Teaching Listening and Speaking Skills (ENG514)

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY OF PAKISTAN

Module-23 to Module 37

- **Language** is a means of thinking and transferring culture from one generation to another as well as from one nation to another
- Many countries emphasize **teaching** languages other than the native language to its citizens.

Q: Define speaking.

Speaking is one of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). It is the means through which learners can communicate with others to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions, intentions, hopes and viewpoints. In addition, people who know a language are referred to as 'speakers' of that language. Furthermore, in almost any setting, speaking is the most frequently used language skill. As Rivers (1981) argues, speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing in our communication.

- Speaking has been classified to monologue (oral presentation) and dialogue (interacting with other).

Q: What are the two function of language?

Speaking can also serve one of two main functions: transactional (transfer of information) and interactional (maintenance of social relationships).

- Nunan (1999) and Burkart & Sheppard (2004) argue that success in learning a language is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the (target) language
- Speaking covers broad areas of mechanics, functions, pragmatics and social interaction.
- Speaking is a high complex mental activity which differs from other activities because it requires much greater effort of the central nervous system (Bygate, 1998: 23).
- In speaking, speaker has to retrieve words and phrases from memory and assembles them into **syntactically** and propositionally appropriate sequence (Harmer, 2001: 269-270).
- Speaking also happens in the context of limited processing capacities due to limitations of **working memory**.

Q: What are the common characteristics of a spoken language?

- It is both time-bound, and dynamic.
- Participants are usually face-to-face and so can rely on feedback (extra-linguistic cues to aid meaning).
- Spoken language makes greater use of shared knowledge than written language.
- Many words and constructions are characteristic of, especially informal, speech.
- There is an opportunity to rethink an utterance whilst it is in progress. However, errors once spoken cannot be undone. As such, the interlocutor must live with the consequences.
- Negotiation of meaning is common and often a large part of any conversation.
- Interruptions and overlapping are normal and are generally very common.
- Frequently displays ellipsis.
- Speech makes use of many formulaic expressions.
- Negotiation of topic is also very important: yes but«, anyway«, right then«,
- Interlocutors give and receive immediate feedback.

- Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning (involves producing and receiving and processing information) that is dependent on the context in which it occurs.

- Speaking is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving.

- One of the central difficulties inherent in the study of speaking is that it overlaps with a considerable number of

other areas and disciplines.

- The structure of a conversation culturally determined (related to pragmatics and ethnography)
- The grammar and vocabulary of speech different from other sorts of grammar (related to syntax and semantics)

- What are the critical factors in the stream of speech that make it intelligible (prosody, phonetics/ phonemics)?

Q: As a second language learner acquires a living language, what aspects other than grammar and vocabulary he needs to be acquired?

As a second language learner acquires a living language, a large number of aspects other than grammar and vocabulary also need to be acquired for successful communication to take place. These relate to culture, social interaction, and the politeness norms that exist in the target language. To learn to communicate expertly in another language a speaker must change and expand identity as he or she learns the cultural, social, and even political factors, which go into language choices needed to speak appropriately with a new 'voice'.

Q: Write down Aspects of production in context of Spoken discourse and written discourse?

Aspects of production in context of spoken discourse include:

- Dynamic, Oral/aural, transient, unplanned, context dependent.

Aspects of production in context of written discourse include

- Static, visual/motoric, non-transient, planned, de-contextualized.

Q: Write down Social Aspects in context of Spoken discourse and written discourse?

Social aspect in context of Spoken discourse includes:

- Primary, rhetorical, stigmatized, informal, inter-personal, locus of change

Social aspect in context of written discourse includes:

- Secondary, logical, prestigious, formal, contractual, conservative

- Channel is a term used to describe the physical means by which communication takes place.
- In terms of speaking there is the oral/aural channel and in terms of writing the visual/motoric channel.
- Discourse can be studied in terms of the effects of channel on the language. These include the constraints of speech processing in real time versus the capacity to reflect and edit that the written channel allows.
- One of the commonest problems in oral presentations is information overload for listeners as they try to process densely informative language that has been prepared via a written text.
- This faculty is the universal linguistic form: speech.
- The spoken form is the basis for investigations in first language acquisition.
- Speech is also quintessentially the form in which the inter-personal functions of language are carried out and the form is subject to the benefits and disadvantages that stem from the way it is produced.

Q: Where Does Speech Fit in Language Studies?

The notion that humans have an innate, more recently articulated as a biological or genetic, language ability, which provides the basis for all language use no matter how seemingly

These two opposing camps, one based on the notion of an innate cognitive model which sees the diverse, developed in the twentieth century in opposition to earlier behaviorist models. human child as 'pre-programmed' at birth to learn to speak, the other seeing learning as wholly dependent on an external stimulus, have a strong bearing on both the status of speech data in linguistic science and on theories of teaching language. The second half of the twentieth century saw the rationalist camp win the theoretical battle.

Q: What are the Historical Perspectives on Speaking?

Attitudes to the spoken form of language have waxed and waned since earliest available records of how and why speaking was taught. The art of speaking has been connected to the skill of persuasion, and the ability to influence others by means of rhetoric. The beginning and end of the nineteenth century show a marked change in the status of speech in the language teaching process. This was brought about in the transition from 'grammar ranslation' methods which dominated language teaching in the early parts of the century in Europe to what came

to be termed the 'Reform Movement' which arose around the 1880s.

The 1960s with the influence of the work of Noam Chomsky, and the 1970s and 1980s with the growth of 'communicative' approaches, marked two distinct sea changes in the field of language teaching both of which did much to underpin present attitudes to the spoken form. While these two threads are brought into commonality by research in the field of second language acquisition, they have marked differences in the emphasis they placed on speech in their thinking. On the one hand, the transformational grammar movement internalized and made abstract the language system to such an extent that actual speech became something of an irrelevance. On the other, the tenets of the communicative movement held that language was acquired by meaningful and interesting communication in contexts which mimicked real communicative settings as closely as possible

Q: What is phonological loop?

Having a good pronunciation of the language can help in normal communication, particularly intelligibility (Derwing and Munro, 2005). However that is not the only reason for developing a stable pronunciation of a new language. There is a very important mechanism involved in working memory called the **phonological loop.** In essence, the phonological loop is the brain saying a word or phrase over and over to itself in order to keep it in working memory or to help it move into long-term memory. A good example of this is the way we say a telephone number over and over to ourselves in order to keep it in memory while we go about dialing the number. If learners do not have a stable pronunciation for a word, it cannot easily enter long-term memory because it cannot be held in the phonological loop.

Q: What are the some aspect/characteristics of pronunciation?

Pronunciation includes the articulation of individual sounds and the distinctive features of sounds like voicing and aspiration, voice-setting features (Esling and Wong, 1983), and stress and intonation. Attention to these aspects also requires attention to the blending and omission of sounds, and the effect of the various aspects on intelligibility. Thus, although it can be very useful to provide practice with individual sounds, it is also important to give attention to other aspects of the sound system.

Q: What are the factors to change the fossilized pronunciation of advanced ESL learners proposed by Acton (1984)?

In trying to change the fossilized pronunciation of advanced ESL learners, Acton (1984) also took account of a wide range of factors.

- First, he placed much of the responsibility for change on the learners, requiring them to make the best use of their time out of class and to find opportunities for making pronunciation changes in their spontaneous speech.
- Second, he gave a lot of attention to helping the learners to deal with their attitudes and feelings as these affect their pronunciation.
- Third, he helped learners with the non-verbal behaviors associated with pronunciation like facial expression and gesture.
- Fourth, Acton provided opportunity for the controlled practice of sounds in formal exercises.
- Fifth, the learners were encouraged to make use of written pronunciation guides in dictionaries so that their pronunciation could be helped by conscious knowledge of the written form.

Once political issues have been considered, the usual approach is to set up a list of criteria that typify a good pronunciation (Brown, 1989). These criteria include

- intelligibility (Abbott, 1986) (to both native speakers and non-native speakers),
- identity (does the pronunciation identify the speaker with others he or she would like to be identified with?),
- ease of learning, acceptability by parents and the educational administration, and
- the availability of teachers and materials to support the wanted pronunciation.

❖ Stevick (1978) considers pronunciation and personal identity to be very closely related, and any teacher that

ignores this could spend a lot of wasted effort on an unattainable goal.

- Levis (2005) describes the nativeness principle which sets a native-speaker goal for learners, and the intelligibility principle which accepts accents and sets understanding as the goal.
- Jenkins (2002) argues that intelligibility must be the main criterion and describes what she calls "the Lingua Franca Core" which consists of the phonological and phonetic features that "seem to be crucial as safeguards of mutual intelligibility" in interlanguage talk.
- Jenkins' proposal is a very pragmatic approach to setting pronunciation goals.

Q: What are the factors that affect the Learning of another Sound System

There are five factors that have been shown to have major effects on the learning of another sound system. Following are the factors:

1. the age of the learner
2. the learner's first language
3. the learner's current stage of proficiency development
4. the experience and attitudes of the learner
5. The conditions for teaching and learning.

- Usually, if the learner began to speak in the second language before the age of six there will be little or no accent. If the learner began to speak between the ages of seven and 11, the learner is likely to have a slight accent. If the learner began to speak after the age of 12, then there is almost always an accent (Tahta, Wood and Lowenthal, 1981a and 1981b).
- The relationship between age and accent does not invariably apply to everyone.
- The **psychological explanation** says that pronunciation is a part of our personality and as we become older we become more protective of our personality and unwilling to change it.
- Stevick believes that learners are easily able to copy new sounds, but there are three reasons why they might have difficulty.
    - They overlook some feature.
    - The learners sound bad to themselves when they copy well.
    - The learners become anxious about making the sounds.

Q: How L1 affect the Learning of another Sound System

There is a reasonable degree of predictability in the types of relationships between first language and second language sounds and their relative difficulty for long- term success for second language learners. Hammerly (1982), gives the following list of relationships ranked from the most difficult to the least difficult.

- The first language has an allophone not in the second language
- The second language has an allophone that is not in the first language
- The second language has a phoneme that is not in the first language
- The learner has to use a first language phoneme in a new position

- Flege and Port (1981) also found "the most important interference from 1L to 2L occurs at the level of phonetic implementation rather than at an abstract level of organization based on features such as voicing or aspiration".

