UNIT –IV LSRW

LISTENING
SPEAKING
READING
WRITING

30.2 The Sub-Skills of Listening

Based on the studies on aural discourse, Richards (1983), Leend (1990) and Dunkel (1991) have highlighted the micro-skills

ollowing:

— Recognize the characteristic English speech sounds, in isolation as well as in combination.

— Discriminate among the distinctive sounds of the language.

— Recognize stress, rhythm and tone patterns

— Process utterances spoken at different speeds

— Detect sentence constituents

— Be aware of cohesive devices used in speech.

— Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.

— Use nonverbal clues (including body language) to get at meanings.

— Use one's world knowledge to infer situations.

— Recognize clues in grammar including word classes, sentence patterns etc.

— Distinguish word and phrase boundaries, word-order patterns etc.

— Recognize communicative functions of different utterances.

The Three Phases of Listening

CHAPTER
31

"The listening tasks are effective, if the learners have a well-designed, interesting and carefully graded activity to complete".

There are three phases of a listening class. But a very important phase of the lesson is the preparation that goes before it.

The teacher has to plan a great deal on the physical aspects of the listening class. The size of the class, the arrangement of the furniture, the availability and quality of cassettes and recorder have to be taken care of in advance. The listening material may be excellent, the worksheets well graded and contextualized but if the physical arrangements have not been planned for in advance, the listening lesson may end in a failure.

31.1 Pre-Listening Phase

In this phase the teacher sets up the activity which gives the learner a purpose for listening. A quick look at the listening exercise helps the learner to understand the context and what s/he has to listen for. The pre-listening activity is a very short phase. At times the learner may be asked to predict what they will hear. In case the listening activity is in 'Asking for directions', certain preliminary questions like what would they do if they go to a new place and have to find out a particular place, do they know to find a place using a road map etc. The students can also be asked to familiarize themselves with the roadmap and to read through the questions.

31.2 While-Listening Phase

During this phase the learner completes the task based on the listening material. The diagram/map/table helps the student as it gives an idea about the listening passage. It also gives the learners the

necessary support as it gives them clues whether the answer is to be given in one word or phrase form and partial sentences. It helps them to concentrate on the listening activity rather than worry about grammar or reading. The learners should be encouraged to gather as much information as they can from the passage while listening. If they fill in the information later, it would turn into a memory task and not a listening one. The focus of the task is on the message of the listening text. The while-listening task can be graded carefully by the teacher. Gradually the learners can be asked to jot down more detailed information.

31.3 Post-Listening Phase

This activity occurs after the learners have completed their listening activity. It is in this phase that the answers to the listening tasks are discussed. If many students get an item wrong the relevant portion on the tape can be played back once more and the cause of confusion discussed. The post-listening activity can also take up some activities which require integration of skills – for e.g. give directions to another student to reach a place. Thus speaking skills can be integrated with listening; similarly writing skills can be integrated by asking learners to write an account of their trip for the school magazine.

31.4 Role of the Teacher

It is important to plan meticulously for the different stages of the listening lesson. Before the listening session, the teacher has to check the following.

- Check the quality of tape recording.
- Arrange for the recorder in advance.
- Pre-position the tape.
- Plan on reading aloud (if the material is a monologue) in case of power failure.

31.4.1 In the Pre-listening Stage

— Introduce the lesson briefly

— Deal with vocabulary if any, which might interfere with the success of the listening activity

— Define the task very clearly – clarify any problems relating to the task

31.4.2 In the While-listening Stage

- Ensure that learners are doing the task
- Ensure that there is no disturbance made by the students

31.4.3 In the Post-listening Stage

— Ask students to exchange information in pairs/groups

— Replay cassette if students have missed any information.

— Elicit answers briskly and complete the follow-up work.

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32.1.2 Using Recorded Listening Materials

Recorded materials are listening inputs which have been specially scripted for teaching purposes. For example, the class IX CBSE course 'English Textbook' 'Interact' has recordings of listening inputs which can be used by the teacher to help develop listening skills in the learner. In addition, many learning materials developed for second language learners have accompanying audiocassettes and worksheets. Besides this, the teacher can develop her or his own listening materials in tape.

32.1.2.1 Advantages of Using Recorded Listening Materials

- Learners can get exposure to a variety of voice and a range of accents making it more realistic.
- It gives them a chance to hear several people participating in discussions or conversations.
- The teacher or student can stop the tape, repeat and replay the cassette often as possible.
- It also gives the learners the option to practice and develop listening skills on their own.

material it forces the

they feel overanxious and are unsure about their language competence. But they must remember that they are not supposed to provide a perfect model of the language to their students. In the listening lesson, the principal aim is to strengthen the ability of the learner to understand the spoken message and not to model one's speech on the teacher.

The above-mentioned kinds of listening materials enable the pupils to comprehend the English language through listening and then produce a great deal of information containing vocabulary and structures that they have mastered. Students who work with authentic material develop an interest in the language and come to realize the benefits of English language learning.

32.2 Listening Activities

The listening activities can be broadly divided into two kinds – Extensive and Intensive.

32.2.1 Extensive Listening

During extensive listening the learner listens to an interesting story, radio programme or anecdote. The listening material may be lengthy. The learner listens for pleasure and is not expected to complete a worksheet or a task. Extensive listening may take place inside or outside the school.

32.2.1.1 Using Stories

Storytelling can be followed with questions, asking for factual information and inferential statements. Stories can be used to get the learners to listen to the gist.

32.2.1.2 Using Anecdotes/Passages

The students are asked to listen to a short passage and then to ask them to answer a few questions. Next is the exercise which demands some inferential skill from the listener. They listen to a lecture and then evaluate the given statements as true or false.

32.2.2 Intensive Listening

During intensive listening, the learner listens very carefully. For example, while listening to directions, the listener listens with full concentration. Such listening material is short and has a special task designed on it. There is some amount of challenge so that the learner

feels motivated to complete the task. It is through the completion of this task that the learner gets practice in specific listening skills. The intensive listening practice takes place in class and should be so designed that it is practical, easy to administer and can be completed within the time limit. The following are the listening activities that can be used by the teacher in the classroom.

32.2.2.1 Dictation

One of the most common listening exercises which have been practiced continually in schools is dictation. One of the positive features of dictation is that it involves the learner who becomes actively involved with the language.

Dictation can become a meaningful language activity provided the teacher plans carefully. In 'Once upon a time' John Morgan, M. Rinvolucri (1983) suggests an interesting activity. A list of words is dictated and the students should either narrate or write out the story.

Pair work can be used effectively while using dictation. Students A and B are given copies of grouped exercises. The students know that each group has half of the text. A dictates and B writes, then B dictates and A writes until the story is complete.

Another exercise is called cloze dictation. This takes the form of asking the students to listen to a paragraph and to write the missing words. Leave the first few sentences as they are, so that a proper context is established for subsequent blanks in other sentences.

32.2.2.2 Listening and Following a Route

In this activity, a route map is used and exercises designed to link the spoken description with the map. This activity can be improvised quite easily by the teacher. The route she wishes the learner to mark can be traced on her copy of the map. She can then give the learner instructions, adding comments and a brief description. A map of a place they would like to visit as part of a class trip can be given. In this way a real life context is introduced and the activity becomes more interesting.

