

FIGURE 2.2 *Categories and Examples for Developing Language Objectives*

Consider these six categories as a starting point for generating a language objective. Think about your content topic and how language will be used in your lesson: in your speech, in the reading assignments, and in the lesson activities. Given the content topic and your understanding of the students' degree of academic language acquisition, write an objective that complements the topic and can be explicitly addressed in the lesson. Examples of language objectives are listed below and could occur over several lessons in a chemistry unit on physical and chemical change.

- **Key Vocabulary** refers to the **technical terms, concept words, and other words** needed to discuss, read, or write about the topic of the lesson (e.g., names of important people, places, and events; scientific and mathematical terms; social studies or health concepts) can become language objectives. The "other words" subset includes process words and words like comparatives (e.g., both, are similar, in comparison), conjunctions (e.g., but, however, although), and transition phrases (e.g., first, next, after that, during the second phase).

An example objective is

Students will be able to define the terms *chemical reaction, reagent, and physical change* orally and in writing.

Therefore, in this lesson, the teacher will spend time making sure students become familiar with these definitions and can use them, with support as needed.

- **Language Functions** refer to the ways students use language in the lesson. The lesson may call for students to describe, compare, or summarize, for example. Some state standards (e.g., New York's ESL standards) are organized in this way and are a good source for ideas.

An example objective is

Students will be able to formulate questions and generate hypotheses before conducting an experiment.

If a lesson focuses on language functions, the teacher will spend time teaching or reviewing the purpose and procedures for the targeted language use. In this case, the teacher might provide question and hypothesis starters (e.g., What will happen when . . . ? How does a . . . ? I predict that . . .).

- **Language Skills** are the reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills students need to learn. Skills can be taught directly, practiced, and reviewed; they need to link to the topic of the lesson. In a language arts class, for example, will students need to read and determine a main idea? In social studies, will they need to listen to an audio or video recording and identify the speaker's point of view regarding an historical conflict? In math class, will they have to write an explanation of their solution to a word problem?

Two example objectives are

Students will be able to scan directions for a laboratory experiment to identify the necessary equipment.

Students will be able to draft a lab report.

In this lesson that revolves around a lab experiment, the teacher may teach scanning skills, using another piece of text, and also teach how to draft a report, perhaps by providing a template and modeling its completion.

- **Grammar or Language Structures** can be taught when they are prevalent in the written or spoken discourse of the class. They might include questioning patterns, past or future tense verbs, paragraph writing, pronoun usage, or sentence formation. Structural clues for words like roots (photo-), prefixes (un-), and suffixes (-tion) can be addressed in this category as well.

Two example objectives are

Students will be able to recognize the difference between imperative sentences (like those in lab directions) and declarative sentences (like those in their textbook).

Students will be able to use adverbs of time in their lab report to describe observations.

The teacher might introduce or review the types of sentences or the adverbs of time in this lesson on chemical and physical change in passages in the textbook. Beginning-level students may need to understand that a statement like "Turn on the Bunsen burner" is a sentence that calls for an action even though it does not have a recognizable noun subject.

- **Lesson Tasks** are a source for language objectives as well. Teachers consider what language is embedded in a lesson assignment that could be pulled forth and turned into explicit instruction in language. Will the student need language to play a particular role in a cooperative learning group? Will the students have to take notes or explain a procedure to one another?

An example objective is

Students will be able to read and summarize a text passage with peers and then teach the main information to another student.

FIGURE 2.2 *Continued*

This example shows how a language objective built around a lesson task might involve multiple areas of language. In this case, the teachers would make sure students knew how to read for the main idea, write a summary, and share key information orally. If not, the teacher might teach one of these three language goals, but we would not suggest the teacher never teach all three at once.

- **Language Learning Strategies** may include corrective strategies (e.g., reread confusing text), self-monitoring strategies (e.g., make and confirm predictions), prereading strategies (e.g., relate to personal experience), or language practice strategies (e.g., repeat or rehearse phrases, visualize). Helping students with Latin-based native languages apply cognates to new academic terms is a very powerful strategy.

Two example objectives are

Students will be able to confirm their responses to text questions with a peer.

Students will be able to represent data graphically.

To help students meet these objectives, the teacher would provide time in class for partners to check their answers but encourage discussion about any disputed responses. Also to help complete the lab report, the teacher may model how to create a chart or graph using the data from the experiment and then have students practice on their own.

For language arts and reading teachers, teasing apart language and content objectives can be tricky. Certain curriculum concepts like *plot* and *setting* are clearly ingredients for language arts content objectives, but some potential objectives like “produce writing that conveys a clear point of view and maintains a consistent tone” could be either a language or a content objective. We encourage language arts and reading teachers to nonetheless consistently identify a content and a language objective for each lesson, even if some might be placed in either category. Because we are aiming for whole-school implementation of the SIOP® Model, having students recognize and expect both types of objectives across all their classes is a valuable goal.



The following objectives are from an eighth-grade language arts class. Which one is the content objective and which is the language objective? Justify your answer.

- Students will be able to (SWBAT) use descriptive adjectives to write sentences about the characters.
- SWBAT compare traits of two characters in a story.



You teach a tenth-grade sheltered World History class with students of intermediate English proficiency. One of your state history standards is “Explain the causes of the economic recovery of Europe and Japan after World War II.” You intend to teach about the Marshall Plan. Write a content and a language objective for your class.

As you write your objectives, keep the verbs in Figure 2.3 in mind. Although the verbs are not exclusive to one type or another, they are more common to the category presented. Over time, add to this list to further distinguish between the content and language goals of your lesson.