

# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 2 : 2 April 2002

Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.  
Associate Editor: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.

## An Introduction to TESOL

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Click [HOME PAGE](#) of *Language in India* for the current issue articles. Click [BACK ISSUES](#) for previous issues.

### CONTENTS

[Preface](#)

[Chapter 1](#) Introduction to English

[Chapter 2](#) Some Language Teaching Methods

[Chapter 3](#) Use of English, Blackboard, and Visuals in Class

[Chapter 4](#) Teaching Listening

[Chapter 5](#) Teaching Speaking

[Chapter 6](#) Teaching Pronunciation

<a href="#">Chapter 7</a>	Teaching Orthography and Spelling
<a href="#">Chapter 8</a>	Teaching Reading
<a href="#">Chapter 9</a>	Teaching Writing
<a href="#">Chapter 10</a>	Teaching Vocabulary
<a href="#">Chapter 11</a>	Use of Literature in Teaching Language
<a href="#">Chapter 12</a>	Teaching English to Children
<a href="#">Chapter 13</a>	Testing
<a href="#">References</a>	

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## PREFACE

This is an introductory course on teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). The goal of this experimental text is to introduce the students (and lay men and women who would like to help and minister to those who do not know English) to some basic ideas, methods, and tools of teaching English as a second or foreign language. The text is intended to be taught and completed in a semester as a three credit course (3 hours of classroom instruction and practice teaching per week for 14 weeks). Some basic acquaintance with a few linguistic concepts and terms would be of great help. However, students who have had no previous knowledge of linguistics may also benefit from this text, because I have tried to present these concepts in simple terms with adequate illustrations. Avoid the technical terms and look for the descriptions.

I believe that this textbook will be found highly useful for the teacher training courses in India and South Asia.

My grateful thanks are due to my friend and colleague Mike Leeming, a missionary to Mexico, presently on the faculty of Bethany College of Missions, who read parts of the text and made many suggestions to improve its style and grammar. Likewise I am grateful to my wife Swarna who read the manuscript in several stages and helped improve its quality.

M. S. Thirumalai

CONTENTS PAGE

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**CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH**

**ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE**

English is an international language, spoken in many countries both as a native and as a second or foreign language. It is taught in the schools in almost every country on this earth. It is a living and vibrant language spoken by over 300 million people as their native language. Millions more speak it as an additional language.

English is spoken habitually in the United States, the British Isles, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of South Africa, Liberia, and many territories under the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It is estimated that 300 million people speak English as a second language, and an additional 100 million people use it fluently as a foreign language. As a rough estimate, 1000 million or one billion people around the world have some knowledge of English, either as a native language, as a second language, or as a foreign language.

English is the associate official language of India which has over 1000 million (over billion) people. Pakistan, Bangladesh, and many other nations which were ruled by Britain continue to use English both as an optional medium of instruction in their schools and as one of their official languages. The islands of the Philippines continue to use English as an important tool for education, administration, and for mass media purposes. English is the chief foreign language taught in the schools of Europe, South America, Asia and Africa.

Even though some nations which were ruled by the French continue to teach French as their most preferred second language, English is gaining ground even in these countries. In the former Soviet Union, Russian was the dominant language. Since the break of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian Republics have been rapidly introducing English in their school system as a second or foreign language. In Russia itself, English is gaining ground as the most popular second language. In Japan too, English is the most favored second or foreign language.

Outside Europe, English is the predominant language of international commerce. Although the United Nations and its various agencies have more

than one language for transaction, more often than not, English comes to be chosen as the preferred language of communication between the participating member-nations.

All this has happened within the last one hundred years. The ascendancy of English as the most preferred language began two hundred years ago with the colonization of North America, Asia, and Africa by Britain. The Industrial Revolution in Britain, its ever-expanding maritime power, development of material wealth, progress in scientific research and consequent power, all helped the spread of English, even as Britain marched as a great empire. In the Sixteenth Century, English was spoken mostly in England, southern Scotland, and small areas of Wales and Ireland. There were only about two to three million people speaking it as their native language. At present one in seven in this world speak English either as a native language or as a second language.

English was well established as the dominant language in North America in the 17th Century. But its rapid growth was in the 19th Century.

Latin was the main medium of education in western Europe throughout the Middle Ages. French was the language of diplomacy for four centuries, from the 17th to 20th. And yet, at present there is not a single language which can be compared to the position occupied by English as the international language. This is so, even though more people in the world speak Chinese than English as their native language. Spanish may claim a large number of native speakers, but neither Spanish, nor French, nor Russian, nor Chinese can even come close to the level and variety of uses to which English is put in the world.

English is learned everywhere because people have found out that knowledge of English is a passport for better career, better pay, advanced knowledge, and for communication with the entire world. English is also learned for the literature it possesses, and for the variety and rich experience it provides. English has replaced French as the language of diplomacy. In this computer age, English is bound to expand its domains of use everywhere. Everyone wants to appropriate English as their own.

In the Indian subcontinent, English became the dominant language of communication among the educated classes after the famous Minute of Lord Macaulay in 1833. For an insightful discussion on the progress of English as the dominant language of communication among the educated classes in India, see the monograph on the subject by Professor Ranjit Singh Rangila, et al., *Bringing Order to Linguistic Diversity: Language Planning in the British Raj* in *Language in India*.

## **ORIGINS OF ENGLISH**

English belongs to the Indo-European family of languages. Within this family, English is a member of the Germanic branch. The Germanic branch may be divided into three groups or subdivisions: East Germanic which consisted of Gothic, now an extinct language; North Germanic under which we include the Scandinavian languages; and West Germanic which consists of High German, Low German, Frisian and English.

Three tribes settled in England. These were the Angles, the Jutes, and the Saxons. The Angles came from Denmark, the Saxons were from Holstein in the south, and the Jutes were from the north. These and the Frisian were worshippers of Ing. Linguistic and religious associations between these tribes resulted in a bundle of related dialects, which we presently call English.

### **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

The history of English may be divided into three periods: Old English from about 700 to 1100 AD, Middle English from 1100 to 1500 AD, and Modern English from 1500 to the present.

Old English showed considerable differentiation from the other languages of Europe. Old English was clearly Germanic, but it had borrowed many words already from Latin. Along with the words borrowed from Latin, Old English continued to coin its own words and thus remained vibrant in its usage.

From the 9th Century, West Saxon became the dominant dialect. Norse speakers acquired English at this time. They brought Norse words into their English. In addition, the English native words were also adjusted in their pronunciation by the Norse speakers. At this time, the Normans were the dominant class and so French words were accepted in the domains of administration, law, and church. Words such as felony, angel, and duke came into English. One-fifth of words used in art and science in English came from French.

London became the capital of England in early 11th Century, and its dialect, which was close to the dialect of Essex, became prestigious. Slowly, London English gave up its local peculiarities and assumed the role of a universally accepted dialect with prestige. In the Fourteenth Century, English became the medium of instruction in schools, as the language of the courts of law and the opening of Parliament. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales was written in this period, utilizing a variety of London English.

In the Fifteenth Century, many familiar Fourteenth Century words were replaced by many words which were borrowed from French and Latin. Words such as consecrate, firmament, grace, pollute, and sanctity came into English in this process.

Modern English presents a peculiar picture. It has retained the old spelling, even as it developed new pronunciation – modern pronunciation with medieval spelling. Many Latin words were borrowed into English through French. This period also saw development of regularity in vocabulary, in form and usage, grammatical forms, and in syntax.

English language developed a tendency and respect for correctness in the Seventeenth Century. “Accessions to the vocabulary in the 17th Century show the influence of French and Italian, particularly in matters of fashion and the fine arts. The 18th Century showed the influence of more distant countries such as India, and the 19th Century continued that tendency. However, scientific terms are the outstanding contribution of the 19th Century, and this has remained true in the 20th” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

### **RECEPTIVITY TO LOAN WORDS**

An important characteristic of English has been its receptivity to loan words from other languages. No other language exhibits such an extraordinary receptivity. This has not resulted, however, in the loss of corresponding native words in most cases. Words were often borrowed to refine the meanings which resulted in greater clarity in the expression and creation of ideas.

Moreover, English speakers always enjoyed greater freedom in the use of their language, unlike, for instance, the users of the French language. There has been no legal provision which guided the native speakers of English in the use or non-use of words. Mostly the commonly agreed conventions, rather than deliberate enforcement of rules of usage through academies, marked the development of English and its use.

Modern, current English has over 500,000 words. If we add the scientific terms used in the language, the total would be very high indeed. It has been estimated that only 18.4 percent of these words is native to English. French vocabulary used in English is around 32.4 percent, whereas the words of Latin origin is estimated to be 14.4 percent, words of Greek origin around 12.5 percent, and other languages 23.3 percent. This does not mean that the words of foreign origin are more greatly used in English. It only suggests that more foreign words than the native ones are used to characterize, define, and describe meanings and ideas in English (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

### **DIALECTS OF ENGLISH**

Two principal branches of spoken English dialects are recognized by scholars. The British branch of spoken dialects include those spoken in England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The North American branch of spoken dialects include those spoken

in Canada and the United States. Within each of these categories, there are different dialects, both geographical and social.

The English spoken in the Eastern Seaboard region and adjoining states in the United States have been studied in greater detail than the English spoken in other parts of the United States. Generally speaking, there are three different dialect areas: Northern dialect area consisting of Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and eastern Massachusetts and Connecticut; the Midland dialect area consisting of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, northern Maryland, and northern West Virginia is treated as North Midland dialect; and the area consisting of West Virginia, western Virginia, western North Carolina, and northwestern South Carolina is treated as South Midland. The Southern English dialect includes Delmarva, Virginia Piedmont, Northeastern North Carolina, Cape Fear and Pee Dee Valleys and the South Carolina country (O' Grady, et al. 1993:445).

It is possible that these three major dialect areas in the eastern United States extend to the west in close conjunction with the history of westward movement in settlement in the U.S. However, as Gleason warned us years ago (Gleason :403), it is only "American folk-linguistics (which) recognizes two major dialect areas, 'Southern' and 'Northern.' But there is no discernible linguistic division at or near the Mason-Dixon line. 'Southern' dialects are exceedingly diverse. The sharpest dialect boundary in the United States runs directly through the South roughly along the Blue Ridge mountains. A 'Northern dialect' is as much a fiction as a 'Southern dialect.'" Despite spoken dialectal differences, the native speakers of English have maintained a great uniformity in formal spoken English which is amazingly uniform and close to written English. An educated native speaker of English makes easy transitions from the colloquial/informal to varieties of formal English in his/her speech.

The teacher of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), who is a native of speaker of English, needs to give up the peculiarities of his/her regional and/or social dialect at the informal level, and to switch over to the standard which is closer to the ordinary, plain written English, in his/her classroom.

## **SPELLING IN ENGLISH**

As already pointed out, modern English has retained the old spelling even as it has developed new pronunciation. English is rather "notorious" for its alleged frequent lack of correspondence between the spelling and pronunciation of a word. It has been pointed out that "there are 13.7 spellings per sound, but only 3.5 sounds per letter" in English (G. Dewy, 1971, quoted in Crystal 1987:213).

Contrary to general impression, scholars claim that 75% of English is regular. However, “the 400 or so irregular spellings are largely among the most frequently used words in the language, and this promotes a strong impression of irregularity” (Crystal 1987:214).

As Crystal (1987:214) points out, irregularities of English spelling came from several sources into the language. 26 letters are used to represent a larger number of phonemes (significant groups of sounds each of which may be represented by a separate letter for ease and convenience in a language). Borrowed words from French led to respelling of words. The printing process caused further complications. Many early printers were from Holland and they introduced their own spelling norms, and made several convenient abbreviations and additions and deletions to account for the space in a line. Then “there was a fashion to make spelling reflect Latin or Greek etymology.” And modern borrowings from other languages brought with them their own spelling. In spite of all this, English spelling gives us a lot of information about the relationship between words. And this feature is a boon both to the TESOL teacher, and the second/foreign language learner of English. One comes to recognize intuitively the relationship between words, learns to derive the nouns from the verbs and vice versa, and does a lot of other grammatical exercises which make the learning of English much simpler than learning many other languages.

English has a long history of spelling reform movements from the 16th Century. The efforts of Spelling Reform Association in the U.S. (founded in 1876) and Simplified Spelling Society in Britain (founded in 1908), along with the untiring efforts of Bernard Shaw, a great modern playwright, in recent times, are significant milestones in spelling reform movements. But almost all of these ended as futile exercise. However, some spelling changes have been effected in American English through the rules introduced by the great American lexicographer Noah Webster (1758-1843) which distinguish American English from British English. For example, use of -or for -our and -er for -re in words such as honor/honour, and theater/theatre.

We revisit the issue of spelling in a subsequent chapter which deals with orthography.

### **PLAIN ENGLISH**

Of great interest and relevance to the teacher of TESOL are the on-going movements against the unnecessarily complicated use of English and for the replacement of such usage by clearer forms of expression (Crystal 1987:378). Both in Britain and the United States, because of pressure from teachers, authors, writers and communicators, governments have made efforts to redesign forms and reports, etc., in plain English which could be understood with ease.



President Carter issued an Executive Order in March 1978 requiring regulations to be written in plain English. This order was revoked by President Reagan in 1981, but “it promoted a great deal of legislation throughout the country, and an increase in plain English usage among corporations” (Crystal 1987:378).

As a consequence of growing interest in Plain English, instruction manuals, government forms and documents, and many other materials for public use have been greatly simplified. Medical labels, Nutrition Facts, etc., are presented in readable and easily understandable form. Corporations have begun to use the services of skilled technical literature writers for this purpose. There has, however, been continued objection from legal professions based on “the risk of ambiguity inherent in the use of every day language” which, they claim, makes it unsuitable for precision.

Dayananda (1986:13) presents the following as the characteristics of Plain English:

1. Prefer the shorter word to the longer one.
2. Use simple, everyday words rather than fancy ones.
3. Prefer verbs over nouns and adjectives.
4. Prefer the specific word to the general.
5. Write short sentences with an average of no more than 20 words.
6. Use the active voice rather than the passive.
7. Be a miser with compound and complex sentences and a spend thrift with simple sentences.
8. Write short paragraphs with an average of about 765 words.
9. Avoid paragraphs that exceed five typed lines for business letters and ten lines for longer compositions.
10. Write with the ear. A sentence may look good on paper but its cadence may be jarring. Listen to your sentences in your head as you write, and do not write anything that you could not comfortably say.
11. Write for the eye as well as the mind. Prepare an overall design, positioning understandable headings, subheadings, and captions for each segment, showing the organization of the text. Make the whole document visually appealing.
12. Use appropriate underlining, ink color that contrasts sharply with the paper, lists, boxes or panels, bold or other typefaces to emphasize points.
13. Use ‘white space’ in margins, between sections, paragraphs, and lines to make the document look good. (Cited from Crystal 1987:379).

The English taught, spoken, and written in the Third World countries is

often not plain, simple, and straightforward. As in the Indian sub-continent, it is derived, more often than not, from the English style spoken and written a century ago, in some instances. We certainly need to emphasize grammatical correctness in learning English, but it is equally important to cultivate in our learners a sensitivity and skill to use natural, simple, and straightforward English. Indian newspapers in English and the radio news broadcasts should take the initiative in simplifying the usage.

### **ENGLISH TEACHING BY THE MISSIONARIES**

Teaching English as a tool for communicating the story of Jesus has a long history. Missionaries have vehemently differed from one another about its usefulness as a tool for this purpose. Even as English contains excellent Christian literature, it also is home for secular literature. Secular Humanism found its way in many lands through the learning of English language and literature. Its “ennobling” characteristic as a tool and purveyor of culture, the scientific knowledge it opens up for those who learn it, the ease with which one could transact business using it, all have more or less overshadowed the deep Christian foundation upon which the language, literature and culture is built.

Aided by the influence of secularism, many Christian teachers of English have more or less abandoned the Christian program while teaching English. Ethics and morals portrayed in literature were interpreted not as emerging from the Christian base but from universal humanism. English is still pregnant with Christian metaphors, idioms and set phrases, which cannot be wholly understood and used without a grasp of the underlying Christian message.

Perhaps because of the reason last mentioned, most nations have embarked upon a process of textbook contextualization when it comes to teaching English. The original pieces of writing by the native speakers of English are sought to be replaced by the writings of the nationals who are masters of English prose and poetry. In their creative writing, metaphors, idioms, and set phrases from the national languages, which imply local culture and religion, are more freely used. Translations from the local tales are more frequently substituted for tales from Europe. In addition, government-inspired documents on ideology become part of the textbook. Nations (and individuals) want to appropriate English as a language minus the culture and religion it represents and communicates.

Even as the goals of English teaching and learning are being continually redefined, you should remember that English would not be taught solely by the native speakers of English in many nations. Some countries like India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and several African nations have provided for the teaching of English mainly through their nationals. Some countries like

Japan and China open their doors to more number of native speakers of English to teach English.

When English is introduced in the school curriculum as a language to be learned in addition to a national language or languages, it is inevitable that governments and institutions would look for training their own nationals to meet the demand.

Missionaries in the past responded to this by training nationals in the art of teaching English as a foreign or second language, while noting all the time the inadequate skills attained in pronunciation and naturalness of usage. The missionaries and others involved in teaching English have recognized that a perfect duplication of the native speakers' language is neither possible nor desirable. We discuss this issue in a later chapter.

Even as many adult students in short term English courses may not care for the literary benefits of learning English, many more do not feel satisfied with just learning the language and using it only for practical ends. They do, indeed, seek to understand, enjoy and appreciate what English literature offers them. School curriculum always blends learning English language with learning and enjoying English (and American) literature. We shall discuss the aspects of using literature for TESOL in a later chapter.

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## CONTENTS PAGE

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## **CHAPTER 2 SOME LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS**

### **LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS— A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Europe and Asia have had a long tradition of teaching and learning foreign languages. Memorization of vocabulary and translation of sentences often formed the major part of such learning processes in the past. Ancient languages such as Sanskrit and Pali were mastered in Asia through the process of memorization of texts and vocabulary lists. Learning vocabulary lists indeed formed the core of language learning.

The progress of Reformation in Europe brought within its wake change in methods of learning foreign and classical languages. While writing paradigms for individual verbs continued to be emphasized, teachers began to focus more on oral aspects of language. Until then learning a language

was synonymous with learning the written language.

Two scholars during the progress of Reformation stood out as distinguished contributors for the change of language teaching methods: **Erasmus** and **Comenius**.

Erasmus, a contemporary of Martin Luther, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, argued that speaking the foreign language should begin early in one's attempt in learning it. Good and understandable oral communication, he said, was the important thing to master. Next in importance was reading, and, then, writing came at last.

Erasmus wanted that we learn the language through exposure to interesting and practical conversations and stories accompanied by visuals such as picture. Note that this is still one of the cornerstones of current thinking on teaching foreign/second language. In addition, Erasmus suggested several rhetorical exercises which focused on "transforming verse into prose, imitating the style of a prominent writer, translating, or recasting propositions in various forms."

Currently these types of exercises are not favored in teaching and learning languages. These are good exercises, no doubt, but are more useful in teaching literature, or more appropriately, teaching writing of literary pieces. Presently we do make a distinction between learning language and literature. We may learn a language in order to study the literature written in it. But learning a language need not be necessarily done through studying its literature.

Martin Luther was opposed to excessive drill on rules for producing sentences. Instead of memorizing rules for the production of sentences, he asked for the actual production of sentences themselves as appropriate practice to learn a language. William Bath (1565-1614) focused on teaching vocabulary through contextualized presentation, which would be further elaborated later on by Comenius.

The contribution of Comenius to modern secular education is enormous. His thoughts on methods of teaching languages had influenced generations of European teachers. He wanted a graded presentation of sentence structures. He insisted that grammar should be taught through an inductive approach, by giving many examples of the same sentence type, so that the students would understand and master the structures. He insisted that the understanding of the content, and mastery of linguistic forms must proceed on parallel lines. In other words, he recommended that we do not introduce a content topic, if, for the understanding and expression of which, the students do not yet have some parallel linguistic mastery in the language they are learning.

Comenius recommended that new words be introduced to the students with the visuals of objects or phenomena they represented. He asserted that “words should not be learned apart from the objects to which they refer. Comenius held that the subject matter of lessons should have appeal to students, that modern languages should have priority over classical languages, that language should be learned by practice rather than by rules (though rules were seen as complementing practice), and that the subject matter of initial exercises should already be familiar to students (O’Grady, et al. 1993).” In subsequent centuries several methods came to be used.

## **LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS**

**Grammar-Translation.** “This method emphasizes reading, writing, translation, and the conscious learning of grammatical rules. Its primary goal is to develop literary mastery of the second language. Memorization is the main learning strategy and students spend their class time talking about the language instead of talking in the language. The curriculum requires the memorization of paradigms, patterns, and vocabulary, with translation being used to test the acquired knowledge. Consequently, the role of L1 (that is, mother tongue or native language) is quite prominent” (O’Grady, et al. 1993).

**The Natural Method.** “Since children learn naturally to speak before they read, oracy (should) precede literacy and that receptive skills precede productive ones. Proponents of the method tended to avoid the use of books in class . . . Like the child in his home, the student was to be immersed in language and allowed to formulate his own generalizations . . . it consists of a series of monologues by the teacher, interspersed with exchanges of question and answer between instructor and pupil—all in the foreign language . . . A great deal of pantomime accompanies the talk. With the aid of gesticulation, by attentive listening, and by dint of repetition, the beginner comes to associate certain acts and objects with certain combinations of sound, and finally reaches the point of reproducing the foreign words or phrases . . . The mother tongue is strictly banished” (Bowen et al. 1985:21; part of this cited text contains a quotation from the Report of the Committee of the Twelve, 1890).

**The Phonetic Method.** This method emphasized “oral expression as the basis of instruction, stressing pronunciation, avoiding grammatical rule giving, and seeking to impart a practical mastery of language forms for use in-country; cultural information was also provided. The teacher would read a passage aloud, explaining unfamiliar words as students followed along. After discussing questions on the passage, students would paraphrase the story aloud. Next would come written answers to questions, phonetic work on new words, and ultimately recitation. Gestures, pictures, and interesting contexts were to be used in making applications of familiar material. Graded

reading would come later.” This method demanded “heavy requirements for linguistic expertise on the part of the teachers.”

**The Direct Method.** “Adult L2 learners can learn a second language in essentially the same manner as a child. Therefore, if possible, the teacher should try to create a natural learning environment within the classroom. Instead of explicit grammar instruction, the major emphasis is on communicating. Classes are carried out totally in the second language with absolutely no reliance on the first language or on any form of translation. The expectation is that through question and answer dialogues, the second language will gradually be acquired. Problems have arisen with such an approach because adults do not in fact learn exactly like children, and they express the need for explicit instruction in grammar and other aspects of the second language” (O’Grady et al. 1993).

Teaching of receptive skills (listening and reading) rather than teaching of productive skills (speaking and writing) was encouraged as the first step. Contrastive analysis of the native language of the learner with the target language was done. Teachers were required to have a good knowledge of the phonetics of the language they teach, but they would use it to teach pronunciation and not phonetics. This method was indeed an extension of the Natural Method, with greater emphasis on and sophistication of knowledge of linguistics.

**The Audiolingual Method.** The audiolingual method in some sense represents a return to the direct method, as its main goal is to develop native-like speaking ability in its learners. It is an extension as well as a refinement of the Direct Method. Translation and reference to L1 are not permitted. Underlying this approach, however, is the notion that “L2 learning should be regarded as a mechanistic process of habit formation . . . . Audiolingual learning comprises dialogue memorization and pattern drills, thus ensuring careful control of responses. None of the drills or patterns are to be explained, since knowledge of grammatical rules would only obstruct the mechanical formation of habits.”

“Just as the Direct Method was an extension of the Natural Method, so Audiolingualism had its theoretical roots in the Direct Method.” The Audiolingual method used exhaustively the linguistic structures identified in the descriptive analysis of the target language. It resulted in carefully prepared materials. It was skill oriented, with a practical emphasis on oracy. “It provided contextualized language practice in true-to-life situations including dialogue. It provided a wide variety of activities to help maintain interest, and it made extensive use of visuals. It arranged for abundant practice, although “the grammar-based Audiolingual approach moved cautiously from supposedly simple to more and more linguistically complex features, often without adequate consideration for what might be needed in

everyday situations.”

