
UNIT 4 LISTENING AND SPEAKING



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4.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we noted that children are able to easily learn more than one language, being spoken in their home environment. This is possible because they get ample opportunities to speak and listen to these languages. We also learnt that this can be true for those languages which are to be learnt by children in school, if they are given enough opportunities to speak and listen to these languages.

In this unit, we will talk about listening and speaking skills. We will try to understand: What do we mean by listening and speaking and how these skills are helpful in learning language? Along with this we will also understand a teacher's perspective towards these skills, while teaching language.



4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- understand the meaning of listening-speaking;
- understand the role of listening-speaking in the process of language teaching-learning;
- identify the desirable roles and responsibility of the teacher for teaching these skills; and
- understand the importance of accuracy and fluency in the process of speaking

4.2 LISTENING AND SPEAKING

When children start going to school, they are given a lot of practice in listening and speaking in the initial 2-3 months. This is done in various ways and prominent among these is the teacher reading out poems, songs, numbers, letters etc., to children and children repeating, word-to-word, after the teacher.

The expectation is that children rote-memorize the lesson, even if they do not understand what they are speaking. They are thus made to continuously repeat the lesson till the time they are able to memorize it.

The teachers obviously believe that through such an activity of repeatedly speaking and listening to the same sounds, children will be able to memorize them. Teachers have an unshakeable belief that a child cannot learn new sentences or words if the particular word or sentence is not spoken to her. It implies that “a child first listens and then speaks”.

However, listening and speaking are parallel processes. When you are speaking something, then you are also listening to yourself. Sometimes we are only listening, for example when we are listening to the news on TV, radio, etc. But this consumption of news is also not like the one done by a tape recorder which records everything that is spoken and can repeat word-to-word. Another significant characteristic of our listening-speaking mechanism ‘understands’. Without ‘understanding’ we cannot carry forward a dialogue. This is clear if we think about how we talk over a telephone. We first listen to the person on the other side, try to understand what she is saying, and then respond to her; without understanding we cannot carry on with the conversation.

So in order to learn a language, we cannot look at these skills separately. These are mutually dependant skills wherein the processes of thinking and understanding are intertwined.



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Check Your Progress-1

1. What is a significant part of listening- speaking?

- a) listening b) speaking
- c) understanding d) receiving information

2. What is the difference between the process of listening-speaking and the process of receiving information?

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3. What kind of opportunities are given to children to listen and speak usually, in the earlier classes in schools? Are these opportunities sufficient? Give your opinion.

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4. Your friend will be unable to listen to today's morning news on AIR. She has asked you to listen to it and tell it to her. What will you tell her? What will you be required to do in order to accomplish the above task?

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4.2.1 WHAT IS LISTENING?

We hear various kinds of sounds in our environment – these include sounds produced by humans, machines, animals etc. However, all these sounds we hear do not hold meaning for us. For example, the sound produced by a turned on machine (which we may hate) or a chirping bird (which we may enjoy) have no meaning for us.

The act of listening essentially includes meaning. While having a conversation the listener has to instantly make sense of the conversation. She does this in two ways and these have been discussed below in detail.

First, the listener understands the dialogue based on its words. This essentially



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refers to decoding of words, clauses, sentences and text. The listener needs to be aware of the meaning of words and the arrangement or pattern in which they would appear in the sentence. Let us understand this through an example—supposing a friend invites you to his house for dinner and you have never seen his house. On calling him, he guides you:

‘Take a right into the 3rd street from City Centre. Keep going straight and then take a left, into the lane housing Bawarchi Hotel. The third house in the lane is mine.’

In order to locate the house, you keep repeating the dialogue (verbatim) in our mind while in the process of locating the house. In this process your complete attention is on the dialogue and you know that you should follow the sequence of instructions. In this we divide the dialogue into small fragments like (third street from City Centre, take a right, go straight, take a left, Bawarchi Hotel lane, third house), decode them and understand the dialogue. In this whole process, the ability to recognize the key fragments/phrases of the sentence as well as the relationship between them is very important and comes with persistence.

In order to understand a statement in this manner, the listener should be well versed with a rich vocabulary and sentence structure. A consistent practice of this process helps in acquiring the following skills:

- To listen to a sentence carefully
- To recognize the key words
- To understand the grammatical relationship between the key words and sentences
- To understand the relevance of any stress and pause that the speaker uses, for example to identify a key word.

