers, focusing on accurate question formation. No *interview* or *survey* activity was identified in the textbook More! 3.

Observation Analyses

The second method used was observation, with 6 classes of teacher A and 9 classes of teacher B observed, totalling 15 lessons. Classroom observations provided insight into the real-life application of the transactional speaking activities identified in the textbooks. Researchers documented whether teachers used these activities, adapted them, or ignored them entirely. The observations also revealed learner engagement, the frequency of transactional speaking, and whether teachers supplemented textbook materials with their activities. An observation sheet was created, focusing on the function of speaking as a transaction. Table 2 presents the coding system, based on Reid (2014).

Table 2
Observation analysis Talk as transaction

	Teacher A	Teacher B
Total number of observed lessons	6	9
Codes:		
1. Occurrence of activities practicing Talk as Interaction	1	2
2. Activity type	dialogue	information gap
3. Materials	textbook, CD player	textbook
4. Speaking as the main activity	1	-
5. Speaking as an extra activity	-	2
6. Form of work	pair work	pair work

Observation Teacher A

In Teacher A's 6 classes, only one activity related to talk as a transaction was observed. It involved using the *Project 5* textbook (page 25, exercise 6), where students prepared a *dialogue* for homework to be presented the next day. They chose one of four scenarios and created a dialogue to change an appointment. The teacher explained that students had previously listened to, read, and practised similar dialogues. According to the Teacher's book (Hutchinson, 2009), the activity aims to practice the appointment-making language. The dialogue was performed by two girls changing a doctor's appointment. For privacy reasons, learner 1 represents the doctor, and learner 2 is the student.

S1: "Hello, doctor K. How can I help you?"
S2: "Hello, It's M. I have got an appointment on Monday at 10 am but I can't come. I have a test at school."
S1: "Ok. Can you come on Tuesday at 10 am?"
S2: "I am sorry, but I can't. A photographer is coming to the school. I must be there."
S1: "Oh, I see. Give me a minute. Hmm. What about next Monday at 8 am?"
S2: "Yes, that will be OK."
S1: "OK. So see you next Monday at 8 am."
S 2: "Thank you very much. Goodbye."
S1: "Goodbye."

The dialogue was well-prepared and followed the textbook pattern. It was interesting that the learners pretended to be adults, although the context was set in their school lives. The girls giggled while reading, and later, we learned a photographer had visited their school. After their presentation, the teacher praised them and asked if anyone else wanted to present. When no one responded, she mentioned they might have something similar in a test.

Observation Teacher B

In Teacher B's classes, the function of talk as a transaction was developed twice through *information gap* activities linked to vocabulary teaching. The first focused on computers, and the second on food. In these activities, one learner had the information, and the other had to ask questions to find the answer, making them a good fit for this category. The teacher likely uses this technique regularly, as it occurred in units 9 and 10 of the *More! 3* textbook. These activities were more of a short, end-of-lesson task, so they are categorized under code number 6. Both activities involved pair work, typical for this type of task, as noted in code number 7. A brief example transcribed from nearby learners is provided.

L1: "Is it small?"
L2: "No it isn't."
L1: "Is it a monitor?"
L2: "No it isn't."
L1: "Is it a printer?"
L2: "Yes, it is."

As shown, the questions and answers are brief, but the activity's value lies in promoting speaking and its transactional function. The learners had their books open and could see the objects they were discussing. Another example is the second information gap activity on fruit, aimed at practising making deductions. Learners used example phrases such as "What do you think this is?", "It must be a…", "It might be a…", "No, it can't be a…", and "Yes, I think you're right" to guess the fruit. After drawing fruit from the textbook, they paired up to guess the correct fruit using these phrases. Unfortunately, the exact dialogue could not be transcribed as the class worked simultaneously.

Observations revealed that despite the availability of transactional speaking activities in the textbooks, their actual use in classrooms was limited.