Some of the things which led to the spread and success of this method in this century include: Greater allotment of time, smaller classes, greater emphasis on oral-aural practice which led to automatic production of sentences repeated or in the internalization of sentence structures through repetition and inductive generalization, the structural description and gradation of sentence and other linguistic utterances presented to the students for drill, contrastive analysis between the structures of the native and target languages, and careful preparation and presentation of learning materials based on all these.

**Communicative Language Teaching.** This approach argues that “merely knowing how to produce a grammatically correct sentence is not enough. A communicatively competent person must also know how to produce an appropriate, natural, and socially acceptable utterance in all contexts of communication. ‘Hey, buddy, you fix my car!’ is grammatically correct but not as effective in most social contexts as ‘Excuse me, sir, I was wondering whether I could have my car fixed today . . . (Communicative competence) includes having a grammatical knowledge of the system, . . . knowledge of the appropriateness of language use . . . (such as) sociocultural knowledge, paralinguistic (facial and gestural) and proxemic (spatial) knowledge, and sensitivity to the level of language use in certain situations and relationships . . .” (O’Grady et al.1993).

**Total Physical Response Approach.** “It takes into consideration the silent period deemed necessary for some L2 learners. During the first phase of total physical response, students are not required to speak. Instead, they concentrate on obeying simple commands in the second language. These demands eventually become more complex. For example, Walk to the door becomes Stretch your head while you walk to the door at the back of the classroom. Students later become more actively involved, verbally and creatively. The objective of this approach is to connect physical activity with meaningful language use as a way of instilling concepts” (O’Grady, et al. 1993).

**Immersion Programs.** “Students are instructed in most of their courses and school activities in the second language. Instruction is usually begun in the second language and eventually incorporates the native language. The main objective of any immersion program is that all students acquire a high level of proficiency in oral, listening, and literacy skills . . . Fundamental to an immersion program is the belief that normal children have the inherent capacity to learn a second language without jeopardizing their native language expertise. Total immersion involves the instruction of all subjects in the second language, including physical education and extracurricular activities . . . Partial immersion involves instruction in the second language

for half the school day and in the native language for the other half” (O’Grady et al. 1993).

Immersion programs have been greatly used in several missionary training programs, and in field studies done in north-eastern India, and the Andaman and Nicobar islands by the students of linguistics.

### **THE NEED FOR AN ECLECTIC APPROACH**

At present, teachers of English around the world prefer some form of communicative teaching and learning, rather than the audio-lingual method and its derivatives. However, we must remember that a successful TESOL teacher is not necessarily biased in favor of one method or another. She should be first of all competent in and comfortable with the methods she wants to use. She tends to select different teaching strategies from different methods, and blends them to suit the needs of her materials and students.

It is important that the students are given ample opportunities to practice English in the class as well as outside the classroom, even as it is important for them to have time and freedom to digest, reflect and analyze what has been exposed to them. Internalization of the linguistic structures and their ready and easy retrieval for communication are achieved in many ways.

A diligent TESOL teacher continually learns new techniques from her peers and her students, as she interacts with them. She needs to know the new directions in teaching of English to speakers of other languages which are debated in the journals and demonstrated in new textbooks. Her own English speech, pronunciation, and writing should be as close to the “standard” as possible, or native-like, if she is not a native speaker of English. She may use regional characteristics of English to inform and entertain, but she should be able to switch to the “standard” for presenting her lessons.

Her writing in English should be simple, straightforward and plain. She should have a good command and conscious knowledge of the grammatical structures of the language and should be at home with the grammatical terms used to describe the structures. She should be sensitive to the background and the needs of her class.

She should have a clear voice, and should be energetic and enthusiastic so that the class will come alive in her presence. It is important for her to get all her students involved in the drills and exercises conducted in the class. A good actor she should be!

### **SOME KEY TERMS**

**L1** refers to the language acquired or learned first by the student. It



generally refers to the mother tongue or the first language of the student. Mother tongue is a fuzzy concept.

The term **first language** focuses upon the serial order in which a language may be acquired or learned. It is possible that a child may acquire or learn two or more languages simultaneously. Under such circumstances, it is possible for a child to have more than one language as her first language or her mother tongue. (See *Simultaneous Acquisition of Two Languages: An Overview* by Shyamala Chengappa and M. S. Thirumalai, published by the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, India, 1986.)

**L2** refers to the language or languages acquired or learned subsequent to the first language. The term Second Language also refers to the language or languages acquired or learned subsequent to the first language. It is generally assumed that the first language of a person comes to influence the quality of learning and use of the second language. In this context, the term **Source Language** generally refers to the first language or the mother tongue or L1 and the term **Target Language** refers to the second language or L2.

The term **Foreign language** refers to that language for the use of which there is no immediate reinforcement outside the classroom. For example, if English is learned by a Japanese student from Japan in the United States, the status of such learning is treated as second language learning, because he has abundant opportunities to use that language outside his classroom. On the other hand, if the same student learns English in his country, he may not have equally abundant opportunity to use English outside his classroom. Under this condition, the student is deemed to be learning English as a foreign language. It is important that we keep this distinction in mind when we teach English to speakers of other languages, because each teaching/learning situation will require different materials, strategies, and goals.

The term **acquisition** is used “when the emphasis is on the natural, unconscious way in which a learner can assimilate a foreign language as in bilingual contexts or when using one of the natural approaches to foreign language teaching. In several approaches, however, acquisition and learning are carefully distinguished: the former is then restricted to what takes place in ‘natural’ learning situations; the latter to what takes place in classrooms when following a structured course with a teacher” (Crystal 1987). **Interference** or **Negative Transfer** refers to the inappropriate use of an L1 structure in the L2 system. **Interlanguage** refers to the successive approximations that a second language learner makes towards the target language he is learning. These terms have come to connote the assumptions that a teacher has as regards the process of learning/acquiring a language.

**The behaviorist view** assumes that second/foreign language learning is “a process of imitation and reinforcement: learners attempt to copy what they hear, and by regular practice they establish a set of acceptable habits in the new language. Properties of the L1 are thought to exercise an influence on the course of L2 learning: learners ‘transfer’ sounds, structures, and usages from one language to the other. A widely used typology distinguishes two kinds of transfer. Similarities between the two languages cause ‘positive transfer’: it proves acceptable to use the L1 habits in the L2 setting (e.g. the assumption that the subject goes before the verb satisfactorily transfers from English to French). Differences cause ‘negative transfer’, generally known as ‘interference’: the L1 habits cause errors in the L2 (e.g. the same assumption about subject-verb order does not satisfactorily transfer into Welsh) . . . Problems of negative transfer are thought to provide a major source of all FLL (foreign language learning) difficulty. The main aim of behaviorist teaching is thus to form new, correct linguistic habits through intensive practice, eliminating interference errors in the process” (Crystal 1987:372).

In **the cognitive view** of language learning, “learners are credited with using their cognitive abilities in a creative way to work out hypotheses about the structure of the FL (foreign language). They construct rules, try them out, and alter them if they prove to be inadequate. Language learning, in this account, proceeds in a series of transitional stages, as learners acquire more knowledge of the L2. At each stage, they are in control of a language system that is equivalent to neither the L1 nor the L2 - an interlanguage” (Crystal 1987:372).

**Foreigner Talk or Teacher Talk.** “When speaking to L2 learners, native speakers may choose simple word order and more common vocabulary items. They formulate explanations or questions carefully and attempt to produce well-formed utterances by avoiding false starts, slips of the tongue, unfinished sentences, and hesitations. They modify vocabulary by employing frequently used words, and avoiding idiomatic expressions such as He flew off the handle in favor of He got angry. Vocabulary that might be unfamiliar is often paraphrased, such as hold on very tightly for the verb cling” (O’Grady, et al. 1993).

**Contrastive Analysis.** This is based on an assumption that the errors produced by the learner would occur at those points at which the two languages were dissimilar. Contrastive analysis contrasts the structures of L2 with L1 of the learner. However it is now recognized that “not all errors could be predicted from the source language. Some errors were unique and did not reflect the L1 structure.”

**Error Analysis.** This approach sees “errors as indicators of the learner’s current underlying knowledge of the second language, or as clues to the

hypotheses that a learner may be testing about the second language. In this sense, errors provide us with insights into the language system that L2 learners are acquiring and using at a particular period. Such an L2 system is called interlanguage. Interlanguage changes constantly as the learner progresses through a theoretically infinite number of states of grammatical development along a continuum. Each L2 learner's interlanguage is unique. As learners progress toward native-like proficiency in the second language, their interlanguage is characterized by fewer and fewer errors.”

**Error Types.** Roughly speaking, there are two categories of errors: interlingual and developmental. Interlingual errors are the result of L1 interference, implying that some structure from the native language has been transferred to the second language. When L2 errors cannot be accounted for on the basis of the first language, they are considered to be developmental; that is, to result from the manner in which the language acquisition mechanisms themselves operate. These errors arise from a mismatch between the L2 learner's grammar and that of the native speaker. Within the interlingual and developmental categories, errors can also be classified according to the grammatical subsystem involved: phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics. Errors can be further classified as errors of omission, addition, or substitution.

Generally speaking, we often tend to see the errors only as an interference from the source language. In fact, errors of interference from the source language are very few when compared with the interlanguage errors of the learners. This, however, does not mean that we can easily ignore the interference errors and focus only on the interlanguage errors. Indeed, we need to work out remedial steps for both these items in our teaching processes and materials.

We must bear in mind that “the analysis of errors turns out to be a highly complex matter, involving other factors than the cognitive. Some errors are due to the influence of the mother tongue as contrastive analysis claims. Some come from external influences, such as inadequate teaching or materials. Some arise out of the need to make oneself understood by whatever means possible (e.g. replacing words by gestures). Moreover, not all errors are equally systematic, disruptive, or unacceptable. Errors of vocabulary, for example, are less general and predictable than errors of grammar, but they are usually more disruptive of communication. Some errors, indeed, become so acceptable that they do not disappear: they become ‘fossilized’ – tolerated by learners (insofar as they are conscious of them) because they do not cause major problems of communication (e.g. the pronunciation errors that constitute a foreign accent)” (Crystal 1987:372).

**Strategies.** Many L2 learners employ similar strategies: they over-generalize, they transfer certain aspects of their native language, and they

simplify various L2 structures as they subconsciously test their hypotheses about the second language. L2 learners often need a silent period (a period of aural exposure to the language) so that incoming information may be processed and stored in memory.

**Aptitude.** Aptitude, motivation, attitude, and empathy are a few of the many traits which seem to have something to do with the success in learning another language. Some people have a special talent, a knack, or an aptitude for learning a second language. Aptitude involves having verbal intelligence (familiarity with words and the ability to reason analytically about verbal materials).

**Motivation.** In L2 acquisition motivation is described as the need or desire the learner feels to learn the second language. Integrative motivation is defined as a desire to achieve proficiency in a new language in order to participate in the life of the community that speaks the language. Instrumental motivation is defined as the desire to achieve proficiency in a new language for utilitarian reasons, such as getting a job or a promotion. It reflects the practical value and advantages of learning a new language.

**Attitudes.** L2 learners' attitudes are said to reflect their beliefs or opinions about the second language and culture, as well as their own culture. It is believed that attitude and motivation are closely related. One influences the other.

**Empathy.** Empathy is defined as the ability to put oneself in someone else's shoes. An empathic L2 learner has the capacity for participation in another's feelings or ideas, to project his or her personality into the personality of another. It is believed that those who are empathic will be favorably predisposed to learning languages in a natural environment. They may more easily emulate a native-like pronunciation since they are purportedly less inhibited than others. Furthermore, "because of their sensitivity to others, empathic people may be better at picking up nuances of word meaning and their implications in different linguistic contexts." (Taken from O'Grady et al. 1993).

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[CONTENTS PAGE](#)

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## CHAPTER 3 USE OF ENGLISH, BLACKBOARD AND VISUALS IN CLASS

## USING THE BLACKBOARD IN CLASSROOM

The blackboard continues to be a very important teaching aid throughout the world. In the Third World countries, it is the cheapest visual aid, which is easily available in every classroom. Chalk and Talk continues to be a very effective method of teaching. The blackboard offers a variety of functions to the teachers of TESOL.

You may use it to write the sentences, words and phrases you wish to teach. You may use it to test what the students have learned. You may use it to illustrate the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. You can invite your students to come forward and write what they have learned. So, it is important that you train yourself to use the blackboard effectively in your class.

1. Some teachers hide the board. And if the teacher has her back to the class she cannot control what the students are doing.
2. You need to keep eye contact with the class as you write. You should allow the class to see what you write.
3. You should keep the students' attention by saying the words as you write them.
4. Write clearly. The writing should be large enough to read from the back of the class.
5. Write in straight lines. This is easy if you only write across a section of the board, not across the whole board.
6. Talk as you write.
7. The blackboard should not be too crowded.
8. Choose only those items that need special and focused attention to write on the blackboard.
9. Write the key vocabulary down the side of the board, with similar items close together.
10. An important use of the blackboard is to show clearly how the structures are formed, and to show the differences between structures: **He played football: Did he play football?**
11. Use the blackboard to discuss how the students could make the structures. This could be done by underlining the important features.
12. You could use different colored chalk (red, and green stand out most clearly).
13. You could draw arrows or write numbers to show the change in word order.
14. You can ask different students to come to the front in turn and present each set of examples on the blackboard.
15. Many teachers use the blackboard only for writing. But simple pictures drawn on the blackboard can help to increase

- the interest of a lesson, and are often a good way of showing meaning and conveying situations to the class.
16. Blackboard drawings should be as simple as possible, showing only the most important details. Very simple line drawings and stick figures, which are easy to draw.
  17. It is important to draw quickly, so as to keep the interest of the class. Talk as you draw.
  18. Simple blackboard drawings: **Faces**. Heads should be large enough to be seen from the back of the class. Show how you can indicate expression, especially by changing the shape of the mouth.
  19. Show other expressions, for example, surprise by raised eyebrows, anger by a frown.
  20. Show which way the speaker is facing by changing the nose. This is useful if you want to show two people having a conversation.
  21. Show sex or age by drawing hair.
  22. Stick figures Show/draw basic male and female stick figures. The body should be about twice as long as the head; the arms are the same length as the body; the legs are slightly longer.
  23. Indicate actions by bending the legs and arms.
  24. **Places**. Show buildings, towns, and directions by a combination of pictures and words.
  25. **Vehicles**. Draw vehicles and indicate movement.
  26. Use blackboard drawings to build up a complete situation. This might be done to introduce a topic and new vocabulary, or as a preparation for reading a text or dialogue. Draw a school, then draw a boy running, then rub out the boy, and draw him again by the school, then draw another diagram with the boy and the teacher.
  27. A series or sequence of pictures would tell the story better. Use the pictures as cues to students to tell the story.

## USING ENGLISH IN TESOL CLASS

As much as possible, English should be used in your class from the beginning itself. (Indian teachers of TESOL are very weak in this aspect.) This means that you will use English as frequently as possible for interaction with the students, and that you will ask students to use English as much as they can to express their personal needs and to engage themselves in conversations with you.

Use English mainly in the activities below:

1. Introducing the lesson.
2. Checking attendance.

3. Organizing where students sit.
4. Presenting new vocabulary.
5. Introducing a text.
6. Asking questions on a text.
7. Correcting errors.
8. Setting homework.

Note that in the initial stages you need to use a lot of gestures along with English to make the students understand what you wish to communicate to them. Sometimes you may be required to use the native language of your learners, or a language known to them as well as you. There are two main ways in which English can be used in class. It can be used in teaching the lesson itself: giving examples, introducing a text, asking questions, etc. It can also be used for activities which surround the lesson, but which are not actually part of the teaching: checking attendance, telling students where to sit, chatting students, controlling the class, etc.

There is great value in using English in class. If the teacher uses English most of the time, it will give the students practice in listening and responding to spoken English. This will help them pick up words and expressions beyond the language of the textbook. In the lesson itself, the language used is often unnatural and artificial. This will be modified to give an opportunity for real, natural English to be used. However, you should not feel that you must use English all the time. There are occasions when it can be useful to use the students' own language.

Use of English in the classroom is greatly facilitated through socializing conversations. Instead of going straight to the textbook at the beginning of a lesson, the teacher can spend a few minutes chatting to the class about topics of interest. Note that if you make use of English in natural conversation, it would amount to exposing your students to native speakers' English.

Try to keep to simple language that you might use in your own class. You can talk and ask questions, but get the students to give only short responses. You can prompt individual students to talk more about things they have done. You can get students to talk and ask questions. Chatting creates an opportunity for real language practice, and creates an English language atmosphere in the class. Students get to know one another well. They come to know each other's names, and make small talks.

Even more important, it establishes contact with the class, and helps students to feel relaxed and ready to learn. Here are some possible topics for chatting to the class at the beginning or end of a lesson: Things the students did the previous day, feast days and holidays, a piece of local news, a local sports event, a school performance, a film on at the cinema, an interesting TV program, birthdays, etc.

Teachers have to say so many things simply to organize the lesson – starting or stopping an activity, getting students to do or not to do things. Much of this language consists of simple commands and instructions which are repeated lesson after lesson. If you say these in English, students will quickly learn what they mean. The following are some simple classroom commands in English, which you should continually use in your class:

Stand up (please).

Sit down (please).

Look! Look at me.

Listen!

Repeat!

Again! Open/Close your books.

Stop talking!

Come here, please.

Come to the front.

Be quiet, please.

Most of the language we need for organizing the class consists of simple expressions which can be used again and again. However, teachers may often need to use more complex language, for example, when explaining a new word or a grammar point, or explaining how an activity works. In such instances also, make your explanations as simple and clear as possible, so that the students understand.

Use simple, short sentences; use gestures to show each of the action you want them to understand. Use simple blackboard drawings; give difficult words in the language known to the students. Giving explanations in English is worthwhile if it can be done successfully and without too much difficulty. However, there are many occasions when it is best to use the students' own language—either because the language needed is too complex, or because it is easier, quicker, and more convenient.

An explanation in English could be very confusing, especially if the concept or words are unfamiliar to the students. It would be better to give examples in English, and then to give a translation of the word. By using the students' own language, we can give a clearer and fuller explanation, and refer to equivalent expressions in their language. It is best not to rely only on explanations in either language. It is more important to give plenty of examples and a chance for students to practice. An advantage of using the students' own language is that the situation can be given more quickly and easily, leaving more time for practice. However, an advantage of using English is that it provides useful listening practice, and helps students by



giving them some of the words they need.

## **USING VISUALS**

As a teacher of TESOL, you should familiarize yourself with a range of simple visual aids which would help you to teach the structures and words smoothly. You should develop some skills to prepare your own visual aids. You should know how to use the visual aids effectively. Doff (1988:81-92) presents some interesting information on the use of visual aids in TESOL classroom:

Visual aids include pictures, objects, and things for the students to look at and talk about. Visual aids are important because showing visuals focuses attention on meaning, and helps to make the language in the class more real and alive; having something to look at keeps the students' attention, and makes the class more interesting; visuals can be used at any stage of the lesson, to help in presenting new language or introducing a topic, as part of language practice, and when reviewing language that has been presented earlier; good visual aids can be used again and again and shared by different teachers.

You can use the following as visual aids in your class: yourself, the blackboard, real objects, flashcards, pictures, and charts. The teacher can use gestures, facial expressions, and actions to help show the meaning of words and to illustrate situations. You can use the blackboard to draw pictures, diagrams, maps, etc. You can use real objects in the classroom and bring other things into the class – food, clothes, containers, household objects, vegetables, etc.

Flashcards with single pictures can be held up by the teacher in the class. These can be used for presenting and practicing new words and structures, and for revision. The teacher can draw a picture on the flashcard, or stick on a picture from magazine. Flashcards can also be used to show words or numbers. Charts are large sheets of card or paper with writing, pictures or diagrams, used for more extended presentation or practice. These may be displayed on the wall or blackboard.

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[CONTENTS PAGE](#)

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## **CHAPTER 4 TEACHING LISTENING**

## **LANGUAGE SKILLS**

Teaching English to speakers of other languages can be looked at from many different angles. One useful way is to look at the teaching process as the teaching of various language skills.

There are, in general, four language skills, each based upon the modality of emphasis. These are the Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing skills.

Generally speaking, it is emphasized that we first teach listening, then speaking, then reading and writing. However, in real life situations of language communication, these skills are interdependent in many ways, even though they can be taught independently to some extent.

### **LISTENING SKILL**

Listening in English is attending to and interpreting oral English. Listening is necessary to develop the speaking skill. The student listens to oral speech in English, then separates into segments the stretch of utterances he hears, groups them into words, phrases, and sentences, and, finally, he understands the message these carry. Listening prepares the students to understand the speech of the native speakers of English as they speak naturally in a normal speed and normal manner.

There are three approaches to listening: interactive (listening to a message and doing something as a consequence) and one-way communication or non-interactive (just listening and retaining the message, in activities such as conversations overheard, public address announcements, recorded messages, etc.) and self-talk. Listening to radio and watching TV and films, public performances, lectures, religious services, etc., generally reflect non-interactive listening. Responding to the commands given reflects interactive listening, which, in fact, is equally widespread in communicative situations. Self-talk is also an important process by which internal thinking and reasoning is carried out. All these three modes or approaches to listening may be included in our TESOL listening comprehension training.

In the classroom, students listen in order to repeat and to understand. In listening to repeat, students imitate and memorize linguistic items such as words, idioms, and sentence patterns. This is an important beginning task and focus of listening exercises. However, it is listening to understand that is real listening in its own right.

Students listen to understand as part of using English for communication purposes. In listening to understand, students may be involved in the question-oriented response model of learning or in the task-oriented model of learning. In the question-oriented response model, students may be asked

to listen to a sentence, a dialogue, a conversation, a passage, or a lecture and asked to answer questions which may be presented in the form of true/false statements, multiple choice questions, fill in blank, or short answers. In the task-oriented response model, students may be asked to listen to a passage and accomplish the task described in the passage through interaction with others or by themselves.

Remember that research indicates that most students have difficulty with listening skills, even when listening to their native language. Among other factors, because of the phenomenon of stress (some syllables of a word may be stressed while others may not be), most learners of English have difficulty in mastering the correct placement of the primary and other stresses in English. (This could lead to misunderstanding the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence.) As a consequence, listening proficiency in English is to be cultivated with great care.

### **LISTENING COMPREHENSION**

The listening skill is the most neglected one, both in first and second language teaching. Teachers tend to focus on the rudimentary elements of listening briefly, and pass over to other aspects of language teaching. Discrimination of sounds and intonations often form the major part of listening practice in the classroom. Listening for content is often assumed. In reality, the listening skill is fundamental to the entire process of mastering and using a language, whether first or second or foreign.

Listening is like painting, like color, in day to day environment. You don't notice, but it is always there in every linguistic activity. Listening is important for casual chats, face to face encounters, telephone messages, for enjoyment of radio and television programs, formal lectures, and many other activities.

In the past, listening was labeled as a passive skill, along with reading. No doubt, it is a receptive skill like reading. Speaking and writing were considered to be productive skills, but also active skills. While this categorization is somewhat justifiable because the focus of listening is on reception of information, listening itself cannot be fully and correctly characterized only as a passive skill.

There is a need for an active involvement of the self for the efficient performance of listening. The listener is often forced into guessing an approximation to what the speaker is communicating. The listener expects and anticipates what may be the form and content of the immediate message being delivered. He actively avoids the redundancies in the process of listening, focuses himself on the relevant, interesting and/or crucial points, and engages himself in some critical analysis of content. Listening becomes

the stepping stone for action. In view of all these and other activities that are involved in listening, we should consider listening as an active skill demanding active participation of the listener.

How do we organize teaching the listening skill for the TESOL audience? Remember that fluent listening results only from wide exposure to the target language. Listening, like other language skills, is acquired only by doing it.

Remember also that listening is an integral part of any type of language performance. For this reason it should be taught from the beginning classes of TESOL. It should not be postponed for special treatment at a later date or for special occasions. Fluent listening is important from the beginning, if a student is to succeed in his TESOL class and succeed using English outside his class. Teachers should enable the students to listen to native speakers' speech from the beginning.

More often than not, English is taught through the eyes rather than through the ears in Third World countries. As a consequence, students would have mastered reading and writing with some relative competence, but their skill in listening to natural and native English will be poorly developed.

Where do we practice Listening Comprehension? In all places and in all classes. We must begin with the identification of natural listening situations both inside the classroom and outside.