The second way in which we understand the sentence is based on our previous knowledge. While the process of understanding meaning based on words takes us from word to meaning the process of understanding meaning based on previous knowledge, takes us from meaning to words. For this we need previous knowledge, which may be based on some conversation, experience, reading etc.

For example if I hear during news time ‘Last night a furious earthquake hit China’, the word ‘earthquake’ raises a set of questions in my mind, like:

- How intense was the earthquake?
- How many people died or were injured?
- What kind of damage did it cause to property?
- What relief work is being carried out?



All these questions help us in understanding the aforesaid statement. Thus, we are able to understand the meaning of the sentence with minimum information; our prior knowledge plays an important role in this. The minimum information that this statement provides is that an earthquake has hit China and the time that this event occurred. Our previous knowledge which could have come from what we have seen, heard or read about earthquakes helped us raise the above questions and understand the meaning of 'an earthquake hitting China'. If a listener is unable to understand meaning through this process, then either the dialogue is incomplete or she does not have any previous knowledge about earthquakes. The practice of this process helps in acquiring the following skills:

To make sense of the conversation based on key words

- Raise questions about the situation
- Estimate the cause and effect relationship
- Estimate the unsaid details of a situation

Both these processes run in parallel while listening . The responsibility of deciding the extent to which each process will be used will depend upon how familiar the listener is with what is being talked about, the depth of information, the type of the information and the listener’s purpose of listening.

Check Your Progress-2

1. *In how many ways do we understand meaning while listening?*

- (a) one
- (b) three
- (c) two
- (d) four

2. *How do we build meaning when we understand a dialogue based on words? Explain with an example.*

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3. *What is the difference between the two processes - building understanding based on words and building understanding based on prior knowledge?*

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4. Ravi said, 'I am going to see a dentist.' On hearing this statement, what questions come to your mind?

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4.2.2 WHAT IS SPEAKING?

Speaking does not mean mere pronunciation of sounds, words and sentences. Jean Aitchison in her book 'The Articulate Mammal' has talked elaborately about the linguistic understanding of human beings. According to her, while speaking we are simultaneously involved in many processes. Before speaking we plan in our minds, as to what we should speak such that the listener understands what we are saying. We also make up our mind about 'what' and 'how' to speak depending upon who we are speaking to. For example even if we are communicating the same thing to our friend and our grandfather, there will be a difference in the manner we speak and our choice of words.

However, in both the situations we first plan for what we have to say. The process of thinking of what we have to say first and then what goes next on while we are speaking. Let's understand this with an example:

- 'I will return home late today'
- 'Mother will get annoyed'
- 'I will have to stay out of home.'

The structure of all the three sentences given above is simple. If we have to speak these sentences in the following order, they are easy to understand as well as speak. Now when if we make these sentences dependent on each other, will they be as easy as before?

'If I return home late today, then mother will get annoyed and I will either have to stay out of home or go to some friend's house.'

In the above sentence 'then' is dependent on 'if', similarly, 'either' is related to 'or'. Clearly, even before speaking, the whole sentence has been formed in our mind along with its sound and its characteristics. All this happens in a planned manner. (Based on Jean Aitchison's book 'The Articulate Mammal')

It is evident from this example that during a conversation we have to keep planning while talking, it is a must. This process happens so fast that we don't realize its existence while talking. This is more relevant in the context of our mother tongue. While learning second language, these processes can be observed very closely.



While speaking, it is very important to select the right words along with their grammatical structure, which expresses our thoughts and feelings. In Hindi the sentence structure is Subject + Object + Verb and even before speaking, during the phase of planning, this structure is correctly formed in our minds and there is no confusion in this.

Voice modulation, pauses and even rhythm play an important role in conveying while speaking. We shall try understanding the significance of a pause, with an example-

‘Pakdo mat jaane do’

The meaning of this sentence changes depending upon where we pause while speaking it. If we momentarily pause after “pakdo” then we are being instructed to catch someone and not let him go but if the same pause is given after “pakdo mat” then the opposite meaning is being implied. Such understandings are an integral part of language learning and develop with practice.

Similarly, while speaking if we emphasize or pronounce a word with a different rhythm then it also impacts the meaning of the sentence.

