Teaching Listening and Speaking Skills

(ENG514)

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY OF PAKISTAN

Lecture- 01

Listening: An Introduction

Module - 01

PARTS AND GOALS OF A LISTENING AND SPEAKING COURSE

The Four Strands

A well-balanced language course should consist of four roughly equal strands:

- Learning through meaning-focused input; that is, learning through listening and reading where the learner's attention is on the ideas and messages conveyed by the language.
- Learning through meaning-focused output; that is, learning through speaking and writing where the learner's attention is on conveying ideas and messages to another person.
- Learning through deliberate attention to language items and language features; that is, learning through direct vocabulary study, through grammar exercises and explanation, through attention to the sounds and spelling of the language, through attention to discourse features, and through the deliberate learning and practice of language learning and language use strategies.
- Developing fluent use of known language items and features over the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing; that is, becoming fluent with what is already known.

These four strands are called meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development.

Meaning-focused Input: Learning through Listening and Reading

The meaning-focused input strand involves learning through listening and reading—using language receptively. It is called "meaning-focused" because in all the work done in this strand, the learners' main focus and interest should be on understanding, and gaining knowledge or enjoyment or both from what they listen to and read. Typical activities in this strand include extensive reading, shared reading, listening to stories, watching TV or films, and being a listener in a conversation.

Meaning-focused Output: Learning through Speaking and Writing

The meaning-focused output strand involves learning through speaking and writing—using language productively. Typical activities in this strand include talking in conversations, giving a speech or lecture, writing a letter, writing a note to someone, keeping a diary, telling a story, and telling someone how to do something. Many spoken activities will include a mixture of meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output. One person's output can be another person's input.

Language-focused Learning

It involves the deliberate learning of language features such as pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse. The term language-focused learning is preferred because terms like focus on form and form-focused instruction are misleading in that they can involve a deliberate focus on meaning as well as form, and need not involve instruction but can be the focus of individual autonomous learning. The ultimate aim of language-focused learning is to deal with messages, but its short-term aim is

to learn language items. Typical activities in this strand are pronunciation practice, using substitution tables and drills, learning vocabulary.

Becoming Fluent in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

The fluency development strand should involve all the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this strand, the learners are helped to make the best use of what they already know. Like meaning-focused input and output, the fluency development strand is also meaning-focused. That is, the learners' aim is to receive and convey messages. Typical activities include speed reading, skimming and scanning, repeated reading, 4/3/2, repeated retelling, ten-minute writing, and listening to easy stories.

Balancing the Four Strands

Each strand should have roughly the same amount of time in a well-balanced course which aims to cover both receptive and productive skills. The three strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, and fluency development are meaning-focused strands. They all involve activities where the learners' focus is on communicating and receiving messages. In the meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output strands, this meaning-focused communication pushes the boundaries of learners' knowledge and skill and results in the largely incidental learning of language features. In the fluency development strand, the messages are very easy and familiar ones but they are still the main focus of the activities.

Integrating the Four Strands

The four strands are opportunities for certain types of learning. They differ from each other according to the conditions which are needed for the different types of learning. They can fit together in many different ways. For example, in an intensive English programme with many different teachers, there may be different classes for spoken language (listening and speaking), reading, writing and language study. It would then be important to make sure that the spoken language classes, for example, not only had meaning-focused input and output activities, but also included fluency development activities and only a very small amount of language-focused learning.

Principles and the Four Strands

The following pedagogical principles are aimed at providing guidelines for teachers. They draw on an earlier larger list (Nation, 1993) and can usefully be compared with other lists of principles (Brown, 1993; Ellis, 2005; Krahnke and Christison, 1983). The list is organized around the four strands with the final two principles focusing on what should be covered in course.

- Provide and organize large amounts of comprehensible input through both listening and reading.
- Boost learning through comprehensible input by adding a deliberate element.
- Support and push learners to produce spoken and written output in a variety of appropriate genres.
- Provide opportunities for cooperative interaction.
- Help learners deliberately learn language items and patterns, including sounds spelling, vocabulary, multi-word units, grammar, and discourse.

- Train learners in strategies that will contribute to language learning.
- Provide fluency development activities in each of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Provide a roughly equal balance of the four strands of meaning focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development.
- Plan for the repeated coverage of the most useful language items.
- Use analysis, monitoring and assessment to help address learners' language and communication needs.

Learning Goals

A language learning course is used to reach learning goals. These goals can include the learning of: (1) language items such as sounds, vocabulary and grammatical constructions, (2) the content or ideas of the subject being studied such as geography, English literature, mathematics, or cross-cultural understanding, (3) language skills such as listening, writing, fluency in using known items, and strategies for coping with language difficulties, and (4) the organization of discourse such as rhetorical features and communication strategies.

Module-02

BEGINNING TO LISTEN AND SPEAK IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

The aims of a beginners course in listening and speaking are: (1) to help the learners to be able to cope with meaning-focused input and meaning focused output as soon as possible; (2) to motivate them in their language study by getting them to engage in successful listening and speaking; and (3) to make the early learning as relevant as possible to their language use needs.

What Should They Learn?

The content of an English course for beginners will vary greatly according to the age of the learners, their purpose for learning, their educational background and previous experience with English, and whether they are learning in a foreign or second language context. Where possible the course should try to address the learners' language needs and should do this so that the learners can see that this is being done. In small classes this can involve the use of a negotiated syllabus (Clarke, 1991) where the teacher and learners work together to decide what will be dealt with in class.

- Using a New Alphabet: Develop phonological awareness, that letters in words stand for specific sounds
- Phrases for Talking about Yourself: My name is_____. I live in_____.
- Phrases and Vocabulary for Everyday Life: Visiting the doctor, Housing, Using the telephone
- Sight Vocabulary: Reading street signs, tickets, labels, etc.
- Classroom Expressions: Excuse me . . ., Say that again please? How do I say this?
- High Frequency Words: Classroom objects, Colors, Time and date words

How Should the Teaching and Learning be Done?

Five Principles for Teaching Beginners

One way to answer this question is through a set of principles. Here are five principles that are particularly relevant to the teaching of beginners:

- Meaning: Focus on meaningful and relevant language
- Interest: Maintain interest through a variety of activities
- New language: Avoid overloading learners with too much new language
- Understanding: Provide plenty of comprehensible input
- Stress-free: Create a friendly, safe, cooperative classroom environment

Principle 1: Focus on Meaningful and Relevant Content

The main focus should be on language that the learners can use quickly for their purposes rather than on too much grammar explanation or on words that are not directly useful. Here are some simple sentences that can be learnt very early in a course so that the learners can use them straight away:
My name is_____.
I come from_____.
I live in_____.
My address is_____.

Principle2: Maintain Interest Through a Variety of Activities

To maintain learners' interest, activities need to be short and varied, and to involve the learners in responding to or using the language. Here are some simple ways to keep learners interested in learning:

- do activities that involve movement
- use real objects and pictures
- plan trips outside the classroom, for example, a trip to a local supermarket linked to a simple food search game
- use songs and simple chants in between other more demanding activities
- introduce and practice new content though games such as bingo.

Principle3: Avoid Overloading Learners with Too Much New Language

There is usually little need to focus on grammar in the early parts of a course for beginners. Instead Module s should focus on learning set phrases and words. Teachers often make the mistake of introducing too much new language without giving learners enough opportunities to gain control over this language. A simple rule to keep in mind is "learn a little, use a lot". To apply the principle of "learn a little, use a lot", the body words need to be practiced in a variety of ways. These could include picture games, information transfer activities, action games ("Simon says . . ."), and bingo.

Principle4: Provide Plenty of Comprehensible Input

To ensure that input can be understood requires the use of visual aids and contextual support for new language including pictures, gestures, mime, objects, and experiences out of class. Teachers also need to think carefully about the language they use in class with the aim of keeping their talk simple but not simplistic or ungrammatical. One way to do this is to always use one form for one meaning.

Principle5: Create a Friendly, Safe, Cooperative Classroom Environment

There is strong evidence that anxiety influences learners' willingness to communicate in a second language (e.g., Yashima, 2002). Therefore, it is particularly important that, in the early stages of learning a second language, learners have successful, low stress learning experiences. By paying attention to the first four principles, there is a very good chance that these experiences will be plentiful, and that the

teacher will already be meeting this fifth principle. Some of the factors that contribute to a positive beginners' classroom are variety, movement, physical comfort, frequent interaction, successful language experiences, and opportunities for learners to experiment and make mistakes without penalties.

Activities and Approaches for Teaching and Learning in a Beginners' Course

Memorizing Useful Phrases and Sentences

A quick way of gaining early fluency in a language is to memorize useful phrases. There are several advantages in doing this. First, simple communication can occur at an early stage. For example, learners should be able to say who they are, where they come from, and what they do from the very first language Module s. They should also be able to greet people with phrases like good morning, and good day and to thank them. Second, memorizing phrases and sentences allows learners to make accurate use of the language without having to know the grammar. Third, as we have seen, knowing sentences like Please say that again, Please speak more slowly, What does X mean? allows learners to take control of a conversation and use it for language learning purposes. Fourth, the words and patterns that make up such phrases can make the learning of later phrases and perhaps the learning of later patterns easier.

Guiding Listening and Speaking

The prototypical technique for guided listening and speaking is the **What is it?** technique (Nation, 1978).

The teacher writes some sentences on the blackboard. The sentencesdescribe something or someone. Here is an example:

It is thin.
It is black.
It has many teeth.
It is made of plastic.
We can find it near a mirror.
It costs a dollar.
Everybody uses it.
It is used for combing your hair.
What is it?

The teacher shows the learners how to change the sentences to talk about different things. While she does this the teacher follows the plan very closely. For example,

a needle :
It is thin.
It is silver.
It has a sharp point.
It is made of steel.
We can find it in our house.
It costs

Listening grids (Badger, 1986) involve using listening and often questioning to fill a matrix with information. Here is an example based on what people enjoy watching on television. Each learner makes

a short presentation describing what they like, using the construction "I enjoy watching . . ." The rest of the group ticks the appropriate places in their grids.

It is only a small step from grids to **surveys**. Each learner has a grid or a list of questions which are then used to gather information from other learners in the class. This can be done with each learner moving around the class. Surveys may also move out of the classroom to involve English speakers at home or at work, or learners in another class

Interview activities provide small-scale question and answer interaction. The activities using grids and surveys described above can easily become like small interviews. The person being interviewed needs a source of knowledge, for example personal experience, a report from a newspaper, part of a science, mathematics or economics textbook, a picture or a brief written description. The interviewer needs some guidance on what information to look for and what kinds of questions to ask.

Quizzes are often simply listening activities with an element of competition. The teacher prepares general knowledge questions, incomplete statements, or true/false statements that the learners will hear and try to answer. There may be two competing teams with an audience who also write their own answers to the questions.

Listen and do activities are used in most classrooms and are the basis of Total Physical Response language teaching (Asher, Kosudo and de la Torre, 1974). In these activities the teacher gives commands or makes statements and the learners do what the teacher says. There are many possible variations on these activities. They can become speaking activities with the learners saying what to do and the teacher or another learner doing the action. In **positioning,** some of the learners see a photograph or picture and have to tell other learners how to position themselves to appear like the people in the picture.

The listening to pictures technique (McComish, 1982) is an excellent example of a technique that involves a large quantity of material to listen to, and which uses a supporting picture to make the language input comprehensible. The learners have a big picture in front of them in which several things are happening. The teacher starts describing the picture, and the learners follow the description while looking at the picture. Occasionally the teacher includes a true/false statement.

Information transfer activities can be used to help learners produce a description involving several sentences (Palmer, 1982). For example, the information transfer diagram could consist of small pictures and phrases showing the process of cooking a certain food, or making something such as a clay pot. Most of the sentences needed in the description would be in the passive (White, 1978). The learner could repeat the description several times, each time with a different audience and with less opportunity to consult the information transfer diagram

Techniques for Early Meaning-focused Speaking

The following techniques allow learners to produce spoken language mainly in single sentence turns.**Descriptions** involve the learners making statements based on pictures. The statements may be descriptions, comparisons, predictions, pointing out the differences between two pictures, explanations of

what happened before the event shown in the picture, and so on. The learners can take turns producing a sentence each around the group, or can call on each other.

The learners are divided into tourists and information officers for the **ask and move activity** (Buckeridge, 1988). Each tourist has a different card telling the tourist to find out four or five pieces of information, such as, "Find out the address of the Automobile Association". The information officers have the answers to these requests but each information officer does not have all the information. So, it is necessary for each tourist to go to several information officers to find out all the answers. This will involve the information officers answering the same questions several times.

Twenty questions is a well-known activity. The teacher or a learner thinks of an object and writes its name on a piece of paper. The learners ask yes/no questions, for example, "Is it in the room?", "Is it big?" They must guess what it is before they have asked 20 questions. The person who guesses correctly thinks of the next object and the other learners ask questions.

Planning a Listening and Speaking Programme for Beginners

A well-balanced early listening and speaking Module or series of Module s could contain the following parts.

- Meaning-focused input: The learners engage in dialogue with the teacher, do activities like listen and do, grids, interview activities and listening to simple stories.
- Meaning-focused output: The learners engage in dialogue with the teacher, do activities like descriptions, a variety of questioning activities like asking by numbers and hints, and guided activities like What is it?, picture stories and the same or different.
- Language-focused learning: The teacher helps the learners with pronunciation, memorizing useful phrases and sentences, and substitution tables.
- Fluency development: Memorized phrases and sentences are given repeated practice with an emphasis on reaching a normal speed of production. The learners listen to the same story several times over several days with the deliveries getting faster. The learners do simple repeated role plays which use the sentences and phrases they memorized and the sentences which they have already practiced in substitution tables. They also get very fluent listening to numbers.

Module-03

DEFINING LISTENING

Why Listening?

It has been claimed that over 50 percent of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening (Nunan, 1998). Despite this, we often take the importance of listening for granted, and it is arguably the least understood and most overlooked of the four skills (L, S, R and W) in the language classroom.

Language development in a person's first language (and in naturalistic acquisition of other languages) is dependent on listening. Indeed, Gillian Brown and others (see, for example, Brown, 1978; Brown, Anderson, Shillcock and Yule, 1984) showed that both oracy and literacy development needed ongoing attention in first language education.

In second language learning, several writers and researchers in the early 1980s suggested that listening had a very important role. One of the strongest arguments for emphasizing listening and delaying speaking is based on a particular view of what it means to learn a language. Some approaches to language teaching have given a lot of importance to speaking.

Listening is the way of learning the language. It gives the learner information from which to build up the knowledge necessary for using the language. When this knowledge is built up, the learner can begin to speak. The listening-only period is a time of observation and learning which provides the basis for the other language skills.

What conditions are necessary for language learning to occur? Several writers (Krashen, 1981; Newmark, 1981; Taylor, 1982; Terrell, 1982) using different terminology found considerable agreement. Newmark (1981: 39), for example, said:

> A comprehension approach can work . . . as long as the material presented for comprehension in fact consists of (1) sufficient (2) language instances (3) whose meaning can be inferred by students (4) who are paying attention

Gary and Gary (1981) described the many benefits of delaying speaking and concentrating on listening. These benefits include the following:

- The learner is not overloaded by having to focus on two or more skills at the same time—a cognitive benefit.
- Speed of coverage—receptive knowledge grows faster than productive knowledge. It is possible to experience and learn much more of the language by just concentrating on listening.
- It is easy to move very quickly to realistic communicative listening activities. This will have a strong effect on motivation.
- Learners will not feel shy or worried about their language classes. Having to speak a foreign language, particularly when you know very little, can be a frightening experience. Listening activities reduce the stress involved in language learning—a psychological benefit.

- Listening activities are well suited to independent learning through listening to recordings.

Certainly, most of the early research on comprehension approaches to learning was not well done, and both research and theory now consider that there is an important role for early spoken production in a language course. The effect of the comprehension approach on language teaching has been to highlight the importance of listening and to direct attention to the development of techniques for providing interesting, successful, and sustained opportunities for listening early in a learner's language learning.

Factors That Influence Listening Success

We will begin by examining research into the cognitive factors that are known to affect listening success. Then the affective factors that play an important role in listening will be explored. Finally, conclude with an examination of some of the contextual factors that can affect listening success

Cognitive Factors

- Vocabulary Knowledge: L2 vocabulary size (particularly breadth of knowledge) is important for listening success.
- Syntactic Knowledge: Syntactic or grammatical knowledge plays an important role in L2 learning and is hypothesized to contribute to comprehension success.
- Discourse Knowledge: Discourse knowledge, sometimes called script knowledge (Dunkel, 1986) refers to awareness of the type of information found in listening Texts. Discourse knowledge has mostly been researched in the context of academic listening.
- Pragmatic Knowledge: Pragmatic knowledge involves the application of information regarding a speaker's intention that goes beyond the literal meaning of an utterance
- Metacognition: The importance of metacognition in comprehension, particularly for L1 reading, has long been acknowledged and continues to be widely researched.
- Prior Knowledge: Prior knowledge refers to all the conceptual knowledge and life experiences that language learners have acquired and are available for comprehension purposes. It plays an important role in listening.

Affective Factors

- Anxiety: anxiety is multi-faceted and can be so high as to be debilitating; however, a certain level of anxiety can be facilitating, giving learners the "edge" to concentrate harder and be more successful.
- Self-Efficacy: self-efficacy, the basis for self-confidence and motivation, refers to learners' beliefs about their ability to successfully participate in learning activities.
- Motivation: there is some evidence that language learners engaged in tasks that develop metacognitive knowledge about listening become more confident and motivated

Contextual Factors

- Interactive Listening: interactive listening is an important part of listening competence. It most often takes place in more informal contexts for language learning and reflects the type of listening language learners would like to develop in order to interact with L2 speakers.
- Listening in Informal Learning Contexts: informal contexts are another factor for consideration
- Listening in Formal Learning Contexts: academic listening refers to listening to learn subject matter content in formal classroom contexts.

Models of Listening

Listening was traditionally seen as a passive process by which the listener receives information sent by a speaker. More recent models view listening as a much more active and interpretive process in which the message is not fixed but is created in the interactional space between participants. Meanings are shaped by context and constructed by the listener through the act of interpreting meaning rather than receiving it intact (Lynch and Mendelsohn, 2002: 194).

Types of Listening

We can distinguish two broad types of listening:

- One-way listening—typically associated with the transfer of information (transactional listening).
- Two-way listening—typically associated with maintaining social relations (interactional listening).

Again, we can distinguish traditional, conventional views of listening from more contemporary views. Traditionally, listening was associated with transmission of information that is with one-way listening. This can be seen in the extensive use of monologues in older listening materials. While this is fine if we are relating primarily to listening in academic contexts for example, it fails to capture the richness and dynamics of listening as it occurs in our everyday interactions (two-way listening). Most contemporary materials reflect this re-emphasis with a move towards natural sounding dialogues.

Listening Processes

Bottom-up Processes

These are the processes the listener uses to assemble the message piece-by piece from the speech stream, going from the parts to the whole. Bottom up processing involves perceiving and parsing the speech stream at increasingly larger levels beginning with auditory-phonetic, phonemic, syllabic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, propositional, pragmatic and interpretive (Field, 2003: 326).

Top-down Processes

Top-down processes involve the listener in going from the whole—their prior knowledge and their content and rhetorical schemata—to the parts. In other words, the listener uses what they know of the context of communication to predict what the message will contain, and uses parts of the message to confirm, correct or add to this. The key process here is inferencing.

When we put these two types of processing together we see listening not as a single skill, but as a variety of sub-skills.

It is possible to make sense of a spoken message by drawing cues from context and picking up a few key words, but without attending to the grammatical form of the message. In other words, comprehension is possible without noticing.

Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

Listening strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified according to how the listener processes the input. Top-down strategies are listener based; the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language.

Top-down strategies include

- listening for the main idea
- predicting
- drawing inferences
- summarizing

Bottom-up strategies are text based; the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. Bottom-up strategies include

- listening for specific details
- recognizing cognates (equivalent s)
- recognizing word-order patterns

Lecture- 02

Levels of Processing in Listening-I

Module-04

NEUROLOGICAL PROCESSING

Hearing

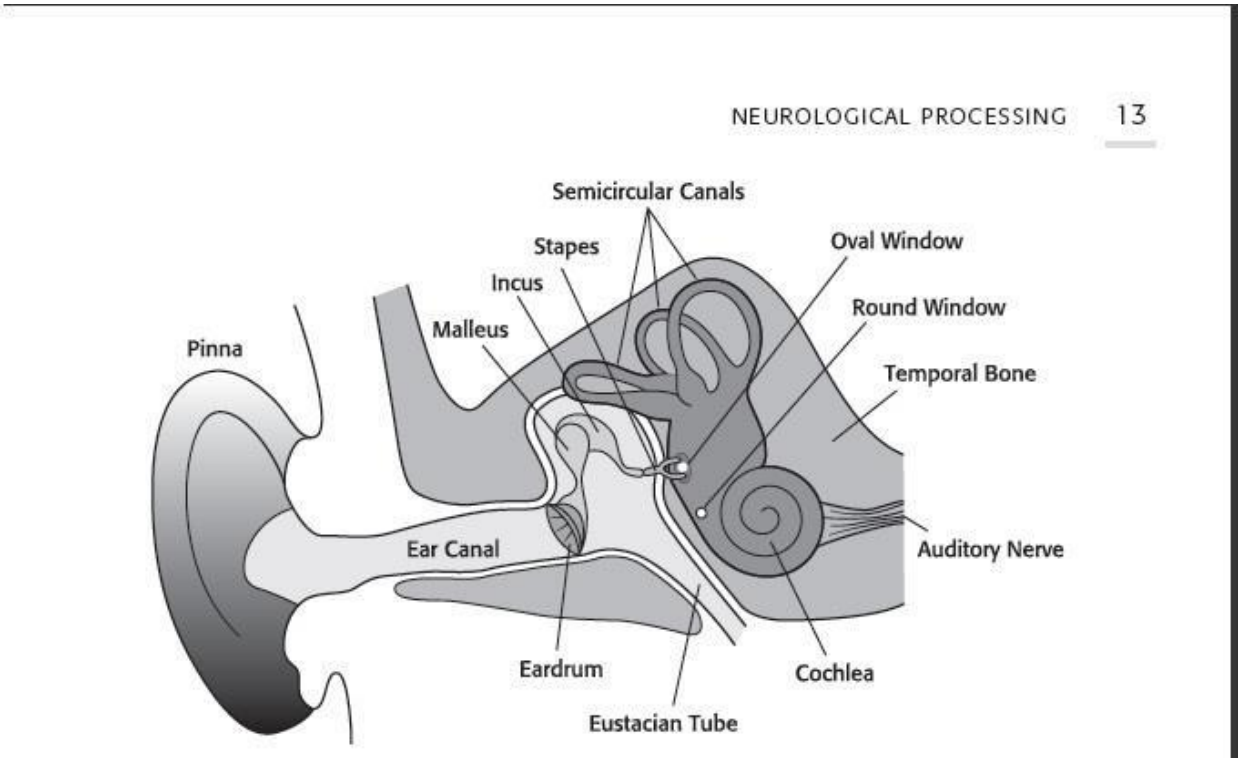
Hearing is the primary physiological system that allows for reception and conversion of sound waves. Sound waves are experienced as pressure pulses and can be measured in **pascal**s (Force over an Area: p = F/A). The normal threshold for human hearing is about 20 micropascals – equivalent to the sound of a mosquito flying about 3 m away from the ear. These converted electrical pulses are transmitted from the **outer ear** through the **inner ear** to the **auditory cortex** of the brain. As with other sensory phenomena, auditory sensations are considered to reach **perception** only if they are received and processed by a cortical area in the brain. Although we often think of sensory perception as a passive process, the responses of neurons in the auditory cortex of the brain can be strongly modulated by attention (Fritz et al., 2007; Feldman, 2003).

In physiological terms, hearing is a neurological circuitry, part of the vestibular system of the brain, which is responsible for spatial orientation (balance) and temporal orientation (timing), as well as **interoception**, the monitoring of sensate data for our internal bodily systems (Austin, 2006).

Of all our senses, hearing may be said to be the most grounded and most essential to awareness because it occurs in real time, in a temporal continuum. Hearing involves continually grouping incoming sound into pulse-like auditory events that span a period of several seconds (Handel, 2006). Sound perception is about always anticipating what is about to be heard – hearing forward – as well as retrospectively organizing what has just been heard – hearing backward – in order to assemble coherent packages of sound.

While hearing provides a basis for listening, it is only a precursor for it. Though the terms hearing and listening are often used interchangeably in everyday talk, there are essential differences between them. While both hearing and listening are initiated through sound perception, the difference between them is essentially a degree of intention. Intention is known to involve several levels, but initially intention is an acknowledgement of a distal source and a willingness to be influenced by this source (Allwood, 2006).

The anatomy of hearing is elegant in its efficiency. The human auditory system consists of the outer ear, the middle ear, the inner ear, and the auditory nerves connecting to the brain stem. Several mutually dependent subsystems complete the system (see Figure).



The physiological properties of listening begin when the auditory cortex is stimulated. The primary auditory cortex is a small area located in the **temporal lobe** of the brain. It lies in the back half of the Superior Temporal Gyrus (STG) and also enters into the transverse temporal gyri (also called Heschl's gyri). This is the first brain structure to process incoming auditory information. Anatomically, the **transverse temporal gyri** are different from all other temporal lobe gyri in that they run mediolateral (towards the center of the brain) rather than dorsiventrally (front to back).As soon as information reaches the auditory cortex, it is relayed to several other neural centers in the brain, including **Wernicke's area,** which is responsible for speech recognition, and lexical and syntactic comprehension, and **Broca's area**, which is involved in calculation and responses to language-related tasks.

Consciousness

Consciousness is the aspect of mind that has a self-centered point of view and orientation to the environment. Consciousness is directly related to intentionality – the intention to understand and to be understood. The concept that has been used most often to describe this neurological cognitive bridge between individual and universal perception and experience is consciousness (Chafe, 2000). Consciousness is the root concept for describing the processes that initiate attention, meaning construction, memory and learning.

Beyond this characterization of subjective experience, it has been said that consciousness is a dynamic neurophysiological mechanism that allows a person to become active and goal-directed in both internal and external environments (Alexandrov and Sams, 2005). This means that consciousness is a

continuous force that links experiences in the internal and external environments and allows the experiencer to make sense of these experiences and, to some degree, direct them.

For the purposes of describing listening, the concept of consciousness is important because it helps to define the notion of context. Consciousness involves the activation of portions of the listener's model of the surrounding world – a model that is necessarily self-referenced. The concept of consciousness is important for communication – both listening and speaking – because something must direct the individual's attention to the external world. For the speaker, consciousness influences what aspects of the person's experience to communicate – the signaling and displaying levels of communication (Holmqvist and Holsanova, 2007). For the listener, consciousness guides the person's intentions to experience the speaker's world and to attempt to construct meaning from this experience

The Properties of Consciousness

There are five properties of consciousness that affect listening.

- Consciousness is embedded in a surrounding area of peripheral awareness. The active focus is surrounded by a periphery of semi-active information that provides a context for it.
- Consciousness is dynamic. The focus of consciousness moves constantly from one focus, or item of information, to the next. This movement is experienced by the listener as a continuous event, rather than as a discrete series of 'snapshots'.
- Consciousness has a point of view. One's model of the world is necessarily centered on a self. The location and needs of that self-establish a point of view, which is a constant ingredient of consciousness and a guide for the selection of subsequent movements.
- Consciousness has a need for orientation. Peripheral awareness must include information regarding a person's location in space, time, society and ongoing activity. This orientation allows consciousness to shift from an **immediate mode**, in which the person is attending to present, tangible references, to a **distal mode**, in which the person is attending to non-present, abstract, or imaginary references and concepts.
- Consciousness can focus on only one thing at a time. The limited capacity of consciousness is reflected as a linguistic constraint: A speaker can produce only one focus of consciousness at a time, which is reflected in brief spurts of language, called **intonation units.**

Attention

Attention is the operational aspect of consciousness and can be discussed more concretely. Attention has identifiable physical correlates: specific areas of the brain that are activated in response to a decision to attend to a particular source or aspect of input. Attention is the focusing of consciousness on an object or train of thought, which activates parts of the cortex that are equipped to process it.

In neurolinguistic research, attention is seen as a timed process requiring three neurological elements: **arousal**, **orientation** and **focus.** Arousal begins with the **Reticular Activating System (RAS)** in the brain stem becoming activated. When this happens, the RAS releases a flood of neurotransmitters to fire neurons throughout the brain. Orientation is a neural organization process performed near the brain stem. This process engages the brain pathways that are most likely to be involved in understanding and

responding to the perceived object. Focus is achieved in the higher cortex of the brain, the lateral pulvinar section. This process selectively locks on to the pathways that lead to the frontal lobe of the brain and are involved in processing incoming stimulus, thus allowing for more efficient use of energy

Two notions are central to understanding how attention influences listening: **limited capacity** and **selective attention**. The notion of limited capacity is important in listening. Our consciousness can interact with only one source of information at a time, although we can readily and rapidly switch back and forth between different sources, and even bundle disparate sources into a single focus of attention. Whenever multiple sources, or streams, of information are present, selective attention must be used. Selective attention involves a decision, a commitment of our limited capacity process to one stream of information or one bundled set of features.

Processes of Attention

- Attention is a limited capacity system.
- Automatic activities that require little or no attention do not interfere with each other.
- Controlled processes require attention and interfere with other control processes.
- Attention can be viewed as three separate but interrelated networks: alertness, orientation and detection.
  - Alertness represents a general readiness to deal with incoming stimuli.
  - Orientation refers to a specific aligning of attention.
  - Detection is the cognitive registration of sensory stimuli .
- Detected information is available for other cognitive processing

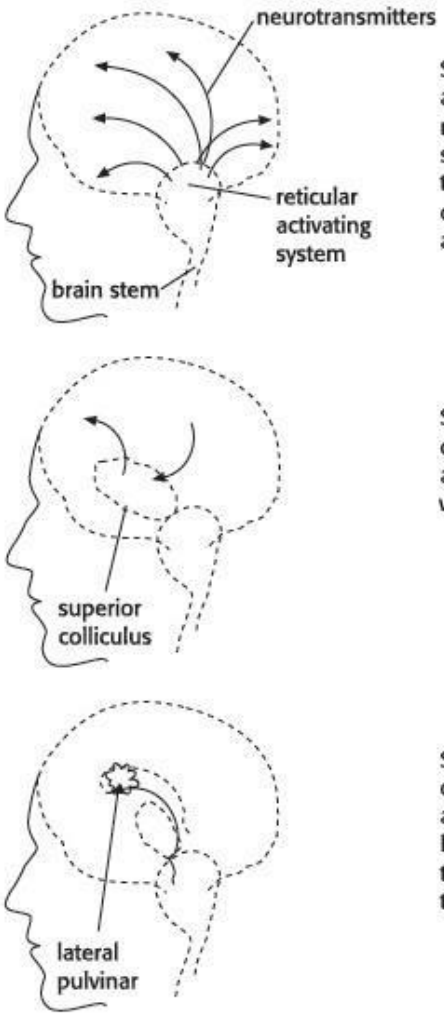


Figure 1.3 *Three stages of attention.* Attention consists of three nearly simultaneous stages.

Individual Differences in Neurological Processes

Six critical differences among individuals are:

- Local processing: In terms of basic-level processing, individuals show marked differences in basic attributes such as speed of neural transmission.
- Commitment and plasticity: As basic linguistic functions develop, they become confined to progressively smaller areas of neural tissue, a process called neural commitment. This leads to a beneficial increase in automaticity and speed of processing, but it also results inevitably in a decline in plasticity.

- Integrative circuits: humans are unique in using those connections to support language learning.) In addition to this central memory consolidation circuit, a variety of local circuits are likely used in analyzing and breaking apart local memories through a process called resonance (Grossberg, 2003). Resonant circuits copy successfully detected linguistic forms to temporary local buffers so that the system can focus on incoming, unprocessed material while still retaining the recognized material in local memory.
- Functional neural circuits: The types of local integration supported by the episodic memory system are complemented by a variety of other functional neural circuits that integrate across wider areas of the brain. A prime example of such a circuit is the phonological rehearsal loop (Lopez et al., 2009), which links the auditory processing in the temporal lobe with motor processing from the prefrontal cortex.
- Strategic control: Brain functioning can be readily modified, amplified, integrated and controlled by higher-level strategic processes. These higher-level processes include mood control, attentional control, motivational control as well as learning strategies and applications of cognitive maps and scripts. The degree to which the listener can activate and apply these higher-level processes will determine relative success and failure in language comprehension in specific instances and in long-term acquisition.
- Level of attention: Some listeners pay more attention to overall conceptual structure, attempting to process incoming language more through top-down inferential, whereas other learners focus more on bottom-up detail. This individual difference is also likely to be important in determining the relative success of listeners in language comprehension to specific texts and in longer-term acquisition of the language.

Module-05

LINGUISTIC PROCESSING - I

Perceiving Speech

The goal of speech production is to maximize communication, putting as many bits of retrievable information into every second of speech as possible (Boersma, 1998). Languages evolve in congruence with this **efficiency principle**. To this end, the most frequently used words tend to be the shortest ones in a language, and communication patterns develop to allow for a maximum of **ellipsis** – omissions of what is presumed to be understood by the listener. Zipf (1949) first summarized this evolutionary tendency as the **principle of least effort** – speakers want to minimize articulatory effort and hence encourage brevity and **phonological reduction**.

In the same way, the listener has to adopt an efficient principle for understanding speech. This means processing language as efficiently as possible in order to keep up with the speaker. At a perception level, two fundamental heuristics are needed to do this:

- Maximization of recognition. Because the speaker is reducing effort in production, the listener will try to make maximum use of the available acoustic information in order to reconstruct the meaning of the utterance.
- Minimization of categorization. Because there are large variations between speakers, the listener must tolerate ambiguity and create as few perceptual classes as possible into which the acoustic input can be grouped.

In order to maximize recognition of what has been spoken, the listener uses three types of perceptual experience. The first type is the experience of **articulatory causes** for the sounds that strike the ear. For spoken language, the perceptual objects are the effects of particular vocal configurations in the speaker (the lip, tongue and vocal tract movements that cause the proximal stimulation in the ear). The second type is through **psychoacoustic effects**. The perceptual objects are identified as auditory qualities (the frequency, timbre and duration of sounds that reach the ear). The third type is the listener's construction of a model of the speaker's **linguistic intentions**. The perceived sounds are drawn from a matrix of contrasts at multiple levels of a language (phonemic, morphological, lexical, semantic, pragmatic). The listener's knowledge of and experience with these three systems – **articulatory causes** of sounds, the psychoacoustic effects of sounds, and the likely linguistic intentions of a speaker – all maximize the efficiency of speech perception. At the same time, if the listener's knowledge or experience is incomplete or flawed, use of these systems will limit or distort perception.

When we learn to articulate the sounds of a language, we learn to manipulate these frequencies, without conscious attention (Kuhl, 2000). This is called the **perceptual goodness** of the sound (Pickett and Morris, 2000). Although there is an ideal prototype for each phoneme of a language, there is also a relatively broad acceptable range of ratios between frequencies, that is, sound variations, within a given phoneme that makes it intelligible to us and allows us to distinguish one phoneme from another.

Identifying Units of Spoken Language

In order to manage speech in real time, it is essential for the listener to group the speech into a small number of constituents that can be worked easily within short-term memory.

To understand the perceptual process fully, we need to understand pre-perceptual and post-perceptual states of the listener. Spoken language has evolved in a way that allows a listener to parse speech in real time, in the most effective manner given the specific resources of our short-term memory. Based on examinations of multiple corpora of language spoken in naturally occurring contexts (unplanned discourse), researchers have found a number of characteristics to be representative of spontaneously spoken English.

Many of these features of speech are considered by the layperson to be signs of careless use of language, particularly when viewed from the perspective of written standards. However, it is now widely established that written and spoken language, while based on the same underlying conceptual, grammatical, lexical and phonological systems, simply follow different realization rules and standards of well-formedness (Chafe and Tannen, 1987; Houston, 2004; Carter and McCarthy, 2004). The reason is that the conventions and standards for spoken language have evolved interactively: they allow speaker and listener to co-ordinate on the time, timing and conditions needed to communicate in an oral medium.

A specific cause for the surface-level differences in speech and writing is the difference in planning time. Speakers and listeners are also likely to abandon and reformulate strategies, even in the middle of utterances, when the strategies seem to be unsuccessful. To an outsider or **over hearer**, these adjustments may seem to make the resultant language 'sloppy', but these shifts in strategies and devices actually improve comprehension for the actual participants.

Using Prosodic Features in Processing Speech

Speech is typically uttered not in a continuous stream but in short bursts. (In addition to whatever communicative function short bursts of speech may have, speaking in this manner is a biological necessity: It allows the speaker periodically to replace air in the lungs efficiently.) These units of speech have been identified by various terms, but the term **intonation units** may be preferable. This term indicates that an intonational contour is constructed by the speaker to indicate a **focal center of attention.**

Intonation units typically consist of phrases or clauses and average two or three seconds in length. Bound by pauses, these temporal units mark the speaker's rhythm for composing and presenting ideas. Because these units are bound by perceptible pauses, linguists sometimes refer to them as **pause units.**

Table 2.1 **Features of spoken language**

FEATURE	EXAMPLE
Speakers speak in **short bursts of speech**	*The next time I saw him/ he wasn't as friendly/ I don't know why.*
Spoken language contains more **topic-comment structures** and uses more topic restatement	*The people in this town – they're not as friendly as they used to be.*
Speakers frequently use additive (**paratactic**) ordering with *and, then, so, but*	*He came home/ and then he just turned on the TV/ but he didn't say anything/ so I didn't think much about it/*
Speech is marked by a high ratio of **function** (or **grammatical**) **words** (particles, preposition, pro-forms, articles, *be* verbs, auxiliary verbs, conjunctions) to **content words** (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, question words)	Written version: *The court declared that the deadline must be honoured.* (Content words, 4; function words, 5) Spoken version: *The court said that the deadline was going to have to be kept.* (Content words, 4; function words, 9)
Speech is marked by incomplete grammatical units, **false starts**, **incomplete/abandoned structures**	*I was wondering if . . . Do you want to go together? It's not that I . . . I mean, I don't want to imply . . .*
Speakers frequently use **ellipsis** – omitting known grammatical elements	*(Are you) Coming (to dinner)? (I'll be there) In a minute.*
Speakers use the most frequent words of the language, leading to more loosely packed, often imprecise language	*the way it's put together* (v. *its structure*)
Topics may not be stated explicitly	*That's not a good idea.* (The topic is *that*, the action referred to earlier, but never explicitly mentioned)
Speakers use a lot of **fillers**, **interactive markers** and **evocative expressions**	*And, well, um, you know, there was, like, a bunch of people . . . And I'm thinking, like, what the hell's that got to do with it?*
Speakers employ frequent **exophoric reference**, and rely on gesture and non-verbal cues	*that guy over there this thing why are you wearing that?*
Speakers use variable speeds, accents, **paralinguistic features** and gestures	

Source. Based on McCarthy and Slade (2006), Roland *et al*. (2007).

Although the speaker has choices as to which words to stress, the language itself presents constraints about how this stress can be articulated. All content words typically receive some stress (contrastive duration and loudness), and the last new content word in a phonological phrase usually receives the primary stress (**tonic prominence**) in an intonation unit. By 'new word' we mean a word that has not occurred in the previous discourse or a word that is not closely related lexically to a word in the previous discourse.

What is identified as prominent or focal in a pause unit then will usually be a **clitic group** – a lexical item that consists of one core word and other grammaticalising words.

A third type of information available in sequences of pause units is related to connectivity. Speakers signal through **intonational bracketing** which pause units are to be interpreted as closely related. Sequences of connected pause units will end with a falling, proclaiming tone, and although a speaker may add on other units with falling tones.

Another way of viewing the role of intonation is in the framework of relevance theory, which considers all communication to be an **ostensive-inferential process** (Sperber and Wilson, 1995; Moeschler, 2004). In this system, the speaker is continually offering **ostensive signals** – both linguistic and paralinguistic signals – from which the listener derives inferences.

Types of Information Available in Speech Signal

Six types of information have been noted in the paralinguistic signals of speakers in all languages. These are:

- Emotional. The intonation is used to express speaker's attitudinal meaning, such as enthusiasm, doubt, or distaste for the topic (Ohala, 1996).
- Grammatical. Intonation can be used to mark the grammatical structure of an utterance, like punctuation does in written language (Brazil, 1995).
- Informational. Intonational peaks indicate the salient parts of an utterance that a speaker wishes to draw attention to for both self and listener (Chafe, 1994).
- Textual. The intonation is used to help large chunks of discourse contrast or cohere, rather like paragraphs in written language.
- Psychological. Intonation involving a rhythm of vowel sounds is used to chunk complex information into units which are easier to deal with. For example, lists of words, or telephone or credit card numbers are grouped into units to make them easier to hold in short-term memory. (Cheng et al., 2005).
- Indexical. Intonation and speech melody are used as a sort of social group identifier, often as a conscious or habitual 'speech strategy' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003). For example, preachers and newscasters often use a recognizable intonation pattern; gays or lesbians are often identified through intonational and melodic features in their speech

Recognizing Words

Recognition of units of spoken language is a fluid process which can accommodate a fluctuating range of units in the input. What provides stability is its essential focus on word recognition. Recognizing words in fluent speech is the basis of spoken language comprehension, and the development of automaticity of word recognition is considered to be a critical aspect of both L1 and L2 acquisition (Segalowitz et al., 2008). Although all aspects of speech recognition are important contributors to comprehension, under conditions of noise or other perceptual stress, or when sounds are ambiguous, listeners will tend to focus on and rely on lexical information alone (Mattys et al., 2009).

The two main synchronous tasks of the listener in word recognition are (1) identifying words and lexical phrases and (2) activating knowledge associated with those words and phrases.

If we want to understand spoken word recognition, it is important to note that the concept of a word itself is different for the spoken and written versions of any language. The concept of a word in spoken language can be understood best as part of a **phonological hierarchy**. A phonological hierarchy starts with the largest **psychologically valid unit** (that which typical users acknowledge in planning their language use). It then describes a series of increasingly smaller regions of a phonological utterance, which may indeed not be units that a typical user acknowledges. From larger to smaller units, this hierarchy is generally described as follows:

- Utterance, a grammatical unit, consisting of an intonation unit, plus surrounding grammatical elements needed for its interpretation.
- Intonation Unit (IU)/phonological phrase (P-phrase), a phonological unit consisting of a lexically stressed item plus supporting grammatical elements, uttered in a single pause.
- Lexical phrase, a formulaic element consisting of frequently used clitic groups and phonological words, e.g. try as one might.
- Phonological word (P-word), a word or set of words uttered and interpreted as a single item, e.g. in the house.
- Clitic group, a focal item plus grammaticalising elements: e.g. an apple.
- Foot (F), ‘strong–weak’ syllable sequences such as ladder, button, eat it.
- Syllable (u), e.g. cat (1), ladder (2); syllables themselves consist of parts: onset (optional), nucleus (required), coda (optional).
- Mora (t), half-syllable or unit of syllable weight, used in some languages, such as Japanese and Hawaiian.
- Segment (phoneme), e.g. [k], [æ] and [t] in cat.
- Feature, glides, obstruents, sonorants, etc

There are several simultaneous processes that increase the reliability of word recognition:

- Words are recognized through the interaction of perceived sound and the understood likelihood of a word being uttered in a given context.
- Speech is processed primarily in a sequential fashion, word by word. Recognition of a word achieves two goals:

  - It locates the onset of the immediately following word.
  - It provides syntactic and semantic constraints that are used for predicting a number of following words.
- Words are accessed by various clues:
  - The sounds that begin the word.
  - Lexical stress.
- Speech is processed in part retrospectively, by the listener holding unrecognized word forms for a few seconds in a phonological loop in **Short-Term Memory** (STM) while subsequent cues are being processed (Baddeley and Larsen, 2007).
- A word has been recognized when the analysis of its acoustic structure eliminates all candidates but one – in other words, when the listener identifies the most likely or most relevant candidate.

Module-06

LINGUISTIC PROCESSING - II

Employing Phonotactic Knowledge

Effective speech recognition involves an automated knowledge of the phonotactic system of a language – that is, knowledge of its allowable sounds and sound patterns – and an acquired sensitivity to the allophonic variations of the prototypes in the system. Some speech processing researchers contend that phonetic feature detectors in the auditory cortex, which enable the listener to encode speech into linguistic units, atrophy during development if they are not used. Exposure to speech during childhood alters neural organization such that individuals, born capable of learning any language, develop perceptual and cognitive processes that are specialized for their own native language.

One of the interesting aspects of auditory decoding is **allophonic variation** the alternate pronunciations of a **citation form** (pure form, uttered in isolation) of word or phrase that occur due to context. Allophonic variations (e.g. gonna versus going to) are allowed in every language because of efficiency principles in production. For reasons of efficiency, speakers of a language tend to use only the minimum energy (loudness and articulatory movement) required creating an acceptable phonological string, one that is likely to be recognized by the intended listener. As a result, nearly all sound phrases in a natural spoken language sample are underspecified – that is, they are always less clearly articulated than pure citation forms would be.

The variations are brought about through co-articulation processes of assimilation, vowel reduction and elision. These changes – essentially simplifications – shorten both production and reception time. In essence, they allow the speaker to be more efficient in production, and the listener to be more efficient in perception and processing. Of course, this principle tends to hold true only for native listeners of a language; non-native listeners often find the simplifications to make the spoken language more difficult to process, particularly if they have learned the written forms of the language and the citation forms of the pronunciation of words in the language before they have begun to engage in natural spoken discourse.

Assimilation

Consonant assimilation takes place when the pure sound of the consonant is changed due to phonological context. Assimilation occurs in several forms. See Table for a display of the consonants in English, in IPA form, organized by phonetic features. The top row indicates point of primary articulation. The left column indicates the type of friction that is created. Assimilation is a sound change where some phonemes (typically consonants or vowels) change to be more similar to other nearby sounds. It is a common type of phonological process across languages. Assimilation can occur either within a word or between words. It occurs in normal speech.

Table 2.3 Consonants of English

FRICTION	BILABIAL	LABIODENTAL	DENTAL	ALVEOLAR	PALATAL-ALVEOLAR	PALATAL	VELAR	GLOTTAL
Plosive	p b			t d			k g	ʔ
Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
Approximate				ɹ		j		
Lateral				l				

Note. There are twenty-two consonants in most varieties of spoken English, represented here in IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) transcription. However, all consonants are spoken with multiple variations, depending on the variety of English spoken, and on the phonological context in which the consonants occur.

Cluster Reduction and Dropping

When two or more consonants, often of a similar nature, come together, there is a tendency in English to simplify such a cluster by eliding one of them. The longer the cluster, the greater the chance of elision.

Examples of cluster reduction:

Word/combination	*No elision*	*Elision*
asked	[ɑ:skt]	[ɑ:st]
desktop	['dɛsk,tɒp]	['dɛs,tɒp]
hard disk	[,hɑ:d'dɪsk]	[,hɑ:'dɪsk]
kept quiet	[,kɛpt'kwaɪət]	[,kɛp'kwaɪət]
kept calling	[,kɛpt'ko:lɪŋ]	[,kɛp'ko:lɪŋ]
kept talking	[,kɛpt'to:kɪŋ]	[,kɛp'to:kɪŋ]
at least twice	[ə,tli:st'twaɪs]	[ə,tli:s'twaɪs]
straight towards	[,stɹeɪt'tʊwo:dz]	[,stɹeɪ'tʊwo:dz]
next to	['nɛkst,tʊ]	['nɛks,tʊ]
want to	['wɒnt,tʊ]	['wɒn,tʊ]
seemed not to notice	['si:md,nɒttə'nəʊtɪs]	['si:m,nɒtə'nəʊtɪs]
for the first time	[fəðə,fɜ:st'taɪm]	[fəðə,fɜ:s'taɪm]

Examples of dropping:

where **he** lived	where (h)e lived
com**for**table chair	comf(or)table
goi**ng to** be here	go(i)n(gt)o be here
I'll pay for it	I('ll) pay
given to **the**m	given to (th)em
succeed **in im**agining	succeed in (i)magining
terrorist attack	terr(or)ist attack
in the envi**ron**ment	in the envir(on)ment

Vowel Changes

Vowel reduction refers to various changes in the acoustic quality of vowels, which is related to changes in stress, sonority, duration, loudness, articulation, or position in the word, and which is perceived as weakening.

