

Paper 12; Module 13; E Text

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(B) Description of Module

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LANGUAGE SKILLS LSRW II (LISTENING)

In this paper on ELT, we are trying to identify the performance and areas of problems in the process of learning of four linguistic skills of English language. This module 13 is based on second skill Speaking.

13.1: Learning Objectives

- ❖ To identify the communication strategies adopted by the L2 learners whenever they find linguistic gap, and while they encounter the problems during the process of learning the oral communication.
- ❖ To identify the inter and intra lingual communication strategies adopted by the students while making oral communication and to evaluate their speaking skill.
- ❖ To suggest remedial measures to improve all the four skills of English.

13.2 : Speaking Skill :An Introduction

There are four basic linguistic skills necessary to acquire linguistic competence: oral comprehension (Listening) oral production (Speaking) written comprehension (reading) and written production (writing). The receptive skills (oral or written) are always developed before the productive skills. It has also been observed that receptive skills tend to be four times more developed than productive skills during the process of learning a new language. In the early phases of learning, it is necessary to favor oral language rather than written, in order to make FL/L2 learning as similar as

possible to the acquisition of L1. The form and meaning of speaking depends on the related contexts. It includes the participants themselves, their collective experience, the physical environment and the purpose of speaking.

Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode. It, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words.

“Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts.”

These definitions of speaking skill indicate towards the required communicative skills.

Penny Ur(1996) in her ‘A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory ‘ states that of all the four key language skills, speaking is the most important in learning a second or foreign language. She continues to state that speaking includes all other skills of knowing that language. It is only through speaking skills that one exhibits linguistic, strategic and communicative competence.’

13.3 Speaking Situations

There are three major kinds of speaking situations

- ❖ Interactive speaking
- ❖ partially interactive, and
- ❖ non-interactive.

Interactive speaking situations include face-to-face conversations and telephone calls, in which we are alternately listening and speaking, and in which we have a chance to ask for clarification, repetition, or slower speech from our conversation partner.

Partially interactive speaking situations are where listeners are passive. For example when one delivers speech to a live audience, where the resolution is that the audience does not interrupt the speech. The speaker nevertheless can see the audience and judge from the expressions on their faces and body language whether or not he or she is being understood.

Non-Interactive Speaking Situations are there such as when recording a speech for a radio broadcast. One speaks for the listeners but presence of listeners are not noticeable.

13.4 Speaking Skill, Speech and Spoken Language:

Burns and Joyce(1997),commented on the nature of Speaking in the following way:

‘ Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information.’ Spoken language has wider range of functions to perform than the written language. They start from casual spontaneous conversations ending with formal speeches and so on. Written

language tends to serve rather specialized functions at the formal level.

Speech is the first and foremost form of communication. It occupies a predominant position in enlightening the minds of the people. Information is understood and processed easily through speech rather than writing. Speech is a biologically endowed behaviour of human beings.

Speech is the great method through which human co-operation is brought about. It is the means by which the diverse activities of man are coordinated and correlated with each other for the attainment of common and reciprocal ends (De Lauguna, 1927: 19).

Speech is an activity. Whilst language is the structural pattern of system we use to convey our message in speech. The pattern of the language exists of words and of the structured relationship between words and phrases, which is known as grammar (Mitchel, 1973: 1)

One may possess mono-or bi-or multilingual potentiality. He may express his inner speech fluently through all the languages he knows. But, a monolingual cannot express his views other than the L1. If he wants to become a bilingual, he should learn a language in addition to his L1. The additional or second language may be learned in school atmosphere or in society where it is used in real communication. Learning/acquiring spoken mode of an L2 is different from that of L1 as said earlier. If an L2 user has linguistic skills to steer the language fluently with the native speaker of that language, he may be considered as an actual speaker of that

language, otherwise he is not. In the process of learning spoken mode of L2, the learner encounters difficulties because of the inter and intra lingual factors, language shock, cultural shock and so on. However, difficulties and problems are inevitable in the process of learning spoken or written mode of the L2.