‘Yeh school hai’

The above statement can be question, can be expressing surprise, can be expressing sarcasm or can simply be stating a fact depending on the its rhythm. At the same time the usage of non-verbal signals like gestures and expressions influence meaning while speaking,

Check Your Progress-3

1. *What is the sentence structure of Hindi language?*

(a) Subject - Verb - Object

(b) Subject – Object – Verb

(c) Verb – Object - Subject

(d) Can't Say

2. *Write down 10 sentences spoken by children in the age group of 3-4 years. From the perspective of rules of language, analyze and mention all that the child knows.*

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3. *Make a list of 5 sentences spoken by a non-English language speaker. Analyze the sentences and state the areas where she is facing difficulty?*

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4.3 NEED OF DIALOGUE IN THE CLASSROOM

Speaking and listening are the first steps for learning a language. It is also clearly evident that both speaking and listening processes occur simultaneously during a dialogue.

It is often seen in language classrooms, teachers lecture and students quietly listen or teachers ask students questions and students voices are restricted to only answering these questions. These cannot be classified as dialogues, as dialogues occur when students are able to express their ideas and thoughts without any pressure from the teacher. Teachers think that class discipline is disturbed and in turn learning gets hampered due to such dialogues. It is because of this attitude that teachers are unable to comprehend the importance of dialogue in children's learning.

At the primary level, children are easily able to converse in their home language as well as understand it well. It is because till now they have been using it and as soon as they join school, they encounter a new language. The problem occurs when children are forced to learn and use the school's language. In fact, there is a need to accommodate both the languages in the classroom and the only way to reduce the gap between these languages is to provide them with more opportunity for dialogue. In these early opportunities a child's language should also be adopted so that she is able to respect her surroundings and able to feel confident about herself. This encouragement proves helpful to the child in acquiring the new language and also in increasing her enthusiasm.

Children never engage in aimless dialogue. This can be understood by reading the natural dialogue between these two children.



CARTOON: (Please make the following changes in the adjoining picture)

Girl – Look this lady is wearing a ring today!



Boy – You hadn't seen it before?

Girl – No.... Yes, yes I had seen it before.



Boy – Oh but this is a different ring!

Girl – The lady has bought a new ring. It is smaller than the previous one.



Boy – No this one is thinner?

Here children are exposed to several learning opportunities while they are engaged in a dialogue. Come, let's analyze these – By listening to the boy's statement, the girl got a chance to revisit her statement that the lady had worn a ring even earlier. Also, children were able to differentiate between *new-old* and *small-thin*.

In order to be conscious of the benefits of dialogue, it is necessary that we get used to listening to our children but adults mostly donot listen to their children. In any random dialogue, carefree children are found effortlessly reviewing, comparing and even imagining, passing predictions or reinforcing their statements with logic. We will have to recognize the possibility of learning through dialogue, for children.

Check Your Progress-4

1. Which two processes run simultaneously during a dialogue?

- (a) listening and seeing
- (b) reading and listening
- (c) listening and speaking
- (d) listening and laughing

2. What do teachers think about children's dialogue in the class?

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3. *What role is expected from a teacher in the classroom, so that the children get ample opportunities for dialogue?*

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4. *Observe the dialogue of any 3-6 year old child in your neighbourhood and write down your experience. Now analyze, which of the above stated actions is present in their dialogue?*

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4.4 HOW CAN WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LISTENING AND SPEAKING IN THE CLASSROOM?

Schools had opened after the summer holidays. Due to rains there were puddles full of rain water everywhere. A teacher was teaching in her class. Two children who were seated at the back were busy talking to each other. The teacher suddenly noticed them and asked them affectionately, ‘What is the matter, tell me? What are you two talking about? And if there is something interesting then do tell your classmates as well.’

The two children got nervous for a while and kept mum. The teacher then said, ‘Don’t be afraid. What was it that you were talking about?’

One of the children gathered some courage and said, ‘While we were coming from our home we heard frogs making loud sounds.’

The teacher said in an encouraging voice, ‘Oh! What happened next?’

Children- Frogs were jumping on the boundary of the puddle. The frogs were large.

Teacher- Then what happened?

Children- Then... Then when we went near them, they jumped into the puddle.



Both the children gained confidence. They were convinced that they would not be scolded for what they were sharing.

One of the children asked the teacher, ‘Where do frogs go after the rain?’