32.2.2.3 Listening to a Telephone Conversation

Listening forms a key element in telephone skills. In this activity the learner is introduced to a situation of a telephone conversation and then has to answer the questions based on the conversation. This

activity needs verbal feedback. This also leads to an exercise in note taking. The student may reconstruct a conversation of which be heard only half. This involves guessing and this skill is very much necessary for a successful listener.

32.2.2.4 Listening to Instructions and Marking a Ground Plan

In this activity, the learners will have to mark a ground plan either for a fete or sports meet on following the instructions given by the teacher.

32.2.2.5 Listening to a Sports Commentary

Another interesting context for a listening lesson is provided through listening to a sports commentary. The learner listens to the commentary for specific information. In this the learner uses background sounds for clues; for example, playing of the band for the march past, applause and cheering of the winners name and so on.

32.2.2.6 Jigsaw Listening

Another kind of listening activity is called jigsaw listening. In this the teacher divides the class into groups. Each group listens to a part of the story on the audiocassette. In the next stage the learners send one or two members from their group to other groups. They will be asked several questions and will have to respond and give information. The various groups thus collect the missing sequences of the story. Now in their original groups they speculate on the last part or the ending of the story. Usually, a mystery story is most suitable for jigsaw listening. Each group then reports to the class their version of the story, other groups are free to react, question and comment. Finally, the teacher plays the final part of the recording, which resolves the mystery.

32.2.2.7 Physical Response Activities

Introduce as part of the English lesson, physical response activities. Commands could be given by the teacher and the students could give appropriate physical responses. Stand up, walk to the window etc. This procedure can be repeated as many times as necessary when new actions and vocabulary are introduced to the students. However, only those words which lend themselves for physical response should be chosen.

The tasks given to the students can be made more complex in successive stages. The student may be asked to pick up a pencil on the floor as he goes to close the door. Or, instructions may be given to the student to draw a picture and this will involve learning the dimensions, parts of the object being drawn etc.

32.2.2.8 Language Laboratory

Recorded lessons on tape are available in the language lab. Language lab exercises are effective for minimal pair recognition, paraphrasing of what is listened to and so on. Then, after the student has committed to prepare his judgements on a series of items, the voice on the tape can reel off a list of correct responses, so that the student can tally the items he got correct and have an evaluation of his own performance.

Thus listening is an important part of the competence of a successful learner of English. Listening can be dealt in isolation, through exercises which focus on listening aspects only. However, even though listening is treated as an independent skill in the learning of English, it is important for us to integrate listening with speaking and writing. This may be better accomplished if we deliberately include some listening activities while teaching every English lesson.

QUESTIONS

1. List out the micro-skills of listening.
2. What does listening for perception involve?
3. How can you develop the skill of listening comprehension?
4. Explain briefly the three phases of a listening class.
5. What is the role of the teacher in a listening lesson?
6. What are the three kinds of listening materials that can be used by a teacher? What are the advantages of each of these?
7. Describe the various activities that can be used to develop the listening skill.

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Holistic Approach

- A holistic approach means to provide support that looks at the whole person, not just their mental health needs. The support should also consider their physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing.

- Education is no longer just about learning tangible and measurable skills. Our past educational paradigms relied on the "average" measurements and standardization. Children were prepared to memorize information and then take placement examinations.

- Although children should be prepped in core subjects such as mathematics, literature, or science, it is also important that they *be taught how to learn.* Holistic education redefines not only what a core subject is, it also redefines how children should be taught.

- The biggest benefit of a holistic approach isn't just about mental development, but it encompasses *psychological, social* and *emotional growth.*

- A holistic approach motivates children to learn about a subject. It instills *curiosity* and allows children to learn naturally and creatively. It is also attuned to each child's *individual persona* and learning style, in contrast of the current mass educational system.

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- **Positive And Long Term Results**
  The result is a child who develops better communication and social skills, and better confidence. They feel good about learning and challenging themselves with certain subjects because these things offer positive associations. Intrinsic motivation, in turn, propels them to be curious, inquisitive, and eventually be innovative adults in the workplace.

- **Implementing a Successful Holistic Approach**
A holistic methodology seeks to help children develop all their skills and to build their strengths. As such, this educational approach is inclined towards play-based learning, children's creativity, and their imagination. For instance, a holistic curriculum could include dance and stage performance, speech, photography, or painting (to name only a few) in addition to the "traditional" subjects.

- More importantly, a holistic approach would encourage children to make connections between subjects–for instance, using their creative skills to solve a practical science or social problem, or approaching a foreign language similar to the way they approach a mathematical equation.

- This kind of teaching does not confine to the classroom setting. In fact, parents and educators would do well to create environments where children can experiment and explore.

Edutainment

- Edutainment is an acronym of the words 'education' and 'entertainment'. Etymologically, edutainment is a process of learning that is designed with the ligature of education and entertainment in harmony, so that learning process will be more fun and enjoyable. In a broad sense, some structural activities can be considered as a part of it. This kind of activities not only become a matter of fun and enjoy for the learner, but also motivate them and charge them to learn things in a new way. Unconsciously, the learner is entertained as well as enriched him/her by being educated.

- Nowadays in India, this new emerging trend is intensely used and that gives a victorious aura in ecology of teaching, specifically in the field of ELT. 'Teaching' English in India has always been a highly estimated prospect. Education system in India has underwent several changes throughout the history of education in India- beginning from the 'gurukul' system to the modern (modular) classroom that we see today. As education system has underwent, rather found out the need to change their mode of instruction with the change of time and in this aspect we must keep in mind that this has been done or rather this has taken place in order to keep pace with the advent of the global market.

- The most popular six teaching techniques of 21st century are shown in the below.
- Flipped Classroom (Inverting your class)- Learners or students are motivated by this flipped classroom technique to draw up for the lesson before the class. As a result, a dynamic ambiance is generated in the classroom and students can elaborate on what they have already studied. Students prepare a topic at home so that the class the next day can be devoted to answering any questions they have about the topic.
- Thus this allows students to go beyond their normal boundaries and to explore their natural curiosity.

- Design Thinking (Case Method)-This technique is rooted on resolving real-life cases through group analysis, brainstorming, innovation and creative ideas. Although "Design eshita8 Thinking" is a structured method, in practice it can be quite messy as some cases may have no possible solution. However, the Case Method prepares students for the real world and arouses their curiosity, analytical skills and creativity. This technique is often used in popular MBA or Masters Classes to survey real cases experienced by companies in the past. Self-learning-

- Gamification- Learning through the use of games is one of the teaching methods that have already been explored especially in elementary and preschool education. By using games, students learn without even realizing.

- Therefore, learning through play or 'Gamification' is a learning technique that can be very effective at any age. This technique can easily motivate students. The teacher should design projects that are appropriate for their students, taking into account their age and knowledge, while making them attractive enough to provide extra motivation.

- **Social Media-** A variant of the previous section is to utilize social media in the classroom. Students today are always bridged to their social network and so will need little stimulation to get them engaged with social media in the classroom. The ways you can use teaching methods are quite varied as there are hundreds of social networks and possibilities.