13.5 Need for Teaching Speaking Skills: In his article, 'Training Speaking: Misconceptions about Teaching Speaking Skills in English', Minda Mora, argues that the goal of teaching speaking skills is to communicate effectively. Teachers should aim at enhancing learner's ability to make them understand and to make use of their current proficiency to the fullest. They should avoid confusion in the message due to faulty grammar or vocabulary, and to apply the social and cultural norms of communication. Research findings point that teaching vocabulary or lexis in context is highly beneficial to improve speaking skills.

Some of the speaking skills that can be taught to beginners are:

- ❖ Addressing people In English
- ❖ Conducting conversation through telephone
- ❖ Making Oral Presentations
- ❖ Public speaking
- ❖ Reporting
- ❖ Negotiating
- ❖ Clarifying
- ❖ Problem solving etc.

13.6 Strategies for Developing Speaking Skills

Students often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process. Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies -- using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about language -- that they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. These instructors help students learn to speak so that the students can use speaking to learn.

1. Operating minimal responses

Language learners, who do less talking because of not being confident, should be encouraged to participate by building up a stock of minimal responses that they can use in different types of exchanges. Minimal responses are predictable, often idiomatic phrases that express understanding, agreement, doubt, and other responses.

2. Comprehending scripts

Some situations for communication are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges -- a script. Greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations, and other functions that are influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts. So do the interactive exchanges involved in activities such as obtaining information and making a purchase. In these scripts, communication between the first speaker and the other can often be anticipated. Through interactive activities, instructors can give students practice in managing and changing the language that different scripts have.

3. Using language to talk about language

Language learners are often too embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand another speaker or when they realize that a conversation partner has not understood them. Instructors can give students strategies and phrases to use for clarification and comprehension check. By encouraging students to use clarification phrases in class when misunderstanding occurs, and by responding positively when they do, instructors can create an authentic practice environment within the classroom itself. As they develop control of various clarification strategies, students will gain confidence in their ability to manage the various communication situations that they may encounter outside the classroom.

13.7 Micro-skills involved in Speaking

The speaker has to:

- Pronounce the distinctive sounds of a language clearly enough so that people can distinguish them. This includes making tonal distinctions.
- Use stress and rhythmic patterns, and intonation patterns of the language clearly enough so that people can understand what is said.
- Use the correct forms of words. This may mean, for example, changes in the tense, case, or gender.
- Put words together in correct word order.
- Use vocabulary appropriately.
- Use the register or language variety that is appropriate to the situation and the relationship to the conversation partner.
- Make clear to the listener the main sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, object, by whatever means the language uses.

- Make the main ideas stand out from supporting ideas or information.
- Make the discourse hang together so that people can follow what is being said.

13.7 Language Learning and Dyslexia in the Multilingual Society: Phonetics and phonology.

While learning English as a second language, we realize that this includes sounds that do not exist in our mother tongue. Under the influence of the linguistic input of L1 this ability is lost or drastically reduced, so that we can only discriminate those sounds that we need to distinguish meanings in our mother tongue, and that are therefore functional to communication.

Phonetic skills are often neglected in language teaching, but are extremely important especially for students with dyslexia who may have particular phonological difficulties. It is very important for the language teacher to be able to bring the student's attention to the similarities and differences in the sound inventories of the languages, to train their sound discrimination abilities as well as sound production. "The competence in a spoken language consists of the ability to use the sounds that form words and sentences, in order to convey meanings. In order to speak we need to be able to articulate, through particular movements of the oral articulatory organs, the sounds of our language and, in order to understand the spoken language we need to recognize the same sounds in all the various auditory stimuli, that we perceive in the surrounding environment." (Nespor & Bafile, 2008)

‘First of all we should not forget that phonetic competences are the first to be acquired spontaneously in the mother tongue, but they are not acquired so spontaneously in a foreign language. For students with dyslexia, phonetic competences tend to represent a weakness. In these students, any phonological difficulties encountered in the mother tongue are usually transferred to the new language to be learnt.’ (Daloiso, 2011).