The students are always required to listen to the teacher's instructions and questions, and answer them. They may listen to conversations between a student and the teacher and understand what is going on. They may like to participate in a discussion between students and understand what is being discussed. They may like to listen and enjoy the story told by the teacher, and answer questions raised by the teacher. They may listen to simple questions eliciting information about them and their families and understand what the speaker wants to know from them. They may enjoy the jokes told both in the class and outside.

Outside the classroom, the students have many needs which they can meet only by listening to the speech around them and by expressing what they need. They need to understand the native speakers of English they come across in their day to day life, if they are studying and/or working in an English speaking country. Where there is no opportunity for them to come across native English speakers, they will need to listen and comprehend the native English used in the movies and TV programs.

We practice listening comprehension in all places and in all lessons and in all language skills (although at advanced levels of other language skills the role of listening could be minimal). There may be listening comprehension

exercises on the phonological elements when pronunciation is taught. There may be exercises for listening comprehension when exercises on grammar are done, as well as in vocabulary teaching. When varieties of speech in various communicative contexts are introduced, there will be ample scope for listening comprehension exercises.

So, begin with the identification of listening situations appropriate to the need and age of the students and the level of English competence already achieved by them. Start with a focus on an ability to understand the formal code of classroom style English, because this is what is absolutely needed for the learner to benefit from classroom instruction. Focus on the goal of the TESOL learners and progress towards achieving the goal in small graded steps. Proceed to less formal varieties of spoken English to enable students to understand people outside the classroom.

Often a simple progression is suggested: classroom style, outside spoken English, how to listen to lectures and take notes, comprehend native speakers in all situations, including radio and TV, cultural language, etc.

Identify the listening medium: is it face to face interaction, or is it a movie or a TV program? Or is it a lecture situation? Or is it a telephonic conversation? Face to face interaction requires a different listening orientation than watching (and listening) to a movie.

### **SIMPLE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION**

It is important that you, as a teacher of TESOL, should have definite goals as regarding teaching listening comprehension.

In the early stages of listening, the students may have to be taught and exposed to discrimination of sounds used in English in isolation as well as in combination, not simply as sounds in themselves in isolation, but as units of meaningful words.

**Pit** and **bit** are two different words with significant meaning difference. The students who listen to these words should be able to distinguish these words not only in terms of the contexts in which these occur in a phrase or sentence, but also as sound units occurring in words, even without any context.

I had great difficulty distinguishing between p and b in English words, when I began to learn English in my elementary school. My mother tongue does not use p and b in identical position to discriminate between words and their meanings.

Many students with Bengali (a language spoken in Bangladesh and India) background have difficulty in discriminating between s, and sh. The Japanese free variation between l and r is quite well known.

The auditory habits followed in the native language of the student may come to influence his perception and production of the quality of sounds in English. In such conditions, it is always helpful if you know something about the phonology of the native language of the students.

The goals of teaching listening comprehension to a beginning student of English are different from those when teaching English to an advanced student. The advanced student has already mastered the discrimination of sounds and their combinations as well as various other aspects of phrases and sentences such as the significance of pauses between words and phrases, sentence intonation, etc. Therefore, he is geared towards following the flow of content of the message in such a way that he is not conscious of the mechanics or the processes of listening.

In essence, listening is not mere recognition of linguistic units and their meanings. It comprises an ability to predict information based on linguistic context, and the situation and topic of the message conveyed by the linguistic code, as well as the expectations about the world. Listening helps also to understand and act according to the emotional state of the speaker.

First of all, you should be clear about your goals in teaching a lesson for listening comprehension. These goals must be made explicit and explained to the students so that the learning process becomes meaningful to them.

Secondly, you should plan for a careful step by step progression in the material and, in teaching the same in the class. You should give direction to the students as to what they should listen for, where to listen, when to listen, and how to listen.

Thirdly, you must insist on active overt student participation. They should provide some written or physical response. Listening is done silently, but needs to be demonstrated through some other overt manifestation.

Organize your lesson in such a way that there is a need for the students to develop concentration while listening and for remembering (and reproducing) what they have listened to. This does not mean that you should clutter your lesson with facts, figures and details. Even with very little details, we may be able to create a need to listen intently, if the material is based on a communicative need.

For example, in a shopping context in a grocery store commonly found in the Third World countries, the shopkeeper has the need to remember and

present the number and quantity of items the buyer has asked for. In a post office, the counter clerk has to listen to the patron carefully and remember exactly the quantity and denomination of the stamps the patron has asked for. The communicative urgency and the need to listen carefully and remember what has been listened to should come from the lesson itself.

It is important that students develop consciously their memory span while listening to a message. Their auditory memory span must be strengthened and expanded in progressive steps in English.

While personality factors play a very important role in deciding how successful a listener a student could become, the learners need to have some minimal competence in listening to the speech of the native speakers. In due course they should be able to listen and remember relatively lengthy sentences and phrases.

In natural contexts, no one deliberately speaks in very long sentences. Often we tend to use certain sentence patterns more frequently than others. The number of adjectives in a noun phrase often is limited and these often follow a certain order. The teachers can take advantage of such structural information and build their classroom listening practice around these.

Listening, thinking, and remembering go together. They are not separate acts. In the beginning, the TESOL student may tend to focus on these as independent items. The teacher should organize her lesson and its presentation and teaching in the class in such a way that listening, thinking, and remembering are all integrated in listening comprehension.

Neither you nor your students should think that listening comprehension exercises are miniature tests. These generally come in the form of questions to be answered, action to be performed, or objects to be identified, etc. Because this format demands response in the form in which tests are generally prepared and presented, we tend to treat the exercise as a test. Consider listening comprehension only as practice and look for progress in student performance.

Brief listening comprehension exercises with content interesting to the student and which focus upon and incorporate his communicative needs will develop his listening comprehension to a satisfactory level. Students need to be attentive to the tone of the conversation, and should ask questions whenever they find it difficult to understand the conversation.

Even with limited vocabulary and sentence structure, listening comprehension exercises may be built on a variety of content. Do not ask questions on every little detail presented in the passage. Focus upon the major and significant items, because we, as users of language, tend to ignore

what we consider insignificant and less interesting, and focus upon what is significant and interesting. While doing so, we still develop and retain an ability to reconstruct at least some of the details of what we ignored, if called upon to do so.

What is the generally followed form of listening comprehension exercises? Students are given a specific task such as answering questions or solving problems. They listen to the teacher or the recorded material and perform the task asked for. Thus the teacher as well as materials on tape/cassette recorders become the major means to train the students in listening comprehension.

Use a cassette recorder as often as you can, because the cassette recorder gives a chance for students to listen to a variety of voices apart from the teacher's. It is a simple way of bringing native speakers' voices into the classroom. In countries where there is only a limited number of native speakers of English and when even these may not be readily available to model English before the class face to face, recorded materials become more useful for listening to dialogues, interviews, and discussions. Students, however, will have greater difficulty listening to the cassette recorder, because face to face listening provides them with more clues. Nevertheless, the cassette can be stopped and played back several times.

Focus should be on exposure to the speech of native speakers in contexts that are relevant to the second language learner's goals in learning English.

In developing or choosing materials for listening appropriate to TESOL students, Morley (1991:90-92) suggests three important principles: relevance, transferability/applicability, and task-orientation. The materials must be relevant to the interests and level of the TESOL students of your class. The content, structures, and words used in the listening materials should be of such a nature that these are transferable and utilized in other classes and outside the classroom.

Task-orientation materials focus on performance based on what is presented as listening material. There are at least six types of task-oriented use: Listening and performing actions ("Simon Says"); Listening and performing operations (listening and constructing a figure, drawing a map, etc.), Listening and solving problems (riddles, numerical, spatial or chronological problems), Listening and transcribing (taking telephone messages, writing notes), Listening and summarizing information. Interactive listening and negotiating meaning through questioning and answering routines. Note that every one of these items can be used as exercise types.

A recent publication (Nunan and Miller 1995), containing materials from practicing TESOL teachers, looks at the classroom techniques for



developing listening under seven major heads:

Developing cognitive strategies (listening for the main idea, listening for details, and predicting), Developing listening with other skills (listening and speaking, listening and pronunciation, and listening and vocabulary), Listening to authentic material (such as weather reports, television daytime dramas, News, Discussions, Advertisements, etc.), Using technology (Phone mail, recording messages, etc.), Listening for academic purposes, and Listening for fun.

A generally followed format of listening comprehension lessons includes the following:

1. Select the teaching point for the listening comprehension lesson.
2. Introduce the topic before the class begins to listen to the passage. In this manner the teacher brings the students' attention to focus on the material to be listened to.
3. Give one or two guiding questions before students begin to listen to the passage.
4. Divide the listening into stages, such as listening for the main idea only at the first instance, then answering some guiding questions. This may be followed by a second listening in which students listen for details.
5. Divide the passage into several sections and check comprehension after each section.
6. Students listen to the passage and complete the set task.
7. Presentation of feed back on the performance of the students.
8. You may read the passage once again so that your students may follow the passage more fully.

More often than not, a well graded listening comprehension lesson selects the teaching points (that is, the material to be listened to) from all the components of language. Listening does not focus only upon the sounds in isolation or in combination, even though such training to discriminate between various sounds of the English language may be necessary at the beginning level. It may begin with the discrimination of sounds and may proceed to the discriminations of sounds in combination, words, phrases, clauses and sentences. It focuses on the discrimination of various intonation patterns, and grammatical structures. However, the ultimate goal of listening is to listen for information.

There are several kinds of listening comprehension exercises.

1. A rudimentary but important form of listening comprehension exercise is the Use of the terms in English for class management. The teacher

frequently uses instructions such as Everybody sit down; Listen carefully; Answer; Again; and Repeat. When these are uttered with appropriate gestures, the students begin to understand them very soon.

2. While use of the class management terms is continued, introduce as part of your lesson Physical Response Activities. Commands would be given by the teacher and the students would give appropriate physical responses: Stand up; Walk to the window; Open the Window. You as a teacher of English as a foreign/second language can demonstrate the act intended to be carried out by the students initially.

Note that the **Physical Response** procedure can be repeated as many times as necessary when new actions and vocabulary are introduced to the students. However, choose only those words which lend themselves for Physical Response.

The tasks given to the students can be made more complex in successive stages. You can ask the student to close the door, but ,while he goes to the door, he may pick up the pencil on the floor. 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. Or, we may have exercises which would focus on shapes and colors, in which new terms would be learned while performing the task.

Bear in mind the following factors when you wish to have Physical Response activities in your class: Complexity of the task. 2. Length of exercise. (Do not give lengthy ones.) 3. Length of Sentences. 4. Frequency status of vocabulary used. (As much as possible, give prominence in your teaching to those words that are more frequently used in a particular context.) 5. Speed of delivery instructions.

3. Limited Verbal Response Activities. The response in these exercises is limited to yes/no, true/false, simple answers to WH-questions, usually answers that consist of one word. Do not emphasize production of complete answers.

4. Sound Discrimination Exercises. In English, consonant discrimination is more easily learned than vowel discrimination. And vowel discrimination is more easily learned than stress discrimination and production. Teaching of English stress is important in contrastive contexts.

In English, a contrastive stress (typically louder and often pronounced on a higher pitch) is regularly placed on new information in a context. Compare the following: 1. John hit Bill and then Joe hit him. 2. John hit Bill and then Joe hit him. In sentence 1 Bill gets hit twice, first by John and then by Joe. In sentence 2 Bill gets hit by John, but then John is hit by Joe. The

difference is caused by the location of the sentence stress in the last clause of each sentence.

Consider these sentences: 1. Helen pinched Mary, and then Eileen pinched her. Who got the second pinch? 2. He didn't lose his new pen; (he lost....) He lost his pencil. He didn't lose his new pen; (he lost....) He lost his old one (Bowen, et al.1985:83-84).

Remember that the intelligibility of spoken English is reduced more by errors in stress than in mistaken sounds. Remember also that teaching and learning the stress system in English is considered to be the most difficult exercise by many, both teachers and students.

5. There are many one-syllable words such as and, to, for, than, the, was, etc., which, when buried in sentences, are unstressed and, as a consequence, cause listening problems to the second language learners of English. This problem is not generally recognized in the classroom, but in actual conditions of language use it hinders listening. One way to overcome this problem is to teach some nursery rhymes which abound in unstressed syllables and words: One for the money, Two for the show, Three to get ready, And four to go. Note that all the underlined items are unstressed words (Bowen, et al. 1985:86).

Since unstressed syllables and words cause listening problems and consequent misunderstanding of what is being listened to, you should continually provide your students with exercises for listening to the unstressed syllables and words. Some of the following exercises may be used: Check every time you hear and. Check every time you hear to. Check every time you hear for, and similar exercises for the unstressed items. Another complex exercise would be to ask the students how many times the word for (etc.) occurs in the text?

6. Often we tend to focus less attention upon teaching the segmental sounds and their combinations in English. However, mastering some of the segmental sounds and their combinations could pose some difficulty to second language learners. For example, I have come across learners who have difficulty in distinguishing between p-b, l-r, j-z, s-z, and similar sounds. A simple exercise of minimal pairs of words may be designed where these distinctions would be drilled.

Note that we are not talking about producing the sounds, but about listening in order to discriminate the sounds.

7. There are also difficulties faced by learners in mastering combinations of segmental sounds. Often, the clusters of sounds in the word's initial position may pose some difficulty. For example, many Punjabi speakers have

difficulty in mastering the pronunciation of the clusters such as st-, sl-, sp- and sk-. Once again a contrastive minimal pair drill in which the contrast between the occurrence of single sounds and their combinations could be designed: sick vs. stick. Note that we are not talking about producing the sequences of sounds, but about listening to discriminate the sequences of sounds.

It would be highly useful if you had some idea of the nature of the phonology of the source language of your students. This would give you some insights into the difficulties posed by your class, and you could come up with some concrete illustrations as to why they have difficulty in listening to particular speech sounds and/or their combinations.

8. While certain intonation patterns (sentence melody), based upon the universality of emotions in some sense, could be easily recognized by the students, others, which carry communicative nuances such as sarcasm, cynicism, wonder, doubt, etc., will be hard to follow. Hence there is a need to teach your class a variety of intonations the native speakers of English generally use in their day to day language.

Once again, a contrastive approach of first presenting an ordinary statement which conveys somewhat a literal sense should be presented, then followed by modifications of intonations on the very same sentence which would convey various communicative shades of meaning. For example, you can start with an ordinary declarative sentence, change that into an interrogation, then change that into an exclamatory sentence, etc. Contrast a matter of fact sentence with the same words but in the mode of expressing doubt, and so on.

Note that listening is not just listening to sounds, words, phrases and sentences. Listening is listening to the meanings, the progress of the meanings of the utterances, the logic and rationale and goading into action, etc. So, while the basics of listening focus upon sounds and their combinations, words and their combinations, and sentences and their combinations, the goal of listening lies beyond the elements and forms of language. Listening needs to be automatic, and in a speed that is in consonance with the speed of the incoming utterances.

9. The student is required not only to comprehend native English spoken to him, but also to comprehend it with a speed that somewhat matches the speed of comprehension in a natural language situation in English. Accordingly, your listening exercise should have some room for the development of "listening speed." An important step towards this is to ask the learners to make intelligent guesses about the meaning based on the context of other words in the utterances.

10. Communicative Classroom activities. There are several types of exercises one could introduce here.

- i. Ask the student to listen to a short passage (an excerpt of a lecture) and then ask students to answer a few questions. This is to test the listening comprehension of the students.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Next comes the exercise which demands some inferential skill from the listener: Listen to the lecture and then evaluate the following statements as true or false. The student is not only asked to listen but also think over the matter and make inferences in this type of exercise.
- iv. Another inferential skill exercise focuses upon the nuances. Sometimes people say something they don't really mean. The insincerity may be signaled by intonation (tone of voice etc.):  
Wife: George, I think I'm pregnant again. Husband: Now, isn't that a pleasant thought (Bowen, et al. 1985:93).
- v. Listening to radio plays and advertisements is yet another interesting activity.
- vi. Story telling or story reading. Follow this with questions, asking for factual information and inferential statements.

11. Community Interaction Activities. Students learn listening in the classroom for purposes outside the classroom. They need to take their skills into the community. There are several good listening comprehension exercises meant for this.

- i. Eavesdropping is a good way to inform oneself of community activities as well as to sharpen one's listening comprehension. Anywhere in crowds is a good place to eavesdrop: department store, on a municipal bus, in a theater and so on. Note that this is generally possible only if you are teaching English in an English-speaking country.
- ii. Telephone is another device that can give realistic practice in listening. The telephonic conversation needs verbal feedback (Uh huh; Yes; Is that so; etc.) or some brief indication that the listener is still there and attentive. Also this leads to an exercise in note-taking, when the person called is not readily available. Thirdly, the student may reconstruct a conversation of which he heard only half, and that too from across the room. This involves guessing, and this skill is very much necessary for a successful listener.

- iii. Ask students to listen to pre-recorded messages of various sorts and give them comprehension questions to answer after listening to the messages: Time, weather messages, movie announcements, airlines flight information, aquarium and planetarium programs, library hours, and so on.
- iv. Recorded lessons on tape in the language lab. Language lab exercises are effective for minimal pairs recognition, paraphrasing of what is listened to, and so on. The student can be given a series of choices, such as selecting the best paraphrase of two possibilities, making a congruence decision, etc., and he can be directed to write these down. Then, after the student has committed to paper his judgments on a series of items, the voice on the tape can reel off a list of correct responses, so the student can tally the items he got correct and have an evaluation of his own performance (Bowen, et al. 1985).

Remember that listening is an important part of the competence of a successful learner of English. Listening can be dealt with in isolation, through exercises which focus on listening aspects only. However, even as we focus on it as an independent skill in the learning of English, it is important for us to integrate listening with speaking through all the lessons. This may be better accomplished if we deliberately include some listening exercises in every lesson we teach.

#### **A SUMMARY LIST OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION EXERCISES**

1. We may have exercises at the phonological level of English. These will include the following: Aural discrimination exercises for segmental sounds, Aural discrimination exercises for suprasegmentals such as stress and intonation, Vowel reduction exercises which demonstrate the relationship between the spoken and written forms of English, and Stress placement exercises. All these may be used in dialogue form.
2. We may also have listening comprehension exercises which relate to listening in the process of reading a material. In these exercises, we may ask the students to number the words in the order in which they heard them, ask students to cross out what is not correct for the passage, ask students to identify the words with the sound specified, ask students to identify whether the words and phrases they heard in pairs are the same or different (same-different drills), and ask students to identify the grammatical categories of patterns they have just listened to. Note that not all these exercises

would be interesting or relevant in your class.

3. Dictation is an excellent drill for developing listening comprehension, even as it helps in the development of rudimentary writing skill. You may begin with spot dictation in which a few simple words from the text are read/pronounced to the students and they are asked to write what they heard. In another type of spot dictation, students may be asked to fill in the blanks, when a passage is read. Yet another dictation method is to dictate a complete passage with normal speed. For this, it is always helpful if you read first the whole passage aloud in normal speed. Then, you may read the same passage again with pauses for students to write. These pauses should fall in natural breaks between phrases and sentences. After the dictation is done, you may reread the passage at normal speed for checking the responses given by the students. In order to keep the level of difficulty and complexity of the passage given for dictation appropriate to the level of students, it is better to select these passages only from the lessons already completed in class.
4. It is possible to use dictation for “grammatical” listening as well.
5. Recoding exercises in which you may ask the students to circle the sentence which has the same meaning as the one they hear may be given for listening comprehension practice.
6. Listen to the passage and check all the appropriate answers.
7. Listening for the message is focused upon when students listen to entire passages. Read from a well-graded book or play a message on tape and ask students to say or write the essential parts of the message they just heard. Let the students concentrate on the general theme or the central message, instead of on specific words or phrases.
8. In Problem Solving listening comprehension exercises, students listen to the description or presentation of a problem and solve it, by doing what is required of them.
9. Listening to an uncontrolled passage (a passage in which neither vocabulary nor sentence structure nor content is controlled or graded) and taking notes is an important listening comprehension skill that students must have if they wish to use English for purposes of higher education. They need to understand the lecture, go along with the lecture with ease when the content progresses in complexity, and be in a position to recall what was heard earlier for purposes of understanding what is being discussed by the lecturer at a later moment. Listening and Note Taking Competence is very much needed in college instruction. This skill may be developed in the second or foreign language learner of

English through several graded steps:

10.
  - i. Students are introduced to the mechanics of note-taking. They will be given a list of common symbols used as abbreviations for words and ideas. They should also be introduced to the processes and forms of outlining a content.
  - ii. Students may be given an outline with the basic points of the content of the lecture they are going to listen to. Along with these basic points, there will be blanks which they are required to fill in as they listen to the lecture. Then, at the end, they will answer some comprehension questions as well.
  - iii. In the next graded step, students may be given a bare outline and a set of comprehension questions. They are required to fill the outline, but take their own complete set of notes, and answer questions.
  - iv. The next advanced step will present only the major headings of the outline of the lecture, and the students are required to take their own complete set of notes, and then answer some comprehension questions.
  - v. In this step, students are given only comprehension questions. They are required to answer them after listening to the lecture. At this level, lectures may last for an entire class period.
11. It is important to include listening comprehension exercises to teach variations of style in English. English is greatly marked by such variations in usage. Such exercises help students understand the English spoken outside the classroom. For this it is important to use dialogues. Discuss the factors concerning the style of a particular passage given for listening comprehension. Focus on the speakers, situation, content, mood, channel, etc. You may focus upon the variations on a theme, on sound, grammar, and vocabulary, and ask students how the dialogues differ. Through such exercises students will become sensitive to style differences.

### **A FEW GENERAL SUGGESTIONS**

A few general suggestions for the selection and presentation of listening comprehension exercises may be in order here. As already pointed out, you should select your teaching points for listening comprehension from various language components. While the presentation is made, you should help students focus their attention on the presentation. You may alert the students to what they are going to do. You may give them written material to complete the task before they listen to the passage.



This will help them understand what they are expected to do after listening to the passage. Are they going to answer comprehension questions? Are they going to draw pictures or other physical response activities, or are they going to do problem solving exercises? Are they going to involve others in doing physical tasks, or are they going to tell the answers (oral answers)?

Are they going to write the answers, or are they going to put together and narrate? It is also important that you give a model question and a model answer in the beginning of the exercise.

While asking students to listen and complete a set task, your presentation should be given in normal speed and intonation. Do not reduce the speed. However, read the exercise over again, if demanded. The length and difficulty of exercise will decide the number of repetitions. If you focus upon recalling facts, you may repeat the exercise several times.

Feedback on the performance of students in listening comprehension exercises is better done by giving an answer key so that students themselves will check their answers. You may discuss the progress with students so that they will know how well they are progressing in listening to native English.

Remember that listening is an important skill which facilitates the mastery of other language skills. Continued exposure to native English speakers both in face to face communication and audiovisual means will help foster the listening skill. The unstressed vowels and the process of vowel reduction make listening a difficult process to master. If students have a better listening skill they are more likely to have a better pronunciation.

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[CONTENTS PAGE](#)

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## **CHAPTER 5 TEACHING SPEAKING**

### **ASKING AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS**

How do you get a second/foreign language learner to speak English? You may just ask the student to speak, ask him to say something in English. You can even tell him what to say. He may or may not understand the meaning of the utterances he is asked to produce, but he will imitate what you told him to repeat.

Another way is to ask the student a question. He will try to answer if he

realizes that he is being asked to answer a question. For this, he should understand what the question is, and he should have some mastery over the English phonology, grammar, and lexicon necessary to frame an appropriate answer. This is a more difficult task.

Asking and answering questions is an essential part of teaching, learning, and using any language. Asking questions and eliciting answers may be used for various purposes. First of all, asking questions enables the student to practice what he has learned. Secondly, you may ask questions to find whether the student understands the new vocabulary and the structures, and whether he is able to use them appropriately.

As Bowen et al. (1985) points out, “successful learners should be able to produce their thoughts in a way that will make their message accessible to native speakers of English who have no special training in linguistics or in the native language of the speaker.” You are a good speaker if you do not attract the attention of your listeners to how you say something, but to what you say.

Remember also that our goal in teaching speaking in English is not developing accuracy of pronunciation. There are several, almost insurmountable, problems that an adult second or foreign learner of English will face if he or she aims at perfect pronunciation like a native speaker of English. It is not accuracy of pronunciation but adequacy of fluency and communicative effectiveness that becomes the focus of speaking skill.