Elision is another type of assimilation. It is specifically the omission of one or more sounds (such as a vowel, a consonant, or a whole syllable) in a word or phrase, producing a result that is easier for the speaker to pronounce. (Sometimes, sounds may also be elided for euphonic effect.) Elision is normally automatic and unintentional, but it may be deliberate. All languages have examples of this phonological phenomenon.

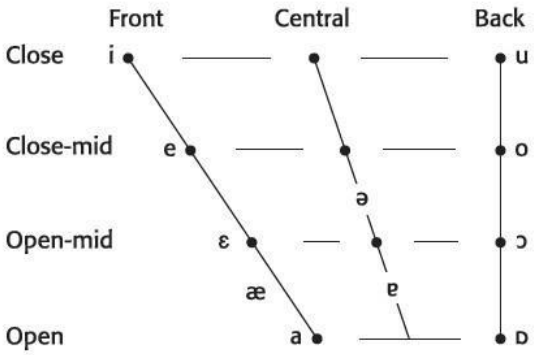


Figure 2.2 *Vowels of English*. There are eleven main vowels in most varieties of English. The vowel system is often depicted in two dimensions, corresponding to the position of tongue mass relative to the front or back of the mouth (front–central–back axis) and to the relative openness of the mouth and jaw during voicing of the vowel (close–open axis). More so than with consonants, vowel sounds will vary according to the variety of English (all front and back vowels have degrees of rounding) and by phonological context (vowels in unstressed syllables are generally reduced, or centralised for quicker articulation)

Syntactic Parsing

While processing speech starts with successful chunking of sound into phonological groups, followed by word recognition, a more automated and more precise processing of the auditory input is possible if the listener can map incoming speech onto a grammatical model of the language (Baggio, 2008). This aspect of linguistic processing is called **parsing**, and like word recognition, it is also seen as involving two passes and taking place on two levels. As with phonological parsing, these two passes take place simultaneously, but operate across differing time spans and with different, though consistent, priorities. As is inferred from neural imaging studies, the **first pass** involves a broader time frame – typically six to eight seconds (the span of two to three pause units) – while the **second pass** involves a more constrained time frame – typically just the two or three seconds of a single pause unit (Schuler et al., 2010).

Utilizing Syntactic Parsing

As words in speech are recognized, processing the language for meaning requires a partial syntactic mapping of incoming speech onto a grammatical model. A number of syntactic and morphological (word form) cues influence how the listener processes meaning: word order, subject-verb (topic-comment) matching, pro-form agreement (e.g. agreement of pronouns with their antecedents), case inflections (e.g. I versus me), and contrastive stress. The listener's grammatical knowledge, and ability to utilize that knowledge in real time, is called on during syntactic processing.

Syntactic processing occurs at two levels: that of the immediate utterance, or sentence level, and that of the extended text, or discourse level. There is some evidence that syntactic processing takes place

in two passes. The first pass identifies syntactic categories of units in the speech stream, and the second pass integrates syntax of the immediate utterance with syntax of the larger speech unit that is being processed.

In the first pass, syntactic processing, or parsing, accomplishes three basic goals: (1) It speeds up aural processing by using constraints to quickly assign parts of incoming utterances to inviolable syntactic categories; (2) it allows for predicting functions of incoming parts of an utterance and for disambiguating partially heard parts of an utterance; (3) and it helps the processor create a propositional model of the incoming speech from which logical inferences can be calculated for further comprehension.

The first pass creates a syntactic reference frame that can be used as a kind of net for comprehension. It is rarely possible, except with extremely slow speech, for a human listener to monitor a complete second pass (word-for-word) parsing of an incoming auditory signal.

A first pass parsing uses a referential interface or reference frame to identify the discourse topic – what is being talked about generally. In a first pass parsing, utterances are initially scanned for references that link to previous utterances and ultimately to a dependency on the discourse topic (Martín-Loeches et al., 2009). When a fuller, second pass parsing is necessary, the listener assigns all words into grammatical categories (content words, such as noun, verb, adjective, adverb or function words attached to a content word) and assigns structural and semantic relations between them.

The most critical syntactic integration processes for the listener are (1) determining conjunctions between utterances, including equivalences between text items in adjoined utterances, by calculating cohesion markers for **anaphoric** (previously mentioned), **cataphoric** (to be mentioned), and **exophoric** (references external to the text) references, and (2) filling in ellipsis (items that are left out of the utterance because they are assumed to be known by the listener, or already given in the text), and (3) calculation of logical inferences that link propositions within the discourse, which most often are not explicitly stated (Chater and Manning, 2006).

As with other phases of linguistic processing, integration of parsing is facilitated by underlying knowledge at multiple levels:

- **Pragmatic knowledge** of common discourse functions (e.g. apologies, invitations, complaints) and types (e.g. greeting routines, personal anecdotes). In particular, an ability to note episode boundaries, routines, or other conventional division points that bind sets of utterances together will assist in discourse (first pass) parsing.
- **Intertextual knowledge** of likely speaker experiences that affect the meaning of the message. Because of the pervasive intertextual nature of language – any utterance is likely to reflect the past linguistic experience of the speaker and hearer – awareness of the speaker's background experiences, including the types of metaphors he or she is apt to use and the range of cultural experiences he or she is able to draw upon, will influence speed and efficiency of linguistic processing.
- Familiarity with common sequences of **formulaic language** that can be processed quickly. This category of formulaic language covers various types of word strings which appear to be stored whole in memory and retrieved rapidly from memory by the listener with only minimal cueing. A

formulaic sequence can be a continuous or discontinuous string, of words which appears to be prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use or interpretation, rather than being subject to generation or parsing by the language grammar.

Grammatical context includes obligatory and optional case relations such as Agent, Object, Recipient, Instrument, Goal, Temporal, and Locative. In a construction grammar, constituents in an utterance are defined by their relationship to a theme or verb. While listening, the receiver can construct a hierarchical map of how the words recognized in speech fit into the semantic frameworks of the verbs in the utterance Stated another way, if the verb, or theme, is central to parsing an utterance, a listener cannot fully complete a parsing without first identifying the verb. Once the verb is identified, the listener can then relate the other constituents to it.

Items within the units that are not understood can be held temporarily in an episodic buffer for several seconds (Baddeley, 2001). The hierarchical view may be a closer psychological representation of what the listener does in real time, because it addresses how short-term memory holds input only until it can be related to the theme of the utterance and fit into a developing hierarchical (situational or propositional) model of the text (Kintsch, 1998).

Integrating Non-Verbal Cues into Linguistic Processing

Listening involves integration of verbal and non-verbal cues. As an utterance unfolds, listeners take advantage of both linguistic and extra-linguistic information to arrive at interpretations more quickly than they could use the spoken language.

Some of the non-verbal information available to the listener is communicated independently of the language – before or after the language is uttered, and sometimes offered by someone other than the speaker. Visual signals must be considered as **co-text,** an integral part of the input which the listener is able to use for interpretation (Harris, 2008; Fukumura et al., 2010). Visual signals are of two basic types: **exophoric** and **kinesic. Exophoric** signals, such as a speaker holding up a photograph or writing some words on the board typically serve as references for the spoken text and are critical for text interpretation. Exophoric signals are particularly crucial in situations of high information flow, such as scientific documentaries and academic lectures.

Kinesic signals are the body movements, including eye and head movements, the speaker makes while delivering the text. There are numerous systems for describing a speaker's body movements and their role in communication. From these sources, the most commonly occurring sets of kinesic signals are baton signals, directional gaze and guide signs.

Baton signals are hand and head movements, which are typically associated with emphasis and prosodic cadence. Emphatic motions of the lips, chin, or cheeks associated with articulation are also baton signals.

Directional gaze is eye movement and focusing used to direct the listener or audience to an exophoric reference or to identify a particular moment in the discourse as relevant in some way to the listener. In all live discourse, the main function of eye contact is to maintain the sense of contact with the

listeners and to allow for them to give backchannel signals to the speaker about their state of interest and understanding of the conversation or speech.

Guide signals are the systematic gestures and movements of any part of the body, such as extending one's arms or leaning forward. Many guide signals may be purely idiosyncratic, with no clear meaning, but most will have some clear role in a speaker's emphasis or shading of a particular point. Needless to say, guide signals will vary from culture to culture, and from speaker to speaker, and it is possible to increase comprehension by learning the guide signals of a particular speaker.

As with paralinguistic cues, non-verbal cues are intended to confirm the speaker's linguistic meaning. However, when messages in the linguistic and paralinguistic or non-linguistic channels are detected to be inconsistent, the listener may have reason to believe that the speaker is being deceptive, and is likely to attend to the non-verbal cues.

Lecture- 03

Levels of Processing in Listening-II

Module-07

SEMANTIC PROCESSING

Semantic processing encompasses the listening processes involved in comprehension, inferencing, learning, and memory formation.

Comprehension: The Role of Knowledge Structures

Comprehension is often considered to be the first-order goal of listening, the highest priority of the listener. Many people even consider it the sole purpose of listening. Although in the vernacular the term listening comprehension is widely used to refer to all aspects of listening. Comprehension is the process of **structure building**, relating language to concepts in one's memory and to references in the real world in a way that aims to find coherence and relevance. Concepts, not words, are the fundamental units of reason and comprehension, and as such are assumed to be the result of neural activity inside the brain (Gallese and Lakoff, 2005). **Structure building framework**, the initial goal of comprehension is to build coherent mental representations from concepts. Comprehenders (listeners or readers or observers) build a comprehension structure by first developing a map in which the concepts will fit. As they listen (or read or observe) comprehenders then place concepts representing new information into this figurative map. They can do this only if and when the new information relates to previous information already in the structure. However, when the incoming information is judged to be unrelated, comprehenders shift attention and attach a new substructure. The building blocks of mental structures are **memory nodes**, which are activated by incoming stimuli and controlled by two cognitive mechanisms: **suppression** and **enhancement**.

In terms of language processing, comprehension is the experience of understanding what the language heard refers to in one's experience or in the outside world, and sensing how any incoming burst of language enhances or suppresses one's current understanding. Complete comprehension then refers to the listener having a clear concept in memory for every **reference** used by the speaker, not necessarily the same referents in the speaker's memory.

Because comprehension involves the mapping and updating of references that the speaker uses, the process of comprehending occurs in an ongoing cycle, as the listener is attending to speech. A useful starting point for discussing how comprehension – the mapping and updating procedure – takes place is the notion of given information and new information.

The central process in comprehension is the integration of the information conveyed by the text with information and concepts already known by the listener. Comprehension occurs as a modification (additions, deletions, amendments) of the internal model of the discourse by the listener, in which the explicit information in the text plays only one part. This process of integration is necessarily sensitive to whether the information conveyed by a sentence provides given information (already known to the listener) or new information (not already known to the listener, or not already known in the presented context).

The speaker conveys his or her own distinctions between given and new information through **presentation cues**. In English, presentation cues are both linguistic and paralinguistic. The paralinguistic

cues are primarily intonational. The main stress or **prominence** (increased duration, loudness, and/or pitch) within an intonational unit falls on the word that is the locus of the new information.

Presentation cues are also provided in the speaker's **manner of delivery**, including **pacing**, **pausing**, and frequency and type of **disfluency**. Disfluencies, while often considered to be signs of flawed speech, can actually improve communication through adding processing cues for the listener. Comprehension is intricately tied to memory, so it is important to consider what the listener actually takes away from a listening experience. The listener's representation of a comprehended text is stored as sets of interrelated propositions (Singer, 2007). Propositions may be seen as units in memory, which are used both in encoding and retrieval of comprehended information.

Cognitive Understanding: The Role of Schemata

Listening is primarily a cognitive activity, involving the activation and modification of concepts in the listener's mind. As a way of referring to activated portions of conceptual knowledge, cognitive psychologists and linguists often refer to modules of knowledge as **schemata**. It is estimated that any normal adult would have hundreds of thousands of available schemas in memory, which would be interrelated in an infinite number of ways. Comprehension researchers agree that a key to effective comprehension is activating appropriate schemata that will assist in understanding the incoming text.

What defines a schema is not its structure – since schema is not a neurological structure – but rather its heuristic nature. A set of memory nodes needed to guide one through an activity. Because these schemata can be interrelated and cross-referenced in a variety of ways, the connections among them is virtually infinite (Churchland, 1999). In order for schemata to be useful as heuristics for real time comprehension, new schemata are created every day and existing ones are updated constantly.

When we are in the act of listening – to a conversation, radio program, etc. – we activate the smallest number of schemata that we estimate will be relevant to understanding the text adequately. This is what has been called the parsimony principle (or Occam's razor) in language processing: a person should not increase the number of entities required to explain anything nor make more assumptions than needed.

Activation of multiple schemata is the basis of elaborative inferencing, as it allows us to invoke the presence of people, events, static and dynamic imagery and other sensory data that are not explicitly referred to in the text. When there is a relative match or congruence of schemata in the listener's and speaker's mind, we can say an **acceptable understanding** has taken place. When there are significant mismatches between the speaker's and the listener's schemata, we say that a **misunderstanding** has occurred. When there are lapses and the listener is unable to activate any appropriate schema, we say that **non-understanding** has occurred.

Social Understanding: The Role of Common Ground

Understanding spoken discourse goes beyond creating a cognitive map of the speaker's intended meaning. What a listener understands depends to a large degree upon having common ground with the speaker: shared concepts and shared routines, ways of acting in and reacting to the world. f course, it is impossible that two persons would share an identical schema or perspective for any conversational topic

similarly, it is not possible for two speakers to have same script for sequences of action. However, it is possible that two conversants will share what are known as common activation spaces in memory that will allow them to arrive a mutual empathy and acceptable understanding, due to their having common cultural or educational or experiential backgrounds.

According to **prototype theory**, people may react to events in the world in similar ways not because their underlying memories (i.e. synaptic configurations in memory) are closely similar, but because their activation spaces are similarly partitioned and their concentration on particular partitions is equally energized. In every listening situation, it is essential for the listener to activate knowledge from stored prototypes. When relevant knowledge is activated during comprehension, additional information in related schemata becomes available to the listener. At the same time, whenever a knowledge structure is activated, the listener also may experience an effective response associated with it – a cognitive commitment – which further influences connections with the speaker and her ideas, and empathic responses to what she has said.

The Role of Inference in Constructing Meaning

Since we do not have direct access to a speaker's intended meaning in producing an utterance or series of utterances, the listener has to rely repeatedly on the process of inference to arrive at an acceptable interpretation of each utterance and the connection between a series of utterances. One part of the process of inference by the listener is achieved through conventional inferencing involving linkages within the language used and another part is achieved through problem-solving-oriented heuristic procedures involving both logic and real-world knowledge.

Listener Enrichment of Input

Speech processing is known to be aided by consistent visual signals from the speaker, in the form of both gestures and articulatory movements (of the mouth, lips, cheeks, chin, throat, chest) that correspond to production of speech. Because of the importance of visual cues, psycholinguists consider face-to-face and audio-visual speech perception to be bi-modal, involving both auditory and visual senses.

When visual and auditory signals do not coincide, there are a great number of incidences of blended mishearings, called the **McGurk Effect.** This cognitive effect occurs when part of the signals taken from visual cues and auditory cues are fused and illustrate how a listener attempts to integrate information from multiple channels. Consistent with the principle of integration, when auditory cues are completely absent (as in listening on the telephone or to the radio), **acoustic mishearings** and other comprehension problems are significantly higher than in face-to-face delivery of messages.

Problem-Solving During Comprehension

According to Barbey and Barsalou (2009), inferences are problem-solving processes that are employed only when there is a need to draw a relevant inference before comprehension can continue, and when evidence is available from which some conclusion can be drawn. Inferences involve operations on a mental model that a listener has produced while listening. Several types of inferencing algorithms have been identified in everyday language comprehension contexts:

- Estimating the sense of ambiguous references
- Supplying missing links in ellipted propositions:
- Filling in schematic slots
- Supplying plausible supporting grounds for logical arguments
- Using text genres to generate expectations about what will occur
- Supplying plausible intentions for the speaker

Through the use of this kind of inferencing, the listener builds and updates her cognitive representation from one utterance to the next, updating both the transactional level (what is said and meant) and the interactional level (how this affects the relation between the listener and speaker).

Inference Types

More than one inference type can be used – and often is used – to represent the link between two propositions. Types of logical inference during text comprehension are following:

- Initiating links.
- Enabling links
- Schematic links
- Classification links
- Paratactic links
- Logical links
- Reference links
- Elaborative links
- Bridging links

Reasoning during Comprehension

Much of the language comprehension we do in everyday discourse situations – from watching television to talking with colleagues – involves logical and elaborative inferencing. Both of these types of inferencing processes are based on reasoning, the use of mental logic, involving **claims** and **grounds** of support.

The process of reasoning during listening is relatively straightforward, though not always easy to apply in real time. Reasoning involves five basic cognitive processes:

- comprehension of facts
- categorization of claims about those facts
- relative assumptions of truth value in what the speaker is saying
- **induction** of unknown or unknowable facts from given information
- **deduction** of a generalization based on evidence given

Reasoning while listening involves rapid identification and evaluation of facts, premises and claims. Listeners need to make assessments quickly in order to understand the claims that the speaker is

making – directly or indirectly. Claims are the assertions that the speaker wishes us to accept in order to keep the conversation going. Behind the claims are the grounds: the supporting facts or ideas which supposedly lead us to accept the claim.

Even after hearing the grounds explicitly, listeners may still disagree with the force of the claim. They may find the grounds irrelevant, that is, not directly related to the claim, or they may find the grounds contradictory in their own experience, leading them to reject the claim rather than accept it. Similarly, they may find the claim too strong in that there are other grounds, or counter-evidence, that would lead to an alternate claim.

Compensatory Strategies During Comprehension

Given natural limitations of memory, all listeners need to resort to compensatory strategies from time to time to perform semantic processing – to make sense of spoken language when conditions become severe. At any point during semantic processing, the listener's capacity for comprehension may be overworked or exhausted, or the listener becomes distracted, and some kind of compensation may be required. A breakdown in semantic processing may occur when:

- the listener cannot hear what the speaker is saying;
- the listener does not know specific expressions the speaker is using;
- the information the speaker gives is incomplete;
- the listener hears a familiar word, but it is used in an unfamiliar way;
- the listener encounters an unknown word or concept, or when the speakers proceed too quickly for the listener to conduct all of the reasoning processes required, and no opportunity for clarification is available.

In these cases, some kind of compensation is required if the listener aims to maintain full participatory status in the discourse or aims for full comprehension. Some of the commonly noted compensation strategies are:

- Skipping: omitting a part or a block of text from processing for comprehension.
- Approximation: using a superordinate concept that is likely to cover the essence of what has not been comprehended; constructing a less precise meaning for a word or concept than the speaker may have intended.
- Filtering: compressing a longer message or set of propositions into a more concise one. (This is different from skipping or approximation, which are 'reduction' strategies, because filtering involves active construction of a larger semantic context.)
- Incompletion: maintaining an incomplete proposition in memory, waiting until clarification can be obtained.
- Substitution: substituting a word or concept or proposition for one that is not understandable.

Memory Building during Comprehension

Memory is generally discussed as involving two dimensions: l , associated with the sum of all of a person's knowledge and experience, and short-term memory, associated with knowledge that is activated at a particular moment. The key concept is that listeners are able to focus their attention sequentially – and not simultaneously – within different subsets of the neural connections in long-term memory.

Working memory is seen as a 'computation space' in which various operations, such as rehearsal, phonological looping of input, and information reductions, generalizations, and inferences occur. A computational version of working memory still has strict temporal-span limitations.

There are two phases of short-term memory with very different properties:

- a brief sensory unresolved after-image lasting up to two seconds (sometimes called echoic memory)
- a more perceptually resolved short-term memory lasting up to twenty seconds. Under this conception, the second phase of short-term memory, lasting ten to twenty seconds, is just one of a series of activated features in memory.

Short-term and long-term memory can be associated with **active information** and **inactive information** respectively. For purposes of understanding verbal communication, psychologists now consider it preferable to speak in terms of memory activation rather than in terms of memory size.

Comprehension and Learning

In psychological terms, learning can be defined most simply as the durable modification of a concept in memory due to an experience. The degree of learning is reflected initially in the way the listener represents what he or she now knows, what new knowledge is being constructed during the event. Degree of learning is then reflected in the impact of that new knowledge on the listener's subsequent attitudes, beliefs and actions. Recent research consistently suggests that we have two types of memory systems involved in learning, and that most learning is a hybrid process involving both systems.

Type 1. Associative processing: draws on associations that are structured by similarity and contiguity in memory – they share some of the same neural connections. Increased experience with these memories leads to long-term learning, so that these associations occur automatically. Associative learning generally occurs without awareness of the steps of processing.

Type 2. Rule-based processing: draws on symbolically represented rules that are structured by language and logic. With rule-based processing, new information can be learned in just one or a few experiences. Rule-based learning generally occurs with conscious awareness of steps of processing.

The most basic type of learning is a text-base model of memory use (Kintsch, 2007; Zwaan, 2006). This type of learning tends to be temporary, fading after even a few hours, because the new learning is not sufficiently integrated with prior knowledge and can only be retrieved by using established indexes related to the learned text.

In a cognitivist framework learning requires five elements:

- Units of learning: words or concepts or configurations of concepts that are represented in long-term memory. These units (words or concepts or configurations) must have psychological reality for the learner, that is, they must be relevant to the learner.
- Activation values for these units: the cognitive importance attached to a unit by the learner.
- Connection weighting: the links of a unit to other units in memory, and the strength of connection. The strength of the links of the new unit (concept or configuration, etc.) to prior experience, and to the listener's own interests, views and needs, will predict strongly a likelihood of the new learning becoming permanent.
- Learning rules: the ways that the connections can be augmented or changed, or unlearned. The ways that the listener 'processes' the text – fills in the gaps in the text to achieve her own sense of continuity and completion
- Emotional and motivational weighting: conceiving of representations as reconstructed allows us to understand that all aspects of the person's state (e.g., mood, goals, physical location) will influence the exact details of what is reconstructed.

Module-08

PRAGMATIC PROCESSING

Listening From a Pragmatic Perspective

The listener has access to multiple layers of information in the speech signal. In order to make use of this information, the listener needs to access multiple interconnections in memory when listening. **Pragmatic competence** is essential to the social dimension of listening, including **pragmatic comprehension** (Kasper, 2006; Taguchi, 2009), **interactional competence** (Hymes, 2001), and **symbolic competence**. Discourse analysis, as a branch of pragmatics, is concerned with the ways listeners make use of linguistic information and background knowledge as they listen in a social context.

A pragmatic perspective includes the speaker's and the listener's situated presence at the time of the interaction. When we consider the listener's role in particular, it is important to emphasize that presence entails engagement in an event. The notion of engagement encompasses the listener's relationship with the speaker, including his or her awareness of emotional shifts in the speaker's state. We refer to monitoring this engaged state of listening as pragmatic processing.

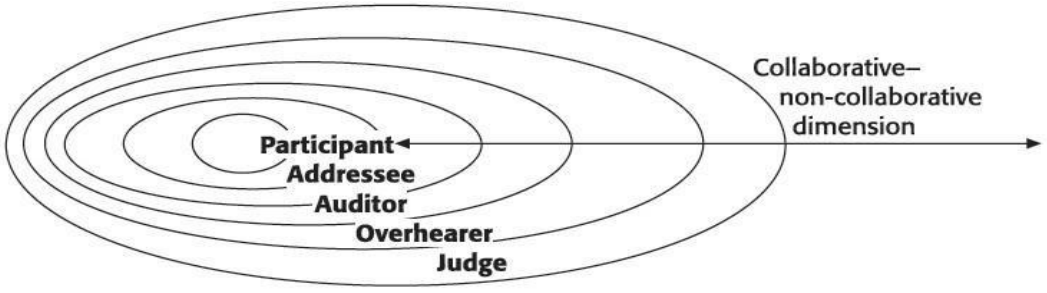


Figure 4.1 *Listener roles*. Level of engagement is an important factor in pragmatic processing. As the listener becomes a more active participant in discourse, the listener is more 'engaged'. Here are descriptions of this range of listener roles. *Participant:* a person who is being spoken to directly and who has speaking rights equal to others involved in the discourse (e.g. a conversation between two friends on a topic of mutual interest and shared background). *Addressee:* a person in a discourse who is being spoken to directly and who has limited rights to respond (e.g. a student in a traditional classroom in which the teacher is lecturing). *Auditor:* a person in a discourse who is a member of an audience that is being addressed directly and who has very limited rights to respond and is not expected to respond (e.g. a bus driver announcing the name of the next bus stop to the passengers (audience) on the bus). *Overhearer:* a person who is not being addressed, but who is within earshot of the speaker, and who has no rights or expectations to respond (e.g. hearing the conversation of a bank teller and the customer who is in front of you as you stand in line waiting)

Inferring Speaker Intention

The central aspect of pragmatic processing is deriving and building contextual meaning. Contextual meaning includes the interactional status and interpersonal relationship between the speaker and listener. From a pragmatic perspective, both the speaker and the listener have intentions in any discourse situation, and the interaction of their intentions contributes to the meaning of the discourse. In every situation, the listener has an **intention** to complete a communication process to some degree. The implicit assumption in a pragmatic view of communication is that language resources – the listener's knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis – *cannot* be activated until the listener takes on a pragmatic perspective

A pragmatic perspective includes the degree of co-ordination and collaboration between speaker and listener on the goals of the interaction and the rules for conducting the interaction. Researchers in the area of pragmatics concur that there are four key pragmatic notions that contribute to a listener's understanding of spoken language:

- deixis, anchoring of language to a real context
- intention, indicating the desired force of the language used
- strategy
- conversational meanin .

Deixis

Language used meaningfully in communication has to be anchored in the real world. As they interact, listener and speaker continuously point to or indicate variables of time (*then*, *now*, *today*, *eventually*, *whenever* . . .), space (*there*, *here*, *come back* . . .), objects (*that*, *it*, *those* . . .), persons (*he*, *she*, *we*, *they* . . .), and status (*sir*, *hey you*, . . . or *tu* versus *vous* distinctions in French). These **deictic** elements of an utterance can only be interpreted with respect to the physical context in which they are uttered. **Deictic reference** is a crucial notion in understanding how listening occurs in context.

These elements as identifiable features of context:

- Addressor (the speaker of the utterance), addressee (the intended recipient of the speaker's utterance), audience (any over hearers).
- Topic (what is being talked about).
- Setting (where the event is situated in place and time).
- Code (the linguistic features of the utterance).
- Channel (how the communication is maintained – by speech, writing, texting, images, etc.).
- Event (the social norms affecting the interaction and its interpretation).
- Message form (the conventional categories of speech events).
- Key (the tone, manner, or spirit of the event).
- Purpose (the intended outcome of the event).

Intention

A cornerstone of pragmatics is characterizing the purpose of communication as an act to influence people with intent. In all communicative situations, the speaker intends to exert some influence on the listener through the presentation of linguistic and non-linguistic elements. **Constatives** are the aspect of a speech act that can be evaluated in terms of their truth value. **Performatives** are the aspect of the speech act that can be evaluated in terms of felicity, that is, what the speech act accomplishes in the interaction.

Austin replaced the constative–performative distinction with a threefold contrast:

- Locutions: the act of saying something as true (e.g. I sent you an e-mail yesterday).
- Illocutions: what is done in saying something (e.g. denying an accusation).
- Perlocutions: what is done as a result of saying something (e.g. the speaker makes the listener believe that the accusation is false).

Conversational Maxims

Communication is generally experienced as successful when both speaker and listener have congruent strategies – when their plans of action are in alignment, and both can achieve their communicative goals simultaneously.

Within the framework of inferring speaking intention, a communication strategy can be understood as a particular use of the rules and restrictions that speaker and listener are agreeing to observe. Grice (1969) proposed that speakers create meaning with listeners on a pragmatic level through an agreement to co-operate in their use of **conversational maxims**. He outlined four basic co-operative principles of conversation which can be understood as default strategies.

- The maxim of quantity: Make your contribution to the conversation as informative as is required. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- The maxim of quality: Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say something for which you have inadequate evidence.
- The maxim of relevance: Make your contribution relevant to the interaction. If your contribution cannot be maximally relevant, indicate any way that it may not be relevant.
- The maxim of manner: Avoid obscurity and ambiguity. Be brief and orderly. Give the listener only the information that allows focus.

Detecting Deception

While observance of maxims generally leads to successful communication, speakers can also create specific modifications and nuances of meaning by flouting these maxims that is, strategically infringing, ignoring, subverting, or opting out of a maxim for a particular effect. Indeed, in many conversational settings, particularly those in which the speaker feels the need to modify a speaking contribution to render a specific emotional effect, flouting of maxims is quite common. Flouting is

typically intended to evoke a particular emotional response in the listener or wider audience, when the speaker estimates that observing usual conventions, or maxims, will not be as effective.

Although much of the flouting of conversational maxims and norms in daily interactions are innocuous and unintentional, it is often a form of communicative insincerity (Okamoto, 2008) in which a speaker is consciously manipulating the listener .Generally, a listener will be able to detect if and when a speaker is flouting a maxim – manipulating or playing with language in some way – and will be able to calculate the intended effect, that is, will be able to derive an **implicature**. Although flouting maxims may be used for deceptive or competitive purposes, more often flouting is done in an attempt to **save face**, or to make a situation more comfortable for the speaker or listener.

Enriching Speaker Meaning

Inferring speaker intention through the strategic use of conversational maxims is vital to pragmatic competence. Another aspect of inferential listening involves enriching speaker input. This is achieved in two ways: through inferring speaker emotion and elaborating speaker meaning.

- Inferring speaker emotion: a key part of pragmatic competence is not only inferring speaker intention, but also inferring speaker emotion. Even more than with intentions, emotions are very seldom explicit, and are often not even acknowledged by the speaker.
- Elaborating speaker meaning: Refers to making semantic inferences based on the concepts used by the speaker and also making pragmatic inferences based on context-dependent conditions of the current discourse

Invoking Social Expectations

By definition, all genuine language is situated. The language is used by real speakers for a meaningful purpose, and the user desires a meaningful response from one or more listeners. As a result, all understanding of genuine language requires a conscious accounting for the **context of situation.** According to this view of language, the very meaning of an utterance is seen as the function of the situational and cultural context in which it occurs.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, all language comprehension is filtered through the norms of the **interpretive community** that you belong to (Denzin, 2001). An interpretive community is defined as any group that shares common contexts and experiences.

At a personal level, that of one-to-one interaction, this social phenomenon is more readily observable. Interaction takes place within social frames that influence how the speaker and listener act. The social frame for an interaction involves two interwoven aspects: the activity frame, which is the activity that the speaker and listener are engaged in, and the participant frame, which is the role that each person is playing within that activity (Tyler, 1995). From a pragmatic perspective, a good deal of conversation is, in effect, using context cues to negotiate and establish the exact nature of the activity frame and the participant frame, rather than simply exchanging information.

Once the frame is established, all conversational behavior is interpreted within that particular context. Thus, the interpretation that a listener gives to any utterance is heavily dependent on the frames

that he or she assigns to the interaction, and the expectations about how those frames are enacted in conversation. While activity frames can vary widely, participant frames are more simply divided into **knowledge superior** (K+), **knowledge equal** (K=), or **knowledge inferior** (K–).

Adjusting Affective Involvement

Not only will the participant frame influence what is and is not said, it will also influence the affective involvement of both participants. One aspect of affective involvement in an interaction is the raising or lowering of anxiety and self-confidence, and thus the motivation to participate in interactions in meaningful, open and self-revelatory ways. For listeners, greater affective involvement promotes better understanding through better connection with the speaker, while lower affective involvement typically results in less connection, less understanding and minimal efforts to evaluate and repair any misunderstandings that arise.

One implication is that receiver apprehension may indeed be triggered by social actors, such as perception of roles and status, and the sense that one's interlocutor does or does not have a parallel recognition of these roles, and may also be amplified by a low action orientation to listening (Villaume and Bodie, 2007), one of several personality variables that affects communication style.

A vital line of research relating to apprehension and listener perceptions of social role is based on uncertainty management theory (Gudykunst, 2003; Bradac, 2001). This theory maintains that

- initial uncertainty and anxiety about another's attitudes and feelings in a conversation are the basic factors influencing communication
- language and language use itself inevitably introduces ambiguity and uncertainty into communication,
- the perception of uncertainty inhibits effective communication.

This theory predicts that the amount of information-seeking and openness that takes place in an interaction will be determined by the degree of uncertainty. Uncertainty itself refers primarily to lack of clarity about how one's social or situational status affects the interaction. The **equality position** of both parties in an interaction sharing common ground is considered the starting point for effective communication. The central prediction of this theory is that when equality is in doubt, or when a **superior position** is claimed by one party without the consent of the other party, communication will be strained and ineffective.

Formulating Responses

By examining listener response in discourse we can see how the listener contributes to the conversation and achieves meaning, and at times clarifies or even creates meaning in the speaker. In a discourse analytic framework, conversation can be seen as organized around a series of intentions, which are originated by **initiating acts**, such as a request. A speaker initiates an act in conversation and the listener has the choice of **uptaking** the initiating move or ignoring it. Typically, the speaker intends or expects the listener to uptake the act in a specific way, in a way that is considered normal within the speaker and listener's discourse community. In discourse-analysis parlance, the speaker intends to elicit a **preferred response**. This preferred response from the listener completes the exchange.

In normal conversation, a listener is expected to comply with a speaker's initiating move. A listener response that expresses inability or reluctance to provide information, or a lack of capability to otherwise comply with the speaker's initiating move, creates a **challenge**. Challenges are **face-threatening** – they upset the participation frame by demoting one interlocutor's power. Of course, some challenges are less face-threatening than others. Specifically, challenging the presupposition that one is *able* to provide the information is less face-threatening than challenging the presupposition that one is *willing* to provide it. This is why in most cultures it is more polite to declare ignorance than refuse to comply with a request.

Another type of listener response is **backchannelling**, which is when the listener sends short messages back during the partner's speaking turn or immediately following the speaking turn. Backchannelling, which always differs in form from culture to culture and within subcultures, is important in conversation for showing a number of listener states: **reception** of messages, **readiness** for subsequent messages, turn-taking **permissions**, **projections** (see Tanaka, 2001, for examples of projections in Japanese), and **empathy** for the speaker's emotional states and shifts in emotion during the conversation. Backchannelling occurs more or less constantly during conversations in all languages and settings, though in some languages and in some settings, it seems more prevalent.

A third class of listener response in discourse is the **follow-up act**. Follow-up acts are responses to a discourse exchange, and can be provided either by the listener or the speaker from the previous exchange. Follow-up acts can be **endorsements** (positive evaluations), **concessions** (negative evaluations), or **acknowledgements** (neutral evaluations).

Connecting With the Speaker

In early communication theory, listening is viewed as part of a transactional process – a kind of conduit – in which all participants are simultaneously sending and receiving messages. Later communication theory views speaking and listening as equal parts of a co-construction process. In both views of a communicative transaction, a listener is 'speaking' continuously through non-verbal responses as well as through periodic verbal responses. The speaker simultaneously 'listens' to these non-verbal and verbal messages and adapts his or her communicative behavior, attitudes, and affective states according to an assessment of how he or she is being understood (Beale, 2009). Listening then becomes an interactive and co-constructive process.

The goal of listening is not primarily comprehension of messages, but rather establishing interactive connections with one's interlocutors and mutually moving toward goals. These goals may be related to mutual comprehension of messages in the discourse, but they will also be related to adjustments in the 'relationship system' between the speakers.

Listening includes not only **monitoring** and **feedback** but also **response**. 'The response stage of listening is especially crucial for judging the success of the listening act as a whole' (Steil, Barker and Watson, 1983: 22). In this view listening includes four stages: (1) **sensing** (taking in messages); (2) **interpreting** (arriving at a degree of understanding); (3) **evaluating** (judging, weighing evidence, deciding on degree of agreement with the speaker) and (4) **response** (non-verbal feedback to show understanding, and verbal contributions, such as asking questions or paraphrasing).

Module-09

AUTOMATIC PROCESSING

Introduction

refers to computer interfaces that can understand and produce a natural language, such as English or Chinese. Natural language in this sense is an evolved language used by humans as opposed to synthetic or programming languages, such as C or JavaScript or Perl, that are normally used to communicate with computers.

NLP is now used for a wide range of applications such as information extraction, machine translation, automatic summarization, and interactive dialogue systems. Automatic processing presents similar kinds of challenges to the computer that humans face in understanding language: linguistic analysis of the input (deciding what was actually said), semantic processing of the input (interpreting what the input means), and pragmatic processing of the input (decisions on how to respond to the input).

What is Natural Language Processing?

Natural Language Processing (NLP) is both a modern computational technology and a method of investigating and evaluating claims about human language itself. Some prefer the term Computational Linguistics in order to capture this latter function, but NLP is a term that links back into the history of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the general study of cognitive function by computational processes. NLP is the use of computers to process written and spoken language for some practical, useful, purpose: to translate languages, to get information from the web on text data banks so as to answer questions, to carry on conversations with machines about practical topics, getting a computer to decide if one screenplay has been rewritten from another or not. NLP is not simply applications but the core technical methods and theories that underlie these tasks.

Linguistic Processing

Natural Language Processing (NLP) applications that utilize spoken language for their input are much more problematic than those that use written language. NLP applications using spoken language as input present one initial challenge: speech recognition. Once the input speech is recognized, it can be processed in the same way that written language is processed.

The first stage of speech recognition for Natural Language Processing (NLP) is phonological analysis of the input, or **Automated Speech Recognition** (ASR). Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) has been one of the greatest challenges in Natural Language Processing (NLP) because of a few persistent, inconvenient facts about spoken language:

- The large size of vocabulary that needs to be recognized.
- How fluent and connected the conversational input is, which prevents accurate recognition.
- The reliability of the instrument used for recording, which introduces ‘noise’ surrounding the speech signal.

- Accent and dialect characteristics, which introduce variations.

When a computer receives speech input, its primary goal is to convert the speech signal into **spectral information** (mapping of **duration, loudness, pitch**) that it can deal with electronically. Speech recognition by computers seeks to emulate the processing outcomes that the human auditory system, using a more complex neurological architecture, is able to produce: recognition of most (if not all) incoming words, assigned lexical meaning for most (if not all) words recognized, a correct (or nearly correct) sequencing of the words, with precise (or at least acceptable) syntactic relationships calculated.

In essence, **Human Speech Recognition** by computers **(HSR)** or automated speech recognition Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) starts with the goal of human processing– comprehension of messages – and builds backwards to identify what parts of the signal contribute to that goal.

The initial goal of an Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) device is to determine the words that were spoken. In order to determine words an Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) program must have both a database of possible candidate words and a means of matching the incoming signals to those words. The contents of the database and how it is constructed or programmed (called the training of the database) as well as the techniques used to find the best match is what distinguishes one type of processor from another.

Three basic methods are employed for pattern matching: **template matching**, **statistical calculations** and **neural nets**. Template-matching systems match patterns directly on sequences of spectrum frame. The template contains a sequence of frames corresponding to a typical utterance of each word. When a sequence of speech is uttered, frame patterns are matched to measure the least difference or distance between the input and plausible words and sequences of words.

Statistical recognizers employ a technique known as Hidden Markov Models (HMMs), named after the Russian mathematician. The basic assumption underlying the HMM technique is that a temporal sequence of frames can always be described by probabilities of occurring, by comparing the observed frame sequence. HMMs are generally more efficient than template processors because they can decode full phrases rather than decode word by word.

Neural Net Models (NNs) rely on simultaneous processing at multiple layers: phonetic, lexical and syntactic. Using information in one layer to help clarify partial information at any other layer, they can quickly rule out implausible candidates. All three models improve their accuracy and efficiency by limiting the number of words to be considered at a given time. The goal is to gain efficiency by imposing constraints using an underlying model of how language is encoded.

Syntactic Processing

We use grammatical knowledge to parse incoming speech at two levels. The first level is a rough categorization of incoming speech into grammatical units within the heard utterance. The second level computes grammar relationship across utterances as they accumulate in short term memory. In NLP, there is a similar multi-stage process by which the computer analyses incoming text by checking for correct syntax, and then building a data structure – some kind of representation of the syntax in a hierarchy.

A **parse**, denoted in computer programming language as 'pi' (π) denotes a hierarchy of syntactic constituents, identified by a single head word with branches of **tags** related to it.

The first stage of syntactic processing consists of **Probabilistic Context-Free Grammar** (PCFG) which is the bible of abstract syntax rules that is programmed into the computer. The PCFG is reinforced by a large database of acceptable utterances that it uses to estimate probabilities for needing to employ various syntactic rules

The second stage of parsing is a text-level analysis that takes the input (π) and generates a **cohesion map**. A cohesion map for any chunk of input consists of a list of lexical entities (lexical items that have explicit relationships with other items in the text) and the anaphoric connections between them.

Calculating **cohesion** among text items is necessary in order to arrive at **coherence**: a more abstract, higher-level meaning in the input (Barzilay and Lapata, 2008). Coherence in NLP is defined as the congruent interaction between **linguistic representations** and **knowledge representations**, in which most if not all detected entities are interlinked. As with human processing, coherence is considered a higher level goal of language comprehension than cohesion, which is simply the computation of intra-textual relationships of linguistic representations. However, in NLP, particularly with its focused, limited applications such as rough translations or calculation of readability indexes, cohesion is often all that is needed.

Semantic Processing

The main goal of semantic processing is abstract. The goal of semantic processing is converting incoming speech to idea units that will serve as the basis for a decision, an action, or a response (Song *et al*., 2010). Semantic processing involves a formal, explicit representation of a set of concepts and their interrelationship, which is called ontology. Ontologies allow the application to use hierarchical reasoning to conduct searches and respond to the user in a 'reasonable' way.

A more complex level of semantic processing involves **Information Extraction** (IE) in more open discourse domains. Information extraction is a subfield of semantic processing in NLP that is concerned with identifying predefined types of information from text. Once a domain has been identified, information can be extracted using activating conditions and trigger words, called **extraction patterns**.

Essentially, during semantic processing of a story, or of any other UoD, the NLP application will be activating **concept maps**. A concept map is a kind of structural diagram that contains a schema for the type of discourse, and looks to fill in slots in the schema with each key word and each proposition that it identifies. (This parallels human use of default values in schemata in making inferences when listening or reading.)

Concepts are connected in a hierarchical structure. The relationship between concepts can be articulated by way of **semantic operators** such as 'gives rise to', 'results in', 'is required by,' or 'contributes to'. Because a complete semantic processing involves filling in all of the slots in the hierarchical structure, the application will know what it does not know, and can ask specific questions to be sure it 'understands' the discourse completely.

Pragmatic Processing

The goal of pragmatic processing in NLP is to derive knowledge from external commonsense information, integrate that knowledge with knowledge gained from semantic processing, and come up with a suitable response. One widely respected roadmap document for NLP research (Hirschman and Gaizauskas, 2001) has identified five pragmatic standards that users may expect from an NLP system:

- **Timeliness.** The system should be able to respond to the input or user in real time, even when accessed by thousands of users, and the data sources should be kept up to date.
- **Accuracy**. Imprecise, incorrect responses are worse than no answers. The system should also discover and resolve contradictions in the data sources.
- **Usability**. The knowledge in the system should be tailored to the needs of the user.
- **Completeness.** Responses that come from multiple databases should be fused coherently.
- **Relevance**. The answer should be relevant within a specific context. The evaluation of the system must be user-centered.

Pragmatic processing involves interpreting the input in terms of its social or action-oriented value – knowing how to respond to the user. Response processing, which is considered part of pragmatic processing, is based on a correct calculation by the SLS of intention in discourse processing.

Lecture- 04

Listening in Language Acquisition

Module-10

LISTENING IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION -I

Listening in L1 Acquisition: Development of Linguistic Processing

Under normal circumstances, and given a healthy neurological system, we all manage to acquire our first language (L1) successfully. In nearly all cases, our L1 is acquired primarily in an oral mode, although multiple sensory and experiential systems are involved. We acquire the ability to use oral language through a lengthy immersive process which involves an abundance of listening.

L1 acquirers always begin the process as infants; the L1 immersion process involves simultaneously the acquisition of multiple cognitive and social skills through interaction with other L1 speakers. There is an essential and seamless connection between learning to observe, to listen, to think, to interact and acquiring our L1.

Though all psycholinguistic systems (phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic) are developing in parallel, we often think of sound perception occurring first because it has the most definable physical correlates. Developmental studies of speech perception across languages demonstrate that all infants begin with a **language-general capacity** that provides a means for discriminating thousands of potential **phonetic contrasts** in any of the world's languages. Over time, based on the input received from significant caretakers in the child's world, each child sifts the set of contrasts to the ones most relevant to what is to become his or her native language or languages. This notion is consistent with other accounts about general neurological development, in which the child employs **learning by selection**. It is claimed that the nervous system of an infant starts with an **over exuberance of connections** that are pared down in the course of development to **templates** that are tuned to the **phonotactic system** of the language being acquired.

L1 studies have shown that over the first year of life, learning by selection of available environmental sounds results in **directional changes in perception** (Kuhl *et al*., 2008; Kuhl, 2000). The child's experience (exposure and selective attention) is known to affect the **magnetic tuning** of neural transmissions in the cortex: through enhancement, attenuation, sharpening, broadening and realignment of sound prototypes.

During their first year of life, infants develop the perceptual ability to discriminate various kinds of differences in the utterances they hear around them. This ability provides them with a way of distinguishing one utterance from another and one speaker from another, and serves as a precursor to developing the ability to listen to connected language in context.

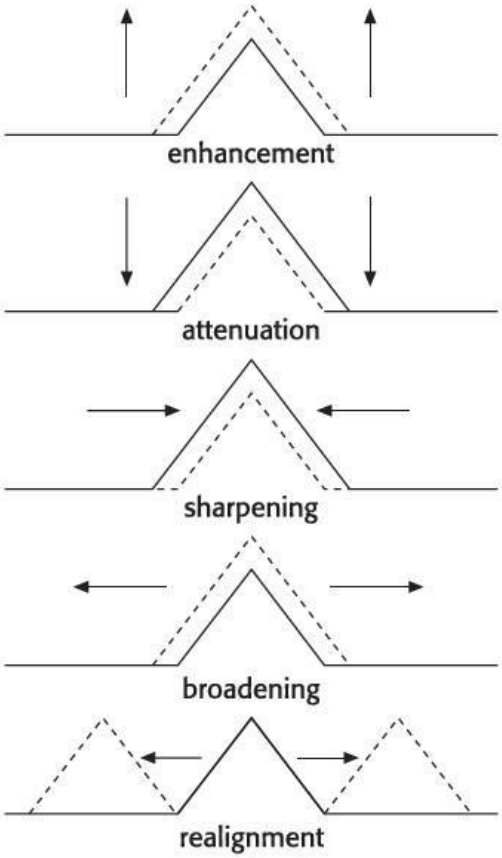


Figure 6.1 *Changes in perception during the first year of life*. When learning a first language, the child uses several kinds of perceptual adjustments to tune into the sounds of the language. By the end of one year, through regular exposure to spoken language, a child will know which sounds belong to the native language

Words are very seldom isolated from one another in fluent speech, and even Child-Directed Speech (CDS) is generally in phrasal forms. Consequently, part of what the child must acquire has to do with learning how word boundaries are marked in the language. This exposure and gradual discrimination of allowable features is known as gaining **phonotactic knowledge** of the language. Words from other languages will frequently differ with respect to the properties of the child's first language, and the infant must acquire a sense of what is and is not allowable in the native language.