Learning new sounds, then, requires some explicit teaching at all ages (even for pre-schoolers). So it is necessary for the language teacher to have some basic knowledge of phonetics, and to be able to retrieve information about the sounds of the languages represented in the classroom. This allows the teacher to help students learn to discriminate and produce the sounds of the new language.

In order to be able to speak and communicate in a new language, it is necessary to be able to discriminate and produce the sounds of that language, through the correct movements of the articulatory organs. First of all, when in the presence of a new sound, we need to understand which organs we should move and how to move them, in order to acquire and consolidate new articulation habits.

13.8 Speaking Skill and Communicative Competence: The speaking skill is often discussed within the context of a theory of communicative competence. Communicative competence describes a language learner's ability to communicate

appropriately within a given situation. Canale & Swain (1980) outlined four components of communicative competence. These are:

• Discourse competence,
• Grammatical competence,
• Sociolinguistic competence and
• Strategic competence.

In terms of speaking, learners demonstrate communicative competence when they choose the correct words/phrases to convey their meaning while showing an understanding of the particular sociocultural or sociolinguistic context in which they speak (e.g., choosing language to be polite or formal based on the situation). Speakers also show communicative competence when they can compensate for language deficiencies such as using other words to describe a concept for which the speaker has no word (Martinez-Flor, Usó-Juan & Soler, 2006).

An important area of research that has influenced speaking instruction is the discovery that much language use is formulaic. For example, when greeting someone in English, it is likely you say, "Hi. How are you?" and the hearer responds, "Fine, thank you." Speech Act research has identified multiple situations where language is formulaic such as in greetings, thanking, requesting, apologizing and complimenting (University of Minnesota, 2007). These formulas, in their appropriate context, can be directly taught to L2 learners to quickly increase their proficiency.

Bottom-up processes related to speaking include the ability to pronounce the sounds of the language, to recognize how words are segmented and to use rhythm, stress and intonation correctly. While pronunciation is taught as a speaking skill and

pronunciation can improve through practice, it is also recognized that adult second language learners rarely achieve native-like proficiency.

13.9 Process of Communication

The term "communication" can be defined as the process through which inner speech of the communicator is conveyed to others. The complete communicative process is the hierarchical arrangement of the various components of communication. They are as follows:

Intended Message: intended messages can be abstract ideas and feelings of speaker who wishes to communicate.
Encoder: The encoder is the person who has intended messages in the form of words and gestures
Signals: Signal is the encoded message transmitted in the form of the mechanical impulse.
Decoder: Decoder is the person who receives communication signals into meaning and idea
The received Message: Received message is the result of decoding communication signals.

13.10 How to Learn Speaking

The development of spoken language is not merely expressing the structure of language. The development of spoken language involves the development of pragmatic usage in addition to the development of pronunciation, constructing words,

phrases, sentences and discourses. Discourse in learning of second language, plays a vital role. The teaching of second language fulfills when the learner comes to know how the second language works in discourses. Barns and Seidlhofer (2001: 211) say that 'learning speaking involves developing subtle and detailed knowledge about why, how and when to communicate, and complex skills for producing and managing interaction such as asking question or obtaining in turn'. It is viewed commonly by the applied linguists that the second language is learned as the first language learning. The stages of the learning the speaking skill of L2 are same as learning of speaking L1. The problems encountered by the learners in the process of learning subtle, and detailed knowledge, show the gradual development of spoken language. The purpose of the learning second language fulfills when the learners use language with the real people for real purpose.

13.11 Avoidance for speaking

Students avoided speaking or talking with the researcher in English. Reasons for the avoidance are that the learners do not want to show their inadequacy in the second language to others. So, to conceal their linguistic inadequacy, the learners follow the strategy of avoidance. Further, the anxiety, language shock and culture shock are yet another factors which lead them to the use the strategy of avoidance.