Despite a heavy accent, if the speech of a second/foreign language learner can be comprehended by a native speaker of English without forcing the native speaker to speak in shorter sentences than he normally does, with greater repetition and paraphrase of what he says for the benefit of the second language learner, we may consider the second or foreign language learner to have adequate efficiency in English speech. However, this is only an impressionistic evaluation, at the mechanical level of speaking. Speaking skill in English includes more than adequacy of pronunciation, as already pointed out. 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.

### **IMITATION AND REPETITION**

Imitation and repetition are important elementary steps in developing speaking skill in English. Imitation and repetition are inter-related, and yet they are distinct.

Imitation helps students to pronounce and produce the English utterance they hear from the teacher as closely as possible to the utterance produced

by her. Imitation is not restricted to mere production of the sounds, phrases, and sentences. It includes also the capacity to produce the utterances in the contexts in which the original utterances were produced.

On the other hand, repetition refers to the acts of producing the utterances in as close a manner as possible to the original. Repetition leads to automatic reproduction of the utterance, and, in the process, some sort of memorization of the sound or structure practiced takes place through repetition.

Note, however, that neither imitation nor repetition results in the mastery of any language. These are important steps in practicing the language material, but these should not become the focus of the learning process in the classroom, because ultimately the TESOL speaker is expected to use English in novel and unpredictable ways to meet his or her needs. Children in the process of acquiring their first language use imitation and repetition as props, but not as the main tool for acquisition.

Some of the imitation and repetition exercises may be organized in the following manner: Present some simple sentence, phrase, or word and ask students to repeat after you. If you want them to understand and repeat a conversation, say the questions and the answers and have the students repeat the latter, or perhaps both, signaling the meaning in some way. The meaning can be demonstrated with realia (real objects brought into the classroom), pictures, gestures, or translating.

The teacher may use pictures, gestures, pantomime, translation, guessing, and drawing on the board to make the students understand the meaning. It is important that you use only meaningful words, phrases, and sentences for imitation and repetition. The props you use to explain or demonstrate the meaning should enable the student to learn the meaning with ease, along with the pronunciation.

Ask students to repeat the utterance several times. Some learning takes place through repetition, and the student begins to see patterns at different levels. He may form some hypotheses as to the order of occurrence of sounds in a word, words in a phrase, or a sentence. He may begin to distinguish between statements and questions. He may generalize from what he has been exposed to, and form even new sentences based on what he has repeated so far. He may begin to substitute new words in place of the old in the sentences he has repeated and form new sentences.

In the initial phase of learning and teaching English, repetition and imitation serve to make students familiar with the sounds and structures, get the attention and interest of the students, and focus their effort in the learning process. However, if these are stressed continually, or made as the main process of learning, these soon become boring events, and do not contribute

to real learning of English. Naturally, the TESOL student will commit many errors at first. His pronunciation may not be appropriate, or he may not have reproduced all the elements or units of a word, phrase, or sentence. He will be hampered or guided by the structure and sounds of his language. However, imitation and repetition will help him to practice producing native-like utterances at the sound level.

## **SUBSTITUTION**

Substitution of a word, phrase, or sentence by another is an elementary method which helps students to produce new utterances and to develop 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 another to substitute in the proper place. In place of this, they may be given that and the students make the substitution and produce a new sentence That is a mat and so on.

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.

The substitution drill has been used very much by teachers of TESOL in the past. Although the substitution drill is highly useful for the production of new sentences, it is of limited value (like imitation and repetition) and may not be used as the chief means to develop speaking skill.

Substitution of sounds in minimally different words is a common practice in listening exercises to develop auditory discrimination of sounds. Substitution of one word or phrase by another in the same slot in a frame is a common practice in speaking exercises at the beginners' level.

From single word substitution, one may proceed to multiple word substitution in the same slot, without making grammatical changes in the frame: This is a pencil : This is a long pencil.

Consider the following:

Let's go to the cinema. (theater)  
Let's go to the theater (library).  
Let's go to the library (football).  
Let's play football (hockey).  
Let's play hockey (pizza).  
Let's eat pizza (milk).  
Let's drink milk.

Likewise we may proceed to multiple word substitution in the same slot which necessitates making some grammatical changes in the frame: This is a cat (cats) : These are cats.

Substitution drills can be made more complex as students learn more structures and words. Combining the substitution drill with processes of addition, deletion and transposition of words/phrases makes these more complex and challenging to students.

### **DAY-TO-DAY EXPRESSIONS**

Expressions of greeting, gratitude, small talk, introductions and making acquaintance, leave-taking, appreciation, expressions of regret and asking to be excused, etc., are very important communicative acts TESOL students need to master. For one thing, such expressions may take on different form and import in English than the ones students are accustomed to in their language and culture.

These expressions include, among others, Good morning. How are you?, Fine, Thanks, Hello, How do you do?, and Good-bye. These are learned as they are, with some explanation as to their meaning. Unlike other utterances, these are not analyzed into their structural components.

The students may be asked to memorize them and practice using them appropriate to the occasion: Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, good day, good night, etc. You should model their pronunciation and use in appropriate contexts and give students repeated practice so that they can incorporate these in their exchanges with you and other students in the class.

Sentences you teach should be so framed that these are useful and extendable to a variety of real situations. As already mentioned, some cultural information needs to be learned/taught in the use of these expressions. Students may use first names to address one another, but they will be required to use some titles such as Mr. or Mrs. or Dr. when they address adults. They may also use family names to begin with while addressing adults.

Small talk revolves around weather in English. One begins a conversation with another by commenting on weather. Then one introduces himself or herself to the other person. Starting a conversation across the fence, in crowded public places waiting for a game to begin, or in such similar contexts is quite common. This is called **phatic communion**.

Such phatic communication does not convey a heavy load of information. It functions as icebreakers, to maintain rapport between people, and to signify

friendship or lack of enmity. These expressions do vary from culture to culture. Perhaps we, as teachers of English, should learn the phatic communion adopted in the native language of our learners and teach, not only the phatic messages used in native English context, but also incorporate the messages from the culture of the learner as well.

## **SIMPLE QUESTION-ANSWER DIALOGUES**

Simple question-answer dialogues around a given context and object/objects is another elementary method to develop speaking skill in TESOL students.

There are three types of questions in English: yes/no questions, “or” questions, and WH-questions. Consider these questions which illustrate these types: Do you drink tea? Do you prefer tea or coffee? What do you usually drink? What is this?

Perhaps the easiest question to ask is What is this? Have a number of real objects and pictures of objects with you and ask the question What is this? while pointing to the object. Supply the name of the object and the answer for the question. Following this model, repeat the question and encourage the students to provide the suitable answer.

From this simple process of starting a dialogue, you may proceed to ask more complex questions. Note that the Yes/No questions are also easy to answer. The “Or” questions need more practice to answer.

How do we teach a dialogue? There are three types of drills one could use in the class: **choral drill** in which the entire class participates in one voice with the teacher modeling the utterance; **chain drill** in which one student asks the question and another answers, and in this way the entire class participates as a chain; and **individual drill** in which individual students are pointed out and asked to produce the utterance modeled by the teacher.

We recommend that you start with some form of choral drill, then proceed to chain drill, and finally ask individual students to answer your questions directly (individual drill). The class may be divided into two sections, one section repeating the question and another answering it. If role play is involved, assign roles to the sections.

The teacher can assume one of the roles among children. It is always fun when the teacher associates herself with some role and assigns the other roles to students. We can set up puppets, stick figures on the board, pictures, or even live objects for the roles, and the teacher will go behind each of these and produce their utterances as models (Bowen, et al. 1985). The teacher can create pretend situations and give students some model questions to ask these objects. Through dialogue accommodation we modify

the dialogues so that the roles and names in the dialogue are made suitable to the participants.

The question-answer dialogue may take the following format: The teacher may write the example on the board or model the example orally. The students will repeat the model. Then the teacher asks questions and the students give answers. The teacher then gives some cues for additional dialogue question-answers. The students ask each other questions. After this has been practiced for some time, the students are encouraged to make up their questions and answers. All these must be done within the limits of words and structures already known to the students.

Long answers are elicited using several strategies. The teacher gives a question and asks for a long and complete answer. What is your name? My name is Susan Madison. A question such as "What do you do in the morning?" generally leads to a long answer. Likewise, a question such as "Tell me about your work" results in a long answer. Questions on the previous lesson generally lead to long answers.

Eliciting long answers helps the student to compose his thoughts in English, search for appropriate words and structures and use them in the appropriate order. This brings out explicitly his grammatical knowledge (knowledge about the structure of English). Note, however, that in normal conversations long answers are not often expected or given.

As their knowledge of and proficiency in using words and structures increase, the teacher can ask her students to talk about real life, about themselves, their friends, things in the world and so on. The teacher can suggest some imaginary situations or the students themselves may assume an imaginary situation and engage themselves in conversation. In such free oral practice, the students may be asked to build the content of a dialogue by giving one sentence each (Doff 1988). There will be some initial reluctance on the part of the students, but such reluctance should be overcome.

## **ELICITING**

Eliciting is related to presentation of the lesson as well as asking questions. Eliciting is an important process which teachers must employ to get the class involved in what is going on in the class. For speaking practice eliciting is highly essential. It helps students to focus their attention, to think, and to use what they already know. It helps teachers to assess what the class already knew.

Presentation of a lesson with eliciting questions helps students remember words and structures, and gives them practice right then and there when the word is introduced. This may be used even to test the learning level

achieved so far within that particular lesson. For example, you may present words for the different parts of the face. Then follow it by eliciting each word by pointing to the feature on your face, asking students what it is called, and then how to spell it. If no one knows the answer for a particular item, give the answer yourself. Use the board to write the words.

In straightforward presentation, the teacher gives the word and points to the part, asks the students to repeat, and then writes the word on the board. In presentation with simple eliciting, the teacher presents the words one by one and points to the parts, asks the students to repeat after her, writes the words on the board, points to the feature and elicits the word for it, and elicits the spelling. Note that, in eliciting, students are actually asked to practice speaking.

You can elicit vocabulary from pictures; you can also elicit sentences and phrases which give the description of what is depicted in the pictures. Ask simple and common questions when you show the pictures to the students. Let the student answer according to each picture. For example, show a picture in which a girl is swimming, and ask the question, What is she doing? Show the picture of a doctor and ask the question, What is this man?

Pictures from previous lessons would be most ideal, for students already would be familiar with the words, phrases, and sentences needed to describe the pictures. How about a story known to your students which is now given in pictures and the student is asked to narrate it in English? Picture cues are very helpful in teaching tense in English.

Care should be taken to frame questions in an unambiguous manner and the questions should be such that the students are able to answer without much difficulty.

At least two types of questions may be asked using pictures. In Type 1, the questions relate directly to what is seen in the picture. In Type 2, the questions ask students to imagine and interpret the picture beyond what is seen clearly in it (Doff 1988).

Type 1 Questions: Where is this woman standing? What is she wearing? What is she doing? What is she holding in her hand? What time of day is it?

Type 2 Questions: Why is she standing here? What has happened? How does she feel? Why? What is she thinking? Write some of her thoughts in a few words. Imagine this is a scene from a film. What will happen next?

Type 1 questions elicit important words or structures relating to the picture.

Type 2 Questions, however, ask students to imagine things beyond the



picture, and to express possibilities using English. For this the students need to think and compose their thoughts, as well as find appropriate words and structures in English.

### **SPEAKING THROUGH GUESSING**

As we saw in the last chapter, guessing is important for listening comprehension. Guessing can be used also to develop speaking skill. Through the process of guessing, students are encouraged to see the patterns of usage and to “invent” the correct words and sentences. Students will guess words and sentences that have not yet been taught to them. Through guessing, students work out the rules of deriving new words for themselves.

The teacher writes a few pairs of sentences such as the following on the board (Doff 1988):

He drives buses. ----- He’s a bus driver.  
She sells books. --- She’s a book seller.

Based on these examples, students would guess the correct answers for the following.

Someone who drives trucks (truck driver)  
Someone who owns ships (ship owner)  
Someone who robs banks (bank robber)

You can find lots of such sets of words for eliciting. Egypt-Egyptian, Brazil-Brazilian; Russia-Russian, India-Indian; buy-bought, catch-caught, think-thought; leaf-leaves, loaf-loaves, knife-knives, wife-wives; interesting-more interesting, beautiful-more beautiful; sleep-slept, meet-met, feel-felt; short-shorter, big-bigger.

Mime may be used to encourage students to guess and speak about what is being mimed. The teacher writes an act on a sheet of paper and asks a student to mime what is written on the paper. Other students describe the act as in sentences such as You are changing a light bulb; You are brushing your teeth; You are reading a book.

A number of guessing games have been suggested by Doff (1988) and others to help students to produce sentences, to get the students to speak. One student may pretend to be a famous person demonstrating some characteristic features of that person. It may be physical appearance, dress, gait, posture, etc. Other students are required to guess who that person is by asking questions such as Are you alive? Are you American, British, etc.? Are you a writer? Are you a movie actor? Are you a general?

A student may choose a job and mime a typical activity of that job. Other

students try to guess the job by asking questions as to whether he is mending a shoe, cooking, is using his stethoscope, etc.

In yet another guessing game, an object is hidden and students are asked to guess the name of the object by asking questions such as, Is it made of wood? Is it a pencil? Is it on this side of the room? Is it high or low? etc.

### **DIRECTED DIALOGUES**

In Directed Dialogues, the teacher asks a student to make a comment to, or ask a question of, another student (Bowen et al. 1985). The teacher suggests the content of these remarks: Peter, ask Ann whether she needs some water to drink. Ann, tell Peter that you would like to have a soda.

In such directed dialogues, students must be able to understand what the teacher asks them to do, then identify the appropriate part of the teacher's utterance that would become their response, manipulate the grammatical structure suitably, and then produce the correct response.

Note that this exercise can be used to elicit full sentence statements or questions. This involves comparable adjustment in word order, choice of appropriate pronouns, verbs, and tense, etc.

In this dialogue, the fading of the teacher is more easily done: "Fading involves the withdrawal of the teacher stimulus and participation in an activity as student interest mounts and the activity no longer needs to be sustained by teacher direction. More and more responsibility is passed on to the students" (Bowen, et al. 1985:110).

### **SHOW AND TELL**

In this activity, students are encouraged to bring a favorite toy or object of any kind to class. Let the students bring only those objects which they can handle using the level of competence they have. They show their classmates what they have brought. They also tell them about it: how they got it, where it came from, what is it used for or what it can do, etc. Other students handle the object, try it out, ask questions about it, etc.

This provides a good opportunity for self-expression. More often than not, the class would ask WH-questions. The student will also tend to give answers in a form that is possible for him to frame.

### **ROLE PLAY**

Role play is perhaps the liveliest form to get the class involved in speaking. Role play brings situations from real life into the classroom. Students

imagine and assume roles. They create a pretend situation, and they pretend to be some different persons.

Once they assume a role the students are forced to improvise and to produce words and sentences appropriate to the situation as well as to the roles they have assumed. Teachers should select the roles beforehand so that the roles to be assumed are familiar and are within the linguistic competence attained until then by the students.

Roles such as friends, brothers, sisters, parents, teachers, shopkeepers, police officers, characters from the textbook and popular television programs have been suggested by Doff (1988) and others. Everyday life situations such as shopping, holidays, camps, local journeys, fables and folktales, etc., have been found very useful. Interviews are yet another excellent situation for role play.

As Doff (1988) points out, role play increases motivation. Always talking about real life can become very dull, and the chance to imagine different situations adds interest to a lesson. In addition, role play gives a chance to use language in new contexts and for new topics.

Students may have difficulty composing their thoughts in English or expressing them coherently, using appropriate grammatical structures and words. Teachers should give prompts wherever necessary, which would encourage students to guess and produce utterances appropriately. Role plays help reduce the common reluctance found among the second language learners in using English because of fear of committing errors in English. Teachers can improve structure practice by encouraging students to give a variety of responses, rather than the usual set responses a situation and a role may demand. The focus of practice should be on producing a text of related sentences suitable for the role and the situation, rather than on the production and practice of single sentences.

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. Begin first with the contexts of familiar stories. Go to local contexts including market situations, and then to contexts that may be peculiar to the native English speakers. I would recommend this activity for all classes. Try to include a role-play for every lesson you teach.

### **USE OF ENGLISH IN REAL WORLD**

While the role play gives practice in using English in situations similar to those outside the classroom, the situations are still controlled in some sense, because of the presence of the teacher and other prompts. On the other hand, use of English in the real world may offer features that are not captured in

the classroom pretend situations.

Also, use of English in the real world will demand a competence that solely, if not wholly, revolves around the student's attainment of English. Several community interaction activities are advised in order to develop the speaking skill in real world situations. Assignments should be given to students which will require oral communication between the student and the community. These assignments must be task-oriented.

For example, these assignments may involve buying a train or bus ticket, getting information about schedules of trains or buses, transactions with the "dry cleaners, shoe repairs, self-service laundries, auto repair shops, employment agencies, fast food establishments, the public library, fire stations, car wash facilities, state highway patrol, ambulance service, self-storage facilities, airport transportation, etc."

However, I would urge that you choose your contexts in such a manner that what you have chosen would be familiar to your students and would be appropriate to their level of competence in English. Note that it is not necessary for all the material culture facilities of the West to find a place in the English language lessons for the non-native speakers. If you can find suitable contexts within their own country in which the use of English would lead to an appropriate diction and structure in English, please prefer these contexts first.

Since English plays a very crucial and important role in India in all walks of life, the Indian teachers of TESOL should identify situations that are relevant to life in India relating to a variety of professions where English is ordinarily used. And use these situations to develop communicative competence in their students.

Gathering information from the community is another important way of using English in the real world. This requires going to the community institutions and getting information about the services they offer. These institutions are many, such as the post office, a bank, a movie theater, the bus company, a car rental office, the International Student House, and so on. Include in it dialogues in a doctor's office with the nurses and doctor, dialogues in a department store, with a waiter and so on. In all these instances, the student should acquire adequate vocabulary, relevant structure, and socially appropriate usage (Bowen, et al. 1985).

Interviewing native speakers in the classroom is an important exercise that will encourage speech. This will also be an occasion to explain certain cultural constraint one is expected to observe. For example, questions relating to the age, weight, or salary of the interviewee, are not considered appropriate in native English-speaking context.

Another important step in developing speaking skill is to ask and enable students to pass on the information they have collected to other students in the class. This will help students focus on the essentials and compose their thoughts and sentences accordingly.

In the real world, making excuses and getting oneself excused from an activity is a very important skill in the domain of conversation. It requires tact, understanding of the parties involved, succinct and convincing explanations, not too much prodding and such other characteristics that would be considered imposition or intrusion, and other socially appropriate usage. There may be differences in this area between practices followed in English-speaking societies and the society of the second language learner. You should learn how excuses are made in an appropriate manner in the language of your students and ask your students to imagine such situations in native English-speaking contexts and teach appropriate usage.

Developing abilities to understand the intentions of someone, and to communicate your own intentions in a more sophisticated indirect manner, are very much demanded in native English. Recognizing the intentions of the speaker often requires a good linguistic and sociolinguistic sensibility.

It will be hard for you to imagine and prepare passages of this type. My suggestion is that you watch for these passages in the day to day conversations you may have with your friends, in cartoons, and in books which focus on jokes. Consider this dialogue reported in Bowen, et al. (1985). Teen-age son: The manager at the used car lot assured me that the Plymouth had only one previous owner, an elderly lady who drove it very little and treated it like a jewel. Father: That's a man you can really trust.

Expressing Politeness/Annoyance requires a skill in the manipulation of intonation (tone of voice), as well as in the use of words and expressions. A number of situations may be presented to the class for practice. Students will be given a description of the situation and asked to generate appropriate sentences to the roles they are assigned. While suggesting situations for practice, look for the most appropriate contexts for your class. The class should not be expected to know a lot more about the social life of the native English speakers to understand these passages. If a lot of explanation is to be given, the fun in learning these would be lost. Choose those contexts which are easy to recreate and easy to explain. Choose those contexts which would not demand complicated structures. Also choose those contexts which would use only those structures which are familiar, and which have been practiced already in the class.

Sometimes it may be necessary to analyze and describe situations to enable the students to understand whether an utterance is a formal one or not, whether it is an informal utterance, rude, neutral, etc. This discussion may

be incorporated as part of the introduction the teacher gives to the class before speaking practice of selected utterances begins. Problems in interpersonal relations are easily revealed in linguistic exchanges. Linguistic exchanges reveal the attitude of the participants in the conversation process.

Language Games such as “rumor” 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 (Bowen et al. 1985). What other games would you like to introduce for the development of the speaking skill?

Translation is another helpful device to encourage students to speak in English. The students may be given some sentences in their own native language and asked to translate them and use these to answer or ask questions. There are several other ways of using translation as a tool to develop speaking skill.

Survival English is basic English which one needs to use to get around places and meet some basic necessities of life in a native English environment. For example, one needs to know how to flag down a taxi and to tell the taxi driver where to take him. One needs to know how to get to the Underground station and to reach places in London. This kind of English focuses on the needs and problems of the student in his immediate environment.

The student should have the ability to produce expressions in a manner comprehensible to native speakers of English. “If he depends on trains, he’ll need expressions about departures, stations, destinations, tickets, etc. Regardless of where he is, he should learn to count and should master directional terms necessary to communicate with a taxicab driver, such as ‘right, left, straight ahead, stop here, how much,’ etc. He should learn to use gestures, pointing, finger counting, etc. that will support his attempts at oral communication, and he should have the means of enlarging his vocabulary when bilinguals are available, by asking questions to clarify meanings and pronunciation” (Bowen et al. 1985:110-111).

Survival English should not be taught separately as an end in itself in a TESOL class. It is to be considered only as a stage or a part of the learning process. If survival English is focused upon as an end in itself, students may have no motivation to develop proficiency in English. They may lose their motivation to seek further improvement in using English. They may develop a “pidgin” English of their own.

#### **ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILL**

Teachers of TESOL have been reporting on the strategies they use to develop the speaking skill of their students. The strategies adopted by experienced teachers are many and it may not be possible to list all these. However, in order to stimulate your curiosity and help you innovate your own strategies matching the needs of your students, we give below some sample strategies published by TESOL teachers.

Harsch (1994) suggests that we can use dictation to help students negotiate the meaning of utterances they hear. Such negotiations are carried through speaking and thus directly help improve the speaking abilities of students. Six steps are suggested: interrupt to stop the speaker with expressions such as Excuse me, or Pardon me, or Sorry, etc. Then the students question the speaker as to whether they heard him correctly by repeating the words or sentences they are unsure about. They will do it by raising their intonation at the end. Thirdly, the students will ask the speaker to repeat with questions such as You went where? Or She's what?

Students will follow it up by giving feedback to show that they understand what is being spoken to them. The next strategy is to control the pace of conversation by asking the speaker to speak more slowly. Finally, the students would ask the speaker to repeat by saying, Could you please repeat that? Note that these strategies introduce the student to procedures in carrying out a conversation.

Asking students to introduce another student, friend, or visitor to the class, and speaking on a given topic in front of the class, are highly recommended by many teachers of TESOL. This helps students to compose their thoughts in English in a coherent and attractive manner, and to overcome any fear in speaking English in public.

Huntoon (1994) has used 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 conditions in which these verbs should be used, even as it demands a variety of topics to be presented by the students.

We have already discussed the usefulness of Total Physical Response activities for listening. This can be used also for developing speaking skill. Braverman (1994) seats her students in a circle, performs an action, and asks the students to say what she is doing. The students are expected give responses such as, You are walking, You are eating, etc. Then she calls upon students one by one to perform different kinds of action and to ask the question, What am I doing? The students are required to answer these questions.

Ted Plaister, a seasoned TESOL teacher trainer, uses a box of raisins to promote speech. In other words, anything in the environment can be used for getting students to speak in the class. Plaister (1994) suggests passing out boxes of raisins with a caution not open the boxes. Individual students are asked questions such as, How many colors can you find on the box? Students are asked to name them. Then they are asked to describe the girl on the front of the box. Questions such as, What is she holding in her hands? What does oz. mean? What is the girl wearing on her head? Then the students are asked to open the box and count the raisins in English. They are asked to make a report on the number of raisins they have. This is followed by questions such as What were raisins before they became raisins? What is the process called? What countries are the major producers? How are raisins used besides being eaten as they are? How would they describe a raisin to someone who hasn't seen one before?

Plaister also introduces names to help TESOL learners to distinguish between female and male names, through a game "My friends call me Ted." The model sentence used here is, My given or first name is Theodore, but my friends call me Ted.