There are two primary features of the early development of learning to listen:

- Infants develop **categorical perception**, the capacity to discriminate speech sound contrasts in their native language in a number of different phonetic dimensions, in addition to **continuous perception**, the ability to hear continuous speech as combinations of sound sequences.

- Infants develop the ability to tolerate the kind of acoustic variability that accompanies changes in rates of speech or differences in speakers' voices. This ability to generalize across variable input is exactly what is required to relate sound differences to changes in meaning.

Lexical Acquisition

In L1 development, acquisition of lexicon is an ongoing process. At any point, a child will be in various stages of acquisition for different words and concepts. **Labelling** is the first of three related tasks a child has to perform during the acquisition for any new word. The challenge of **symbolization** is often simply depicted as a process in which parents point at an object and say the name of it so that the child can understand the connection between sound, object and meaning.

The labelling task can be accelerated by use of the two strategies: **generalization** and **differentiation**. Generalization refers to the child labelling numerous things and situations with the same words. Only after encountering these things in different contexts does the child start to differentiate each word from a whole event and start to use it as a label for a specific object or event.

The second task of meaning acquisition is the **packaging task**. The crucial question is how a child manages to apply a label to a wider range of objects of the same type but simultaneously to restrict the label when appropriate. Aitchison answers this question with the concepts of **under-extension** and **over-extension**. Under-extension means that the child oversimplifies concepts and fails to apply them to more than only one prototypical object.

In order to acquire fuller meanings of words the child has to achieve the third task which is the **network-building task**. The challenge for the child is that relations between words and concepts have to be worked out explicitly. This connecting task takes place slowly and proceeds initially through collocational links. Other important aspects of this network-building task are the connection of sounds and their meanings to visual concepts and grammatical information to develop a more advanced level of lexical competence, which leads to the development of vocabulary in the context of literacy.

Listening In L1 Acquisition: Development of Semantic Processing

As a child learns a first language, a number of cognitive developments are taking place simultaneously. These cognitive changes serve as an experimental playground for the child to try out new language and also as a motivator to help the child seek new language that fits new concepts that the child is experiencing for the first time. Because of this harmonious fit between growth and motivation, first language development and cognitive development cannot be separated.

The concept of **cognitive structure** is central to understanding how these vectors of development coincide in the child. Cognitive structures are patterns of physical or mental action that underlie specific acts of development of intelligence. These patterns seem to correspond to definable stages of child development. There are four primary cognitive structures that are triggered during four development stages:

- sensorimotor operations

- pre-operations
- concrete operations
- formal operations

In the **sensorimotor stage** (birth to two years), intelligence takes the form of motor actions. Intelligence in the **pre-operation period** (three to seven years) is intuitive in nature. The cognitive structure during the **concrete operational stage** (eight to eleven years) is logical but depends upon concrete referents. In the final stage of **formal operations** (twelve to fifteen years), thinking involves abstractions.

Cognitive structures invariably change as the child grows older, and this modification can be amplified through experience and education. Piaget calls these experiences the processes of adaptation: assimilation and accommodation. **Assimilation** involves the interpretation of events in terms of existing cognitive structure, whereas **accommodation** refers to changing the cognitive structure to make sense of the environment. Cognitive and linguistic development consists of a continual effort to adapt to the environment in terms of assimilation and accommodation. The child's use of language – both receptively and productively – is a reflection of his or her efforts to adapt to the environment.

While the stages or sequences of cognitive development are associated with characteristic age spans, they vary for every child. Furthermore, each stage has many detailed structural forms that individual children will come to master in different ways. Caretakers and teachers can facilitate the cognitive and linguistic development of the child, by providing environments, stimulation and listening opportunities that will fully engage the child in concepts that the child is beginning to explore.

Another critical aspect of the child's cognitive and linguistic development is social. It is now well established that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition and language. While the child is continuously restructuring cognitive connections, he or she is also working on restructuring internal modelling of the grammar of the L1. Restructuring is achieved through active processes of using intake to formulate the underlying grammar rules of the language. Formulating a grammatical system can be achieved only through the processes of **extraction** (finding recurring temporal units in speech that are bound by silence, and hence are likely to be important units of communication) and **segmentation** (breaking off pieces of extracted units to make internal comparisons).

Crowley and Jacobs (2002) introduced the idea of **islands of expertise** to reflect the fact that young children often develop considerable knowledge about topics of interest well before they begin going to school.

Listening In L1 Acquisition: Development of Pragmatic Processing

Children's innate language ability, coupled with a natural curiosity about the world of ideas and feelings and experiences around their desire to integrate into the family unit provide the motivation and the means for acquisition of language.

In nearly all cultures adults and other caretakers commonly use special speech styles when talking with young children, styles that feature repetitive patterns and frames, manipulate intonation, increase voice onset timing, reduce utterance length, coin special words and utilize special lexical selection

(Mintz, 2003). In terms of language development, it has been established that this form of **Child-Directed Speech** (**CDS**) facilitates children's **noticing** and subsequently more effective learning of the phonology, syntax, lexis and discourse patterns of the native language.

Listing the range of ways in CDS facilitates language acquisition. These include:

- managing attention
- promoting positive affect toward interacting with others
- improving intelligibility of language directed to children
- facilitating segmentation of input
- providing feedback on comprehension
- providing correct models for imitation
- reducing processing load
- encouraging conversational participation
- providing repetitions for learning social routines

Child-Directed Speech (CDS) is typically **semantically contingent**, that is, caretaker talk with the child tends to be about objects and events to which the child is already paying attention. Thus, it may be that semantic contingency and the establishment of mutuality with the caretaker (Thibault, 2006), rather than the linguistic features of Child-Directed Speech (CDS) itself, is what is consistently triggering language acquisition.

Child-directed speech is principally constructed to help the child understand linguistic or social concepts more easily and to learn how to participate in social events. At a linguistic level, CDS also provides both positive and negative evidence to help the child develop productive and receptive language skills, though the adult language that is used is most often simplified lexically or syntactically, and is thus well beyond the child's productive abilities.

Although the style of child-directed speech varies from culture to culture, it appears that children in all language backgrounds are constantly present in group settings and are surrounded by contextual talk routines to which they can and do pay attention.

Module-11

LISTENING IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION -II

Listening In L2 Acquisition: Development of Linguistic Processing

The acquisition of an L2 is clearly different from the acquisition of an L1. Second language learners; rarely achieve the same native competence that children do learning their L1. This disparity between L1 and L2 acquisition is evident in all psycholinguistic systems (phonological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic), but the disparity is often most apparent with respect to acquisition of an L2 phonological system.

In terms of auditory processing for L2 listeners, the fundamental goal of phonological processing is word recognition. Lexical processing in the L2 is the means by which the L2 user comes to use conceptual knowledge needed for understanding. The area of bilingual speech processing is particularly important as it relates to **cognitive transfer** from the L1 to the L2.

The semantic knowledge that is required for language understanding (the background knowledge related to real-world people, places and actions) is accessed through **phonological tagging** of the language that is heard, and facility with the phonological code of the L2 will be the basis for keeping up with the speed of the spoken language.

The essence of phonological competence in an L2 is the appropriate use of **lexical segmentation strategies**. Each language has its own preferred strategies for listening, which are readily acquired by the L1 child but often only partially acquired by the L2 learner. **Lexical segmentation** is the process of recognizing words in the stream of speech. Because there are few reliable markers in the speech code for word boundaries, even a fluent listener may require one or two seconds to recognize words in the speech stream.

Speech perception and word recognition are considered the **bottom-up processes** in listening: They provide the tangible data for comprehension. If the listener does not recognize enough of these bottom-up cues in order to process the speech in real time, he or she will need to rely more on **top-down processes**: semantic expectations and generalizations.

Syntactic Development

L1 listeners acquire ability to process increasing complexity syntax at the same time as they are gaining cognitive and social maturity. L2 listeners, if they have already acquired an L1, will not have this concurrent acquisitional process, and will therefore forfeit this apparent motivational advantage. By aiming to understand messages through focusing primarily on lexis, which is called the **lexis-first comprehension principle** (see Ortega, 2007), L2 learners may learn to suppress syntax processing, and fail to use syntactic cues that would help them become better listeners.

A common point of agreement among L2 processing models (the **information processing model, input processing model**, **competition model**, **multidimensional model**) is that in order to increase cognitive capacity for processing, the learner must begin to **detect** new forms in the L2 spoken

input. Detection (i.e. discovering a new phonological or syntactic form in the input, in real time, form without being told) is the key cognitive process that makes the piece of information in the input available for further processing.

Lexical Development

The L2 learner engages in gradual acquisition of the lexis of the new language. These processes involve mapping concepts on to words, generalizing and eventually discriminating between lexical items. Listening and reading are the only avenues for lexical acquisition; therefore, the more an L2 learner listens to and read input that is comprehensible, yet contains *some* new and challenging items, the more lexical acquisition will take place.

Mapping is regarded as the initial phase of lexical acquisition in which grammatical, contextual and communicative information from the linguistic and non-linguistic context are being processed (Nation, 2006). This processing initiates a developing map of referent and meaning in the mental lexicon.

There is a major difference between L1 and L2 lexical acquisition through mapping. When language learners acquire their L1, **mutual exclusivity strategies** are often used, in which the L1 acquirer differentiates new words while learning new concepts, with numerous lexical maps being updated by the child every day. As soon as a language learner starts to learn an L2, the learner has to accept that there are counterparts for already known words and concepts of their L1 in the L2: There is no new discovery process. This principle may decrease the L2 learner's motivation to discover new words in the L2.

One significant difference in the acquisition of lexis in L1 and L2 is the possibility of **lexical transfer** between two related languages. The two basic kinds of transfer are cognate transfer and loan transfer. Both of these, when used successfully, can vastly increase an L2 users receptive and productive vocabulary.

Cognates are words that have a common etymological origin. Cognate transfer refers to an underlying semantic and phonological similarity between words in the L1 and L2. Learners of an L2, when they become aware of cognates, can generally learn the L2 target word faster, often immediately, without needing to go through the mapping processes involved in semantic acquisition of words.

Another form of transfer is the use of loan words that have come into the learners L1 from the L2 that the learner is acquiring. This section is highly relevant and explanatory Loan words are usually borrowed whole from another source language. Loan words will undergo the following processes of transformation:

- Transliteration: adapting the word to the writing system of the new language
- Phonological transformation: typically around the world, loanwords are initially marked as foreign by retaining close to their original pronunciations and spellings (by contrast, loanwords into Japanese are phonologically transformed and almost always transliterated; for example English becomes *ingurishu*).
- Shortening (sometimes called clipping or truncation): typically the most semantically important phonemes will be preserved; shortening facilitates integration into the language example.

- Hybridisation and coinage (e.g. *dai-hitto* = big (*dai* in Japanese) + hit (from English); *sukin-shippu* (skin + ship, denoting close physical relationship).
- Grammatical transformation: usually only one form of the borrowed word is used (e.g. *sabisu* (service) becomes fixed expression used as a noun phrase, *sabisu-suru* (give it away for free)

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Listening In L2 Acquisition: Development of Semantic Processing

Semantic processing can be a problematic aspect of L2 listening, and L2 acquisition in general, because L2 learners may not be conscious of the schemata they are using in comprehension, and may not realize that some of their default reasoning and inference processes that they use in their L1 are not effective in their L2. These processes can be changed consciously, through normal deductive means of acquiring a new skill, but the L2 learner must first become aware of any schemata or reasoning processes that may need to be altered.

Ingrained culture differences in cognition may be, and how pervasively these differences may affect comprehension. Differences in the type of thinking that the listener uses during comprehension of a metaphor, an axiom, or a story. These differences originate in cultural institutions of family, school religion, literature, and are also keyed to the patterns of one's language that are used in the reasoning process.

Cultural differences in thinking may arise, it seems apparent that cultural styles of thinking influence the **cognitive anchors** and **schemata** we use when we understand and interpret texts. When L2 learners are confronted with a topic regarding another culture about which they have no anchoring ideas, the potential for misunderstanding is heightened. One of the most obvious reasons why a particular content schema may fail to exist for the learner is that the schema is culturally specific and is not part of a particular learner's cultural background.

Listening In L2 Acquisition: Development of Pragmatic Processing

The acquisition of pragmatic competence in an L2 is widely recognized as one of the most challenging – and one of the most fascinating – aspects of language acquisition, particularly in an EFL context. Pragmatic competence involves listening and spoken interaction in many ways:

- knowledge of rules for taking speaking turns, including silences
- when to talk, how much to say, pacing and pausing in and between speaking turns
- when and how to give 'listenership cues'
- how to interpret intonational emphasis
- how to interpret a range of idioms and formulaic expressions
- how to interpret styles of cohesion and linking devices in discourse
- how to interpret communication styles, including non-verbal communication
- how to interpret types of indirectness, including apparent deception

Research in cross-cultural pragmatics has been vital to our understanding of the dynamics of L2 listening. It has been shown that, in general, cultures differ in their use of key conversation features that a learner may initially – and often erroneously – as the same criteria as in his or her L1 culture: when to talk, how much to say, how loud to talk, what gestures to use, backchannelling cues for the speaker, intonational emphasis, and so on.

Most analyses of intercultural communication have been based on a model of mismatch ('crosstalk') which derives from the cultural anthropological tradition (Gumperz, 1990). According to the mismatch view, conversations between speakers of different cultural backgrounds often become problematic because of contrasting discourse styles and a **mismatched interpretation** of **participant** and **activity frames**.

An alternate point of view is that *inter*cultural interaction follows the same **inter-subjective rules** as intracultural interaction, with speakers and listeners seeking to find balanced, reciprocal participation. Discourse with participants from differing cultural backgrounds, particularly if one is a Native Speaker (NS) and one is a Non-Native Speaker (NNS), is often mediated by the NS distorting – either amplifying or reducing – the responses from the NNS.

Being reduced to a passive listener is one of the key problems that the NNS faces in interaction. The dissatisfaction that the NNS experiences in a passive listening role is often triggered initially by language understanding problems. However, understanding difficulties in conversation arise not only at the levels of phonological processing, grammatical parsing, and word recognition, but also, from informational packaging and conceptual difficulty of the content.

Lecture- 05

Teaching Listening-I

Module-12

TEACHING LISTENING

Issues Related to Teaching and Learning Listening

1. **Compared to the other language skills, listening is a passive activity**

On the surface, listening may appear to be a relatively passive skill. After all, there is nothing that can be observed. Listening processes are very difficult to access, because of their covert nature. However, listeners are engaged in a number of cognitive processes as they construct meaning. They perceive sounds, segment words, accumulate these into meaningful units, register stress and intonation, and retain all of these. Listening is hard work and, contrary to popular opinion, listeners are very active as they seek to understand a message. This is particularly true for L2 listeners whose knowledge of the target language is incomplete and who often must compensate for gaps in understanding.

L2 listeners may develop a passive approach to listening in the target language because they do not feel in control: they feel they are at the mercy of the sound stream or the speaker. It is important for learners to realize that they can be proactive in their approach to a listening text. When they attempt to anticipate what they will hear, based on their accumulated linguistic, prior, and metacognitive knowledge, listeners can better regulate their comprehension.

2. **The important thing in teaching instruction is that students get the right answer**

An accurate understanding of the desired information is an important goal for L2 listening instruction. Typically, the main goal of communicative listening activities is successful comprehension. However, with a focus on the product of listening, every activity becomes a test of learner listening ability, rather than a means for understanding the social and cognitive nature of developing and using these listening skills.

Learners need opportunities to learn the process of listening, just as they are taught the process of writing, for example. They need to acquire the metacognitive skills involved in successful comprehension so that they can better regulate these processes and become more successful listeners. Teacher guidance and scaffolded listening practice are valuable for demystifying the processes involved in successful listening and help make explicit to novice listeners the implicit processes of skilled listeners.

By integrating metacognitive activities with everyday listening activities, teachers can help learners become aware of the various processes that are involved in L2 listening. In turn, learners can apply this knowledge to their listening development beyond the classroom to explore their own self-concept as listeners, use appropriate strategies, or identify factors that influence their own performance in different listening tasks.

3. **Learner anxiety is a major obstacle in L2 listening**

Learner factors that contribute to high anxiety are perceptions that listening is the most difficult skill and largely beyond their control. Classroom factors that contribute to anxiety are the focus on product and the association of listening with evaluation of comprehension. In combination, these factors can lead to low confidence levels, a limited sense of self efficacy, and a feeling by learners that they are incapable of improving their listening abilities. This affects progress in learning.

The way we teach listening can contribute to or reduce anxiety. When the focus is the product of listening, listening activities often become a test of listening ability; learners are expected to reveal how much they have understood or, more often, what they have not understood, leading to anxiety about listening. On the other hand, teaching approaches that focus on the process of listening can facilitate the acquisition of L2 listening skills and gradually help learners take control of their own listening development, which can reduce anxiety. Pre-listening activities can also help alleviate anxiety by better preparing learners for what they will hear.

4. **Listening means understanding words, so teachers just need to help learners understand all the words in the sound stream**

Research on the role of vocabulary in listening success demonstrates that it is a very significant factor; recent studies demonstrate that up to 50 percent of success in listening ability could be explained by vocabulary knowledge. Time spent on post-listening perception activities can increase learner knowledge of sounds and phonological rules for recognizing words. At post-listening stage, learners no longer feel the pressure that often occurs during realtime listening; they can now pay attention to isolated features of speech and build up their metacognitive knowledge of authentic speech.

5. **Teaching listening through video is better than audio alone**

The visual component offered by videotext elicits a positive affective response to learning; but the measurable impact of adding a visual component for listening comprehension is less certain. Attention to the listening task, the visual, and the audio may be too demanding or distracting. The reality is that the visual content in many videotexts often does not closely match the audio. When the two are not congruent, listeners become distracted and can no longer concentrate adequately on the audio, frustrating the comprehension process.

6. **Learners who have good listening ability in their first language will also become good L2 listeners**

The degree to which L1 listening ability might contribute to L2 listening ability has only recently been examined. Results suggest that L1 listening ability is, indeed, one of many factors that contribute to success in L2 listening. Research suggests that skilled L2 listeners are able to transfer their L1 listening skills to listening in another language. The good news for less skilled L2 listeners, however, is that they can benefit from metacognitive instruction for L2 listening that raises their awareness about the listening process and teaches effective strategies for managing comprehension and overall listening development.

7. **Interactive listening is more difficult than one-way listening**

Some features of interactive listening can in fact make it easier. First of all, listeners can clarify meaning or ask their interlocutor to slow down or repeat what was said. The opportunity to seek clarification makes interactive listening less demanding. Second, listeners in interactive situations often have some kind of shared experience or communicative goal.

Some interactive listening events can be equally or more demanding than one-way listening. When listeners are expected to reply, for example, they must prepare and formulate an appropriate response as they process the speech of their interlocutor. This adds significantly to the cognitive load, because they must attend to the speaker's message, clarify understanding when comprehension is uncertain, and begin to formulate a response. Listeners must allocate their limited attentional resources to

both comprehension and production in swift succession. The face-to-face nature of interactive listening also requires attention to non-verbal signals, body language, and culturally bound cues, which can add to or change the literal meaning of an utterance.

8. **When teachers provide learners with the context for a listening activity, they give away too much information**

Listening is a process of matching new input with what one already knows about a topic. In many real-life situations we already have a context for understanding what we hear. In the classroom, when teachers provide learners with the context before beginning a listening activity, they are only providing information usually available to listeners in real-life listening situations.

Providing learners with contextual information for L2 listening helps them activate various knowledge sources to interpret what they hear. Learners use information about the topic to activate their store of prior knowledge and predict what they might hear.

9. **Letting students listen on their own, according to their interests, is the best way to develop listening skills**

Listening outside the language classroom is useful for learners; if the learning is left to chance, however, it may not occur. On the other hand, preparing students in class with the metacognitive tools for listening outside class, along with task-based practice, increases the potential for learning from those experiences. Preparation gives learners the confidence to move beyond easily comprehensible listening texts to select input that is slightly more challenging, which stimulates greater learning.

Activities that bridge from the classroom to real-life listening experiences can engage learners in situations with a high level of communicative authenticity and develop their metacognitive knowledge about the features of a range of listening texts.

10. **Captions and subtitles are useful tools for learning to listen**

The use of L2 captions and subtitles (here after captions) can lead to better word identification and, ultimately, vocabulary learning. Captions can play a role in the development of L2 skills by reinforcing and confirming understanding of a listening text, and directing listener attention to gaps in understanding during repeat listens. Written support is usually not available in authentic, real-time listening; therefore learners need to learn to rely only on the acoustic signal and relevant contextual factors, along with metacognitive knowledge, to construct the meaning of what they hear.

Challenges and Opportunities in Listening Instruction

Listening activities in many language classrooms tend to focus on the outcome of listening; listeners are asked to record or repeat the details they have heard, or to explain the meaning of a passage they have heard. In short, many of the listening activities do little more than test how well they can listen. Because learners are often put in situations where they have to show how much they have understood or, more often, reveal what they have not understood, they feel anxious about listening. In addition, when they not only have to understand what the person is saying but must also respond in an appropriate way, learners' stress and anxiety levels increase even further.

In addition to anxiety, learners also face the challenge of not knowing how to listen when they encounter listening input. Although pre-listening activities are a common feature in some classrooms, these activities mainly provide learners with the background knowledge they need to make listening easier. Learners are "primed" to listen to a specific piece of text through a pre-listening activity, but they are seldom taught how to listen once the audio or video begins.

The nature of spoken text, experienced in real time, does not normally allow the listener to slow it down or break it down into manageable chunks. Many teachers also feel that they should ask learners to listen to the input without any interruption or repetition because this mirrors real-life communication.

Another instruction gap is the lack of guidance on how learners can self-direct and evaluate their efforts to improve their listening. Many learners who desire to improve their listening participate earnestly in all class listening activities in the hope that these will help them become more successful listeners over time. Second language (L2) learners need to be supported and to understand the listening processes they are using. In short, teachers need a way to engage learners' metacognition in teaching listening.

Metacognition refers to the ability of learners to control their thoughts and to regulate their own learning. It plays an important role in learning to listen. Metacognition enhances thinking and comprehension. The focus of much listening instruction has been on getting learners to comprehend, on their own and with little support, the meaning latent in a piece of spoken text. With time the focus has shifted to the comprehension of details and the gist of messages that have a communicative purpose

Module-13

APPROACHES TO TEACHING LISTENING

Introduction

Early views of teaching listening considered listening to be a passive skill that would develop naturally with speaking and reading. To some extent, this is true since there are underlying competences for all language skills. However, listening is now receiving fresh attention as an active skill that can be taught directly. In the last part of the twentieth century, a number of teaching methodologies developed that included a key role for listening, among them: the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), with its focus on presentation of models; Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), with its focus on authentic conversation; Content-Based Instruction (CBI), with its focus on rich input; the Natural Approach, with its focus on immersion in comprehensible input.

Contexts for Teaching Listening

Language learning is essentially an abstract psycholinguistic process, but one that always takes place in concrete social contexts. The contexts, rather than the listening process, provide learners with definable goals, standards, and expectations. To be realistic, it is important to also consider the goals and expectations of other principal participants in that context who influence\ the learners: teachers, administrators, learners' families, and learners' peers and colleagues

There are several specific criteria that we can consider in defining the social context and learning background:

- Contact. What is the origin and type of the contact with the second language? In other words, when does the learner come into contact with the L2, and how often and how intense is this contact with the L2?
- Identity. How does the learner identify himself or herself as a user of a second language? In other words, to what extent does the learner see himself or herself as **bilingual**?
- Competence. What is the **target competence** that the learners are expected to attain in the second language?
- Function. For what communicative functions will the second language be used?
- Goal. What is the ultimate or eventual goal of the learner in acquiring a second language?

Answers to these questions – even if the range of answers is relatively broad – are helpful in initiating an approach to listening instruction. The following table shows a range of possible answers to these questions.

Table Criteria for identifying social context for language learning

	CRITERION FOR DEFINING L2 INSTRUCTION	A (STRONGEST) THE LEARNER . . .	B THE LEARNER . . .	C THE LEARNER . . .	D (WEAKEST) THE LEARNER . . .
1	*Contact* with the L2	has learned two languages in the family from native speakers from infancy	has used two languages in parallel as means of communication from infancy, with one language clearly dominant	has made contact with a second language at school	has made contact with a second language later in life in social contexts only
2	*Identification* of the learner	identifies himself/herself as bilingual/with two languages/or two cultures (or parts of them)	is identified by others as bilingual/as a fluent user of two languages	identifies himself/herself, or is identified by others as an advanced learner of a second language	identifies himself/herself and is identified by others as a recent learner of a second language
3	*Competence* of the learner	has complete or equal mastery of two languages	has nearly native-like control of two languages, at least in some domains	can produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language or has at least some knowledge and control of the other language	has come in limited contact with another language, not enough to establish any control
4	*Function* of the L2	uses or can use two languages in most situations	uses or can use two languages in a variety of situations	uses or can use the other language in at least one significant social domain, with a small range of functions	uses a second language in limited situations, across limited functions
5	*Goals* for attainment	wishes to use two languages in most situations, wishes to comply with the demands of the community	wishes to use the second language in at least one social context, in a sustained way	wishes to use the second language in at least one social or academic context, for only a limited time	wishes to maintain minimal, limited contact with the L2 community

Identification of learners within this type of framework is useful in estimating **intensity** (how intense L2 instruction should be in relation to other aspects of the learners' educational and social lives), value of **oracy** (the relative role of the spoken language in L2 instruction, including listening), and **authenticity** (the relative role of the source of L2, which may include local and international sources).

Another key consideration, one that parallels the identity of the learner, is the description of the educational setting. Educational settings vary widely in terms on how the L2 is treated – as a subject matter, as a professional or social tool, or as a medium for communication in the learner's community. Educational setting also concerns the perceived status of the L1 and the L2, as the desirability and acceptability of gaining competence in and using the L2. By understanding the variables in the educational setting, the language teacher or planner can better choose an approach for teaching listening that is most likely to be effective.

SLA Research and Language Pedagogy

It is widely recognized that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has emerged as a valid scholarly field in its own right, and one that is exerting considerable impact on the world of language teaching.

Ellis (2009) notes seven positions that have been taken toward SLA research over the past decades:

- SLA has no influence. SLA does not have enough certainty to exert an influence on to language education.
- SLA should constitute the basis of teacher education, but should not support teacher training or teaching practice.
- SLA should show how languages are learned and taught, and also determine language teaching methodology.
- SLA can participate in design and construction of tasks that teachers can test out and adapt for particular learning environments.
- SLA should define research issues that need to be addressed in language education.
- SLA should be at the service of language pedagogy: SLA should address only those issues of concern to language pedagogy delivery systems.
- SLA should have a reciprocal relationship with language pedagogy:
- SLA should inform language pedagogy, and at the same time language pedagogy should inform SLA.

This section outlines six key influences that are derived directly from second language acquisition research:

- affective filter hypothesis
- input hypothesis
- interaction hypothesis
- processability hypothesis
- metacognition hypothesis

- sociocultural hypothesis

Affective Filter Hypothesis

The **affective filter** was first proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977) to account for how affective variables – motivation, attitude, etc. – influence the process of L2 learning. In subsequent work by Krashen (1982, 1985) the concept was given more extensive treatment.

The filter is proposed to be a part of the internal processing system that subconsciously screens incoming language based on affect: the learner's motives, needs, attitudes and emotional states. According to the hypothesis, those aspects of the learning experience (including the input itself) that are congruent with the learner's motives, needs, attitudes, and emotions tend to lower this filter, and allow increased learning to take place.

Applicable principles for teaching

- Listening experiences that help students lessen their anxiety about listening will generally be beneficial. Using student-centered and collaborative learning formats, such as pair and group work, and employing task types, such as collaborations, friendly competitions may help learner relax, become more engaged, and make greater progress in listening.
- By taking into account learners' motives and their attitudes about listening, the instructor can better select input or point learners to the best resources and opportunities for input. Choosing listening content that appeals to the students can help students lower their affective filters toward listening, and get more out of the learning experience.
- Because learners differ in many aspects, effective instruction needs to take into account differences in learners. This includes individual opportunities to select input of interest, and experimentation with learning styles and task types that may best trigger involvement and acquisition for each learner.

Input Hypothesis: Selecting Accessible Input for Acquisition

Krashen's (1982) **input hypothesis** has had a sustained effect on teaching approaches to listening. The input hypothesis was developed as a corollary to what Krashen referred to as the **natural order hypothesis**. Krashen suggested that *if* there is a natural order of acquisition for all language learners, there must be a consistent way to map and guide progress for all learners. The input hypothesis suggested this underlying consistency: second languages are acquired 'by understanding messages or by receiving **comprehensible input**' (Krashen, 1985).

This hypothesis has two main corollaries:

- Speaking is the result of acquisition and not its cause. Speech cannot be taught directly, but rather emerges on its own as a result of building overall competence via comprehensible input.
- If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar the learner needs to learn is automatically provided. The language teacher does not need to teach the structures (syntactic or lexical) along a continuum of learnability or difficulty – a natural order will be provided in just

the right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input.

Applicable principles for teaching

- Instruction should aim only to provide comprehensible input, slightly above the learner's current level of competence in terms of vocabulary, syntax, discourse features, length and complexity.
- Comprehensible input may be aural or written, or both. Context should be enhanced to ease processing; input with visual and other sensory support will tend to be more comprehensible. Using multimedia involving visuals and audio, and with multiple modes of presentation (e.g. video with subtitles), will increase context, reduce cognitive load, and improve comprehension.
- While the successful development of a listening ability – and successful language acquisition – requires extensive L2 input, successful learning also requires opportunities for output (Swain, 2000). Speaking ability will tend to emerge naturally as a result of extensive work with authentic listening input.

Interaction Hypothesis: Using Interaction to Make Input Accessible

Input alone is generally not sufficient to sustain acquisition because meaning has a social dimension. Participation in verbal interactions following a listening experience offers a learner the opportunity to engage in creating social meaning, specifically by following up on words and discourse structures that may be unfamiliar. According to the interaction hypothesis, interaction contributes directly to language acquisition in three ways:

- through allowing the learner to provide himself or herself with comprehensible input through interaction adjustments (e.g. requests for clarification which elicit repetitions and paraphrases)
- by providing negative feedback that allows the learner to see where he or she may be producing errors (e.g. through recasts or reformulations by the conversation partner)
- by presenting opportunities for '**pushed output**', in effect forcing the learner to try out new words and structures to get his or her ideas across in a social context.

In particular, the kind of negotiation of meaning that routinely takes place during interactions (both NNS–NNS and NNS–NS interactions) is a primary means of listening development as well as language acquisition.

Applicable principles for teaching

- Listening instruction should allow learners to figure out meanings for themselves and not depend on deductive presentation by the instructor.
- Listening instruction should include a wide range of oral interaction tasks that present a need and opportunity for **negotiation of meaning** and **pushed output**, such as **information gap** and **opinion gap tasks** and **role plays**, as well as opportunities for learning how to incorporate feedback from learning tasks

Processability Hypothesis: Tuning Input to Trigger Acquisition

There are two similar pedagogic approaches to help L2 learners develop their syntactic processing of oral language. The first, **enriched input**, provides learners with oral texts that have been deliberately 'flooded' with exemplars of the target syntactic structure in the context of a meaning focused task. This approach caters to incidental learning of the target grammar structure through **focus on form.**

The second is through **processing instruction**, in which pedagogic tasks are designed based on predictions about features of grammar that interfere with acquisition. Learners attend to listening tasks that require them to engage in intentional learning by consciously noticing how a target grammar feature (e.g. passive voice) is used in the spoken input, even though the feature is not explicitly emphasized or 'flooded' in the input

Within the processability hypothesis, there are specific principles by which learners come to notice new features from the blur of input. It has been proposed that successful listeners consciously use **operating principles**. Operating principles are cognitive strategies that underlie our innate ability to acquire language – presumably in both an L1 and an L2. By using operating principles, the learner can strategically link incoming sound with linguistic rules, and readily discover the way the grammatical system of the spoken language works. Slobin's operating principles are as follows:

- Pay attention to the ends of words. They often signal relational meanings.
- Be aware that there are linguistic elements which encode relations between words.
- Avoid thinking about exceptions; try to find a consistent rule.
- Attend to underlying semantic relations; they should be marked overtly and clearly.
- Assume coherence; the use of grammatical markers should make semantic sense.

Applicable principles for teaching

- Because different features of the grammatical, lexical, and discourse systems of the L2 are available to learners at different times, depending on their readiness, listening instruction should select oral input that contains the necessary features for acquisition and create activities that promote noticing of those features. This is what Richards (2005) called **listening for acquisition**, different from **listening for comprehension**.
- Learners must use operating principles to notice formal features of the spoken language in order to make progress in listening. Teachers can incorporate intensive listening techniques to enable learners to go over transcripts of natural oral texts systematically, successively identifying particular features that they may otherwise not notice.
- Attending to structural form while listening for meaning requires a gradual increase in processing capacity. Reconstruction of oral input, especially when done as part of a collaborative task, can assist learners in developing more focused attention as they listen.

Metacognition Hypothesis: Using Explicit Strategies to Activate Listening Capacity

The employment of listening strategies is part of a cognitive approach to learning that emphasizes metacognition – thinking about the ways one processes language. Metacognitive processing is a form critical thinking, in which we seek to overcome – or at least counterbalance – our instinctive reactive thinking.

A good deal of listening research since the 1990s focused on strategies, ways that learners think about, plan, and adjust their own listening processes. The underlying hypothesis in this line of research is that better listeners and listeners who tend to make the most sustained progress are those who are able to learn and implement effective strategies.

Learning strategies is a term now used to refer to any attitudinal plans or behavioral devices that students use to acquire knowledge or skills. In particular, the notion of learning strategies is used to focus on those plans that aim to increase transfer of learning from a controlled, pedagogic experience to a more generalized realm.

Second language learning strategies are generally divided into two basic classes: those types of plans and decisions adopted to benefit ***long-term* learning** which are often recursive and those adopted for using the language in a *current* contact situation which are often time-sensitive.

The latter category, **strategies for current use**, include four sub-sets: retrieval strategies, rehearsal strategies, covert strategies (to exert control), and communication strategies (to convey or receive a message) (Chamot, 2005). Language learning strategies and language use strategies can be further differentiated according to whether they are primarily **cognitive**, **metacognitive**, **affective**, or **social**.

Applicable principles for teaching

- Integration of learning strategies helps students listen more efficiently, and become more autonomous learners who can acquire language on their own. The introduction of listening strategies needs to be done explicitly, with opportunities for students to identify and explore various strategies and evaluate their effectiveness throughout a language course.
- Use of explicit listening strategies can enable students to handle tasks that may be more difficult than their current processing might allow.
- Listening strategies that are associated with successful learning can be demonstrated and modeled for less successful learners. Over time, less successful learners can consciously adopt these strategies and due to the change in learning style, make significant gains in their listening comprehension skills and intrinsic motivation toward listening.

Sociocultural Hypothesis: Seeking Appropriate Contact to Promote Development

Sociocultural Theories (SCT) of language acquisition posit that language learning is a complex activity, a socially situated phenomenon that goes beyond paradigms of psycholinguistics (Lantolf, 2000).

Within SCT, the goals and motives of the learner are of paramount importance, as are the learners' perception of themselves within their social environment.

One implication of SCT is that second language acquisition is seen as part of **acculturation**. The degree to which a learner is motivated to acculturate with the target language group will determine the success which he or she acquires the second language. The role of teaching concerns developing and fueling motivation.

Language learning motivation is developed through positive experiences with acculturation. As such, in SCT language acquisition is determined largely by the degree of **social and psychological distance** – the gap between the learner and the target language culture.

Applicable principles for teaching

- Learners who have positive (minimal) distance, socially and psychologically, from the target language will learn more efficiently and more enjoyably. Instruction must seek to gauge the appropriate input and design based on the social distance of the learners.
- Learners who experience positive social and psychological distance will more readily gravitate toward target language standards in their language learning efforts.

Module-14

LISTENING IN MULTIMEDIA ENVIRONMENTS

Introduction

The face of teaching L2 listening changed, not with the advent of computers, but the invention of the phonograph. The acoustic signal could now be recorded and repeated as often as desired for purposes of comprehension. Technology has evolved greatly since the phonograph, with major advances in the last few decades. The ability to repeat delivery of audio or videotext and add captions or subtitles begins to turn the listening skill into a semi-recursive activity. As suggested by Robin (2007), listening is "inching its way closer to reading which is fully recursive". Indeed, the acoustic signal is not as elusive as it once was, opening up new avenues for teaching and learning L2 listening. Multimedia can be used to facilitate the development of listening skills. Today language learners can access a huge range of input options through the internet and other innovative technological tools.

Impact of Visual Media for Listening Instruction

Adding a visual component to listening instruction increased the authenticity of classroom listening practice. This is particularly true for situations where the visual component is a fundamental part of the listening context and fully supports comprehension as it would in real-life listening contexts.

The potential for a visual component to enhance language learning finds theoretical support in educational theories such as Mayer's generative theory of multimedia learning and Paivio's dual coding theory. The **generative theory** of multimedia learning assumes that mixed modes of delivery (text, audio, and video) affect cognitive processing for learning. Similarly, in dual coding theory (Paivio, 1986), learning is facilitated when both verbal and nonverbal processing reinforce each other. Believing that human cognition can deal simultaneously with language and with non-verbal objects and events,

Both theories maintain that L2 listeners will comprehend more when visual and aural information support each other, because any recognized visual information is processed automatically in working memory and made available for processing further linguistic input. As a result, listeners have more attentional resources available in working memory to process the aural information which, in addition, will be segmented more efficiently because of the supporting visual information.

Impact of Visual in Listening Instruction

A visual component adds an element of authenticity that more closely approximates real-life listening situations. Given the additional visual cues, the incorporation of visual media in listening instruction should make comprehension for L2 listeners easier than in audio alone.

Listening to a speaker is facilitated by visual support; this more closely approximates authentic listening experiences such as lectures. Watching the speaker, in addition to listening, offers the option to attend to potentially helpful cues known as kinesics: that is, body language, facial expressions, hand gestures, and other non-verbal cues that can facilitate interpretation of a message.

Visual media, such as video clips, can be used successfully to prepare learners for listening. Seeing the setting of a listening event provides listeners with an immediate context to activate potential scenarios and related vocabulary. Guided by metacognitive knowledge, L2 listeners use the information elicited by the visual to activate strategies. Visual media can provide helpful context to prepare for listening and to activate appropriate strategies.

Ginther (2002) investigated the relative effect of context or content visuals for listening performance on the computerized Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Content visuals, in contrast to context visuals, are pictures congruent with the actual sound track. Results indicated that content visuals slightly enhanced comprehension but that context visuals had a slightly debilitating effect on comprehension.

Even though learners may initially appear to be positively disposed to visual media and make extensive use of it in their daily lives, they do not always appear to benefit from the dual mode of delivery for comprehending a language they are learning. . It appears that attention to the listening task, the visual, and the aural may be too demanding or distracting.

Teachers will want to use multimedia because of its affective attractiveness for learners. What they can learn from the ongoing research is to make careful choices among the types of visual supports available and the nature of the images in the visual material. A key consideration is a close match between the content of the images and the aural input, especially for learners at lower levels of language proficiency.

Listener Choices in Multimedia Environments

A distinct advantage of multimedia environments is the choice and control available to L2 learners (Hoven, 1999). Choice and control already became available to learners at a very basic level when sound was first recorded. With the help of three simple tools—a recording, a player, and a printed copy of text—listeners could implement a relatively unsophisticated six-step procedure to practice listening and word segmentation skills:

- listen to the recording
- ask themselves whether they have understood what they hear
- replay the recording as often as necessary;
- consult the written text to read what they have just heard;
- recognize what they should have understood
- replay the recordings often as necessary to understand all of the oral text without written support.

Support Options in Multimedia Listening

A wide range of help options, and the use of play/rewind/pause functions, were investigated by Pujolà (2002) for insights into strategy use in multimedia listening environments. The help options included: dictionary, cultural notes, transcripts, subtitles, feedback (on comprehension question responses), and an expert's module.

The use of options is quite idiosyncratic and that learners do not always make use of the options available to them. Learners may not be aware of how the various options can be used and they may not be aware of how to combine them synergistically to enhance their comprehension efforts, particularly lower proficiency listeners. In terms of outcomes, the options used appear to have beneficial effects for vocabulary learning. The choices made by some of the lower proficiency listeners led them to written support options and reading that likely precluded the development of productive listening strategies. Providing listeners with more help options in themselves will not necessarily lead to better learning outcomes.

Captions and Subtitles

Widespread availability of television programming and DVD video with multilingual soundtracks and captions provides increased opportunities for written support to enhance listening comprehension. These include subtitles and captions. Subtitles are translations of the sound track of a film or television program that appear simultaneously on the bottom of the screen, for the benefit of non-native viewers. Captions are translations that appear on the screen a second or two after they are spoken. These are commonly used to aid deaf and hearing-impaired audiences.

There is no doubt that the use of L2 captions and subtitles can lead to better word identification and, ultimately, vocabulary learning. The potential of L2 captions and subtitles for improving oral text comprehension needs to be verified with a comprehension measure that replicates listening in real life contexts: that is, without the help of these tools. No claims can be made about the positive impacts of captions and subtitles on L2 listening comprehension until their effects are investigated using a measure that requires L2 listeners to fully rely on their L2 listening ability, compensatory strategies, and metacognitive knowledge about listening processes.

Captions and subtitles help listeners note differences between what they hear and the written form of the message, improve word segmentation skills, and, thereby, gain greater insight into their comprehension errors. Captions and subtitles should only be used after learners have attempted to understand the text as a whole, by means of a metacognitive approach, using prediction, inferencing, and monitoring strategies that help to compensate for gaps in understanding.

Multimedia Tools for Listening Development

The rapid spread of technology has opened up new avenues for listening development. We will briefly discuss two such prominent tools for access to more authentic texts and listening practice outside the classroom: podcasts for extended listening and oral computer mediated communication for interactive listening.

Podcasts

Podcasts are audio or video files published via the internet, designed to be downloaded to a MP3 player or laptop for future listening (McMinn, 2010). Given their widespread availability and mobility, podcasts offer new, creative, out-of-class possibilities for L2 listening practice and instruction. The podcasts reinforced the listening strategies taught in class by offering learners opportunities to practice the

strategies through listening to mini-lectures and/or completing related tasks. Benefits reported by teachers were extension of class time, and learners reported acquiring new note-taking tips and useful lecture cues.

Oral Computer-Mediated Communication

Oral computer-mediated communication (CMC), which began with the advent of audio and video conferencing, is expanding rapidly with advances in broadband technologies and wider availability of laptops with cameras and microphones. Internet voice and video applications present new opportunities for interactive listening. These new, high-quality media offer boundless opportunities for speaking and listening development and L2 listening research. Oral computer-mediated communication holds a great deal of promise, particularly for language learners in contexts with very little or no access at all to target language speakers.

Meta-technical Skills for Listening in Multimedia Environments

When faced with an overabundance of information, some learners may attend to the wrong elements and have more difficulty extracting relevant meaning from the material (Smidt & Hegelheimer, 2004). Multimedia tools may be appealing, but that does not mean that their use will automatically lead to better learning. Language learners may need guidance in navigating the options available to them. Listening success in multimedia environments may also be related to learning styles and strategies.

Listening in Multimedia Environments: Synthesis

Considerations for Teaching and Learning L2 Listening in Multimedia Environments

We can tentatively deduce the following points for consideration by teachers and learners who want to use multimedia for L2 listening development.

Visual Media

- Use multimedia to engage learners in learning since it does trigger a positive affective response; however, the measurable impact of adding a visual component for text comprehension is less certain. Attention to both visual and aural inputs may be too demanding for working memory or too distracting.
- Use visual materials to prepare learners for listening. Appropriate visuals provide context quickly and activate metacognitive knowledge to predict potential scenarios and to use strategies to compensate for inadequate linguistic knowledge.
- Choose materials where content of the visual input closely matches the aural input, especially for learners at lower levels of proficiency.
- For assessment, careful attention is needed before including visual inputs. The potential for distraction and the need to move eye contact between a monitor and test materials may have a greater negative impact than the positive impact of the visual aids.
- Include instruction in media literacy somewhere in the student curriculum. Understanding the nature of different types of visuals and texts (e.g., the difference between news clips, interviews,

comedy, and stories), is important for the effective use of visual media to enhance listening comprehension.

Help Options

- Provide learners with initial guidance on the use of help options, including how and when these tools can enhance comprehension and listening development. Without guidance, the use of help options is quite idiosyncratic and learners do not always make use of the options available to them.
- For lower proficiency listeners, provide more guidance in choice of help options to prevent a tendency to quickly resort to written support options (and reading) instead of developing productive listening strategies that are essential to become good listeners.
- If vocabulary learning is a goal, help options have beneficial effects on the outcomes.
- If L2 listening development is the primary goal, consider that there is little evidence to show that use of help options leads to improved listening comprehension ability.

Captions and Subtitles

- Use materials with captions to reinforce and confirm understanding of an aural text: for example, with a repeat listen. Captions can draw student attention to the difference between what they hear and the written form of the same message. This helps them direct attention to gaps in understanding during repeat listens.
- Captions can also help learners develop word segmentation skills and gain insight into their comprehension errors.
- Captions can become a crutch, allowing learners to resort to reading skills rather than develop appropriate listening strategies.

Podcasts

- Preparation or selection of appropriate materials needs careful attention, but distribution and access is easy for use at times convenient for learners and, thereby, extends listening practice beyond classroom time.
- Podcasts can be a useful teaching tool for metacognitive knowledge about L2 academic listening and note-taking skills.

Oral Computer-Mediated Communication

- Interactive listening practice can be expanded and reinforced similar to face-to-face listening contexts.

Lecture- 06

Teaching Listening-II

Module-15

INPUT AND INTERACTION -I

Relevance

The concept of relevance is gaining importance in educational and communication contexts. Human cognition has a single goal: we pay attention only to information which seems relevant to us. If our entire cognition – our power of attention, perception and interpretation – is coordinated most naturally and most readily around the notion of relevance, it makes sense to place this aspect of listening as the top priority in teaching. Engaging learners with relevant material – the 'right stuff' for triggering true motivation for learning – is essential for progress in language learning.

Relevant material for listening can be obtained through discovery of naturally occurring local input sources – that is, those sources already part of the learner's linguistic environment, whether they are resources in an environment without native speakers of English. At the same time, materials can be obtained through selection or adaptation of distant sources – that is, those sources not currently familiar to or readily available to the learner. Learning materials (topics, inputs, tasks) are relevant if they relate to learner goals and interests, and involve self-selection and evaluation.

Genres

Learning to listen involves exposure to a range of genres of language use. The notion of genres in linguistics refers to culture-specific ways in which communication is organized. This includes communicative function and identification of communicative situation in which certain text types are employed, as well as formal characteristics of texts and textual organization.

Just as we utilize genres in our own cultural experience to generate and guide further comprehension, we can see that within different cultures, the types of texts that fit in each group will differ. Familiarity with genres and particularly with current or popular exemplars of those genres contributes indirectly to listening ability, through activation of these cultural schemata.

The following subsections provide illustrative overviews of the listening processes for two main genres, narratives and descriptions.

Narrative

The narrative is the most universal rhetorical form across the cultures of the world. Narratives follow a time, event, and change sequence that is understood and embellished by people in every culture. Because of their universal appeal, narratives are an unparalleled teaching device for cultural values and facts as well as for discussion of relationships and morals.

Narratives will vary in complexity, but they always involve some element of time orientation, place orientation, character identification, events, complications, goals and meaning.

- **Time orientation:** When are the actions happening? What is the historical setting? In what order, what events are left out? **Listening expectation**: Listeners typically assume paratactic

organization, forward sequencing, unless time markers indicate backtracking or jumping forward in time.