Syntactic Avoidance

Sentence avoidance is a strategy adopted by the learners to conceal their linguistic inadequacy. Upon questioning, the student has given one word answer instead of constructing sentence or giving complete answers as mentioned below.

Semantic Avoidance

The learners evade from communicating a given content for which appropriate target language rules and forms are not available to them by talking related concepts which may presuppose the desired content.

Literal Translation

The learners follow word for word translation from the native language to L2. The samples from the corpus are as follows.

The appearance of word - for-word translation, while producing second language structure is due to the L1 interference. The learners relate the L1 words with the L2 words which are stored in their mental dictionary without considering or realizing the sentence structure of L2. Thus, the learners tend to express what they intended to say by translating the word for word applying the L1 structure .

Fillers

In certain cases the students use the fillers to conceal the internal process taking place in the inner minds of them. The fillers may be of the user's pet words or expression, which literally do not carry any meaning. The hindi speakers also avail such fillers like arre, what I mean etc., and a sound like mmmm., by which users take time to get the word they search for.

The samples indicate that the students initiated to speak on a topic, but while they face difficulty in the process of communication, they use sounds like mmm... and then L1 words ,then again they continue their speech. So, the use of fillers indicates the learners' mental search. After getting linguistic elements and information from

their mental dictionary, they continue their linguistic behaviour. This is another type of peculiar strategy adopted by the learners to fulfill the ontogenic linguistic developmental gap they face in the process of communication. In certain contexts, the learners use the sound mmmm... alone without L1 words as a gap filler as indicated below.

In some cases instead of fillers, the learners take long pause. It can be seen explicitly in their linguistic manifestation.

I don't like to ... I don't like to ... speak more.

I fly ... away

I control of ... myself.

The dots in the samples suggest the long pause and then the learners continue the sentence or passage after getting the clues. So, both the fillers as well as long pause signify the learners' mental searching processes for apt words or linguistic elements.

Self Repairing

Self repairing is yet another strategy being adopted by the learners whenever they realize that there is something incorrect in their speech. The learners felt that they have gone wrong somewhere during the execution of the sentence and so they adopted this strategy in order to correct themselves.

I will take more time and hard word for doing ... (self correcting) completing.

He will encourage me more ... to get more marks in another test ... (self correcting)
other test also.

The learners have corrected the words as 'completing' for 'doing' and 'other' for
'another' the self corrected words in certain context go wrong.

The learners follow the strategy of self correction not only at the word level but also
at grammatical level as given below.

I saw many natural place ... (self correcting) places.

Repetitions: Sometimes the learners tend to repeat a sound, word or several words
and take time to think of the next word, for example:

Computer can read out ... read out to the blind people.

I ... I feel very happy.

Eighteen ... eighteen year old.

mmm... I spend my leisure time in my nature of my pet animals ... mmm... pet
animals.

Voice Reduction

Voice reduction is a strategy adopted by the learners when the learners feel what they
are about to say is incorrect. Instead of avoiding to utter the word or seek help, they
utter the word with their voice reduced. This makes the learners confirm that the
hearers have not heard what has been told, and also they have the satisfaction of
having completed the sentence.

Word Coinage

The learners create or coin certain new words in order to communicate a desired concept or whenever they find gap in the mental lexicon for expressing communication.

Ko:li+form > Koliform for poultry form

Progash + card > progashcard for progress report

There are 10% of the students who have invented new words in their communication.

Language Switching

The learners use the native language terms without bothering to translate it to the second language terms.

For instance, the speakers have the tendency to add simply 's' to all singular nouns whenever the need for the use of plural arises.

Childs for children

Mans for men

Another strategy, in the area of morphology, adopted by the learner is analogical creation. For instance, as for as English is concerned, the suffix 'ed' is mostly used while changing the verb into a past tense form. But, certain verbs are exceptional to this rule.