The teacher, leaving aside what she had been teaching, took up the topic– ‘Has everyone seen a frog?’ There was nobody in that class who had not seen a frog, ever. In response to the teacher’s question, the whole class echoed , ‘Yes’.

Each and every child started getting impatient to say something about frogs. One child said, ‘Frogs produce turr-turr sound in rains.’

Another child said, ‘When my backyard was being dug, frogs came out from it.’

One child shared that she had seen a frog eating insects. Someone was saying that frogs can jump from the coping of the step-well.

The atmosphere of the class turned “*frogous*”! Some children were making frog sounds [turr turr] while some were jumping like frogs.

The teacher was carefully listening to the children’s conversations and watching their activities. Also, the teacher was intermittently trying to maintain discipline in the classroom.

The teacher told the children, ‘Look, now carefully observe the frogs around you and ponder on where they go after the rains.’

Finally the teacher asked children to write 5 sentences on frogs.

In the conversation about frogs, the teacher was easily able to relate with the habitat, food habits, colour, size and nature of the frogs, with her teaching. If children are given such opportunities of conversation by the teachers, then slowly and steadily they will become capable of expressing their feelings and thoughts related to their experience. They will also be able to have a better understanding of the knowledge contained in various subjects. The teachers do not have to look out for such opportunities; but they can find them in the school environment or around it in places like – garden, farm, sewer, small culvert, flower, butterflies, road, soil, gate, nest, etc. By closely observing such things the children will be able to converse about them.

Here, the teacher gave the children abundant opportunities to speak as well as, encouraged them to speak. If the teacher had not encouraged the children, such interesting conversation would not have taken place in the classroom. In this manner, connecting children’s lives and experiences with the class, makes learning spontaneous and natural.



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Check Your Progress-5

1. *What is the advantage of giving children opportunities for dialogue?*

(a) will become capable of expressing their experiences and thoughts

(b) will learn words

(c) will learn rhyming words

(d) will learn to read

2. *Why is it necessary for a teacher to provide the child with opportunities to speak?*

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3. *How will you become a medium of learning-teaching dialogue to the children in the classroom?*

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4. *According to you, what should be the atmosphere in the classroom during teaching?*

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4.4.1 LISTENING AND SINGING POEMS/4.4.1 CHILDREN’S SONG/ POEM

*Amma’s rotis
Round and small
Puffed up like a ping-pong ball.
Amma’s rotis on a plate
I sat down and finished eight
I am a little tea pot*



*Short and stout
Here is my handle
Here is my spout
When i get all steamed up
Hear me shout
Pick me up and pour me out
One, two buckle my shoes
Three, four shut the door
Five, six pick up sticks
Seven, eight lay them staight
Nine, ten a big fat hen*

We often find children in lanes and neighborhood, singing nursery- rhymes by themselves or with their friends. While singing they do not fear being scolded, punished or ridiculed. Each and every child is fascinated by the rhythm and the words of the rhyme/poem.

Many times they use the words of the rhymes by extending their meaning and coming up with a nonsensical usage; they enjoy doing it. Playing with words can serve a wonderful role in flowering the creativity and energy of children. This poem presents an example of this-

Five little monkeys
Jumping on the bed
One fell down and
Bumped his head
Mama called doctor
Doctor said
No more monkey jumping on the bed

Usually while singing such songs, children keep adding and removing words but the rhythm of the poem is not broken. For example, the above poem is sung by a 4 year old like this-

*Three little babies
Jumping on the bed
All fell down
And bumped their head*



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*Mama came in
And all of them said
No more babies jumping on the bed*

Poem is a potential medium to express ourselves and to relate it to our lives. By regularly listening to poems and songs, children comprehend the basic structures of language. For instance- children are able to comprehend the meaning of new words, do rhyming by playing with the rhythm of the poem. At the same time the poem connects the children with their experiences. If the same poem is read by two different children, then both of them will construct the understanding of the poem by relating it to their own experiences.

It is left to the educators to make use of the poems in the classroom, such that the children develop creativity and are able to express their feelings and experiences through poems and songs.

Check Your Progress-6

1. What do children comprehend by regularly listening to poems and rhymes?
(a) word (b) sound
(c) rhythm (d) basic structure of language
2. Make students of class 3 do the poem "Walking through the jungle". Ask them to extend the poem further by creating more lines. Discuss the lines added by children, as to why did they write these lines?