- **Place orientation**: Where is the action happening? What aspects of the setting are significant for the narrative? **Listening expectation**: Listeners typically assume prototypical settings – that is, prototypes, or typical cases, based on their personal experience – unless specific descriptions contradict them.
- **Character identification:** Who is in the story? Who are the main characters? Who are minor characters? Who are peripheral characters? What are the key relationships? **Listening expectation:** Listeners typically assume one or two main characters, a range of minor characters, with the relationships to the main characters driving the story.
- **Events/problem/complication/goal**: What about the setting is especially problematic? What factors complicate the story? How will the story be resolved? **Listening expectation:** Listeners typically assume there is a complication in the story that will be resolved, probably in some dramatic fashion.
- **Meaning of the story**: Most stories are told with some encompassing point, often with a moral Module or a principle that confirms some aspect of the relationship between the speaker and listener. What is the special meaning of this story? **Listening expectation:** Listeners will assume that the story has some unique meaning, though one that conforms to accepted principles (such as 'good over evil').

Descriptive

Like narratives, descriptive texts – descriptions of people, places, and events – are universal. However, unlike narratives, there are many more variations in organization, and cultural differences in how descriptions are likely to unfold. Oral descriptions of people, places, and things tend not to follow a fixed pattern, but often exhibit – somewhere in the text – characteristics of prototypical descriptions

Authenticity

This issue of **authenticity** is one of the most controversial issues in the teaching of listening, one that engenders heated discussion among teachers and linguists. Genuineness, realness, truthfulness, validity, reliability, undisputed credibility, and legitimacy are just some of the concepts involved when we talk about authenticity. At one end of the spectrum are those who define authenticity as any language that has been used by native speakers for any real purpose. While this approach has value in terms of targeting real context and real language as central to language instruction, it perhaps devalues the role of the addressee in making the language authentic. Authenticity is relative; what's relative to one listener may not be relative to another

Table Genre and listening purpose

	TYPE	INFORMATION ORGANISATION	PURPOSE OF LISTENING	SPEAKER FOCUS
1	Narrative	Temporal sequence	To find out what happened, who was involved, personal responses to events	Events, actions, causes, reasons, enablements, purposes, time, proximity
2	Descriptive	Spatial/sensory sequence and coherence	To experience what something looked or sounded or felt like	Objects, situations, states, attributes
3	Comparison/ contrast	Point-by-point organisation, leading to single conclusion	To discover how two things are alike and unalike	Instances, specifications, equivalences
4	Causal/ evaluation	Syllogistic/logical explication	To understand the causes and effects of certain actions	Value, significance, reason
5	Problem/ solution	Problem/ proposal/effect of proposed action	To generate hypotheses on the effects of proposed solutions	Cognition, volition

As is now well established in pragmatics, the closer a participant is to the 'control center' of an interaction, the more immediate the purpose for the interaction, and therefore the more authentic and meaningful the discourse.

If we accept the notion of discourse control as leading to authenticity, then for purposes of language education, those inputs and encounters that involve the students' own purposes for listening can best be considered authentic.

What many teachers are referring to when they seek authentic input is the characteristic of genuineness. **Genuineness** refers to features of colloquial style of spontaneous planning that are characteristic of everyday spoken discourse:

- Natural speed, speaking in short bursts, irregular timing.
- Natural phonological phenomenon, natural pauses and intonation, use of reduction, assimilation, elision.
- High-frequency vocabulary, as a function of short-term memory limitations during spoken discourse planning.

- Colloquialism, such as short formulaic utterances, current slang, that show sensitivity to the audience.
- Hesitations, false starts, self-corrections, as indicators of the speaker's real-time cognitive processes.
- Orientation of the speech toward a 'live' listener, including natural pauses for the listener to provide backchannelling or responses.

Another issue relating to authenticity is the medium of the input itself and the quality of that medium. A mediating factor in the use of authentic listening material has been task design. By designing tasks which preview key vocabulary and discourse structures in the input, by chunking the input into manageable segments and providing selective focus on its particular elements, teachers can make use of authentic material in ways that are motivating and useful to learners at all levels.

Teaching principle: focus on authenticity and genuineness

- Language input should aim for user authenticity, first, by aiming to be appropriate to the current needs of the learners, and second, by reflecting real use of language in the real world.
- Language input should aim to be genuine, i.e. involving features of naturally occurring language with and between native speakers: speed, rhythm, intonation, pausing, idea density, etc.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary acquisition is an important goal of listening instruction, as there is a robust relationship between effective listening and vocabulary accessibility. In principle, listening is facilitated by the size of an individual's mental lexicon and the listeners' facility in spoken word recognition. The activation of background knowledge (**content schemata** and **cultural schemata**) that is needed for comprehension of speech is linked to and launched by word recognition. Speed and breadth in word recognition have been shown to be a consistent predictor of L2 listening ability.

Corpus studies show that a recognition vocabulary of 3,000 word families is necessary for comprehension of everyday (non-specialist) conversations, if we assume that a listener needs to be familiar with – and able to recognize – about 90–95 per cent of content words and lexical phrases to understand a conversation satisfactorily. There is evidence that occurrences of **out-of-vocabulary words** in a spoken text create attentional problems that interfere with comprehension of both the immediate and subsequent utterances

Recognition vocabulary is not a simple concept because word knowledge involves a number of aspects and continuously expands. Word knowledge includes, on a surface (**syntagmatic**) level, recognition of the words spoken form (including its allophonic variations), its written form, and grammatical functions, and on a deeper (**paradigmatic**) level, its collocations, relative frequency in the language, constraints on use, denotations and connotations. There is evidence that a listener's depth of knowledge of words influences the speed of spoken word recognition, by way of **priming effects**.

Based on L1 research, it is assumed that activation is more readily achieved for high frequency (i.e. frequently used) words than for low frequency words. It is also assumed that vocabulary knowledge interacts with other competencies in the process of listening, such as syntactic processing and discourse processing. In L2 contexts, the four major views on the role of vocabulary in language comprehension are:

- The **instrumentalist** view, which sees vocabulary knowledge as being a major prerequisite and causative factor in comprehension.
- The **aptitude** view, which sees vocabulary knowledge as one of many outcomes of having strong general 'intelligence' or 'feel' for a language.
- The **knowledge** view, which sees vocabulary as an indicator of strong world knowledge. This world knowledge enables listening comprehension.
- The **access** view, which sees vocabulary as having a causal relationship with comprehension provided that the vocabulary can be easily accessed.

Because word recognition and vocabulary knowledge play such an important role in L2 listening and second language acquisition, most approaches to teaching L2 listening involve explicit efforts for vocabulary development.

Five types of instructional methods are commonly used:

- Priming of lexical knowledge through pre-teaching of vocabulary items known to be unfamiliar to L2 learners.
- Concurrent lexical support while listening, either through captioning of videos or overt signaling and paraphrasing of unfamiliar lexical items in face-to-face delivery.
- Prior simplification of vocabulary in oral texts, including restatements and paraphrases to promote vocabulary learning.
- Emphasis on negotiation of meaning of unknown lexical items during conversational interactions, to promote awareness of lexical gaps in input processing, and on increasing use of contextual strategies for inferring meanings of unknown words.
- Group reconstruction activities following listening (sometimes called *dictogloss*) to promote awareness of unfamiliar lexical items and to deepen and extend partial vocabulary knowledge.

All five methods demonstrate gains in vocabulary knowledge, as measured through pre- and post-test comparison in comparison to control groups, though part of this gain must be attributed to the additional time of lexical processing provided in each method.

Module-16

INPUT AND INTERACTION -II

Difficulty

The discourse framework of a text (often called formal schema) contributes to the ease or difficulty of understanding it. The surface language of the text itself contributes to its difficulty. However, it is important to note that these are only predictive aspects of difficulty. Brown (1995) has argued that the central, governing feature in difficulty of a text is not the language itself, but the complexity of the content – its intrinsic **cognitive difficulty**

Brown defines cognitive difficulty as the factors that make the four central listening processes (identifying information, searching memory for information you already have, filing or storing information for later cross-referencing, and using information in some way) easier or more difficult to perform. Having conducted a long series of interactive listening experiments (Brown, 1995), Brown proposed six principles of **cognitive load** that affect listeners:

- Cognitive load, principle 1. It is easier to understand any text (narrative, description, instruction, or argument) that involves fewer rather than more individuals and objects.
- Cognitive load, principle 2. It is easier to understand any text (particularly narrative texts) involving individuals or objects which are clearly distinct from one another.
- Cognitive load, principle 3. It is easier to understand texts (particularly description or instruction texts) involving simple spatial relationships.
- Cognitive load, principle 4. It is easier to understand texts where the order of telling matches the order of events.
- Cognitive load, principle 5. It is easier to understand a text if relatively few familiar inferences are necessary to relate each sentence to the preceding text.
- Cognitive load, principle 6. It is easier to understand a text if the information in the text is clear (not ambiguous), self-consistent and fits in readily with information you already have.

The implications for teaching and testing are that if we wish to grade the texts and tasks that listeners will encounter, we need to take into account the cognitive load of the texts and tasks we are presenting. If we wish to simplify a text (e.g. by shortening it) or a task (e.g. by providing initial vocabulary or other information), we need to first consider the factors of cognition – the listening processes – that make a listening activity difficult.

Simplification

Simplification of input is a form of **social accommodation**, a term first used in social psychology (Giles and Smith, 1979) to refer to mutual movements of interlocutors toward the language and behavior standards of the other. Simplification of input is one common method of making discourse accessible to L2 users and rendering difficult texts more accessible for language-learning purposes. Simplification of input can be achieved in two basic ways:

- **Restrictive simplification** operates on the principle of using and highlighting familiar linguistic items and frames:
  - Lexical: using a simpler term (or higher-frequency term) for a more complicated one (or lower-frequency one), less slang, fewer idioms.
  - Syntactic: using simpler syntax, shorter utterances, topic-fronted utterances (e.g. The man at the reception desk, I gave the package to him), less pre-verb modification (I only want coffee versus I want only coffee) to make utterance easier to process and study.
  - Phonological: overtly marking word and phrase boundaries by slowing down or exaggerating speech patterns.
  - Discoursal (for conversation): using prototypical question–answer patterns (yes/no questions), non-inverted questions (You can sing?), either–or questions (Where do you live? Do you live in the city?) or other familiar patterns (e.g. tag questions: You're from Osaka, aren't you?).
  - Discoursal (for monologues): using prototypical rhetorical patterns such as direct temporal sequencing, avoidance of tangential information.
- **Elaborative simplification** operates on the principle of enriching the input rather than cutting out presumably difficult parts (Granena, 2008; Long, 2009):

  - Phonological: using higher pitch and more pitch variation to promote attention.
  - Lexical: providing rephrasing of key words and ideas, use of definitions, use of synonyms.
  - Syntactic: providing rephrasing of difficult syntactic constructions, to provide more time for processing of meaning.
  - Syntactic: using more subordinate clauses and embeddings to make utterance relationships more transparent (e.g. I have relatives in the
  - Cincinnati area. That's the place where I grew up).
  - Syntactic: supplying optional syntax (I think that he's here versus I thinkhe's here).
  - Discoursal: providing explicit frame shifts (well, now, so, okay, The next thing I want to mention is, One of the main issues is . . .) to assist in identifying of idea boundaries and relationships. (Temporal relationships: and, after that; causality: so, then, because; contrast: but, on the other hand; emphasis: actually, in fact).
  - Discoursal: providing direct repetition of words, phrases, whole utterances.
  - Discoursal: providing narrative examples of key ideas.

Simplification often has the immediate beneficial effect of helping learners understand the ideas in what otherwise might be an inaccessible text, and thus reducing frustration and increasing motivation. But because simplification of the input itself necessarily alters the original text and may reduce the learner's satisfaction of having a genuine listening experience, it is important for teachers to use simplification judiciously.

Teaching principle: increase shared knowledge rather than simplify texts

Simplification of input is effective for language learning only if it helps the listener become more active as a listener, that is, more able to activate background knowledge and make inferences, and more willing and able to respond to what he or she hears. Speakers generally do not consciously script features

of simplified language into their speech. Rather, they tend to 'pitch' their discourse at their intended audience, taking into account their own perceived importance of the topics and subtopics as well as the interests and expectations of their audience and the amount of background information available to them.

Other means of achieving greater comprehension without altering a text are often preferable and typically much easier to administer. They include:

- Direct repetition: repeating the text by replaying the audio or video extract or repeating the text orally.
- Simplification of the context: preparing for key concepts in advance is the chief means of simplifying the context for the listener. Presenting or eliciting vocabulary and ideas that will be part of the text generally helps adjust the listener's cognitive context. As Lynch (1996: 26) says, 'The more we know, the less we need to rely on language to understand the message.'
- Chunking the input: presenting the input in short chunks (e.g. one to three-minute segments), followed by opportunities for clarification before continuing.

Restructuring is an interactive technique for simplifying or elaborating in face-to-face discourse, depending on the needs of the listener in the moment. Based on a survey of successful restructuring moves in NS–NNS discourse across a number of languages, Bremer *et al*. (1996) offers a helpful summary of the range and types of discourse structuring that will help prevent understanding problems and promote repair of problems when they occur. (see Table)

Table Range and types of discourse structuring to promote active listening

ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION	RAISING EXPECTABILITY	RAISING TRANSPARENCY RAISING ACCESSIBILITY	RAISING EXPLICITNESS
Open-topic management	*Discourse:* metadiscursive comments on: activity type, topics, shared knowledge	*Perceptual:* short utterances, salience of elements (articulation, volume), segmentation (pauses, rate of delivery, chunking, avoid false starts)	Full forms instead of ellipsis, pro-forma reduced forms, lexicalisation of important information
Slow down rhythm for turns	*Topics:* announce by paralinguistic markers, announce content explicitly	*Lexical meaning:* high-frequency vocabulary, recourse to L1 code switching	*Metadiscursive:* comments on discourse function of utterance, discourse structuring, discourse context
Acknowledge language problems	*Locally:* left topic dislocation	*Conceptual meaning:* linking complex topics to 'here and now' absolute instead of relational reference to time	Possibility of re-runs by modified repetition
Giving room: offer turns, open questions, allow for pauses, help other with formulations			

Interaction

Access to input alone is rarely sufficient to assure successful and sustained acquisition of listening ability in an L2. Some type of sustained, meaningful interaction is required if the L2 learner is to deepen and expand comprehension, and develop an ability to respond to what he or she hears.

It is now axiomatic that for a person to learn a second language to any high functioning degree, three major conditions are required: (1) a learner who experiences the need to learn the second language and is motivated to do so; (2) a speaker or speakers of the target language who know it well enough to provide the learner with access to the spoken language and the empathic support (such as simplification, selective repetition and targeted feedback) needed for learning the target language; and (3) a social setting that brings the learner in frequent enough and sustained enough contact with target language speakers to make permanent language acquisition possible.

Listening plays a vital role in the relative success or failure of the L2 learner. Listening is required in two of these conditions (access to a learnable version of the spoken language, sustained contact), and is therefore an essential means of language development.

The learner, in order to acquire the language, must come to understand the input in terms of its cognitive and social meanings *and* pay attention to structural form within the input. In order to listen in the L2, for purposes of message comprehension and for language acquisition, the listener must gain access to the spoken language code.

Because the language presented to second-language learners is often in the form of a modified input similar to child-directed speech, SLA researchers in the 1980s began to document the kind of linguistic adjustments that were evident in this newly named 'foreigner talk'. Linguistic adjustments have been noted in several areas:

- Phonology: slower rate of delivery, more use of stress and pauses, more careful articulation, wider pitch range, more use of full forms/avoidance of contractions.
- Morphology: deliberately well-formed utterances, shorter utterances, less complex constructions, more retention of optional constituents/less ellipsis, more questions.
- Semantics: more redundancy of information, higher frequency of content words, fewer idiomatic expressions, more concrete references.

Strategies

Interaction can take many forms and serve many purposes, but it is the kind of interaction linked to input processing that is of most interest in the development of listening ability. In L1–L2 interactions, both speakers and listeners enact **strategies** that they assume will make the interaction smoother and the content more comprehensible. L1 speakers often make **conversational adjustments** for content (narrower range of topics, more predictable topics nominated, more here-and-now orientation, shorter treatment of topics) and also for interaction structures (more acceptance of unintentional **topic shifts**, more **confirmation checks**, more clarification requests, more question-and-answer strings).

Comprehension and clarification checks are the most overt form of L2 listener interaction strategies leading to listening development, and to language acquisition, but there are other important strategy types as well. Listener displays of uptake, backchanneling, and follow-up acts can be seen as part of 'pushed output', leading to listening development and acquisition as well.

When a speaker initiates topics in conversation, the listener has the choice of up-taking any initiating move or ignoring it. Typically, the speaker intends the listener to uptake the topic in a specific way, incorporating both verbal and non-verbal means that constitute a normal, or **preferred response**.

Another type of listener interaction token is **backchannelling**. Backchannelling responses are short messages – verbal, semi-verbal and non-verbal – that the listener sends back during the partner's speaking turn or immediately following the speaking turn. These messages may include brief verbal utterances (yeah, *right*), rhythmic **semi-verbal utterances** (*uhhuh*, *hmm*), laughs or chuckles, and postural movements, such as nods and raising of the eyebrows. Backchannelling, differing from culture to

culture and within subcultures, is important in conversation for showing a number of listener states: reception of messages, readiness for subsequent messages, agreement on turn taking, and empathy with the speaker's state, or change in emotional state, or communicative intentions. Backchannelling occurs more or less constantly during conversations in all languages and settings, though in some languages and in some settings, it seems more prevalent.

A third category of listener interaction in discourse is the follow-up act. Follow-up acts are responses to a discourse exchange, and can be provided by either the listener or the speaker from the previous exchange. Follow-up acts can be endorsements (positive evaluations), concessions (negative evaluations), or acknowledgements (neutral evaluations). A follow-up act may include a move to reframe the interaction by adjusting the participation frame or by redirecting the topic

Module-17

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN -I

Designing Instruction to Include a Range of Listening Types

Sociolinguist Leslie Beebe writes about the role of input in language acquisition, and states that the key to successful language acquisition is for the learner to find 'the right stuff '. Carrying this metaphor a bit further: while finding the right input may be key to language acquisition, ultimately it is *how* learners interact with that input that allows them to 'fly'. We can categories ways of interacting with input, and how those ways allow learners to understand and to glean more from the input. This chapter outlines six types of practice, highlighting the learning focus and activity focus of each type.

Table Types of listening practice

LISTENING TYPE	LEARNING FOCUS	ACTIVITY FOCUS
Intensive	Focus on phonology, syntax, lexis	Learner pays close attention to what is actually said. Teacher feedback on accuracy
Selective	Focus on main ideas, pre-set tasks	Learner attempts to extract key information and construct or utilise information in a meaningful way. Teacher intervention during task and feedback on task completion
Interactive	Focus on becoming active as a listener; attempt to clarify meaning or form	Learner interacts verbally with others, in collaborative tasks, to discover information or negotiate solutions. Teacher feedback on form and outcome of interaction
Extensive	Focus on listening continuously, managing large amounts of listening input	Learner listens to longer extracts and performs meaning oriented tasks. Teacher direct instruction on comprehension strategies; global feedback from teacher
Responsive	Focus on learner response to input	Learner seeks opportunities to respond and convey her own opinions and ideas. Teacher 'pushes output' from learner
Autonomous	Focus on learner management of progress, navigation of 'Help' options	Learner selects own extracts and tasks, monitors own progress; decides on own patterns of interaction with others. Global feedback from teacher on learning path

A balanced approach to listening instruction would aim to include all six types, with an instructional priority on those types that offer the most engagement and are consistent with learning and assessment goals.

Intensive Listening

Intensive listening refers to listening closely – for precise sounds, words, phrases, grammatical units and pragmatic units. Intensive listening refers to listening to a text closely, with the intention to decode the input for purposes of analysis. Although it does not seem that listening intensively is called for in most everyday situations, accurate perception is involved in higher level comprehension and listening. The ability to listen intensively when required – as in listening for specific details or to spot a particular word – is an essential component of listening proficiency.

In addition to its value in increasing listening proficiency, intensive listening offers an avenue to **language-focused learning**, which is an essential aspect of permanent language acquisition (Nation and Newton, 2009). As such, it is beneficial to include intensive listening in instruction, if only as a small part of each learning session. Types of intensive listening practice include: dictation, elicited repetition, shadowing (for a review of shadowing types and techniques, see Murphey, 2000), word spotting, error spotting, grammar processing, and mediation (translation or simultaneous interpretation).

The prototypical intensive listening activity is pure dictation, the transcription of the exact words that a speaker utters. Dictation, with its many practiced variations such as dicto-comp and pair info-gap dictations, is a focused instructional tool because it involves processing phonology, vocabulary, grammar and draws on the ability to make specific inferences from context.

Because pure dictation of extended passages can be tedious and time consuming, many teachers have developed variations. These variations provide more efficient use of time, more interaction, and clearer focus on specific language items. (See Nation and Newton, 2009, Wilson, 2008, and Davis and Rinvolucri, 1988, for examples.) Some popular variations follow:

- Fast-speed dictation: The teacher reads a passage at natural speed, with assimilations, etc. The students can ask for multiple repetitions of any part of the passage, but the teacher will not slow down her articulation of the phrase being repeated. This activity focuses students' attention on features of fast speech.
- Pause and paraphrase: The teacher reads a passage and pauses periodically for the students to write paraphrases, not the exact words used. (Indeed, students may be instructed not to use the exact words they heard.) This activity focuses students on vocabulary flexibility, saying things in different ways, and in focusing on meaning as they listen.
- Listening close: The teacher provides a partially completed passage that the listeners fill in as they listen or after they listen. This activity allows focus on particular language features, e.g. verbs or noun phrases.
- Error identification: The teacher provides a fully transcribed passage, but with several errors. The students listen and identify (and correct) the errors. This activity focuses attention on detail: the errors may be grammatical or semantic.

- Jigsaw dictation: Students work in pairs. Each person in the pair has part of the full dictation. The students read their parts to the other in order to complete the passage. This activity encourages negotiation of meaning.
- Group dictation: Learners hear an extended passage, perhaps two minutes long, usually a monologue. It can be a relatively complex exposition or a narrative. The passage deliberately contains challenging vocabulary and structures, and considerably more information than can be recalled by a single listener after listening just once. A key element of this activity is that the learners do not take notes, but rather rely on short-term memory building. Following the hearing of the passage, which may be read more than once, the learners are asked to collaborate to reconstruct the passage as completely and as accurately as they can (see Nation and Newton, 2009; Kowal and Swain, 1997; Wajnryb, 1990).
- Communicative dictation: There are several variations of this type of dictation, all focusing on student-to-student exchanges. In a **jigsaw listening** variation, students hear different parts or versions of a text. They then pair up to share their information. Or students add an opinion to each sentence they hear (*I think that* . . . or *I don't think that* . . .) and then compare.
- Listening games: There are a variety of listening games, particularly designed for younger learners, that involve partial dictation, writing down key words, 'word spotting' (e.g. 'I spy', 'Simon says', 'Mother, may I?'), passing along messages Verbatim, Etc.).

Selective Listening

In language teaching, selective listening refers to listening with a planned purpose in mind, often to gather specific information to perform a task. In its vernacular use, selective listening is used to refer to 'attending to only what you want to hear' and 'tuning out everything else'.

Selective listening tasks may be the most salient form of listening instruction in use today. Morley stated at the time, 'The only way to improve aural comprehension is to spend many hours practicing listening . . . However, a directed program of purposeful listening can shorten the time.' Morley considered the two tenets of improving aural comprehension (what she then called 'listening with understanding') to be concentrated, disciplined listening, and immediate task completion to provide 'an urgency for remembering'.

Morley viewed selective listening as a prerequisite for the more complex and more extended listening that learners in an academic course would need to undertake. Morley believed that using carefully planned and graded listening Module s would help students learn to listen and get facts so they become ready to listen and get ideas. Module content included:

- Numbers and numerical relationships
- Letters, sounds, abbreviations, spelling.
- Directions and spatial relations
- Time and temporal sequences
- Dates and chronological order
- Measurements and amounts

- Proportion, comparison, and contrast
- Getting the facts (factual readings)

For extended texts, longer than the one-minute extracts, a useful form of selective listening is note-taking. Note-taking is widely viewed as an important macro-skill in the lecture–listening comprehension process, a skill that often interacts with reading (when note-taking is integrated with reading material accompanying the lecture), writing (the actual writing of the notes or subsequent writing based on the notes) and speaking (posing questions, or oral reconstruction of the notes or discussion based on the notes).

Note-taking is a commonly used selective listening task, and one with a high degree of **face validity** (i.e. it is recognized as having practical value in the real world) and **psychological validity** (i.e. it is recognized by learners as reflecting their listening ability). For purposes of developing students' selective listening ability, instructors may cater their requirements in notetaking, such as writing down certain words or phrases, copying material on board in appropriate places in their notes, listing topics, or labelling parts of their notes.

An important aspect of selective listening is the **pre-listening** portion of the instruction. Pre-listening is a stage of instruction designed to prepare students for listening. This phase may consist of a short activity to preview upcoming vocabulary or concepts or discourse frameworks that will help students engage with the listening extract.

Prior to listening, the class can discuss pictures, photos or cartoons that may pique interest in the listening topic and provoke some predictions about the extracts. The teacher can also elicit what students already know about the topic or add a personal experience to pique interest. Or, to promote interest in the topic, the teacher may provide a short list of provocative questions (such as *Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? . . .*) on the upcoming topic to help activate schemata and emotions related to the listening extract.

Any of these activities, alone or in combination, may serve to activate the background knowledge students will need to listen well. Effective pre-listening activities heighten the degree of relevance for listening, which fuels motivation.

Table [illegible] Note-taking functions, goals, techniques

NOTE-TAKING FUNCTIONS	NOTE-TAKING METHODS	NOTE-TAKING TECHNIQUES
Retrieval	*Outlining:* showing macro–micro relationships	Indentation, spacing, charting, review (e.g. Cornell method)
Storage	*Linear:* showing sequencing of presentation	Key words, sequencing, abbreviations (key word method)
Application	*Matrix:* showing connectivity and relevance	Graphic imagery, connectives, personalisation (e.g. Mind Maps scheme)
Language learning	*Task:* completing explicit activity	Group collaboration, reconstruction, question answering (e.g. Contemporary Topics system)

Module-18

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN -II

Interactive Listening

Interactive listening refers to a type of conversational interaction in which the listener takes a leading role in understanding, through providing feedback, asking questions and supporting the speaker. Interactive listening refers to listening in a collaborative conversation. Collaborative conversation, in which learners interact with each other or with native speakers, is now well established as a vital means of language development and as a benchmark of listening performance. Its potential benefits seem to be both in 'forcing **comprehensible output**', that is, compelling the learner to formulate ideas in the target language, and in 'forcing negotiation', that is, leading the learner to come to understand language that is initially not understood.

Learners acquire new linguistic forms (syntactic structures, words and lexical phrases) as a product of attending to them in the communicative contexts that collaborative discourse provides. Because learners frequently experience difficulty in producing accurate forms, collaborative discourse provides an ideal opportunity to attend to and query target forms that are necessary to arrive at meaning.

In classroom language learning situations, the primary opportunity for collaborative conversations is learner–learner interaction. In order for learners to benefit from this NNS–NNS interaction, it is important to incorporate necessary learning elements. First, there needs to be a **communicative task**, that is, a tangible outcome of the interaction, and therefore a problem that requires negotiation of linguistic form to achieve that outcome. Collaborative tasks usually require some negotiation and clarification of meaning in order to arrive at an outcome, although real world communicative outcomes may be indirect and unstated. For pedagogic purposes, tasks often need to be contrived to some extent (i.e. they are structured as 'pedagogic tasks') in order to make problems explicit and outcomes expressed. Commonly used text–task combinations are information gaps for pair exchange or ambiguous stories for reconstruction.

In classroom settings, **two-way collaborative tasks** are widely used to promote interactive listening skills. Use of structured communicative tasks involving two-way communication promotes listener control of conversations, including regulating turn-taking and seeking feedback through clarification, and confirmation checks. the key characteristics of an effective two-way collaborative task are (1) a **primary focus on meaning** (rather than on language form) (2) the learner selecting from a menu of linguistic resources needed for task completion, and (3) a tangible outcome (which can be evaluated for its correctness or appropriateness). These features are seen as necessary in promoting learner **uptake** during the task, rather than mere completion of the task.

Though there are inherent advantages to interactive listening, not all interaction or collaboration is guaranteed to lead to effective learning or to improved attitudes about listening. Formulated schematic frameworks for evaluating the success, and for leading learners toward more successful and rewarding interactions. For example, Lynch (2001b) has developed a framework (Achieving Communicative Outcomes, ACO) that focuses on ways that learners come to achieve better outcomes in problem-solving

negotiations, particularly in academic settings in which students work together to discuss complex issues. (see table below)

Table Achieving communicative outcomes

1. *No problem*. A problem exists but is not identified by either the sender or the receiver.
2. *Non-negotiated solutions*
   a. *Unacknowledged problem.* A problem is identified by the receiver but not acknowledged by the sender.
   b. *Abandon responsibility.* A problem is identified by the receiver and acknowledged by the sender, but the sender does not take responsibility for solving the problem, either by saying they will skip it, leave it, never mind it or forget it, or by telling the receiver to choose any location or path.
   c. *Arbitrary solution.* A problem is identified by the receiver and acknowledged by the sender, who then makes an arbitrary decision about some defining feature of the location or path. The key element here is not accuracy but the arbitrariness of the decision, which does not attempt to take the receiver's world into account or to make the receiver's world match the sender's.
3. *Negotiated solutions*
   a. *Receiver's world solution.* A problem is identified and acknowledged by the sender, who then tries to find out what is in the receiver's world and uses that information to instruct the receiver, based on the receiver's perspective.
   b. *Sender's world solution*. A problem is identified and acknowledged by the sender, who then instructs the receiver to make the receiver's world match the sender's, ignoring whatever information the receiver provides which does not fit the sender's perspective.

Extensive Listening

Extensive listening refers to listening for an extended period of time, while focusing on meaning. Extensive listening can include **academic listening**, also known as **listening for academic purposes** and **sheltered language instruction**. It can also include extended periods of listening in the target language outside of classroom settings, paralleling what in reading instruction is referred to as 'reading for pleasure'.

Extensive listening refers to listening for several minutes at a time, staying in the target language, usually with a long-term goal of appreciating and learning the content. Extensive listening includes academic listening, sheltered language instruction, and 'listening for pleasure'.

Incorporating the support elements into academic listening has been described under the nomenclature of '**sheltered instruction**', in which learners are literally protected from being overwhelmed by too much information to process effectively. One comprehensive system is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The SIOP guides teachers in several steps to support students in an extensive listening environment.

Extensive listening is generally considered appropriate for all students above a beginner level Table given below provides an outline of an Extensive Listening (EL) approach.

Table : Guidelines for an EL programme at intermediate and advanced levels

Intermediate. EL should be a significant part of language instruction	*Advanced*. EL should be a major aspect of language learning
• Listening to long graded texts (e.g. graded readers)	• Watching movies, television (with subtitles as necessary)
• Watching easy movies or easy television broadcasts with subtitles	• Radio programmes and podcasts
• Listening to easy songs	• Listening to songs
• Listening to simplified lectures	• Lots of natural conversation, including radio and television interviews, variety shows, dramas, new shows
• Repeated listenings are important	• Listening to authentic lectures
	• Lots of narrow listening (extracts or lectures on the same topic from different perspective)

An important aspect of teaching extensive listening is the need to provide **comprehension strategy** instruction so that learners can avoid becoming overwhelmed by the quantity of input and so that they can get back on track when they are experiencing comprehension difficulties. Researchers in both reading and listening have derived a small number of principles to guide comprehension strategy instruction. See table given below.

Table Principles of comprehension strategy instruction

METHOD FOR TEACHING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Experience–text–relationship method	Emphasises tying learners' own experiences with text cues to arrive at meaning (Au, 1979; Vandergrift, 1997)	(Accompanying the film *God Grew Tired of Us*, about Sudanese refugees) As you watch the story, think of similar events in your own life when you felt out of place. Note some key events or interactions in the story that bring up memories for you
K–W–L sequence ('What you Know', 'What you Want to know', 'What you Learned' from listening or reading)	Focuses listeners and readers on the process of learning from text (Ogle, 1986; Rubin, 1988)	(Accompanying audio clips of three job interviews for Apple Computer Company) Before you listen to the interview, think of three direct questions you would ask the interviewee. Think of one extra question that might surprise the interviewee
Reciprocal teaching approach	Prompts teacher and students to query each other around the four specific strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarising (Palinscar and Brown, 1984; Robbins *et al.*, 1999)	(Prior to watching a scene from *Mulholland Drive*) After you watch this scene, write down three questions to ask your classmates to make sure that they have understand the scene clearly
QAR method (Question–Answer Relationships):	Teaches learners to look for specific links concerning how the information is presented (Nix, 1983; Raphael and Wonnacott, 1985)	(Accompanying a scene in *Little Miss Sunshine*) In this scene Grandpa is trying to boost Olive's confidence. What does he say to show this?

Drawing on elements from all four of these approaches to comprehension strategy development, Block and Duffy (2008) recommend that teachers focus on the following comprehension strategies:

- Predict. Size up the text (story, lecture, etc.) in advance by looking for titles, pictures, captions; relating to prior readings, etc.
- Monitor. Activate and remind yourself of as many comprehension strategies as you can, make a plan for how to continue if you encounter difficulties; don't give up
- Question. Stop to re-listen and ask yourself questions about what you understand and what you don't understand
- Image. Construct images and mental pictures that help you visualize the story
- Look back. Go over sections that are unclear, keep thinking about the text after you stop listening
- Infer. Connect ideas based on what you already know; make good guesses
- Find main ideas. Pause to summarize what you understand so far, try to focus on the main elements of the lecture or story
- Evaluate. Formulate opinions about the story or lecture; evaluate your own emotional reactions to the text
- Synthesize. Consider all the facts, scene observations and parts of the dialogue that help you understand
- Collaborate. When possible, ask others, who have heard or read the same text for their ideas, compare your understandings

Responsive Listening

Responsive listening refers to a type of listening practice in which the listener's response is the goal of the activity. The listener's response in this type of activity is 'affective' – expressing an opinion or point of view – rather than 'informational' – giving back facts based on what was heard.

L2 pedagogy has taken a significant interest in the notion of schemata and the activation of appropriate background knowledge for listening. Training methods typically incorporate pre-listening activities to raise awareness of cultural schemata that will be needed for comprehension, and follow-up discussion of cultural allusions, cultural preferences, etc. that were included in the listening text (Buck, 2001). Some methods stress the interrelatedness of gaining intercultural competence (awareness of cross-cultural factors in language learning and L2 use) and skill development (Sercu, 2004; Bremer *et al*., 1996). Methods for teaching academic listening directly incorporate an awareness of cultural and content schemata in extended listening and recall (Flowerdew and Miller, 2010). These methods are consistent with general L1 educational methods for promoting use of schematic maps in developing critical thinking and understanding extended texts.

One structured method of using ongoing listener response is a **paused task**. Listening task design using short inputs (typically one or two minutes long) and overt listener response have great benefits for listening training. There are known limitations to short-term memory that occur after about sixty to ninety seconds of listening – for listeners of all ages and backgrounds (cf. Florit *et al*., 2010; Cowan, 2005).

Because of these limitations, one minute may be an optimal 'training window' for new listening skills and strategies.

One way to work within the limitations of short-term memory and still employ longer texts is to use paused tasks. Paused tasks require the instructor to pause at specific points during the input phase of the activity – either by pausing the audio or video or by stopping the narration if the teacher is providing the input directly.

Autonomous Listening

Autonomous listening refers to a self-directed listening activity in which learners choose what to listen to, seek feedback on their comprehension, respond in ways they choose, and monitor their own progress. In effect, all **natural language acquisition** – acquisition that does not involve teachers or classrooms or online course – is autonomous listening. Within the autonomous listening paradigm, however, teachers can still influence the success of their students, particularly through instruction in a range of listening and learning strategies.

Autonomous listening refers to independent listening, without the direct guidance of an instructor. Autonomous listening can include all of the types of listening discussed – intensive, selective, extensive, interactive, and responsive. The key is that the learner is in control of input selection, task completion, and assessment.

For teaching purposes, two distinctions seem most important to make. First, if strategies are decisions that the user (the learner) makes, the mental decision or mental action that the learner undertakes must be psychologically valid, that is, it must be clear to the learner when he or she is and is not engaging the strategy. Only psychologically valid strategies need to be considered for instruction. Second, strategies that are associated with improved, or expert, performance are those that need to be identified, modelled and practiced. Only success strategies need to be taught. Success strategies can be found through research of successful listeners – listeners who have made and are making progress in their listening ability.

Within studies of strategy training, there is broad agreement on the kinds of strategies that are frequently associated with successful listening. Five commonly recognized successful strategies are:

1. **predicting** information or ideas prior to listening
2. **making inferences** from incomplete information based on prior knowledge
3. **monitoring** one's own listening processes and relative success while listening
4. **clarifying** areas of confusion and
5. **responding** to what one has understood

Lecture- 07

Teaching and Researching Listening

Module-19

A METACOGNITIVE APPROACH TO LISTENING INSTRUCTION

What is Metacognition?

Metacognition is our ability to think about our own thinking or "cognition," and, by extension, to think about how we process information for a range of purposes and manage the way we do it. It is the ability to step back, as it were, from what occupies our mind at a particular moment in time to analyze and evaluate what we are thinking. The concept of metacognition was first applied to language learning by Wenden (1987) who articulated its role in developing learner autonomy and differentiating cognitive processes between learners. Wenden (1991) added a new dimension to the discussion of the good language learner by arguing that learners who are metacognitively aware are self-directed and can take charge of their own learning processes.

Metacognition enables us to be agents of our own thinking—individuals who can construct an understanding of themselves and the world around them, control their thoughts and behaviors, and monitor the consequences of these thoughts and behaviors. Learners who engage at the metacognitive level acquire a sense of agency as they gradually gain more control of their learning through effective steps in problem-solving and understand more of what is being learned. This sense of agency can develop the learners' self-concept, motivating them toward greater success.

Metacognitive awareness refers to a state of consciousness of our own thoughts as we focus on a particular cognitive or learning situation. According to Flavell (1979), it is demonstrated in at least two ways. The learner may experience a distinct thought or feeling apart from the regular train of thought, or the learner may retrieve something from stored knowledge in relation to the train of thought. A third way of demonstrating metacognitive awareness is the use of strategies for problem-solving, comprehension, and learning.

The **metacognitive framework** that we propose serves two important functions in language learning: (1) self-appraisal or knowledge about cognitive states and processes, and (2) self-management or control of cognition. Self-appraisal occurs through personal reflections about one's ability and means to meet the demands of a cognitive goal. Self-management is executive in nature and "helps to orchestrate cognitive aspects of problem solving". These two functions of metacognition have continued to find support within current scholarly efforts to develop a unified understanding of the concept of metacognition.

To address these functions, the metacognitive framework draws on three components: experience, knowledge, and strategies (see Figure below). As a description of a learner, one can say that metacognitive awareness helps learners become self-knowing, self-directed, and self-managed in their learning.

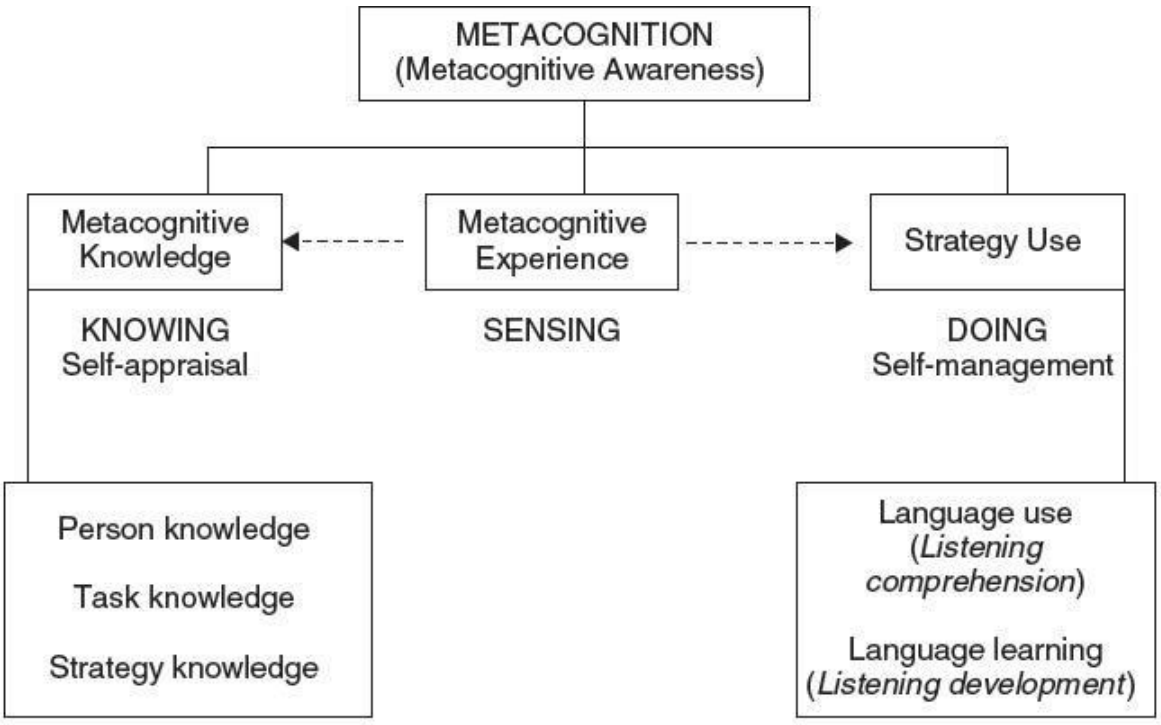


Figure A Metacognitive Framework for Listening Instruction

Metacognitive Knowledge

Learners store three kinds of knowledge about cognition: person, task, and strategy. This knowledge is "similar in structure and function to other kinds of knowledge in long-term memory".

Person knowledge is knowledge about how a particular individual learns and the various factors that affect that individual's learning. Person knowledge includes what we know about ourselves as learners and the beliefs we have about what leads to success or failure in learning. An individual's person knowledge determines his or her self-concept. For example, language learners who often experience listening problems in interactive listening may develop a strong belief that they are poor listeners and may therefore try to avoid such situations.

The second type of metacognitive knowledge is **task knowledge**, which is knowledge about the purpose, demands, and nature of learning tasks. It includes knowing how to approach and complete a real-life listening task. In the case of listening comprehension, task knowledge also includes knowing about features of different types of spoken texts, such as the respective discourse structures, grammatical forms, and phonological features of words and phrases as they appear in connected speech.

The third type of metacognitive knowledge is **strategy knowledge**: that is, knowing which strategies can be used to accomplish a specific goal, be it achieving comprehension in a specific communicative context or improving one's listening ability after one term of study. Strategy knowledge can be distinguished from strategy use in that the former is limited to knowing about strategies.

Strategy Use

The third component of metacognition is an individual's ability to use appropriate strategies to achieve cognitive, social, and affective goals. Strategy use is the deployment of specific procedures or actions to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-regulated, more effective, or more transferable to new situations. Strategy use builds on strategy knowledge; it includes awareness of when and how to use specific strategies.

On the whole, learners who have good strategic knowledge are also more likely to use strategies. Strategies contribute directly to language learning as well as language use. Learners use strategies to achieve comprehension goals, particularly when they have limited ability to understand what they hear. Strategies help them improve comprehension, retention, and recall of information; and, at the same time, they assist in planning for overall listening development as part of their language learning effort.

Figure The Relationship Between Strategy Knowledge and Strategy Use

Some key characteristics of learner strategies, which also apply to listening strategies, are listed as follows:

- Strategies are conscious behaviors involving cognitive, social, and affective processes.
- The use of strategies is managed by metacognition.
- The amount of attention learners give to strategies they employ varies according to different factors.
- Strategies are mainly employed in an interactive and orchestrated manner to form a network of processes for achieving better comprehension or learning outcomes, but sometimes individual strategies are used.
- Some strategies contribute to language development directly while others may not.
- The quality and use of strategies by individual learners is influenced by internal and external factors.
- At the macro-level, strategies are viewed as a general strategic approach to a task, and at the micro-level as specific strategies for realizing that approach.
- Knowledge about and use of strategies can be jointly constructed and managed by learners working together.

L2 Listener Metacognitive Knowledge

Language learners demonstrate various degrees of metacognitive knowledge about themselves as L2 listeners and the listening process. Several recent studies have shown that metacognitive knowledge can be increased through classroom instruction, and that weak listeners stand to benefit the most in terms of proficiency improvement.

How does metacognitive awareness influence the outcome of listening comprehension? One way is that it influences the manner in which learners approach the tasks of listening and learning to listen. Learners who have appropriate task knowledge better plan, monitor, and evaluate what they do, compared with those who approach listening in a random or incidental manner. What language learners know about their learning often directly affects the process and the outcome of their learning. For example, learners' perceptions of the demands of listening tasks and strategies, as well as their own abilities and interests, can lead them to select, evaluate, modify or even abandon plans, goals, tasks, and strategies.

Metacognitive Instruction

Metacognitive instruction refers to pedagogical procedures that enable learners to increase awareness of the listening process by developing richer metacognitive knowledge about themselves as listeners, the nature and demands of listening, and strategies for listening. At the same time, learners also learn to plan, monitor, and evaluate their comprehension efforts and the progress of their overall listening development. Metacognitive instruction will enable learners to become better learners of listening as they take positive action to self-regulate their learning. When integrated with well-planned listening tasks, metacognitive activities can be an effective way to improve listening proficiency and learner motivation.

Text-oriented and communication-oriented instruction focuses mainly on the product of comprehension, and learner-oriented listening instruction tends to focus narrowly on cognitive strategy instruction in the classroom. Metacognitive instruction is learner-oriented and addresses more aspects of learning by focusing on both cognitive and social variables and processes that affect listening success. It increases awareness of variables and processes that may seem a mystery to learners, who are often left to figure out how to learn to listen on their own.

Metacognitive instruction ensures that learners develop greater metacognitive knowledge and more effective strategy use through systematic and principled planning of learning activities. In other words, it enables learners to engage in self-appraisal and self-management activities that are supported and guided by teachers.

Metacognitive instruction creates a continuous cycle of learning. It typically begins in the classroom where listening Module s are conducted. Through carefully designed tasks, the teacher engages learners in thinking and learning about how to listen.

Objectives of Metacognitive Instruction

Like all instruction, metacognitive instruction will only be relevant and useful to learners if teachers have clear objectives. Metacognitive activities enable learners to enjoy scaffolded learning

experiences in which novices receive guidance, support, and feedback from their teachers, who are the experts. When learners make their mental processes explicit in discussion with a peer, and then track, monitor, and evaluate their own listening development, they will see the benefits of engaging in these metacognitive processes and be more motivated to continue using them.

Metacognitive Processes

Metacognitive instruction in L2 listening refers to pedagogical methods that increase learner awareness about the listening process. In particular, it develops richer metacognitive knowledge about the nature and demands of listening and strategies for listening. Through metacognitive instruction, learners become more skilled in using the following processes: (1) planning for the activity; (2) monitoring comprehension; (3) solving comprehension problems; and (4) evaluating the approach and outcomes. The result is improvement in overall ability to listen.