- **Free Online Learning Tools-** There is an arrangement of free online learning tools available which teachers can use to encourage engagement, participation and a sense of entertainment and fun into the classroom. Teachers can create an interactive and dynamic classroom environment using, for example, online quizzes to test student's knowledge.

- Comics- comics are new trendy material which is used for ELT. Suppose a student who is a fan of comics of Marvel Studios, he/she can be instructed to write something on it. In this way the writing skill of the student is developing. Evenly, pictorial material are provided to the students and they can be instructed to write some dialogue format on that particular task.

- In early days teacher first gave the definition and then example was used and that is known as deductive learning. But nowadays as the classroom becomes learner centered and learner oriented, the teacher tries to get the answers from the students before his/her explanation. And this is the inductive method. In contrast with the deductive method, inductive instruction makes use of student "noticing". To conclude it can be said that Traditional mode of chalk-and-talk Indian classroom teaching is deductive, alternative teaching approaches are more inductive in 21st century.

The Reading Process

"The Education of a child is imperfect unless he is equipped with the ability to read, to decifer, to interpret and understand the contents of the reading material". —R.S. Trivedi

Reading like listening is a decoding process. But it is a very complex process involving many physical, intellectual and often emotional reactions. Reading involves the recognition of graphic symbols, the correlation of these with formal linguistic elements such as words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs as well as the correlation of these with meaning.

38.1 Aims of Teaching Reading

The aims of teaching reading are as follows.

- To develop the skill of effective oral reading along with accurate word recognition and meaning.
- Cultivate interest in reading for information and leisure
- To stimulate thought and expression.
- To enrich the reader's vocabulary.
- To develop the power of comprehending English in the written/ printed form.
- To develop a taste for English language and literature.

38.2 Mechanics of Reading in the Early Stages

Reading in the early stages is a matter of 'learning to read' and not 'reading to learn'. Learning to read in the early stages involves the following aspects.

38.2.1 Recognition of Words and Sentences

Recognition of words in print is a mechanical act which depends on the movement of the eye. The quicker the eye moves along the printed line, the more words could be recognized. A fast reader does not read word after word. His eyes do not move from one word to another in a uniform manner. Instead they move in hops; they jump from one group of meaningful words to another. The group of words he recognizes at a glance is known as recognition span, the perceptual span or the eye span. After each jump, he pauses for a short while; then he proceeds to the next group of words. This pause is called fixation during which the reader tries to comprehend what he has read. In case, what has been read is not meaningful, the reader's eyes make a regressive or backward movement which is called regression. This regression retards the speed of reading.

The pupils should learn to widen their eye span so that they can read many words at a glance, shorten the fixation pauses and avoid regression. Word-to-word reading which is very common among beginners is harmful to reading. The meaning can be conveyed only when read together as a sentence. Pupils should be given practice for swift recognition of words.

38.2.2 Pronunciation or Utterance of Words and Sentences

Another aspect about learning to read is that it requires pronunciation or utterance of words. Reading has to be reading aloud. Once children pass through the stage of reading aloud, rapid silent reading should be encouraged for pleasure as well as for thought getting. The pupils should take in complete phrases or groups of words at once and when reading aloud, use appropriate sounds, juncture, stress and intonation patterns.

38.2.3 Reading Speed

It is calculated that a fast reader might read at a speed between 400 to 1000 words per minute. At the end of the school course, the pupil should be able to read at the rate of 500 words per minute. Initially the material for reading must follow the material of speech. What the pupils are required to read must have been spoken to them already by the teacher, so that they are quick to recognize the printed symbols. Daily practice in rapid reading of easy and interesting material would prove useful in developing reading speed. This should

be followed by a few questions to make sure that what has been read has also been understood.

38.2.4 Interpretation or Comprehension

This is an ability to unlock meanings by adding together a number of associations. Knowledge of English syntax is essential. Interpretation also involves the ability to relate the sentence to the total context.

Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text. Readers typically make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand the text.

38.3 The Process of Reading

The Process of Reading may be broadly divided into three stages.

- Recognition stage
- Structuring stage
- Interpretation stage

38.3.1 Recognition Stage

At this stage the learner simply recognises the graphic counterparts of the phonological items. For instance, he recognizes a spoken word in its written form. Difficulty at this stage will largely depend upon the difference between the script of the learner's mother tongue and English and between spelling conventions of the two languages. The learner who follows mother tongue reading strategy of 'spelling pronunciation' in reading English will find reading difficult. Hence, word recognition refers to the reader's ability to perceive the written symbols to one's spoken language.

38.3.2 Structuring Stage

In the second stage, the learner sees the syntactic relationships of the items and thereby understands the structural meaning of the syntactic units. The learners understand the lexical and structural meanings of words, phrases and sentences. They should be able to recognize the meaning of various graphic signals such as punctuation marks, paragraph indentation, capitalization etc.

38.3.3 Interpretation Stage

This is the highest level in the process of reading. At this stage, the learner comprehends the significance of a word, a phrase or a sentence in the overall context of the entire discourse. He should be able to comprehend the serious and the jocular use of a word, distinguish between fact and opinion etc. Since this is the ultimate goal, the entire process of reading is geared to attain it. The reader should be able to guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word from the context, locate the topic sentence, make a summary of the important points in the passage and infer the mood of the writer. This is the stage when the reader really reads for information or pleasure.

The above three stages have some correspondence with the three levels of language, namely, phonological, syntactic and semantic. In the process of reading, these three stages cannot be rigidly separated; there is always overlapping and simultaneity of operations.

38.4 Models of Reading Process

The process of reading happens inside a reader's brain. Attempts have been made to explore the process of reading which has resulted in several theoretical models.

Three such models are:

- The bottom-up model
- The top-down model
- Interactive model

38.4.1 The Bottom-up Model

The bottom-up processing refers to the role of the text in providing input through decoding or letter and word recognition. It explains reading as an activity in which sounds are matched to letter. *"The person who learns to read, acquires the habit of responding to the sight of letters by the utterance of phonemes"* (Bloomfield 1933). According to the bottom-up model of the process of reading, a reader:

— recognizes a number of linguistic signals including letters, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical structures and discourse markers.

— selects these signals which make sense and contributes to meaning

— decides upon what to 'retain' and 'what to leave'

38.4.2 The Top-down Model

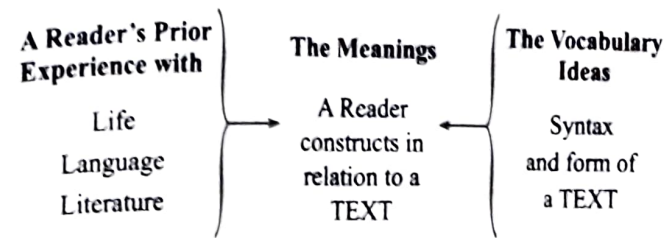Top-down processing refers to the use of predictions based on one's prior knowledge.

Figure-38.1: The Relationship among Prior Experiences, a Text and the Meaning – Schema Theory

Figure-38.1 shows the relationship among prior knowledge, a text and the meanings a reader constructs in relation to the text. It summarises what is known as Schema theory. The figure shows that in creating meaning, good readers rely on their prior knowledge of how language works, of how ideas are organized in writing and how different forms are structured.

An important function of schemata is to help readers to match what they know with what the written text tells them.