Walking through the jungle

What did I see?

A big lion

Roaring at me

Walking through the jungle

What did I see?

A long snake

hissing at me

Walking through the jungle

What did I see?

A little baby monkey

Roaring at me



3. *What all opportunities of learning language are provided to the children by this poem?*

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4.4.2 DISCUSS THROUGH PICTURES

Picture is one such medium through which we can find ample possibilities for dialogue and discussion with children from standard 1 till standard 8. In primary standards children are very fond of pictures; they enjoy observing and drawing pictures. In any book, it is the pictures that first attract the attention of the children. It is easy to spontaneously talk to them about pictures. Children very closely observe pictures and can come up with numerous things to talk about them, which is beyond our imagination.

When we discussed the picture with the children of standard 3, we found that along with naming the objects evident in the picture they were also able to relate their observation with their experience and come up with logical statements. However all of them had their own perspectives. Some such examples are as follows:

- (i) The man is taking the cow/ A man is tying the ox/ A boy is entering the hut.
- (ii) One girl was climbing the tree, a boy stopped her as the tree was too big and she might get hurt./ Girl is swinging on the tree. / Trees are shaking. / Many trees are growing on the mountain.
- (iii) Sun is rising in the morning, birds are flying in the morning/ Sun is coming out/ It is evening/ Sun is setting
- (iv) Wife is returning home/ The women is carrying water.
- (v) Two heron are flying

The above sentences hint at the fact that children can do varied conversations over a picture. The conversation over pictures has the potential to promote creativity and analysis capability in children. Irrespective of whether those pictures are printed in newspapers, advertisement, ticket or at the back of a calendar. These pictures can be used in different ways for initiating conversation even in upper primary standard.

Sitting amongst children and letting them see a picture at their own pace; giving them the freedom to express their thoughts is very useful in developing uninhibited



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expression in them. The objects in the picture which had not yet caught the attention of the children can be brought to their notice by the teacher, through questions. In this way the ability of critical observation can be developed in children. Questions asked during the dialogue on pictures, give children an opportunity to sharpen their skills. The questions should be such that they help children in finding objects, in developing logic, imagination, prediction and in association of objects and incidents with their experience. For instance these questions based on the above picture demonstrate how to further the dialogue by asking questions -

What all is kept under the tree? (Explore)

Why is the girl standing beside the well, crying? (Use logic)

What are the women, standing by the village well, be talking about? (Imagine)

What will the women do once they reach home? (Predict)

Have you ever been to a village, if yes then what all did you see there? (Establish relation)

Check Your Progress-7

1. Showing the picture to the children and asking them to tell what all is kept under the tree? What opportunity does this present?

(a) to reason

(b) to explore

(c) to imagine

(d) to establish relation



2. With respect to this picture, what all can be discussed with children? Form questions; practice them with children of standard 3 and write down your experiences.

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4.4.3 STORY TELLING/ LISTENING

Listening and telling stories helps children in learning language in primary classes. Listening to stories is of interest to children and also enhances their creativity. Often it is seen that children mould the stories they have heard as per their wishes, while telling it to their friends. Through this children not only learn meaning of the words but also develop an understanding of various incidents and this facilitates in enhancing their imagination. Another way in which stories are beneficial is that it enhances the ability of children to estimate. For example, whenever children are listening to a story, they are curious to know about what happens next? They guess as per their understanding and if the story progresses as per their guess, they grow more confident and with time their estimates become more accurate. Most notably, these stories help the children to prepare for their future life. For example, the rabbit- lion story prepares them mentally to face the difficulties life brings. In the story telling we keep incorporating our life experiences in them. Sometimes when the story teller finds something very important then she exaggerates that part of the story. While doing this, the main focus is on shaping the life's incidents, characters, etc. and also in attracting the attention of the listener. Moreover the story teller's manner of telling the story impacts the interest generated in the story. And whenever new words are used in a story, the children are able to guess the meaning of the word by observing the expressions of the story teller. This facilitates in enhancing their vocabulary, listening- understanding and estimation.

Discussing about a story after listening to it, is a little difficult task but if the teacher is prepared with its objective then it can become a useful medium. Most of the teachers feel that after telling the story, it is their right to ask the children, about the lesson they have learnt from it. Whereas in order to initiate a meaningful dialogue with the children, raising this question is not at all correct.