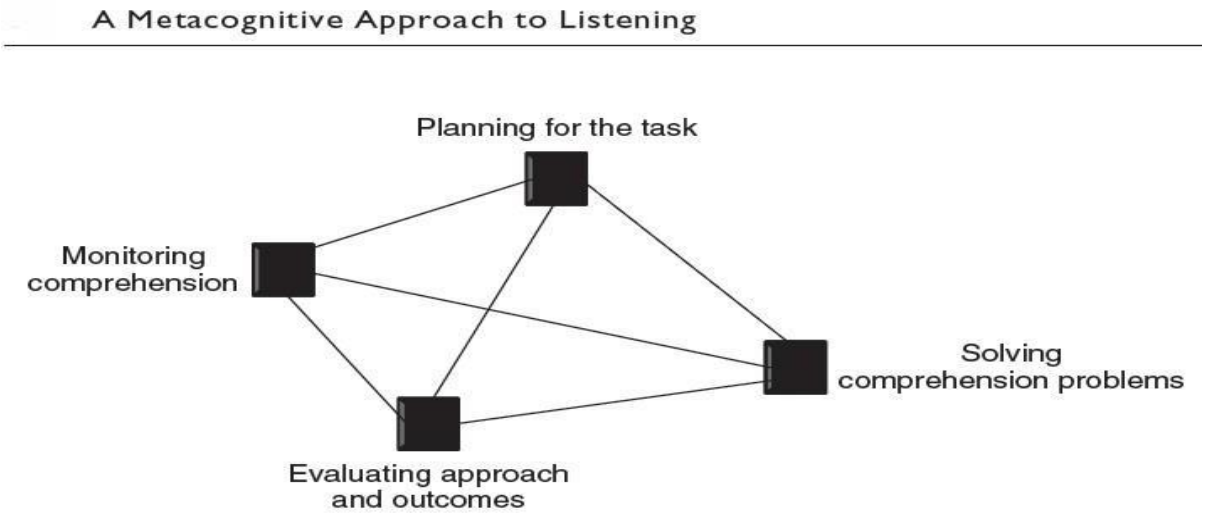


Figure Metacognitive Listening Processes and Their Interaction

Metacognitive Pedagogical Sequence

The metacognitive pedagogical sequence can develop awareness of the process of one-way listening, and help listeners acquire the metacognitive knowledge critical to success in comprehension and in becoming self-regulated listeners. It builds on knowledge about skilled L2 listeners comprehension instruction in cognitive psychology and the development of self-regulated language learners. This sequence involves the orchestration of metacognitive processes and other pertinent comprehension strategies, most notably inferencing and elaboration.

Metacognitive instruction adopts a process-based approach to instill in learners (1) knowledge about themselves as listeners (person knowledge); (2) the inherent complexities of L2 listening in relationship to task demands (task knowledge); and (3) effective listening strategies (strategy knowledge). The goal is to open up avenues to regulate listening comprehension and, ultimately, achieve greater success in L2 listening.

Impact of the Pedagogical Sequence on Listening Performance

A high degree of metacognitive knowledge is a mental characteristic shared by successful learners; in fact, metacognition accounts for a relatively high percentage of variance in learning performance. There is extensive evidence that learners' metacognition can directly affect the process and the outcome of their learning. Research shows that it is positively linked to motivation and self-efficacy and that it can help learners regulate their comprehension. There is, indeed, a strong theoretical basis for arguing that this pedagogical sequence can enhance listening success.

Metacognitive Instructional Activities

Integrated experiential listening tasks weave metacognitive awareness-raising activities with listening comprehension activities. Through these tasks, learners can experience the cognitive and social-affective processes of listening comprehension and at the same time practice their listening comprehension skills.

Metacognitive activities for listening can also include language-focused activities, in which learners examine the linguistic features of a listening text from an earlier listening task. Such activities can help learners develop better task knowledge—in particular, knowledge about spoken texts. Integrated experiential listening tasks can also take the form of learning extension tasks that are carried out after formal instruction time; these extensive listening tasks require learners to work together to co-construct metacognitive knowledge about listening.

The second type of metacognitive instructional activities aims to help learners plan and evaluate their learning. The purpose in using guided reflections is to elicit learners' implicit knowledge about L2 listening and to encourage them to construct new knowledge, as they make sense of their own listening experiences. These activities are used mainly as stand-alone activities after class, but they can also be adapted for use with other activities in a listening Module , before or after listening tasks. These specially designed reflective activities, initiated by the teacher, require learners to set aside time to plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening and learning experiences. These activities, which direct attention to specific aspects of learning, enable learners to reflect on their listening performance and overall progress.

Module-20

A METACOGNITIVE APPROACH TO LISTENING: TASK-BASED LISTENING MODULE S

Listening, unlike writing, speaking, and even reading, is typically done in real time where the input is transient and there is little record of what happens during listening. Teachers therefore find it difficult to teach listening in the way they teach the other language skills.

Listening Comprehension Tasks

According to Willis (1996, 2005), a task is an activity in which learners use language for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome. By focusing on learning activities and communication goals, task-based listening Module s foreground the importance of comprehending meaning during listening. Teachers need to have a principled and systematic way of designing tasks that supports learners in their comprehension. They need to engage learners cognitively and affectively by motivating them to pay attention to meaning and to use strategies and skills to achieve comprehension. Listening tasks should also offer opportunities to develop core skills such as listen for details, listen for global understanding, listen for main ideas, listen and draw inferences, listen and make predictions, and listen selectively.

Skills are what we use to carry out a task without much conscious attention. Strategies, on the other hand, are controlled and require effort; they are activated according to the purpose of the task. Learners employ strategies when they encounter difficulty in comprehending input or when they have to manipulate their cognitive processes or manage their affect. Language learners use both skills and strategies according to the degree of challenge they encounter and the purpose for listening. Typically, if the input is something they can easily manage, learners will demonstrate better proficiency in comprehension by using a variety of listening skills that are similar to those used by competent listeners.

In everyday listening events, listeners often combine the six core skills in different ways to understand the meaning in the input. The skills used to achieve comprehension are mainly influenced by the purpose for listening.

One-way Listening

One-way listening tasks do not require learners to interact with a speaker. The goal is to understand a text they hear according to specified communicative purposes. Two types of listening texts can be used for one way listening: direct and indirect authentic listening texts. Examples of direct authentic listening texts include lectures, talks, radio broadcasts, podcasts, TV programs, and movies that are aimed at a general audience. In such situations, learners engage directly with the speaker(s): that is to say, they respond to the speaker(s) and the message overtly or covertly because they are the ones being addressed. With indirect authentic listening texts, however, learners play the role of "overhearers" of the conversations and other exchanges in an interaction where they are not a participant.

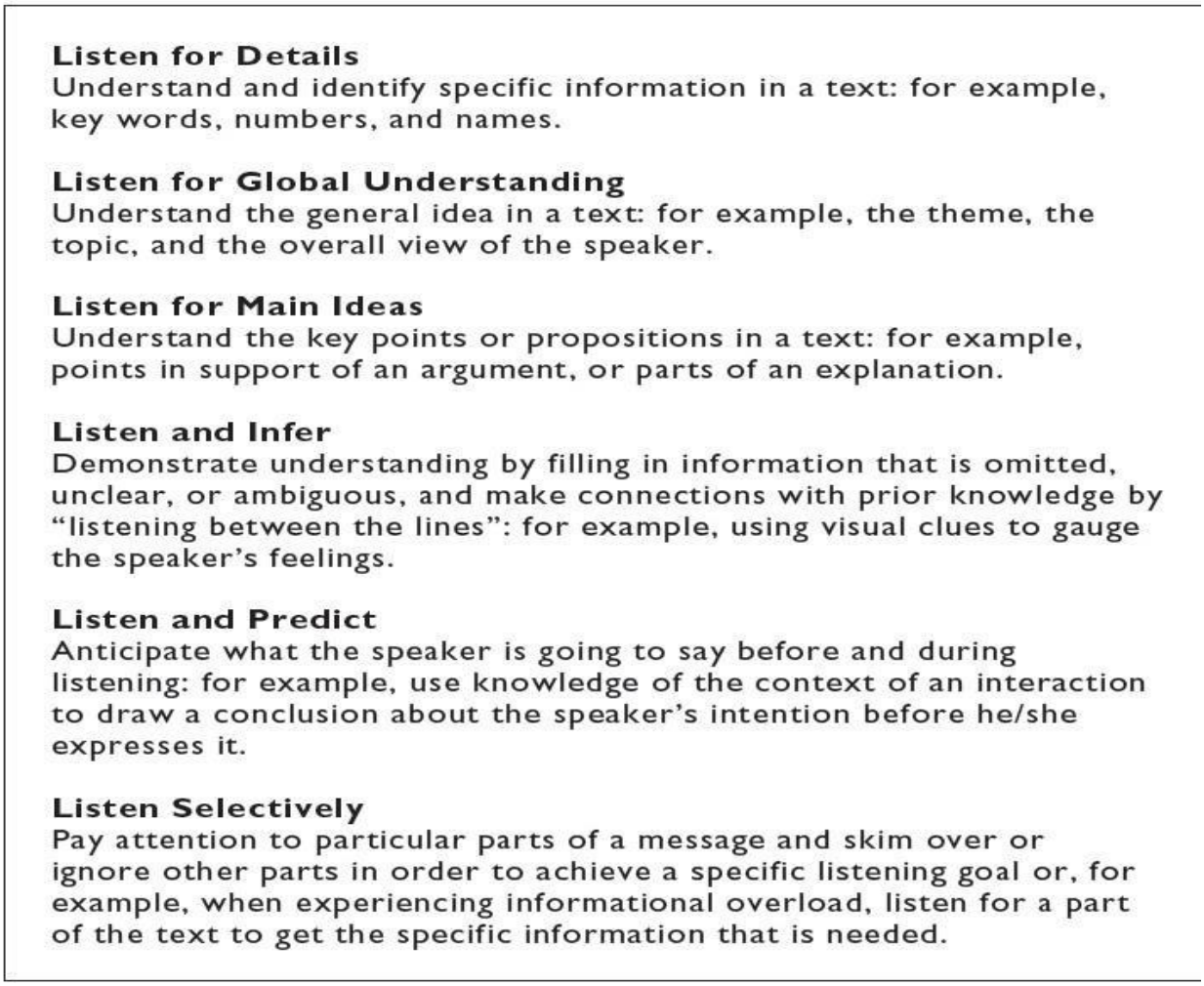


Figure . Core Skills for Listening Comprehension

Most one-way listening tasks require little teacher intervention once the tasks are planned and the accompanying listening materials, such as worksheets, checklists, and templates for note-taking, are prepared. It is important to ensure that appropriate listening texts are selected so that learners find the task manageable and interesting. Selecting texts that are easy for students may have the short-term benefit of building up their confidence, but in the long term texts with some degree of challenge should be included so that learners also get opportunities to learn to apply listening strategies.

One-way listening tasks rely heavily on texts to develop listening competence. It is therefore important that texts are carefully selected for this purpose. As a general principle, it is beneficial to use authentic materials as frequently as possible. Authentic materials for listening are texts that have not been produced or scripted for the purpose of language teaching but are recordings of natural speech taken from everyday sources where speech is produced (Underwood, 1989). Authentic materials for one-way listening can be found in a number of sources, such as videos, radio and television broadcasts, songs, audio recordings, CD ROMs, the internet, and situations in which speech is performed, such as drama and poetry recitals.

Interactive Listening Tasks

Interactive listening requires learners to engage in face-to-face interactions where they often alternate between the roles of listener and speaker. As listeners, learners will have opportunities to seek clarifications and improve their comprehension in other ways. Interactive listening tasks normally involve talk with a broad range of purposes of an interactional or transactional nature (Brown & Yule, 1983). The purpose of interactional talk is to create and maintain relationships between participants. The turns are generally short and more equally distributed among the participants. Transactional talk, on the other hand, focuses on giving and receiving information; the speaker who is giving the information does most of the talking while the listener may ask questions or give comments during or after listening. In some situations, both types of talk occur in the same interaction, but in all situations the learner alternates between the role of listener and speaker.

Interactive listening tasks reflect the contextual conditions under which people normally communicate: there is a clear purpose and the participants' goal is to ensure that meaning is understood and necessary information is shared successfully. In social interactions, participants may also work towards greater solidarity and mutual understanding among themselves. In interactive listening tasks, listening and speaking skills are practiced in an integrated manner: learners need to cooperate with one another to accomplish the task. Typical tasks include activities with a gap in knowledge between participants.

Developing Process-Based Module s from Listening Tasks

While an interesting task is an important component of a good listening Module , it has to be complemented by other process-based learning activities that support learners in processing input for meaning. In addition, activities that apply, synthesize, and extend the knowledge they have gained are needed to make listening more purposeful and directed. Last but not least, process-based Module s should include metacognitive activities through which learners deepen their understanding of how to facilitate and improve listening comprehension.

Pre-listening Activities

Pre-listening activities are carried out before an actual listening task to prepare learners for listening. The rationale is based on our understanding of how prior knowledge or schema about facts and language can assist individuals in processing any kind of information encountered. Pre-listening activities retrieve existing knowledge and create new knowledge to help learners process listening input more efficiently when they eventually encounter it during the listening task.

Post-listening Activities

Post-listening activities, as the name suggests, are carried out after a listening task to extend the communicative listening outcomes. These activities are useful for increasing the authenticity of the overall listening task, particularly when the listener response is not something that people would normally do when listening, such as filling in blanks. Post-listening activities can also provide an opportunity for learners to notice specific language in the input they heard, thus helping to facilitate their overall

acquisition of the target language. Opportunities for reflection and evaluation can also be included as post-listening activities.

Module s that Promote Authentic Listening and Metacognitive Awareness

Normally teachers start by determining the skills and strategies that they want learners to practice and then plan a Module to practice those skills. Another common approach is to select a text, decide what to do with it, and plan activities that can be used to achieve that purpose. While these two approaches are useful in their own ways, there is an alternative way of planning that starts with the communication goal for listening in mind. The goal can be aligned to the theme of a unit of work or a higher instructional objective for the unit. By beginning with the listening outcome and the communication goal, teacher focuses on creating an authentic listening experience for learners.

The term "Module " is used to refer to any coherent unit of learning activities that engages learners in a systematic and principled manner, carried out over an appointed duration in a day. The duration may vary, however, according to different learning contexts and requirements. Figure given below shows the process of designing a listening Module , comprising eight stages, starting from the listening outcome and the communication goal for the Module .

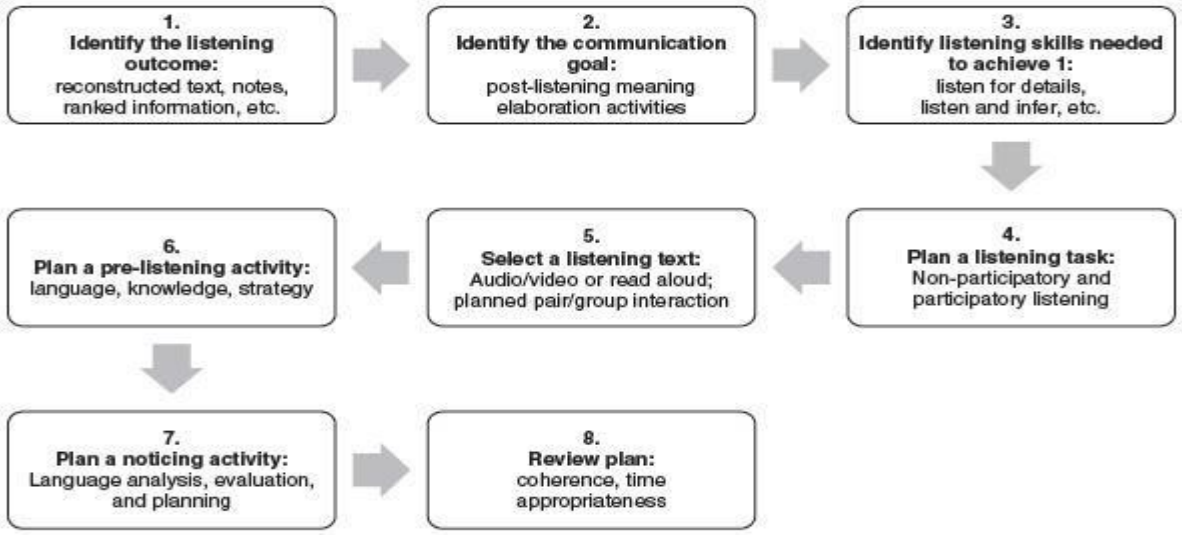


Figure Designing an Authentic Listening Lesson

Pre-listening activity	• Is there one? • Does it focus on language, knowledge or strategy? • Is this a useful activity for the main listening activity that learners have to do?
Listening task	• Are the skills needed to accomplish this task made explicit? • Does it have a communicative purpose? • If a recorded text is used, does it fulfill some or all of the criteria presented in this chapter?
Post-listening activity	• Is there one? • Does it focus on knowledge, language or metacognitive knowledge? • Does it provide a clear communication goal for using the information and knowledge from listening?

Figure Evaluating the Authenticity of Listening Experiences in Prescribed Materials

The metacognitive dimension of the Module must not be overlooked. Pre- and post-listening phases of a Module can also offer opportunities for metacognitive development by including activities that help to activate strategy use for comprehension and encourage reflections on learning. These types of metacognitive activities do not have to be included in every Module but they should be done regularly.

Module-21

LISTENING ASSESSMENT

Defining the Social and Educational Context for Assessment

Listening is a complex ability with receptive, constructive, interactive, and transformative aspects. If we intend to assess listening in a comprehensive way, we need some means of describing a person's ability that reflects all of these aspects. The inherent difficulty with assessing listening, of course, is that it is primarily a cognitive activity and is not readily observable by objective measures.

This difficulty of direct access means that any assessment of listening must employ indirect measures, always at some degree removed from the actual psycholinguistic processes we wish to describe. The primary means of assessing listening is therefore to observe the various language activities that the learner is engaged in while listening, and to create qualitative descriptors and quantitative measures that have an acceptable degree of **validity.** The concept of validity refers to an agreement on what is being assessed, both in broad and narrow terms. A starting point for considering validity is constructing a broad, contextual model for what is being assessed.

When preparing forms of assessment and means of reporting, and making use of the results of assessment, it is important to understand the context in which the language is being learned, the goals of students in learning, and the potential social and political impact that any kind of **high-stakes assessment** will have on the students.

Developing Criteria and Constructs

What is to be assessed can refer to both a **criterion** that represents a correlation with some standard of success and a **construct** that represents the underlying quality or trait that the assessment intends to measure. Criteria and constructs are related, but they do not technically refer to the same thing. The attempt to reconcile criterion-referenced assessment and construct-referenced assessment approaches has long been a source of concern in language assessment circles.

In defining validity for language tests, two main types of arguments have been used: **criterion-referenced** or **construct-referenced**. Criterion-referencing arguments aim to predict that if a student does well on a given test (passes the criterion cut-off point), he or she will also exhibit the abilities and skills necessary to perform successfully on specific tasks outside of the specific test context, in the wider target domain. For language testing, this is the **Target Language Use**, or **TLU**, **domain**. An example of criterion referencing is the prediction that a person who performs well on the TOEFL listening test will subsequently perform well in listening to academic lectures at an English-medium university. This type of criterion-referenced validity has come to be emphasized as part of a movement toward a more socially relevant **evidence-centered assessment** design.

While criterion-referenced validity is mainly concerned with external measures and standards, **construct-referenced validity** is most concerned with direct evidence that a particular ability has been successfully demonstrated.

With any form of language testing, including testing of listening ability, we need to consider a combination of these approaches in order to claim validity. Any listening test will to some extent measure a learner's general language knowledge and general comprehension ability, in addition to the listening ability we seek to measure. This principle of necessary overlap in listening between **top-level (general) abilities** and **bottom-level (skill-specific) abilities** has been established in the language testing field.

Using a procedure called **Rule-Space Methodology (RSM)**, a statistical method for classifying examinees' test item responses on a test that are aimed at measuring different cognitive skills) Buck and Tatsuoka were able to isolate fifteen attributes for TOEFL test takers that accounted for virtually all of the **variance** in test takers' performance. The **top-level attributes** (i.e. generalizable to all language skills) included:

- the ability to recognize the task by deciding what constitutes task-relevant information
- the ability to use previous items to locate information
- the ability to identify relevant information without explicit markers
- the ability to make inferences and to incorporate background knowledge into text processing
- the ability to draw on one's grammatical knowledge, lexical knowledge, socio-pragmatic knowledge

The **bottom-level attributes** (i.e. specific to listening) included:

- the ability to scan fast spoken text automatically and in real time
- the ability to process dense information
- the ability to understand and utilize prosodic stress
- the ability to recognize and use redundancy

There are five attributes that are commonly claimed to represent listening-specific attributes of language ability:

- **Phonological knowledge** of the sound system of the language, including phonemes, phonological rules, prosodic elements; ability to process speech quickly.
- **Syntactic knowledge** of sentence- and discourse-level rules, structures, and cohesion; ability to perform accurate parsing quickly
- **Semantic knowledge** of words, lexical phrases, word categories, semantic relationships between lexical items; ability to perform semantic calculations (e.g. identifying synonyms and superordinate relationships between words) quickly
- **Pragmatic knowledge** of how fluent users of the language communicate, including use of formulaic expressions, gambits, indirectness, and ellipsis (omission of mutually understood information)
- **General knowledge** of commonly discussed topics and common human relationships, and the general knowledge of the world (history, geography, science, math), knowledge of how to utilise one's knowledge in testing situation

- (For the interview portion of tests) **interactive pragmatic knowledge,** including activation of phonological, syntactic, semantic knowledge in real-time interactions, real-time inferencing and updating representations; responding to interlocutor questions and feedback without lengthy pauses, employing **repair strategies for misunderstandings**.

Formulating a Model of Listening for Assessment

The image below provides a general map of listening ability and shows its overlap with general language ability.

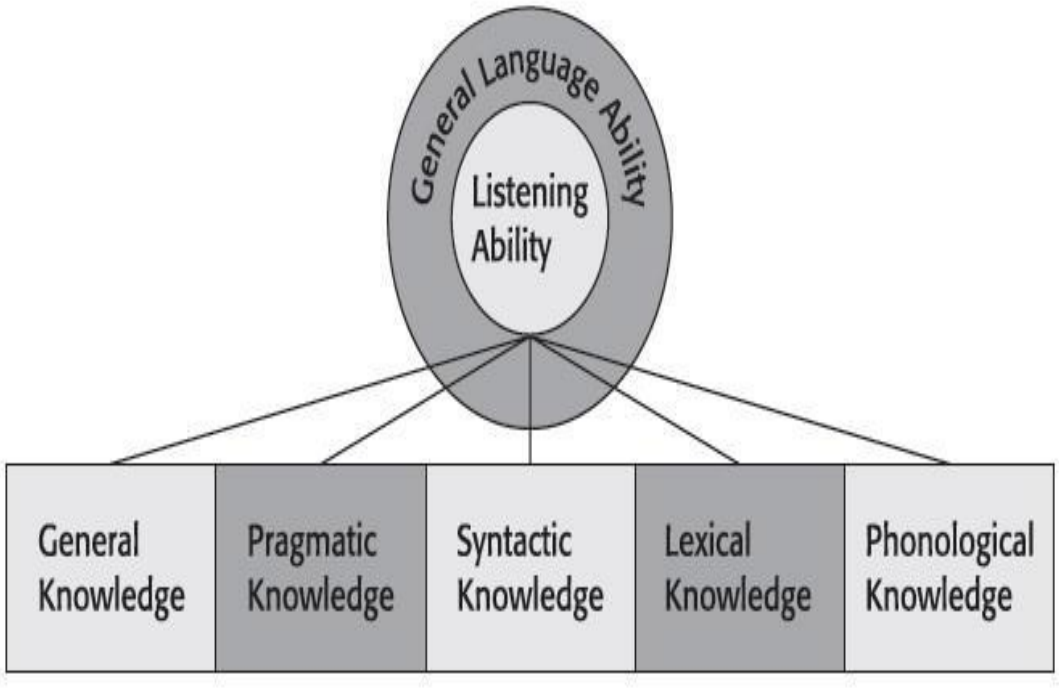


Figure 10.1 *General language ability and listening ability*. Listening ability is a sub-set of general language ability. Any assessment of listening ability will also be assessing general language ability

The image given below provides additional detail for the components in the model.

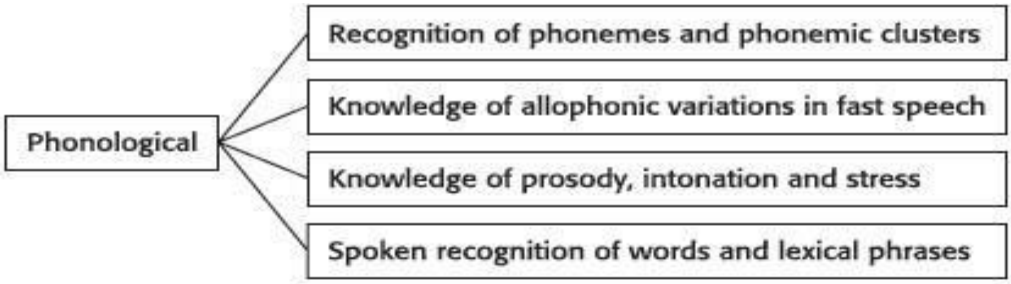


Figure 10.2 *Phonological knowledge* consists of knowledge of phonemes, allophonic variation, prosody, intonation, and stress. It also includes the application of this knowledge to recognise words in the stream of speech

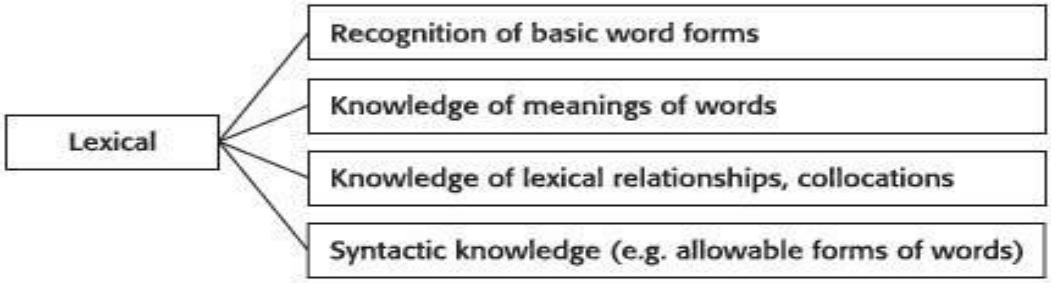


Figure 10.3 *Lexical knowledge* encompasses knowing the means of words and their relationships to other words and collocations

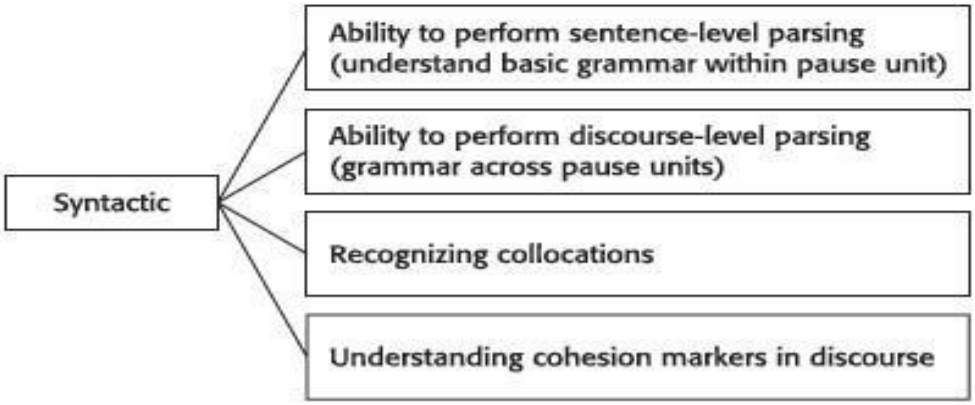
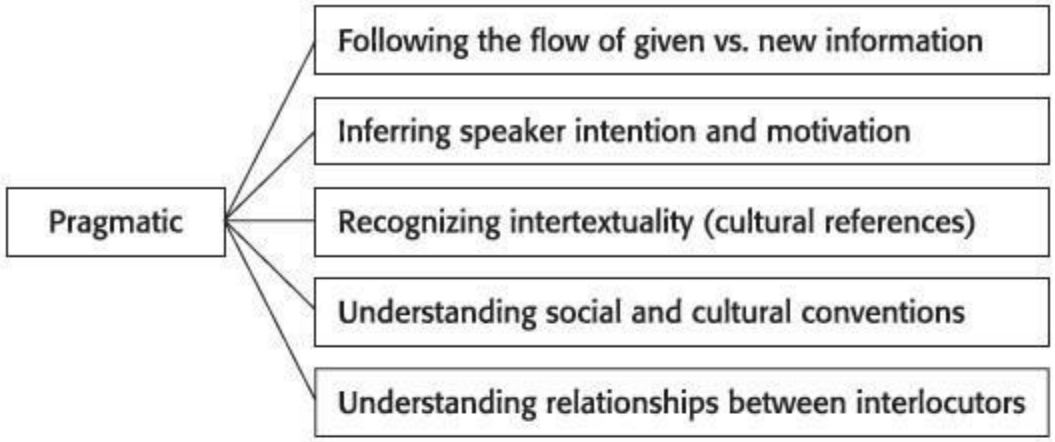


Figure *Syntactic knowledge* is based on ability to parse speech at sentence and discourse levels



Figur *Pragmatic knowledge* includes recognition of social dimensions in speech

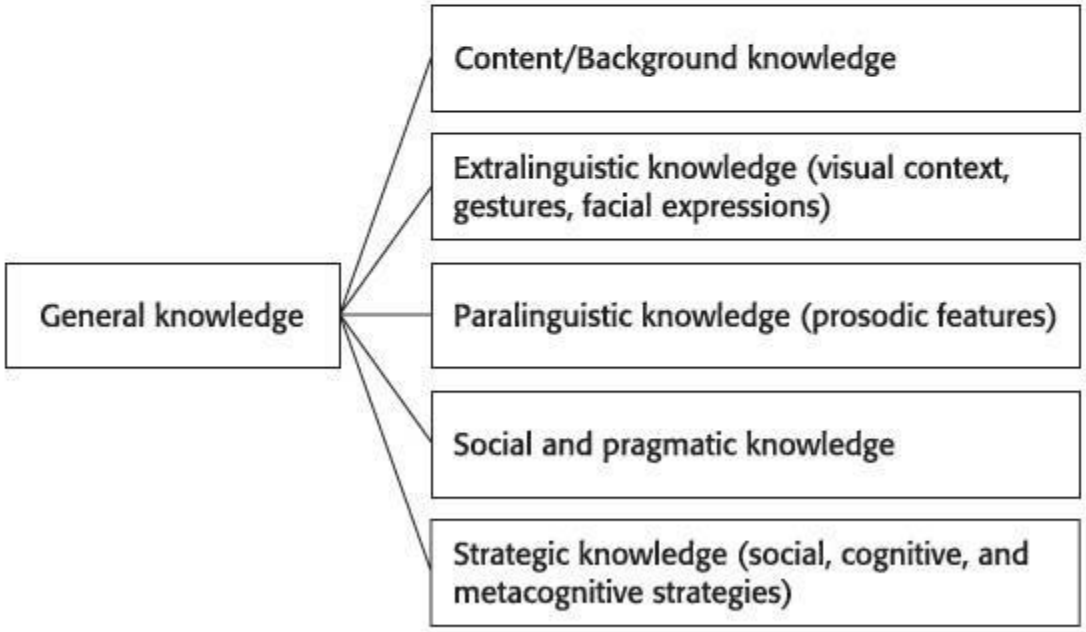


Figure *General knowledge* includes knowledge about the world, including the ways that people communicate

Creating Forms of Assessment

Form of assessment refers to the materials, including any media (audio, video, text), the general procedures and rubric for taking the test or participating in the assessment, and the means of scoring the assessment. Commonly used forms of assessment include the following:

Discrete item tests

- Multiple-choice questions following a listening text (scoring response right or wrong).
- Open questions following presentation of a listening text (scoring questions on a scale of 'correctness' and 'completeness').

Task-based tests

- Tasks involving making an appropriate non-verbal action in response to a listening text.
- Closed task involving single response
- Open tasks involving multiple responses:
  - Tasks involving making an appropriate non-verbal action in response to a listening text.

Integrative tests

- Memory test following or during listening to an extract, e.g. taking notes or summarizing of a lecture (scoring on a scale of accuracy and inclusion of facts and ideas).
- Dictation, complete or partial (scoring based on correct suppliance of missing words).

Communicative tests

- Written communicative tasks involving listening (scoring on the basis of successful completion of a task, such as writing a complaint letter after hearing a description of a problem).
- Oral tasks involving listening (scoring on the basis of successful completion of the task, such as following directions on a map).

Interview tests

- Face-to-face performances with the teacher or another student (scoring based on a checklist of items, such as appropriate response to questions, appropriate use of clarification questions).
- Extended oral interviews (scoring keyed to a scale of 'native-like' behaviors, such as the Foreign Service Institute scale).

Self-assessment

- Learner rates self on given criteria, via questionnaires or checklists, during or following listening activities.
- Learner provides holistic assessment of own abilities via oral or written journal entries.

Portfolio assessment

- Learner is observed and evaluated periodically throughout course on performance in tasks and other class activities (see illustration box: Contemporary Topics); observations may be audio or video recorded
- Portfolio may include any or all of the above types of objective and subjective measures.

Adjusting Factors That Influence Test Performance

Assessment researchers have identified several factors that tend to influence listening test performance. It is demonstrated that how the nature of the input (video versus audio, speech rate, complexity of input) and response type (item type and openness of response options) are likely to

influence performance and interpretation of test results. The following table shows the factors that influence test performance.

Table Factors influencing test performance

FACTOR	DESCRIPTION	PREDICTION
Medium of the input	Video or audio-only presentation; accompaniment with graphics or text enhancements	Enhancements tend to improve test taker performance, such as video presentation, graphic cues, text subtitling or selective captioning
Nature of the input	Dialect, speech rate, length, background, propositional density, amount of redundancy	Unfamiliar dialect, faster speech rate, increased length and proposition density, decreased redundancy will influence test performance negatively
Nature of the assessment task	Use of visual context, amount of context given, clarity of instructions, availability of question preview, type of thinking processes involved	Lack of visual context, lessening of contextual information, ambiguous instructions, absence of question preview, requirement for higher-order thinking processes will influence test performance negatively
Individual listener factors	Memory, interest, background knowledge, motivation, readiness to take the test	Test taker with limited memory skills, limited interest in test topics or the test itself, limited background knowledge with test topics or the test itself, limited motivation to perform well, will negatively impact test performance

Listener Preparation for Listening Tests

Because individual factors, such as motivation and familiarity with test formats, do affect test performance, a number of instructional approaches and even testing institutions are preparing guidelines to help students perform well on tests.

Educational Testing Service (ETS) publishes their own tips for students preparing to take the TOEFL test. Preparing students for high-stakes tests involves three major factors:

- **Self-management:** An understanding of how to build and conserve mental, emotional, and physical energy and when to use this energy; the use of strategies for dealing with difficult, pressurized, or ambiguous situations.
- **Test-wiseness:** An understanding of the testing process and the underlying aims of each part of a test and each item within a test; strategies for answering questions efficiently.
- **Mastery of knowledge base:** An acquisition of the knowledge and skills required to perform well on the test.

Assessing Listening Proficiency in Oral Interview Tests

An essential element in assessing second language listening performance is evaluating a learner's ability in interactive settings in which goal-oriented oral communication is required. Because these settings often cannot be readily replicated for testing purposes, evaluators typically rely on some form of oral interview as a sample of the learner's oral and interaction ability. In an oral interview test (often called OPI, for Oral Proficiency Interview), the test candidate is placed in the role of the listener and is expected to respond (as quickly and completely as possible) to the interviewer's prompts, which are usually questions (e.g. *What kind of work do you do?*) or open-ended invitations to talk about suggested topics (e.g. *Tell me more about your job.*).

While the OPI ostensibly resembles natural conversation, it has been shown that such interviews lack the prototypical aspects of conversation, such as features of conversational involvement and symmetry. Interview tests are being designed as testing tasks with the tasks being closely associated with specific situations and goal-oriented and involving active participation of the language user.

Accommodation and Control Features in Oral Proficiency Interviews

May (2009) studied the features of accommodation and control used in oral interviews. As a means of raising awareness of discourse moves that contribute to perceptions of well-formed oral discourse, Berwick and Ross (1996) have developed a descriptive system for the accommodation and control features that are observed in the OPI.

Accommodation

- Display question. The interviewer asks for information which is already known to the interviewer or which the interviewer believes the interviewee ought to know.
- Comprehension check. The interviewer checks on the interviewee's current understanding of the topic or of the interviewer's immediately preceding utterance.
- Clarification request. The interviewer asks for a restatement of an immediately preceding utterance produced by the interviewee.
- Or-question. The interviewer asks a question and immediately provides one or more options from which the interviewee may choose an answer.
- Fronting. The interviewer provides one or more utterances to foreground a topic and set the stage for the interviewee's response.

- Grammatical. The interviewer modifies the syntactic or simplification semantic structure of an utterance so as to facilitate comprehension.
- Slowdown. The interviewer reduces the speed of an utterance.
- Over-articulation. The interviewer exaggerates the pronunciation of words and phrases.
- Other-expansion. The interviewer draws on the perceived meaning of the interviewee's utterance and elaborates on words or phrases within the utterance.
- Lexical simplification. The interviewer chooses what is assumed to be a simpler form of a word or phrase which the interviewer believes the interviewee is unable to comprehend.

Control

- Topic nomination. The interviewer proposes a new topic by foregrounding information not previously introduced in the discourse. This typically leads to a question which may be introduced by informative statements and which requires no link to previous topic development
- Topic abandonment. The interviewer unilaterally ends a current topic even though the interviewee may still show evidence of interest in further development.
- Self-expansion. The interviewer extends and alters the content of the interviewer's immediately preceding utterance so as to accomplish interview objectives.
- Propositional. The interviewer refocuses the interviewee's reformulation attention on a previously nominated topic or issue which has not produced enough language to confirm a rating for the interviewee.

Module-22

RESEARCHING AND EXPLORING LISTENING

Sociolinguistic Orientations

A sociolinguistic orientation to listening research is primarily concerned with the listener's role in any language use situation. What exactly is the listener doing? Does the listener have goals and plans? How is the listener formulating and enacting these goals and plans during the interaction? How are the participants influencing the listener? These are key questions that arise in a sociolinguistic orientation to research.

Sociolinguistics is concerned with the relationship between language use and social factors. The projects of sociolinguistic orientation explore factors as setting, function and relationships between participants. Researching listening from a sociolinguistic perspective also concerns ways in which our cultural background influence how we listen. Specifically, it ask how do listeners attend to, select, amplify, clarify, and possibly distort aspects of events as they listen and recall what they have heard.

The projects in sociolinguistic orientation explore

- **Listener perspective,** the notion that our cultural background provides certain schematic overlays that influence how we comprehend events and how we internally structure and report those events;
- **Listener participation**, the ways in which conversational encounters are co-created with listeners, who display various patterns of participation
- **Listener response**, the options the listener chooses from during a listening event and how these responses shape the event, give meaning to it, and contribute to the listener's competence
- **Listeners in cross-cultural interactions,** an exploration of ways in which L1–L1 interactions parallel and differ from L1–L2 and L2–L2 interactions. Partial communication and miscommunication can often be attributed to differences in communicative style and, violations of expected discourse structures, as well as to limited command of the linguistic code.

listener plays a vital role in creating the meaning in all discourse situations – whether directly, as in the **two-way discourse** of face-to-face interaction, or indirectly, as in **audience design** used in preparing one-way discourse such as media programmes.

Psycholinguistic Orientations

A psycholinguistic orientation to listening research focuses on the listener's cognitive processing. What types of knowledge must the listener have? How is the listener decoding the input, comprehending messages, building meaning, encoding meaning in memory? These are the types of questions that come up in this orientation to research.

Because psycholinguistics is concerned with cognitive processing, the projects of this orientation explore aural perception and the ways in which listeners' process for deficient or missing parts of the input, comprehension. Psycholinguistic orientation examines the encoding processes in memory – how

we store what we have understood for later retrieval – and also recall processes for reactivating what was previously understood. Listening strategies are also explored, which are ways of compensatory for distorted and partially encoded input.

Listener processing of speech, the ways in which the speech signal itself is perceived **bottom-up speech processing** involves accurate perception of the speech signal, so that the listener can decode what was said into words and grammatical units. Because bottom up perception is never entirely accurate or complete – even for L1 listeners – developing confidence in one's ability at oral perception is a persistent challenge for L2 learners. Habitual patterns in phonological perception, due to one's L1, and lack of familiarity with L2 prosodic patterns often lead to mishearing.

Listener memory, the process by which listeners draws on long-term memory, including cultural schemata, to interpret speech. Comprehension and memory are interrelated. All comprehension draws upon memory – linguistic memory and semantic memory – so if memory does not serve the listener well, comprehension will be unstable. Similarly, because measures of comprehension entail both recalling what was understood and producing a representation in speech or writing, comprehension and production are interrelated. The purpose of this project is to explore ways in which we comprehend long texts, and how we report our understanding.

Listener misunderstandings are the types of mishearing and misinterpretations that the listener and speaker create. Misunderstandings are a common feature of communication, and it most go undetected or are never addressed because they do not reach a critical level at which the communication breaks down. When breakdowns do occur, competent listeners know how to address misunderstandings strategically. Skilled listeners can address misunderstanding without loss of face to either the speaker or listener, which entails not attributing fault to either party, but rather focusing on the repair itself.

Listener strategies, the options the listener chooses from during a listening event and how these responses shape the event, give meaning to it, and contribute to the listener's competence. As listeners, we all have the capability of monitoring our own comprehension and making decisions about how to adjust our attention. However, there appear to be constraints on this process and limits to its effectiveness.

Developmental Orientations

A developmental orientation to listening research concerns both sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of listening, and focuses on how the person's listening ability develops over time. What aspects of listening ability are developing most quickly? Which are developing least effectively? Is there regression in any area? What factors seem to promote development? What factors seem to retard development?

Developmental orientation described approaches and methods for developing listening in a range of contexts, and recommended principles to apply in teaching, curriculum development, and assessment. Three of the projects in this section explore ways of selecting designing tasks, activities, and courses for language learners

Academic listening is type of extensive listening, although it has some characteristics which make it unique. In academic listening contexts, primarily school and university settings, the listener (the

student) is expected to interact with multiple sources of knowledge and to form collaborative relationship with other students. The listener is expected to use multiple sources of knowledge, only some of which are lecture situations, to help build mastery of a set of concepts in a particular domain and to demonstrate a degree of mastery of that content

Listening materials include the input materials, accompanying tasks and means of assessment and feedback. The project is designed to be of use when materials for a course or for learners are already assigned, including text, audio, video, and online components. By conducting a valid materials evaluation project, teachers and curriculum planners can arrive at practical solutions for selecting and adapting and supplementing materials.

Increasing learner autonomy, even in small ways, is generally a positive goal for teaching learners of all ages. The purpose of the project is to create an autonomous listening course, one in which learners perform some or most of the work in the course by themselves, without direct instruction or supervision from the teacher. The project provides three sets of resources to use as guidelines for developing an initial proposal.

The fourth project outlines a research project for teacher trainers. It focuses on concepts, practices, and attitudes that contribute to better research and teaching in the area of listening.

Exploring Listening

Materials for teaching listening include sources of audio and video input, as well as opportunities for spoken interaction, and structured tasks and activities that develop comprehension and learning strategies. Commercial educational publishers provide a steady stream of new materials, and countless internet sites provide an abundance of free and affordable resources for teaching listening.

While there are several major publishers who offer commercially available listening materials, there are numerous small publishers and local publishers to supplement the offerings of the major ones. In order to stay current on the offerings of publishers, it is advisable to survey online catalogues for new publications. Most sites allow for online viewing of samples of student and teacher materials, including any electronic versions of products and companion web sites (which may offer supplementary listening or viewing resources), and auditing of audio and video clips**.**

Published Sources

Because published resources are updated continuously, it is best to view current catalogues – online versions are preferable because it is easier to search for key words (such as *new*, *listening*, *multimedia*, etc.). Here are some of the many sources of published material to begin a review. At each publisher site, the first step is to search 'catalogue' and then enter additional search terms. Some search terms are suggested below.

Cambridge University Press, www.cambridge.org/us/esl/catalog/. Search: skills, listening, academic listening, course books.

Cengage Learning, www.cengage.com. Search: catalogue, skills, listening, academic listening, coursebooks, online learning.

Macmillan English, www.macmillanenglish.com. Search: catalogue, skills, listening, coursebooks, multimedia, onestopenglish.

Oxford University Press, www.oup.com. Search: catalogue, skills, listening and speaking.

Pearson Education, www.pearsonlongman.com/index.html. Search: skills, listening, academic, coursebooks, assessment, e-learning, multimedia, myEnglishlab, SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol).

Internet Sources

Internet sources for listening, particularly in English or other major languages, are also abundant. The key to selection on the internet is not popularity, or ease of access to the site, or even ease of navigability on the site. The keys to selection are: appropriateness and relevance of content, length of extracts (shorter is generally preferable), linking of extracts (interrelated are preferable), support material for comprehension (graphic and textual), possibilities of networking with other users and availability of help menus, as well as transparency of navigation. Below are selected examples:

Awesome stories, www.awesomestories.com. A resources site that allows users to access information about films, famous trials, disasters, history and biography. Includes text, audio and video clips on a range of subjects. Also includes Module plans, designed for native speakers, that can be adapted to EFL/ESL audiences.

Learn Out Loud, www.learnoutloud.com. Offers a large directory of audio and video learning resources. Access to 10,000 available titles, including audio books, MP3 downloads, podcasts and free educational audio and video.

Stone Soup, www.stonesoup.com/listen. For elementary age students, fictional stories told by young authors

Online Listening Sources

Games

The Baby Center provides an abundance of language activities and games involving listening for very young children: www.babycenter.com/ kids-activities.

Podcasts and videocasts

Podbean.com, www.podbean.com. Provides a range of high-quality content, including 'The Medical Minute', several exercise, dance, and yoga instructional video series, video game reviews and 'Mondo Mini' shows (comedy).

Public broadcasts

BBC, www.bbc.co/uk/worldservice/BBC_English/progs.htm. A range of audio and video broadcasts available for online streaming

Resources for Researching Listening

Research networks

Research networks are groups of individuals and institutions engaged in similar research plans. Many of these networks are open, and provide resources and support freely.

I Teach, I Learn, iteachilearn.com. Participates in multiple levels of educational research and design, particularly focusing on bilingual education. Serves as a portal to a number of other informative and interactive sites.

Method Space, www.methodspace.com. Method space claims to be the home of 'the research methods community' from across the world. Contains forums, groups, resources and live chats.

Lecture- 08

Teaching Speaking

Module-23

DEFINING SPEAKING

Speaking: An Overview

Language is a means of thinking and transferring culture from one generation to another as well as from one nation to another. It is also a means of communication among people. Hence, many countries emphasize teaching languages other than the native language to its citizens. Over the last three decades, English has become the most important foreign language in the world. At present, English is the language for international communication.

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 and dialogue. The former focuses on giving an interrupted oral presentation and the latter on interacting with other speakers. Speaking can also serve one of two main functions: transactional (transfer of information) and interactional (maintenance of social relationships). Developing speaking skills is of vital importance in EFL/ESL programs. 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 is more than to form grammatically correct sentences; it rather covers broad areas of mechanics, functions, pragmatics and social interaction. Speaking is a complex skill and a multi-facets cognitive process. 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). It includes sub processes and involves distinct areas of planning. First the 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.

Characteristics of Spoken Language

Languages originated from the need for communication between and among people. From this need spoken language appeared and developed. The purpose and the function of language is to know about other people and let others know about you. Language is a tool of communication of human society. This kind of communication is a bi-directional process which includes both receiving information as well as giving out information. This giving-out includes speaking and writing.