Interview Analyses

Since observations alone could not explain teachers' decision-making processes, the next step involved teacher interviews. Based on observed trends such as limited implementation of transactional speaking activities researchers designed interview questions to find out why teachers used or neglected these activities and how they viewed their usefulness. Interviews were conducted with both teachers after the observations to explore their attitudes toward teaching speaking, particularly the function of talk as a transaction. The aim was to understand their views on the importance of speaking, and their teaching methods. The focus was also on finding out whether the teachers rely primarily on textbooks or create additional activities. For *talk as a transaction*, the focus was on activity types, learner attitudes, challenges faced, and potential solutions. The interviews, based on 11 questions, were recorded and lasted about 30 minutes each. The teachers' responses are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Interview results Talk as transaction

	Teacher A	Teacher B
Codes:		
1. Activities	role-plays, dialogues, information gaps, find someone who	role-plays, dialogues, information gap
2. Learners' attitudes, problems and solutions	positive, due to their playfulness and connection with the movement no problems	only a few learners like them problem: lack of knowledge about the language solution: asking for clarification
3. Sufficient/ Insufficient occurrence in textbook from teachers' point of view		Sufficient

The category *talk as transaction* focuses on message-oriented speaking activities. Teacher A provided role-plays set in restaurants, shops, and railway stations, as well as dialogues for practicing directions using maps. While the textbook lacked maps, she supplemented it with her own, allowing learners to work in pairs, asking and verifying directions—a clear example of an information gap activity. Although primarily observing 9th-grade activities, we noted these methods as part of transactional skill

development. Another activity she employed was "find someone who," where learners list three experiences and find peers who share them through communication.

Teacher B described similar activities to Teacher A, including role-plays in social institutions, often using those provided in the textbook. She also shared one original activity: a museum role-play where learners use UK museum leaflets to act as tourists and tour guides, asking and answering questions in pairs after reading the material. Regarding learners' attitudes (code 2), Teacher A noted that students enjoyed these communicative and playful activities, while Teacher B observed limited enthusiasm, attributing it to language difficulties and puberty. She suggested encouraging clarification requests to address misunderstandings. For transactional activities in textbooks (code 3), both teachers agreed they are sufficiently represented. The analysis confirmed the presence of various transactional activities across social settings, though not all were mentioned by the teachers.

The interviews helped contextualize the findings from both content analysis and classroom observations by exploring teacher perspectives on speaking instruction. The interviews clarified whether and how the teachers adapted or supplemented textbook exercises and what challenges they faced in encouraging students to engage in transactional communication.

Summary of the Findings

This section discusses the results based on the research questions. Regarding the first question, "Which activities in the analysed textbooks and workbook promote talk as a transaction?", the content analysis of *Project 5* and *More! 3* revealed that both textbooks contain activities supporting talk as a transaction, though in varying degrees. *Project 5* includes 21 activities across six types: 5 dialogues, 6 discussions, 3 information gaps, 2 interviews, 3 role-plays, and 2 surveys. In contrast, *More! 3* offers 16 activities across four types: 5 dialogues, 9 discussions, 1 information gap, and 1 role-play, with no workbook activities supporting this function. Overall, *Project 5* provides a greater variety of transactional activities, including dialogues, role-plays, information gaps, discussions, interviews, and surveys, while *More! 3* focuses primarily on discussions and dialogues. The findings confirm that English course books contain sufficient resources for teaching talk as a transaction.

To address the second research question, "Do teachers implement activities focusing on speaking functions? If yes, how do they implement them? If not, why do they not implement them?", results from Tables 2 and 3 indicate that both teachers occasionally implemented activities promoting talk as transaction. Teacher A included it once through *dialogue* for changing an appointment, while Teacher B used it twice with *information gap* activities during vocabulary lessons, utilizing the textbook and a CD player. Observations confirmed a *dialogue* in Teacher A's class and two additional transactional activities in Teacher B's, including an *information gap* activity aimed at exchanging information. Most transactional speaking opportunities in textbooks were either not implemented or were briefly included as supplementary exercises rather than core lesson activities. These findings suggest that although teachers recognize the

presence of transactional speaking activities in their textbooks, they do not consistently prioritize them in their lessons.

Interviews with both teachers provided further insights into why transactional speaking activities were not frequently used. Both teachers use textbook activities like shopping role-plays and dialogues, supplemented by their activities, such as information gaps or "find someone who." One teacher noted that students enjoy these activities for their playfulness, and both felt the textbooks provided sufficient material. However, their focus remained on naming activities tied to social institutions, overlooking discussion-based activities, despite these being present in the textbooks. The results indicate that *talk as transaction* in real English classrooms was only partially developed, as few examined codes appeared during lessons. While the textbooks provided sufficient transactional speaking activities, purposeful practice in observed lessons was rare. Teachers agreed the textbooks offered enough activities, such as *role-plays, dialogues*, and *information gap* tasks, to develop transactional speaking. They occasionally supplemented these materials to foster authentic communication.