A list similar to the following will be very useful for practice.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nickname</b>
Theodore	Ted
Kathleen	Kathy
Frederick	Fred
Elizabeth	Beth/Betty/Liz
Thomas	Tom
Margaret	Peg/Peggy
Samuel	Sam
Sarah	Sally/Sal
Henry	Hank
Frances	Fran
Michael	Mike
Sarah	Sally
Douglas	Doug
Christine	Katy/Kit
Robert	Bob/Rob



Dorothy	Dot
Philip	Phil
Jennifer	Jenny
Edward	Ed/Ted
Nancy	Nan

Asking students to Present Oral Reports for some minutes in front of the class on a given topic will help the students to edit their speech beforehand to make it suitable for their audience.

Life history and testimony of the student is a good topic for the purpose. He will focus upon his birth, family, childhood, school, work specialization, marriage, travel, present activities, and plans, etc. Note that practicing this as part of speaking skill will help develop the writing skill later on. In writing, this will take the form of guided composition. Subsequent assignments can include oral reports on other subjects, and may lead to debates between class members (Bowen et al. 1985).

Oral reports, telling anecdotes, or jokes are some of the activities you should incorporate in every class. The ability to talk about an incident, tell an anecdote, joke, etc., is a valuable social skill. Presentation should always be followed by a question-answer session in which the class will raise questions and the presenter will answer. Some assistance from the teacher may be required at this stage.

Learning rhymes, poems, songs, proverbs, sayings, etc., brings the student a little closer to the culture. Additionally, the rhythms learned along with the poems and even the songs are usually valid examples of the suprasegmental elements in the language. Note that this does not demand that students should be taught composing nursery rhymes. You should expose them to popular literature, ask them to imitate and repeat after you, and use these as interludes for fun and learning. A lot of learning does take place when students get involved in enacting the content of the rhymes. Intonations are easily acquired in a chorus drill.

To conclude, combine speaking practice with other skills. Let the students get source material for an oral report through a reading or a listening assignment. What is taught for the development of one language skill could be used for the development of other language skills. Repetition of the familiar material in another mode will help students in quickly mastering the related skill.

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## **CHAPTER 6**

### **TEACHING PRONUNCIATION**

#### **THE NEED FOR PROPER PRONUNCIATION**

Pronunciation is a very important component of speaking skill. Without proper pronunciation, which should be somewhat similar to but not necessarily identical to native performance, second or foreign language users of English will not be able to communicate accurately.

It is possible to communicate the information without elegant pronunciation. It is also possible to communicate one's intent without elegant pronunciation. However, such communication would be inadequate or could even lead to miscommunication. Moreover, if we allow this to happen all the time and if we do not insist on certain standards of pronunciation, there is a danger that the students would be "led to a permanent plateau of pidgin from which very few emerge" (Bowen et al. 1985).

Remember that pronunciation lends accuracy to the message conveyed. Remember also that if the learner's pronunciation is "very poor", a concept which needs to be clarified and specified in context, he will have great difficulty in communicating orally with native speakers of English. He may have excellent skills in writing and reading, but if his pronunciation is very poor, he will not be seen to be proficient in English. Native speakers of English often tend to be generous towards the second/foreign learners of English. And yet there is always the danger that poor pronunciation may be equated with the lack of knowledge of English.

#### **MODELING PROPER PRONUNCIATION**

Pronunciation has been often taught through modeling by the teacher who asks students to listen and imitate her. She corrects the pronunciation, possibly then and there, and asks students to listen and imitate her pronunciation through graded presentation of words, phrases and sentences.

Minimal pairs of words such as bit:beat, hit:heat are used to develop correct pronunciation. These may be followed by phrases and sentences for proper sentence melody practice.

More often than not, the teacher expects a native-like pronunciation from her students, which the adult students often find impossible to achieve. Ultimately such a teacher is forced to settle for a level of pronunciation

which may be understood without much effort by the native speakers, even though it is heavily accented!

## **FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE PRONUNCIATION**

Experience tells us that individuals differ from one another as to their ability to pronounce English correctly. At least six factors have been identified by teachers of TESOL. These are: 1. The influence of the learner's native language. 2. The learner's age. 3. The learner's exposure to English – length and intensity of exposure. 4. The learner's innate phonetic ability. 5. The learner's attitude and sense of identity. 6. The learner's motivation and concern for good pronunciation (Celce-Murcia and Goodwin 1991:137).

The socio-economic class of the learner, whether he comes from a family in which members already know and use some English, and whether there are opportunities available in the community to continue to practice English outside the classroom, may also have an impact upon the level of proficiency attained in the pronunciation of English. The socio-political attitudes towards learning and teaching English which prevail in the nation appear to influence the performance of students in the rural areas.

## **GOAL OF TEACHING PRONUNCIATION**

Most TESOL teachers do not aim at imparting “perfect” pronunciation. Even native-like pronunciation is not insisted upon in all contexts. Teachers have recognized that it takes a lot of time to master “perfect” pronunciation and that the results are not often worth the time and effort.

When mature students try seriously to imitate a foreign pronunciation model, and when the expertise is available to offer technical assistance, they will demonstrate the physical capacity for a quite satisfactory production. But the minute the students' attention is diverted to the content of the message, the pronunciation control loosens, and native language influence reappears to produce a heavy speech accent . . . For most adult students a reasonable goal is the ability to communicate orally with ease and efficiency, but without expecting to achieve a competence in pronunciation that would enable them to conceal their own different language background. At the same time it should be possible to achieve a consistent production of the basic contrasts of the sound system, to speak fluently and understandably in a form that requires minimum adjustment on the part of one's listeners. And of course students must be capable of understanding native pronunciation under normal circumstances of production, and not require of their interlocutors a special style (Bowen, p.102, in Celce-Murcia, et al. 1979).

## **TIME SPENT ON PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE**

How much time should be devoted to pronunciation? The answer depends on factors such as “level of instruction, age range of the students, aims of the course, availability of materials, training of teachers, intensity of involvement, interest of students, etc” (Bowen et al. 1985:133).

Availability of time for the course and for the specific class hour is another important factor. If the course is intended only for the development of pronunciation, there will be plenty of time on hand, and the teacher will lead her students through several levels and kinds of materials dealing with structures.

If we spend a lot of time on pronunciation exercises, student interest may dwindle. So, teachers should move on to something else when pronunciation exercises no longer produce noticeable progress. Five to ten minutes of class time per meeting for as long as the need and willingness of the students last - this is a golden rule (Bowen et al. 1985).

### **TEACHER’S PREPARATION**

The first requirement that a TESOL teacher should meet is that she should be familiar with the basic sound system of English. The basic system includes the individual consonants, consonant clusters, vowels, and diphthongs as well as stress, and intonation. It also includes the combinations and the distributional patterns of these elements. The TESOL teacher should know what is meant by vowels, consonants, diphthongs, stress, and intonation.

It is important for the TESOL teacher to be familiar with and able to use either the International Phonetic Alphabet or some modified form of it. This will help her to make some comparison between English sounds and sound patterns with those of the native language of the learners. This will also help her to explain in some graphic details why the learners have difficulty with some sounds and not with others. Again, by using the International Phonetic Alphabet she will be able to demonstrate and make the learners identify the manner and place of articulation of the sounds they have difficulty in producing.

Teaching pronunciation involves teaching the articulation of consonants, vowels, and diphthongs used in English. These are called segmental sounds. Teaching pronunciation involves teaching also the use of stress and intonation, called suprasegmental. First of all, familiarize yourself with the parts and uses of speech tract. Then, understand the processes involved in the production of the sounds.

### **CONSONANT PRODUCTION**

The processes involved in the production of English consonants may be looked at from two angles: **manner and places of articulation**.

Place or point of articulation is the point at which the air from the lungs is either interrupted totally or partly, and is modified in the vocal tract to produce a sound. Scholars identify seven places of articulation in the production of English consonants. These are labial, labiodental, dental, alveolar, palatal, velar, and glottal. Manner of articulation refers to the manner in which the airflow in the vocal tract is modified by the speech organs in the production of a sound. Scholars identify six manners of articulation in the production of English sounds. These are as follows: Stop, Fricative, Affricate, Nasal, Liquid, and Glide.

### **VOWEL PRODUCTION**

The TESOL teacher should also have a good knowledge of the processes involved in the production of vowels in English. Vowels pose greater difficulty to the second or foreign language learners of English, especially because of certain complex relations between them, stress, and the production of diphthongs.

In the production of a vowel sound there is no interruption whatsoever of the airflow in the speech tract and there is no audible friction either.

Four criteria are generally employed in the identification and description of vowels. 1. Lip rounding/unrounding, that is, the kind of opening made at the lips, the degrees of lip rounding or spreading. 2. Tongue height, that is, the extent to which the tongue rises in the direction of the palate. 3. The part of the tongue that is raised: front, center, or back. 4. The position of the soft palate which is raised for the production of oral vowels, and which is closed for the production of nasalized vowels (Crystal 1987:153).

It is also important to note whether a vowel is tense or lax and whether a vowel is accompanied by another vowel-like sound which together forms a diphthong. In some cases it is important to note the length of the vowel produced.

The following list gives the sounds used in American English, as detailed in Prator, Jr., and Robinett (1972).

1. /b/ boat
2. /d/ dark
3. /f/ far
4. /g/ gold
5. /h/ home
6. /k/ cold, Kodak

7. /l/ let
8. /m/ man
9. /n/ next
10. /ŋ/ (velar nasal) ring
11. /p/ part
12. /r/ rest
13. /s/ send
14. /ʃ/ ship
15. /t/ ten
16. /θ/ think
17. /ð/ that
18. /v/ very
19. /w/ went
20. /y/ you
21. /z/ zoo
22. /z/ pleasure
23. /hw/ when
24. /ts/ children
25. /dz/ jury
26. /a/ far
27. /æ/ am
28. /ɛ/ (epsilon) get
29. /ɪ/ in
30. /ɔ/ (broken o) for
31. /ʊ/ put
32. /ɪ/ (inverted v) but
33. /eɪ/ late
34. /iː/ see
35. /oʊ/ go
36. /uː/ rule
37. /aɪ/ I
38. /aʊ/ now
39. /ɔɪ/ (broken o plus y) boy
40. /iə/ (i with schwa) feel
41. /ɪə/ hill
42. /eə/ sale
43. /ɛə/ (epsilon plus schwa) well
44. /æə/ (æ plus schwa) shall

### **SUPRASEGMENTALS**

The TESOL teacher should have a good knowledge of how the suprasegmentals are employed in English. Suprasegmentals are those sounds which are overlaid on segmentals. These do not occur without the segmentals which carry them.

Stress, rhythm, and intonation are the three important elements of the suprasegmental system used in English.

Some syllables may be produced with more force or intensity than others. This is called stress. English is a free stress language, unlike French in which the stress always falls on the last syllable of the utterance. In English the stress can be placed on any syllable of the utterance in order to achieve a variety of purposes. The meaning of single words can be changed by shifting the stress. Words which are not ordinarily stressed may be stressed for emphasis.

Remember that recognition (and production) of vowels and stress in English is very difficult for the second or foreign language learners of English. Some rules have been identified to explain why, where, and when the stress falls in a word in English. “Unfortunately, there are no infallible rules for determining which syllable of a word should be stressed. Many times you will need to turn to the dictionary unless you hear the word spoken by someone familiar with it. Certain observations, however, should be of help.

1. The great majority (at least three out of four) of two syllable words are accented on the first syllable: never, breakfast, Monday.
2. Compound expressions:
  3.
    - Compound nouns ordinarily have a primary accent on the first component and secondary accent on the second: drugstore, thoroughfare, weatherman.
    - In compound verbs the reverse is true; there is usually secondary accent on the first component and a primary on the second: understand, overlook, outrun.
    - In the intensive-reflexive pronouns the stronger accent also falls on the last syllable: myself, yourself.
    - Numbers ending in -teen may receive primary stress on either syllable, but it is best for a student learning English as a second language to put it on the last syllable, so as to distinguish clearly between thirty and thirteen, forty and fourteen.
  4. A large group of words, which may be used either as nouns or verbs, have a difference in stress to indicate the difference in usage. In such cases, the noun has a primary accent on the first syllable, the verb on the last (compare 2a and 2b above). The nouns in this group of words sometimes have secondary accent on the last syllable: increase, overflow.

cónduct    condúct

cónflict	conflićt
cóntèst	contést
cóntràct	contráct
cóntràst	contrást
cónvert	convért
désert	desért
íncline	inclíne
íncreàse	incréase
ínsert	insért
ínsult	insúlt
óverflòw	òverflów
pérmit	permít
prógress	progréss
prótèst	protést
rébel	rebél
récord	recórd
súrvèy	survéy
súspect	suspéct

5. In general, when a suffix is added to a word, the new form is stressed on the same syllable as was the basic word: abandon, abandonment; happy, happiness; reason, reasonable. Words ending in -tion, -sion, -ic, -ical, -ity, however, almost always have primary stress on the syllable preceding the ending. The addition of one of these suffixes may, therefore, result in a shift of accent: contribute, contribution; biology, biological; public, publicity.” (Prator, Jr. and Robinett 1972:19-21).

### **FOCUSING ON SELECTED SOUNDS**

Do not teach the sounds of English individually. The sounds should be part of a meaningful word or phrase or sentence. Students generally pick up the sound system by listening to your model or voices on cassette, etc.

However, the presentation of sounds in a carefully selected word or phrase or sentence will help you to direct the students’ learning process. And this will help you also to monitor their progress. By practicing words and phrases which contain the sounds to be learned, students are able to master



the production and use of these sounds.

Introduce the sound. Focus students' attention on the teaching point. Present a sentence or line/text which has the sound. Underline the sound in the text. Avoid complications of stress, intonations, etc. Include examples of the sound in all the positions.

### **HELPING STUDENTS TO RECOGNIZE AND DISCRIMINATE SOUNDS**

What sounds should be focused upon? Some suggest that only those sounds that are not common between English and the native language of the learner should be focused upon for special treatment in a pronunciation lesson. Some others suggest that "when an individual begins the study of a foreign language, the new phonemes are often immediately obvious to him, and he, therefore, tends to learn them rather quickly" (Prator, Jr., and Robinett 1972: xiii).

It may be helpful to make use of a contrastive study of the phonetics of English and the native language of the second or foreign language learner. Through this study we will identify the sounds of English that are not found in the native phonetic and phonemic system of the second or foreign language learner.

Sounds that are used as allophones in the native language may be used as phonemes in English. There may be differences in the number and kinds of phonemes between English and the source language of the learner. Even if all the phonemes of English are found in the source language of the learner, it is possible that their distributional patterns may not match those of the phonemes used in English.

It is also possible that the phonemes of English may occur in combinations that are unfamiliar in the source language. English and the native language of the learner may have similar phonemes at different points of articulation.

However, such a contrastive study may or may not be available to you. If you have to prepare such a contrastive study on your own, you will need more skills in linguistics than you may have right now. Making a contrast between English and the native language of the learner should lead you to set up a hierarchy of possible errors in pronunciation. Otherwise mere contrast will be only a futile exercise. Under such circumstances what shall we do?

Scholars have found out that there are "large categories of speech difficulties which all or many" learners of English have in common. In an exhaustive study of errors committed by a variety of second or foreign

language learners of English, Prator, Jr., and Robinett (1972) found out that substitution of one phoneme for another was relatively infrequent in the speech of their students. Only a few such substitutions—/iy/ for /I/, /I/ for /iy/, /o/ for /ow/, /a/ for /ə/, /s/ for /z/, /t/ for /d/, /d/ for /ð/, etc.—accounted for the great majority of cases.

Most others, while theoretically possible or even likely, were actually quite uncommon and certainly could not be regarded as a problem of major importance. We found our students having no trouble with /m/ or the diphthongs /ay/, /aw/, etc. even in those where the mispronunciation should have resulted in giving the word a different meaning **bit** as /biyt/ (beat) instead of /bIt/, the context made the intended meaning quite clear. In other words, the substitution seldom seemed to result in a misunderstanding . . . Our students appeared simply to fail to understand a word much more often than they mistook it for some other word. We did not understand them a great deal more frequently than we misunderstood them . . . When an individual begins the study of a foreign language, the new phonemes are often immediately obvious to him, and he therefore tends to learn them rather quickly . . . But he may never notice or reproduce certain other features of the new sound system, unless these are pointed out to him . . . Our own solution has been to regard unintelligibility not as the result of phonemic substitution, but as the cumulative effect of many little departures from the phonetic norms of the language.

The fact that any phonetic abnormality can contribute to unintelligibility does not mean, either, that all departures from the norm should be treated as though they were of equal importance.” (Prator, Jr., and Robinett 1972).

In general, you should identify the main pronunciation problems that your students have. Pronunciation problems will vary greatly from one country to another. TESOL teachers may already have prepared and published a list of common errors of pronunciation found in a particular country. If not, keep a diary of errors in pronunciation committed by your students and prepare a general list which you can use to develop remedial drills.

The most common errors include the following: 1. Difficulty in pronouncing sounds which do not exist in the student’s language. For example, the sound / ð / in the, and / ə / in bird. 2. Confusion of similar sounds, for example, /i:/ in eat or /I/ in it, or /b/ and /p/. 3. Use of simple vowels instead of diphthongs, for example, use of /i:/ instead of /i /. 4. Difficulty in pronouncing consonant clusters, for example, desks, fifth. 5. Tendency to give all syllables equal stress, and flat intonation (Doff 1988:112).

### **HELPFUL HINTS FOR TEACHING PRONUNCIATION**

Focus only on those sounds which are causing difficulty to the students. The following steps may be helpful in teaching the difficult sounds: Say the

sound alone, but this may be avoided wherever possible. Say the sound in a word. Contrast it with other sounds. Write words on the board only when it becomes necessary to make your point clearer. Explain how to make the sound. Have students repeat the sound in chorus. Have individual students repeat the sound.

As Doff (1988:114) points out,

say the sound clearly in isolation (so that students can focus on it) and in one or two words; and (ask) students to repeat the sound, in chorus and individually. If students confuse two similar sounds, it is obviously useful to contrast them so that students can hear the difference clearly. If students have difficulty in producing a particular sound (usually because it does not exist in their own language), it is often very useful to describe how it is pronounced, as long as this can be done in a way that students understand (using simple English or their own language).

Some other steps which you can follow are: use the minimal pairs to practice the sounds (will/well), say a word or phrase with the difficult sound, leaving a blank for the student to fill it in with the known word: A boy and a (girl); First, second and (third); a pigeon is a kind of (bird). You may also make up sentences with words which are difficult for the students to produce, and ask the students to repeat after you and then produce the same on their own.

Remember that a sound cannot be reproduced by chance. Students must first hear it and recognize. However, we should not spend a lot of time in practicing aural discrimination of sounds as a focused activity. Aural discrimination practice should take only a few minutes of class time.

Place the new sound in a fixed position in a number of words. Write these words on the board. Model these selected words, giving the same intonation for all words.

Aural recognition and discrimination is better achieved through minimal pair drills. Contrast two sounds in English in minimal pairs. Contrast two sounds, one in the native language of the learner and another in English. Often it is helpful to give the approximate equivalent of the English sound in the learner's native language. Emphasize that the similarity is only approximate, wherever some difference is noticeable.

Model the pairs and then ask students to tell the difference between the pairs of sounds. Same-Different exercise drills are very useful for this purpose. For example, you can give bit/beat/beat and ask which ones are similar and which ones are different. You can give the sentences He bit me/He beat me and ask the students to show where the difference lies.

## CLASSROOM PRACTICE

“Pronunciation instruction has been presented in various ways. First there is model of imitation . . . A second technique for teaching pronunciation is explanation . . . A third technique is practice. A fourth technique is comparison and contrast. Two similar but significantly contrasting sounds are taught together, with an effort to highlight the feature that differentiates them . . . This kind of comparison helps pinpoint the difference, but doesn’t always guarantee efficient acquisition of the two contrasting sounds” (Bowen 1979 in Celce-Murcia, M. and McIntosh, L., Eds. Teaching English as a Second Language, Newbury House Publishers, Inc., Mass.: Rowley, 1979).

Face the class, walk around, speak at normal speed, and model the utterance for students to imitate. Produce the sounds in isolation, in isolated words, isolated phrases, and later in sentences. Finally produce them in communicative sentences. Ask the students to imitate your pronunciation. Generally speaking, production of sounds in isolation is for demonstration purposes only. It is always better to produce the sounds in words and phrases which can be easily explained and understood. The new sounds may be given in new words, but not in phrases and sentences which are not understood. Give the meaning for the item which is being drilled.

It is always better for the students to drill the words and phrases with their books or sheets open so that they will develop some sensitivity on their own to the correspondence between pronunciation and spelling.

Some of the simple exercises for the pronunciation of sounds are as follows: Prepare a list of the sounds used in English. Go through the list and model the same for the students. Ask them to imitate and repeat after you.

Prepare a list of admissible combination of sounds in English, go through the list, and model the same for the students. Ask them to imitate and repeat after you.

Prepare a list of very common words, write them as they are usually spelled in English, go through the list, model them for the students, and ask them to imitate and repeat after you.

Then select a few words from the list at random, ask the students to read them, keeping in their auditory memory the model you have provided earlier. In subsequent repetition drills, contrast a newly introduced sound with the one already mastered: pot:putt; lock:luck; rob:rub; duck:dock.

This may be followed by testing drills in which the teacher gives an item and the students recognize the sound in contrast to another. For example, the

teacher gives bit and beat as the model. Then she gives words such as hit, heat, leave and live, and asks the students whether the given word resembles in its vowel with hit or heat. Note this kind of testing is more a testing of aural recognition than actual production. However, aural recognition is an important segment of actual production. Production and recognition should go hand in hand.

### **PRACTICE IN CONTEXT ONLY**

Always practice in a meaningful context by asking students appropriate questions. In the early part of the pronunciation drill, you may be required to give practice of individual sounds and words without much context. Even here you should explain the meaning of the word in which the sound occurs so that some contextualizing will take place.

Once words, phrases and sentences are introduced, context is more easily created. You may ask them to give the names of objects around or in the pictures presented to the students. You may ask the students to give their own names and names of people around them. You may ask questions about their family and friends, what they do, what they did that day, and so on.

Paulston and Bruder (1976) suggest three types of questions to practice materials in context: questions which demand recapitulation of beginning material, opinion-type questions, and discussion type questions.

Words introduced earlier may be used for additional practice by asking students to give the names of objects shown to them or found in the pictures presented to them. This demands recapitulation of the words already introduced. Opinion type and discussion type questions are good for advanced students.

### **TEACHING STRESS AND INTONATION**

As a teacher of TESOL, you should know what a syllable is. You should be able to identify the syllables in an utterance. Train yourself to identify and count the syllables in words, phrases, and sentences.

Remember that most words with two or more syllables have one stressed or strong syllable and one or two unstressed or weak syllables. Stress is not dependent upon the fixed place in the sentence. Stress can occur on any syllable. Generally speaking, only nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, demonstratives and interrogatives are stressed.

Often the vowel in the unstressed syllables is pronounced as / ə / or / I /. Notice the vowel in the beginning of the following words: Asia, apart, attack. All these words have / ə / in the beginning which is unstressed.

Notice the first vowel in the word between, and the last vowel in the word wanted. The vowel used is /ɪ/. In the words able, and table, the “a” is pronounced as /eɪ/. In vegetable and syllable, it is reduced to /ə/. In the word day, the “ay” is pronounced /eɪ/ but in the words Monday, and Tuesday, it is often reduced to /ɪ/.

Note also that the vowels in many conjunctions and prepositions such as and, but, at, for, of are normally reduced unless the word is being specially stressed for meaning conveyed. It is stressed in the construction John and Mary, both of them.

Reducing vowels in this way is a feature of normal spoken English. It is, however, very difficult for the second/foreign language learner to master. You should use and demonstrate reduced vowels in your own speech in the classroom.

Discuss what is meant by stress with your students if their native language does not use stress. Whisper stressed words. This will show how the stressed syllables are more prominent than the others. Pronounce a few selected words, and ask students to underline stressed syllables. Prepare exercises to demonstrate how stress changes the meaning.