Q: How Experience and Attitudes of the Learner affect the Learning of another Sound System

Each learner brings different life experience and attitudes to the classroom and these may affect the learning of a new sound system. Purcell and Suter (1980) looked at 20 different factors that might affect learning. These included **experience factors** like the number of years the learner had lived in an English-speaking country, the amount of conversation at home in English, the amount of training to speak English, the number of languages the learner knew, and the proportion of teachers who were native speakers. They also included **attitude factors** like the type of motivation (economic, social prestige, integrative) of the learner, the strength of the learner's desire to have an accurate pronunciation, the learner's skill at mimicry, and the learner's extroversion or introversion. Purcell and Suter found that the factors most strongly related to success in

pronunciation were the number of years the learner had lived in an English-speaking country, the number of months the learner had lived with native speakers, the learner's first language, the learner's desire to have an accurate pronunciation, and the learner's skill at mimicry. In general, it was found that classroom factors, like the quantity of English lessons and whether the teachers were native speakers were not important factors.

- The written form of a word can affect its pronunciation.
- Hammerly found that reading aloud was more difficult than imitating for correct pronunciation if the spelling system was misleading.
- Seeing a speaker's mouth movements can have a significant effect on listening (Kellerman, 1990).
- Communication activities between learners with different first languages are a good way of encouraging intelligibility.
- Strevens (1974) suggests that most learners are able to mimic particular sounds without any special teaching.

Q: Before teaching or correcting a sound, certain information is needed. Then the teacher can follow several steps to teach the sound. What are those steps?

- Does the learner have the wanted sound in the first language? What is the nearest sound?
- What sound does the learner put in place of the wanted sound?
- Does the learner make this mistake in initial, middle, and final position?
- What is the difference between the wanted sound and the unwanted sound?

- Teach the learner to hear the wanted sound by using distinguishing and identifying activities. Distinguishing should come before identifying.
- Teaching the sound usually begins with hearing practice because it is believed that such practice also improves pronunciation (Henning, 1966).

Q: Write few activities to teach identifying and distinguishing sounds in class room.

- To help learners in **distinguishing sounds**, the teacher says a pair of words (they can be nonsense words). Sometimes the two words are the same, *pa—pa*. Sometimes they have one sound different, *pa— ba*.
- In the **identifying sounds** activity, the teacher writes two words on the blackboard and draws a hand next to one of the words. fa (picture of a hand) pa. Whenever the teacher says a word which begins with the same sound as the word with the picture of the hand next to it, all the learners must move their right hand. If the teacher says a word which begins with the other sound (the one which does not have the picture of a hand next to it) the learners do nothing
- In **identifying sounds using pictures**, the learners see two pictures, for example, one showing a sheep and another showing a ship. When the teacher says "a sheep" the learners must point to the correct picture.
- In **don't be tricked**, some words are written on the blackboard. A learner points to one of them. The teacher pronounces it. Sometimes the teacher pronounces the wrong word. The learners must say if the teacher is right or wrong.
- **A multiple-choice sound involves** the learners seeing a list of groups of five words. The teacher says one word from each group and the learners draw a circle around the word that the teacher said. The same list can be used several times.
- For **sound dictation**, the teacher says nonsense words or new words and the learners write them. If the learners write them correctly, it shows that the learners can hear the words correctly.
- Pronouncing to hear works on the idea that learning to produce new sounds may improve the learners' ability to hear them correctly.

- In the **repeating sounds** activity, the teacher says the new or difficult sounds. The learners listen and repeat.
- Locke (1970) found that after a learner had copied a model to pronounce a new sound twice, there was very little further improvement.
- Difficult vowel sounds can often be made by using the exercises that Pike (1947) calls **slurring and bracketing**.
- In slurring, the tongue or another part of the mouth is slowly moved from one position to another. This is done several times with the learners copying the teacher. Then the movement is stopped a part of the way between the

two sounds so that the wanted sound is produced.

- In **testing the teacher**, some of the exercises that are used for hearing practice can be used to practice pronunciation. The learners take the teacher's place, and the teacher takes the learner's place. So, for the same different exercise the learners individually pronounce pairs of words and the teacher says "the same" or "different".

Q: How to Correct Pronunciation Mistakes in a classroom?

When a learner makes a pronunciation mistake and the teacher wants to correct it quickly, the teacher can do any of the following things.

- The teacher repeats the word correctly several times with ordinary stress and intonation until the learner self-corrects by copying the teacher.
- The teacher repeats the word correctly giving extra stress and length to the part where the learner made the mistake. The teacher compares the mistake and the correct form: "Not lice but rice."
- The teacher writes the word on the blackboard correctly and underlines the part where the learner made a mistake. The teacher also says the word correctly.
- The teacher just says "No" and lets the learner find the mistake without help. The teacher can make a certain signal, like hitting the desk softly, when a learner makes a pronunciation mistake. This technique is used when the learners can make the correct sounds but forget to do so while talking.

Q: Define and distinguish stress-timed and syllable-timed language.

Languages can be classified according to whether they are stress-timed or syllable-timed. It used to be thought that in a stress-timed language (like English) the stresses were equal distances apart even though the number of syllables between each stress was not the same. This would mean that some syllables would have to be said very quickly if there were several between two stresses, and some would be said slowly if there were few between two stresses.

In syllable-timed languages, the syllables occur at regular intervals (as in Spanish and Indonesian). Research indicates that the spacing of stresses is by no means equal in stress-timed languages although there is a tendency towards regularity (Dauer, 1983). The main differences between stress-timed and syllable-timed languages lie in syllable structure (syllable length varies more in stress-timed languages than in syllable-timed languages), vowel reduction (stress- timed languages are more likely to use centralized vowels in unstressed syllables and vowels may be shortened or omitted), and lexical stress (stress-timed languages usually have word level stress).

Q: Which points should be remembered while teaching Word Stress?

In English, one part of a word is usually said with greater strength, stress, than another part. Strong stress often goes with an increase in the length of the syllable and a change in intonation. There are no easy rules to find which syllable should be stressed in a word. The stress pattern of each word just has to be learned. A common mistake is to say words with the stress in the wrong place. Stress can be taught in the following ways.

- The teacher taps the stress pattern of a word, with a hard tap for the stressed syllables and soft for the others. The learners say the word.
- When the teacher provides a model she can make the stressed syllable longer than usual and the unstressed ones very short.
- When the learners say a word, they make a gesture to go with the stressed part of the word. This gesture can be a hand movement.
- The learners are given a list of words. The teacher reads them and the learners underline the stressed syllables.
- The learners are given a list of words and they put them in groups according to their stress pattern. The teacher can give them some model words to represent each stress pattern. When practicing stress the teacher can present words with the same stress pattern for practice.

Q: Write a note on Sentence Stress in English language.

The place of stress in an English sentence depends on the relative importance of the different words in the

sentence. Usually nouns, adjectives, certain pronouns, main verbs and adverbs are given strong stress (Jones, 1960). Learners can be given practice in looking at the meaning of sentences to decide where the strong stress should be (Halverson, 1967). One sentence can be spoken in many different ways to give different meanings (Jones, 1960; Robinett, 1965). George and Neo (1974) point out the close relationship between stress and information distribution in a sentence, with the stressed parts conveying the least predictable information.

In English sentences the stressed syllables are roughly the same distance from each other. So, if there are many unstressed syllables between the stressed syllables, the unstressed syllables are said very quickly. A very common mistake is to make every syllable, stressed or unstressed, the same length. Learners can be helped to avoid this mistake in the following ways. When providing practice, it is important to give attention to the unstressed syllables as well as the stressed syllables. The unstressed syllables will be shorter. Weakening the unstressed syllables gives prominence to the stressed syllables.

Q: How can we teach intonation in classroom?

Learners can practice intonation in the following ways.

- The learners can copy the teacher.
- The learners can make gestures to go with changes in intonation. The rise at the end of a Yes/No question can go with the speaker raising her eyebrows, or lifting a shoulder (Robinett, 1965).
- The learners say the last word of a sentence by itself with the correct intonation, rising or falling. Then word by word they build up the sentence from the end to the beginning while keeping the correct intonation (Robinett, 1965).
- The learners can be shown drawings of intonation patterns to help them understand what they should try to do.

Q: Define Negotiation.

The integration of listening and speaking emphasizes active listening with the listener negotiating and shaping the spoken message. Part of the skill of listening is learning how to take an active role in providing feedback to the speaker (Brown, 1986). This feedback may involve pointing out problems with the comprehensibility of the message and specifying where the problem lies. This feedback and questioning is called **negotiation.**

Q: How negotiation can assist language development?

One of the main ways that negotiation helps the listener learn is by clarifying unknown items. Negotiation also plays other roles in assisting language development, such as the following which are based on Long's detailed discussion of interaction (Long, 1996: 445–454). Negotiation:

- makes input understandable without simplifying it, so that learnable language features are retained
- breaks the input into smaller digestible pieces
- raises awareness of formal features of the input
- gives learners opportunities for direct learning of new forms
- provides a "scaffold" within which learners can produce increasingly complex utterances
- pushes learners to express themselves more clearly and precisely— "pushed output"
- Makes learners more sensitive to their need to be comprehensible.

Q: How direct training can be beneficial for speaking strategies?

Direct training of speaking strategies can have a positive effect on learners' development of speaking skills (Sayer, 2005). Training can involve: (1) explanation of discourse strategies like "holding the floor", negotiating meaning, providing feedback to the speaker, and managing turn-taking; (2) observing conversations using a checklist and later providing feedback; and (3) learners transcribing recordings of their own speech and critiquing them.

Q: How agony column can be beneficial in encouraging Negotiation?

Let us take the **agony column** activity as an example. In some newspapers there is a place for letters from readers to be printed. Readers write in describing their relationship problems or other personal problems and an answer giving advice about their problems is printed next to each letter. These letters and their answers

can be used for class discussion. Hall (1971) suggests these steps.

- Read the letter to the learners, but not the answer. Unknown vocabulary and other difficulties should be explained. The learners can take notes as they listen to the letter, ask questions, repeat it aloud phrase by phrase, or write it as dictation.
- After the letter is read, the learners discuss it in small groups and suggest advice of their own.
- The last step is when the teacher presents the advice given in the newspaper. This advice can be discussed and compared with the advice suggested by the learners.

