

Long, M., Doughty, C., & Chaudron, C. (1999-2001). *Task-based language teaching in foreign language education*. Honolulu: National Foreign Language Resource Center, University of Hawai'i.

PROTOTYPE TBLT MODULE FOR TARGET TASK (TT): OBTAINING AND FOLLOWING STREET DIRECTIONS

First-time visitors to foreign cities often need to obtain street directions when lost or, preferably, so as to avoid getting lost in the first place. This typically (although not exclusively) involves politely stopping a stranger to ask the way, explaining where they want to go, possibly answering questions about such matters as the time and means of transport available to them, following the directions given, perhaps requesting clarification or even a complete rerun, perhaps repeating the directions back to check they have got them right, thanking the stranger, and leave-taking.

Some 20 such conversations were surreptitiously recorded in Waikiki, 10 by a NS requester, and 10 by a NNS. Analysis of the transcripts found two basic patterns, depending on (a) the complexity of the direction-giving in terms of distance to the destination and (b) whether the requester was a NS or NNS.

When a NS requester and close and easy destinations and directions were involved, direction givers tended to give the whole set of directions all at once. These were then checked by the receiver repeating them. If this showed they had been understood correctly, the giver would confirm, sometimes adding a new detail or two, the receiver thank him or her, and the two part. If the check revealed some misunderstanding, the giver would provide the directions a second time.

Alternatively (still in the context of a NS requester and close and easy destinations and directions), direction givers would provide very detailed directions in stages, receiving back channels to confirm understanding before providing the next part.

When far and hard destinations and directions for a NS were involved, and whenever the requester was a NNS, regardless of whether destination and directions were close and easy or far and hard, directions were often vaguer and always given bit by bit, with comprehension signaled by the requester before the giver moved on to the next part. The requester did not usually try to repeat them for confirmation.

There were variants, of course. For instance, if the person asked did not know the way, either the interaction ended with an apology, or the requester was directed to someone who did know, or perhaps to a map (whereupon a quite different type of direction giving ensues). If two people were asked, the interaction was different, and seemingly more complex. Also, direction givers sometimes threw in comments about the (long) distance involved, and so forth.

Here are two typical conversations, both NS-NS, one close and easy, one far and hard.

1. Close and Easy

Excuse me. Would you know where the duty free shop is?

You walk down this street. Oh, actually, you cut through here. Go to the coffee shop and cross over and you'll- and you're right in front of it.

Oh, just cut through here?

No, you walk to the end.

Uh-huh

Go to the corner and keep walking through there.

Okay. Okay, thank you.

2. Far and Hard

Excuse me. Do you know where the Imax Theater is?

You're way off, but Imax . . . Does it show over there? It's way back that a way.

Oh, okay.

It's by the uh do you know where the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center is?

(shakes head)

Alright. You go down until you hit Lewers Street.

Uh-huh.

Then you go up towards the mountains.

Uh-huh

It'll be about half a block in.

Okay. Thank you.

You're welcome.

TT 1: Obtaining and Following Street Directions

Rationale and Overview

The TT for this module is **obtaining and following street directions**. The module consists of a sequence of seven pedagogic tasks (PT 1-7). The purpose is to raise students' performance to a level at which they can politely request and understand street directions to both nearby and distant destinations. The first three tasks are to be done in a teacher-fronted, whole class format (although individual students can take the teacher's role after some models from you). The aim is to provide intensive exposure to typical NS directions. At this stage, the students are not required to produce, but simply to listen. During PT 1, and in PT 2 and PT 3, they show comprehension by moving their fingers on very simple, two-dimensional street maps. The next task, PT 4, still uses the simple two-dimensional maps, and is done in small groups after a demonstration by you. It involves comprehension and some production, but the emphasis here and throughout this module is on following directions, since this is what visitors need to be able to do and since, as visitors in a strange city, they will rarely be in the role of direction giver. PT 5 and PT 6 increase the complexity of the directions and involve a real map of a real town (Waikiki). Both PT 5 and PT 6 provide more intensive practice of something now very close to the full target task. The final task, PT 7, provides practice with as close an approximation to the target task as can easily be completed in most classrooms (unless they have special technical equipment). As such, it can double as a trial run for the exit test (to be completed at a later date). The seven PTs should take about 60 minutes to complete, but times are approximate and should be adjusted by you according to your students' of progress. Pedagogic adjustments may also be needed in some cases.