All languages have some characteristics in common which are as following:

- It is both time-bound, and dynamic. It is part of an interaction in which both participants are usually present, and the speaker has a particular addressee or addressees in mind.
- The complexity and speed of most speech acts make it difficult to engage in complex advance planning. The pressure to think whilst speaking promotes looser construction, repetition, redundancies: fillers, hesitations and rephrasing.
- Sentence boundaries are at best unclear though intonation and pause divide long discourse into more manageable chunks.
- Participants are usually face-to-face and so can rely on feedback (extra-linguistic cues to aid meaning). The lexicon of speech is usually characteristically vague using words which refer specifically to the situation. Deictic (see: deixis) expressions are very commonly used, for example: that one, in here, right now.
- Spoken language makes greater use of shared knowledge than written language.
- Many words and constructions are characteristic of, especially informal, speech. Lengthy co-ordinate sentences (joining sentences with co-ordinates such as ³and´ are normal and are often of considerable complexity. Nonsense vocabulary is often not written and may have no standard spelling (whatchamacallit). Obscenity may be replaced with graphic euphemism.
- Speech is very suited to social (phatic ± i.e. ³chewing the fat´) functions, such as passing the time of day or ³creating an atmosphere´ or any situation where unplanned and casual discourse is desirable. It is also good at expressing social relationships, opinions, and attitudes in part due to the vast range of nuances, which can be expressed by prosody and accompanying non-verbal features.
- 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.
- It has many routines and this can make it very predictable. For example you never say, ³Give me a banana´ in a bread shop. But, each situation has its own discourse which has been historically and socially defined.

THE SKILL OF SPEAKING:

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. It is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts" (Chaney, 1998,) Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information

One of the central difficulties inherent in the study of speaking is that it overlaps with a considerable number of other areas and disciplines. How far, for instance, is the structure of a

conversation culturally determined (also dealt with in pragmatics and ethnography)? How far are the grammar and vocabulary of speech different from other sorts of grammar (which is related also to the fields of syntax and semantics)? What are the critical factors in the stream of speech that make it intelligible (prosody, phonetics/ phonemics)? These three areas broadly relate to fairly stable areas of activity in linguistics of discourse, lexis and grammar, and phonology/phonetics and map on to, and overlap with, other threads of study in theoretical and applied linguistics. Some of the relationships are indicated in following figure.

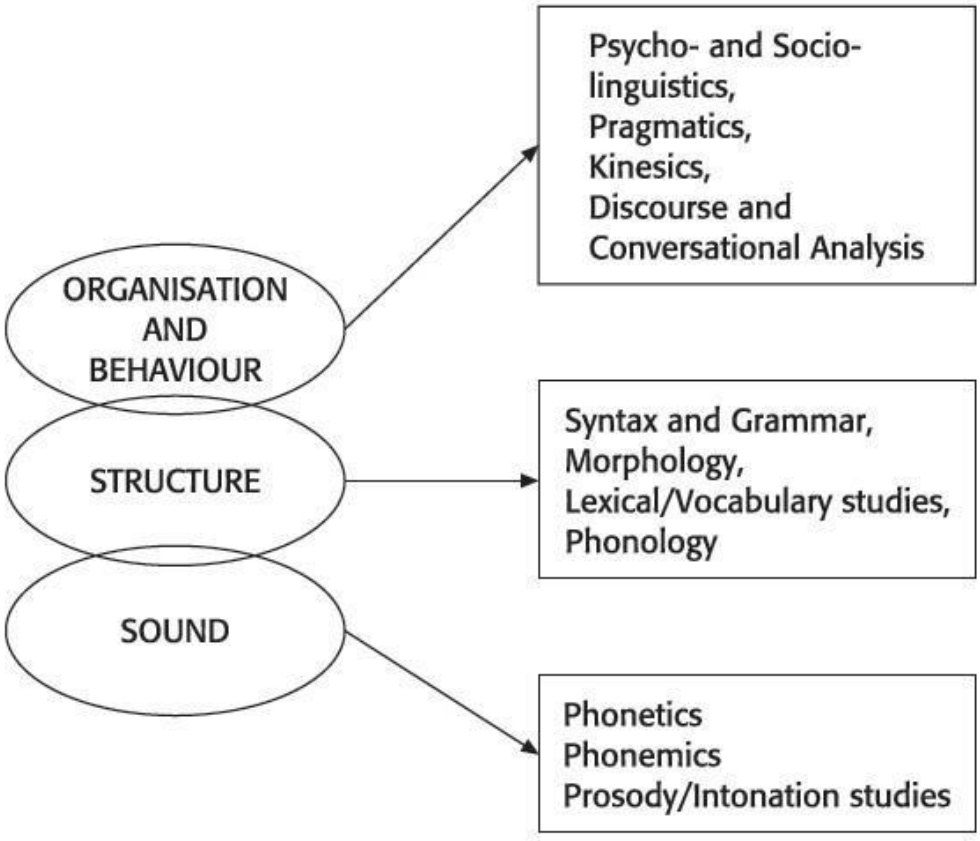


Figure Levels and fields of research into speech and conversation

Bringing the Facets of Speaking Together

The human voice and the faculty of speech are inherently bound up with the projection of the self into the world. 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'.

The Nature of Speech in Contrast to Writing

Figures 2 and 3 provide a visual summary of some of the major, very general contrasts between the spoken and the written forms of language. The first diagram represents aspects that relate to how the two forms are generated: 'Aspects of production' and the second deals with tendencies in attitudes to the two forms: 'Social aspects'.

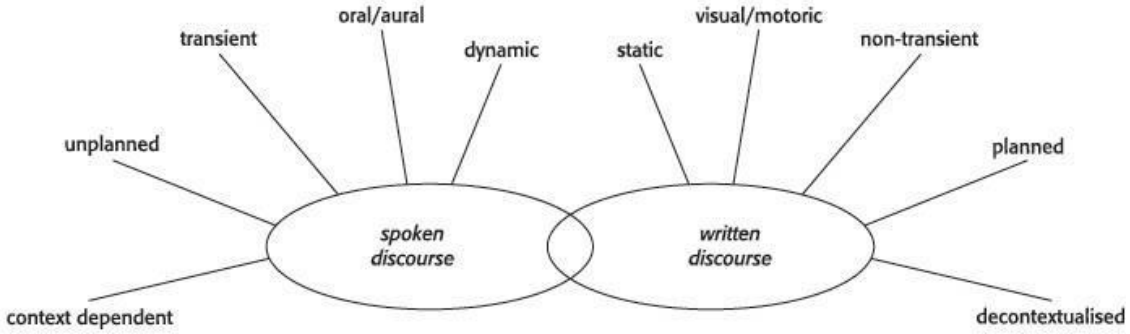


Figure 2 Aspects of production

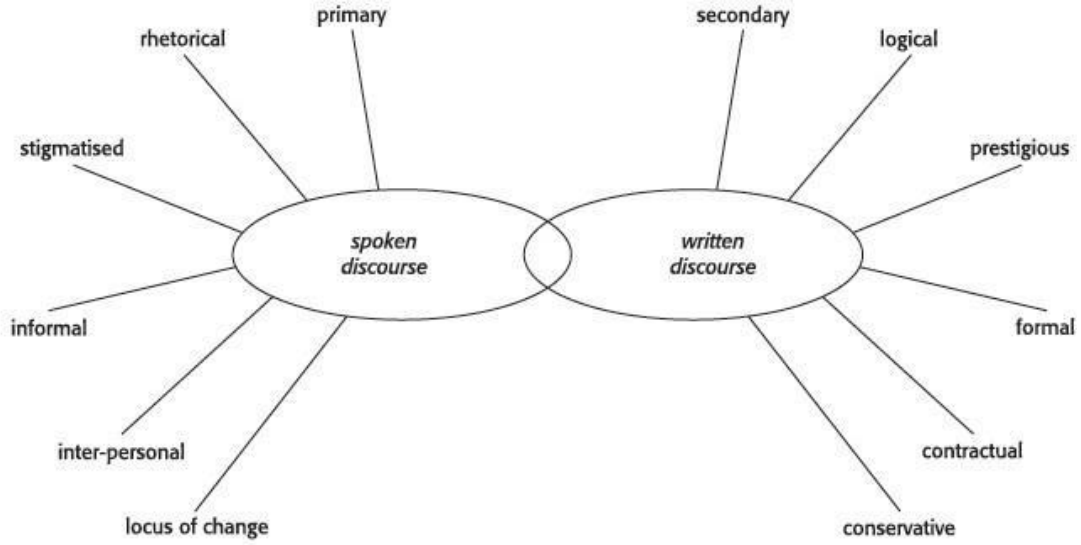


Figure .3 Social aspects

How speech reaches the world

When speech is considered in opposition to writing, several distinctive features become evident, particularly if the way it is produced is taken as the starting point (see Figure 2). Most important, and generally least considered in a linguistic discipline dominated by texts and recording of texts, is the fact that the spoken form of any language is fundamentally transient. When a word is spoken this event happens within the 'co-ordinates' of a particular place and moment and these can never be reduplicated, although we can now record the word via several different media.

A second, related, factor underpinning the nature of speech, and affecting the type of language choices that can be made, is its delivery via the oral/aural channel. 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. Further salient aspects of the way speech is produced again relate to the transient and situated nature of the spoken channel. The vast bulk of spoken material is spontaneous, face-to-face, informal conversation. This kind of discourse is generally unplanned, dynamic and context dependent. A conversation may be guided by one speaker or another who wishes to deal with a particular topic; however, the vagaries of real-time contexts mean that most speech takes the form of a give and take, not only between speakers but also between the discourse and the context.

How speech is regarded

The spoken form is very highly valued in linguistics and applied linguistics where it is regarded as the primary form of a language and the source of innovation and language change. In the realm of second language teaching there is also a high degree of attention paid to the skill of speaking. Indeed, to be a fluent speaker in a language is often the lay person's goal. The source of input in highly influential 'communicative approaches' is largely the spoken form, and there has been a conflation in linguistics of the term 'language' with 'speech' as if the two are entirely interchangeable.

The innate, universal human capacity for speech has led to its being regarded as the central form of interest to linguists. Therefore, even when theorists appear to pay no attention to actual instances of speech, fundamentally they are pursuing questions related to the primary language faculty. This faculty is the universal linguistic form: speech.The spoken form is the basis for investigations in first language acquisition. Since no child learns to write before he or she learns to speak, the spoken mode is the only mode available for consideration and, therefore, in first language acquisition studies the issue of distinguishing 'language' from 'speech' is irrelevant.

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 Therefore, whereas the tangible, no ephemeral nature of writing lends it to logical and contractual functions in society, for example record keeping and legal tasks, the spoken form, being essentially more dependent on the time and place it is produced, is used for more informal or rhetorically based tasks.

Where Does Speech Fit in Language Studies?

There is the paradigm set out by Noam Chomsky in the 1960s and which in turn has underpinned the greater part of second language acquisition studies, advances in grammatical models, and computer modelling in which a linguistic element is required. A central aspect to the discussion of speech is the dichotomy between the language faculty ('competence') and the way language is used in actual speech or writing ('performance'). Essentially, this division stemmed from Chomsky's questioning of how children

can master language, and master it in such a way that, eventually, any speaker of a language can create and understand an infinite amount of discourse.

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 diverse, developed in the twentieth century in opposition to earlier behaviorist models. These two opposing camps, one based on the notion of an innate cognitive model which sees the 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.

Historical Perspectives on Speaking

Attitudes to the spoken form of language and its position in the curriculum have varied considerably through time, and in different cultures. The status which is given to the faculty of speech in a particular society, or at a particular point in its history, is reflected in the position and emphasis placed on teaching the skill of speaking in the curriculum. By looking at how the teaching and study of speech has varied through time a clearer perspective can be gained on how present attitudes fit into a bigger picture, and may point to the ways in which attitudes will change in future.

Attitudes to the spoken form of language have waxed and waned since earliest available records of how and why speaking was taught. These attitudes are usually linked to the ephemeral nature of speech production, and the fact that until very recently in the history of humanity, spoken language was directed at a present audience by a physically present speaker. In these key facts lie the strengths and weaknesses of the spoken form. On the one hand, its nature permits a speaker to convince, persuade, argue, or cajole using all the benefits of being physically in view of the listener through gesture, intonation, eye contact and so on. On the other, unless captured and recorded in some form, the spoken word is fundamentally transient in nature and cannot be checked or scrutinized after the event.

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 translation' 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

Module-24

TEACHING SPEAKING: PRONUNCIATION -I

The Importance of Pronunciation

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.

For second language learners it is likely that the size of their working memory in the second language is affected by their knowledge of patterns of pronunciation and grammar in that language. It is thus important that attention is given to pronunciation in the course so that learners can quickly develop a stable pronunciation, and become familiar with the patterns and rules that work within the second language.

The Place of Pronunciation Instruction

We will deal with language-focused ways of trying to develop pronunciation. It is viewed that pronunciation is affected by a wide variety of factors. Being able to consciously perceive and produce the spoken form is only one of these. Some teachers reject any type of form-focused pronunciation teaching, but this is probably short-sighted. Appropriate attention to form for pronunciation is likely to have the same kinds of good effects as attention to form can have for the learning of vocabulary, grammar or discourse. As with all instruction, it is necessary to find a suitable balance between the four strands of opportunities for learning.

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.

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 controlle 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.

Goals

There continues to be debate about whether the model for foreign language learners should be native-speaker or non-native-speaker English, and if native-speaker English should it be British, American or some other regional pronunciation. 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. In reality, this most often means that local pronunciations of English become the norm for the majority of learners.'

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. These include most of the consonant sounds with some provisos, initial consonant clusters, the distinction between long and short vowels, and the placement of contrastive stress. Jenkins' proposal is a very pragmatic approach to setting pronunciation goals.

Factors Affecting 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:

- the age of the learner
- the learner's first language
- the learner's current stage of proficiency development
- the experience and attitudes of the learner
- the conditions for teaching and learning.

All these factors need to be considered in a well-balanced approach to pronunciation.

Age

There is clear evidence that there is a relationship between the age at which a language is learned and the degree of foreign accent (Patkowski, 1990). 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). There

are two important points to note here. First, this relationship between age and accent does not invariably apply to everyone. A few adult learners do achieve native-like pronunciation. Second, there are several competing explanations of the cause of the relationship.

The physical explanation says that there are physical changes in the brain as a result of age that affect the learning of a new sound system and other aspects of the language. The **intellectual explanation** says that learners have already learned the sound system of their first language and this increasingly disrupts their perception of a second and later language. Age affects this perception because the first language system becomes increasingly well-integrated and stable as learners get older (Flege, 1981). 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.

The intellectual and psychological explanations are not in conflict with each other. For a teacher it means that these factors have to be considered when designing a lesson and a programme. Stevick (1978) combines these two explanations. 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.** If this happens the teacher can help by giving a suitable model which is not too difficult for the level the learners have reached and by making it easy for the learners to find out how near their pronunciation is to the standard set for the course. This addresses the intellectual aspect.
- **The learners sound bad to themselves when they copy well.** People are usually sensitive about their pronunciation because it allows others to guess their social background. Also, if learners' pronunciation of a foreign language is very good, others may think it is because they love the foreign culture and want to be like the foreigners. Learners' pronunciation will improve when they feel more comfortable about the way they sound when they speak the foreign language and when they develop positive attitudes towards the native speakers of the foreign language.
- **The learners become anxious about making the sounds.** If the teacher points out to the students that they are not saying something correctly, they may become very tense and nervous and be unable to do it correctly. The teacher thus needs to find ways of helping learners find out what their pronunciation is like without getting them worried about it.

Stevick's approach sees the learning of pronunciation as only one aspect of a total process, mainly social in nature, which involves the whole learner and not just the speech apparatus or intellectual understanding.

The Learner's First Language

The learners' first language can have a major influence on learning the sound system of another language. The type of evidence for this is where speakers of the same first language typically pronounce the second language in the same way, making the same kinds of substitutions and patterns of pronunciation.

Another type of evidence is that 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". This indicates that rather than giving attention to general features such as voicing or aspiration, a teacher should be giving attention to the particular sounds where these problems occur.

Teachers can take account of first language influence by being familiar with the sound system of the learners' first language and thus gaining some idea of the amount of effort and attention needed to bring about a wanted change. Familiarity with first language sounds can help considerably in this procedure as unwanted sounds often show a first language influence.

The Learner's Development and Range of Styles

There is considerable evidence to show that a learner's pronunciation changes as the learner becomes more familiar with the second language (Major, 1987). Just as there is an interlanguage stage for grammatical development there is a developmental interlanguage stage for phonology. Major (1987: 196) suggests that as learners proceed in their learning of the second language, interference processes from the first language decrease but developmental processes increase and then decrease. This means that teachers should not classify learners' pronunciations too quickly as errors, but should look to see if they are stable or changing. If they are stable, there may be value in encouraging change. If they are changing it may be better just to observe. Change may also be seen by observing learners' pronunciation in formal and informal situations, as different styles of pronunciation may be used. The presence of different styles shows flexibility and shows that the learners' second language pronunciation is developing. Before beginning intensive pronunciation work, it is thus useful to observe learners over a period of time and in a range of situations.

The Experience and Attitudes of the Learner

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 Conditions for Teaching and Learning

The ways in which the sound system is taught and learned can have effects on learning. The following findings can be useful guides to classroom practice.

- 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. Teachers need to look carefully at the positive and negative effects of spelling on pronunciation when carrying out a pronunciation activity.
- Tongue-twisters like "Round the rugged rocks the ragged rascal ran" or "She sells sea shells on the sea shore" are very difficult for native speakers of English. For learners of English as a second language they are a cruel and unusual punishment.
- Seeing a speaker's mouth movements can have a significant effect on listening (Kellerman, 1990). While tapes may be useful for developing certain aspects of pronunciation, there should also be opportunities to see and listen.
- Communication activities between learners with different first languages are a good way of encouraging intelligibility. Such tasks make learners focus on intelligibility in order to get their message across, are meaningful, and avoid the embarrassment of teacher correction.

Module-25

TEACHING SPEAKING: PRONUNCIATION -II

Procedures and Techniques

As we have seen, there are many factors to be considered when learning a new sound system. As a result, there are many techniques and procedures that can be used to focus on various aspects of the pronunciation task and to take account of the various factors affecting pronunciation. Here we will look at techniques and procedures that focus on the articulation of particular sounds, and stress and intonation.

Articulation of Individual Sounds

Strevens (1974) suggests that most learners are able to mimic particular sounds without any special teaching. The following procedure moves from mimicry through observation and explanation to rather drastic forcing techniques. Practice with individual problem sounds is important and informed teachers can bring about significant improvement in their learners' pronunciation with such practice (Pennington and Richards, 1986: 217). Usually such practice is based on observation, analysis and selection by the teacher, and may begin with getting learners to hear the differences between sounds and to identify particular sounds before they are guided in pronouncing them.

Learning New Sounds: A Procedure

Before teaching or correcting a sound, certain information is needed. Then the teacher can follow several steps to teach the sound.

Necessary Information

- 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?

Teaching the Sound

Teach the learner to hear the wanted sound by using distinguishing and identifying activities. (Compare it with the sound the learner usually puts in its place, and other sounds that are like it both in the first language and the foreign language.) Distinguishing should come before identifying.

Give advice and help to get the learner to make the sound. Practice the sound by itself or in easy syllables. The first step is for the learners to repeat the sound copying the teacher. If this is not successful, learners can be helped to pronounce sounds if the teacher explains the position of the tongue and lips, and explains what type of sound it is. If the learners still cannot make the sound after trying to copy the teacher and listening to the explanation, there are several techniques that they can use to force their mouths to the correct position. The technique that is used often depends on the type of mistake that the learners make. So the teacher should look carefully at the type of error before deciding what technique to use for forcing.

When the teacher pronounces a sound, the learners should watch the teacher's mouth carefully. Then they can practice using a small mirror so that they can see their own mouth. It is valuable to let the learners experiment with sounds. By changing the position of their tongue they can change the sound. By changing the position of the lips and teeth the sound can be changed. Activities like these may help the learners to be able to feel where their tongue is in their mouth. This is a useful ability when learning a new language.

Teaching the sound usually begins with hearing practice because it is believed that such practice also improves pronunciation (Henning, 1966). A good technique for practicing hearing is easy for the learners to understand, tells the teacher quickly and easily if the learners can recognize the sounds, and gives most of the class some practice.

Hearing Sounds

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*. The learners listen and if they think that the two sounds are the same, they say "the same". If they are different, they say "different". Learners answer individually when the teacher points to them or the learners can move their right hands when the two sounds are the same and do nothing when they are different. Briere (1967) found that learners preferred to answer "the same" rather than "different" when they were not sure of the correct answer. Thus, in such exercises many of the correct answers should be "different"

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. This gives all the class practice and the teacher can easily see who can hear the sound. Later during the exercise the learners can shut their eyes so they do not copy the others but give all their attention to hearing. One of the most important parts of hearing practice is telling the learners whether they are correct or not. The teacher should give plenty of examples first and move her hand herself in the beginning, to help the learners. The learners should practice hearing the sound in all positions in the syllable.

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. This exercise is used with pairs of words that are the same except for one different sound, for example, *watching—washing, chair—share, live—leave,* etc. In order to give all the class some practice, the teacher should put the two pictures far apart at opposite ends of the blackboard. Then, the teacher can easily see who is pointing to the wrong picture. The pairs of words can be put in sentences: "I see a ship. I

see a sheep." It is often difficult to make matching pairs of sentences like this, but it makes an amusing classroom exercise. Learners can give answers to the sentences to show that they hear them correctly.

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. So, *pa* and *fa* are written on the blackboard. The learner points to *pa*. If the teacher says *fa*, the learners say "no". The learners listen carefully because they know that the teacher will sometimes try to trick them.

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. The learners may experiment in pronouncing the sounds with the teacher guiding them. They can be shown the position of the tongue and copy the teacher's pronunciation. There is no rule that hearing practice must come before speaking. Teachers should experiment to see what way is best for certain learners and certain sounds.

Producing Sounds

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. That is, after repeating the sound for the second time the learners did not usually make any more improvement even though they heard the same model and tried to copy it several times Once the learners can make the sounds well the teacher can give a written model or show pictures or objects to get the learners to pronounce the sounds.

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".

Sometimes, **using the written forms** can help with new clusters. Learners can look at the structure of the syllable as a help for word recognition and vocabulary learning. The patterns for final consonant groups are much more complicated than the consonant groups at the beginning of the words. Here is a simple kind of exercise to get learners to find the main patterns at the beginning of words. This kind of exercise also shows the learners some of the connections between spelling and pronunciation.

Correcting Pronunciation Mistakes

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.

Stress and Intonation

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).

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.

Teaching Sentence Stress

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.

Teaching Intonation

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.

Lecture- 09

Learning Through Task-focused Interaction

Module-26

LEARNING THROUGH TASK-FOCUSED INTERACTION -I

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.**

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.

Overall, interaction helps language learning by providing opportunities to learn from others, often through negotiation, and by speakers having to adjust their output to communicate with others. This interaction helps learning by providing plenty of comprehensible input, by encouraging pushed output, by making learners aware of what they do not know, and by helping learners develop the language and strategies needed for interaction.

Encouraging Negotiation

The extent to which negotiation helps language learning depends on what is negotiated and how far the negotiation takes the learner through comprehending, noticing, comparing and using unfamiliar or partly unfamiliar language items.

Several studies of negotiation have shown the range of reasons for negotiation (Aston, 1986; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). These include keeping the group together by "celebrating agreement", clarifying poorly presented items, clarifying because of inattention, clarifying unknown items, and clarifying the task procedure. Only a few of these are likely to contribute directly to language learning. 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. 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.

Using Written Input to Encourage Negotiation

Newton's (1995) research on the effect of written input on negotiation showed that in the tasks he used, all of the negotiated vocabulary was in the written input sheets used in the activity. That is, the learners did not negotiate vocabulary that they incidentally brought into the activity. If this finding is true across a variety of activities and texts, it means that by careful choice or rewriting of texts, teachers can set up wanted vocabulary to be negotiated.

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.

In order to encourage negotiation, in step 1 the learners are simply given the written version of the letter. Before doing this the teacher checks that the letter contains about six to eight items that may be beyond most of the learners' present level but which are appropriate for them to learn. The teacher may wish to simplify the other vocabulary which is not worth spending time on. There is nothing wrong with adapting the text providing the teacher is confident that adaptations represent normal language use. Step 3, the comparison of the group's advice with that provided by the newspaper, will provide a useful repetition of the items.

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. Teachers need to monitor tasks well and use this feedback to redesign tasks to suit learning goals.

Using 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:

- All learners have the same information (a cooperating arrangement).
- Each learner has different essential information (a split information arrangement) (Nation, 1977).
- One learner has all the information that the others need (a superior inferior arrangement).
- 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. The first two types of information distribution are the ones that most encourage negotiation, and there has been considerable research into their effects. **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 these 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. For example, in a **ranking** task, the learners are given a list of items and a criterion for ranking or choosing amongst the items. They must arrange the items according to the criterion or choose the top 3 and the bottom 1.

This type of **problem-solving** activity can be done by moving through a variety of group sizes. First, the learners are presented with the problem and are then asked to think individually about the problem and choose a possible solution. In the second step, the learners work in small groups to reach an agreement. The third step involves whole-class work in which groups compare their rankings and the teacher facilitates discussion of the rankings and of language issues that came up in the task. Activities like ranking with a strong focus on reaching consensus can encourage negotiation of language items. If you want to reach agreement, then there must be understanding. Here are some techniques that require a consensus.

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 the following kind of **problem solving**, the learners are given a problem to solve. They must do this by reaching an agreement amongst themselves. They should not do this by voting but by discussion. The work is done in small groups of about six people. When they have reached an agreement they report the result of their discussion to the class. 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.

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 not enough sentences for each learner to have one it does not matter, because they can still participate in ordering the sentences. If there are more sentences than learners, then some learners can have two short sentences to memorize. So, each learner sees only one sentence and does not see the other sentences in the story. 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. The technique allows the learners to communicate in the foreign language with each other to solve the problem. The solving of the problem is less important than the communication that needs to take place in order to solve the problem.

The learners had to order themselves in a line according to the sentence that each had memorized, and then retell the recount in sequence. Similarly, the strip story activity can be used with short, set dialogues that learners have been learning.

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.

Module-27

LEARNING THROUGH TASK-FOCUSED INTERACTION -II

Using Learner Training to Encourage Negotiation

In order to negotiate, learners need to know the language features needed for negotiation and to develop negotiation strategies. Anderson and Lynch (1988) have reviewed studies with young native speakers on the effect of training on the use of negotiation while listening. The training can involve telling learners the importance of asking for more information, watching others ask, and providing simple plans of what to do when there is a comprehension problem.

Encouraging second language learners to negotiate can involve learning the appropriate language items and procedures to negotiate and providing opportunities for practice. When taking part in a conversation, a learner may find that there are unknown words or structures, or that what the speaker said was not clear. If this happens, one strategy is to ask for clarification.

Clennell (1999) describes a useful procedure for making learners aware of the linguistic and socio-linguistic features of interactive spoken language.

- Stage 1 involves preparing for an interview and then carrying out the interview. The preparation can involve focusing on appropriate ways of addressing the interviewee, different ways of requesting an interview, and so on. It can also involve ways of managing the discourse by asking the interviewee to repeat or slow down.
- Stage 2 involves transcribing the recorded interview and coming to an understanding of what happened during the interview.
- Stage 3 involves presenting the analyzed transcription to the class in the form of a seminar presentation with accompanying discussion. Lynch (2001) found plenty of evidence that transcribing their own spoken interaction resulted in learners finding plenty to improve and being able to make substantial corrections to the language of the transcription. There was also a useful follow-up role for the teacher in providing helpful corrective feedback especially in vocabulary choice. The teacher's feedback on learners' written transcription of a taped rehearsal of a presentation had substantial positive effects on the grammatical accuracy of a subsequent presentation.

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. 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.

- Please say the last word (sentence/paragraph) again.
- Excuse me, please speak more slowly.
- Excuse me, what was the word in front of king?
- Could you tell me the meaning of convince?
- Excuse me, how do you spell apply?

Then, he tells the learners that he is going to read a text aloud for them to listen to. He tells them that after they listen to the text he will check their answers to some questions about the text. The teacher gives the learners copies of the questions or writes the questions on the blackboard. He also tells the learners that at any time during the reading of the text they can ask him to stop, read more slowly, repeat, go back to the beginning, spell a word, explain the meaning of a word, or read more quickly.

Could you repeat that? (Folse, 1991) involves a learner or group of learners dictating to someone writing on the blackboard, while they are facing the other way. Therefore, the people dictating cannot see what is being written on the blackboard. This can be done with two teams and similar but not the same sentences.

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. This is an amusing technique because at last by listening to what the teacher says about the answers the learners are able to give the correct answer to the question although they really did not know the answer before. The technique helps learn the phrases like "more than that" which guide learners towards the 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. There are many variations of this technique. All of these activities increase the need for negotiation between the learners in a group. They all involve an information gap which may be there because of split information or a superior-inferior information distribution.

Monitoring Negotiation

Group work can have a variety of learning goals and monitoring should reflect these goals. If the goal is the learning of language items, then the amount of support that learners provide each other during the activity will be of major interest. This support can take the form of negotiating the meaning of language items, the encouragement of turn-taking to involve all of the group in the activity, the valuing of contributions by commenting positively on or picking up others' ideas, and the modelling and supplying of needed items.

Teachers or learners acting as observers can look for these kinds of support and comment on them to the group as a way of bringing about the development of group support skills that will help language learning. If observation shows that there is a need for increased support, there are several ways of arranging this, which are as following;

- Parts of group work sessions are recorded and used as case studies to show learners how to increase support.
- Each learner in the group is assigned a different role to play during a group work activity. Thus, one person could have the role of encouraging each person to contribute to the discussion. Another person could have the role of commenting positively on good ideas put forward by others, and so on.
- The teacher should consider redesigning the activity to include an information gap, a series of well-defined steps for the learners to follow, or a different outcome such as ranking, completion, or distinguishing.
- It may be necessary to rearrange the assignment of learners to groups so that, for example, learners of a similar proficiency level are in the same group, or so that there is not a gender mix.

This monitoring can involve looking at the amount of discussion of how to do the task, the amount of time spent focused on the task, and the amount of use of language items from the written input used in the task.

Learning through Non-negotiated Interaction

Although negotiation is a very effective means of encouraging learning through interaction, it does not account for most of the learning through interaction. Most learning will occur through guessing from context which is not overtly signaled, and by the non-negotiated noticing of language features (Newton, 1995; Nation, 2001: 123–125). Sometimes there may be overt signs of this noticing.

Small group activities provide an opportunity for the productive use of items supported by the interaction with colleagues. It is likely that the design features to encourage this production include the use of information gap tasks which contain a large amount of shared information.

The **find the differences** activity is a good example of this. In this 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.

In this procedure the teacher may simply rely on group cooperation to produce the wanted vocabulary and constructions. If monitoring the activity shows that this does not happen, then it may be necessary for the teacher to write words and phrases on the pictures for the learners to use. This gives the first activity something of a focus on form, and so the follow-up activities of turning it into a dialogue and then acting it may serve to bring back the meaning focus. All these kinds of support allow learners to draw on explicit knowledge of the language in their spoken production.

Monitoring Learners Beginning to Speak

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).

Each of the possible causes for reluctance to speak is accompanied by a way of checking the cause. A vocabulary of 1000 words is easily enough for substantial spoken production. It is important to be aware that reluctance to speak may not be only because of language difficulties. It is observed that some learners possessed adequate language skills, but had not received enough encouragement to speak in a classroom. When they were taken out of the classroom for short periods of time with one or two other learners and given lots of encouragement to speak, they were soon speaking a lot. After several sessions of such speaking, they seemed more willing to contribute to speaking in the larger class.

Observing learners in speaking activities can provide important information for the teacher about the learners' control of developmental features, like question making, and other features. This information can indicate to the teacher where language-focused instruction could usefully be directed. The presence of a feature in the learners' speaking is a sign that formal teaching could have a positive effect on expanding and refining its use.

Lecture- 10

Learning Through Pushed Output

Module-28

LEARNING THROUGH PUSHED OUTPUT -I

Introduction

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 speak. 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. Biber's (1989) research on the various clusters of syntactic items in different text types suggests that learners might be made aware of gaps in their productive knowledge of language features if they are required to speak in unfamiliar genres. The aim of setting demanding tasks is to encourage learners to extend their use of grammatical features and words. There are other ways of making tasks demanding, including getting learners to talk on unfamiliar topics, speaking where high standards of performance are expected, speaking without the opportunity for planning or preparation, and speaking in formal situations without the interactive support of others.

Learners are "pushed" through encouragement or necessity when they have to produce spoken language in unfamiliar areas. These areas may be unfamiliar because the learners are more used to listening than speaking, or are not accustomed to speaking certain kinds of discourse, or are now expected to produce a higher standard of spoken language in terms of accuracy, precision, coherence and appropriateness. 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. Givon, Yang and Gernsbacher (1990) argue that because language learners can only give their attention to one demanding task at a time, they initially learn vocabulary. Once vocabulary recognition is largely automated, they can then give their attention to grammar. Swain suggests that if learners are not pushed to produce output, then there is little reason for them to pay attention to the grammar needed for production. 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.

Pushing Output

When planning for a variety of speaking tasks to push learners' output there are several factors to consider. These include

- covering a range of topics
- a range of text types
- a range of performance conditions

Topic

Learners should be pushed to speak on a range of topics. Van Ek and Alexander (1980) provide a categorization of topics. West (1960: 113–134), in his classification of the Minimum Adequate Vocabulary, also provides a range of possible topic areas. Topic is most likely to have an effect on the vocabulary that is used as each topic is likely to have its particular technical, topic-related vocabulary. 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. There could be strong gender difference effects in relation to background knowledge of topics which can make some topics much more demanding than others for male and female learners.

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. Is an only one person speaking or are speaker interacting with each other?
- Colloquial speech versus formal speech.
- Short turns versus long turns. Do speakers make short contributions to a conversation or is there opportunity for longer largely uninterrupted speech?
- Interactional versus transactional speech. Is the goal of the speaking to establish a friendly relationship or is it to convey important information (Brown, 1981)?
- Narrative versus non-narrative.

Learners should have the opportunity to speak across the range of these types of speaking.

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

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.

Planning helps language production because it allows part of the work to be done before the task so that there are less things to attend to while the task is being performed. 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.

Getting learners to use new language items while their attention is focused on the meaning that they are conveying is a challenging part of activity design. 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.

In an **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.

Time Pressure

The second major performance condition affecting speaking is time pressure. 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.

Amount of Support

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.

Standard of Performance

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 judgement 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.

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". This extra information then provides an opportunity for the person asking the question to continue the conversation, typically by taking up the point raised in the extra information, "What were the difficulties you had?" This very useful strategy deserves quite a lot of practice in class, particularly in guiding learners in the kinds of extra information that they can provide. It is also a good way for the person being questioned to take control of an interview or conversation by using the extra information to guide the direction of the conversation (Nation, 1980).
- 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?

Formal speaking also provides an excellent opportunity for learners to become aware of what is involved in speaking effectively and can lead to the development of useful planning and delivery strategies.

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. There are several aspects that affect complexity. These include the amount of preparation available, whether the task involves describing a "static" display or "dynamic" process, and the number of items, characters or points to deal with in the information they are presenting. The performance conditions described above also affect the complexity of the task.

Module-29

LEARNING THROUGH PUSHED OUTPUT -II

The Nature 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:

- It is transactional. Its purpose is to communicate information rather than to maintain social contact as is the case with most interactional speaking.
- 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.
- It is influenced by written language. Often it will involve speaking from notes and will involve academic vocabulary.
- 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.
- 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

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.

Table Tasks for Learning the Parts of the Process of Formal Speaking

Parts of the process	Tasks
Goals and audience	Be a listener Talk and get audience feedback Perform **listen and do** tasks where there is an observable outcome of the talk such as something drawn, or made from LEGO
Gathering ideas	**Brainstorm** and **What is it like?** in groups Follow schema such as topic type or discourse plans to gather information systematically
Organising ideas	Use rhetoric plans Discuss and evaluate model outlines Use guiding checklists
Making speaking notes	**Information transfer** Note-taking
Presenting and monitoring	Talk on your speciality **Be an expert** **4/3/2** Prepare, talk to a partner, talk to a group, then talk to the class

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.

Lecture- 11

Language-focused Learning: Deliberate Teaching

Module-30

LANGUAGE-FOCUSED LEARNING: DELIBERATE TEACHING -I

Introduction

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. Surprisingly, the boundary between language-focused learning and meaning-focused instruction is not so easy to draw. Noticing an item is one of the steps in acquisition. This noticing is arguably attention to language; that is, the temporary decontextualisation of the item so that it is viewed as part of the language system rather than part of the message. 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).

The Value and Limits 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

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 most important finding is that language-focused learning has an important role to play in second language acquisition. The purpose of this chapter is to show what this role is and how it is most effectively played.

Deliberate Vocabulary Learning

The best language-focused vocabulary instruction involves looking at a word as part of a system rather than as part of a message. This means paying attention to regular spelling and sound patterns in

words, paying attention to the underlying concept of the senses of words, paying attention to word building devices, giving attention to the range and types of collocations of a word, and paying attention to the range of clues to the word's meaning provided by context.

It is also useful to study words isolated from context and as individual items. There is substantial research in this area and it shows how learners can take the first steps in quickly learning a large vocabulary and that this learning results in implicit as well as explicit knowledge.

Language-focused vocabulary learning has three main values. It speeds up vocabulary learning considerably. It contributes directly to implicit knowledge. It raises awareness of the systematic features of vocabulary.

The Requirements of Language-focused Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary instruction should focus on useful items. We have more frequency information about vocabulary than any other part of the language. 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.

For learners who have a good knowledge of the high frequency words, the focus of instruction should be on learning and coping strategies, including using context clues for inferring meaning, and using word parts and other mnemonic procedures for learning new low frequency words. Learners need to take responsibility for using these strategies to increase their knowledge of low frequency words.

Vocabulary instruction should involve thoughtful processing so that the words are remembered. Teachers should evaluate the procedures they use and the procedures their learners use to see their effectiveness. One way of doing this is to look at them from a "levels of processing" viewpoint to see how thoughtful the learners have to be when they use a particular procedure. Evaluating a procedure from this point of view can involve asking questions.

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. This means that if *fat* and *thin* are both new items for a learner, and if they are learned at the same time, the learner will have difficulty in learning which is which and not mixing them up. Unfortunately most course designers are not aware of this research and deliberately group words in this way.

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.

Knowledge gained through deliberate learning should be enriched by opportunities to learn through meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output. Language-focused learning is a means to an end and that end is not reached unless learners can easily find the words they need when they are using the language. 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.

Techniques and Procedures for Vocabulary Learning

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

Beginners

There are numerous possibilities for conveying the meaning of new vocabulary. Both brief pre-teaching before meeting the words in context and explanation in the context of listening to a story have a substantial effect on learning compared to incidental learning without directly focused attention. This means that before listening activities, it is worth drawing learners' attention to some of the vocabulary that will occur and that it is worth learning. This can be done by listing words on the board and quickly discussing them, giving learners lists of words and meanings to work on at home, or by doing a semantic mapping activity drawing on the learners' previous knowledge and introducing the target vocabulary into the map.

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.

Even at an early stage of language learning, it is worth looking at word building devices. The inflectional suffixes of English are a good start as they are all frequently used. As the guessing from context strategy is so useful, it is worth practicing it as early as possible. At this stage, many of the context clues will come from the situational context rather than the linguistic context. Use of a guided guessing procedure will add some depth of processing to the learning of new words.

At this level, direct teaching of vocabulary is useful. The techniques used can include the use of first language definitions, synonyms, pictures, or demonstration. Some items, particularly numbers, greetings and polite phrases should be practiced to a high level of fluency. The teacher can suggest mnemonics for the words, but this should be regarded more as training in getting learners to create their own mnemonics because research indicates that mnemonic tricks created by each learner result in better retention than those provided by others.

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. This type of activity can be done inductively with the learners going in to the underlying meaning through the analysis of many examples, or deductively by going out from a meaning to examples.

The guessing from context strategy should continue to be practiced with attention being given mainly to clues in the linguistic context. Word parts should be used to help remember the meanings of new words. The keyword strategy links the form of an unknown word to its meaning by using a keyword usually taken from the first language. The keyword procedure can be broken into these steps:

- Look at the second language word and think of a first language word that sounds like it or sounds like its beginning. This first language word is the keyword.
- Think of the meaning of the second language word and the meaning of the first language word joined together in some way. This is where imagination is needed (Ellis and Beaton, 1993).
- Make a mental picture of these two meanings joined together.

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.

Module-31

LANGUAGE-FOCUSED LEARNING: DELIBERATE TEACHING -II

Deliberate Grammar Learning

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 Description

This kind of language-focused learning results in learners being able to say what a grammatical feature means, how it is put together, or how it should be used. As the following techniques show, the instruction is teacher produced description of rules or patterns, learner analysis of examples, or learner manipulation and joining of parts. 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. Discussing grammar is not easy. Sheen conducted a small-scale experiment comparing direct explanation with group problem solving and found that on his written test there was no significant difference, but that there was a significant advantage for direct teaching on his oral test, possibly due to the extra time available for oral practice. Fotos (1993) also found a slight but non-significant advantage for teacher description.

Exploring Collocation Patterns

Some of the simplest explanations that could be of immediate value to learners involve the description of collocation possibilities. Here are some examples, "dismantle is usually followed by the name of an elaborate structure. Collocation patterns are like "local" rules, and may be of more practical value to a learner than the more generally applied rules.

Learning Explicit Grammatical Rules

Sharwood Smith (1981) makes the point that there is a range of knowledge that learners may have. He uses the dimensions of overtness and elaboration to describe these. There are clearly other factors as well, such as generality of application, and kinds of information (rules, strategies, probabilities). There are several exercise types that could fit this category. They include transformation, ordering, constructing from rules, and classification.

Eckman, Bell and Nelson (1988) used **transformation exercises** to teach relative clauses. The learners were given a pair of sentences to transform into a single sentence. The set of combined sentences made up a story. Before doing the exercise the learners were given a little explanation and teacher-led practice.

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. The task aims to develop explicit

knowledge about a grammar point (which may eventually add to implicit knowledge through consciousness-raising or output becoming input), and provides an opportunity for the development of implicit knowledge of other items through the message-focused interaction.

The task that they designed involved groups of four, or pairs. In groups of four, each member had different sentences and they had to decide through group discussion which sentences were correct and which was not. This is a kind of classification activity. All the sentences involved the same grammar point. Finally, the learners had to find the rule to describe the basis for the decision.

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

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.

Tomasello and Herron (1989) found that learners who made an error and were immediately corrected learned more than learners who simply had the correct form explained to them. "Students learn best when they produce a hypothesis and receive feedback, because this creates maximal conditions under which they may cognitively compare their own system to that of mature systems. Such comparisons are clearly important in L1 acquisition". Tomasello and Herron argue that because the activity was done as a group rather than an individual activity, there were no negative motivational effects. The learners

involved could see that many others were making the same error, and that their errors were deliberately caused by the teacher.

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.

Correcting Grammatical 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 table lists some of the causes along with examples.

Table Causes and Examples of Second Language Errors

Cause	Example error	Explanation
Interference from the first language	There are too many difference. When I was young I was very sick. But now that I am a virgin I can take care of myself.	The first language does not mark singular and plural. *Virgin* and *adolescent* are the same word in the first language.
Interference from the second language	One factor which aids second language learning to occur.	The use of *aid* is modelled on the use of *help*.
Reduction to increase efficiency	Big square on top of small square.	The learner was under time pressure to complete a task and so left out unnecessary items.
Accidental error	I said . . . told him not to do it.	Self-correction indicates that the learner knows what to say.

Many errors have more than one cause. For example, interference from the first language is encouraged if the learner has to perform beyond their normal level of competence. Then the first language becomes the main resource to fall back on. Errors resulting from the over-use of second language patterns are more likely to occur where the first language patterns provide little support. From a teaching point of view it is thus useful to regard errors as at least partly a result of the conditions under which speaking occurred.

The following table looks at four task-based sources of error, and suggests how a factor in the design of the task could be considered partly responsible for an error the learner makes while doing the task. General solutions are also suggested. The errors the learners make could show first language, second language, efficiency, or accidental influences. It should not be assumed that every error should be corrected or prevented. One of the major contributions of error analysis is the demonstration that some

errors are signs of developing competence and will largely disappear when full competence in that particular area is reached.

Table Task-based Sources of Error and Possible Design Solutions

Source of error	Solution
The learners were not sufficiently prepared for the task, or the control of the task was not sufficient.	Check the language, ideas, skill, and text aspects of the task to make sure that at least three of the four aspects are well within the learners' previous experience.
The other learners in the group did not provide support or feedback.	Change the group work activity so that each learner has a particular support job to do and so that the activity has a procedure to make it better organised.
The task was not guided enough; the contribution that the learner had to make was too great.	Redesign the task so that guidance is provided in the area in which the error occurred.
The learner's self-monitoring and coping strategies were not sufficient.	Review the strategies that the learner has for monitoring and checking language production.

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. Reducing the amount of making means getting the learners to take fewer risks in their language use and to do mainly guided activities. Similarly, continually correcting learners when they make mistakes may have the effect of reducing the amount of "making" that they do. That is, the continual correction will discourage the learners from speaking or from saying things that might contain an error.

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.

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. There are several reasons for this. First, there is little sense in using procedures that have already been unsuccessful for those learners. They will just remind them of past failures. Second, a new correction procedure allows the learner to account for a previous lack of success. "If this way of correcting had been used before, I wouldn't have continued to make the error." Third, a variety of procedures will create more interest in correction. 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.

Fitting 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. There are several reasons for this, but the main one probably is that teachers and course designers consider that a language course should systematically cover the important grammatical features of the language. This is a reasonable and praiseworthy principle, as long as it is put into practice in a way that takes into account what we know about second language acquisition and what we learn from corpus linguistics.

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. If there is a lot of opportunity for meaning-focused use outside the classroom, then much of the classroom time could be on language-focused learning. If learners' only contact with the language is within the classroom, then less than a quarter of this time should be given to language-focused learning. 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.

Lecture- 12

Developing Fluency

Module-32

DEVELOPING FLUENCY -I

The Nature 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

Fluency and Accuracy

Usually a distinction is made between fluency and accuracy and between activities that are designed to develop fluency and accuracy. This distinction is difficult to maintain. Nation (1989a) and Arevart and Nation (1991) found that an activity that was designed to bring about an increase in fluency also resulted in a reduction of errors and an increase in grammatical complexity. As the ease increases with which learners make use of what they know, then they are able to give more attention to the quality of what they use.

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.

Comprehensive review of the psychological mechanisms underlying second language fluency shows that it is not possible to account for developments in fluency simply through an increase in speed of processing. Substantial increases in fluency also involve changes in the nature of the knowledge of language. Many writers see restructuring as the essential feature underlying skilled performance.

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". Even theories that see repeated practice as the major determinant of development see fluency as being related to a change in knowledge. It is therefore not surprising that developments in fluency are related to developments in accuracy.

Developing Fluency

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.

There needs to be substantial opportunities for both receptive and productive language use where the goal is fluency. There must be plenty of sustained opportunity either inside or outside the classroom to take part in meaning-focused experience tasks. If the items that have been learned are not readily available for fluent use, then the learning has been for little purpose.

Designing 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. 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.

From the point of view of fluency, this activity has important features. First, the user is encouraged to process a large quantity of language. In 4/3/2 this is done by allowing the speaker to perform without interruption and by having the speaker make three deliveries of the talk. Second, the demands of the activity are limited to a much smaller set than would occur in most uncontrolled learning activities. This can be achieved through the teacher's control, as is the case in most receptive fluency activities such as reading graded readers or listening to stories, or it can be done by choice, planning or

repetition on the part of the learner. In the 4/3/2 activity the speaker chooses the ideas and language items, and plans the way of organizing the talk. The 4- and 3-minute deliveries allow the speaker to bring these aspects well under control, so that fluency can become the learning goal of the activity. Note that the repetition of the talk is still with the learner's attention focused on the message because of the changing audience. Third, the learner is helped to reach a high level of performance by having the opportunity to repeat and by the challenge of decreasing time to convey the same message.

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. In listening tasks this is usually done through teacher control, with the teacher controlling the language by working from a simplified text or by consciously controlling the level of the input. However, it can also be achieved by using learner control. This is done for listening activities by getting learners to provide input for other learners, such as when learners present short talks to the class. In speaking activities, allowing learners to provide their own topics and to speak based on their own writing, for example, provides learner control which makes the activity an experience task and thus suitable for the development of fluency.