A mature reader according to the top-down model

- gets hold of large chunks of text
- makes use of prediction to guess meaning
- puts to use his/her previous or prior knowledge to reconstruct meaning

38.4.3 Interactive Model

The interactive model brings together both the models. In this model the good reader processes texts by simultaneously making use of the support that comes from good knowledge of the language as well as knowledge of the world, the culture and knowledge of the writing conventions of the language. Reading is thus an interactive process and comprises a multiplicity of skills made use of in different ways for differing texts.

Reading is thus viewed as an active process. The reader has to be actively involved in getting meaning out of the text as well as guessing what the text will say next.

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Types of Reading and Reading for Perception and Comprehension

CHAPTER 39

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and few to be chewed and digested". —Francis Bacon

The place of reading in a teaching-learning context involves the development of the ability in learners to handle different kinds of reading efficiently. Special kind of instructional help is necessary to develop reading competence in pupils; they should have a clear understanding of the kind of reading activity and work actively on the given written or printed texts. The students should be exposed to the different types of Reading explained in this chapter.

39.1 Oral Reading

Oral Reading is largely part of beginning reading. Young children associate the letters with the sounds these letters represent. They read aloud the letters and their combinations. The teacher can introduce reading books that have attractive pictures on each page with sentences written below them.

Oral Reading serves a few specific functions.

— It is used as a pronunciation check.

— It serves as a check on the bottom-up skills.

— It contributes to student participation by being a source of motivation and interest to individual students.

Oral Reading is considered to be a pre-reading preparation.

39.2 Loud Reading

Reading aloud means reading the printed or written material by producing sounds audible to others. It implies the use of voice that should be audible both to the reader himself and the audience before whom reading is done. In reading aloud, the pupil is confronted with written sentences that he is required to speak at a normal speed. For this he needs an effective practice of grasping the patterns he is going to read because most of the words and phrases may be new. When the students acquire the ability to read effectively and with ease every pattern, the purpose of loud reading is served.

39.2.1 Merits of Loud Reading

• Loud Reading provides practice in good speech.

• It offers opportunity for the teacher to find out whether the pupil is reading with correct pronunciation, stress and intonation.

• Loud Reading improves the listening ability. They learn to recognize different sound patterns.

• Ability to read well gives the student a sense of pleasure, power, and mastery over the language.

• The pupil concentrates while reading aloud because of the conscious effort needed.

39.2.2 Limitations of Loud Reading

■ In loud reading, attention is focused on sounds of words rather than on comprehension aspect.

■ Habit of loud reading sometimes disturbs others.

■ In overcrowded classes, it is not possible to give every student a chance for loud reading.

■ Reading aloud reduces speed and impedes comprehension. According to Hagbolt, loud reading is a basis for silent reading. A.W. Frisby calls it a 'necessary evil'.

39.3 Silent Reading

Silent Reading is reading without producing sounds audible to others. This type of reading is useful at the advanced levels of learning a language. Handschin says, *"Silent reading inculcates a love for reading and is pleasurable and it gives the pupil a feeding of power and achievement"*.

Silent reading should be encouraged in pupils. Training in silent reading is of great utility to the Indian pupils learning English as a foreign language.

39.3.1 Objectives of Silent Reading

Silent reading is both an end and a means in reading. It is a means to achieve the following objectives

- *Intellectual:* The students are quickly able to get at the facts or thoughts contained in the subject matter.
- *Literary:* The students get a taste of English language and literature.
- *Linguistic:* It aims at expansion of vocabulary and knowledge of English syntax.   *Words but by ... form*
- To the able to read rapidly.
- To meditate or ponder on the reading material.

39.3.2 Uses of Silent Reading

- To make a survey of materials to be studied and to look through indexes.
- Chapter headings and outlines.
- To skim for information.
- To familiarize oneself with the material and its thought content.
- To study the material in depth.
- To study the language in which the material is written from a literary and linguistic point of view.

39.3.3 Merits of Silent Reading

- Silent reading promotes self-study habits among students in and outside the school.
- Silent reading develops the ability to comprehend the subject matter due to concentration while reading.
- Silent reading can be continued for a considerable length of time without fatigue.
- Silent reading develops a taste for further reading.

39.4 Intensive Reading

Intensive Reading can be defined as 'Reading shorter texts for exact or specific information'. In intensive reading, the pupils read not only for detailed comprehension of meaning but also for mastering the structures and vocabulary.

39.4.1 Objectives of Intensive Reading

Intensive Reading has for its objective the full understanding of the text with its argument, its symbolic, emotional and social overtones, the attitudes and purposes of the author and the linguistic and literary means the author employs to achieve his purpose. Intensive Reading is in a sense a close and observant study. On this basis, Intensive Reading has the following objectives.

- To read fast with good comprehension, texts that are easy in language and content or difficult texts that are familiar.
- To read slowly but with excellent comprehension **difficult texts**.
- To be able to skim and read for specific points of information.
- To use works of reference.
- To size up a book quickly and accurately.

The aim of Intensive Reading is for pupils to acquire a detailed and deep knowledge and to increase their power of expression. In other words, we can say that the chief aim is the linguistic. The pupils study the language from different angles and then arrive at its full meaning. The Intensive Reading material is analysed, every word is explained and every para or stanza is paraphrased. According to Hornby, *"the purpose of intensive reading is to give the learner chances to make 'new friends' in the English language"*.

39.4.2 Steps in an Intensive Reading Lesson

i) *Introduction:* The teacher explains the purpose for reading the target passage, gives the students a setting for the text to be read, presents a background of appropriate information for the text to be read and introduces the new vocabulary necessary to comprehend the main ideas in the text.

ii) *Reading:*
   - Teacher reads while students listen.
   - Teacher reads while students listen and read along.
   - Students read silently.

iii) *Comprehension tasks:* Three types of questions are employed for discussion:
   - Information (what, when, where, who, how many etc.)
   - Inferential

- Interpretative (questions relating to author's opinion, readers judgement of the content)

iv). *Review and related exercises.*

39.4.3 Merits of Intensive Reading

- Increases the vocabulary of pupils.
- Teaches them grammar.
- Improves their power of expression.
- Acquaints them with new idioms and usages.
- Helps to locate relevant information.
- Enables to comprehend the subject matter fully.
- Students are exposed to a variety of reading materials.
- Develops the skill of answering comprehension questions on the passage read.
- Students are trained to make inferences.

39.5 Extensive Reading

Extensive Reading is non-detailed study where pupils read for information or just for the pleasure of reading. In this kind of reading the primary object is general comprehension, not language study. Since the aim here is to read rapidly, the ability to locate the 'topic sentence' of a paragraph will be useful. The ability to guess the approximate meaning of a new word from the context will be found helpful. The skill of making rapid notes of relevant information for future use is also a component of this useful skill of extensive reading.

39.5.1 Objectives of Extensive Reading

- The primary purpose of extensive reading is to train the student to read directly and fluently in the English language for his own enjoyment without the aid of the teacher.
- To increase passive vocabulary.
- To read rapidly.
- To understand the subject matter without any difficulty.
- To develop the habit of silent reading.
- To promote self study habit.

It should be ensured that the subject matter meant for extensive reading is not difficult. Prof. Rivers says that material for extensive

reading should be of a lower standard of difficulty than that of intensive reading. Such material will consist of short stories, simple biographical sketches, simplified plays etc.