PT 1 The Real Thing

Materials: Tape-recorder and audio tape

Procedure: Teacher explains that today's lesson is on how to obtain and understand street directions to nearby and distant destinations from a passer-by. Teacher then tells students to listen carefully to the three sample conversations -- real examples of NS giving directions -- but not to worry if they do not understand everything. He/she then plays the tape through twice (3 x 2 = six brief conversations in all). [5 minutes]

PT 2 Fragments

Materials: OHP (or if unavailable, blackboard) and student worksheets

Procedure: Teacher displays a series of three simple street maps on the OHP, one at a time. Students look at the same map on their worksheets. One at a time, the teacher then reads out 60 street directions fragments, 20 for each map, twice each at first, and students trace that part of the route on their worksheets with their fingers, stopping where they think the direction takes them. The teacher then repeats that direction twice more, moving his/her finger on the OHP, and students thereby receive confirmation or, if it be the case, see where they went wrong. This is not a test. Students are not asked if they were successful. It is assumed they will need numerous hearings before success becomes routine. These early PTs allow for private practice and improvement first. The 60 fragments, which gradually increase in complexity, are genuine excerpts, or only slightly cleaned up versions, or melds, from the target discourse samples obtained as part of the needs analysis. If this kind of activity is unfamiliar to your students, provide clear explanations and one or two models, as needed, before beginning. In some classes, students may be capable of taking over the teacher's role after sufficient examples. [10 minutes]

See student worksheets 1-3 for the maps, and teacher OHP transparencies 1-3 for the same maps, and the accompanying worksheet for the 60 fragments.

Sample items:

1. Go straight down Kalakaua Avenue two blocks, and turn right.
 2. Go to the first corner and turn left.
 3. Go to the first corner and take a right.
 4. Go down Kalakaua Avenue two blocks. Make a right.
 5. Go two blocks up Kalakaua. Make a right, and then the first left.
- Etc.

PT 3 Where Are You Now?

Materials: OHP (or blackboard) and three new simple maps on student worksheets. These maps are more detailed, including some additional street names and very simple three-dimensional drawings or symbols of some frequent types of buildings (church, school, bank, museum, etc.) and other typical landmarks (shopping mall, university, railway station, etc.).

Procedure: Same as for PT 2, except that this time, (a) the directions will tend to be a little more complex because the distances involved will gradually be longer, and (b) after each one, the teacher will ask the class, gradually shifting to individual students, a question after each one, e.g., What street are you on now? What's the building in front of you? If you are now facing north on Main, is the bank on your left or your right? (Note: Teachers should NOT teach any supposedly unknown vocabulary items first. Students can be expected to learn any such items through doing the task.) Again, allow students to take over the teacher's role if capable of doing so. [10 minutes]

See student worksheets 4-6 for the maps, and teacher OHP transparencies 4-6 for the same maps, and the accompanying worksheet 2 for the 60 new fragments and questions.

Sample items:

1. Go two blocks on Main, and turn left. What street are you on now?
2. Take the first right on Main. Is Trinity Church on your left or your right?

3. Go down Main, past Shipley Road, and take the next right. What street is that?
4. Continue on Redfern Avenue. Make a right, and then an immediate left. What building is in front of you?
5. Go up Main, and make a left on Shipley. Keep going straight on Shipley. How many blocks to the Museum, and is it on the left or right?

Etc.

PT 4 Asking the Way

Materials: Tape recorder and cassette. Worksheets with the same maps as were used in PT 3. other sheets each with a mix of 15 of the original 60 directions and questions used in PT 3, and 15 new items of the same type.

Procedure: Replay the original three dialogs, once each, and three additional ones. Then divide the students into groups of four. Students work as two pairs inside each group, each pair with a copy of the map and one of the worksheets. One pair reads out the directions while the other follows them for item 1, then reverses the giver and receiver roles for item 2, and so on. Demonstrate the procedure first if this is a new kind of activity for your students. (If more practice is needed, the whole procedure can be repeated with a second pair of worksheets containing another set of 30 items, using the same maps, but with the students this time working in pairs rather than groups of four.) [10 minutes]

PT 5 Follow the Route

Materials: Real three-dimensional tourist maps of a potential destination town in the L2 environment for the students concerned, e.g., the map of Waikiki issued to all passengers arriving at Honolulu International Airport. The map has five different routes marked on it to and from various sites, ideally in different colors. The audiotape of 10 sets of directions describing the five routes. (The teacher could read these aloud if a tape is unavailable, in which case scripted versions of the directions will be required for the teacher.)

Procedure: Students hear two versions (A to B, and B to A; C to D, and D to C; etc.) of five sets of taped directions (= 10 in all) while following the routes already marked out by the five colored lines on the map. [5 minutes]

PT 6

Materials: The same three-dimensional maps used in PT 5, now one per person, and an audio-tape with five new sets of directions from points marked on the map to destinations not marked on it.

Procedure: Students are told they are at point A (B, C, etc.), marked on their maps. They hear taped directions to new unknown destinations, and trace the routes on the map with their fingers. The directions are in segments, with check questions of the sort used in PT 3 (What's the building in front of you? What street are you on now?) as they go. Students complete this task individually, but with answers to the check questions spoken aloud and confirmed or corrected by the teacher or other students as they go. The final question after each set of directions is a variant of "Where are you?" or "What's the building we are now at?" [10 minutes]

PT 7

Materials: The same three-dimensional maps as in PT 5 and 6. Taped versions of five new sets of directions.

Procedure: Students do the same as in PT 7, but in one go, i.e., without breaks and check questions along the way, labeling the building/space/etc. on their maps at the end of each route as evidence that they have successfully reached their destinations. To ensure they really have identified the right place, they also answer a check question of the sort used earlier, e.g., "And what's the building next door/across the street?" (Note: This PT can also serve as the exit test for this module if a better simulation or, ideally, the real target task, is unavailable.) [10 minutes]