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. Some activities, like 4/3/2, do not have a demonstrable outcome but are meaning-focused because the speaker has a strong sense of speaking to an audience, even though it may only be an audience of one person.

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. In split information activities like **same or different** or **find the difference**, it is done by putting a time limit on each set of five items and getting learners to change partners after the set time. Learners may also keep a regular record of how long it takes them to perform a task, and then try to reduce the time it takes them. This could be done with learners recording a description of an object or reading aloud.

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. Before doing a same or different split information activity, all the learners who are A get together and work on what they will say. Similarly all the learners who are B get together and plan and practice. After this has been done the As pair up with the Bs to do the activity.

There are numerous ways of designing a planning and preparation element into listening and speaking activities. Here are some brief suggestions of things to do before the fluency activity begins.

- brainstorming the topic
- pre-reading on the topic
- observation of others doing the activity
- repeated opportunities to do the activity
- preparing and practicing in the first language
- prediction activities

The purpose of the preparation is to make the quality of the subsequent listening or speaking reach a higher level than it would without the preparation.

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. The success of repetition activities largely depends on the repetitions involving substantially the same message. In the 4/3/2 activity, the work is done in pairs and the listener in each pair is replaced by a different listener for each repetition.

In listening activities, the purpose for listening may need to change in order to keep the learner interested in the repeated message.

Fitting 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."

If fluency activities are included in each lesson and make use of new language items taught in that lesson, then these items should occur at a low density in the fluency material. In listening material this means that at least 99 percent of the running words should be very familiar to the learners. A second alternative is to include fluency activities in each lesson that make use of items learned several days or weeks before. A third alternative is periodically to give large blocks of time to fluency activities.

Many fluency techniques involve the linking of skills. For example, reading is followed by listening, discussion is followed by listening, writing is followed by speaking. The reason for linking skills in this way is so that the earlier activities can provide preparation and support for the later activity. This preparation and support then allows a high level of performance to be reached in the later activity—much higher than there would have been if the later activity had not been linked with earlier activities.

Module-33

DEVELOPING FLUENCY -II

Developing Fluency in Listening and Speaking

Although fluency activities are aimed at the development of a skill, they inevitably affect knowledge of the language. The way that they affect this knowledge in turn relates to the development of fluency. We can distinguish three approaches to fluency development which can all usefully be part of a language course.

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. 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. 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.

Techniques for Developing Fluency in Listening

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.

In listening and reading activities, a distinction is sometimes made between activities where the learner brings a lot of topic-related background knowledge to the task (top-down processing) and activities where the learner relies primarily on the language of the text to

understand (bottom-up processing) (Richards, 1990). Most comprehension activities are a combination of these two approaches, 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

In the **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. The learners can have a list of multiple-choice answers in front of them. They listen to the sentence and then choose the answer. The items that are described are all things that the learners are familiar with through everyday experience.

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. When asking questions the teacher should ask the question before pointing to a learner to answer it. In this way everyone in the class tries to think of the answer in case the teacher points to them. As well as questions, true/false sentences can be used. Each sentence has a number.

Questions can easily become a game, with different teams trying to beat the others. A variation of this technique is to put the answer to each question, either a single word, a short phrase, or a sentence, in a list on the blackboard, but the answers are in a different order from the teacher's questions. The learners must listen to the teacher's question, choose the correct answer, and write it.

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. These books can be bought or they can be made by using a photocopier that enlarges what it copies. The teacher reads the story to the learners while they look at the words and pictures. The same story will be read several times over several weeks and the learners will soon be able to say parts of the sentences that they recall from previous readings. This technique is also useful for listening fluency as the teacher can read the story a little faster each time.

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. The writing could be done individually or as group compositions. Instead of learner compositions learners can listen to recordings of what they have read before.

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.

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. The learners just listen to the story and enjoy it. While reading the story the teacher sits next to the blackboard and writes any words that the learners might not recognize in their spoken form. Any words the learners have not met before may also be written, but the story should be chosen so that there are very few of these. During the reading of the first chapters the teacher may go fairly slowly and repeat some sentences. As the learners become more familiar with the story, the speed increases and the repetitions decrease. Learner interest in this activity is very high and the daily story is usually looked forward to with the same excitement people have in television serials. If the pauses are a little bit longer than usual in telling the story, this allows learners to consider what has just been heard and to anticipate what may come next. It allows learners to listen to language at normal speed without becoming lost. See the Extensive Reading Foundation website for good books.

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.

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.

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.

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. For younger learners the topics may be based on an article in the newspaper, an interesting event, or a story that the learner has just read. Farid (1978) suggests allowing learners to question the speaker after the talk and then to question each other on their understanding of the talk.

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.

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.

Techniques for Developing Fluency in Speaking

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.

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.

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. This continues until the learner is happy with the recording. This technique can involve planning and encourages repetition through the setting of a quality-based goal.

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.

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.

Activities described in other chapters of this book can be used to develop spoken fluency if the three conditions of limited demands, meaning focus, and a high level of performance are met. These activities include **ranking**, **information transfer**, **split information** activities, and **interviews**. Repeating an activity that was previously done with a language learning goal is a useful way of developing fluency. A gap of about a week or two is probably sufficient for enough memory of the previous activity to remain.

Monitoring Fluency Tasks

Examining the Context of the Material

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—**L**anguage item goals; **I**dea or content goals; **S**kill goals; and **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.

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

Examining the Teaching Material

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?

Fluency activities can also be monitored to see if learners are increasing the fluency with which they deal with tasks. Lennon (1990) found that over a period of several months, the measures that showed a change were speech rate and filled pauses. It would be necessary to make careful transcripts of recorded spoken production to measure such change, but teachers may be able to make more subjective judgements that are of value.

Fluency is often a neglected strand of a course, probably because the teacher feels that new material needs to appear in each lesson. Fluency development activities are a very useful bridge between knowing and using.

Lecture- 13

Teaching Speaking and Listening in Primary School

Module-34

TALK IN THE EARLY YEARS

Talk in the Early Years

Any understanding of the way children and adults use language at home and at school must be grounded in the ways in which language itself develops and in the very nature of talk. You may find it useful to think of conversation and speaking and listening as analogous to a game of tennis. The talk itself is the tennis ball and the speaker and listener the two players. The server/speaker hits the talk to the receiver/listener who then becomes the hitter/speaker and hits the talk back to the server/receiver. This toing and froing continues until perhaps the ball falls short (a misunderstanding/unclear explanation), when one of the players has to reach out and retrieve it, before hitting the talk back into the play area/conversation and so the game continues. Talk between an adult and a young child is analogous to a game of ball with a toddler. The adult has to do most of the work running round and retrieving the ball (or talk) and practically throwing the ball (or talk) into the arms (or ears) of the less experienced player (or talker). I do not think it is claiming too much to assert that playing like this with a toddler is almost a natural reaction. 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. But we do not explicitly teach talk in the classroom and it is an arduous process to record and transcribe. It is perhaps the transitory nature of talk which makes it difficult to track, to assess and comment upon.

Speech and Language Development in Early Years

- **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 language can occur.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

- **Nursery rhymes encourage listening skills.**

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.

Oral Language Development 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.

Shared Conversations: Talking with Children

Children of all ages enjoy talking with the adults in their lives, including their parents, teachers and caregivers. Talking is one of the most natural things we do with the children in our care, sometimes without even thinking about doing it. When we talk about our day, sit down to snack or lunch we can help build important language skills through our conversations. Caregivers can do more intentionally to build children's oral language development. They can help children build language skills both through their own language interactions with children and by setting up an environment that gives children lots of reasons to talk and things to talk

about. 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.

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. Who does most of the talking? Whose voices are heard the most in the classroom or care setting? The child should be talking at least half the time instead of the teacher or caregiver. There is a real difference between talking with children when the conversation is shared and the caregiver listens versus talking at children where the caregiver does all the talking and the children listen.

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.

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.

Description

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. Narrating also introduces and illustrates sentence structures. Verbs, prepositions (such as for communicating direction, location), adverbs (such as for characterizing intensity), and generally the kind of labeling that places new words immediately in a natural context (because the objects or actions are present or occurring at that moment). 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.

Reading with Children is an Opportunity for Conversation

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.

You can help focus children's attention on the vocabulary and concepts and use them as a basis for conversations after the shared reading experience. The types of books available can make a difference in children's interest in and use of books for learning and enjoyment. Many available children's books contain rich vocabulary in a natural context. They have a variety of words that might not otherwise come up in daily conversation, and those words often occur in complete sentences in the books. There should be an adequate supply of books of different types available to children—fiction and non-fiction, poetry, stories, children's reference books (picture dictionaries or encyclopedias) as well as "information books"–single-topic books that explore different features, characteristics, or circumstances of the topic, such as books on butterflies, reptiles, the weather, transportation— that allow children to get information or answer questions. Books that have interesting content, rich vocabulary, and detailed illustrations are powerful for helping children build oral language and vocabulary, an understanding of the meaning of words they hear and read, and an understanding of how language works,

Talking with Children Makes a Difference

The ways in which caregivers talk and read with children and the kind of environment caregivers set up can affect the development of oral language skills that are a crucial underpinning for children's later reading achievement. By exposing children to new, rich

vocabulary and concepts in spoken and printed sentences and helping children understand the meaning of words and sentences, caregivers help children build their own knowledge of words and speech to use in expressing themselves and in interpreting the meaning of print.

The more those caregivers intentionally make time for talking and sharing experiences such as

- extended, contextualized conversations with individual children
- reading books with interesting and rich concepts
- engaging children in discussions and questions about the book
- modeling speaking in complete sentences in questions, responses, and statements
- providing opportunities for children to talk about things and events that are not in the here-and-now—past, present, and imaginary

the more support there is for children's language development and later reading comprehension success.

Module-35

DEVELOPING ARTICULATE READERS

Introduction

Spoken language is children's most powerful tool for formulating and expressing their thoughts. Talk offers children an immediate, flexible medium with which they can have an impact on those around them. They learn to use this tool – to become articulate – by speaking and listening with others. Articulate children are in a strong position. They have the means to do such useful things as question, describe, persuade, inform and speculate. They can use this facility to help themselves understand the social and physical world around them. More than this, they can encourage others to talk to them, giving them a better chance that their fluency in spoken language will make exponential gains. As the literate child learns to read and write while learning from reading and writing, the articulate child make leaps of understanding and development while becoming better able to use spoken language effectively.

Conversely, children limited by lack of vocabulary, lack of confidence or poor language awareness may well become frustrated by their inability to communicate. Of course there are other ways children can express their feelings and ideas – for example, a smile, a punch or a hug – and eventually most are able to write down what they want to say. But talk remains the best and most accessible way for the majority of children to open up their thoughts, to interact with other people, and to learn. This remains the case as we grow into adults. Although much exchange of ideas goes on through writing and reading, people in all areas of their personal and working life organize meetings, discussions, one-to-ones, conferences, talks, phone calls, dinner parties, and get-togethers of various kinds where much gets learned, clarified and decided through talk. Education must offer children ways to become articulate as an investment in their future; but just as importantly, so that they can make the most of their present.

Speaking and Listening for Literacy

The National Literacy Strategy (NLS) (DfEE 1998c) encouraged the use of spoken language in whole-class and group work but did not specify the direct teaching of speaking and listening as a discrete subject. The QCA guidance materials *Speaking, Listening, Learning* (QCA/DfES 2003) addressed this omission by providing a framework to support the development of the skills and understanding children need to become articulate. The approach depends on the fostering of children's progress through activities with specified learning objectives for speaking, listening, group work and drama. The child working through these activities can be expected to gain an awareness of the importance of their own 'voice', to develop appropriate vocabulary and spoken language tools, and the confidence to use them purposefully.

Dialogic Teaching

Dialogic teaching is based on the premise that learning in schools is a social activity. Social aspects of classroom contexts which teachers can organize to help ensure the effectiveness of learning activities are:

- the fostering of a classroom community in which learning dialogues take place;
- the creation of activities which necessitate learning dialogues.

Learning dialogues are conversations in which challenging questions feature strongly. An open and inquisitive attitude is essential to learning dialogues. In learning dialogues different points of view are seen as a positive resource. Children are aware that through speaking and listening they are thinking together, and that focused talk is necessary to help everyone develop their ideas. In classrooms, learning dialogues are based on explicit learning objectives so that the children know what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how to achieve their objectives through discussion

The Guided Reading Group

Picture books, with their detailed illustrations and motivating narrative structure, are open to a range of interpretations and can provide a terrific stimulus to help teachers to generate talk and thinking. Each child will bring their own ideas to their understanding of text and graphics. If encouraged to share such ideas, they gain the opportunity to consider other points of view, to reflect and learn. This sort of thinking together aloud is invaluable preparation for thinking alone.

OFSTED's (1995) finding that it was taking too much time for teachers to listen to children read individually led to the formulation of 'guided reading'. With many variations in format, guided reading sessions generally involve children organized in ability groups reading individual copies of the same book. By listening or joining in with the group talk the teacher can gain insight into levels of individual reading competence and comprehension. During guided reading, 'Challenge may be in terms of reading cues and strategies, language and vocabulary, or sophisticated aspects of grammar, inference, skimming and scanning'. Considering the role of talk, the NLS sets out the format of guided reading sessions: 'the teacher discusses the text with the pupils, drawing attention to successful strategies and focusing on comprehension' (DfEE 1998c: 81). This is a good example of how learning is expected to proceed through the medium of talk.

Guided Reading as a Social Way of Thinking and Learning

Discussion of the text under study is an integral part of guided reading. The purpose of such discussion is to ensure that individual children attend to and comprehend the details of what

they see and hear. Each child in a guided reading group can be expected to interpret the text slightly differently. However, the overall learning gains will depend not only on the child's previous experiences, but on the text, the illustrations, the group and the task as organized by the teacher. In addition, and most profoundly for young readers, learning depends on the chance to hear the text read, repeated, analyzed and commented on, to share ideas about the pictures and the story, and to ask and answer questions. Guided reading is in essence a very social activity. The child joins a mini-learning community for the duration of the session, in which the discourse creates a fertile habitat for developing as a reader. It is an unusual situation; parents or librarians may read to children, classmates may occasionally share a text, but very rarely will the child be part of this sort of 'book club' setting. The talk focus is of great importance for getting the most out of the text and one another.

Learning to read is not a linear process; it proceeds in leaps and small incremental steps at different times. The ultimate aim of teaching reading is to help children develop into independent readers. Guided reading offers learners the support of both classmates and teacher. A real advantage is that children in guided reading groups can tackle books that they would fail to read alone. They can gain satisfaction and confidence from this achievement, as well as acquiring skills and understanding about both the book and the process of reading

The teaching of literacy is driven by educational learning objectives, and by the child's personal impulse and purpose. Guided reading, writing and speaking and listening provide special contexts for learners. In these situations, learners move away from imposed expectations towards making use of literacy for their own purposes. Paradoxically, use of group work is a strong support for independence. In addition, guided groups offer increased skills, knowledge and understanding of literate practices generally.

Guided Reading as Exploratory Talk

Whatever the format of guided reading, it should include an element of exploratory talk which is essentially a particular type of dialogue in which partners engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas. The concept of exploratory talk is derived from the work of Barnes who says, 'Exploratory talk is often hesitant and incomplete; it enables the speaker to try ideas, to hear how they sound, to see what others make of them, to arrange information and ideas into different patterns'. Dialogic teaching of guided reading involves the teacher knowing where the discussion might lead. The teacher takes the responsibility for upholding the discussion, and in so doing allows the children to bring their ideas forward for the attention of others. Talking to children about books involves asking questions which may be thought-provoking, interesting, or downright impossible to answer. Sometimes, it is in not knowing that new learning lies. Not only that, the teacher also has to encourage readers to raise their own questions – genuine queries which they really want answered. Teachers model this 'probing' by raising genuinely interested questions themselves. This involves not only knowing the book

under study extremely well, but in wanting to know what the children think, and in being prepared to learn more about the book from them. This sounds a lot to ask; but teachers commonly achieve this small miracle of teaching-and-learning, using knowledge while remaining open to new ideas. It is simply an area of professional expertise.

Four Important Worries about Guided Reading Raised by Teachers

- **It may be very difficult to work intensively with a small group for a reasonable length of time.**

  Teachers are very creative in organizing their own time and that of teaching assistants and other helpers. A weekly guided reading session is an invaluable learning experience which makes all the organization worthwhile. A class of children can learn that everyone will have the opportunity to participate, and understand the importance of avoiding interfering while guided reading takes place. Their own enjoyment of the experience may help them to recognize the importance of letting others immerse themselves in a learning conversation about a book.

- **Some children want to read at their own pace and seem averse to sharing books through discussion.**

  For some children, the 'stop-start' pace of guided reading can seem frustrating. Understandably, they just want to get to the end of the story and find out what happens! There is a case for reading the book straight through first, so that some of the narrative tension is lessened, and indeed so that the book can be enjoyed simply at this level. Interrogation of pictures and text can then take place to try to work out, for example, why it seemed so exciting, and if everyone had the same first impressions or had noticed the same things. Learning to consider things carefully is useful in itself, as is learning that your ideas might not be the same as everyone else's.

- **Children rarely raise questions themselves, but are very passive and expect the teacher to do all the 'work' of the conversation.**

  When children do not raise questions, this may be because they have become accustomed to waiting for someone else to do so. Teachers raise lots of questions, for example during introductory and plenary sessions; if the teacher is part of a talk group, the child may assume that the teacher will take on the task of questioning. There are probably lots of ways round this, one of which is simply to raise children's awareness of this as a problem. Another strategy is to teach children how and why to raise questions; for example, using one storybook page, to talk with a partner to decide on three questions about the pictures, then ask another pair these questions. Non-fiction books are good for this activity too. Learning to ask relevant and interesting questions can be a learning

objective for any curriculum-based lesson. For example, in science, given a snail, a woodlouse or a ladybird, how many things do we actually know about the creature? All the things we don't know can be turned into questions. Where does it live? Why is it that colour? Does it live alone or in families? What does it like to eat? Making questioning a habit through teaching questioning as a skill is an important task for the primary teacher.

- **Teachers question their own role in group discussion, feeling that their intervention is somehow 'wrong' in being too directive.**

  The role of the teacher in setting up groups, in supporting exploratory talk, and leading the children through the sharing of ideas, is immensely important. It is really inappropriate to worry, as some teachers do, that joining a discussion group is interfering in some way with children's relationship to the text and to one another. While children are learning all the complex skills they need to conduct an exploratory discussion, and to read and interpret text, they need the support and guidance

Module-36

SPEAKING, LISTENING AND THINKING WITH COMPUTERS

Introduction

Computers are designed for individual use, but children in primary classrooms often work at the computer in a group. This is sometimes because of a scarcity of computers in schools, and sometimes because teachers believe that children working in a group can support one another by talking about their work. Teachers may have to supervise several groups simultaneously, so such computer groups are most effective when the members can support one another. But what is it that we really want them to help one another with? Children have to learn to cope independently with problems to do with hardware, software, and ideas. For the teacher, it's the third of these areas which is extremely interesting. Ensuring that children have the opportunity to think about and discuss their ideas with others gives the whole group a real chance to reflect and learn. For this reason, it is important that the talk that goes on between children at computers is primarily to do with thoughts, ideas, opinions, understandings and reasons. Teachers can encourage such educationally effective learning dialogues during ICT-based activities.

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. Transcript 1 is a clear example of disputational talk.

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. Alternatives are offered and reasons requested, with knowledge being shared, and reasoning more evident in the talk. Progress emerges from the

eventual joint agreements that are reached, and any decisions 'belong' to the entire group Further discussion about these varieties of talk may be found in Mercer (1995). Not all talk fits neatly into this categorization, but this offers a practical way of distinguishing the sort of talk that teachers say they wish to hear in their classrooms. Often specify 'exploratory talk' as the sort of talk that they would particularly want to encourage between children working in groups, at the computer or during any other task. However, disappointingly little exploratory talk may take place unless children know

The Value of Exploratory Talk

What is it about exploratory talk that makes it such an important sort of interaction? And if a teacher hopes or aims to encourage exploratory talk between children in her class, how can she help them to achieve this?

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. That is not to say that the children are acting irrationally, but that they are not making their reasons explicit to one another. If asked, they might well be able to articulate their reasons for assertions and suggestions, but in cumulative talk they make no attempt to do so, and are not encouraged to do so by their workmates. The talk, and the engagement with the task, is superficial.

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. Having to say what you mean – 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. Also, you have no alternative suggestions to produce the creative friction from which new ideas arise. 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

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

Encouraging Exploratory Talk

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.

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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.
- Self-appointed group leaders emerge and impose an inappropriate style of working on the group. 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.
- Encouraged by the game-play feel of some software, talk may be of a casual or social nature. The children may engage in their constant testing and re-establishment of the class 'pecking order'; this process dominates the talk.

It is the role of the teacher to be aware of these effects and to overcome them on the children's behalf. Computers currently retain their popularity and motivating power in classrooms, despite their tendency to unreliability and their capacity to lose hours of work in moments.

Teaching Ground Rules for 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 need to understand and share the aims for their talk. They can use the computer to practice discussion skills only once they have been taught what the elements of those skills are. 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. Ground rules which can enable a group to discuss things with one another may not be entirely obvious to children. They have to be disentangled from other rules for talk that they will have learned, or at least heard of.

Talk Lessons

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.

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.

The Effect of the Talk Lessons

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.

In any mixed-ability class, some of the children will develop their discussion skills quickly during the direct teaching programme, while others will find it hard to listen, hard to talk, or hard to think of reasons for their assertions. Such children may need a little longer and a little more practice; the growing skills of their classmates can act as a model and a reminder. The video evidence shows that many talk-trained children learn how to negotiate their ideas so that they are able to consult the other members of the group and give proper attention to their views. They can ask one another for opinions, and make their own reasoning explicit in their talk.

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.

Module-37

MONITORING AND ASSESSING SPEAKING AND LISTENING IN THE CLASSROOM

Planning for Assessment of Speaking and Listening

The National Curriculum Programmes of Study and level descriptions for Speaking and Listening are rather generalized. There is a need to develop a range of strategies for listening to children talking, taking into account a number of features which might not relate to their oral ability. These will include:

- who the child is speaking to
- what sort of task is involved
- previous experience of the talk task
- the child's fluency in a home language as well as English
- the gender of the child and other group members.

It is noted that the child's proficiency as a speaker and listener in a very wide range of situations. During a school day they will be required to respond to questions, listen to stories, act on oral instructions, work closely with their classmates and perhaps contribute to class discussion.

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. We must also be aware that making progress in talk isn't just a matter of practicing different kinds of purposes for talk. Neither is it having experience of a number of audiences, or even having experience of all the types of talk text listed in curriculum documents. Making progress involves more socially and culturally influenced qualities such as increased flexibility and the capacity to choose how and whether to speak in specific circumstances. It also involves developing the confidence to initiate discussion or support opinion by reference to wider experience.

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.

Frameworks for Assessment

Assessment procedures which involve children and their parents or carers in the process can be continued in Key Stage 1 classrooms. 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 would seem to be particularly useful in the case of speaking and listening where so much of the child's experience takes place in the home. 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.

'Keeping a record of children's development in talking and listening may present difficulties not found when recording children's development as readers and writers' (Barrs *et al.* 1988: 20). One of the problems that the Primary Language Record identified was that 'talk disappears into the air'; another was that as teachers we are often part of any classroom interaction both as contributor and as monitor. Added to this is the fact that for many children in classrooms who are using community languages as well as English, we may not be able to take into account the part played by their first language.

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.

Recording Evidence

The National Curriculum for English details the range of purposes for which talk opportunities should be provided in schools, and the key skills necessary for confident expression and careful listening. It also provides information about the development of pupils' use and appreciation of standard English and other dialects, and their growing fluency with an increasingly enriched vocabulary as they progress through the levels of attainment. In order to collect evidence of speaking and listening you will need to become confident about your own judgement of individual progress and you will almost certainly need to use some form of

framework for recording progress. It is helpful to have some ideas of formats for recording in mind when you are planning the curriculum so that assessment for Speaking and Listening is incorporated into a term's work.

We can create assessment opportunities by planning to listen to children talking in many different contexts, for different purposes and to different audiences over a period of time; in these contexts we also observe the child as a listener. You will need to consider the range of assessment opportunities available and different ways of recording evidence. There are many formal and informal situations in which information about an individual's speaking and listening abilities can be collected and recorded.

Teacher Assessment

An initial assessment of children's speaking and listening skills might begin by considering readily observable features of talk. This could be used on a single occasion or to gather information over a longer period. Different purposes will require different sorts of assessment. You might, for example, want to do a quick initial overview of your new class, or you might need a more detailed procedure that will enable you to monitor and chart their progress over a period of time. The time span chosen should be long enough to provide evidence from a balanced range of different contexts.

Self-assessment

Involving children in the assessment of their own speaking and listening helps them to develop a way of describing their own talk and become aware of the way they interact with other people. It also helps them to take an active part in their own learning as we saw in Chapter 6, where children became aware of themselves as talkers as they learned to work together round the computer.

The role of considering and recording their own talk can be provided by completing a 'talk diary'. This can build up a picture of children's talking and listening activities over a finite length of time in a way that is straightforward for both teacher and child to use and interpret. In the same way that reading records are constantly updated, adding to the content of a talk diary should be simple and frequent. A comprehensive talk diary can fulfil several purposes. It can:

- provide an overview of the range of opportunities for speaking and listening which the child has experienced
- record the child's strengths and weaknesses in speaking and listening
- build up a picture over time of speaking and listening activities
- focus the child's attention on the value of speaking and listening
- provide evidence for informal ongoing assessment
- contribute to planning of activities

- provide a resource for reporting the child's achievements.

Identifying and Monitoring Progress

Because speaking and listening are everyday features of classroom life it may be difficult to detect the rather subtle differences that indicate progress. Children whose personalities allow them the confidence to speak more often or more clearly can be assessed more readily than those who are less sure of themselves, which presents something of a paradox, since it is the latter who may require input or direct help in order to make progress.

Speaking, Listening, Learning and Assessment

Opportunities for assessing Speaking and Listening occur in a range of different contexts within the English Curriculum. Storytelling, reading aloud, sharing poems, drama activities, listening to tapes and watching videos, collaborative writing and research, reporting and explaining, all provide opportunities for assessment. These contexts allow the child to talk and listen for an increasing range of purposes but need to be included in the overall planning of provision which integrates. The Teaching Objectives from the QCA/DfES (2003) *Speaking, Listening, Learning* materials can be usefully paired with curriculum objectives. In this way children can be provided with a clear indication of what is expected of them in terms of spoken language, while curriculum subjects provide rich contexts for discussion, storytelling, description, active listening and so on

Lecture- 14

Assessing Speaking

Module- 38

APPROACHES, MATERIALS AND THE ISSUE OF 'REAL' SPEECH

As teachers and researchers, we have preconceptions about the spoken form that influence our beliefs about it. These affect how we think about speech at the level of interaction, at the level of language choices and in what we think it means to be a 'fluent' speaker. Speaking is messy and difficult to define, it is fundamental to language learning but open to the vagaries of individual use and context. The production of teaching materials and the handling of speaking in the language classroom show these tensions particularly clearly.

What are our Models and Standards When We Teach Speaking?

As soon as real speakers in real interactions and in socially and culturally diverse situations are taken into account in models of language, some kind of assessment is required as to how far the features found are universal in the spoken form and to what extent they are particular to that speaker or that context. In this sense, descriptive linguistics meets up rather interestingly with conventional language theories. This is an area that has been under-researched during a phase of rapid improvement in the descriptions of spoken forms and greater emphasis on its importance in the curriculum.

There is, therefore, a great deal of opportunity for fruitful research projects in the area of both descriptive studies of spoken forms and more theoretically informed work on how far one can generalize from these studies.

The above debates lead us to a more practical question for the classroom practitioner, that is, how far one would want actually to incorporate any generalizations about spoken forms into the syllabus as an individual teacher or into course components at an institutional level. In general, the tendency to see the grammatical faculty at such an abstract level has permitted the majority of us to continue to teach via models of grammar that are extremely traditional, and strongly influenced by historically 'high prestige' standard forms. These forms, as noted by Carter and McCarthy tend to be closer to the norms of published writing than of casual speech. However, with the growing body of evidence about the grammar of speech, the individual teacher or teacher trainer needs to decide where they stand on the issue of how, and how far, to incorporate descriptive linguistics into their teaching.

Overall, at the start of the twenty-first century the field of applied linguistics is in an interesting state of flux over its attitudes to the spoken form and, in particular, spoken grammar. It will take some time for the teaching profession and materials developers to evaluate the multitude of novel ideas about speech that the work of corpus linguists and discourse analysts is throwing up. As it is implied, the fact that a structure is commonly found in the spoken form of a

language has never made it automatically a target for language topics in classrooms and materials

The Evolution of Materials to Teach Speaking

It provides a commentary that relates them to some of the broader changes in approaches to language teaching that have been seen. The issue underpinning many of the commentaries is that it is significantly easier to teach speaking as if it were isolated from its users, and the greater the flexibility and authenticity of the materials the harder it can be to manage them in a structured syllabus. In addition to questions of norms of grammar or of targets for pronunciation, real speech brings real people into the classroom and with them complex matters of class, gender, race, religion, politics and other culturally sensitive issues.

The trace of audio-lingual and notional-functional approaches

During the 1970s and into the 1980s a focus on structured practice and de-contextualized tasks was the norm in materials produced to develop speaking skills. In these the long shadow of what had been a dominant paradigm in language teaching, the audio-lingual method, could still be seen. Whereas in the research domain at this time communicative approaches were emerging, and the earlier approach had been largely set aside from the early 1960s, commercial materials still showed features of the older approach. Very few exercises to generate 'free' talk or allow students to negotiate meaning between themselves were evident and pattern practice would take place through a highly structured and constrained set of exercises. In addition, as was the norm in the audio-lingual approach, there would be very little description at the meta-level, that is to say, there would be little or no attempt to explain point of language and the focus was to gain automaticity by filling in gaps and repeating patterns. In some materials however the influence of 'functional' approaches to language teaching– those in which a brief context/scenario and a conversational purpose/ function were related to particular forms which speakers might be expected to produce – also made their way into materials produced for teaching speaking.

The early influence of the communicative approach

In contrast to the above, many of the pair-work books which grew out of the drive for communicative materials in the ELT classroom during the 1980s and early 1990s focused less on structural input, and more on scenarios to prompt 'natural' dialogue. Through such interactions the learner would be encouraged to build fluency and from which, in theory, insight about structure would be acquired. For example, *Partners 3* by Michael Lewis (1982) contains a range of ingenious scenarios and prompts for the more advanced learner. However, it is not that far removed from the earlier materials. In particular, it asks the student to carry out their interactions in something of a void or as if the scenarios being presented were culturally universal or neutral (the British pub and drinking being a culturally loaded set of topics that not all students would appreciate or find appropriate).

The influence of discourse analytic approaches

At the mid-point between the first two extracts a popular text at higher levels which also balanced structural items and tasks/scenarios/prompts on each page was Keller and Warner's (1988) *Conversation* The influence of 1980s UK discourse analysis can be seen in the categorization of stretches of conversation (First speaker: PLAN, Second speaker: RESERVATION, First speaker: COUNTER-ARGUMENT). The cultural norms being tapped into would perhaps be questioned by a later readership (for example, middle-class couple with husband persuading wife to do something and taking rhetorical lead throughout

Task-based learning materials for teaching speaking in the context of English for Academic Purposes

Interestingly, in the fields of ESP and EAP the tendency to isolate speaking processes from broader contextual matters has never been as strong as in general language teaching. For example, in Lynch and Anderson's (1992) *Study Speaking* or Rignall and Furneaux's (1997) *Speaking* in the English for Academic Study Series, speaking skills are embedded in broader functional areas (such as disagreeing) and in turn presented within appropriate real-world contexts and genres (such as the academic seminar). This highlights the advantage of knowing the specific use to which a learner will put a target language in terms of defining the areas to be introduced into a syllabus. While these appropriacy constraints apply across all skill areas, they are more sensitive in the domain of speech.

The Current Scene in Materials to Teach Speaking

Developments during the latter decades of the twentieth century and more recently continued to reflect the trickle of ideas from the applied linguistics research community. Hand in hand with the greater professionalization of the ELT community, there has been a tendency for the classroom practitioner to explore corpus- and task-based approaches independently of published materials and/or to engage in their own materials development. However, the small percentage of ELT staff worldwide that has the luxury of time and training in these fields should not be forgotten. The much larger, hard-pressed, often non-native speaker teaching community still requires a range of modern published materials to support the development of speaking skills. However, the needs of such teachers for innovative research informed materials may be being overlooked in modern trends in ELT publishing.

There has been some nervousness on the part of the commercial publishers to tackle the issues surrounding teaching spontaneous, richly contextualized speech data. The tendency in the publishing world has been simply to produce a greater variety of course books for different types of learners and levels and retain a strong focus on prompts for discussions, role plays, and tasks to generate interaction (for instance, Gammidge, 2004). Rather than books that draw on research insights about spoken interaction, by far the most prominent development in recent years has

been material developed to prepare for the speaking elements of the major international tests of English. A calculation based on web searches suggests that, in terms of materials for speaking/listening, around 50 new titles were produced for the two most widely known tests of English: the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) between 2000 and 2009. This large number was prompted in part by significant changes to the test formats requiring new material to prepare students, but the paucity of commercial teaching material based on, for example, spoken corpora is stark in comparison. In relation to this it is possible to suggest there may be a gap developing between two types of teaching community. The first, larger, is the international community of often non-native speaker teachers who depend on published materials and work in contexts where the use of a textbook is an imperative. The second are those who work in contexts that allow time and training to support the confident teaching of speaking skills by teachers of all backgrounds and languages.

Bringing the Skills Together

It is salutary to remember how skillful the competent speaker of any language is, and the multitude of tasks that have to be carried out simultaneously for talk to occur. Acknowledging the unique complexity of the skill of speaking can help build confidence for teachers and learners in approaches to spoken language. It is not simply a matter of developing accurate mastery of structure and vocabulary combined with effective handling of phonetic detail. The spoken form, unlike the written, calls for the learner to draw on oral/aural, cognitive, processing, pragmatic, inter-personal, cultural and motor skills simultaneously.

This dynamic and complex set of achievements comes as naturally to the first language user as the smooth operation of a car to an experienced driver (in contrast to the halting and sometimes humiliating performance of the learner driver). Knowing how to speak is too often presented as a simple translation of linguistic knowledge into the spoken medium. Learners very often have a far higher passive knowledge of the language than the multiply challenging skill of speaking will allow them to deliver under real-time processing pressures. Explaining that the spoken medium brings processing and inter-personal pressures that even first language users will find challenging at times is a good place to begin for any level of learner. Finding the right response to anger in a friend or loved one, defending an idea in an aggressive business meeting or academic seminar, answering an unexpected question in a job interview – none of these are easy in the spoken channel even in a first language under real-time processing constraints

Module- 39

ISSUES IN ASSESSING SPEAKING

Introduction

The development of the assessment of speaking has gone hand in hand with the emergence of language testing as a recognized sub-field of applied linguistics. Attitudes to oral assessment have been shaped by the changing currents of research paradigms in this field and in linguistics more generally. Early developments in language testing were strongly linked to governmental, colonial, and military requirements for effective language teaching and testing, particularly during the Second World War. This strongly practical focus meant that language assessment practices and theory tended to develop outside the discipline of linguistics.

The nature of speech means that the potential for subjectivity, variation in test facets and, due to these two factors, difficulty in maintaining consistency across tests are far higher in the spoken form than the written. As there are so many competing factors which can affect speech production under test conditions – from the health of the candidate to cultural expectations about how a conversation works – test designers have tended to focus on the more quantifiable aspects of language production (for example, number of errors per stretch of speech) and to constrain the test procedure.

A meaningful test of language proficiency rests on how objective, replicable and reliably consistent over time it is for comparative purposes. Speaking challenges all three concepts continuously and it is only by handling it in terms of performance that appears very different from the norms of daily spoken interaction that the examination processes can be carried out

Why the Nature of Speaking is a Challenge for Test Designers

Understanding the construct

The first general question asked by any test developer is 'What is the construct that we are aiming to assess?' In lay terms this is simply asking 'What exactly is this a test of?' and our general answer here would be 'Speaking'. However, the diverse nature of speaking makes the definition of the construct challenging. Taken statistically, casual conversation is by far the most prominent genre of speaking. Setting aside formal or prepared public talk such as broadcast material or academic lectures, the vast bulk of spoken discourse is commonplace, situated, informal and as infinitely varied as the participants and their particular concerns at the time of talking. Through such discourse shared understanding of given and new information emerges; relationships, opinions and social identity are formed; and the performative and creative aspects of talk such as jokes, stories and word-play are carried out. However 'everyday conversation' is clearly not the construct dealt with by the major tests of speaking, and the creative and affective

aspects of talk do not appear in the criteria for internationally benchmarked tests of spoken language.

Speaking is also carried out under severe processing constraints in which deleting and editing are impossible and planning difficult. A key skill for the speaker, therefore, is the ability to handle the pressures of speech production well and to maintain flow of ideas and/or self-repair as needed. Unless a stretch of talk can be completely memorized (a skill some test takers try to master for their high-stakes language tests and generally fail) it must be created at the time of utterance by the speaker and will rarely – even when speech acts such as quoting the speech of oneself or others – be identical to what has been uttered before. Under test conditions the smooth and syntactically complete utterance will be valued more highly than the hesitant self-repair or choppy reformulation. Until oral assessment criteria value skillful handling of self-repair the pressure is on candidates to not produce these natural features in their test performance.

Test formats and task types

The examiner and candidate participating in oral discourse under test conditions are in an atypical relationship in terms of everyday speaking, in several ways. A key skill in spoken language production involves understanding listener needs and adapting speech in the light of this. For instance, speakers using the same geographical dialect and from a similar social background will use distinctive forms and lexical items with people they feel close to in terms of social identity. The same speakers may, in different circumstances, monitor and adjust their way of speaking if, for example, they are speaking to someone of their own generation but from a different location or language background. They may adjust their talk again if they speak to someone much older than themselves who speaks their local dialect. A fine-grained and well-judged adjustment of talk is the mark of a proficient speaker and cannot be evaluated without reference to the recipient. Some test formats allow interaction between two or more test takers. There is clearly no benefit to them to accommodate to one another to the point where the examiner does not understand them. However, the nature of informal talk is that it is often difficult for the 'outsider' to understand. Under examination conditions, inevitably, speakers are speaking for the examiner, not for their interlocutor.

Whether a candidate is asked to interact with an examiner or with another student, the interactive nature of speech and the level of personal involvement which even formal speaking will lead to mean that it is extremely hard to eliminate the effects of one speaker on another. This is in part because good oral communication is founded on one speaker actually having an effect on another, and on the reactions and responses that take place between interlocutors.

The counter-argument to criticisms of highly constrained oral test conditions is that a correlation exists between test performance and genuine speaking skills. That is to say, although there is an almost inevitable mismatch between the test criteria and conditions and naturally occurring speech the test may still give an accurate indication of speaking ability. A number of

TOEFL research papers have been produced which suggest this to be the case. For instance Sarwark *et al.* (1995) found that the oral performance in a class of teaching assistants correlated well with their performance in the SPEAK test (an easily administered test that can be given at an institution via a 'kit' of tapes and answer key and does not require trained examiners on site). These questions of oral performance in and outside constrained test conditions remain a productive area for further research.

Genres and skills

A further issue in oral assessment relates to the question of what speech genres, if any, are being tested, and of 'field-specific' or specific purpose tests versus general tests. In the case of speech genres, there is some evidence from the field of corpus linguistics to suggest that the language choices made by speakers are strongly influenced by the genre of talk in which they are engaged. For example, the densely informative (and therefore noun-phrase packed) monologue of a seminar presentation versus the less densely structured conversational content which takes place during 'language-in-action' or service encounters. Webber (2005) constructed a corpus of medical conference presentations and noted the surprising prevalence of interactive features in what might have been predicted to be a formal monologue genre. Using such insights within a field-specific test of medical oral discourse in a range of genres is one way for speaking assessment to provide a more fine-grained and relevant set of criteria than are generally available in the generic tests of speaking.

However, much more work is needed if the oral test designer is to be able to construct test conditions in which realistic speech genres can be produced; and if test criteria are to be matched more closely to real speech data. In addition, the extensive retraining of raters would also be essential. As noted above, in terms of a general test of informal spoken English, it takes a change of mindset to realize that hesitancy, short clauses (or even single word turns), ellipsis, repetitions, self-repair and simple or inexplicit vocabulary may be the essence of excellent speech production in certain conversational genres. In contrast, long turns, explicit phrasing and densely structured talk may be found in a spoken genre such as narrative. This is why the issue of speech genres, context and purpose of talk needs to be taken into account in relation to a full discussion of 'authentic' oral testing.

Another issue in the testing of oral skills is the degree to which it is possible to isolate speech from other skills in test design. This is known as the distinction between integrated versus discrete skills testing. The question arises in all language testing, for example, the degree to which reading ability influences performance in a written test; however, the matter is particularly critical in relation to the testing of oral/aural skills.

A Comparison of Contrasting Test Paradigms for Oral Assessment in Three High-Stakes Tests

'High-stakes testing' is a term used to describe any test that has a major influence on the life of the test taker. While it could be argued that any test has an effect on the person taking it, significant barriers are placed before those who fail some tests, and are raised for those who pass them. Examples of these kinds of tests outside language learning would be passing a certificate to practice law or medicine or at an earlier stage a test in a school context that permits a student to progress to higher examinations, or limits their subsequent subject choices in some way.

By their nature, these tests draw a line between groups of people and the opportunities and constraints of each group are defined by the outcome of the test. This is what makes them 'high stakes'. Some language tests are particularly significant in the lives of those who take them. Since 2004, the United Kingdom has had tests of English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) for foreign nationals who want to settle in the country. The university systems in all Anglophone countries, and a growing number where English is the medium of instruction for higher education, require evidence of English language ability for entry to a desired programme of study. Both these are examples of high-stakes testing in the realm of language learning. When the stakes are high the pressure on the assessment system is also significant. A small, local test provided in a class by a teacher to show relative progress of students may have little impact on their lives, but passing or failing one of these high-stakes tests will potentially change life chances considerably. This means that providers of such tests are somewhat conservative and cautious in their development. Their clients – whether individual or organisational – are very demanding. The conservative tendency in high-stakes testing has particular effects in relation to testing speaking – a form which is by its nature dynamic, inter-personal, context dependent, and fast changing.

Internet-based Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) speaking test

The format and the rating process in the speaking element of the 'iBT/ New Generation TOEFL' (hereafter 'TOEFL' or 'TOEFL speaking') are deliberately impersonal. This is in order to sidestep a number of the issues concerning bias that can affect face-to-face assessments of speaking. Six tasks in TOEFL are designed to test different aspects of speaking. Two ('independent') call on the candidate to express an opinion on a familiar topic and four others ('integrated') ask the candidate to speak in response to written or spoken material that provides input. The rubrics for the independent and integrated tasks are based on the same underlying facets although the detail of the criteria differs slightly. Due to the nature of the test format, all responses are in recorded monologue. In essence, the difference between the independent and the integrated tasks relates to the source of the material, the topic being generated from students' own experience in the case of the independent tasks; and from external prompts and visual stimuli in the integrated tasks. There is also a strong connection between ability to perform the task and the ability of the candidate to process and synthesize the written and heard material.

The IELTS speaking test

In contrast to the iBT TOEFL speaking test, the IELTS speaking test is conducted with a face-to-face interlocutor/examiner. It is a test with a stronger focus on holistic communicative skills than on the hierarchy of separate language facets underlying the TOEFL test. Each test lasts 10 to 15 minutes and is recorded. A three-stage interview takes place beginning with general and familiar topics for around 4 minutes. A card with a prompt is presented to the candidate in the second stage of the test and they are asked to prepare what they are going to say (around 1 minute) and then speak in monologue for 2 minutes about the given topic. A transition takes place to part 3 in which a dialogue at a more abstract level is developed between the examiner and the candidate out of the material in part 2.

In 2001, the revised version of the IELTS speaking test (described above) was launched on the basis of work begun around 1998. Some changes were made to the format but more significantly in terms of analysis of the approach to the underlying construct, whereas the previous version scored candidates on a single set of criteria the new version analysed performance in terms of four distinct areas: Fluency and coherence; Lexical resource; Grammatical range and accuracy, Pronunciation. The full (public versions) of the descriptors are available at the IELTS website and a search on a major internet search engine with the keywords 'IELTS speaking band descriptors' will take the reader to current versions of these for a given year.

UK Border Agency Knowledge of Language and Life assessments

This took the form of a Knowledge of Language and Life in the UK test (KOL test) one function of which, as the name suggests, is to provide evidence of some competence in English language. Applicants need to show that they have reached Entry Level 3 in the UK National Qualifications Framework (equivalent to Common European Framework B1). One of the ways that applicants wishing to settle in Britain can show this level of competence is by taking and passing the KOL test. This test is a hybrid between an assessment of knowledge and of language.

The KOL test consists of 24 multiple choice format questions based on general knowledge of British life and culture. Taking and passing it assumes language knowledge at Entry Level 3. Those who do not reach this level can continue to retake the KOL test until they pass, or can opt to take an 'ESOL with citizenship materials' qualification through an approved body.

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MONITORING AND TESTING PROGRESS

Monitoring Progress

Careful observation of learners while they are involved in listening and speaking activities can provide useful information of their progress. However, if a teacher sets up an information gathering system, then more useful and reliable information can be obtained. Here are some suggestions for doing this.

- Where possible, get learners to keep a record of their performance on regular classroom activities. For example, learners could record their dictation scores on their own graphs. To do this the number of errors per 100 words of dictation would have to be calculated, but this is not difficult if the length of each dictation passage is known. Similarly, learners could also record their scores on 50-item split information activities
- The teacher uses simple observation checklists when learners are performing listening and speaking activities.
- The teacher gets learners to do regular self-assessment of their progress as well as gathering evaluative feedback from them regarding the course. There are good reasons for getting the learners involved in making self-assessment criteria regarding their participation in speaking activities.
- The teacher crosses items off a syllabus list when satisfied that the learners are able to cope with that part of the syllabus.
- The learners build up a sequenced portfolio of completed activities and feedback, where this is possible. This can show improvement during the course.
- The teacher does regular testing.

Testing Listening and Speaking

Like any tests, satisfactory tests of listening and speaking have to fulfil three criteria—reliability, validity, and practicality. Usually some compromise has to be made between the criteria because what is most reliable might not be the most valid, and what is the most valid might not be practical.

Reliability

A reliable test is one whose results are not greatly affected by a change in the conditions under which it is given and marked. For example, if a test is given on different days by different people it should still give the same results. If the same answer paper is marked by different people, the score should be the same. There are ways of checking statistically to see if a test is reliable. They all share similar features, but they look at different aspects of reliability.

One way of checking is called **test/retest**. In this procedure the same test is given to the same people twice, usually with a gap of a week or so between the first test and the retest. A reliable test should give very similar results on the two occasions. Another way of checking is called **split halves**. In this procedure the test is given to a group of learners and then when the test is being marked the items in the test are split into two groups. A third way of checking is to make two equivalent forms of the same test. The two forms should be as similar to each other as possible without being exactly the same. When the same learners are tested with the two forms of the test, the scores for the two forms should be similar. What is common about all of these ways of checking reliability is that they are trying to see if the test does the same job on all occasions that it is used. If performance on the test keeps changing when the same learners sit it again, it cannot be measuring what it is supposed to be measuring. A reliable test is not necessarily a valid test, but an unreliable test cannot be valid.

There are several features of listening and speaking tests that affect their reliability and teachers can use these to guide their making and use of tests.