39.5.2 Steps for Extensive Reading

- The teacher should give a brief introduction of the topic to create class interest.
- The difficult words should be explained.
- Students should be asked to read it silently with reasonable speed.
- Comprehension questions should be put to test the grasp of students.

39.5.3 Merits of Extensive Reading

- Extensive reading will increase the vocabulary.
- It helps in assimilation of new thoughts and ideas.
- It keeps the children busy and active.
- It has high 'transfer of learning' value since it prepares the students for library reading.
- It paves the way for self-study and self-education.
- The pupil learns to relate to various types of written language such as prose, poetry, drama, letters, biographies etc.
- The pupils are also exposed to various strategies including skimming, scanning predicting and so on.

39.5.4 How to foster Extensive Reading in Pupils

- The teacher has to arouse interest in pupils to read extensively.
- The teacher has to recommend to individual books that suit their tastes.
- Excited passages and enjoyable stories from books can be used for oral discussion.
- Reading aloud to the class, passages of special interest which the teacher herself has liked.
- Encouraging pupils to talk about the books on articles they read, the exciting incidents or on the characters etc.
- Having part of the stories acted in class.

- Urging pupils to read a minimum number of books suited to their level from the school library or during the library period.

- Persuade pupils to buy a few books

39.6 Skimming

When skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer.

We do this, for example when we want to find out whether a certain article is relevant to our area of research or when we glance over a page of a newspaper to see if there is anything worth reading or when we leaf through a book to find out its subject matter.

An exercise that can be given to students to learn how to skim is to give a passage to read fast and ask for only the main idea. Then ask them to write a possible title and a sentence that captures the main idea.

39.7 Scanning

When scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even read the whole passage. We let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it is a name, a date or a specific piece of information.

This skill involves the ability to reject or pass over irrelevant information. It is a kind of reading we do when we read through the biographical account to find out the date on which a certain event happened or when we go through the table of contents in a book.

An activity suggested for scanning is to provide a newspaper cutting and ask for some specific information found in the text.

39.8 Reading for Perception

Reading for perception is practised more at the primary/middle school where learners are introduced to the English language. The focus of reading is oral perception. The readers concentrate on the sounds of words and the intonation patterns.

Perception entails the ability to recognize the graphic symbols in print and connect it to their corresponding vocal sounds. The perception extends from sounds to words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and chapters.

Students get to internalize, in an inductive manner, the possibilities of sound values for each letter or combination of letters. Emphasis is thus on decoding graphic information from the words, phrases and sentences. Based on what they have been exposed to, students begin to read new combinations of vocabulary and sentence – level structures.

39.9 Reading for Comprehension

Reading for comprehension means reading with understanding. Once the child has completed the stage of mechanical reading, he must gain the proficiency of relating written symbols to the thought hidden behind the meaning. Reading comprehension involves understanding the meaning of

❖ new content words.

❖ new grammatical structures.

❖ new concepts of special references.

❖ relationship of ideas.

Reading comprehension involves the understanding of the information stated directly in a text. The information may be facts and details, sequences of events, main ideas and generalizations, causes and effects. The key element in comprehension at this level is to state exactly what the passage is about. The reader has to develop a thorough understanding of the passage at the plain sense, inferential and critical sense levels.

Prof. F.G. French says that the role of the teacher is to act as a guide, showing her class how to uncover all that is there in the subject matter, all that is to be examined in the construction patterns and planned paragraphs in which the material is presented.

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Strategies to Develop Reading

"Reading strategies should promote skills in reading for understanding".
—*Francoise Grellet*

There are a number of considerations to be borne in mind while developing 'Reading Skill' among students. The teacher should understand the underlying principles involved in reading comprehension activities. The strategies to develop reading must be taken care of in order to make the learners independent and efficient readers.

41.1 Reading is Purposeful – State the Purpose

Real life reading is always purposeful. Pupils will have to read different types of materials for specific purposes. Making pupils aware of this important fact must become an essential part of teaching reading at school. The obvious way is to provide suitable reading materials and set appropriate tasks to make the pupils read for well-defined aims.

41.1.1 Develop Reading Skills required by each Text Type

While reading a text, the pupils should develop several sub-skills of reading. They should be able to locate the main points, find out the main idea, scan in order to gain specific information, skim for the central idea, infer stated and unstated information and read critically in order to separate fact 'or' opinion.

41.1.2 Providing Pre-reading Questions

The use of pre-reading questions helps the pupils to focus on various aspects of the text to be read. From time to time, the teacher must ask for pupils' answers to one or two such questions before getting them into actual reading.

41.1.3 Pre-viewing the Text

When pupils lack previous knowledge in the case of a particular topic, the teacher must provide relevant background information in order to help them focus on the text in order to comprehend it better. In previewing, a proficient reader makes use of the following.

a) The titles or headings which provide clues to what the passage is about.

b) The table of contents which provide a view of what may be found in different parts.

c) The index which shows where information can be found on a particular topic in a book.

41.1.4 Focus on Silent Reading

Pupils should be asked to read the passage silently and to comprehend better. Any explanation required on difficult points in the passage is given at this stage. They should be able to guess meanings from contexts.

41.1.5 Train for Adequate Comprehension

Pupils should be sent back to the text to look for answers to specific questions. Poor readers in particular seldom go beyond obvious or surface level answers. An important part of good reading instruction is to steadily move the pupil from surface – level comprehension to phases of comprehension that include both critical and creative understanding.

41.1.6 Evaluation of Reading Comprehension

A common failure of teaching reading is the absence of tests, tasks and exercises on reading comprehension. An appropriate follow-up activity with a view to encouraging learner-to-learner interaction can be organized both in oral and in written. They should work on exercises in vocabulary and complete an extensive reading activity. Classroom activities give students opportunities to get feedback on their reading performance.

41.2 SQ3R Technique of Reading

One of the most quoted techniques of Reading is the SQ3R method of Reading which was developed by Francis Robinson, an educational psychologist. He has explained this technique in his book

"Effective Study" (1970). This method is made of five steps in studying a text. SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recall and Review.

Survey: Survey refers to an overview of the text, search for keywords, glancing through the title page, introduction, table of contents. Survey includes skimming and scanning which are specific reading techniques for efficient reading.

Question: After survey, certain questions to which a person expects to find answers are formed. These answers when put together should form the main points of the passage.

Read: Read the text carefully and critically. The author's ideas or opinions need not be accepted as they are. The pupils can compare them with their own and arrive at conclusions.

Recall: Recall the information you had read from time to time and connect it with the previous knowledge as well as the knowledge to be gained in the future lessons.

Review: The method of review or revision is to look at the passage as a whole and a rapid repetition of the first four steps of this technique. If the first four steps have been completed, then Revision just takes a fraction of the time spent in the first instance.

SQ3R method has been recommended as a means of generating active participation in the study and developing an intellectual attitude towards the material. It ensures a higher degree of both comprehension and retention.

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- The ability to see the relation of the parts of the passage to the whole of it and between parts.

Plain Sense Level Questions

— To direct attention to and to help to identify the stated facts: when did this happen, where, what etc.