For example

buy - bought

see - saw

go - went

The learners have acquired the uniform change, namely, adding - 'ed' to the verb while making a present form as past form. But the exceptions are not properly learned or even after learning, they have difficulty in using them appropriately. As a result, the above mentioned words in English are conjugated by following the general rule of adding the past tense marker - 'ed' with the basic present tense form. Thus, the terms produced by the students are as follows.

buyed for bought

seed for saw

runned for ran

gived for gave

goed for went

13.12 :Remedies

To enhance the linguistic and communicative competence of the students in the English language, the following remedies will be helpful, and these remedies would eradicate or at least minimize the problems encountered by the learners in the process of learning oral communication.

To develop linguistic competence of the students, the language may be taught linguistically. That is, linguistic approach in teaching of English from the beginning may be helpful for the development of competence in English.

Different types of conversational discourse of L2 may be taught, and the students may be given enough time for the development of conversational discourse in the school hours. The conversational discourse training will eliminate language shock and

cultural shock. Further, that will help to develop communicative competence of the students.

While teaching vocabulary of English, the grammatical functions of words should be taught. Further, the words should be distinguished and differentiated in addition to the semantic value of those words.

The similarities and differences between L1 and L2 may be taught especially while teaching syntax, which will eliminate the habits of literal translation from L1 to L2.

While teaching pronunciation of words, the phonetic similarities and differences of the phonemes may be demonstrated in the classroom, and practices may be given in this area properly. Further, the awareness about the interference of L1 in the pronunciation of foreign sounds should be given timely to the learners.

The students may be motivated to interact with teachers and peer groups in second language in the home front in addition to the school atmosphere. Further, watching English programs, on TV listening to radio, local reading and reading dailies would help to develop the spoken language of English.

Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode. It, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words.

Interactive speaking situations include face-to-face conversations and telephone calls, in which we are alternately listening and speaking, and in which we have a chance to ask for clarification, repetition, or slower speech from our conversation partner. Some speaking situations are partially interactive, such as when giving a speech to a live audience, where the convention is that the audience does not interrupt the speech. The speaker nevertheless can see the audience and judge from the expressions on their faces and body language whether or not he or she is being understood.

Relationship of speaking and listening

Speaking is often connected with listening. Speaking and listening are closely related skills, for one rarely occurs without the other. In the classroom, speaking has frequently received more attention, for it is the primary skill learners want while learning a language.

For example, the two-way communication makes up for the defect in communicative ability in the traditional learning. It can create a fresh environment for speaking language. The two-way communication can lengthen the dialogue limitlessly. This is its advantage. At the same time, if the speakers want to give the correct response, he has to think hard, the sentence is not easily forgotten which is created by themselves through thinking, sometimes with the teacher's hint.

13.13 Speaking tips

- Developing speaking skills will involve gaining fluency in spoken interactions with others, as well as practicing the pronunciation.
- Use new language skills repeatedly with people face to face or over the phone.
- To practice pronunciation one should try reading aloud newspaper/dialogue or repeating after a recorded text, trying to reproduce the pronunciation and intonation of the original.
- Record the voice and listen back to try to identify one's own strengths and weaknesses as a speaker.
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13.14 Speaking Activities

First of all level of language listening must be higher than the level of language production. Speaking activities should enable the learners to participate with a minimal verbal response. However in the last levels, they are encouraged to begin to manipulate language and express themselves in a much more personal way.

In primary schools two main types of speaking activities are used. The first type, songs, chants, and poems, encourages pupils to mimic the model they hear on the cassette. This helps pupils to master the sounds, rhythms, and intonation of the English language through simple reproduction. The games and pair work activities on the other hand, although always based on a given model, encourage the pupils to begin to manipulate the language by presenting them with a certain amount of choice, albeit within a fairly controlled situation.