Q: How can we Encourage Negotiation Using Written Input?

There are many techniques which provide written input which could encourage negotiation. These include **completion activities**, **ordering activities**, **split information activities**, **ranking**, **problem solving**, and **modify the statements**.

- It is the nature of the task that determines the kind of language use that occurs.
- It is the learners who determine what kind of interaction occurs with a given task (see also Nakahama, Tyler and van Lier, 2001).
- In addition, strongly focused two-way tasks can result in the use of almost telegraphic language because this is the most efficient way of getting the message across, particularly when there is a time limit placed on the task.
- Similarly, the way in which the learners take turns in a task is largely determined by the nature of the task.
- When the teacher monitors tasks involving negotiation to judge their effectiveness, the teacher should look carefully for negotiation of lexical and grammatical items and should notice whether form or meaning is being negotiated.

Q: How to use Information Distribution to Encourage Negotiation?

It is possible to distinguish four kinds of group work according to the way the information needed in the activity is distributed among the learners (Nation, 1989b). These four ways are:

1. All learners have the same information (a cooperating arrangement).
2. Each learner has different essential information (a split information arrangement) (Nation, 1977).
3. One learner has all the information that the others need (a superior inferior arrangement).
4. The learners all see the same information but each one has a different task.

- The term "information gap activities" is sometimes used in the literature. These can include split information tasks and superior-inferior tasks.
- **Split information activities** have been called two-way tasks, or jigsaw tasks, and **cooperating tasks** have been called one-way tasks.
- The essential feature of the split information arrangement is that only by working together in combining their material can the learners find the required answers. A learner cannot find the answer simply by looking at their own material.
- **Split information tasks** can be used with learners at any level, from beginners to advanced students, if appropriate materials are employed (Nation, 1977).
- One weakness of **Split information** tasks when they require labelling and completion of diagrams with words is that learners can resort to spelling out words to each other and in so doing reduce the quality of meaning-focused talk.
- **Cooperating tasks** involve all the learners having the same information.
- In **modify the statements**; the learners are given a set of controversial statements. They work in groups to make changes to the statements so that everybody in the group can agree with them.
- In **complete the map** each learner has an incomplete version of a map or diagram and each learner has information that the other(s) do not have. By combining this information each learner can make a complete map. They do this by keeping their map hidden from the others and by describing what is on their map for the others to draw on theirs.

Q: What is strip story activity?

In the **strip story** the teacher chooses a story that has roughly as many sentences as there are learners in the group. The teacher writes each sentence from the story on different pieces of paper. The story should be one that the learners have not met before. It should contain known vocabulary and sentence patterns. Each learner is given a different sentence from the story to memorize. If there are more sentences than learners, then some learners can have two short sentences to memorize. After each learner has memorized their sentence, the pieces of paper with the sentences on them are collected by the teacher. Then each learner tells their sentence to the others in the group and without doing any writing at all the learners arrange themselves to solve the problem of putting the sentences in the right order to tell the story (Gibson, 1975). The teacher takes no part in the activity..

Q: Write down Factors Affecting the Amount and Type of Negotiation.

Several factors affect the amount, type and effect of negotiation.

- Pair work usually produces more negotiations on the same task than work in a group of four (Fotos and Ellis, 1991).
- Cooperating tasks produce more negotiation of the meaning of vocabulary than information gap tasks (Newton, 1995). Information gap tasks produce a lot of negotiation but not all of it is negotiation of word meaning or indeed language features.
- The signals learners make affects the adjustment of output during a task. In a study of output in activities involving native speakers working with non-native speakers, Pica, Holliday, Lewis and Morgenthaler (1989) found that the most important factor determining whether learners adjusted their output was the type of signal made by their partner. When their partner asked for clarification (What? I still don't know what the word is.), the learners were more likely to adjust what they said, than if their partner asked for confirmation by repeating what the learner had just said, by changing it (**NNS** house has three windows? **NS** three windows?), or by completing or elaborating it (**NNS** there is a car parking . . . left side **NS** of the picture, right?). The researchers caution, however, that confirmation checks that do not lead to adjusted output may still have an important role to play in language acquisition in that they provide models for input.

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- **Listen and do** activities can also give rise to negotiation if they are at the right level of difficulty.
- Picture drawing in pairs has often been used in research on interaction and negotiation.

Q: How a listener can control the speaker (teacher) if not comprehending fast speaking speed.

Sometimes communication is difficult because the speaker is going too fast or is not being considerate of the listener. If this happens, the learner can try to control the speaker. The language needed to do this consists of phrases like "Please speak more slowly" and "Could you say that again?" In the **controlling the teacher** technique learners gain control of the listening material. When the learners have this control, listening exercises can become learning exercises. The teacher makes sure that the learners know the following sentences and, if necessary, writes them on the blackboard so that they can be seen during the exercise.

Discover the answer is another technique to encourage learners to question the speaker. The teacher asks the learners a question that she is sure that they cannot answer.

In **discover the story** one learner has a copy of a story. They tell the topic of the story to others in the group and they ask questions to discover what the story is about.

Q: What is 'find the difference' activity?

In **find the differences** activity a pair of learners have a similar picture each, but they have to find the differences by describing and not showing their pictures to each other. In this activity the support comes from the common features of the two pictures. Support may also involve some kind of support during the task such as notes, pictures with annotations, or objects.

Q: What are the cause and solution for those who are reluctant to speak a language?

Some learners may be reluctant to speak. It is important to find out the causes for this and to deal with the causes. The following table outlines some possibilities.

Table Causes and Solutions for Learners who are Reluctant to Speak

Possible causes	Way of checking the cause	Solutions
Inadequate vocabulary	Use the 1000 level test (see Nation, 2001).	Use activities where the learner can study the vocabulary beforehand.
Inadequate control of grammar	Use sentence completion tests to see areas of strength and weakness.	Use controlled activities like **substitution tables** and **What is it?** Use guided or creative techniques to develop control of grammar.
Lack of fluency	Provide a long "wait time" to see if the learner is able to construct a spoken sentence.	Do repetitive activities like **4/3/2.**
Shyness	Compare how the learner talks to the teacher with how the learner talks to peers.	Start the learner with safe, small group activities, gradually increasing the risk.
Lack of encouragement	See if the learner will speak with friends in English in the playground or in pair activities.	Work in a small group with the learner giving a lot of encouragement (Day, 1981).

- The comprehension approach suggests that speaking should not be encouraged until learners have substantial receptive experience and knowledge of the language system.
- Some researchers argue that the knowledge that is needed to speak will not come unless the learners are "pushed" to spea`k.
- Swain (2005) argues that learners can comprehend input without having to look closely at the grammar. If, however, they are "pushed" to produce output, then the attention that they give to the grammar changes.
- The idea behind pushed output is that knowledge of the L2 does not transfer automatically from reception to production.
- Comprehension processes involve semantic decoding.
- Production also involves syntactic processing.
- Learners are "pushed" through encouragement or necessity when they have to produce spoken language in unfamiliar areas.
- Pushed output extends speakers and in doing so heightens their awareness of the importance of particular grammatical features in productive use of the language.
- Without pushed output learners mainly acquire language features that are necessary for comprehension.
- Once vocabulary recognition is largely automated, they can then give their attention to grammar.
- Pushed output can result in the learner moving "from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis of it" (1985: 252). This analysis could result in the learning of new grammar.
- Pushed output does not mean that learners have to be pushed to produce as soon as an item is introduced. There is value in building up receptive experience, but this needs to be seen as only a first step. Learners need to be pushed to turn their receptive knowledge into productive use.

Q: What are the factors for planning speaking tasks to push learners' output?

When planning for a variety of speaking tasks to push learners' output there are several factors to consider. These include: topic, text type and performance condition.

1. **Topic**

   Learners should be pushed to speak on a range of topics. Covering a good range of topics in a course ensures that a wide range of vocabulary is used. Topic will also have a relationship with amount of background knowledge, as learners may be familiar with the content of some topics and not with others.

2. **Text Type**

   Biber (1989) distinguished eight major spoken and written text types on the basis of the clustering of largely grammatical features. These text types included **intimate, interpersonal, interaction**, **scientific, exposition**, **imaginative, narrative** and involved **persuasion**.

Although most of these were written types, many of them do have spoken equivalents. The most useful distinctions to consider when ensuring that learners are pushed to cope with a range of text types are:

- Involved interaction versus monologue.
- Colloquial speech versus formal speech
- Short turns versus long turns. Do speakers make short contributions or longer uninterrupted speech?
- Interactional versus transactional speech. to establish a relationship or to convey information.
- Narrative versus non-narrative

3. Performance Conditions

When learners perform speaking tasks they can do this under a variety of conditions. One set that has received a reasonable amount of attention in research is the opportunity for planning before speaking.

- Planning involves preparing for a task before the task is performed. Typically it involves having time to think about a given topic, having time to prepare what to say, and taking brief notes about what to say.
- In research studies it has been found that about ten minutes' planning time is usually enough to give good results.
- The effects of planning are usually measured by looking at the effects on fluency, grammatical complexity, and grammatical accuracy.
- In several studies, planning had positive effects on fluency and grammatical complexity, but had mixed effects on accuracy.
- One of the most effective ways of bringing receptive language knowledge into productive use is to make use of techniques which involve **retelling**.

Giving learners a chance to prepare for tasks can increase their chances of success. Such preparation could involve the **retelling** of a previously studied written text, group members helping in preparation and rehearsal before the task, or research and planning on an assigned topic. In **class judgement**, preparation is an essential part of the task. Two learners are chosen to be the competitors in a quiz. They are given a text to read which they will later be quizzed on. The rest of the class also has the text and the questions which the competitors will be asked. The competitors do not see the questions. Then the competitors are asked the questions orally and the rest of the class note whether they think the answers are right or wrong.

Q: What is ask and answer activity?

In **ask and answer** activity (Simcock, 1993), the learners work in pairs. One learner has a text to study and the other has a set of questions based on the text. The learners may work together on the text. Then one learner questions the other to get them to display their knowledge of the text. They practice this for a few times and eventually do it in front of the class. The performance is done without looking at the text. Many variations of this technique are possible, particularly in the relationship of the questions to the text and the type of processing required to answer them.