“Strong stresses are one of the distinguishing features of the English language; the important syllables in English are more prominent, the unimportant syllables less prominent than in most other languages. Stress then is the key to the pronunciation of an English word. If you stress the wrong syllable, it may be quite impossible for anyone listening to understand what you are trying to say . . . Persons who learn English as a second language often make the mistake of pronouncing unstressed vowels the way they are spelled . . . Unless you consult a pronouncing dictionary or a competent English-speaking person, there is no sure way of knowing whether the unaccented vowels of an unfamiliar word should be /ə/ or /ɪ/. Frequently it makes no difference . . . Unfortunately, there are no infallible rules for determining which syllable of a word should be stressed. Many times you will need to turn to the dictionary unless you hear the word spoken by someone familiar with it . . .” Prator, Jr., and Robinett (1972).

When it comes to teaching stress in English, especially to adult learners, it is important that we combine modeling for production with auditory recognition and explanation of possible rules for the placement of the strong stress (primary accent). For this purpose, you may present several words of polysyllables and ask students to decide which syllable is stressed in each word thus presented. They will mark the primary accent on the vowel in the written word. This may be followed by an exercise in which the students will identify which of the syllables are unstressed in the words given.

Our goal is to increase the ability of the students to recognize and place stresses. To achieve this it is important that we give our students groups of graded lists of words, such as two syllabic, three syllabic, four syllabic, and five syllabic words. Perhaps each group may consist of five or six words, and the students will be asked to listen to the oral model provided and to mark the syllable or syllables which are stressed. The task may be made more complex by asking students to mark not only the stressed but also the unstressed vowels of the words.

Auditory recognition must be followed by oral production. Again, production of individual words must be followed by the production of phrases and sentences in that order.

Remember that English is a stress-timed language. This means that the length of time between stressed syllables is always about the same, and if there are several unstressed syllables they must be said more quickly. He wrote a letter. He wrote a long letter. He wrote a very long letter. In each of these sentences, the unstressed syllables (a, a long, a very long) take about the same amount of time to say. So, “a very long” has to be said more quickly.

Emphasize that this stress timing is a very important feature of spoken English. If students become accustomed to hearing English spoken with a natural rhythm in class, they will find it easier to understand real English when they hear it spoken outside the class.

You can use several devices to demonstrate visually where there should be stress and where it should be unstressed. This can be done by using your voice. Say the sentence, exaggerating the difference between stressed and unstressed syllables.

This can be done also by using gesture. Use your arms like a conductor of an orchestra, use a stronger gesture for the stressed syllable. Clapping or tapping on a desk more loudly for the stressed syllables, and less for the unstressed syllables is another technique you can adopt.

You can use the black board. You can circle the element in a word which is unstressed, and underline an element that is stressed. You can write the stressed syllable in heavier letters.

Prator, Jr., and Robinett (1972:28) suggest tackling the problem of acquiring a good English speech rhythm under five parts:

1. Giving proper emphasis to stressed syllables, and making these recur rather regularly within a thought group.
2. Weakening unstressed words and syllables, and obscuring the

- vowels in most of them.
3. Organizing words properly into thought groups by means of pauses.
  4. Blending the final sound of each word and syllable with the initial sound of the one following within the same thought group.
  5. Fitting the entire sentence into a normal intonation pattern.

Remember that content words are usually stressed in English. Content words fall under the following category: Nouns, verbs (with some exceptions), adjectives, adverbs, demonstratives (this, that, these, those) and interrogatives (who, when, why, etc.).

Remember that function words are usually unstressed. Function words which are usually unstressed include the following: Articles (a, an, the), prepositions (to, of, in, etc.), personal pronouns (I, me, he, him, it, etc.), possessive adjectives (my, his, your, etc.), relative pronouns (who, that, which, etc.), common conjunctions (and, but, that, as, if, etc.), one used as a noun-substitute, and the verbs be, have, do, will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might, and must (Prator, Jr., and Robinett 1972:28-29).

## **INTONATION**

Intonation is speech melody, the way our voice goes up and down as we speak. Intonation is very important in expressing meaning, and especially in showing our feelings, such as surprise, anger, disbelief, gratitude, etc. Intonation patterns are quite complex, and it is better for students to acquire them naturally rather than try to learn them consciously. That is, your modeling and their imitation in an unconscious way is important.

Rising intonation is used in asking yes/no questions, and to express surprise, disbelief, etc. The voice rises sharply on the stressed syllable. Is he your friend? Do you want some tea? “In English, rising intonation is normally used at the end of questions which do not begin with an interrogative word (that is to say, questions which may be answered merely by yes or no)” (Prator, Jr., and Robinett 1972:54).

Falling intonation is used for normal statements, commands, and for WH-questions. The voice rises slightly earlier in the sentence, and then falls on the key word being stressed. What’s your name? Remember that the voice rises slightly earlier in the sentence, and then falls on the key word being stressed. Remember that “the voice often does not rise and fall (suddenly); . . . the change from one tone to another may be gradual and extend over several syllables” (Prator, Jr., and Robinett 1972:42, footnote).

We need to emphasize that students should weaken the unstressed vowels,



blend words together, fix the intonation in their mind, ear, and speech habits. For this they should repeat the short sentences themselves until they sound natural to them (Prator, Jr., and Robinett 1972:47).

### **HOW DO WE PRACTICE STRESS AND INTONATION?**

The easiest way for students to practice stress and intonation is by repetition. Prepare sets of sentences with contrasting intonations and give them to the students to practice. You should identify such sentences, wherever possible, from within the lesson.

Give a good model of the sentence. Say it at normal speed, making a clear difference between stressed and unstressed syllables, and using natural intonation. Indicate the stress and intonation clearly, using gestures.

Say the sentence in sections, starting with the end of the sentence and gradually working backwards to the beginning. For example, living here/been living here/have you been living here?, etc. Ask groups of students to repeat the whole sentence, then individual students should be asked to repeat the whole sentence. You should watch carefully whether the students pay attention to stress and intonation when they repeat the sentence (Doff 1988).

As a teacher of TESOL, you need to do more homework when you wish to teach stress and intonation. Before you begin giving the practice, practice saying the sentences yourself. Mark the stressed syllables. Mark places where you could divide the sentences for working backward. Mark rising or falling intonation (Doff 1988).

### **PRONUNCIATION EXERCISES**

Some of the exercises used in standard textbooks in giving pronunciation practice for stress and intonation are listed below.

1. Pronunciation exercises may be needed to develop contrast between voiced and voiceless consonant sounds in English.
2. Exercises may be needed to develop correct pronunciation of -ed added to regular English verbs to form the past tense and past participle. In wished the -ed is pronounced as /t/, in failed the -ed is pronounced as /d/, and in needed it is pronounced as /Id/.
3. Exercises may be needed to develop a correct pronunciation of -s which is added to make a noun plural or possessive, or to put a verb in the third person singular form of the present tense. "This ending is spelled in several different ways: -s (two hours, he says), -es (several churches, she kisses), -'s (a

moment's time), or -s' (grocers' prices).” However, the pronunciation is governed by certain principles. These need to be taught to the second/foreign language learner of English.

4. It may be necessary to have exercises to teach the aspiration of initial stop consonants in English. “Voiceless stop consonants are aspirated at the beginning of a word. In many other languages, initial voiceless stop consonants are not regularly aspirated, and people who learned one of these languages first usually find it hard to aspirate properly in English.” It may be necessary to teach the lengthening of vowels before final consonants in English. Voiced consonants are confused with their voiceless counterparts at the end of words: Who was /was/ instead of Who /waz/. This type of error is seen to occur more frequently than other types with the exception of the failure to give unstressed vowels their normal sound of /ə/ or /I/. Before a final voiced consonant, stressed vowels are lengthened: /e/ in bed is lengthened than /e/ in bet, /i/ in rib is longer than the i in rip, a in bag is longer than a in back.
5. Training may be necessary to encourage students to make forceful articulation of consonants. A “difference between final /s/ and /z/, as in bus and buzz, is that /s/ is pronounced with a great deal of force, the /z/ with very little. In other words, at the end of bus a listener can hear very clearly the sound of air escaping through the teeth; at the end of buzz there is much less sound of escaping air. At the end of a word, only voiceless continuants are pronounced with a great deal of force.
6. It may be necessary to give some special training in the pronunciation of /l/ and /r/ in words and phrases to help the second language learner to pronounce these like the native speakers of English. (Prator Jr., and Robinett 1972: 98).
7. Syllabic consonants require some focused attention. Most second or foreign language learners of English have difficulty in correctly pronouncing words such as little, sudden, wouldn't saddle, cotton, idle.
8. Substitution of one vowel for another in the stressed syllable of a word is very common. The pronunciation of *leaving* sounds like *living* because of this substitution. “The speaker gives the letters which represent vowels the sounds these letters would have in his native language . . . The speaker is deceived by the inconsistencies of English spelling . . . The speaker cannot hear, and consequently cannot reproduce, the difference between two sounds, either because the two do not exist in his own language, or because

they never serve to distinguish between words in it” (Prator, Jr., and Robinett 1972:106).

**Contrast in vowels.**

peak	pick	peck
dean	din	den
least	list	lest
heed	hid	head
feel	fill	fell
bait	bet	bat
pain	pen	pan
bake	beck	back
laid	led	lad
lace	less	lass
shale	shell	shall
not	nut	naught
cod	cud	cawed
Don	done	dawn
cot	cut	caught
are	err	or
barn	burn	born
flaw	flow	flew
Shaw	show	shoe
bought	boat	boot
call	coal	cool
Paul	pole	pool
lawn	loan	loon
luck	look	Luke
cud	could	coed
buck	book	
should	shoed	

putt	put	
pull	pool	

- Exercises may be needed for the following consonant substitutions frequently noticed in the speech of the second or foreign language learner of English: /t/ / θ / and / ð /. Use words such as the following: though, thank, theft, think, third; thank, these, this, thus, breathe, leather. / j / and /y/: Jew, you, juice, use, jet, yet, jarred, yard, joke yoke, jail and Yale. For the confusion between / š / and / c / use the following words: sheep, cheap, ship, chip, shatter, chatter, mush, much, mashing, matching washer and watcher. For confusion between /b/, /v/, /w/, and /hw/ use the following words: berry, very, wine, vine, west, vest, witch, which. For confusion between /n/, / ŋ / and / nk/, use the following words: ran, rang, sin, sing, singer, finger, rang, rank, sing, sink. To overcome the omission of /h/, use the following words: Remember that /h/ is omitted in several words such as heir, honor, hour, homage, humble, he, him, his, her, have, has and had, when these words are in an unstressed position in the sentence. However, except in the above cases, all initial h's are sounded. Give practice with the following words: home, house, how, heat, hold, horse, hate, ahead, heart, hurt.
- Second/foreign language learners of English have several problems with the consonant clusters used in English. Speakers of Spanish, Persian and Hindi produce an initial consonant cluster like /sp-/ in English with an initial vowel: speak becomes ispeak in Hindi. Chinese speakers add a vowel between the sounds that constitute the cluster: street becomes stareet.
- Use of vowels in stressed and unstressed syllables poses a lot of problems for the second/foreign language learners of English. Ask your students to remember that when a vowel is unstressed it is almost always pronounced either as a schwa / ə / or /I/. The stressed vowel may either be pronounced as a long or short sound.
- Each vowel is pronounced with its long sound (1) if it is final in the syllable: paper, she, final, no, duty, and (2) if it is followed by an unpronounced e, or a consonant plus an unpronounced e: make, eve, die, Poe, use.
- Each vowel is pronounced with its short sound, if it is followed in the same syllable by a consonant: matter, went, river, doctor, cut.

- Note, however, that these rules are incomplete. Moreover, learners may have great difficulty in applying these rules appropriately.
- The best way is to give them practice through modeling for each and every word they come across in their lessons. By focusing upon the pronunciation of words in this manner and by giving them some sort of generalized statements now and then, learners may be able to internalize the rules for lengthening or shortening the vowels appropriately.

## **SOUND-SPELLING CORRESPONDENCE**

Since there is much variation between spelling and pronunciation, it is better to teach these together. When a new sound is learned, give the various spellings of that sound. For example, the learners should recognize that the letter combinations kn, gn, mn, pn, in initial positions have the sound /n/ and that the spelling e has various sounds in different words.

Teach first the common usual spelling of the sound, then follow this with less common spellings, sight words and homophones in that order. Sight words are those words which have a pronunciation different from other words with a similar spelling (Paulston and Bruder 1976:104).

For example, look, took, book, shook, good, and wood all form a pattern which is not shared in words such as too, food and mood. These words need to be taught as sight words, as exceptions to the general pattern.

Homophones are words with different spellings which are pronounced the same (two/too/to, night/knight) (Paulston and Bruder 1976:105).

Homographs are those words with the same or similar spellings with different pronunciation: conduct/conduct, present/present; simply/imply.

Fortunately for us, enterprising teachers of TESOL have published several insightful manuals to teach pronunciation of English which carefully grade the sound-symbol correspondences and provide hierarchically well-organized exercises. I highly commend Pronunciation Pairs by Baker and Goldstein (1990) to develop spelling-pronunciation correspondences. There are several books available which follow the “phonics” method linking sounds with letters. The characteristics of errors committed by the South Asian learners of English are listed in several publications. Professor B. Kachru's booklength treatment of the subject in the *Current Trends in Linguistics*, South Asian Languages volume, is a very significant milestone in this discipline.

It is important to avoid technical explanations. Instead, provide exercises using words which would be of immense practical value to the students in

their day to day use of English. Rules of pronunciation should not be memorized, but taught through abundant practice so that the learners will internalize these rules and the exceptions in their own way, in an unconscious manner.

Remember that teaching correct and appropriate pronunciation of English to adult learners of English is indeed a very difficult task. Do not expect to eliminate all traces of their native language from their English utterances. The goal is to make them speak English in a manner that their speech, though with the accents of their language, will still be understood fairly well by the native speakers of English.

### **STRATEGIES FOR THE CORRECTION OF PRONUNCIATION ERRORS**

Paulston and Bruder (1976) suggest the following: Correct errors immediately at single word drilling phase. Correct the mistakes by modeling and by asking your students to imitate your pronunciation. In conversational exchanges, correct errors only on particular teaching points. Correct those items which interfere with comprehensibility, and overlook other mistakes. Judge content and form separately.

Correct carefully without reducing motivation and self-image of the adult learners.

Doff (1988) identifies three approaches to error correction practiced by teachers.

1. "I never let my students make mistakes. If they say anything wrong, I stop them and make them say it correctly. I don't want them to learn bad English from each other." This approach focuses more on errors of students than on what they do correctly. This approach hampers developing fluency in English, for committing mistakes is an integral part of any learning activity. Currently it is agreed that the errors committed by the students should be considered as an indication of what we still need to teach.
2. "I correct students sometimes, but not all the time. If we're practicing one particular language point, then I insist that they say it correctly. But if we're doing a freer activity then I try not to correct too much. If I do correct, I try to do it in an encouraging way."
3. "I try to correct errors as little as possible. I want my students to express themselves in English without worrying too much about making mistakes. Sometimes I notice points that everyone gets wrong, and deal with them later – but I never

interrupt students to correct them.”

Presently, “most teachers would agree . . . that we need to correct some errors, to help students learn the correct forms of the language . . . But this does not mean that we have to correct students all the time – if we do, it might make them unwilling or unable to say anything at all” (Doff 1988:188).

Doff further gives the following suggestions. “As far as possible, encourage the students, focussing on what they have got right, not on what they have got wrong. Praise students for correct answers, and even for partly correct answers; in this way, they will feel they are making progress. Avoid humiliating students or making them feel that making a mistake is ‘bad’. Correct errors quickly; if too much time is spent over correcting errors, it gives them too much importance and holds up the lesson” (Doff 1988:190).

Remember that our ultimate goal in pronunciation and speaking practice is developing fluency with comprehensibility.

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[CONTENTS PAGE](#)

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## **CHAPTER 7 TEACHING ORTHOGRAPHY AND SPELLING**

### **ORTHOGRAPHY, SPELLING, AND READING**

Reading and spelling are closely related. It is my personal experience that reading does help spelling. However, it cannot be asserted that one leads to the other. In the past, there had been great insistence on mastering spelling, with the assumption that if one mastered spelling, reading automatically followed. In recent times, the trend has been to assume that if children are taught to read, spelling would automatically follow. Neither position seems to be wholly true.

While reading and spelling are somewhat connected with one another, research indicates that one does not necessarily entail the other. For example, “there are many people who have no difficulty in reading, but who have a major persistent handicap in spelling.... It is commonplace to find children who can read far better than they can spell” (Crystal 1987:213). However, in the early stages of learning, children tend to spell more correctly than they read correctly.

There are several reasons as to why the spelling in English seems to be nearly chaotic. There are more letter alternatives for a sound than there are sound alternatives for a letter in English. “For example, sheep has really only one possible pronunciation . . . ; whereas the form could be written in at least three different ways – sheep, sheap, shepe (Crystal 1987:213). Researchers have suggested that in English there are 13.7 spellings per sound, but only 3.5 sounds per letter (Dewey 1971).

There are other reasons as well why spelling and pronunciation appear to be so divergent from each other in English. The history of the language, and the history of borrowing and printing provide many reasons for this divergence.

It is easy to teach the letters of the English alphabet, but very difficult to teach the association between letters and sound, mainly because a letter may represent many sounds, and a sound may be represented by more than one letter. I learned all the 26 letters, their sequence, and pronunciation within a few days when I was in my fifth grade, and I also concluded that by this act I had completely mastered the English language! Soon I recognized how foolish and hasty I was in coming to such a conclusion! Even today I wonder how children all over the world are able to succeed in learning spelling in any language!

More often than not, the letters of the English alphabet are taught associating with a word in which the sound (or one of the sounds) represented by the letter is prominent. Ultimately, however, the students need to associate a primary sound with the letter, and to master the order in which the letters are presented in the alphabet.

Mastering the alphabetical order of letters is of practical importance. Without the knowledge of this order, students will not be able to use the dictionaries.

## **TEACHING HANDWRITING**

English has adopted the Roman script as its script. Long ago there were 27 letters used in the English alphabet. Now we have only 26 letters.

This number is small indeed when we consider the other languages in which the letters of the script may run into a few dozens, if not more. However, in spite of the small number of letters in the English alphabet, the writing system presents several complexities which a second or foreign language learner may find hard to cope with. Diligence is certainly needed when you wish to learn spelling in any language.

The following are some of the features of the Roman script which may cause students difficulty if their languages use a different writing system.



1. **Left to Right direction.** Languages in the Middle East, such as Hebrew, Arabic, and Persian, and languages of Afghanistan, India and Pakistan such as Pashto, Kashmiri, Punjabi, Urdu, Sindhi, Baluchi, and so on, with a variety of dialects, covering millions of people, use the right to left direction in writing their words, phrases and sentences. Chinese, Japanese, and Korean use top to bottom direction. Thus, there is a need for you to make this distinction clear to your students from the beginning and remind them constantly of it. They will have some initial difficulty.
2. **Writing on the line.** English is written in straight line. A four-lined notebook helps students to learn which letters go above and which go below. You may demonstrate this from the beginning by drawing lines on the blackboard.
3. **Shape and size of letters in the handwritten form.** Students may find it difficult to form the basic shape of some letters. They may have some difficulty in distinguishing between the shapes of some letters. Before they practice learning any letter, give them some practice with curvy lines which closely resemble i, u, l and t. What is the distinction between o, p, b, and d? What is the distinction between p, g, and q? What is the distinction between l and t? What is the distinction between n and m? What is the distinction between l and k? What is the distinction between u, v, and w? What is the distinction between y and g?
4. **Hand movements.** English uses both clockwise and counter-clockwise movements, top to bottom, and bottom to top movements. For every letter, there is a conventional way of moving the hand while writing the same. This conventional way must be taught, and students should be encouraged not to deviate from it as much as possible. Following the conventional hand movements helps in joining letters and in gaining a good speed in writing.
5. **Capital letters.** There is a complete set of capital letters in English. Except in the case of a few letters, capital letters and their corresponding small lower case letters are quite distinct from each other. As a result, the second or foreign language learners of English must be taught to recognize the capital and small letters. The first word of a sentence in English must begin with a capital letter. Some words such as I must be written only in a capital letter whether it occurs in the beginning or middle or end of a sentence. Proper names must begin with a capital letter. There are several such important conventions which require the second/foreign language learner to master the use and writing of capital letters. Hand movements for the capital letters are different from the hand

movements used for writing small, lower case letters.

Students need to practice using capital letters by writing their own names and the names of towns, countries, months, etc.

6. **Small/lower case letters.** More often than not, the beginners are first taught the small/lower case letters. By far these letters are more frequently used than the capital letters. Once again, the small letters form a set by themselves. The main focus of teaching the script revolves around the mastery of recognizing, writing small letters and associating them with their sound or sounds.
7. **Joining letters.** Conventional way of writing letters in English is to join them within a word or word-like unit. Joining one letter with another requires practice and adoption of hand movements conducive to joining. There are several combinations of letters which are more frequent than others. For example, combinations of ta, ti, et, ot, th, nt and dt appear to be more frequent than the combinations found in words such as scythe and shotgun. A traditional way to teach joining is to ask students to join all the 26 letters of the alphabet. Students were asked to write the model provided by the teacher many times, so that the students mastered the joining process. These days teachers prefer to give any and every language learning task in meaningful contexts. Accordingly, individual words are given to students and while they copy the word, they learn the letter joining process as well. Remember that it is important to show clearly how we make joins from the end of one letter to the beginning of the next. And this joining is not always the closest point. “You may follow the following model steps: Write c and h separately on the board. Point to where c ends and h begins and draw a line joining them. Then draw the joined letters several times, and describe the shape ... then up to the top of the h, then down.... Ask students to copy the joined letters several times. Go round the class and check.”
8. There are **three styles of handwriting**: Printing, Simple Cursive, and Full Cursive. In printing, we keep the letters separate, and they look the same as in printed books.
9. In **simple cursive**, most letters are joined, but the same basic shape as in printing is maintained. I understand that in Britain most children learn this style, and most adults use it. However, in the United States, full cursive continues to be more popular.
10. In **full cursive**, all the letters are joined, and many have different shapes from printing.
11. **Italics** is another style used in printing for achieving certain effects. This style or convention also needs to be learned by

the second or foreign language learner.

12. **Ornamental writing** is hardly practiced these days. However, it continues to be used in the titles of movies, mastheads of newspapers, in degree certificates, etc.

### **SOME METHODS USED**

When do we start teaching handwriting? Doff points out that “there is no need to wait until students have mastered other skills before introducing. They can begin to learn individual letters from the very beginning. This will help giving more practice. Also early mastery can help students to develop other skills; it can help with reading, and can help them to remember words.”

What order to introduce the letters? It is not necessary to introduce letters in alphabetical order. Some have introduced letters, rather groups of letters, based on the similarity they have perceived in shape, and hand movements in writing the letters. For example, they may first introduce o, then p, then b, and then d. The basic underlying shape is assumed to be a circle in these letters. Or letters may be introduced based on the hand movements – how one letter can be extended from a simple hand movement to another.

The most popular way to introduce the letters is to associate the first sound or the prominent sound of a word with a letter and then introduce the letter: a for apple, b for bat, c for cat, etc.

Yet another way to introduce letters is to associate the letter with an object in which the letter can be easily embedded. For example, the letter S will be embedded in the picture of a swan, and taught.

Sesame Street TV program uses some of these techniques.

All these methods are useful for one reason or another. However, you need to choose that method with which you are comfortable, and which suits your audience. An adult class would prefer a straightforward teaching of the letters with the citation pronunciation for each letter. On the other hand, children would be more interested in learning through games.

Generally speaking, letters with similar shapes are taught together. This helps students see important differences between them (for example, between “n” and “h”). Vowels are introduced near the beginning. This is useful as they are common, and can be joined to other letters to make words. However, in practice the order of letters is often determined by the syllabus or the textbook. Remember that whatever method is to be adopted, the students must ultimately master the alphabetical order of the script system. Without this they cannot use reference materials such as dictionaries,

encyclopedias, thesaurus, phone books, bibliographies, etc.

When do we teach the name of the letter? Just like knowing the alphabetical order, knowing the name of the letter is also important. When spelling words aloud, we need to use the name of the letter.

Copying is the best form of exercise for handwriting. Students don't have to worry about producing the words. They simply focus on copying the letters one after another to write the words. They will have good practice joining the letters while copying. Write words on the blackboard, and/or in the notebooks of students and ask them to copy the words several times. Go around the class and check. You may also ask individual students to come and write the words on the board.

