Types of feedback and the improvement of students’ oral communication skills
ACTFL OPI Assessment Criteria for Speaking comprises 4 components:
- Global Tasks & Functions
- Context/Content
- Accuracy
- Text Type

Functions
Advanced:
Narrate and describe in major time frames

Intermediate:
Create meaning at the sentence level
Text Type
Advanced: Paragraphs
Connected discourse of paragraph length and substance

Intermediate: Discrete sentences
Combine language elements in discrete sentences and string of sentences.
Research Questions

How can we help students improve their speaking skills from Intermediate level towards more Advanced level?

Does feedback help students improve their speaking skills?

If so, what types of feedback ensure effects on students’ speaking skills?
What does it mean by saying “paragraph level discourse?"

With reference of some sources
(Writing a College Handbook, Purdue online
Writing Lab, www.adolphus.me.uk/emx/simply/paragraph.htm)

A key feature of a good paragraph is unity:
1. There should be one major point in talk.
   All the utterances should be well connected with this main point.

A main point in talk should be expressed in a topic statement
at the beginning of the talk.
2. There should be coherence in the talk.

A consistent and logical organization of ideas with points flowing from one another in a natural sequence.

Coherence is created through two ways: Logical bridges and Verbal bridges

Logical bridges are the way of developing the ideas by
Adding information
Providing explanation
Giving examples
Providing data
Defining terms and so forth
Verbal bridges are the way of linking ideas, by

- Using transitional words
- Using compounding sentence structures
- Using complex sentence structures with subordinate clauses
- Repeating key words
- Repeating synonymous words and so forth
1. Will the feedback, focusing on elaboration help students produce more logical bridges?

2. Will the feedback, focusing on grammatical errors, help student produce more accurate speech?

3. Will the feedback, focusing on organization through verbal bridges, help students organize their ideas better?
Research Design

Participants:
3rd year students of Japanese who were enrolled in a conversation course

In this course, students
(1) practice listening comprehensions, using authentic and semi-authentic video materials. (2) practice speaking skills, by interviewing and discussing topics with native speakers of Japanese. (3) practice speaking skills through role-playing tasks.
One type of evaluation in this course was an individual interview: Students had 4 individual interviews with the instructor at her office.

They were asked to talk about a topic in 5 minutes, followed by the interactive question/answer session.

Students were given an assigned topic at least one week ahead of each interview to prepare for the talk.
Pre-test
Students’ 5 minute talk for the first interview administered at the beginning of the semester
They were asked to talk about their weekends.

Post test
One of the Final Exams:
Individual interview, in which students were asked to give a 5 minute talk on the same topic used for the Pre-test: about students’ weekends.
- Unplanned speech – students were not given any information about what kind of questions they would be asked.
Treatments

Students were given three types of feedback on the talks they presented at the four individual interviews.

(1) Feedback, focusing on elaboration with logical bridges
(2) Feedback, focusing on grammar errors with recast
(3) Feedback, focusing on organization with verbal bridges
Procedures

1. Their talks were recorded and uploaded on the Moodle site.

2. Their recorded talks were transcribed and given feedback on them.

3. The three types of feedback were also uploaded on the Moodle site, so that students could hear their talk and analyze the problems, by looking at the feedback given to them.
Three types of feedback
(1)
Feedback, focusing on elaboration, using logical bridges

1. Encourage students to elaborate more by asking questions.
   Examples:
   What kind of work do you do? Tell me in detail
   -How long do you have the job?
   -How long do you work a week?
   How do you celebrate the holiday? Tell me in detail!
   -Does your family invite relatives or friends?
   -What kind of dishes do you prepare?
   -What do people usually do on such an occasion?