Telling stories to children is as important as listening to stories from them. This helps the children in developing their ability to express themselves. Instead of asking the children to repeat the story told by the teacher, it is more beneficial to ask them to tell any story that they like. While responding to the personality and the character of the story, the child includes her experiences in it. Every child in the classroom should be given the freedom that she can talk anything regarding the story, can even exaggerate it through her imagination.



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Check Your Progress-8

1. *Along with telling stories to children, what else is necessary?*
 - (a) *make them read the story*
 - (b) *make them memorize the story*
 - (c) *make them recite the story*
 - (d) *listen to their story*

2. *While talking to children in standard I-II, ask them which stories they like listening to? Keep writing these names on the blackboard. Then while making use of these names, ask children to form stories.*

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3. *While story formation, each child should contribute one sentence and you keep writing these sentences on the blackboard. Share your experience based on the following pointers-*
 - (i) *what were the words on which the story was based?*
 - (ii) *what was the story that was made by the children?*
 - (iii) *what has been your role during the activity?*
 - (iv) *what difficulties did you face during the activity?*

4.4.4 LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DRAMA / THEATRE /PLAY

Drama is not new for children. We often see children imitating cartoon or film characters or playing games like mother-father, doll's marriage, school-school, etc. In this manner, during games play children do drama like; imitating someone, exaggerating something and making excuses. Every child has dramatic skills but children do not get any opportunity to utilize them in their classroom. The reason for this is that activities like drama- acting are performed only during annual functions or when some chief guest visits the school. Even in such situations, dialogues are written by teachers and there is always a risk factor during the performance.

Making use of acting as a day to day activity in a classroom is very different from



this. In order to use drama as a linguistic activity, two characteristics need to be included- freedom and enjoyment. No special preparation is needed by the teacher or children for conducting drama in the classroom. The teacher only needs to encourage the children to share their experiences naturally. At the primary level: any incident, story or cartoon that children see in their environment can be taken up for acting. For example, any animal, its movement, its complexion, etc. At upper primary level, the teacher should motivate children so that they form small groups wherein they themselves decide the topic, write the dialogues and act it out. At the same time children should be encouraged to act out traditional games and folk tales as this will not only enhance their creativity but also connect them to their cultural environments.

4.4.5 CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In order to provide opportunities for listening and speaking to children in the classroom, some other activities can also be undertaken. Activities that give them an opportunity to ponder over and present their thoughts in their own words are really important. Extempore activities wherein children have to immediately present their views on a given topic often prove challenging and productive. To make it interesting we can take up some entertaining topics so that children enjoy speaking and listening about them. Like- “if I found Aladdin’s lamp”, “if I were a magician”, “if I were a clown”, etc.

The second activity is debate. In this children have to present their views on either for or against the topic and have to strongly refute their opponents’ views in such a manner that the speaker is able to influence and convince as much audience as possible. For example, “Industry: a boon or a bane”, “Fast food vs. Health”. Such activities can be conducted for children of all levels. Children get such opportunities through these activities that enable them to establish a relation between their thoughts and their speech, organize them in a systematic order while incorporating logic in their experience; they become an effective speaker and an efficient listener.

In order to accomplish this, the teacher from the very beginning has to inculcate the habit of patient listening and respecting other’s views, in her children.

Check Your Progress-9

1. *Children involved in a child’s play; imitate, exaggerate and make excuses. Which skills of children are evident from this-?*
 - (a) *skill of speaking*
 - (b) *skill of dialogue*



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(c) memorizing skill

(d) dramatics skill

- Pick an agreeable topic and conduct an extempore activity in 7th standard. Write your experiences.

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4.5 FLUENCY VS. ACCURACY

Accuracy and fluency are the two elements involved in language proficiency. What is the role of these elements in the learning of language by a child and as a teacher, what needs to be focused more during teaching language to children? It is important to think on these issues. The capability through which the learner correctly pronounces a sentence, while using the correct grammar and terminology is called accuracy. The level of accuracy of a child at primary level is different from that of an adult. As we have read in unit 3: at each and every level, a child learns language by committing mistakes. A child’s errors help her in learning and simultaneously even while committing error she is following the rules of language. For instance a 3 year old child speaks in order to express herself:

Mummy car chahiye hai.