In order for any speaking activity to be successful children need to acknowledge that there is a real reason for asking a question or giving a piece of information. Therefore, make sure the activities you present to the pupils, provide a reason for speaking, whether this is to play a game or to find out real information about friends in the class.

Once the activity begins, make sure that the children are speaking as much English as possible without interfering to correct the mistakes that they will probably make. Try to treat errors casually by praising the utterance and simply repeating it correctly without necessarily highlighting the errors. And finally, always offer praise for effort regardless of the accuracy of the English produced.

In some cases, attention or memory problems can cause problems with oral production or interaction with others: a student may not be able to recall a word or a concept they would like to express (due to a difficulty with their working memory); or their attention may be diverted by external interference while they are trying to understand or transmit a message.

13.15 Assessment of Speaking Skill:

A. Assessment: Assessment can focus on the sounds of speech that people use to create an image of themselves to others. By using speech and pausing, and variations in pitch, volume and intonation, they also create the texture of their speech.

B. Pronunciation: To be an effective communicator one's pronunciation should be accurate. Otherwise it will adversely affect comprehension.

C. Interactive efficiency: It can be assessed by student's use of stress and intonation to highlight important phrases or his ability to suggest special meaning.

D. Grammar: The grammar that is evaluated in speaking should be specifically related to the grammar of speech. There is a movement from making many errors to a few errors.

E. Proficiency in delivering formal and informal talks. The use of vague words and effective use of generic words is the hallmark of spoken interaction.

F. Fluency. Hasselgren (1998) is of the opinion that the more small words a learner uses, the better will be the perceived fluency.

G. Nonverbal Behaviour: appropriate gesture, and stilted attitude enhance communication.

13.16 Summing Up :Speech plays a vital role in maintaining the relationship between and among the people. It is found that in the process of learning to speak, the students followed certain strategies in their communication to conceal their linguistic inadequacy. The avoidance is the first and foremost strategy followed by the students due to the anxiety, language shock, cultural shock and the linguistic inadequacy. Syntactic avoidance is yet another type of strategy, in which they have avoided to construct sentences. Instead of constructing sentences, they have given elliptical responses for the questions asked. The strategy of semantic avoidance is of peculiar type, in which the students have avoided to follow semantic co-operation for the questions asked.

The learners follow the word-for-word translation from the native language to L2, and use the fillers in their communication whenever they encounter gap and linguistic inadequacy. Self-repairing, drawling and repetition are yet another types of strategies followed by them. In the strategy of self-repairing, certain vocabularies, grammatical items are self-corrected. Sometimes, the self corrected items have gone wrong. Drawling is of lengthening the syllables. This strategy provides time to the speaker to search for the forthcoming elements. Repetition, is also one of the strategies followed by them. In this strategy the students have repeated certain items such as words, partial sentence and full sentence. It is found that the repetition of full sentence gives more time to the learners than the word or partial sentence repetition.

Message abandonment is a strategy followed by the students. The students initiate the communication on a specific topic, but in the middle they cut short due to difficulty, and due to the anxiety about the linguistic elements in the target language system.

The students reduce their voice when they feel that they are incorrect.

The strategy of voice reduction shows that they have no confidence in L2. Resource expansion strategy is yet another peculiar strategy whereby the learners attempt to increase their linguistic resources instead of giving required enough response.

Further, it is observed that some of the students have invented certain new words in their oral communication, when they fail to find appropriate word or for the word which is absent in their mental lexicon. In certain contexts, the students follow the code switching strategy. That is, they use certain L1 words in L2. Approximation is another strategy in which the learners have used the approximate items instead of correct ones. However, this approximate words share near semantic feature.

In addition to the above strategies, the learners follow the inter and intra lingual strategies. The learners adopt the strategy of inter lingual transfer when there is a difference between first and second language. The inter lingual strategies are phonological interference, diminishing diphthong, vowel lengthening, avoidance of initial consonant cluster, addition of vowel at the end position of word and development of consonant sounds.