- A listening test will be more reliable if the material that the learners listen to is on tape. The tape recording ensures that whenever the test is used, the speed of speaking and the accent will be the same. This assumes that the quality of the tape-recorder playing the tape and the room in which the tape is played provide consistent conditions. Note that tape-recording the listening input could make the test less valid.
- A test is more reliable if it has several points of assessment. This means, for example, that a listening test consisting of 50 separate multiple-choice or true-false items is likely to be more reliable than a test involving 12 questions based on a listening text. A test of speaking is more reliable if the speaker is assessed on several speaking tasks and on several sub-skills of speaking rather than on one.
- A test is more reliable if it can be marked in relation to a set of correct answers or if the marking is based on clearly understood criteria. Sometimes it is worth giving markers some training if several are involved. Marking a dictation or scoring a role play, for example, requires a good understanding of the marking criteria plus some marking practice and discussion. Sometimes it is necessary to have two markers for scoring interviews or role plays (as well as making a recording for later reassessment if the two markers significantly disagree).
- A test will be more reliable if the learners are all familiar with the format of the test. It is worth giving a little practice in answering a particular type of test before it is used for testing.

Validity

A test is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure and when it is used for the purpose for which it is designed. This last part of the definition of validity is important because a test may be valid when it is used for a particular purpose but not valid when it is used for another

purpose. For example, a pronunciation test may be valid as a test of pronunciation but not valid as a test of spoken communicative ability.

There are several kinds of validity, but because we are concerned with measuring progress and diagnosis, the two kinds that most concern us are **face validity** and **content validity**.

Face validity is a very informal judgement. It simply means that the people sitting the test, the people giving the test, and others affected by it such as parents, employers, and government officials see the test as fair and reliable. A reliable test which may have good content and predictive validity may be so different from what the public expect or consider relevant that its poor face validity is enough to stop it being used. Good face validity is not a guarantee of reliability or other kinds of validity.

Content validity involves considering whether the content of the test reflects the content of the skill, language, or course being tested. For example, in order to decide if a test of academic listening skill has content validity, we would need to decide what are the components of the academic listening skill and how is this skill used. We might decide that academic listening involves note-taking, dealing with academic vocabulary, and seeing the organization of the formal spoken discourse. Typically the listener has had some opportunity to read on the topic or it is one of a series of related lectures. The next step is to see how well the test includes these components and to see if it includes components that are not part of normal academic listening. If the content of the test matches well with the content of the skill, the test has high content validity. If the test does not cover the components of the skill well, or includes other components that are not part of the skill, or requires the learner to process the components in an unusual way, then it has low content validity.

Practicality

Practicality can be looked at from several aspects: (1) economy of time, money, and labour; (2) ease of administration and scoring; and (3) ease of interpretation. Practicality can only be accurately determined in relation to a given situation, but generally a practical test is short (notice that this may conflict with reliability), does not require lots of paper and equipment, does not require many people to administer it, is easy to understand, is easy to mark, has scores or results which are easy to interpret, and can be used over and over again without upsetting its validity. It is not easy to meet all these requirements and still have a reliable and valid test. Most tests are a compromise between the various criteria. When making the compromise it is important that validity is not lost.

The Effect of a Test on Teaching

One further criterion for a test is the influence of the form and the content of the test on the classroom (this is sometimes called the "washback" effect). For example, many schools do not test learners' oral proficiency in English. As a result much classroom time is spent on the skills like reading and listening that are tested and very little time is spent on practicing speaking because it is not in the test. Here is another example. If the listening test is made up of true/false statements, this could have the effect of very little work being done on listening beyond the sentence level. A good test sets a good model for what should happen in the classroom.

Listening Tests

Dictation

The teacher reads aloud a text of approximately 150 words phrase by phrase. The learners write each phrase as they hear it. This kind of test has been used as a test of general language proficiency (Oller, 1979).

Partial Dictation

The learners have an incomplete written text in front of them. As they listen to a spoken version of the text, they fill in the missing parts on the written text.

Text with Questions

The learners have a list of multiple-choice questions in front of them while they listen to a text being read or a recorded dialogue. As they listen they answer the questions.

Responding to Statements

The learners listen to statements or questions and respond to them by choosing from multiple-choice items of words or pictures, by indicating true or false, or by giving a short answer.

Three Choice True-false

Instead of responding to statements with just true or false, three categories of response are allowed true, false, opinion (Emery, 1980), or true, false, not stated.

Recorded Cloze

The learners listen to a tape recording where every 15th word has been replaced by a "bleep" sound and with pauses at the end of each sentence. As they listen the learners write the missing words (Templeton, 1977).

Information Transfer

The learners listen to a description or dialogue and label a diagram or fill in a chart or table while they listen. Palmer (1982) describes a wide range of possibilities for information transfer.

Rating Scales and Lists

Based on learners' performance on a task or based on teachers' knowledge of their learners, teachers indicate on a scale where they consider their learners are in terms of listening proficiency. The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings, for example, use a nine-point scale ranging from zero proficiency to native-like proficiency. The third point on the scale, *elementary proficiency*, is described as "Able to comprehend readily only utterances which are thoroughly familiar or are predictable within the areas of immediate survival needs". The sixth point on the listening scale, *minimum social proficiency*, is described as "Able to understand in routine social situations and limited work situations" (Ingram, 1981 and 1984). Rating scales may also be used for self-assessment. Learners look at the items in a list, preferably of functions. These scales are useful both for testing and for diagnostic analysis of learners' conversation skills.

Speaking Tests

The two main aspects of direct procedures for testing speaking are: (1) the way in which the person being tested is encouraged to speak (this can include being interviewed, having to describe something for someone to draw, being involved in a discussion etc.); and (2) the way in which the speaker's performance is assessed (this can include rating scales, communicative result, and assigning marks for the parts of an outcome). Due to the practical problems in measuring the speaking proficiency of large groups of people, there has been a continuing interest in more practicable indirect group measures.

Interviews and Scales

Each learner is interviewed individually. The interviewer does not need to follow a set series of questions but it is best to keep at least part of each interview as similar as possible. The interviewees are scored on rating scales from one to five for each of fluency, intelligibility, grammatical correctness, richness of language and overall impression (see Henning, 1983).

Group Oral Exam

The learners are divided into groups of four or five people. They are given a card with a topic and a few questions to think about. After a few moments thought the group discusses the topic. Two observers grade each learner using a set of scales (Folland and Robertson, 1976; Reves, 1982; Hilsdon, 1991). Instead of discussions, role plays, partly scripted dialogues, or partly improvised plays can be used to get the learners to speak.

Dycoms (Split Information)

The learners are divided into two equal groups. All the people in group A have a sheet with 50 items on it. Those in group B have a slightly different sheet.

Some of group B's items are exactly the same as the items on group A's sheet. Some are slightly different. The class forms pairs with someone from group A and someone from group B in each pair. The learners in each pair describe their items to each other and decide if they are the same or different. They must not show their pictures to each other.

Describe and Draw

The learner is given a picture which they have to describe so that their partner, the examiner, can draw it. Marks are given for describing each part of the picture correctly with specific marks assigned for each part. In the test the examiner need not draw the item being described but can just assign the points for each part described successfully.

Conversational Cloze

This test does not involve any listening or speaking by learners. The learners are given a transcript of a conversation. Every seventh word is omitted from the transcript. The learners have to write in the missing words. Brown (1983) found a high correlation of .84 between conversational cloze and oral interview tests. Other researchers have found similar correlations between cloze tests based on non-conversational texts and oral interview. There are problems in using indirect measures such as cloze in place of measures involving direct performance of the skill being measured. These include lack of diagnostic information, poor face validity, problems in interpreting scores, and the washback effect.

Multiple-choice Speaking Tests

The learners are given written multiple-choice items to answer. They do not speak during the test. Here is an example from Politzer and McGroarty (1983: 190).

The students are taking a test and the teacher wants them to know that they can use their books. What are two ways that he could say this?

A. Whose books are those?

B. You may use your books for this test.

C. Don't you know how to open your books?

D. This is an open-book test.

Imitation

Learners listen to tape-recorded sentences of different lengths and repeat them. Usually a large number of sentences are used. Henning (1983) used 90 in his test. The sentences are judged as being correct or incorrect. A correct sentence is one that is repeated without any errors.

Role Plays

The learners are given a card which describes a situation. After the role play the examiner scores the learner's performance on a set of scales. As the role plays can be suited to the jobs of the learners.

The choice of a format for testing speaking will depend on a range of factors including the proficiency level of the learners, their experience of various kinds of speaking activities, the reasons for testing, and how well the format satisfies the requirements of reliability, validity and practicality

Lecture- 15

Researching Speaking

Module- 41

THE RESEARCH SPACE: PARADIGMS AND ISSUES

Classical Research Paradigms in Relation to Researching Speaking

Different research approaches are often called 'paradigms' and these strongly influence how research is carried out. A paradigm functions as a framework or point of reference for both researchers and users of research output. It gives coherence to a study and links it to the work of others providing shorthand by which it can be prepared and judged. If the researcher positions a study in, for example, an experimental paradigm he or she creates a set of expectations in his or her audience about the way the research will be conducted. These considerations affect how research is received.

A paradigm is a framework for ideas which includes definitions of key terms and the relationships between them. The framework is coherent because the researcher assumes certain things as a starting point and new knowledge is absorbed into this mental 'map'. Different disciplines work within different paradigms and even within the same academic department several paradigms can compete with one another. Most research outcomes make only small changes to the paradigm rather than altering it fundamentally – this is the nature of research findings generally. Paradigm shifts can and do occur when either a brilliant individual or a team compel others to change their mental map of a particular topic due to the strength of their findings or arguments.

All paradigms orient towards a theory and towards data, but the balance between these will differ according to the tradition in which the academic is working. Academic research is meaningless if it is not embedded in the context of the work of others. This work is in turn framed within a paradigm that has a particular orientation towards data and theory. Different disciplines will also place different emphasis on the role of theory versus data.

The following table gives an indication of how far, in general, some of the major branches of linguistics deal with situated data, whether they regard mode as relevant, or in contrast deal primarily with abstractions.

Table 1 Branches of linguistics in relation to data and the relevance of mode

Group 1 – Data driven or highly data informed	
Computational linguistics	Phonetics
Discourse and conversational analysis	Socio-linguistics
Text and corpus linguistics	
Group 2 – Less data driven, but data and mode relevant to the analysis	
Historical linguistics	Pragmatics
Lexicography	Psycholinguistics
Neurolinguistics	Second language acquisition
Phonology	
Group 3 – Theory driven, and mode generally not relevant	
Morphology	Semantics
Philosophy of language	Syntax

There are reasons for the different status of data, and particularly speech data, in various branches of language studies. Linguistics as we know it today has a surprisingly short history and since the 1960s has been developing and positioning itself among several disciplines, newer and older than itself. In the early part of the twentieth century, what we call linguistics was termed the 'science of language'. It was primarily interested in concrete examples of language, and the study of the history of the development of a language or the comparison of different languages (philology and its branches) were the focus of its efforts. There was then a transition from what was a largely descriptive analytical discipline (and one that in its attention to detailed contrasts and taxonomies was akin to botanical science and related disciplines) to one that set great store on the need to theorize away from the messy, real-world data, to universal regularities or competencies.

Empirical Versus Non-Empirical Approaches

An empirical approach to a research project begins from situated questions and facts rather than decontextualized issues or questions of theory. Both kinds of approach can be used to deal with the same topic and the clearest differences between them lie in the methods used and what is regarded as a coherent approach and evidence. The less empirically motivated researcher

in linguistics has traditionally been concerned with intuitions about language and the fit between new data and existing theory. The empirically oriented researcher will be more open to seeing patterns emerging from data and drawing conclusions from these that may challenge pre-existing ideas or intuitions. Both approaches will draw on theory and a pre-existing paradigm so the contrast is not so much between empirical and theoretical work but between the emphases placed on data in terms of conclusions reached.

Attitudes to Speech Data

Even theoretically oriented work engages with data at some level. At its most basic the research is grounded in some real-world concepts, if not 'hard' data. When researchers think of empirical approaches in opposition to more theoretically oriented ones, it is a matter of what role the data are seen to have in the research process. In 'classical' theoretically oriented, scientific methods, the model or theory on which a study is based is not going to be fundamentally redefined by the outcomes of the research. Data which challenge the prevailing theory are likely to be set aside as 'blips' and more generally the phenomena being investigated will be selected in such a way that they will tend to fit in with the existing paradigm.

These are particularly pressing issues for the researcher into speech for three reasons. First, unlike the written form, the building blocks of speech do not come to us in a clearly demarcated set of units. The process of understanding speech is highly dependent on an interpretive capacity on the part of the listener and this interpretive role is not one that the researcher can completely stand apart from when handling authentic data. Second, capturing and analyzing speech depends largely on the written form and careful attention is needed to the relationship between the original data and its visual representation – the secondary data. Finally neat and clearly defined categories and patterns are extremely compelling and there can be a tendency to 'retrofit' speech data to pre-designated categories due to this. The terminology of traditional pedagogic or prescriptive grammars struggles to describe the norms of the spoken mode.

In the first part of the twentieth century, speech itself was difficult to capture, and even the advent of the tape recorder meant that gathering large samples of data and analyzing them was a laborious process. The ability to record speech, and the comparatively recent growth in the power of the personal computer, has brought the possibility of large corpus studies to the office of the applied linguistics researcher. However, the complexities of capturing large quantities of spontaneous spoken data have meant that most corpora still depend for their input on the written mode.

is noticeable, however, that despite advances in the capturing and the analysis of speech data, research questions continue to be oriented towards areas other than finding out more about the nature of speech, *per se*. Considering the universality of the ability to speak across humankind there has been little attempt to draw together a unified theory of the process. Many

disciplines value real speech data and place them at the heart of their theories. However, these approaches have tended to incorporate the spoken language into a theory that aims to describe or explain something else. For instance, second language acquisition (SLA) gives high importance to the effect of spoken input on the learner but the elements under discussion have tended to be the learner's inherent capacity for language learning.

The Applicability of Research Approaches and Frameworks to the Study of Speech

Hand in hand with a removal of the object of study to the theoretical, unsituated, or abstract level is a convenient merging of the construct 'speech' with 'language'. It is convenient because it permits the models in question to use isolated examples closer to the norms of formal, published written mode and ignore deviant, ill-formed and difficult to parse forms which might come under debate if real-world examples of speech (and, indeed, writing) were the basis for the model. Secondly, such abstract approaches permit the theorist to ignore sound-based meaning-bearing elements of language, such as intonation, which are again less easy to formalise than text-based elements.

Much of a person's identity and communicative force is carried by the vocal pattern that we associate with them, and many of the affective aspects of language reach the world via the slightest changes in voice quality. In teaching spoken language one might imagine these aspects would be seen as of highest importance. However, since most abstract language paradigms do not take into account or try to account for aspects of the dynamic, interpersonally oriented mode that is speech, the focus tends to fall on structural input, disengaged both from its discourse context and from its meaning-bearing 'music'. In contrast to this, work that is ongoing in computer science and human–computer interaction is keen to better understand and incorporate findings about the links between communicative impact, affect, and prosody. It will be interesting with the growth of multi-modal corpora and new techniques for searching these how far the findings of computer science, corpus linguistics, and the language classroom can be combined to provide insights that are eventually applicable to the spoken language curriculum.

The development of functional magnetic resonance imaging 'fMRI' technology linguistic research developed in the early years of this century has had an interesting effect on the study of spoken language. The capacity to link brain function to particular spoken stimuli has meant researchers can now build hypotheses to investigate questions about links between oral/aural input and events in the brain. The reason that this is a step change in the field is that earlier neurolinguistics work depended on making links between spoken events in the outside world and possible brain activity. This was often done by contrasting brain-damaged and non-brain-damaged speech performance. While this approach remains valid, the capacity to map and link spoken events and normal brain activity is an exciting new development for linguistics.

Levels of Analysis

One of the difficulties in researching speech is the fact that, unlike written texts, the notion of a freestanding genre or clearly delimited sample to be investigated does not readily lend itself to speech. Whereas the researcher into writing can start, if they wish, from a relatively well-defined set of texts that clearly fit into a category (newspaper language, popular fiction, advertising texts, academic writing and so on), the researcher into speech will generally find no such helpful categories to hand. Writing presents itself in front of the researcher through the materiality of its visual medium. The researcher into speech must usually look beyond the discourse to the context in order to delimit the data under investigation and to ensure they are, for instance, comparing like with like

Analyzing speaking skills at the level of discourse and social interaction

Discourse-level studies are interested in questions of how speakers interact with one another (for example, how they know when it is their turn to speak), and how talk is organized in particular kinds of patterns over long stretches of language (for example, how speakers structure their talk for listeners so that they can follow changes in topic easily). At a wider level, researchers are often also interested in how, through talk, social features are expressed, such as identity, shared knowledge, or power relations. Many disciplines outside linguistics are becoming increasingly interested in discourse analysis because of the insights it can give about how participants in a spoken interaction behave.

Both discourse analysis and conversation analysis have links to sociolinguistics in that they prefer not to deal with samples of language in isolation, and conversation analysis in particular is interested in the relations between interlocutors. Discourse analysis, however, has traditionally tended to concentrate on longer sections of language and focused on interrelations between different sections of text. Within this, the discourse analyst is interested in how speakers carry out functions of language and the choices made by them in different contexts.

During the 1990s and beyond there was increasing interest in the telecommunications and computing world that discourse analysis would solve problems of automation of human–computer understanding. This area has not achieved the early promise – humans are still constrained to limited lexical choices and clear talk in these contexts rather than the system being able to adjust to spontaneous talk. Nevertheless, it will be interesting to see what twenty-first-century discourse and conversation analysis can offer other disciplines and users wanting to apply the insights of linguistics to real-world applications.

The relationship between psychology and speech behavior is another thread to research into global aspects of speech, and one which again links in with the bigger questions of how spoken language data relate to underlying linguistic systems, whether neurological, biological or genetic. Whereas discourse or conversation analysts will describe patterns of speech behavior in

order to uncover regularities in the organization of spoken discourse, and will see these patterns as of interest in themselves, the psychologist will generally regard utterances as a source of evidence of mental or behavioral processes.

The research space at the level of language choices: grammar and vocabulary

A prominent strand of work on grammar and lexis that takes into account spoken mode has been developed through corpus studies. Douglas Biber's work gives a strongly data-oriented analysis of a wide variety of spoken and written sources, concluding that certain grammatical features cluster together to make up the distinctive style of a spoken or written genre. These features in turn map on to dimensions of contrast, such as whether the language is concerned with conveying information or is more inter-personally oriented. Rather than suggesting a simple binary division between speech and writing, Biber suggested that there were patterns of probability among language features that show statistical regularity in how they co-occur in spoken and written genres.

There have been two major strands of work developed from this approach: applications of the register analysis in discrete fields and genres, and more theoretical and detailed insights about general language features. Early corpus-based work helped to inform research into speech on detailed aspects such as tenses, vocabulary, clauses, and ellipsis. More recently, work has involved broader questions of the extent of generalizability and applicability of findings. Academics also began working on bridging the gap between corpus findings and the classroom as soon as large corpora of speech became readily available. More recently scholars have focused attention on the interrelations between second language acquisition theories, or approaches to teaching, and the grammatical frequencies found in corpora. However, while these can provide some interesting ideas for classroom activities, there is still a gap between findings on the realities of grammatical and lexical choices in spontaneous talk, and what is presented in published material.

Module-42

APPROACHES TO RESEARCHING SPEECH

Introduction

Approaches to researching speaking are very wide-ranging. This reflects the fact that the spoken form touches many aspects of life and spoken language data are seen as relevant to a variety of research domains and research questions. These can range from the qualitative, for example, analyzing role-plays using conversation analytical techniques to understand business negotiation in inter-cultural contexts, to the highly quantitative, for instance, a statistical analysis in an experimental setting of how listeners perceive accent. The reasons for choosing one approach over another are perhaps best understood by beginning from the relationship between research topics, data, and the conclusions that can be drawn from these. There is a complex relationship between spoken language and theories of language. Our view of language is strongly shaped by the means we have to collect, describe and then analyze it and this is particularly the case in researching speaking.

The studies described here are presented in terms of three broad (often in reality overlapping) categories. Two – quantitative and qualitative approaches – are clearly oriented towards data, and the third covers work that would not be described by either of these terms and can be thought of as primarily theory- or ideas-led. These terms relate to the overall methodological framework or approach being used for the research and are closely linked to the underlying philosophy of the researcher. They are not by any means mutually exclusive categories but it is helpful to understand that research into speaking, as with any of the language skills, is not carried out from within a single or neutral perspective. The epistemological standpoint of the researcher significantly affects what they consider important and the way in which they approach their investigations.

Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches Towards Researching Speaking

Quantitative approaches are very prevalent in researching speaking. They have been used to carry out research into the form at all levels, from the way a very specific acoustic feature affects clear speech (Maniwa *et al.*, 2009), to how a medical discourse community shows trust (Kvarnström and Cedersund, 2006). The apparent preponderance of quantitative methods does not mean that there is a necessary affinity between the spoken form and quantitative approaches and, in fact, the situation may simply reflect the balance between the approaches generally found in the discipline of applied linguistics. Research by Benson *et al.* (2009) among others suggests that overall around 20 per cent or less of research in applied linguistics is carried out by qualitative means. Therefore, the likelihood is that spoken language research, like other areas of language, will be carried out in the dominant, quantitative paradigm. Quantitative approaches provide a powerful and a well-tested framework for an investigation by moving from pre-

existing questions/hypotheses to the appropriate methods to investigate these – for instance looking at the frequency of a feature in natural data or designing a laboratory-based experiment to elicit speech data and then analyze this. Very often, whatever the method of data gathering, the findings are analyzed by means of statistics and these give the researcher the basis for generalizing from particular results to something beyond the data in question. *Not* finding what you predicted in this approach is almost as interesting as finding evidence for what you imagined would be the case, and this is part of the strength of the approach.

Quantitative approaches tend to analyze data in terms of pre-existing categories and the researcher then seeks to investigate the nature of these items in the data. For something as dynamic and socially grounded as spoken discourse, this use of pre-determined categories can be unhelpful. The strength of the qualitative paradigm is that it works from the 'inside' of instances of talk towards patterns and regularities and is able to uncover aspects that the investigator may not have imagined existed.

A widely used method among the qualitative approaches to researching speaking is conversation analysis (CA). This method puts high value on the careful analysis of examples of real (i.e. non-elicited) talk to understand how speakers create meaning and organize their discourse as social action. The CA analyst is interested also in what linguistic resources (syntax, prosody, gaze, laughter, silence, and so on) speakers use to 'do talk' and how these are different in specific varieties of language and discourse contexts. The 'pure' CA approach, therefore, is unique in that it seeks to understand the nature of speech primarily from observation of non-elicited data and through this process gain insights about broader patterns and meaningful regularities appearing in the interaction.

Two contrasting studies dealing with the same linguistic phenomenon can show the differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches to researching speaking. Watanabe *et al.* (2008) and Mushin and Gardner (2009) both deal with the topic of pausing or silence in conversational interaction. The former follows a classic quantitative approach using prediction based on previous work (evidence from corpora that filled pauses precede complex utterances); a hypothesis (that listeners interpret a filled pause as a precursor of a complex utterance of some kind), an experiment designed to test the hypothesis (participants asked to listen to a description of a shape with and without a filled pause preceding it and press a button when they have matched description to shape) and analysis of the time taken to make the match in the different conditions by means of statistics.

Mushin and Gardner (2009) were also interested in understanding more about conversational pauses but in sharp contrast to Watanabe *et al.* (2008) used a conversation analytical approach to probe the topic. In something of a return to CA's ethnographic roots, they investigated Australian Aboriginal talk and began from assumptions found in cross-cultural studies that silence is used differently in Aboriginal and in white Australian talk. Rather than

transforming this into a formal research question and hypotheses as the quantitatively oriented academics might, they use it as a jumping-off point for a series of rhetorical questions. These provide the link between previous findings and the current study and explain to the reader what interests them and motivates the study.

Theory-Driven, Positional, or Ideas-Based Approaches to Researching Speaking

All research is about theory and ideas, however in some work the questioning of the theory or the discussion of a possible alternative theory is the *primary* focus of the study. These studies are interesting because they can question how an aspect of speaking is conceptualized and researched and, if they lead to challenging debate about their strengths and weaknesses among other scholars, they are extremely influential. Liberman (1998) 'When theories of speech meet the real world' is an example of what is known as a 'position paper'. This means that the research text in question (they are generally journal articles) encapsulates an academic's stance on a broad topic and they generally deal with an issue that is open to debate. These can be difficult to write as there is a need to understand the ideas being criticized summarize the relevant arguments and present a coherent alternative to them.

Theoretical research questions very often begin life as 'what if ...?' thoughts, and in a 'position paper' these can, and are often intended to, present fundamental challenges to existing paradigms. It should be noted; however, that even the most robust theoretical thinkers are selective in what they present as 'given' and what is challenged.

A questioning technique can be used as the basis of both a critical evaluation of a theory, and a framework for presenting that evaluation. By taking a step back from the data a theoretical approach can ask questions at a very universal or general level (some might argue too general and abstract) and provide a clear framework for others to use or to challenge.

New Directions

Major trends appear to be emerging that have reshaped and will continue to reshape the research landscape. The first of these is the breaking down of some of the barriers between different 'camps' in the discipline, the acceptance of a less adversarial, more eclectic, approach to language theory and respect for inter-disciplinarity. As noted, this trend can be seen in the field itself as linkages are made between areas that have traditionally not had much dialogue, for instance conversation analysis and second language acquisition or assessment of second language speaking and critical linguistics. It can also be seen in cross-disciplinary work where the interface between applied linguistic insights into talk is transferred into work in fields as diverse as business studies or health sciences. The approach shown in Burns and Moore (2008) towards gaining a better understanding of accountancy discourse

A second major trend is that of the effect of the World Englishes (WE), and English as a lingua franca (ELF) movements. In both, the notion of whose spoken English is the norm and the political, pedagogic, and policy-related issues that flow from seeing English as not, primarily, owned by those who speak it as a first language are creating a source of interesting debate. The impact of these debates on issues of assessment and language pedagogy will take considerable time to filter through to syllabuses, published materials, classrooms and examination boards. It is a trend with which everyone who teaches or researches speaking will need to engage at some level. Work in the new sub-discipline of 'variational pragmatics' is starting to provide both theoretical underpinning and the stability to allow some of the insights to reach the classroom Work at the interface between corpus linguistics and ELF also appears to be becoming particularly strongly established, and major sources of data showing the norms of interaction between non-native speakers are now available for scholars and teachers to examine and begin to ask what the 'core' of this language is like and whether they wish to teach it (Prodromou, 2008). Lam (forthcoming) which contrasts corpus data and materials for the classroom against the backdrop of Hong Kong English, and Hincks (2010) which looks at the issue of the effects of using English as a lingua franca on the content and speech rate in student presentations.

Finally, the consolidation of technological advances over a twenty-year period and the incorporation of entirely new technologies have had, and will continue to have, a major effect on our understanding of the spoken mode and how to research it. At its most basic level, technology has allowed the development of large corpora of speech and at its more sophisticated one, it has permitted multi-modal work combining speech, transcriptions, digital audio and video material for the researcher to probe. This brings a wealth of data for the researcher and will probably be particularly effective in helping us gain insights about spoken grammar. Interactional linguistics has not yet emerged as a discipline that taps into these large corpora but with the increasing capacity to combine audio files with transcriptions it would be fascinating to see this happen. There would be great strength to an approach that could take account of an emergent and collaborative structure and seek parallels in other contexts and languages very speedily.

Module-43

SPOKEN LANGUAGE AND THE CLASSROOM

The Status of Speaking in Classrooms

Historically, there are several reasons for the special status of spoken interaction in applied linguistics and language pedagogy. These perspectives have a strong influence on what is regarded as good classroom practice whether the explicit name of the component in the syllabus is speaking or not. Spoken interaction is seen as an important, if not key, aspect of the language learning process and has been for over a hundred years. The spoken form is variously conceived of as:

- the primary mode in which 'natural uptake' can occur (as in 'The Natural Method' or 'The Oral Approach' prevalent in the early years of the last century until the early 1960s),
- a powerful tool for developing automatic and fluent output, together with consolidation of grammatical patterns (as in 'The Direct Method' or 'The Audio-lingual Approach'),
- the ideal medium for the exploration of language and one that allows a focus on communication to take precedence over form (a fundamental aspect of 'The Communicative Approach' and later developments such as 'Task Based Language Teaching').

In terms of approaches, methods or techniques the spoken form has for a long time retained a very significant status in the language classroom. However, the status and handling of the mode have not remained static and, in particular, the decade of the 1970s marked a significant transition.

The language learner in a 1950s and 1960s classroom would have had a very high chance of being exposed to the spoken form. Indeed the influence of early British applied led to a strong emphasis on the oral mode. What emerged as 'The Natural Method' relied on introducing language items systematically and almost entirely through speech, and then on the very accurate (in phonetic terms) oral practice of explicitly taught language rules and features. In the United States, ethnographic approaches which depended on close and careful scrutiny of the oral form were also influential and these were superseded by what eventually became known as 'The Audio-lingual Method'. This again relied heavily on oral input, exposure to native-speaker models, and repetitive oral work ('drilling') which could be carried out with very little reference to meaning or context. It was the 'medium' or container of carefully selected (in the better programmes) linguistic items that would flourish in this sheltered environment and then become automatic and natural for the learner who had absorbed and internalized them through extensive practice. The focus was not primarily on communication but on structure and accurate production. There was, however, a gradual acknowledgment from the late 1960s onwards that language rules and explicit focus on input and practice could only take the learner so far.

To understand this change it is necessary to go back to another highly influential set of trends and discussions in linguistics and applied linguistics that took place from the mid-1960s, and which continues to be relevant today. There is no real difference between the two acquisition processes. These ideas were not new but were most extensively explored as a method or approach for the ELT classroom by Stephen Krashen in what came to be called 'The Natural Approach' (not to be confused with the early twentieth-century 'Natural Method' which emerged as part of the reaction to 'Grammar-Translation' methods). Like the Communicative Language Teaching movement this theory suggested that a second language is best acquired not by a learner being presented with grammatical information and rules by a teacher but by active engagement in meaningful communication (the 'learning–acquisition' distinction), and by the student needing to comprehend discourse which is slightly beyond that which they can express themselves (Krashen's 'input hypothesis').

The reason it was well received, therefore, was that it gave a theoretically convincing answer to the language practitioner who had faced the issue of how to relate the specifics of language 'performance' in their classrooms to underlying development of L2 'competence'. Krashen's model appeared to provide the solution: the process will happen as naturally as L1 acquisition, if you provide the right conditions. Because spoken interaction was the primary channel for child language development, this perspective placed great emphasis on the spoken mode in second language learning theory and was one of the major drivers of change to what was regarded as good practice in the language teaching classroom by the late 1980s.

Krashen's theory became the subject of heated debate concerning how to apply and how to verify it (for example, White, 1987), together with the growing sense in the field that L2 acquisition differs from L1 in a variety of ways (see for instance, Ellis, 1986). The significant impact that the ideas had means that Krashen's ideas are retained in the standard English language teacher training syllabus and the focus on interaction rather than explicit instruction that they promoted provides part of the explanation for the strong focus on speaking in language acquisition that remains to this day. As noted, the change of emphasis from explicit tuition and drilling to looking at language in use was also shared by the Communicative Language Teaching movement that began to be highly influential from the early 1970s.

The Role of Spoken Interaction in Communicative Language Teaching Classrooms

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach that has dominated English language teaching from the 1980s if not earlier and the Natural Approach that retains a strong influence on teacher training were developed around the idea of meaningful interaction and the focus on communication rather than linguistic facts. Both therefore valued, and were interested in encouraging students to engage in, abundant amounts of spoken language in the classroom.

The handling of classroom talk has therefore become something of a marker of ability to promote good language learning environments. It is also used as a measure of the level of learner

versus teacher centredness of a class, with a correlation being between low levels of teacher talking time (TTT) and higher levels of student engagement and autonomy. The focus on the importance of speaking and its links to a dominant philosophy in the teaching of English has markedly affected the nature of classroom management and also influenced how particular instances of spoken interaction are valued. At the global level teacher training in the communicative method explicitly discouraged too much teacher input and one of several 'alternative' approaches was 'The Silent Way' (Gattegno, 1976). This, as its name suggests, promoted the reduction of teacher talk to an absolute minimum. The popularity of small group and pair work that emerged as teachers began to make constructs such as the communicatively oriented 'notional-functional' syllabus real during the 1980s was also linked to the high value placed on students' spoken interaction in the classroom.

CLT has itself become more refined and diverse over the years but the basic assumption that language is best approached as action and interaction rather than a set of rules has remained the bedrock of English language teacher training. An example of how classroom management of interaction is seen as influencing language acquisition is in the role of feedback and error correction by a teacher. In the Focus-on-Form movement, for instance, the handling of immediate feedback by drawing attention to an item just said by a student is part of the approach. It is felt to enhance the process of becoming more aware of a correct form and promote accurate spoken output by the student.

Another influential development in CLT that places great emphasis on the spoken mode has been the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) movement. This approach is not without controversy – in particular the role of explicit versus implicit focus on linguistic items – but the ideas underlying it chimed particularly clearly with the prevailing ethos of CLT and have meant that the task-based approach remains a current topic for scholarly debate and classroom applications.

Task-Based Language Teaching – TBLT

This is an approach to language learning based on insights first outlined in the late 1980s by Prabhu (1987) and which has remained a central topic in syllabus design and debate about language learning generally. Reporting on his work in India, Prabhu suggested that learners who were mainly focused on a real world task made as good if not better progress than language learners given explicitly language focused instruction. This led to a variety of attempts to implement 'task-based learning' more widely and to relate them to the language classroom more generally. This was done by designing tasks that promoted the use of authentic language and required active engagement by the student in their completion, generally with a high level of spoken interaction being required.

A typical pattern for a lesson would be to provide an introduction to the task in the form of a 'warm-up' discussion to focus the attention of the students on the topic in question and help

to generate some of the language required, a phase introducing the task and checking that students have fully understood the task and their roles (depending on the stance of the teacher to explicit linguistic input this phase may include focus on particular language items needed to complete the task, or not), a phase in which the students carry out the task with the teacher taking the role of facilitator and interlocutor, and a phase of rounding up and reflection on the task and the language used. One of the aspects that teachers found refreshing was that the typical pattern of structured input and very constrained practice of particular items was abandoned. In the task-based classroom students are placed in a role of greater independence and, in a carefully constructed task, the idea is that they will generate language before getting further feedback and clarification of it both from other students and from the teacher**.**

Drawing on Classroom Practice for Research and *vice versa*

Activities based around speaking need to be managed and fostered through careful planning and direction by the teacher, and through a choice of suitable tasks to stimulate speech. Where there are groups of students from different language backgrounds co-operating to carry out a task there is rich potential for the reflective practitioner to draw on existing research, or to carry out their own classroom-based project in this area. There are also, however, factors that need to be taken into account, some of which have been under-researched in relation to the language classroom.

Language awareness activities based around the norms of spontaneous interaction in the target language can provide both an increased understanding of the problems, pitfalls and skills needed for successful communication with native speakers, and provide the learner with a meta-language to ask further questions about the difficulties they are encountering.

Three basic aspects of spontaneous speech that language learners need to be aware of and which language teachers may find helpful to reflect on with their students are:

- speaking is fundamentally an interactive process and is defined by interactivity;
- speaking happens under real-time processing constraints;
- speaking is more fundamentally linked to the individual who produces it than the written form is.

These are the elements that stem directly from the way speech is produced and distinguish it from standard written forms. An awareness of the effects of the interactive, spontaneous and personally oriented nature of speech can, therefore, be of great benefit to learners, both in terms of confidence in production and also to help to improve global listening skills. If, however, speech is taught without greater regard for some of the basic features that shape the process of listening and speaking then learners will constantly be striving, and failing, to speak in the complete, grammatically standard, and impersonal discourse that is quite untypical of naturally occurring speech.

Module-44

RESEARCH BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES

Introduction

There has been remarkably little work either in linguistics or in applied linguistics into speaking as a unified language faculty. Any unified theory of speaking would need to both bring together, and demarcate itself clearly from, a number of interrelated academic disciplines, from pragmatics to corpus linguistics, from psycholinguistics to phonetics. Both of these are well-known and flourishing areas in linguistics and each, along with a number of others, has something to say about speaking, even if they cannot provide a unified theory of spoken discourse in all contexts and domains.

The growth of insights about the spoken form that are beginning to emerge from work in discourse analysis, conversation analysis, pragmatics, corpus linguistics and neuro-linguistics means that there is, however, a distinct pressure for more work on the topic, and a need to make research findings usable by the more applied and pedagogically oriented sections of the linguistics community.

This chapter reviews some of the sister disciplines which are particularly pertinent to research into the faculty of speech, and attempts to show how their insights could relate to a more holistic approach to research into speech. Initially this broadening of the scope of work on spoken data may seem to be unduly far-reaching, making the study of the spoken mode a study of global cultural and ethnographic issues, social issues, psychology, biology, as well as the more traditional aspects of research into language, such as phonology, grammar and syntax. There is a need to begin to tease out the differences between research into the language faculty and research into the faculty of speech. This can only be done by moving beyond conceptions of speech which remain grounded in strongly text-based approaches to the study of language and towards those that draw on emerging inter-disciplinary insights.

Secondly, the broadening of the base of research into speech does not look as extreme as it might if it is compared with attitudes to research into the written mode. Work on literacy particularly that in the field of critical linguistics, has long acknowledged the role of social and cultural factors in writing performance. It is perhaps only the conceptualization of speech as both natural and the primary form of language which has led to the mode being treated somewhat differently from the written form, and, paradoxically, to the detriment of our understanding of the speech faculty.

Speaking and Ethnographic or Cross-Cultural Studies

Research into speech needs to be informed by the cultural expectations of speakers. Our understanding not only of conversational ‘rules’ and norms, but also our interpretation of

meaning or even individual words is colored by our (generally unconscious) acceptance of certain fundamental cultural premises

A better awareness of the potential differences between cultures in ways that affect language behavior can also infuse research into speech with greater insight and sensitivity. For example, speech rate, intonation, interruption or self-correction, pauses and attitudes to silence may all be areas that a researcher interested in the spoken mode would investigate. While within one's own discourse and language community such aspects may have one interpretation, in a different setting their implications and effects may be quite different – the silence that in one culture is uncomfortable or even rude is unproblematic or deferential in another. Awareness of such issues can provide insights for the researcher into speech, but, more importantly, can raise fundamental questions about the constructs we engage with in dealing with speech phenomena in the research process. Investigations carried out via actual speech data, particularly if quantitatively based, might attempt to answer research questions via inappropriate elements in the discourse if the broader cultural and ethnographic context is not properly understood. Work in the fields of ethnography and pragmatics is clearly relevant to these broader questions about the relationship between the spoken mode, conversational action, and social behavior.

Speaking and Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistic studies focus on the relationship between brain, language and behavior. The tendency has been for links to be investigated between psychological processes and speech behavior at the level of planning and delivery rather than on wider psychological motivations to speech behavior, for example how idiolect is affected by emotional or experiential factors. Aspects of speech which the psycholinguist would be interested in revolve around both practical topics such as the relationship between grammar, memory and language processing and, at the more theoretical end of the spectrum, the different levels or hierarchies involved in language production and comprehension, or the links between the brain and language acquisition

Speaking and Neuro-Linguistic Studies

Neuro-linguistics differs from psycholinguistics in that the focus of research is on the biological and neurological basis of language processing. As such, research into fundamental aspects of speech can be investigated within neuro-linguistic frameworks. It is interesting to note how little either psycho- or neurolinguistics affects mainstream applied linguistics and language teaching, despite a long and reputable research tradition. There is, however, a strong link existing between this field and speech pathology/therapy.

Speaking and Corpus Linguistics

Until relatively recently the greatest part of corpus work in linguistics was based on written evidence and overall the balance remains in favor of the written mode. This is due to the

labor-intensive nature of preparing transcribed speech data in comparison with the relative ease, particularly in the age of electronic documentation and scanning, of capturing written material.

However, with a growing interest in speech data and the technological advances offered by powerful personal computers and the internet a large number of projects based on spoken material is being created, and, more importantly, being made generally available to researchers.

There is also a strong relationship developing between particular publishing houses and the creation of different corpora. See for instance Collins and the Cobuild Corpus (information at *http://titania.cobuild. collins.co.uk/boe.info.html*) or Longman and the British National Corpus, or Cambridge University Press and the CANCODE (Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English) project.

Research into spoken corpora is throwing up many insights about the form, but from the perspective of a unified theory or approach to speech, work on corpus linguistics will always tend to isolate the samples of speech data from the original oral/aural channel in which they were produced, and also from the overall context of the discourse. The development of multi-media corpora that is starting to emerge may begin to address this issue and is one of the most promising avenues for a model of the spoken form that does justice to its rich and complex resources for communicating meaning. Analysis of a corpus that can provide linked data on a number of factors at one time – gaze, gesture, prosody, syntax and lexis – should provide a model that goes beyond the literate.

Speaking and New Technologies

A fast-moving area in recent years has been the development of new technologies that blur or alter the traditional boundaries between the spoken and written mode. There are several strands to this, ranging from text to speech software, speech recognition, to robotics, to mobile computing and telephony. The aim of much work is for the user to be able to speak to a computer in much the same way as they would to another person, and for the machine to be capable of carrying out the instruction. The major applications of human–machine speech are in automated call centers, internet searching as well as applications in the military and aid for the physically less able. Uptake by the teaching community has tended to be slow, but in the first decade of the twenty-first century mobile phone providers were starting to offer English lessons via their handsets and this was becoming particularly popular in markets where the demand for English teaching outstrips face-to-face teaching capacity as in Pakistan.

Module-45

EXPLORING SPEAKING: RESEARCH RESOURCES

Traditional Library Resources

The following central journals in applied linguistics will all contain relevant material on the diverse aspects of spoken language, if not on the spoken mode *per se*. It would be worthwhile adding these titles to an automatic alerting system and scanning the table of contents regularly for key words in relation to personal research interests in spoken language:

Annual Review of Applied Linguistics

http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=APL

Applied Linguistics

http://applij.oxfordjournals.org/

Discourse & Communication

http://dcm.sagepub.com/

Discourse Studies

http://dis.sagepub.com/

Interaction Studies

http://www.benjamins.com/cgi-bin/t_seriesview.cgi?series=IS

Intercultural Pragmatics

http://www.reference-global.com/loi/iprg?cookieSet=1

International Journal of Corpus Linguistics

http://www.benjamins.com/cgi-bin/t_seriesview.cgi?series=Ijcl

International Journal of the Sociology of Language

http://www.degruyter.de/journals/ijsl/

International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching (IRAL)

http://www.degruyter.de/journals/iral/

Journal of Applied Linguistics

http://applij.oxfordjournals.org/

Journal of Politeness Research: Language, Behaviour, Culture

http://www.degruyter.de/journals/jpr/detail.cfm

Journal of Pragmatics

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/505593/ description#description

Journal of Sociolinguistics

http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=1360-6441

Language

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/language

Language & Communication

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/616/ description#description

Language Learning

http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rllj

Linguistics

http://www.linguistics-journal.com/index.php

System

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/335/ description#description

TESOL Quarterly

http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=209&DID=1679

The Modern Language Journal

http://mlj.miis.edu/

More specifically speech-oriented journals include:

Computer Speech and Language

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/622808/ description#description

Dialogue and Discourse

http://www.dialogue-and-discourse.org/

Gesture

http://www.benjamins.com/cgi-bin/t_seriesview.cgi?series=Gest

International Journal of Speech Technology

http://www.springer.com/engineering/signals/journal/10772?detailsPage= editorialBoard

International Journal of Speech, Language & the Law

http://www.equinoxjournals.com/ojs/index.php/IJSLL

Journal of Phonetics

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/622896/ description#description

Journal of the International Phonetic Association

http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=IPA

Language and Speech

http://www.asel.udel.edu/lgsp/

Phonology

http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=pho

Pragmatics

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/505593/ description#description

Research on Language & Social Interaction

http://rolsi.lboro.ac.uk/

Speech Communication

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/505597/ description#description

Text & Talk

http://www.degruyter.com/journals/text/detailEn.cfm

Voice & Speech Review

http://www.vasta.org/publications/voice_and_speech_review/vsr.html

Societies and Organizations

The special interest groups of the UK English teachers' association the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) on research generally and on pronunciation can be found at: *http://resig.iatefl.org/* and *http://www.reading.ac.uk/epu/pronsig_new.htm*

TESOL Inc is a US-based association promoting English language teaching and research and can be found at: *http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/ index.asp.* The association has a special interest section on speaking and listening at: *http://www.soundsofenglish.org/SPLIS/*

Search terms: 'TESOL inc' and 'TESOL inc pronunciation'.

Other societies with links to the spoken mode include those listed below. An internet search containing the full title of the association should bring the reader to the current web presence.

American Dialect Society

http://www.americandialect.org/

Institute of Translation and Interpreting

http://www.iti.org.uk/indexMain.html

International Clinical Phonetics & Linguistics Assoc

http://www.ucs.louisiana.edu/~mjb0372/ICPLA.html

Online Resources

The development of the internet has meant that access to oral language data is becoming increasingly easy. As well as the corpora described in section 9.4, sound archive material is available at the following sites, most of which provide downloadable sound files, or can provide taped material for research purposes

- The Australian Film related sound archive: *http://www.screensound.gov.au/ index.html* (mainly relating to film and the arts, but including interview material)
- The (British) National Sound Archive: *http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/ findhelprestype/sound/index.html* (general and oral history material, including political history) and for material on British accents and dialects: *http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/sound/accents/accents.html* or *http://sounds.bl.uk/BrowseCategory.aspx?category=Accents-and-dialects*
- The Michigan State University voice library: *http://vvl.lib.msu.edu/ index.cfm* (including web access to samples of all US presidents' voices of the twentieth century)

- At the time of writing the BBC were providing an excellent site on the evolution of the English language which included downloadable examples of a cross-section of British voices: *http://www.bbc.co.uk/ radio4/routesofenglish/index.shtml*

Speech Corpora

There are a growing number of access routes to spoken corpora on the web. For example, the ICAME website at *http://icame.uib.no/icame-www.html* provides sample access to and also sells CD-ROM versions of the following corpora containing speech data:

- London Lund Corpus
- Lancaster/IBM Spoken English Corpus (SEC)
- Corpus of London Teenage Language (COLT)
- Wellington Spoken Corpus (New Zealand)
- The International Corpus of English – East African component

At the Aethelstan site (*http://www.athel.com/cspa.html)* it is also possible to sample a corpus of professional and academic spoken interactions and buy related software. More general spoken material at *http://info.ox.ac.uk/bnc/* can be found in the British National Corpus.

There are many speech corpora that have been created to assist with research into speech recognition and other aspects of human–computer interaction. See for instance the 'Buckeye Speech Corpus' *http://vic.psy. ohio-state.edu/*.

The Centre for Spoken Language Understanding at the Oregon Graduate Institute of Science and Technology creates specialised corpora including children's speech and a variety of accents and languages. *http://www.cslu.ogi.edu/corpora/corpCurrent.html*. The Centre also provides a free 'toolkit' to work with these corpora

Speech Recognition and Text-To-Speech

Ideas and resources for using speech recognition to help students with disabilities can be found at:

http://www3.edc.org/spk2wrt/lab.html

A history of attempts to produce artificial speech can be found at:

http://www.ling.su.se/staff/hartmut/kemplne.htm

An example of a text-to-speech engine in seven languages is available at:

http://www.nextup.com/TextAloud/

A search on the term 'text to speech' will bring you to a large number of both commercial and free sites offering to produce spoken audio output from inputted text. Examples at the time of writing are:

http://www.voiceforge.com/ http://www.squidoo.com/text-speech-programs
http://www.talkingonline.com/ http://www.abc2mp3.com/

Online Pronunciation and Intonation Resources

A large number of useful sites are listed at:

http://www.sunburstmedia.com/PronWeb.html

A site which provides examples of different accents of the British Isles is at:

http://www.phon.ox.ac.uk/files/apps/old_IViE/

An easy to navigate and useful site which plays sound files of common American contractions in speech is at:

http://www.spokenamericanenglish.com/