Q: How Time Pressure affects speaking?

Recently researchers have distinguished on-line planning and pre-talk planning (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). On-line planning involves paying careful attention to turning ideas into speech while they speak, and this is more likely to have a positive effect on accuracy. On-line planning is helped by having plenty of time to speak. Pre-task planning, as in **prepared talks**, is more likely to allow learners to focus on the range of ideas to cover and the organization of these ideas. Giving learners plenty of time to perform a speaking task allows them to access both their implicit and explicit grammatical knowledge and thus increase the quality of their spoken output.

Q: How Amount of Support affect speaking?

Supported or guided tasks allow learners to operate under the most favorable conditions for production. An important design feature in such tasks is the presence of patient, understanding, sympathetic and supportive listeners. There are several ways to achieve this. One way is to train the listeners in supportive listening strategies. These can include providing plenty of wait time while the speaker prepares what to say, strategy to periodically summarize what the speaker has said, and asking easy questions to direct the speaker and, after sufficient wait time, supplying needed phrases and vocabulary if the speaker is struggling. An important

requirement in supportive listening is giving the speaker the chance to find the language items needed without being overwhelmed by support. Using three learners in a speaking activity can be a useful way of training supportive listeners. One learner is the speaker, one is the supportive listener, and one is monitoring the supportive listener with a checklist. Another way to get supportive listening is to give listeners the chance to experience the difficulties of speaking and to reflect on these difficulties.

Q: How Standard of Performance affects speaking?

The fourth major performance condition affecting speaking is the standard of output expected. The pressure on learners to perform well is increased if they have to speak in public, and if they are aware that some judgment is going to be made on their performance. Doing transactional speaking with others when important information has to be conveyed and where it needs to be conveyed accurately is also a way of pushing output. Speaking with others can be supportive, it can also be demanding.

Q: Writ a note on informal speaking.

Informal speaking typically involves tasks where conveying information is not as important as maintaining friendly relationships. Brown (1978) calls this interactional speaking as opposed to transactional speaking. Interactional speaking can be supported in the following ways. This support enables learners to produce what they would not normally be able to produce.

- Learners can be taught conversational strategies that can help keep the conversation going (Holmes and Brown, 1976). A very useful technique for doing that is called **Q−>SA+EI**. What this formula means is a question (Q) should be followed by a short answer (SA) and then some extra information about the answer (EI). So if someone asks "How long have you been here?" the reply may be "About six months, but I found it very difficult at first".
- Having a supportive partner in a conversation can make speaking much easier. Learners can be trained to provide support for other speakers. This support can involve supplying unknown words, completing sentences that the speaker has begun, and asking helpful questions to provide language and content support.
- Repeated tasks can also be a good way of providing support. Initially the speaking may be difficult, but with repetition it can become easier. Techniques like **retelling** can provide this kind of repetition. Another useful technique is **pass and talk**. In this activity each learner has a card with a task on it. The tasks can involve describing something in a picture or in the classroom, saying something about another person on the group, mentioning an item from the current news, or expressing an opinion on something. Each learner in the group has to do the task aloud. After each learner has done their task, the cards are passed around from hand to hand until the teacher says stop. Then each learner must do the task on the card that they are holding. The passing around should happen several times, meaning that the tasks are repeated several times.
- Informal speaking can be prepared for. As people typically speak about their lives, a good way to prepare for this is to get learners to write a diary describing what they did each day. Every few days the learners get in groups and are asked questions by the others in the group about the content of their diaries.
- Spoken language uses many more multi-word units than written language. It is worthwhile memorizing some of the more useful sentence stems such as, I see, That's right, Are you sure?

Q: Writ a note on formal speaking.

Formal speaking helps language learning in the following ways. It represents a new use of English for most learners and thus requires them to focus on language items that are not as well represented in other uses of the language (Biber, 1989). Formal speaking requires control of content, awareness of a largely passive audience, and being the focus of attention (a rather unsettling experience). It thus requires learners to use language under difficult and demanding circumstances, which will stretch the boundaries of skill development.

In a study of first language speakers of English, Brown, Anderson, Shillcock and Yule (1984) identified the following ways of getting learners to develop their skill in taking a long turn.

- Learners should experience the task from the listeners' point of view. This enables them to notice things that they should avoid in their own spoken presentation, and helps develop a sense of having an audience.
- The learners should have the opportunity to work through a series of spoken tasks that gradually increase in complexity.

Q: What are the some main features of formal speaking?

Speaking as a part of work or academic study may involve presenting reports or presenting a viewpoint on a particular topic. This type of speaking has several important features which are as following:

1. It is transactional. Its purpose is to communicate information rather than to maintain social contact as is the case with most interactional speaking.
2. It involves taking a long turn. That is, it is not usually presented as a dialogue but requires speaking for several minutes in a comprehensible and organized way.
3. It is influenced by written language. Often it will involve speaking from notes and will involve academic vocabulary.
4. The speaking is done in the learner's "careful" style in a clear and deliberate way with opportunity for the speaker to monitor the production.
5. It often needs teaching as it is a skill that is not a part of typical language use. These features have implications for teaching.

Teaching Formal Speaking: Important Topic: Read it thoroughly please.

The transactional nature of formal speaking means that the effectiveness of the learners' performance should focus on the successful communication of information. Formal speaking opportunities in the classroom should therefore be done with an obvious audience who are interested in the speaker's message. The physical arrangement of the room can affect this. The speaker should face the audience who are sitting in rows or perhaps a horseshoe arrangement. The learners can present **prepared talks** that they give in front of the class or in their group. It is a good idea to have a time limit for the talk, but then to let people ask as many questions as they wish. If the other learners know the subject of the talk they can prepare questions before the talk begins.

If the learners are working in small groups, the members of the group can help each other prepare their talks. During each class one or two people can give their talks. The talks may be used as a way of reporting outside reading. Two people may talk on the same subject. One talks in favor of that subject and the other talks against it, somewhat like a small debate (Deyes, 1973). It is best if the learners do not write out their talk and read it, but use short notes to remind themselves of what they want to say. If the class consists of adults in the work force, they can talk about their jobs or some aspects of their experience.

Formal speaking involves taking long turns. Many native speakers find this difficult and so learners need to be aware of the ways of organizing a long turn so that it most effectively achieves its goals. This gives a high priority to planning the turn. This planning can be done in several ways.

- The speaker can look at the ideas that will be presented and find an effective way of organizing them. This will usually require a very good knowledge of the content matter of the talk.
- The speaker can use a standard rhetorical framework for organizing the ideas. For example, when presenting a description of something the speaker can present a feature followed by two examples. If the speaker is defending a viewpoint, the speaker could proceed by systematically eliminating the arguments against that point of view.
- The speaker can use a standard information framework, such as topic type. Thus, when describing how to do something, the speaker describes the materials needed, the tools needed, the steps to go through with cautions and conditions mentioned at some steps, and then the final result, as in the instruction topic type.

- Group planning activities can be very useful in providing help for a speaker. **Moderation** is an interesting way of doing this. The teacher writes a topic for discussion on a large sheet of paper. The learners write their ideas about the topic on small pieces of paper. The teacher collects these and puts them in clusters on the large sheet. The learners discuss the ideas to clarify them. If a person disagrees with an idea that person says "Objection!" and that objection is written on a different colored piece of paper and placed next to the idea. Then the learners think of headings for each cluster. The headings are written on pieces of paper and are added to the large sheet. The next step is for the learners to work on the relative importance of the clusters of ideas. Each learner is given two or three stickers to put on the headings they think are most important. Instead of clusters, a scale or a matrix can be used (Purvis, 1983). This information is then used as the basis for planning a talk.

Formal talks may be scripted. That is, they may be initially in a written form. It is not usually desirable for the talk to consist of simply reading a written paper aloud. Learners thus need to get practice in preparing

note and speaking from brief notes. To encourage this, it may be necessary to use a **pyramid procedure** (Jordan, 1990). This means that the learner works alone to prepare the notes for a talk. Then the learner presents the talk to one learner using the notes, and gets feedback from that learner about the talk. Then using a shorter form of the notes, the learner presents the talk to a small group of three or four learners. Finally, the talk is presented to the whole class using only brief note cards. The practice before the class presentation reduces the need for the notes.

Learners need graded tasks, the chance to be listeners in order to get a consumer's view of formal speaking, and a systematic approach to planning and presenting formal talks. These are nicely combined in the **serials** activity. The learners work in groups to prepare a story that will be told part by part over several days. Each group prepares a different story and the other groups respond to each part of the story saying whether it is interesting, well presented, and so on (Hirvela, 1987). The starting point for the story can be a picture (tell the life story of this person), a personal account, a folk tale, a story from a graded reader, or a dramatization of a newspaper story. Because the learners have the opportunity to be both speakers and listeners, they can develop their understanding of what is involved in making a spoken presentation. The following table summarized the major discussion.

Table Features of Formal Speaking and their Implications

Features	Implications for teaching
Transactional	Focus on successful communication to an audience
Long turn	Give a high priority to planning
Written influence	Practise making and using notes
Careful style	Provide well-prepared opportunities to speak carefully
Needs to be taught	Use graded tasks and give learners the chance to be listeners

A Process Approach to Formal Speaking

Because formal speaking is usually a planned activity, it is possible to take a process approach to it. This means dividing the task into parts such as taking account of the goals and the audience, gathering ideas, organizing ideas, making a set of speaking notes, and presenting and monitoring the talk. An important part of the formal speaking process is taking account of the audience and the suitability of the information that is to be conveyed to them. The following table relates activities and supports to the various parts of the formal speaking process. Taking a process approach is effectively encouraging learners to develop a strategy for dealing with formal speaking. Thus, when a teacher takes this approach learners should be made aware of the parts of the process and how they can take control of them.