— To make clear the reference of the words and other grammatical relationship of the words – for e.g. What does 'this' in the following passage refer to? We may also include under this head questions on the organization of the paragraphs internally and how different paragraphs of the passage are related to each other and how each part builds up the whole.

E.g. What are most of the facts concerned with?

42.1.2 Inferential Level Skills

■ The ability to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from contextual or internal clues without looking for these words in a dictionary.

■ The ability to infer the emotional implications to respond to figurative language.

■ Ability to infer the author's intention, attitudes etc.

■ The ability to distinguish between fact and opinion.

Inferential Level Questions

— To make clear the suggestion of feelings conveyed by individual words.

E.g. What does this word tell us about the speaker's feelings?

— To make clear the exact suggestion of the word in its context.

E.g. What do we usually feel when we see a man dressed in 'rags'?

— To make clear what is suggested by figurative language or comparisons.

E.g. What does the expression 'He is as obstinate as a mule' suggest about the writer's attitude.

42.1.3 Critical Reading Level Skills

• The ability to identify the author's bias or prejudice from the emotionally slanted words.

E.g. Nelson Mandela is an African.

Here the writer shows a favourable attitude or approval.

If he uses the word 'Negro' it shows disapproval.

• The ability to compare books critically and determine that some books are better than others.

42.2 Matching Tests

In the initial stages of reading, matching tests could be given. They test the students' ability to discriminate visually between words which are spelt in fairly similar ways. These matching test items will also assist in developing word recognition speed. They read a sentence, followed by four similar sentences, only one of which is exactly the same as the previous one. At the intermediate and advanced level of reading, testees are required to match meanings of certain terms. Another item type involves the matching of a paraphrase of phrases and sentences in a text with the original words in the text.

42.3 True or False Reading Tests

The true/false test is one of the most widely used tests of reading comprehension. One item type can read as:

According to this passage, are the following statements true or false?

The construction of true/false items based on a reading extract falls into two general categories: those which are independent of a reading text and those which depend on a text. The reading text should generally be a simple one which will be followed by more difficult statements. In such cases, the testec's comprehension ability lies in understanding the reading text as well as the true/false statements.

42.4 Multiple-Choice Items

Most of the items under this category test the vocabulary. It is felt that comprehension of a text lies in the understanding of the meanings of words in the context. Another test type tests comprehension of grammatical structure.

For e.g. In spite of the loud music, I soon managed to fall asleep.

A   The loud music soon helped me to fall asleep

B   I soon fell asleep as a result of the loud music

C   The loud music made me unable to fall asleep soon

D   I soon fell asleep even though the music was loud

A third type of test item in reading comprehension is when the testees are required to read the text carefully once or twice before answering the questions. The choice of the correct option in each multiple-choice item must depend on a testee's comprehension of the reading text.

42.5 Completion Test Items

Completion items measure recall rather than recognition. Usually, completion items require the testees to supply a word or a short phrase. Types of completion items for testing reading comprehension are divided into two groups. Type 1 consists of blanks for completion in the items following the text and Type 2 consists of blanks in the text itself. Completion items are also useful for testing the ability to deduce word meanings from the clues available in the context.

E.g. Japan, in the interests of both the Japanese and the world _____ needs to be assured that efforts will be made to stabilize the yen. For its part, Britain is now taking active steps to improve its _____ by developing new industries and cutting down on imported goods of all kinds. Talks now being held in Paris between France and Germany are directed at ways of increasing the manufacturing capabilities of the two countries in the hope that this will lead to a general improvement in the European _____ and create more jobs.

42.6 Re-arrangement Items

Re-arrangement items are particularly useful for testing the ability to understand a sequence of steps in a process or events in a narrative. In Type 1 test item, the students will often be required to rewrite the jumbled sentences in their correct sequence. In Type 2 test item, the jumbled sentences are based on a reading comprehension text and should be unscrambled in the light of the information contained in the text. The students must write the letters of the sentences in their correct order in the boxes at the end of the item.

42.7 Cloze Procedure

In cloze tests, the words are deleted systematically. Every nth word is deleted by the test writer and in most cloze tests the blanks are of uniform length.

The interval at which words are deleted is usually between every fifth and every tenth word. The fifth, sixth and seventh words are the most widely favoured for deletion in cloze tests.

The most common purpose of the cloze test is to measure global reading comprehension.

42.8 Open-ended Items

The term 'open-ended' is used to refer to those questions which elicit a completely subjective response on the part of the testees. The response required may range from a one-word answer to one or two sentences. When marking open-ended items which require answers in sentences, it is frequently advisable to award at least two or three marks for each answer. If the maximum for a correct answer is three marks, for example, the marking guide might be as follows:

- Correct answer in a grammatically correct sentence or a sentence containing only a minor error . . . . 3 marks

- Correct answer in a sentence containing one or two minor errors . . . . 2 marks

- Correct answer but very difficult to understand with major errors . . . . 1 mark

- Incorrect answer in a sentence . . . . 0 mark

Finally, a reading comprehension passage may be followed by one or two multiple-choice items, several true/false items, a few completion items and one or two open ended items.

42.9 Cursory Reading Tests

Cursory reading is a general term to denote the skills involved in reading quickly, skimming and scanning.

In tests of reading speed, the students are generally given a limited time in which to read the text. The actual reading speed considered necessary will be largely determined by the type of text being read. It is to be noted here that poor readers generally read

Techniques and Tasks for Developing Speaking Skill

> "The ultimate goal of the speaking skill in English is to enable the learner to communicate his or her thoughts, ideas and feelings via oral language to meet the needs faced by him or her".
>
> —*Bowen et al.*

33.1 The Sub-skills of Speaking

Learning to speak in the second language involves developing subtle and detailed knowledge about why, how, what and when to communicate and complex skills for producing and negotiating language in cultural and social contexts. The focus of speaking skill is not only accuracy of pronunciation but adequacy of fluency and communicative effectiveness that becomes the focus of speaking skill.

The following are the sub skills of speaking.

- Produce the characteristic English speech sounds and sound patterns, both in isolation and combination.
- Use appropriate stress and intonation patterns.
- Use appropriate words and structures to express the intended meaning.
- Recall words and structures quickly.
- Organize his thoughts and ideas in a logical sequence.
- Adjust his speech according to his audience, situation and subject matter.

In an actual speaking situation most of these components function simultaneously, demanding smooth coordination on the part of the speaker.

33.2 Techniques in Teaching Speaking

The following are the major techniques of teaching oral skills.

33.2.1 The Conversation Class

One of the accepted ways of teaching speech is to hold a 'conversation class'. The teacher sits with a group of learners and asks them questions about their home, family, work etc. It is a question-answer session and is not always very productive of learning as it lacks interesting and clearly defined topics.

33.2.2 Topic-based Discussion

Another kind of fluency based activity is the topic-based discussion. The teacher plans discussions on interesting topics. This was an improvement on the conversation class because the discussion is now structured and clear.