Paani chahiye hai.

The child knows that every sentence ends with the word “hai” and therefore she uses “hai” after “chahiye”. As per language rules, “chahiye” is an auxiliary verb. For instance- “humein rasgulla khaana chahiye”, in this sentence “chahiye” is an auxiliary verb while in the above sentences it is a main verb. Another auxiliary verb “tha” is used along with “chahiye”, only in past tense. For example: “Mujhe wahan jaana chahiye tha”. Although the child is unaware of this rule but she uses it.

In reference to the learning proficiency, fluency means the ability through which a child is spontaneously able to express herself by speaking, reading and writing. In this, emphasis is laid on meaning and context rather than on grammatical errors.

Today a language teacher faces a huge dilemma, as to which out of the two should she seriously pursue? Both the perspectives are present in front of us.



Traditional teachers give greater importance to accuracy, in language learning. They force the children to read and write in correct grammatical terms. For this, they test the children through various periodic assessments. In most of the classes children are hardly given an opportunity to improve by recognizing their own errors. Examination centered approach is influenced by this *accuracy based perspective*.

Another group of teachers believe that language is the medium for expression of feelings and experiences. They give more importance to fluency. Instead of grammar, they lay focus on understanding the meaning and reference, along with this, they emphasize that the children speaking fluently should be able to express themselves in such a way that the listener understands it correctly. These teachers believe; that since initiation, the more the child will make use of language, the more her level of fluency will rise.

In fact after having a look at both the perspectives, it seems that both stand correct in their own place. In order to learn language from an overall perspective, children have to be skilled in both. Reaching class 10, children start using language with fluency. It is then that we should focus on accuracy because timely and appropriate help plays a very important role in a child’s language development.

Check Your Progress-10

1. *“I need a car”, what is “need” in this sentence -*

(a) auxiliary verb

(b) adjective

(c) noun

(d) main verb

2. *Explain “accuracy” and “fluency” in your own words.*

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.....
.....

3. *In your opinion out of accuracy and fluency, which one is more meaningful in learning language?*

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.....
.....



4.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed that listening and speaking do not mean the mechanical activity of hearing and speaking but it also involves an equally important conceptual process. We also realized that children spontaneously become proficient in their mother tongue but in order to achieve a similar level of proficiency in their school's language, special efforts are required. Most significant amongst them is to provide children with opportunities to speak in the classroom, which is a unique means of learning and which leaves a deep impact on children's social behavior and personality. It was also discussed that a teacher has a significant role in making opportunities available to the children and that she can encourage the children towards uninhibited expression. During this, another important aspect emerged that fluency has a priority over accuracy in learning language by children.

4.7 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

Agnihotri, R.K. and Bagchi, Tista (2007), *Construction of Knowledge*. Udaipur: Vidya Bhawan Society.

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Kumar, Krishna (1996), *Bachchon ki Bhaashaa Or Adhyaapak*. New Delhi: National Book Trust.

Richards, Jack C. (2008). *Teaching Listening and Speaking: From Theory to Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Chafe, Wallace (1985). *Linguistic Differences by Differences between Speaking and Writing*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

4.8 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Which capacities in children can be developed with the help of stories?
2. The moment children speak in the classroom, they are checked. Do you find this attitude correct? Present your view.
3. Write a story based on which plenty of discussion can happen in a classroom and through which a child's listening and speaking capacity can be developed?
4. Which is your favourite way to encourage children to discuss and why? Illustrate through an example.
5. What is really involved in listening?



6. There are some children who do not participate in the discussions in classroom. What strategy will you devise to include such children in the classroom discussion? Elaborate on any two.
7. Find a poem of 4 lines for standard 3 children, which they can build upon. Do this exercise in the classroom.
8. Why is there a difference in listening and understanding between home language and schools' language?
9. While telling a story in the classroom, a child falters or uses incorrect pronunciation. How will you plan for her improvement?
10. In the sequence of teaching language, at which level should accuracy be a priority and at which level should fluency be a priority and why?

ACTIVITY

- Observe children who are engaged in their conversation. Try to let them talk as naturally as possible. Notice what all they talk. How will you use their conversation in the classroom?
- Make children from standard 3.5 to present a story in the form of a play. For this, facilitate the children in writing dialogues and then ask them to enact it. Describe your experience.