It is useful for members of a language class to present tasks to each other so that they experience both the roles of speaker and listener. It is also useful to take part in tasks where there is immediate evidence about whether the speaker understands or not. This can be done with extended **listen and do** type tasks, or with a restatement type of activity like **triads.**

A speaker may have difficulty with a talk because there is little to talk about or the topic is poorly understood. A high level of familiarity with the content of a talk is likely to lead to quality in other aspects such as the presentation, formal correctness and awareness of audience. So, good preparation for a talk can involve using group work activities to gather and elaborate the information that will be presented. **Brainstorming** is an effective way of doing this. In this activity learners suggest ideas which are listed uncritically, the main goal being to get as many ideas as possible. Later the ideas are organized and evaluated. An advantage of brainstorming is that it can result in a very diverse collection of ideas. A much more focused way of gathering ideas involves using information schema or self-questioning scales to gather information systematically

Organizing ideas clearly relates closely to awareness of the audience and the getting of ideas and in preparing a talk there could be continual movement between these parts of the process. Is it best to begin the talk

with a complete overview, or is it most suitable to begin with an example? Should the talk be divided into quite separate sections? In making such decisions it is useful to look at how others have organized their talks or rhetorical models such as description by exemplification or argument by the elimination of alternatives.

Most people speak using written notes as a guide. These probably offer a feeling of security as much as they offer guidance. Learners should practice being able to prepare and present from brief notes. For any particular talk this may mean starting from quite elaborate notes and with practice reducing them. Even very experienced speakers welcome the opportunity to practice their talks with a supportive audience.

The **pyramid procedure** involves a changing audience which can provide opportunities for repetition with the speaker using an increasingly reduced form of notes each time. **Information transfer** grids and diagrams are a useful form of notes to guide speaking. Due to their structured nature, they give the speaker a systematic route to follow and allow the audience to predict what will come.

Presenting and monitoring the talk, like all the other parts of the formal speaking process, can be planned for and practiced. Repeated opportunity to present is important here. Tactfully designed and used checklists are also useful. Feedback on presentation should lead learners to reconsider other parts of the formal speaking process.

Guidelines for Presenting a Formal Talk

The following guidelines for presenting a formal talk take account of the importance of monitoring the attention of the audience, and communicating a clear message.

- The message should be limited to three or four important pieces of information.
- The speaker should present or gradually build up a *simple* outline of the main points of the talk. The speaker may wish to present the whole outline at the beginning and work through it. This helps the audience keep up with the talk and allows them to anticipate what comes next.
- There should be three or four changes of the focus of attention during the talk. This means that the whole talk should not consist of the speaker talking to the audience. The changes of focus of attention provide a rest for the audience, and the speaker, and thus help to keep their attention. At the beginning of the talk the audience is likely to be most attentive and rested, and so this is a good time to get the main points across. Second, the audiences are there to listen to the speaker and so the speaker should show that they have interesting and useful information to present and thus establish credibility with the audience.
- The audience should be involved in the talk by having a chance to participate through asking questions, providing feedback, an responding to tasks. There are three reasons for this. First, it keeps the attention of the audience. Second, it provides feedback for the speaker about whether the learners are following the talk, where they have difficulty, and what any are interested in. Third, it improves the quality of the information, particularly if some of the audiences are already well informed on the topic.

Presenting a formal talk is a worthwhile skill, and it is one that many native speakers have difficulty in learning. It is, however, an important skill and also an important source of language learning opportunities.

Monitoring Formal Talks

The process division of the formal speaking task provides a useful basis for monitoring and providing helpful formative feedback. When listening to formal talks both teachers and learners can look analytically to see where the strengths and weaknesses of the speaker lie.

Learners should be encouraged to reflect on their own formal speaking, noting what they do well, and where they need to make improvement. Another kind of long turn is conversational story-telling (Jones, 2001) where, during a conversation, someone tells of an incident that happened to them. Hill and Storey (2003) describe the use of an on-line website to improve oral presentation skills. Formal speaking pushes learners in their output. It is worth remembering, however, that formal monologue is typically only a small part of most people's speaking. Speaking with others, as we have seen, can push learners in their output and make them notice gaps in their knowledge.

Module-30

- Language-focused learning involves giving attention to features of the language not just for a particular message that they convey, but for their spoken or written form, their general meaning, the patterns that they fit into, or their correct use.

❖ In language- focused learning, the attention to the item as part of the system is likely to be teacher directed (through explanation or through the design of an activity).

Q: What are the affects of Language-focused Learning?

Language-focused learning can help second language learning. Language-focused learning can have the following effects:

- A combination of language-focused learning and meaning-focused use leads to better results than either kind of learning alone.
- Language-focused learning can speed up the rate of second language acquisition.
- Language-focused learning may help learners to continue to improve their control of grammar rather than becoming stuck with certain errors.
- Some language-focused learning can lead directly to acquisition, depending on the kinds of items focused on, especially vocabulary (Elgort, 2007).
- Language-focused learning can indirectly provide meaning-focused

Q: What are the limits of Language-focused Learning?

There are, however, limitations on the effect of language-focused learning. These limitations include the following:

- Language-focused learning cannot change the order in which learners acquire certain complex, developmental features of the language, such as questions, negatives, and relative clauses.
- Language-focused learning needs to be combined with the opportunity to use the same items in meaning-focused use.
- Some grammatical items learned through language-focused learning may only be available to the learner in planned use.

❖ The best language-focused vocabulary instruction involves looking at a word as part of a system rather than as part of a message.

❖ Language-focused vocabulary learning has three main values.

1. It speeds up vocabulary learning considerably.
2. It contributes directly to implicit knowledge.
3. It raises awareness of the systematic features of vocabulary.

Q: What are the Requirements of Language-focused Vocabulary Instruction?

What this information shows is that it is essential for learners to have good control over the relatively small number of high frequency words. The most important 2000 to 3000 word families make up such a large proportion of both spoken and written use that it is difficult to use the language effectively without a good knowledge of them. These words can be found in *A General Service List of English Words* (West, 1953) and the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000). However, to cope with unsimplified spoken language, a vocabulary size of around 6000 word families is needed.

Vocabulary instruction should avoid grouping words that will interfere with each other. Research on the form and meaning relationships between words shows that near synonyms, opposites, free associates, and members of a lexical set such as names of fruit or items of clothing interfere with each other and make learning more difficult if they are learned together.

Vocabulary instruction should take account of the flexibility and creativity involved in normal vocabulary use by drawing attention to the systematic features of vocabulary. This means giving attention to affixes, the underlying meaning of words, and the way they collocate with other words.

. It is therefore important to make sure that the words that are learned have plenty of opportunity to be used, and to be used fluently.

Q: What are the Techniques and Procedures for Vocabulary learning at different stages?

The following description of techniques and procedures has been arranged according to proficiency level—beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

Beginners

For adult beginners, it is useful to have a rapid expansion of vocabulary through direct vocabulary learning. An effective way of doing this for older learners is to make use of **vocabulary cards**. These are small cards (about 4cm × 3cm) with the second language word on one side and the first language translation on the other. Particularly at the beginning level, it is useful to have a phrase containing the new word along with the word. Learners use these cards in their own time, looking at them frequently for a short time. It is good to change the order of the cards as they are looked at to avoid a serial effect in learning. The use of such cards should be combined with mnemonic techniques such as the **keyword technique**, or **word part analysis**, or simply creating a mental picture of the word or a situation where it is used. The considerable amount of research on this rote learning procedure clearly shows its effectiveness.

Intermediate

An important focus at the intermediate level is expanding the uses that can be made of known words. This means drawing attention to the underlying meaning of a word by seeing its use in a variety of contexts. There are many techniques that can be used at this level to help learning vocabulary. **Word detectives** involve a learner reporting on a word that was learned out of class recently. The reporting can follow a pattern involving saying where the word was met, what it means, how it is used, and how it can easily be remembered. The activities at the beginning and intermediate levels should focus on the essential general service vocabulary of English of approximately 2000 words.

Advanced

At the advanced level, learners who intend to study in English at post-16 level or university need to focus on the academic vocabulary of English. This vocabulary can be found in the 570 word family Academic Word Lis. All learners at this level need to refine the strategies they need for dealing with the large number of low frequency words that they will meet. These strategies include, in order of importance, guessing unknown words from context, using word parts to remember the meanings of words, and using mnemonic techniques. At this level, there is little value in the direct teaching of vocabulary although learners should be doing substantial amounts of direct learning using word cards. The main focus of teaching should be on strategy development.

- Grammar can be deliberately learned as a result of direct explanation and analysis, through doing grammar exercises, through consciousness-raising activities, and through feedback.
- Grammar-focused language learning results in learners being able to say what a grammatical feature means, how it is put together, or how it should be used.
- Direct explanation of grammar points has certain advantages over more communicatively based problem-solving activities (Sheen, 1992). First, the direct teaching gets the point across quickly and allows more time for practice and meaning-focused use. Second, problem-solving group work which focuses on grammar may require vocabulary and constructions that the learners do not know
- Some of the simplest explanations that could be of immediate value to learners involve the description of collocation possibilities
- Collocation patterns are like “local” rules, and may be of more practical value to a learner than the more generally applied rules.
- Eckman, Bell and Nelson (1988) used **transformation exercises** to teach relative clauses
- Fotos and Ellis (1991) suggest an integration of meaning-focused and form-focused tasks where the learners have to focus on a message which is about grammar.

Q: What are the Consciousness Raising Activities?

Ellis (1991: 232–241) distinguishes practice activities and consciousness-raising activities. Whereas **practice activities** focus on use through repeated perception or production, **consciousness- raising** activities develop explicit understanding of how a grammatical construction works. The goal of consciousness-raising activities is to help learners notice language items when they appear in meaning- focused input and thus increase the chances that they will be learned. Consciousness-raising activities therefore have limited, delayed aims. They need not result in deliberate production, but develop an awareness of the form, function and meaning of particular items at the level of explicit knowledge. This awareness need not involve the understanding of

grammatical terminology. Success in a consciousness- raising activity would be measured by the learner consciously noticing the same item in meaning-focused input. Consciousness-raising activities can involve the following:

- having to underline or note examples of an item in a text
- being given examples and having to construct a rule
- having to classify examples into categories such as countable/ uncountable or active/passive
- performing rule based error correction
- using a rule to construct a sentence
- recognizing instances of a rule in operation

Q Write a short note on Language-focused Correction.

Tomasello and Herron (1989) suggest that some activities should be designed so that learners make errors and then get immediate feedback to make them aware of the gaps in their knowledge. Their deliberate encouragement of errors through incorrect analogy is called the "**garden path**" technique. The expression "to lead someone down the garden path" means to deliberately trick someone. It is important to note that it is not the error which is important in the garden path technique, but the noticing which comes from it.