33.2.3 Task-centred Fluency Practice

With the increasing importance being given to Communicative Language Teaching, task-centred fluency practice is being used more and more. In this, a group is given a task to perform through verbal interaction; it may be in the form of a group activity or role-play. The group has to perform a task which has a tangible output either in the form of giving a group report, a speech or a presentation. This gives the group a concrete task to work with and clear guidelines regarding its scope. It also provides a basis for feedback

33.3 Tasks for developing the Speaking Skill

Speech training at the earliest stage has to ensure that every pupil receives adequate amounts of practice. To enable how to interact, at this stage, it is best to limit learner interaction to words that have been sufficiently practiced by them. Repetition and drill may serve well at this stage.

33.3.1 Types of Drills for Speaking

According to Thompson and Wyatt (1935) *"Speaking, like walking and running, is not learnt entirely by rule. It is learnt more by practice.... The teacher must create meaningful situations so that the pupils feel the necessity of speaking English. The class must be made as interesting and playful as possible and the pupil must find it a pleasure to speak English".*

33.3.2 Sequencing

Pupils individually or in groups are given sets of sentences to be placed in the right order before they are spoken. They must justify their choice of the order.

33.3.3 Picture Stories

Each group is given a set of pictures that can add up to a story. At first the teacher may provide questions to make the task less demanding or supply the beginnings or endings of the stories. However the aim must be to generate independent work of being able to narrate the story aloud.

33.3.4 Pair or Group Interviews

Each member asks questions which can help to elicit information from the others (e.g. about person, family, hobbies, neighbourhood). At a more advanced stage pupils in groups may gather questionnaire-based information and use it to put together a joint informative report. They may, for example collect their parents, neighbours and others views on a topic of interest to society. The data thus collected can become the basis of a group composition – a report – for oral presentation.

33.3.5 Substitution

Substitution of a word, phrase or sentence is an elementary method which helps students to produce new utterances and to develop the speaking skill.

Students repeat the sentence. 'This is a ball' several times, and then are given some names of objects such as mat, cat, rat, one after the other to substitute in the proper place and produce new sentences.

In this way, a sentence frame is practiced first; then suitable slots in the frame are identified for substitution. When substitution is made, a number of new sentences are produced with ease by students.

Likewise, we may proceed to multiple-word substitution in the same slot which necessitates making some grammatical changes in the frame. Combining the substitution drill with processes of addition, deletion and transposition of words, phrases makes these more challenging to students.

33.3.6 Day-to-Day Expressions

Expressions of greeting, gratitude, small talk, introductions, making acquaintances, leave taking, appreciation, expressions of regret and asking to be excused etc. are important communicative acts that students need to master.

33.3.7 Free Talk

Much less structured task suitable for all levels is free talk by individuals in pairs or in groups. The teacher can provide a set of topics which can engage them in free talk. (e.g. What do I want to do when I am 18 or 25? Whom do I consider my role model and why? What was my happiest day of the year and what made it so?).

The above-mentioned tasks must bring about the use of English in true-to-life situations. A planned progression from relatively easier items to more difficult over may become necessary. What matters most in learning to speak is the provision of opportunities for communication in situations of genuine use.

33.3.8 The Importance of Group Work in developing the Speaking Skills

Group work has been found especially conducive in the development of oral skills for the following reasons.

- Group work provides a framework whereby a learner can have maximum participation.

- Group work gives an opportunity to learners to speak in small groups, at times with their friends and this reduces the hesitation and embarrassment which a shy learner may feel.

- Learners feel motivated which helps in establishing a sense of personal rapport.

- Students can also react as a group with other groups. This can build an atmosphere of healthy rivalry. The time limit also motivates each group to more ahead.

- The teacher goes round and notes the mistakes for follow-up work. Remedial work helps the slow learners.

- Group work provides an opportunity for pre-teaching. Students are more likely to learn from each other than from the teacher; mistakes get corrected in a healthy atmosphere.

- The important features of interaction skills such as turn-taking, adjusting one's speech to what the other person knows and wants to hear also gets practiced.

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Once they assume a role the students are forced to improvise and to produce words and sentences appropriate to the situation. Roles such as friends, brothers, sisters, parents, teachers, shopkeepers, characters from the textbook and popular television programmes have been suggested by Doff (1988). Everyday life situations such as shopping, holidays, camps, local journeys, fables, and folktales have been found to be very useful. Interviews are yet another excellent situation for role-play. Thus role-play involves several students at once and holds the attention of the class, even as it enables students to be original and produce utterances often on their own.

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Communication Games CHAPTER 35

Communication games was first introduced and developed by Caldwell Cook in the 19th century. Language games involve activity both on the part of the students as well as the teacher. A resourceful teacher can make use of any language game suiting her needs. To introduce an element of competition in the game, the class may be divided into teams. A stock of language games would he useful for an English teacher especially if she is required to take a 'proxy class'.

35.1 Vocabulary Games

- A long word is given to children and they are asked to write as many words as possible within a stipulated time.

- Children are given a word and are asked to change one letter only and make a new word. E.g. bad, bed, bar, pad, sad, had, bat, dam, bag.

- Children are given a word and are asked to make another word of the same length with the last letter in the previous word.

  log, gem, mad, day, yes, sad, dim, mat, tap.

- The teacher can give a letter say K; the students are asked to write out words starting with that letter. The student who writes the maximum words gets the prize.

- The students are asked to pick out things they see around them and are asked what they are, what they are called, what they are used for etc. This helps direct vocabulary building.

35.2 Grammar Games

Huntoon (1994) suggests a language game in which each student uses a minimum of five past tense verbs to describe the activities. The sixth is passed to the next student as an incomplete sentence and that student must incorporate it into a description of his

own activities. No verb should be repeated. This game uses a lot of verb forms and helps students to master the structural and semantic condition in which these verbs should be used

Phrasal verbs: The students should listen carefully to each sentence. Then the sentence should be paraphrased by substituting an appropriate phrasal verb for a single verb.

E.g i)   He arose ten minutes later.

         He got up ten minutes later.

   ii)   He ascended to the second floor.

         He went up to the second floor.

Language games such as 'rumour' help students to compose their own sentences and speak. The class is lined up and the teacher whispers a message (length and difficulty level appropriate to the class) to the student on the end of the line, who listens and repeats again in a whisper to the next student, continuing down the line. What emerges is seldom recognized but students learn to construct meaningful sentences.

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Barriers to Effective Communication

No matter how good and effective a communicator one may be, yet the fact is that one does face certain barriers, from time to time, which forces them to work on becoming even more effective in their skills to communicate. Here are some of the communication barriers that occur while speaking.

The learners can develop oral fluency through interactive language teaching. The teacher provides the above-mentioned task practices in the classroom through various kinds of communicative activities, structured in order to suit the learners' level of ability. The teacher creates a situation and sets an activity in motion but it is the learners themselves who are responsible for conducting the interaction to the conclusion. The teacher must make sure that learners understand what they are required to do in an activity. The teacher's presence may be an important psychological support for many learners. The teacher needs to discourage learners from restoring to their mother-tongue in moments of difficulty.

Besides these communicative activities, there are imaginative activities to develop the speaking skill – the use of the audio, video and other authentic materials; even poetry and songs could be used.

The students interact in the target language, perhaps painfully in the beginning but later overcome the timidity. They gain confidence and start cooperating in these interactive sessions. With one new activity everyday, an unimaginative, conventional classroom can gradually be transformed into a stimulating communicative interaction where students comprehend, communicate and create language that is meaningful.