Doff (1988) suggests a technique called delayed copying. The teacher writes a word on the board and asks students to read it. Then she erases the word and students are asked to write the word from memory. Students think of the word as a whole in this process.

Handwriting includes not only the mastery of letters but also the styles in which the alphabet is written. Students will continue to commit several errors such as mixing small and capital letters within a word, mirror image problems, wrong joins, failure to insert the necessary elements of a letter, failure to keep the words separate, introducing gaps where not needed, especially within a word, improper slanting of letters, improper use of capital letters or non-use of capital letters for proper names.

Exercises should be devised to reduce, if not eliminate, such errors. For example, you may write a list of words on the board, including some names of towns, people, etc., but all with small letters. Students decide which words should begin with a capital letter, and say why. Then you may rub the words from the board, and then dictate them. Students write them down.

In all these, use actual handwriting problems found in your students (Doff 1988). Remember that we already suggested that you maintain a diary of the errors of your students. Orthographic and spelling errors will be a significant section in your diary.

## **SPELLING**

A few points at the outset itself: variation in pronunciation within a society is tolerated, but variation in spelling within a society is prohibited. If you spell words wrongly, you will be committing a "serious social error." You may be considered as an illiterate or an ignorant person. Also most people think that English has erratic spelling, and it is a great feat if one is able to spell English words! As already pointed out, English is no more erratic in its

spelling than other languages. Also only about 400 words contribute most to the erratic spelling behavior of the English language, but these words are more frequently used than others, resulting in the feeling of the abundance of chaotic spelling. “However, English spelling is not a simple, straightforward system” (Cronnell 1979:202).

O’Grady et al (1993) list the following as illustrative of the problems with English orthography:

1. Some letters do not represent any segment in a particular word. Thorough, sign, give.
2. A group of two or more letters can be used to represent a single segment. Think, ship.
3. A single letter can represent a cluster of two or more segments. Saxophone, exile.
4. The same letter can represent different segments in different words. on, bone, one.
5. The same segment can be represented by different letters in different words. /uw/ in rude, loop, soup, new, sue, to, two.

It looks as if you will be able to learn the English spelling better if you use the standard English. If you are using a non-standard dialect, you are more likely to commit more spelling errors. In other words, there seems to be a better coordination between the pronunciation and spelling in the speech habits of the standard dialect speakers of English. As Cronnell (1979) points out, since the second or foreign language learners of English do not yet speak standard English, they are likely to commit more errors in spelling, especially with regard to those sounds which they are unable to discriminate between. For example, you should anticipate misspelling between /r/ and /l/ in the writing of the Japanese, Chinese and Korean students. You should anticipate more spelling errors in words which involve s and sh, in the writings of Bengali students.

It is found that the child speaking standard English tends to write I walked to school yesterday, while the child speaking Black English tends to write I walk to school yesterday. This is so because in the spoken Black English, the inflectional suffix -ed is often omitted. Hence the child is not aware that the correct spelling is walked.

It is also found that “the greatest spelling problems may exist for students whose native languages use the Roman alphabet. . . . Literate language learners, when writing in a familiar alphabet, may continue using high-learned native-language sound-to-spelling correspondences even when writing English, while students who must learn a new alphabet or writing system for English may be much more aware of how English spelling differs from their native orthography” (Cronnell 1979:205).

We give below some of the recommendations given by Cronnell 1979 as regards teaching spelling:

1. For the illiterate learner (that is, those who do not know how to read and write English), instruction might be similar to that used for English-speaking children. We choose a series of books in which spelling is presented in a graded manner.
2. If the learners are users of some European languages such as French, German or Spanish, the words from these languages with more or less similar spelling may be used to teach the spelling rules which are regular in English. Hand in English and German, air and nation in English and French, accident/accidente in English /Spanish, etc. may be given as examples for this approach.
3. If students already know some reading and writing in English, they may not need a complete range of spelling instruction in English. We may administer a diagnostic test, a preliminary spelling test, with a number of words. Those words misspelled will be specifically studied by the students.
4. The above test may present words which illustrate various spellings. "Then students performing poorly on specific spellings could receive instruction and practice on their problems."
5. "For advanced students (with specific or general spelling difficulties) a programmed text may provide more individualized learning without creating a heavy burden on the teacher."
6. Students should be encouraged "to find the spellings of words in which there are sounds with two or more possible spellings." They should be encouraged "to check words when they are unsure of the spellings."
7. "Proof reading (and correcting) sentences with spelling errors" is a good exercise.
8. "Perfect spelling without ideas, knowledge, organization, and clarity is of little value."

### **THE PHONIC METHODS**

Based on rules which appear to be somewhat more regular than others, textbook writers organize the words into groups, and then teach the words group by group. Take for example, the letter c is pronounced as k before a, o, u or a consonant: cat, cold, cute, act, cream. It is pronounced as k before e, I, y in words such as keep, kiss, sky. It is also as k at the end of a word after a diphthong: seek, make, strike. It is pronounced as k also at the end of a word after a consonant: ilk, honk, bark. The phonic method, which has been very popular with the teachers and parents for a long time, follows this

arrangement.

There are many such rules, not only for the consonants but also for the vowels. Exploiting such rules to understand and create a sensitivity to the underlying spelling system is the focus of all the textbook writers in English. Sometimes explicit rules and explanations are also offered in these textbooks.

Spelling continues to be one of the basic issues and problems in teaching and learning English.

### **SOME SPECIFIC PROBLEMS**

What follows here (from sight words to mnemonic devices and word games) is largely a summary of information found in Bowen et al. (1985), often using their very own words and examples. However, this information is dealt with in many books, and is often arrived at by many perceptive TESOL teachers.

#### **Sight Words**

Many words used in English have unique spellings in the sense that the correspondence between spelling and sound is rather tenuous in them. For example the, one, two, who, some, school, gym, weird, been, many, said, their, laugh, broad, know, honor, cafe, etc., have no clear correspondence with their pronunciation.

Some other words falling in this category include indict, vicutals, sword, bade, colonel. These are to be taught as sight words. We cannot identify any general pattern of spelling in these words.

#### **Outdated Spellings**

Consider the following words: though, through, bough, thoroughly, ought, rough, cough, hiccough, trough, lough. The spelling does not help us to correctly pronounce these words. These need to be taught as individual words.

#### **Loan Words and Spellings**

English has a ready tendency to borrow words and their spellings from other languages. The spelling eau for the sound /ow/ has come with French words like beaux, bureau, plateau, etc., to add another bit of irregularity and complexity to English. On the other hand, the Spanish word junta comes into English with the /j/ sound suggested by the spelling rather than keeping the Spanish /x/ (matching /h/).

The area of onomastics is another rich source of irregularity in English spelling. Consider the names Freud /froyd/, McKaughn /mekoyn/.

### Homonyms

In yet another pattern, not only does the same spelling represent different sounds, but more difficult for the student who is to produce English words in written form, the same sound can have numerous spellings. Consider the examples: see-sea, meet-meat, cede-seed, etc.

Groups of words with each spelling can be associated together in a single lesson (such as be, me, we, he) later compared with see, bee, fee, tree, free, tee, three, week, peek, heel, green, seed — and at another time sea, tea, pea, flea, each, peach, reach, teach, bead, leave, eagle, speak, peak, weak, heal, clean, cream, team, cheap, dean, eat.

As Bowen et al. (1985) points out that all the possibilities of a pattern need not be taught—only the ones that are useful and relevant to the student's progress.

### Alternation/Reduction of Consonants

The consonants c and g alternate in several ways. C and G become /k/ and /g/ when these are hard, and these become /s/ and /j/ when soft.

electric	electricity
legal	legislation
critic	criticism
logos	logic
public	publicity
regal	regent
romantic	romanticism
centrifugal	centrifuge
classic	classicism
pedagogue	pedagogy
physics	physician
analog	analogy
politics	politician



obligation	oblige
statistics	statistician
allegation	allege

Consonant reduction involves the appearance of consonant letters in the spelling that are not present in the oral forms of words.

Examples are: handsome, surprise, grandpa, cupboard, Wednesday, answer, who, whom, honest, castle, listen, raspberry, receipt, salve, walk, corps. These have to be learned like sight words.

Another pattern of consonant reduction is based on phonotactic rules. Non-permitted clusters simplify by dropping one of the consonants, only to have it restored in another form of the word, usually when an affix is included that allows the cluster to become a sequence (sign-signal, signify, etc., column-columnar, hymn-hymnal, know-acknowledge, mnemonic-amnesia, damn-damnation, gnostic-agnostic, thumb-thimble, muscle-muscular).

Another pattern to be discussed is the doubling of consonant letters (not sounds) to indicate short vowels. When a verb ends in a single consonant, as plan, and -ing, or -er is to be added, one must first double the final consonant of the stem. The correct form is planning, planner. If the same suffixes are to be added to the word plane (referring to a specialized tool in a wood shop), the r can be added directly to produce planer, but the e is dropped before adding -ing for planing. If the verb has two vowels before the single final consonant, the -er and -ing are added directly: speak, speaker, speaking. This is a pattern that applies almost all the verbs in English. If a verb with a simple vowel and two consonants follows, there is no need to double, and the -ing and the -er can be added directly; eg., backing, backer.

The format of exercise given in exercise 10.7 allows you to use virtually all the verbs of English in the drill suggested.

Another pattern of consonant doubling is the doubling of the final consonant, especially in monosyllabic personal names — sometimes given names, but most frequently family names: Plann, Ladd, Fenn, Conn, Glenn, Penn, Goff, Hiss, Webb, Cobb, Pitt, McCann, Call, Kidd, Todd, Redd, Pett, Flamm, Ross, Ott, Rudd, Russ, Hill, Snell, Gibbs, Mills.

### **Syllabification**

Where to break a word that won't quite fit at the end of a line? The rules are  
1. a single consonant between vowels goes with the vowel that has higher

stress: blow.er, a.way. 2. If there are two consonants between vowels, they will divide if they are a sequence, but if they form a cluster, both will go with the second vowel if it carries a higher stress; re.claim, but rec.la.ma.tion.

American dictionaries include all the permissible division points in the main entry of each polysyllabic word, with raised dots as point markers.

### **Mnemonic Devices and Word Games**

Rhymes, other mnemonic devices, word games such as Scrabble, Boggle, Perquackey to remember and practice spellings may be used.

### **AN IMPORTANT CAUTION**

To illustrate that English spelling is not as chaotic as it is sought to be portrayed, we have listed several spelling rules. However, it is not advisable to base our teaching strategy only on giving, explaining and demonstrating these spelling rules.

The rules are bound to be confusing even to the highly motivated, inquisitive and intelligent students. Our goal is not the mastery of the knowledge of the rules, but the mastery of the spelling of actual words and the development of a sensitivity to the underlying system.

I highly commend memorization and copying as two very important exercises. I highly commend grouping of words which have some uniform spelling behavior and teaching the same. I highly commend dictation as an effective measuring tool to assess the spelling skill.

I highly commend developing a tendency to use the dictionary and check the spelling as and when one is in doubt. I do not commend memorization of spelling for spelling's sake. So, focus only on those words that are needed to teach your lesson. Over the months, students will develop the sensitivity to recognize and use the spelling patterns on their own.

Do not ask students to memorize the spelling of many words in a single assignment. May be a few at a time. But give them a dictation of words already known to them almost every day in the early months.

Spelling bee contests with some rewards is an appropriate reinforcement technique.

Remember that spelling is an integral part of writing. It is also essential for reading. Spelling links the pronunciation with the alphabet.

CONTENTS PAGE

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**CHAPTER 8  
TEACHING READING**

**WHAT IS READING?**

We begin with oral reading or reading aloud when we teach young children to read. Young children associate the letters with the sounds these letters represent. They read aloud the letters and their combinations.

Often young children read aloud the letters in a word as if the word consists of independent letters. Soon they recognize or realize that the letters and the sounds they represent stand for a group or series of sounds which occur somewhat sequentially and that this group constitutes the word. The reading aloud goes underground so to say in silent reading.

However, the relationship between sound and letter in a reading process is very complex indeed. Here I have deliberately characterized the reading process in simplistic terms. Reading is a very complex activity which is mastered by the child, by God's abundant grace, with some ease. We must remember that reading is closely related to the development of writing.

Since, more often than not, our second/foreign language learner has some reading skill in his/her first language, he/she brings this skill to bear upon his reading ability in English.

Oral reading and silent reading refer to the features somewhat related to the mechanics of reading. But reading is "appreciating the sense of what is written: we read for meaning" (Crystal (1987:209).

In other words, the ultimate goal of reading is not the process of reading itself, but the unraveling of the meaning represented by the words, phrases, and sentences. Sometimes, "reading between the lines" is demanded. In the latter case, the association between the letter and the sound does not often play a crucial role.

Basically two questions are raised as regards the bases of reading: Do we read by ear or do we read by eye? All of us will agree readily that we read by eye, because use of the eye for reading is so obvious to us. On the other hand, the sound is never far from reading, and hence both in oral and silent reading, we do often move our lips and perhaps the tongue and other

subvocal mechanisms. What we see by eye is to be converted into some sound values (Crystal (1987:209).

As we pointed out earlier, children do read aloud first, converting the letters and words into sound units. At this level then it is the sound that dominates reading. Even at the reading aloud stage, words are not spelled, and letters are not pronounced all alone, but words are sought to be read as single units by themselves. When silent reading is established, single sounds or letters will no more become the focus. We often see words, and not individual letters. We often produce words as oral utterances, and not the sounds which constitute the words.

### **KINDS OF READING**

In a recent publication which gives a variety of new ways of teaching reading (Day 1993), the editor of the book classifies reading into three kinds: extensive reading, intensive reading, and oral reading. Extensive reading is used “to refer to the teaching of reading through reading. In this approach, there is no overt focus on teaching reading. Rather, it is assumed that the best way for students to learn to read is by reading a great deal of comprehensible material.” Intensive reading is used to refer to the actual teaching of reading skills in an instructional setting. Students are exposed to a variety of materials and asked to perform activities such as answering comprehension questions on the passage read. They may be trained to look for critical information in the passage they read, and make inferences, etc. Intensive reading is instruction-based and forms the core of teaching reading in the TESOL classroom. Oral reading does attract much attention from many TESOL teachers, but it is “an integral part of the teaching of reading, especially in EFL contexts.”

### **STAGES IN TEACHING READING**

We can look at reading for second or foreign language learners of English as an acquisition process in three stages:

#### **1. BEGINNING OR ELEMENTARY READING**

The students are exposed to the association of the letters of the English alphabet with their relevant sounds in appropriate contexts. In this process, they discover the relationship between the alphabet and the spoken language. Students are given groups of simple words, phrases, and sentences with focus on one or two letters and their combinations. They are introduced to the correspondence between the individual letters and their combinations in graded steps. They come 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. They develop an ability to predict the sound values represented by the letters and their combinations in contexts.

## **2. INTERMEDIATE READING**

The intermediate reading stage fosters interest in reading, and develops the actual reading skill practiced throughout one's life beyond mastering the association between letters and sounds. Students no more read aloud. They are comfortable with predicting the sound values of letters and their combinations, and they begin to read for the purposes for which they originally enrolled themselves in the TESOL class. Emphasis here is on developing additional reading skills. They begin to read advanced English passages. Reading with purpose is the focus here.

## **3. ADVANCED READING**

Most students of TESOL are quite satisfied with what they have accomplished in the intermediate stage. However, reading is a continuing process, and they need to be introduced to the reading of authentic materials for specific purposes. Stories re-told, and abridged and adapted versions are the focus in intermediate level. But at the advanced level originals are presented.

## **BEGINNER'S READING**

The beginner may be a child, an illiterate, or an adult second or foreign language learner of English, who is an illiterate in English. He/she may be highly educated or a moderately educated person in his/her own native language.

At the beginning level, the focus is on the mechanics of reading. The beginner needs to be taught the relationship and the correspondence between the letters of the alphabet and the spoken language.

In a sense, the letters are all abstract symbols. The letter functions as a tag to the sounds it represents. By seeing (reading) the letter, the beginner identifies the appropriate sound value for that letter in that context.

This is not an easy task even for the adult learner. It is possible that the learner may come from a language in which the Roman alphabet similar to the one used in English is being used. And yet the sound values of letters in his language may vary context to context in his language also, which in their turn may be in conflict with the sound values of the letters as used in English.

Or, the learner may come from a language background in which syllabaries are used. That is, he may be accustomed to reading the syllables which more or less retain the same values wherever they are used. However, he will find that in character and chat, cha needs to be read differently.

Or, he may come from a language background where pictograms are used, as in Chinese in which there is no easy and manifest correspondence between the “letter” and the sound.

Keep the following in mind when you begin teaching reading at the beginner’s level.

1. The background of the beginner: a child, an illiterate, a moderately educated person.
2. The Reading task involves decoding the system of abstract symbols to discover its relation to the spoken language system.
3. The time taken to master this relationship varies with age, maturation, previous experience, and other social factors.
4. With primary emphasis on mechanics one may master the mechanics of reading in four months.
5. Some recognition problems in English: capital, small, italics, handwriting, left to right, distinction between letters, mirror image problems.
6. Choose the words which express familiar meanings or meanings which can be recognized and retained in memory.
7. Choose only those words which focus on the item to be learned.
8. Do not choose those words which may have the same spelling in English as well as in the learner’s language, but are read (pronounced) differently.
9. Do not ignore the stress.

### **Reading Readiness**

Reading readiness exercises help students to recognize and read the letters and words. Reading readiness exercises may or may not use linguistic materials, but whatever materials are used, these should be easy to handle and are familiar to the students. The goal of reading readiness exercises is to help foster a congenial atmosphere for learning reading and to develop some favorable attitude toward reading.

Visual Discrimination, Auditory Discrimination, and Memory Training are some of the reading readiness exercises given to the students.

### **Visual Discrimination**

Directions like same, different, top, bottom, middle, first, second and last referring to objects, letters, and words are presented in these exercises. In English, for example, the students need to distinguish between p and q, between d and p, and so on.

Names and general shapes of the letters of the alphabet that English uses, different forms of the same letters (upper and lower case forms, etc.), ability to tell whether two letters or groups of letters are the same or different are all focused in these exercises.

Some possible discriminations: What is at the top, at the bottom, in the middle of the page? Which object is the first, the second, the last? Are any of the objects, letters, or words the same as the one in the box? Pair the capital and lower case letters as shown in the example.

### **Auditory Discrimination**

Although the auditory discrimination exercises are part of the preparation for listening, these need to be presented even as reading readiness exercises. This is important for those students who hear or repeat a sound persistently wrong. There is a close relationship between the auditory image of the word and its reading and reproduction in writing. Each word has its own auditory image, and this auditory image should be retrieved correctly in the reading process. Otherwise it could lead to misreading and misspelling.

Some possible exercises: a. Minimal Pairs: Are the sounds the same or different? b. Initial Sounds: Do the names of any of the objects shown in the big box begin with the same sound as the object in the small box?

Rhyme words: Say the names of the object in the big box to yourself. Answer yes if it rhymes with the object in the small box, no if it does not.

Similar Sentences: Which sentences say the same thing? Minimal Differences: Which sentence of three or more is different?

### **Memory Training**

This training helps students to hold something in the mind for a length of time.

Some exercises:

- Repeat the first sentence of three after all have been heard.
- Give the order of events in a story heard.
- Name as many of the objects from memory as possible after a picture, or an array of objects, has been shown for a limited

time and then removed from sight.

- Reassemble a picture series in the order first shown.

These exercises help the students to focus on the form of the words (spelling). Once the form is internalized, it is possible for the students to predict what the other parts of a word would be when he/she is given a word. In other words, he/she does not go from one letter to another in his/her reading process. He/she is able to predict and thus read the word in its entirety. This helps increase the reading speed also. Remember that although spelling a word is an important first step towards reading, it is only a first step. Spelling a word must be dropped in favor of reading a word in its entirety.

A student may be said to be in control of the basics when he:

- regularly makes appropriate eye movements for English.
- recognizes and discriminates among the vowel and consonant sounds in English.
- associates vowel and consonant sounds with letters.
- recognizes and discriminates among consonant blends and consonant combinations.
- recognizes and discriminates among vowel combinations.
- recognizes vowel sounds with /r/.
- recognizes selected sight words.
- recognizes rhyming words when not spelled with the same letter pattern.
- recognizes upper- and lower-case letters and the basic punctuation marks.

Note that the knowledge of the orthographic structure is central to the reading process. Note also that any exercise we may give to the students to develop the association between the letters and their combinations with the sounds should be always done with words, phrases, and sentences meaningful to the students. It is important to give exercises not only with groups of words but also with groups of phrases and sentences.

### **Methods for Teaching the Mechanics of Reading**

Essentially there are two kinds of methods which take care of the mechanics of reading: **the whole word method**, and **the linguistic method**. Students are given the whole word to read in the first method, whereas they are first introduced to the elements which constitute the word in the second method, and then asked to combine them. Signs such as Exit, Entrance, Gentlemen, Ladies, No Entrance, Cafeteria, Fifteen Items or less (Express Line in grocery stores), Open, Closed, etc., will be given without any analysis of the constituent elements. Students will associate the entire sound(s) with the



entire written form.

In the linguistic method, students are introduced to the sound-symbol correspondences first in the word, and then they are enabled to combine the sounds to produce the word. "There is no conclusive evidence that either the Whole Word or the Linguistic Method for introducing reading texts works best with all students. Nor is there any assurance that when reading, a student will practice only one or the other exclusively." However, there is no escape from using the linguistic method in the later steps of reading, since not all words of a language can be introduced using the whole word method. The learners often break the words and arrive at the underlying forms in some intuitive manner. Words may be derived from other words. Also the forms may have the same spelling but their reading pronunciations may differ from one another. These and many other characteristics of the structures of English make it imperative that we make a proper blend of these two strategies.

It is important that second/foreign language learners of English are taught to recognize sight vocabulary in an automatic manner, without spelling such vocabulary. There are about two to three hundred words in English which account for a good part of all the words used on a written page. We should enable the students to recognize these words such as articles and prepositions in an automatic fashion. Teach them to recognize also the punctuation marks along with the conventions such as spacing and indenting, which go with the use of such sight vocabulary. There are also set phrases in English which function as sight vocabulary. The students should be enabled to recognize these also as sight vocabulary.

Remember that in the initial stages of reading it is always useful to insist on students reading aloud. This helps them improve their reading pronunciation, and develop a sensitivity to how words are pronounced in English. When they come across a new word, this reading aloud practice will help them to attempt more or less a correct pronunciation of the word.

The teachers of TESOL have been using a variety of materials to help students read with better pronunciation, and to motivate them to read in order to meet their needs. They often tend to use materials which the second/foreign language learner of English may have to use frequently, materials such as public announcements (No classes next Friday, Report for duty at 6:00 A.M.), invitations to parties and weddings, telephone messages, guidelines to perform a task, instructions to assemble toys, recipe, etc. The materials which focus on the learners' survival needs, social needs, and personal needs are presented to them for reading. Reading Games which use catchy phrases in ads, T-shirts, campaign buttons, posters, stickers, etc., are presented to the beginning reader, even when he/she is struggling to master the mechanics of decoding the English alphabet.

The initial texts given for reading are often written with such words that are commonly and frequently used in English. However, frequency of occurrence alone should not be considered when we choose words for the beginning reading texts. "Beginning reading materials should be constructed with a sensitivity to the utility, interest, and value of the words that make up the text. But in case of conflict the text comes first." In the beginners' lessons, "students learn to read names, addresses and telephone numbers important to them, common street signs, and other public labels. Other items of interest: advertisements, direction on food and medicine labels, instructions on vending machines, simple how-to-do-it instructions and menus."

Proverbs in English, metaphors, and similes will be introduced as part of the reading material towards the end of the beginner's level or in the beginning of the intermediate level of reading. A variety of reading materials such as commercial texts, teacher-written recombination's of materials covered in class, student-written materials, using the Language Experience Approach, narrative games such as strip stories, and group-written stories are other materials recommended by Paulston and Bruder (1976), Bowen, et al. (1985) and Celce-Murcia (1991).

Once the reading mechanics relating to the decoding of the alphabet is well established, once the mastery of adequate sight vocabulary is also accomplished, the reading texts may focus on familiarizing the students with the phrase and sentence structure in the reading materials. Students need to learn the differences between a phrase and a sentence in the texts to read. While the sentence is the required minimal unit in written English, phrases function as breath groups. "Phrase reading exercises can be useful in weaning the reader from word-for-word reading, and can help increase speed." Some of the exercises which can be used to develop phrase reading are: "repeat-and-copy exercises, the use of flash cards, lists on the blackboard, matching phrases, etc." Focusing on phrases and sentences for reading will help students not only to foster better speed in reading, but it will aid them in learning more English structures for practical purposes.