There are two major factors to consider when deciding what to do about errors. The first is the **cause of the error** and the second is the **effect of correction**. Error correction as a means of consciousness-raising has several advantages. First, it can be a striking way of noticing, particularly if the error interfered with communication of a message. Second, it pushes the learner to notice a gap, exemplified by the difference between the error and the correction. Third, it assists the learning of accurate explicit rules that can be used to produce output that may become input for implicit knowledge.

Q: What are the basic causes of Errors?

Correcting errors is best done if there is some understanding of why the error occurred. This involves error analysis. Error analysis is the study of errors to see what processes gave rise to them. Following lists some of the causes along with examples.

1. Inference from the first language (Singular, plural differences)
2. Inference from the second language.
3. Reduction to increase efficiency. (pressure to complete the task)
4. Accidental error. (Self correction says that learn knows about rules)
5. Not sufficiently prepared for the task.
6. Lack of feedback

Q: What is the Effect of Correction?

In English we use the phrase "make a mistake". This phrase has two parts, "make" and "a mistake".

If a teacher gives most emphasis to "making" or creative language use, then that teacher will have to be prepared to tolerate mistakes.

If a teacher gives most emphasis to "mistakes" and their avoidance, then that teacher will have to reduce the amount of "making" that the learners do.

Q: How a learner can get rid of mistakes?

Johnson (1988) suggests that learners need the following four things in order to get rid of a mistake.

- The desire or need to get rid of the mistake.
- An internal representation of what the correct form is like.
- The ability to know that a mistake has been made.
- An opportunity to practice the correct form in real conditions.

Q: Write a detailed note on Correction Procedures.

If a teacher decides after careful consideration of the factors that there should be some correction, then it will be more effective if the teacher uses correction procedures that seem new to the learners. Here is a list of possible correction procedures with a brief explanation of how each one might work.

- The teacher interrupts and corrects the error, thus providing immediate feedback.
- The teacher says "What?" each time the error occurs, as if the error made understanding difficult.
- The teacher repeats correct forms as if confirming what the learner said. This type of correction is supposed to be like the type of modelling that is done with young native speakers.
- The teacher makes a written note about the error which is later given to the learners. This type of correction does not interrupt the speaking and may encourage future monitoring.
- The teacher gives some lesson time to pointing out errors that the learners have made, explains how to correct them, and encourages them to monitor for these errors in future speaking activities
- The learners practice using correct forms in their "careful" style of speaking. Supporters of a variable competence theory of learning (Ellis, 1986) argue that learning that becomes stable in one style may then be transferred to other less careful styles.
- The learners practice using techniques like **4/3/2** and **the best recording** which require learners to repeat the same talk several times. Research on this technique (Nation, 1989a) indicates that errors in repeated contexts decrease as a result of repetition. Presumably the repetition reduces the cognitive load and thus allows greater attention to areas of difficulty.
- The learners do group work that requires accurate performance. This encourages peer correction.

Q: How to Fit Language-focused Learning into a Course?

Typically too much time has been given to language-focused learning in courses and it has dominated rather than served the learning goals.As a rough rule, language-focused learning should not make up more than about 25 percent of the whole range of contact that learners have with the language. The range of language-focused activities could include the following:

- The study of new items, including sounds, vocabulary, grammatical constructions, pragmatics, and discourse. This could involve formal presentation by the teacher, individualized exercises, or group activities. For explicit knowledge, this would have both consciousness-raising and monitored production goals. Some of this study would also add directly to implicit knowledge.
- Familiarization and practice of previously met items. This may involve activities such as substitution table practice, and completion, transformation, identification or distinguishing activities. These would have the learning goals of adding to implicit knowledge or monitored production.
- Formal feedback on performance. This could involve the regular use of feedback activities like dictation, and monitored exercises and talks.

Q: What are the characteristics of Fluency

Fluency is not restricted to "the planning and delivery of speech" but is also extended to the comprehension of speech. Fluency has the following characteristics in all of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

- Fluent language use involves "the processing of language in real time" (Schmidt, 1992: 358). That is, learners demonstrate fluency when they take part in meaning-focused activity and do it with speed and ease without holding up the flow of talk. There are observable signs that can be used to measure changes in fluency. These include speech rate (as measured in words or syllables per minute) and b), number of filled pauses such as um, ah, er, and number of unfilled pauses.
- Fluent language use does not require a great deal of attention and effort from the learner.
- If we consider the four goals of Language, Ideas, Skill, Text (LIST), fluency is a skill. Although it depends on quality of knowledge of the language, and its development involves the addition to and restructuring of knowledge, in essence it involves making the best possible use of what is already known.

❖ The following three characteristics of fluency are also the main characteristics of activities designed to develop fluency.

- message-focused activity
- easy tasks
- performance at a high level

Q: Differentiate Fluency Accuracy and complexity.

A very useful further distinction can be made between fluency, accuracy and complexity (Skehan, 1998). **Fluency** is typically measured by speed of access or production and by the number of hesitations; **accuracy** by the amount of error; and **complexity** by the presence of more complicated constructions, such as subordinate clauses.

❖ Restructuring involves changing the integration and organization of knowledge components so that "the procedure involving the old components [is] replaced by a more effective procedure involving the new components".

Q: How Fluency Develops among learners?

Fluency is likely to develop if the following conditions are met:

- The activity is meaning-focused. The learners' interest is on the communication of a message and is subject to the "real time" pressures and demands of normal meaning-focused communication.
- The learners take part in activities where all the language items are within their previous experience. This means that the learners work with largely familiar topics and types of discourse making use of known vocabulary and structures. These kinds of activities are called "experience" tasks because the knowledge required to do the activity is already well within learners' experience.
- There is support and encouragement for the learner to perform at a higher than normal level. This means that in an activity with a fluency development goal, learners should be speaking and comprehending faster, hesitating less, and using larger planned chunks than they do in their normal use of language. A fluency development activity provides some deliberate push to the higher level of performance often by using time pressure.

Q: How to Design Fluency Activities?

Fluency activities depend on several design requirements and features to achieve their goal. These can appear in a variety of techniques over the whole range of language skills. By looking at these requirements and features we can judge whether an activity will develop fluency in an efficient way and we can devise other activities that will. Let us look first at a well-researched activity.

4/3/2 technique: The **4/3/2 technique** was devised by Maurice (1983). In this technique, learners work in pairs with one acting as the speaker and the other as listener. The speaker talks for four minutes on a topic while their partner listens. Then the pairs change with each speaker giving the same information to a new partner in three minutes, followed by a further change and a two-minute talk.

Easy Tasks: Experience tasks for the development of fluency involve making sure that the language, ideas and discourse requirements of the activity are all within the learners' experience so that the learners are able to develop the skill aspect (in this case, fluency) of the activity.

Message Focus: Having a clear outcome to an activity encourages a meaning focus because the learners use language to achieve the outcome. Commonly used outcomes in spoken activities include completion; distinguishing, matching, classifying; ranking, ordering, choosing; problem solving; listing implications, causes, and uses; data gathering; and providing directions

Time Pressure: One way of encouraging learners to reach a higher than usual level of performance is by limiting the time in which they can do something. This is used in 4/3/2 by decreasing the time for each repetition.

Planning and Preparation: Another way of reaching a higher than usual level of performance is to work on the quality of the performance. This can be done through having an opportunity for planning and preparation.

Planning and preparation can be done individually, with the help of guide sheets, or in groups.

Repetition

Repetition of an activity is a sure way of developing fluency with the particular items and sequences used in the activity. It is necessary to change the audience when designing repetition into meaning-focused speaking activities so that the speaker does not change the spoken message to try to retain the interest of an audience that has already heard the message.

Q: How to add Fluency into a Course?

It is likely that the two goals of learning new language items and the development of fluency can be reached in the same activities, provided the conditions for both kinds of learning occur. Where the second language is not used outside the classroom, it is very important that about a quarter of class time is given to fluency activities. Only a relatively small amount of knowledge is needed for successful language use. It is important that this knowledge is available for use and therefore a part of class time should be given to fluency activities. Brumfit (1985) suggests: "Right from the beginning of the course, about **a third of the total time** could be spent on this sort of fluency activity, and the proportion will inevitably increase as time goes on."

Q What are the three approaches to distinguish fluency development?

We can distinguish three approaches to fluency development which can all usefully be part of a language course.

1. The first approach relies primarily on repetition and could be called "**the well-beaten path** approach" to fluency. This involves gaining repeated practice on the same material so that it can be performed fluently.
2. The second approach to fluency relies on making many connections and associations with a known item. Rather than following one well-beaten path, the learner can choose from many paths. This could be called "**the richness approach**" to fluency. This involves using the known item in a wide variety of contexts and situations. Most of the suggested techniques in this chapter follow this approach.
3. The third approach to fluency is the aim and result of the previous two approaches. This could be called "**the well-ordered system approach**". Fluency occurs because the learner is in control of the system of the language and can use a variety of efficient, well-connected, and well-practiced paths to the wanted item.

Q: What are the necessary conditions for developing listening fluency?

The following conditions are necessary for the development of fluency:

- The techniques involve meaning-focused activity. They involve listening to interesting stories, puzzle and quiz activities, and activities with clear communication outcomes.
- They place very limited demands on the learners in that they rely heavily on language items, topics and experiences with which the learners are already familiar. This familiarity may come from having met or produced the material themselves in a different medium, or through drawing on knowledge gained through the first language. The demands of the task may also be limited through the use of controlled input and through the use of supporting material, such as the use of pictures and written texts to support the listening input.
- The techniques encourage learners to reach a high level of performance through the use of meaning-focused repetition, increasing speed of input, and the opportunity for prediction and the use of previous background knowledge.

❖ Most comprehension activities are a combination of these two approaches, (top-down processing) (bottom-up processing) but usually one is predominant.

❖ Fluency tasks should be largely top-down processing because these are the ones that allow learners to perform at speed without having to puzzle over language forms.

❖ Top-down processing is encouraged by getting learners to listen when the topic is very familiar to

them, when the organization and other genre conventions are familiar to them, when their attention is strongly focused on the message, and when there is not a concern for linguistic detail.