2. Provide concrete examples
「そして今度のハロウィーンでダークアリスのコスチュームを着る事にしました。ハロウィーンのために、パーティーシティーとスピリットルインとハロウィーンスペースへ行くんです。あの店でいろいろなものを買えます。」

-->Please elaborate more! What kind of clothes are you talking about?
What kind of costume is it? Tell me in detail.
What kind of shoes are you going to put on?
Do you wear a hat?
例
黒いフリルのついたドレスを着て、黒いブーツを履（は）いて、黒い手袋（てぶくろ）をはめます。
(2) Feedback, focusing on grammar errors with recast

1. Recast – provide accurate forms
2. Provide grammar explanation

Example 1
「週末に大体アルバイトをしていますから、週末はふま感じています。」

Please pay attention to Grammar!
The form should be
(N)に不満（ふまん）を感じている

週末に大体アルバイトをしていて、ゆっくり休む時間がないので、不満（ふまん）を感じています。
Example 2
2月に私の彼女日本からアメリカに来ます・・・心待ちにしています。

Please pay attention to grammar!
1. The form should be
(S V=dictionary form)のを心待ちにしている＝to look forward to doing ~
2. Don’t forget the subject marker が

2月に私の彼女が日本からアメリカに来るのを心待ちにしています。
(3) Feedback, focusing on organization with verbal bridges

1. Encourage students to connect the ideas more logically, by
   - using transitional words,
   - using compound sentence structures and
   - using complex sentence structures.

2. Provide a model of how to organize ideas, by using them.
Example:

「2月に私の彼女日本からアメリカに来ます・・・心待ちにしています。
彼女の名前は山崎ひとみさんです。
留学したら、山崎に会いました。」

→ You need to reorganize this section.
please use a relative clause to modify a person,
so that the information becomes more coherent.

私が日本に留学（りゅうがく）したとき知（し）り合（あ）った
山崎ひとみさんという人が2月にアメリカに来るのを心待ちにして
います。
Data analysis

“T-unit” is used to identify the number of units in a student’s each utterance.

“T-unit” is “one main clause plus whatever subordinate clauses happen to be attached or embedded within it.” (Hunt 1966:735). For example, *He hit me* is one T-unit, and *He hit me, but I still like him* is two T-units.
2.
CS=Compound sentences
--compounding with conjunctions: ～そして、～が、でも～、～し例: ちょっと勉強して、モールに行って、友達と会います
・・・日本語のクラスだけ取っているし、私より勉強ができます

--parallel construction: ～したり、～したりする
例: 友達とバーベキューをしたり、家族とレストランで食べたり
3.
SS=Complex sentences with subordinate clauses
--using adjective (relative) clauses
例：よく日本にいる彼女とスカイプで話します。

--using adverb clauses: 〜したとき、〜ので、〜けど、
例：私の友達はあまり運動しないので、私は一人で運動します
時間があれば、ジムに運動しに行きます。

--using noun clauses: 〜こと、〜の
例：ハロウィーーンを祝うのを心待ちにしています
・・・映画を見ることが好きです
4.
TW=transitional words
--Time: 前に、将来、今週
--Addition: さらに、その上、また
--Contrast: でも、それでも、
--Cause & effect: したがって、その結果、
--Example: 例えば
--Numerical order: 第一に、最後に
--Spatial order: 左に、上に、下に

TW (x)=not appropriate/relevant transitional words
Types of communicative problems
1. G/w=communicative problem at a word level

Example:
・・・お寺に行ったり、大阪に住んでいる友達に会えたりしたいです。

2. G/s=communicative problem at a sentence level

Example:
でも、理想な週末は二日じゃなくて、金曜日はお休みならないと思います。 → でも、理想的な週末は土曜日と日曜日の二日だけでなく、金曜日から休みになる週末です。
G/g=communicative problem at a global level (the meaning is unclear and needs to be recreated from scratch to be fitted in for the topic or to be connected with the preceding part.)

・・・コロナドは安全な場所です。
それに家族について行きましょう？
あのコロナドはたくさん店とレストランがあります。
## Size of Relevant development analyzed by T-units

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Number of Global level communicative problems observed in the talk

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Number of Sentence level communicative problems observed in the talk

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Number of Word level communicative problems observed in the talk

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### Number of compound sentence structures used in the talk

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