The research results revealed discrepancies between teachers' claims about their use of transactional speaking activities and classroom observations in three areas: the use of transactional speaking activities, learner engagement and challenges, and reliance on textbooks. Both teachers reported using various transactional speaking activities, such as role-plays and information gap tasks, with textbooks providing adequate speaking tasks. However, observations showed Teacher A used only one activity (a dialogue) and Teacher B used two information gap exercises, raising questions about whether these activities were used inconsistently or omitted due to time constraints. Regarding learner engagement, Teacher A claimed students enjoyed transactional speaking activities, while Teacher B noted only a few liked them, mentioning vocabulary and confidence issues. Observations revealed Teacher A's students lacked enthusiasm, and Teacher B's students used minimal language. While Teacher A viewed the activities as engaging, student reactions were neutral, and Teacher B's concern about vocabulary struggles was evident in the brief exchanges observed. Both teachers agreed that textbooks provided sufficient speaking tasks, reducing the need for extra materials. However, Teacher A mentioned modifying activities, like adding maps for role-plays, while Teacher B designed a museum role-play. Observations, however, showed that both teachers relied mainly on textbook activities, with no teacher-created materials seen.

DISCUSSION

This section compares the study's findings with the theoretical framework grounded in the functional component of communicative competence and with recent research in similar lower secondary settings.

The content analysis of textbooks revealed that both Project 5 and More! 3 contain activities theoretically supporting talk as a transaction, aligning with the literature. Both textbooks include role-plays, information gaps, and dialogues, which match Richards' (2008) suggested methods. The absence of note-taking exercises (as suggested by Brown & Yule, 1983) and limited contextualized role-plays indicate a gap between theoretical expectations and textbook content. Classroom observations revealed a low

implementation rate of transactional speaking activities which contradicts Richards (2008), who stresses that frequent engagement with transactional speaking tasks is essential. Observations showed that dialogues were often brief and lacked contextual depth, falling short of the structured approaches recommended by Brown & Yule (1983) and Pokrivčáková (2013). Transactional exchanges remained mechanical, rather than fostering spontaneous communication as Richards (2008) encourages.

Comparing this study's results with recent research in comparable lower secondary contexts, Hardiansyah and Bharat (2016) focused on transactional speaking by listing and comparing tasks, emphasizing vocabulary and dialogue creation similar to the role-plays in this study. Hendrowati and Fatmasari (2023) used pair work for context-driven conversations aligning with some engagement-focused activities observed in the current study. Amir and Adijaya (2023) observed improved fluency using transactional dialogues in real-world contexts, mirroring the observed practical transactional activities like ordering or making appointments in the present study.

A common theme in teaching talk as transaction is using activities like role-plays and dialogues to make learning engaging such as in Hendrowati and Fatmasari's (2023) moving dialogues and Hardiansyah and Bharat's (2016) listing/comparing tasks. In Hardiansyah & Bharat`s study (2016, p. 23) the comparing activity encouraged students to use varied vocabulary, giving them more chances to speak. In the current study, the dialogue and information gap activities linked to vocabulary teaching were used by the teachers. The current study's focus on role plays, dialogues, and discussions aligns with Hendrowati and Fatmasari's (2023) approach, highlighting repeated practice.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, teachers are advised to practice the function talk as a transaction in extra role-plays for particular transactional situations once they are provided in textbooks to improve the development of the examined function *talk as transaction*. This controlled technique should be included to create correct language and practice communication in different meaningful contexts. Moreover, it provides the learners with other possibilities for practicing the structures and patterns that are present in the textbooks.

Several limitations had an impact on the research study and its results. The research authors focused on the content analysis of the course books rather than the teachers' motivations for choosing them. The low occurrence of the observed transactional activities can be explained by the fact that the teachers could not include "shopping activities" in every speaking lesson as they did not always fit the topic of the discussed unit. Another objective explanation is that the observations covered only a portion of the school year, limiting the researcher's view of the full teaching process. As a result, not all textbook activities designed to develop transactional speaking were included in the observed lessons.

When teaching speaking skills, Richards (2008) emphasizes the importance of a language teacher's creativity, highlighting that the priority should be engagingly presenting a topic rather than rigidly following the course book content. Regarding the

potential impact of teacher agency on practicing transactional English in the classroom, this could be an area for future exploration.

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