- Bottom-up processing occurs when the main source of information is the text itself and the listener cannot draw on preparation and previous experience to assist in comprehension. Top- down and bottom-up processing tasks usually have different learning goals and set up conditions for different kinds of learning

Q: Write few activities to enhance listening fluency? Important Question

1. **name it!** activity, the teacher says some sentences that describe something, for example: "We use it to clean our teeth." The learners answer by saying or writing the name of the thing that is described, or by choosing it from a group of pictures, or by choosing its name from a group of words on the blackboard.
2. **Listening to questions** is an activity where the teacher asks the learners questions and they answer them. The questions can be based on a picture, a reading passage, or general knowledge.
3. **Blown-up books** are a useful way of using listening to introduce learners to reading and getting them excited about reading. These very large books have pages which are about eight times the size of ordinary pages and they contain plenty of pictures. As they are so large they can be shown to the whole class while the teacher reads them aloud and all the learners can see the words and pictures.
4. A **listening corner** is a place where the learners can listen to tapes as part of self-access activities. The teacher makes a tape of a spoken version of writing that the learners have already done.
5. The **listening to pictures** technique (McComish, 1982) is a way of providing quantity of input. Because of the support that the pictures provide and because of the opportunities for repetition using the same picture, this is also a useful fluency technique.
6. **Listening to stories** is particularly suitable for learners who read well but whose listening skills are poor. The teacher chooses an interesting story, possibly a graded reader, and reads aloud a chapter each day to the learners
7. In **listen again** the teacher retells a story that the learners have already heard before, but uses different words from the previous telling. The learners are told that one of the events in the story will be different from the previous telling. They listen and note the difference.
8. In a **visit and listen** activity, the teacher and the learners visit a place outside the school such as a zoo, a factory, a special school, or a fire station. They take notes during the visit and when they return to the school, the teacher talks to them about the visit. This is a kind of linked skills activity.
9. **'Listening while reading'** activity involves the learners listening to a text and looking at a copy of the text while they listen. Before listening to the passage, the learners can have time to read it or read something containing much the same ideas or vocabulary.
10. Listening in a controlled vocabulary can be done using **peer talks**. Learners prepare talks to deliver to the whole class or to a small group. These talks help improve listening skills because the level of the language used is usually well suited to the listeners. For adult learners the topics can focus on the speaker's job or special skills
11. Recorded **interviews** can be an interesting source of listening material. Simpson (1981) suggests getting non-native speakers to interview native speakers. This has two good effects. First, it puts the non-native speaker in control of the type of questions to ask and the amount of information given and, second, it makes the interviews more accessible for non-native listeners because the person being interviewed is speaking to a non-native speaker. The non-native speaker interviewer can also include lots of clarification requests and understanding checks which will help the listeners. While listening, the learners can fill in an information transfer chart or complete statements.
12. In a **predicting** activity the learners are given some information about a talk and have to predict what will occur in the talk. After they have made their predictions, they listen to the talk and see if their predictions were correct. The information that they are given can include a set of incomplete

statements, a table of statistics, the title of the talk, or the introductory section of the talk (Watts, 1986). This is a kind of linked skills activity because discussion (the predicting) is followed by listening.

Q: Write few activities to enhance speaking fluency? Important Question

The speaking fluency activities make use of repetition and rehearsal and are discreet activities. It is also possible for theme-based work over several days to develop into fluency development opportunities.

1. The **4/3/2** technique has already been described. It combines the features of focus on the message, quantity of production (the speakers speak for a total of nine minutes), learner control over the topic and language used, repetition, and time pressure to reach a high rate of production through the decreasing amount of time available for each delivery.
2. **The best recording** is a useful fluency activity involving a tape or digital recorder or the language laboratory. The learner speaks onto the tape talking about a previous experience or describing a picture or set of pictures. The learner listens to the recording noting any points where improvement could be made. Then the learner re-records the talk
3. The **ask and answer** technique (Simcock, 1993) is a follow-up to reading. The learners read a text to a high level of comprehension and then they work in pairs with one learner questioning the other about the text from a list of teacher-prepared questions. The answers to these questions provide a summary of the ideas in the text. The goal of the activity is for learners to perform the asking and answering in front of the class at a high level of fluency, so each pair practices asking and answering several times before doing their class presentation.
4. **Rehearsed talks** involve learners using the pyramid procedure of preparing a talk individually, rehearsing it with a partner, practicing it in a small group, and then presenting it to the whole class.

Q: Define 'LIST'.

When using experience tasks for language teaching, it is useful to have a way of checking to see what parts of the task are within the learners' experience and what part of the task is being focused on as the learning goal. There are **four** sets of goals—

1. **L**anguage item goals;
2. **I**dea or content goals;
3. **S**kill goals;
4. **T**ext or discourse goals.

The mnemonic LIST can be used to remember these goals. A useful rule to follow is that any experience task should have only one of these goals and the other three should already be within the learners' experience. So, if the teacher wants the learners to master the ideas or content of a text, then the language items (vocabulary, grammar, language functions) should all be within the learners' experience.

So, when checking an experience task, it is useful to ask these two questions.

1. What is the learning goal of the task?
2. Are the three other aspects of the task kept within the learners' experience?

Q: How to examine the teaching taterial for fluency development?

The following checklists can be used to look at material and activities to develop fluency.
They focus on the conditions needed for fluency development. Fluency Checklists

A checklist for examining fluency material

- What will keep the learners interested in the message involved in the activity?
- How is the activity made easy for the learners to do?
- What encouragement is there for the learners to perform at a faster than usual level?

A checklist for observing a listening fluency activity

- Are the learners interested in the message?
- Are the learners easily able to understand the message?
- Is the message coming to the learners at a rate that stretches the fluency of the learners?

A checklist for observing a speaking fluency activity

- Are the learners interested in the activity and its outcome?
- Are they easily able to find things to talk about?
- Are they speaking without a lot of hesitation?
- Are they speaking at a fast rate?

❖ It is Davies (Wilkinson *et al.* 1991: 111) who writes that 'speech is part of normal behavior' yet this very ease and naturalness of use can lead us to underestimate its importance in language and learning. Talk is not like reading and writing, which are taught explicitly by teachers, having high status and being systematically recorded in the classroom.

❖ The first three years of life are recognized as the most intensive period for acquiring speech and language skills.

❖ These early years need to be filled with experiences of sound and language. Otherwise delays in development in lan guage can occur.

Q: How language and speech are different?

Language and speech development are different.

Language is a set of shared rules that allows a person to express their ideas in a meaningful way and understand the ideas of another. The four main language skills are – Attention and Listening; Receptive Language; Expressive Language; Auditory Processing/Memory.

Speech is talking.

It involves coordinating the action of the muscles of the lips, jaw, tongue and vocal cords in the throat to produce recognizable sounds. A speech disorder may present as a hesitation or stutter when talking. It could also be Apraxia of speech where they have difficulty putting sounds and syllables in the correct order to form a word.

Q: Most children develop receptive language skills before expressive language skills: Justify.

Most children develop receptive language skills before expressive language skills.This means they can understand instructions long before they can say the words. For example, a toddler may not say any words, but if they are asked to get their coat and shoes they are able to go and fetch them.

Q: How recognizing stage develops in children?

Most children and babies follow recognizable stages in their language development by relatively predictable stages. For example, the use of the word "mama" or "dada" in a non-specific way starts around seven months, developing into recognizing that they relate to mummy or daddy from around 9 months. Gestures, such as waving "bye-bye", are normally around nine months and recognizable words will start from around 11 months.

- ❖ The average four-year-old will reportedly have a receptive vocabulary of 8,000 words and an expressive vocabulary of 2,300 words.
- ❖ By the age of seven they should typically be able to recognize and use around 10,000 words.
- ❖ Language skills are known to develop more readily in environments with lots of sound, sights and consistent exposure to speech and language of others.
- ❖ There are times within the early years where exposure to language and sound is received more

readily by the brain in babies and young children and this time needs to be optimized to help them develop.

- ❖ Attention and listening skills are essential for children to be able to recognize sounds and words, learn what they mean and how to use them.
- ❖ Children tend to have naturally shorter attention spans and it is important to develop their ability to focus on activities for increasing periods of time. Children with communication troubles are often identified as having poorer attention and difficulties concentrating.
- ❖ A child may have difficulty keeping their attention some of the time or all of the time. Some problems can be easily rectified.
- ❖ It could be down to too much background noise or distractions, adult language being too complicated, or a middle ear infection, among many other reasons.
- ❖ Using rhythm and rhyme from birth helps kick start the auditory processing centres. It is well documented that children who can learn words of songs easily have strong pre- literacy skills and take to reading more easily.

Q: How Oral Language Develop from Infancy to Preschool

Oral language development includes critical skills that let children
(1) Communicate— listen and respond when other people are talking.
(2) Understand the meaning of a large number of words and concepts that they hear or read.
(3) Obtain new information about things they want to learn about, and
(4) Express their own ideas and thoughts using specific language.

Oral language development is a critical foundation for reading, writing, and spelling, and it is the "engine" of learning and thinking. Research suggests that young children's ability to use language and to listen to and understand the meaning of spoken and written words is related to their later literacy achievement in reading, writing, and spelling. Oral language skills start developing in infancy and continue to develop throughout life. Infants listen to and become aware of sounds of the words being spoken by the adults around them. Very early on children begin to communicate their own needs through sounds and gestures. Toddlers use language to express feelings and ideas and seek information. They begin to talk in simple sentences, ask questions and give opinions about likes and dislikes. Young Preschoolers build a larger vocabulary from the language of people around them and from new ideas in books. They tell make-believe stories and talk about things and events that are not in the here-and-now, such as things they cannot see, events that have already happened or might happen in the future. They use language that is more complex, with complete sentences and sentences with multiple parts.

Q: Elaborate Shared Conversations: Talking with Children.

One of the best ways that caregivers can help children develop their oral language skills is through shared conversations with them. Shared storybook reading provides an especially good platform for conversations with children. These language interactions are the basis for building children's understanding of the meaning of a large number of words, which is a crucial ingredient in their later ability to comprehend what they read. Children need practice having conversations with the important adults in their lives. By talking with preschool children, you can help children build speaking and listening skills. Talking with other people—using language to ask questions, to explain, to ask for what they need, to let people know how they feel—is one of the important ways that children build language and understanding. Learning to listen while others talk is another important avenue for learning.