36.1 Barriers while Speaking

- Unclear messages.
- Lack of consistency in the communication process.
- Incomplete sentences.
- Not understanding the receiver.
- Not seeking clarifications while communicating.
- An individual's subjective viewpoint towards issues leads to assumptions.
- An emotional block which can lead to an attitude of indifference, suspicion or hostility towards the subject.
- An emotional block or bias that is based on a third party's viewpoint or on what you have heard.
- Words can have different meanings to different people thus blocking communication.

36.2 How to Overcome Barriers in Communication

We live in a "verbal" environment. Words constitute the most frequently used tool for communicating. Words usually facilitate communication; however, their careless improper use in a given situation can create a communication barrier.

The words we use should be selected carefully. Dr. Rudolph Flesch, a specialist in words and communication, suggests a way to break through the word barrier.

- Use familiar words in place of the unfamiliar.
- Use concrete words in the place of the abstract.
- Use short words in place of long.
- Use single word in place of several.

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Characteristics of Good Handwriting

"Handwriting builds confidence, teaches children to have an organized approach and enhances their ability to communicate".
                                                    —*Jan Oslen*

Handwriting is a primary writing skill. Good handwriting gives a pleasant impression and is a mark of good education. Teachers should teach handwriting most carefully and sincerely. Bad handwriting is a proof not that the pupil has been lazy, but that the teacher has not given ample training.

Since English is a second language, the writing of it should begin only after they have learnt to write in their native language. The pupils will have acquired some amount of muscle control for writing, while writing their mother tongue. But since they are learning a completely new script, intensive practice will be necessary.

46.1 Characteristics of Good Handwriting

46.1.1 Distinctiveness

Each letter should have a distinct characteristic of its own. Each letter should be carefully formed so as to avoid the possibility of one letter being mistaken for another. Each letter has a characteristic form of its own. What may require help here is learning to discriminate between their shapes (e.g. b, d, p, q). Here teachers can group letters and teach them.

- made by strokes (u, w, i, k, l, x, z)
- formed on the circle (c, e, a)
- using circle and strokes (a, p, b, d, q)
- formed by curves (s, g, y)
- using strokes and curves (h, n, m, u, f)

The strokes will have to be made in the right direction. The teacher has to show where to begin a letter, how to move and where to end. Strokes in the proper direction will minimize the necessity of lifting the pen and will facilitate joining of letters naturally. For this the teacher may show the direction and the order of the strokes with arrow marks and numbers.

46.1.2 Legibility

Legibility of handwriting depends on maintaining the crucial contrasts between the letters (called grapheme contrasts). To teach the pupils to maintain these contrasts in their writing, the teacher should first draw their attention to the distinguishing features in apparently similar lessons. For instance, they should be able to see what makes an 'O' different from e, a, an h from n and so on. Pupils should practice writing letters in groups taking care to maintain the distinguishing features of each letter. In order to get legibility in writing, the teacher should pay special attention to the fine aspects of cursive writing namely letter formation, spacing, alignment, regularity or slant and quality of strokes.

46.1.3 Simplicity

Simplicity can be achieved by avoiding flourishes and superfluous strokes. The letters should have no unnecessary parts. Simple and graceful handwriting has great social value and exerts a powerful disciplining influence on the mind of the writers.

46.1.4 Uniformity

The style in writing should ensure uniformity in size. Teachers have found the use of four-line paper helpful in building habits of correct direction, spacing and correct proportion of parts of different letters. The three factors that make handwriting uniform and pleasant to look at are:

i)   uniformity of the size of the individual letters.

ii)   uniformity of the spaces between the letters.

iii) uniformity of the direction and the angle of the slant of the letters.

46.1.5 Spacing

Writing should be neatly spaced. The letters in a word, the words in a line and the lines on a page should not be crowded or too

closely together. A harmonious spacing of letters, words and lines is very necessary in neat handwriting.

46.1.6 Capitalization

Capital letters are to be taught only after all the small letters are taught. An economical method of teaching capital letters is to group them in accordance with their shapes either round, square, half square or half circle. The use of capitals should be taught to students.

46.1.7 Punctuation

Punctuation is a device that seeks to remove some of the deficiencies of the written language by indicating the speech patterns with visual symbols. Punctuation helps the reader to understand the text, clarifies grammatical structures, gives emphasis to certain words and phrases and is used to convey meaning.

Punctuation marks are also called as 'stops'. The semicolon (;) the colon (:) and the dash (–) joins words or word groups without a conjunction. The full stop (.), the question mark (?) and the exclamation mark (!) usually separate sentences while the comma (,) separates parts of sentences. The capital letter marks the beginning of sentences and is used in proper nouns. The brackets and the single or double quotation marks are used to enclose words or word groups in larger constructions.

46.1.8 Speed

Speed in handwriting depends upon the rhythmic and automatic movement of the fingers and hand. Continued practice is the only way to improve speed.

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Developing Good Handwriting

"**The truth is that mastering handwriting sets children up for other learning successes**".
— *Zamel, V.*

F.G French points out that the teaching of writing as a physical activity should be considered from two points of view. One is penmanship, that is training in simple handwriting and the second is a form of exercise in learning to write the language. There are three stages in developing a good handwriting.

47.1 Stages in Developing a Good Handwriting

47.1.1 Stage I – Penmanship

The writing of English letters and their combination are matters of training in penmanship.

Writing patterns

The first step in teaching handwriting is to get the children to practice the writing patterns.

Freehand drawing

Give them a tray of sand or chalk on slates, make them draw lines of various lengths and directions.

Controlled drawing

After practice in freehand drawing the pupil should be asked to draw the shapes within the lines given. The purpose of drawing different shapes is to give the students practice in coordination of eye, brain, fingers, wrist and arms. The production of most letters in English requires an anticlockwise movement whereas most letters in Tamil involve a clockwise movement.

Scriptwriting

In learning to write English, the pupil has to master print script and cursive script.

It is better to begin with

- separate small letters in Print script.
- separate capital letters in Print script.
- cursive separate small letters.
- cursive joined capital letters.

47.1.2 Stage II – Word Writing

As soon as possible, the pupils' attention should be drawn towards the writing of words by putting letters together. The letters may be joined by giving each small letter a little tail as a joiner. The pupils may copy words from the English Reader or they may do so in four-lined copybooks.

47.1.3 Stage III – Sentence Writing

After giving practice in writing words, the pupils should start writing simple sentences. The sentences may be copied from the English Reader. Attention should be paid to the size, style and formation of letters.

47.2 Essentials of Good Handwriting

The following are the essential factors to improve handwriting.

- Right posture is an important factor in teaching handwriting. The pupil should keep his body upright and a little slanting towards the desk. The head should bend a little towards the desk, at about twelve inches above the desk.

- The choice of script at the early stages could be print script and after a year or two, the pupil can write in the cursive script.

- Choice of style in writing varies from individual to individual. The style should be either vertical or slant but never a combination of both.

- Teacher's handwriting on the blackboard or the notebook should serve as a good model of handwriting for students. The children may be asked to reproduce them in their notebooks, imitating the writing of the teacher.

- Dictation can be a good exercise to improve handwriting. It can be a good practice in the manipulative aspect of writing, that is, practice in the letters of the alphabet. To achieve this end, all the