Q: How Adults Talk with Children Matters?

How caregivers talk with children is important. To help children develop strong oral language

skills, it's important for caregivers to be sure that their language interactions are the kinds that give children practice with the following things:

1. Hearing and using rich and abstract vocabulary
2. Hearing and using increasingly complex sentences
3. Using words to express ideas and to ask questions about things they don't understand
4. Using words to answer questions about things that are not just in the here-and-now Caregivers can do this by thinking about the ways they interact with the children in their care.
5. The child should be talking at least half the time instead of the teacher or caregiver.

Q: What is Turn-Taking?

The richest talk involves many "back-and-forth" turns in which the provider builds on and connects with the child's statements, questions and responses. These extended conversations help children learn how to use language and understand the meaning of new words they encounter listening to other people or in reading books. They also often involve different kinds of sentences—questions and statements—and may include adjectives and adverbs that modify the words in children's original statements, modeling richer descriptive language.

Q: What is One-On-One?

Talking one-on-one gives the provider a chance to repeat (say back), extend (add to), and revise (recast or restate) what children say. Children have a chance to hear their own ideas reflected back. In addition, one-on-one conversations provide opportunities to either contextualize the conversation according to the individual child's understanding or tap children's understanding of abstract concepts. Caregivers should try to hold individual conversations with children each day.

Q: Define Description in context of language learning.

Narrating children's activities is a way for caregivers to not only introduce new vocabulary but also encourages deeper understanding of new words so they can begin to define and explain the meaning of these words. Describe what children are doing while they are doing it. Talk with children during formal activities and in informal settings, such as snack, clean up, outdoor playtime. Follow up with conversation about what children did during the activities.

Q: Reading with Children is an Opportunity for Conversation. Justify?

Sharing books with children offers one of the best opportunities for conversations that build oral language, especially when children are engaged in answering questions and discussion. Books with lots of interesting illustrations and simple text are best for encouraging young children to talk about what is happening in the pictures and storylines. As children get older, books are important in exposing them to new ideas, new words, and new worlds. Sharing stories helps children build oral language in a variety of ways—developing children's speaking and listening skills, introducing new concepts or information, and increasing both vocabulary and the ability to define and explain the meanings of new words.

Q: What are Types of Talk at the Computer?

Evidently, very different kinds of talk were taking place between children working together at computers. Three particularly distinctive categories could be identified.

Disputational talk

This is characterized by disagreement and individualized turn-taking. There are few attempts to share knowledge or to offer suggestions. There are short exchanges which consist of assertions and challenges or counter-assertions. The participants are in competition with one another, and each seems to have strong, but unstated, ideas about what constitutes winning.

Cumulative talk

The speakers build positively but uncritically on what the other has said. This sort of talk is characterized by repetitions, confirmations and elaborations.

Exploratory talk

The group engages critically but constructively with each other's ideas, and statements or suggestions are offered for joint consideration. These may be challenged, but justifications are expected and given consideration.

Q: How cumulative talk is practical in classroom and what is its limitation?

Cumulative talk is appropriate in many circumstances in classrooms, where uncritical agreement is all that is required to complete a task. Children completing a puzzle, or collaborating to present a joint piece of work, would do well if they talked this way. Its strength is that it draws on the friendship and mutual trust of its participants, who are 'easily pleased' with one another, and agree to each other's ideas without examining either the idea or their own response to it. However, the very *strength* of cumulative talk is its weakness when it comes to the crucial stages of problem solving or decision making where agreement is reached without reasons being properly considered. There is no evidence of rational thinking in cumulative talk.

- Interthinking is useful to reflect on the effect that working with a partner can have on the child as an individual by considering your own experience of talk about work. Talking with a partner is an opportunity to put half-formed ideas into words.
- **thinking aloud** is a way of making your thoughts clear to yourself; and having to explain and describe things to a partner is a way of developing a shared understanding of ideas.
- If your partner is prepared to accept your initial suggestion, without you having to justify or defend it, you have no stimulus to engage critically with your own thoughts.
- This ***intertwining*** – the joint engagement with one another's ideas to think aloud together, solve problems or make mutual meaning – is an invaluable use of spoken language (Mercer 2000). Children need to learn how to do this, and need lots of opportunities to practice.
- Rationality is also not apparent in disputational talk.
- Children challenge one another's knowledge without offering reasons, and disagree with one another's ideas without offering alternatives. By rejecting ideas they appear to reject the person suggesting the idea

Q: Write a note on exploratory talk.

Exploratory talk allows a reasoned exchange of ideas and opinions. This sort of talk is likely to be of great value to the children educationally, because it means that they are using language to think rationally, and to consider and evaluate each other's ideas in a cooperative way. They can build up shared knowledge and shared understandings, as they engage in opportunities to collaborate as equals. Collaborative talk of this kind provides a supportive context for thinking aloud, and thinking aloud is crucial if children are to formulate their thoughts and ideas. It also represents the kind of rational, considered debate at the heart of 'educated' activities such as science, law and politics. Engaging in interthinking through rational discussion with other people is likely to help children develop clearer ways of thinking to support their development as an individual

- Exploratory talk is difficult enough for adults to achieve and it cannot be assumed that it will come naturally to children.
- Some children in primary classrooms may be familiar with exploratory talk from their prior experience in and out of school. They may be capable of using such experience as a model for their talk with their

peers.

- ❖ Other children who have relatively little experience or awareness of exploratory talk may be completely unfamiliar with using rational discussion as a means of resolving conflicting views or negotiating a joint solution to a problem.

Q: Which problems may arise when groups work at the computer?

When grouped at a computer, it was evident that some children can talk confidently, but not listen carefully to others. Others shy away from engaging one another in protracted talk, as if they find any difference of opinion very worrying, and are unable to distinguish a sensible discussion from a more threatening argument. Still others use ways of being generally agreeable, or disagreeable, to remain uninvolved, while some simply dictate or ask for orders. Some or all of the following problems may arise when groups work at the computer:

- ❖ The children may understand what is required by the program, but they do not understand the intended purpose of their talk together.
- ❖ They do not know how to negotiate with one another, and using the computer will not teach them this directly.
- ❖ Those with home computers are proficient with the keyboard and used to playing games where speed is more valuable than talk or cooperation. Keen to show their skill, they dominate the group.
- ❖ Friends tend to agree with one another on principle, and less confident children make no contribution at all, to avoid being held responsible later on.
- ❖ Difficulties with the program and each other may cause some children to withdraw from the group.

Q: What are the Teaching Ground Rules for exploratory Talk?

A crucial part of the context requiring teacher input is that children who are expected to work together in a computer group need to be taught how to talk to one another. They need direct instruction in the talk skills which will enable them to get the best out of their own thinking and that of all the other members of their group. They must understand that if all the group can agree on a set of rules, 'Ground Rules for Talk', then talk can proceed in a way which will make the whole group, and its individuals, more likely to achieve success and develop new ways of thinking.

These are the ground rules for exploratory talk:

- everyone in the group is encouraged to contribute
- contributions are treated with respect
- reasons are asked for
- everyone is prepared to accept challenges
- alternatives are discussed before a decision is taken
- all relevant information is shared
- the group seeks to reach agreement.

Q: Write a note on Talk Lessons.

The 'Thinking Together' approach (Dawes *et al.* 2000) takes this set of ground rules as the basis for learning objectives for a set of 'Talk Lessons'. One special aspect of these lessons is that at the start of each lesson, the learning objectives for speaking and listening are made explicit to the children. Children are grouped in threes, usually mixed ability and gender. The Talk Lessons initially raise awareness of the importance of classroom talk. Subsequently the groups undertake activities designed to encourage group cohesion and trust. Next comes a crucial lesson in which the entire class discusses and agrees a set of class ground rules for talk. After this, there are opportunities to put the new ground rules into practice, and to undertake further work on each separate skill such as questioning, sharing

information, active listening, giving reasons and negotiating group agreement.

Q: Ho talk lesson can be effective?

Classes using ground rules for talk show a marked improvement in the quality of the children's talk at the computer. In the research project this was confirmed by analysis of videotapes of the children working.

Children work together at the computer more effectively once they have learned how to talk to one another in this way. Computers provide an extremely useful and motivating means of practicing exploratory talk, once it has been initiated by a programme of Talk Lessons. Many children are adept at discussion and reasoning but others are not, and children who are isolated in their ability to reason may quickly resort to a less taxing disputational style, even though it is obviously more frustrating. Once a class, or most of a class, has exploratory talk in its repertoire, the individuals can work with each other, because the 'rules' are clear and have been agreed in advance.

- The National Curriculum Programmes of Study and level descriptions for Speaking and Listening are rather generalized.
- It is noted that the child's proficiency as a speaker and listener in a very wide range of situations.
- In response to the National Curriculum Orders, we need a focused approach which sees that planning for effective and informative assessment of Speaking and Listening is central to teaching and learning.

Q: What is the purpose/aim of assessment?

The primary purpose of teacher assessment is formative, its aim being to improve the quality of teaching and learning as it is taking place; summative judgements which are based on ongoing formative observation and recording will be passed on as feedback to pupils, parents and colleagues at the end of a term or key stage. All the information you record will provide diagnostic evidence that highlights individual strengths or difficulties and this will be the basis for your planning. Assessment should record what children can do and ideally should arise in natural classroom contexts. As far as possible, it is important to provide assessment procedures that allow children to be active participants in the process and to be able to reflect on their own speaking and listening.

Q: What are the Frameworks for Assessment?

One of the most innovative and influential frameworks for the recording and assessment of language development, the Inner London Education Authority's Primary Language Record (Barrs *et al.* 1988), provided a framework for assessment which included input from parents and children. This record encouraged a two-way communication between home and school, 'to let parent(s) share their knowledge of the child at home and school' (Barrs *et al.* 1988: 12) and required that the child should 'talk about and discuss with the teacher her/his experiences, achievements and interests as a language user.

Q: What are the difficulties and constraints that beset the assessment of classroom talk?

Alan Howe (1997: 61) wrote of the difficulties and constraints that beset the assessment of classroom talk:

- the pressure of numbers
- the ephemerality of the medium
- the power **that** context has over the behavior, confidence and language use of the participants
- the way in which such behavior can further alter the context.