The students must be helped to develop a sensitivity to the English word structure. For this, the students will begin reading the most regular and the most productive word patterns in English, and then they will be exposed to the reading of irregular forms. If they internalize the regular patterns they will begin to look at the derived and inflected words such as past tense forms, adjectivals, adverbs, etc., as single entities. The irregular patterns will be learned as sight words or phrases.

Remember that reading is now exploited not only to learn more meanings and forms (words and affixes) in English, but also to gain a knowledge of the structures of English. From mechanics to structures, and then from

structures to content is the way the reading exercises proceed. There is a mix of all the three in every exercise.

## **THE READING LESSON**

There are four steps followed in a reading lesson:

1. 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 selects and introduces the new vocabulary necessary to comprehend the main ideas in the text.
2. The reading. This is generally an oral exercise for the beginners, usually consisting of listening to the passage read aloud, or listening and following along. Later on reading is silent.
3. Comprehension tasks.
4. Review and related exercises.

The following behavioral steps may be followed in the class:

1. Teacher reads while students listen.
2. Discussion.
3. Teacher reads while students listen and read along.
4. Discussion.
5. Student(s) read aloud (in small groups or in dyads).
6. Discussion.
7. Students read silently, or practice reading aloud individually.
8. Three types of questions are employed for discussion: information (what, when, where, who, how many, etc.), inferential (Did Juan know English when he came to the United States? How do we know? Does Juan know how to drive?), interpretive (questions relating to author's opinion, reader's judgment concerning the content of the article, etc.) (Bowen et al. 1985)

## **Elementary Reading**

Some TESOL teachers would like to distinguish between the beginner's level reading and the elementary level of reading, assigning the beginner's level only to the mastery of the mechanics of reading. We have combined both these stages under the heading Beginnings Level.

It is important for us to recognize that reading is an essential part of the TESOL classroom. Reading helps to acquire and internalize vocabulary and

structures, even as it helps the pronunciation and speaking. It reinforces writing as well. More reading leads to increasingly better performance in the use of English. "At present sufficient reading practice is not given in TESOL classes. Reading can be developed only through practicing reading. So give more time to reading in a reading class." Have separate class periods for reading, incorporate reading as an integral part of the course, and give reading assignments to the students everyday.

### **Selecting Materials**

Good textbooks are available in plenty. However, the teacher should select his or her own textbook based on the usefulness of the book for his or her students, and their interest. Level of difficulty should also be considered. Unfortunately, textbook selection is not in the hands of the teachers in most schools in India. No book is ever perfect. Teachers may have to make several adjustments to the content, words, sentence patterns and other items of the lessons they teach from out of the selected textbook.

### **Silent Reading**

Adult students tend to read silently even in their beginning level. This must be discouraged. There is a need to develop an association between the form (words, phrases, and sentences) and its corresponding sound representation. This is better achieved by oral reading. Success with oral reading helps also the success with speaking. So, encourage your adult students to read aloud as often as possible. Towards the end of the elementary or beginner's level, students may be allowed to read silently to some extent.

To develop silent reading, start with phrase reading. Encourage your students to read the phrases at a single stretch, not going from word to word. Flash cards with phrases may be shown for them to read the individual phrases at a single stretch. Flash the card for a brief while and they should catch the phrase and read it. Choose the phrases from the text or from common expressions frequently used in spoken English.

Show them only a partially written phrase and encourage them to guess the full phrase.

Rearrange the words in a phrase and ask them to give the correct phrase from memory. Give them a list of words and ask them to put them together into as many phrases as they can. Or specify a number. Give them two or three sentences and ask them to read silently and time the reading. Then give them another set of sentences of same length and ask them to read silently, and time their reading. Step by step, increase the number of sentences. And increase the number of words in individual sentences. Time their reading.

## INTERMEDIATE READING

In the Intermediate Reading level, the emphasis is on overall comprehension, and reading with purpose. This requires development of study skills. At the intermediate level of reading, the materials should be so chosen as to introduce the students subtly to the grammatical and stylistic conventions of English. Reading is exploited in these passages to help students internalize the grammar (structures) of English. The structures of English are linked to the reading process and the goals of reading. For example, students come to know through reading practice that certain phrases predict the transition in information discussed in the reading material.

Kitao (1993) lists the following phrases as marking transitions in the information contained in the reading material. Acquaintance with these phrases helps students anticipate and predict the turns in the material.

Additional information: and, furthermore, moreover, in addition, also

Expected information: of course, naturally, surely

Unexpected information: surprisingly, amazingly

Intensified information: in fact, as a matter of fact

Restatement: as I mentioned before, in short, in other words, i.e., that is

Example: for example, for instance, to illustrate, such as

Consequence: so, therefore, as a result, consequently

Cause/effect: because, due to, thanks to, on account of, as a result of, in view of

Contrasting information: however, but, although, even though, nevertheless

Order: first, second, then, next

Conclusion: in short, therefore, in conclusion, in summary, on the whole

Brown (1993) suggests asking the students to do the following ten things before reading begins.

1. Look at the title and the headings for each section. What do you think this passage is going to be about?
2. Look at the pictures. What do you think this passage is going to be about?
3. Read the first and last paragraphs and the first sentence of each paragraph. What do you think this passage is going to be about?
4. Read the title. Now quickly scan the passage and circle all the words that have a connection to the title.
5. Scan the passage and cross out all the words you don't know. After you read the passage again carefully, look up the words in a dictionary.
6. After looking at the title, pictures, and so on, brainstorm the

- specific words you expect to see in the passage.
7. After looking at the title and pictures, make up some questions you think this passage might answer.
  8. What kind of passage is this? (fiction ? nonfiction—what kind?) Why would somebody read this? For information? Pleasure?
  9. Choose words from the passage and write them on the board. Ask students to scan the passage and circle them.
  10. Tell a story about the background of the reading passage.

We can always make innovations and improvisations to meet the reading needs of our students.

### **Extensive Reading**

To help foster extensive reading, students should be given materials that are interesting to the students. Commercial graded readers for ESL serve the purpose well. Give them new materials to read aloud.

The most important intermediate reading skills are (Bowen et al. 1985:240):

- Reading with incomplete information (Reading a passage with a sizable number of unfamiliar vocabulary items).
- Organizing for careful reading (skimming and scanning).
- Organizing information (specific time to preview).
- Reading critically.
- Developing effective personal reading strategies.
- Setting effective reading speeds for different kinds of reading.

Success at the intermediate level of reading depends a lot on the initiative the learner takes and the positive attitude he or she has towards reading. The learner should recognize the pivotal role reading plays in improving his/her diction and pronunciation, even as it helps him/her internalize the structures of English. The learner should find for himself or herself how studious reading habits help him/her perform better in English at all the levels - speaking, listening, and writing. Reading materials are abundant in all the surroundings and it is for the learner to take advantage of all these reading materials in his/her surroundings.

Reading is gateway to culture and literature. If the material is relevant, and thus meets the learner's needs, it will help instigate an interest in reading in the learner.

At the intermediate level the focus is also on developing appropriate reading speed.

## **ADVANCED READING**

English for Special Purposes (ESP) is the chief focus of the advanced level of reading.

For individualized self-learning, there is no better method than encouraging the students to read on their own whatever that interests them. Through reading, diction, grammar, and communicative efficiency improve. Through reading, students develop an empathy not only for the language but also for the content of the text they read, as well as the best traditions of the culture the language comes to represent in their understanding. Through reading what is noble in English thought is appropriated.

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## [CONTENTS PAGE](#)

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## **CHAPTER 9 TEACHING WRITING**

### **WRITING - AN INDIVIDUAL EFFORT BUT MORE RULE-BOUND**

Writing is an individual effort. Individuals compose their thoughts often in privacy and then reduce their thoughts to writing, using the strict conventions followed in the language. Writing is an individual effort or work, but it must follow the rules laid down. The development of writing even in native English speaking children is conscious and is thus non-spontaneous. As I have discussed elsewhere (Thirumalai 1977), written language differs from oral language in structure and mode of functioning. The acquisition of oral speech by itself is the acquisition of signs (symbols). The acquisition of writing is a step further and the learner must now transfer the symbolization he/she acquired in the process of speech acquisition to written language. Vygotsky (1962) compares this to the acquisition of algebra which is harder than arithmetic. Added to this problem is the fact that writing needs no interlocutor.

In writing, the discrete nature of linguistic signs should be appreciated consciously. The learner must recognize the sound structure of each word, dissect it and reproduce it in alphabetical symbols, which he must have studied and memorized before. This same deliberate preparedness is needed to put words in a certain sequence to form a sentence (Vygotsky 1962; Thirumalai 1977).

Teaching writing to native speakers of English has always been a major

concern of education. More often than not, most students, both native speakers and second language learners of English, feel inadequate in the face of the writing task. Modern world demands some efficiency in writing skills. However, when one can learn to speak the first or second language with little or no conscious thought, switch from the spoken to writing poses greater difficulty.

“Writing is more an individual effort than speaking, while at the same time more rule-bound and therefore more error-prone. . . The speaker does not have to pronounce each word exactly according to one standard of pronunciation or one model of structure, while the writer is expected to produce according to one model of spelling, and usually a reduced range of structures, with 100 percent accuracy” (Bowen et al. 1985:252). Everyone will agree with Bowen et al (1985:253) when they declare that “writing is more rule-bound than speaking. Considering the control of the orthographic system, the careful organization, and the linguistic conservatism required, writing is the most demanding of the language skills.”

The writing classes have the potential to help consolidate and improve the students’ speaking and reading skills. However, it is important for us to remember that writing is an important skill which can be taught as an end in itself, although none of the language skills is far removed from the other language skills. Focusing on writing as an independent skill helps us to identify the specific problems faced by the learners, and to identify the specific needs of the learners relating to writing. Mechanics of writing are distinct from the mechanics of other skills such as speaking and reading. While reading involves seeing and pronouncing, writing involves association of sounds with mental composition of thoughts and their orderly presentation, and hand movements.

Writing can be viewed and taught as a developmental process just as reading. And we can view writing from four perspectives: Mechanics, emphasized in the low beginner stages (beginning); Extended Use of Language, emphasized in the high beginner and low intermediate stages (elementary); Writing with Purpose, emphasized in the high intermediate and low advanced stages (intermediate); and Full Expository Prose, emphasized in the terminal stage (advanced) (Bowen 1985).

Raimes classifies approaches to teaching writing into five types: controlled to free, free writing, paragraph pattern, grammar-syntax-organization, communicative, and process approaches. In the controlled to free approach, “students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by, for instance, changing questions to statements, present to past, or plural to singular. They might also change words or clauses or combine sentences” (Raimes 1983:6).



In the free writing approach, students are asked to “write freely on any topic without worrying about grammar and spelling for five or ten minutes. . . . The teachers do not correct these short pieces of free writing; they simply read them and perhaps comment on the ideas the writer expressed” (Raimes 1983:7). In the paragraph pattern approach, “students copy paragraphs, analyze the form of model paragraphs, and imitate model passages. They put scrambled sentences into paragraph order, they identify general specific statements, they choose or invent an appropriate topic sentence, they insert or delete sentences” (Raimes 1983:8). In the communicative approach to writing, students are asked to assume the role of a writer who is writing for an audience to read. Whatever is written by a student is modified in some way by other students for better communicative effect. In the process approach to writing, students “move away from a concentration on the written product to an emphasis on the process of writing” (Raimes 1983:10). They ask ‘not only questions about purpose and audience, but also the crucial questions: How do I write this? How do I get started?’ (Raimes 1983:10).

Note that a proper blend of these approaches to writing will give us best results. For example, the controlled to free approach to writing helps us to focus on proper mechanics in the beginning level, whereas communicative approach to writing will be very effective once our students have some control over the mechanics and have acquired a good number of words and sentence structures to help them match these with their thoughts. All successful texts and teachers have always tried to take the best and relevant aspects of every method to suit the learner’s level and need.

### **BEGINNING WRITING: EMPHASIS ON MECHANICS**

At the beginning level the focus is on learning the alphabet, the left-to-right direction of English writing, printing, cursive writing, upper and lower case letters, alphabetizing, basic spelling patterns of English, rules for capitalization, and word and sentence punctuation.

The basic skills include writing letters, numbers, words, phrases, and sentences correctly.

All these should be accomplished by providing writing exercises which use real words (and phrases and sentences). Students may begin with copying what is given to them, but soon they should begin to write from memory, be these items words, phrases, or sentences. In such “free writing” they may be given non-linguistic visual prop in the form of pictures of objects or objects themselves. They will see the pictures or objects, recollect from their memory the words for such pictures or objects, and write these words. In other words, right from the beginning some form of free writing is encouraged, even as they go on mastering the mechanics of writing.

## Writing Readiness

A checklist for introductory writing skills is as follows.

- Motor skills needed for producing legible printing.
- Left-to-right orientation.
- The ability to produce shapes which are the building blocks of English letters.
- Knowing and printing the alphabet.
- Naming while copying and then spell out loud the words copied.
- Recognition and production from written form: vowels, consonants and blends. Words and syllables, upper and lower case letters, basic spelling patterns, common, Sight words, rhyming words, punctuation, phrases and sentences.
- Motor skills needed for producing legible cursive writing.

Copying words and sentences is an important low level writing activity. The alphabet is mastered using copying. Proper hand movements in writing letters and words are established using copying. Also the fluency in writing is improved through appropriate copying exercises. Copying helps also recognizing and using punctual marks. Young students begin with copying, and copying becomes a game, a play for them. The adult students may not relish much copying, and yet some amount of copying is important even to retain in memory what has been learned. So, encourage your class to do some copying exercises.

Use words for writing practice from the student's immediate environment, and later on from speaking and reading activities. After learning to say and read words, and then to copy them, the student may perform other writing tasks, such as filling in missing letters and missing words.

Bowen et al. (1985) suggest the following: When the student is able to write words from memory, he may be asked to

- list objects in pictures.
- draw and label his own pictures.
- make personalized stationery by drawing a personal letterhead.
- make a monthly calendar or birthday card for a classmate.
- draw a picture map of his neighborhood or another familiar area.

Alphabetizing tasks provide writing practice. These include the following.

- List five words that begin with .....

- Rearrange the following words in alphabetical order:
- Write a girl's name that begins with \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Find two objects in the picture whose names begin with \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Rearrange the letters in an alphabetical order.

As the beginner's knowledge of English increases through what he is learning to say and read, and to generate new words, phrases, and sentences, he may be asked to

- make topical vocabulary lists.
- make associational pairs or groups of words.
- prepare antonyms.
- prepare synonyms.
- make familiar paradigms like the days of the week or the months.
- make personal lists, such as items on a shopping list, food served at a meal, and packing lists.

At this stage the student may practice his signature in cursive form.

From words students go on to short word groups such as phrases.

From the above steps, proceed to extend phrase writing into sentence writing

Students may be given pictures and asked to identify the objects and events and write about them. This will be an extended writing exercise. They may be asked to write the sequence of tasks depicted and/or inferred from the picture. While doing this, they will be engaged in sentence combining, paragraph assembly, paragraph completion, controlled composition (such as rewriting the paragraph in a different tense, modification of names and pronouns, etc.), guided composition (which provides some tips or ideas and the students write short sentences and paragraphs on a topic based on items provided), and questions and answers (Raimes 1983).

### **Correction**

It is important that we correct the errors at the beginning level so that some standards in spelling and expression are set for the learners. Raimes (1983) suggests that we "use errors in students' writing to plan ahead: What do the students need to work on next? What are they having trouble with. . . give your students time and opportunity to correct errors before you do. . . (if your students focus on meaning) question only the real major errors, like jumbled sentences, which interfere with communication so much that you can't work out what the student is trying to say."

Most textbooks written by well-known authors often de-emphasize the need to correct the writings of second language learners, and place an emphasis on meaning and free writing, or fluency in writing. However, I personally feel that if the teachers do not correct the students' writings in the Third World countries, a sense of self-sufficiency sets in and the students will not recognize the errors they have committed.

As Bowen et al. (1985) suggest, "Look for problems such as reversed letters, transposed letters or words, incorrect uppercase or lowercase letters, lack of paragraph indentation, lack of familiarity with the basic spelling patterns, and illegible handwriting."

The students should begin to write for an audience and seek feedback. This will encourage more free writing. But, let such demands be within the current level of the grammatical ability of the second language learner. Most of the exercises suggested above, although controlled, lead on to simple form of free writing.

### **EMPHASIS ON EXTENDED USE OF LANGUAGE**

At the end of the beginning level, the ESL student may have a vocabulary of fewer than one thousand words and a limited number of sentence patterns. To increase the mastery of additional sentence patterns, we may ask the students to do parallel writing. "Parallel writing is, in a way, the freest kind of controlled writing. Instead of making changes in a given passage or writing according to an outline or given sentences, students read and study a passage and then write their own on a similar theme, using as a guide the vocabulary, sentence structure, cohesive devices, and organization of the model passage" (Raimes 1983:109). Students should be asked to plan, polish, rewrite their passages several times.

### **INTERMEDIATE WRITING: EMPHASIS ON WRITING WITH A PURPOSE**

At the intermediate level, students acquire a lot of words, and begin to write English for specific purposes, so to say. They will continue to demonstrate errors in their writing. They begin to focus on the use of pronoun links, connecting words for the progress of the thoughts they express, such as also, therefore, but, however, use of specific grammatical points such as conditional clause with or without negation, double negatives, modals, tense, etc. Punctuation, arrangement of sentences within a paragraph, transformation of one sentence type into another with or without change in the meaning, stylistic improvements, summarizing the ideas found in a passage in their own sentences, completion of sentences and paragraphs to match the ideas contained therein or they want to express, writing with the appropriate tone, style and organization for the topic focused upon, are some

of the things which will be considered in the intermediate level. All this may be achieved with some guided practice.

Bowen et al. (1985) suggest that students organize their thoughts in three main types: “1. Take content from one’s own experience or the results of one’s own information gathering, and arrange it into a logical format. 2. Analyze a prose model, reconstruct its outline, and use the outline as a model for writing another passage, using parallel or analogous information. 3. Follow an outline prepared by someone else, e.g., teacher or textbook.”

Raimes (1983) suggests that we give training to students to write in English speculating on the focus of the given text. She also recommends that “students can be given tasks that encourage them to speculate about the text itself, about its content, context, organization, and the writer’s choices of words and syntax.” Raimes (1983) suggests writing skits and records of guided discussion and interviews. At the intermediate level, the technique of dicto-comp is recommended. “The teacher reads a passage all the way through, not broken into segments. Students listen to the passage two or three times. Then they pick up their pens and write down as close a version as possible. This makes them pay attention to the meaning of the passage more than to the form of the individual words or the structure of the individual sentences. At the end of the passage, the students gather in small groups to compare what they have written down. After they have assembled everything they can remember, they listen to the passage again, make revisions and then check their grammar, spelling, and punctuation” (Raimes 1983:77).

Note-taking and story-telling are two other ways in which the TESOL students are encouraged to do some free but controlled writing. “When elementary level students take notes, they can be given a skeleton outline to work with and expand, so that their listening is more directed. Advanced students can listen to long passages and make notes as they listen. Both groups need to be alerted to the signals that speakers use: pauses, raising the head and the voice to make an important point, or using words like first, finally, most important to signal separation and priority of the points made” (Raimes 1983:79).

Filling in forms of general nature, filling in money order forms, forms for registered or certified mail in the post office, writing letters to friends, newspapers, and other organizations, writing business letters, writing instructions for some one to perform a particular task, writing a journal, and even writing some creative short stories are all given at the intermediate writing level. Indian textbooks do not really focus on the use of English for functional purposes.

We have already talked about the usefulness of guided composition, parallel

writing, preparing lists of objects and other inventories, sentence combining and parallel writing. These will continue to be used in developing writing at the intermediate level.

Most students are reluctant to write. Apart from the fact that writing needs more deliberate involvement than reading, students are afraid that what they write may be full of errors in a language with which they have just begun to gain some acquaintance. They may have a lot of reluctance to write even in their first language. Students will face great difficulty in composing their thoughts in English, a second or foreign language to them. As standards of writing are more stringent than in other skills, students need to be trained to proceed from writing short passages to longer essays. They need a lot of encouragement, and appreciation. They need good models, and modeling. They need to be exposed to standard written materials. The form and the character of such materials need to be explained to them.

### **Increased Speed in Writing**

At the intermediate level, there should be some focus on writing faster, in the same way there would be some focus on reading faster and better. If the students are too slow in writing, they will have great difficulty in performing better in timed test situations. Also it will become increasingly difficult for them to match the speed of their thoughts with their writing speed. It is important that we give the dictation exercise progressively increasing its speed. It is also important that we give our students timed writing on given topics. Yet another way to increase speed in writing is to ask them to perform some cloze exercises. In this exercise, “students copy an incomplete short passage and then complete it in their own words. The objective is not to increase the number of words per minute, but to increase the speed of organizing thought in a second language and of judging and producing in a style that will be compatible with the first part of the passage” (Bowen et al. 1985).

### **ADVANCED WRITING**

Students will enter the advanced level with a good knowledge of sentence structure, vocabulary, and idiom. They are already exposed to a variety of forms of writing. They can meet almost every need at the end of the intermediate level. However, they may have had not much exposure to the specialized literature. They may have no skill in writing articles in the format in which these are demanded for publication in standard journals. They may not have much acquaintance with the specialist vocabulary in English from their fields of specialization. Thus at the advanced level of writing in English the focus is more on English for specific purposes. Different fields require different levels of the knowledge of English. For example, if a student wants to study and specialize in law or business, he

needs a more elaborate and deeper knowledge of the use of English. On the other hand, if a student's focus is on physical sciences, there may not be a high demand on him to have an excellent control over English. The students will be required to have good skills in organizing information and ideas in his field of specialization. He will be required to follow the stylistic and rhetorical conventions adopted in English which apply to his field of specialization. He should have adequate skills in self-editing his own writing. The writing conventions of a particular field are usually expressed clearly and succinctly in the style sheets of major publications in that field.

At this stage, we no more deal with teaching English. We are called upon to teach the appropriate rhetoric of the field using English. Rhetoric and logic play a more crucial role than linguistic structures. However, it is always important and useful to refresh the second/foreign language learner of English about the spelling, vocabulary and diction, and structure errors he continues to commit. Students will continue to commit linguistic errors even as they try to master the rhetorical and logical expressions. There are quite a few books in the field which focus upon various aspects of advanced writing in English. These textbooks "treat the writing task as problem solving, and set the prospective writer the task of identifying characteristics of writing and then using their discoveries about writing in actually composing new essays" (Bowen 1985).

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## CONTENTS PAGE

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### **CHAPTER 10 TEACHING VOCABULARY**

#### **LEARNING WORDS: MEANING AND USAGE**

The importance of learning words in any language cannot be exaggerated. When we say that we know English, we mean that we know the meanings and usage of a few thousand words in English. Communication in any language is impossible without some mastery of the words used in that language. It is mainly through using words that we compose and express our thoughts to others.

A second or foreign language learner of English is required not only to focus upon the sentence structures but also upon the acquisition of words. Often, the learner seeks to learn the words before even attempting to understand and use the sentences. When a new sentence is presented to a learner, he tends to break it into manageable units called words.

Everyone intuitively feels what a word is on most occasions. However it is indeed hard to define word, because some times two or more “words” may be combined, printed, and used as a single word.

Learning words in any second or foreign language program involves not only learning the meanings of the words, but also learning how these words are used appropriately in linguistic, sociolinguistic, and cultural contexts.

Words carry connotations which may be quite different from their literal meanings. *The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, for example, uses several labels to indicate a particular attitude associated with the use of words: Approving, Derogatory, Euphemistic, Figurative, Formal, Informal, Ironic, Jocular, Offensive, Rhetorical, sexist, slang, and Taboo.

Meanings of words often become clearer when they are used in proper linguistic structures and in appropriate social contexts.

Some words from the native language of the ESL learner may look alike or share similar meanings in some contexts with corresponding English words. However, they may differ from each other in other more important contexts.

Learning words involves learning structures of the language. So, it is important that when a word is learned, students are encouraged to learn not only the words but their grammatical characteristics (usage).

### **QUESTIONS REGARDING VOCABULARY TEACHING**

The questions which concern the TESOL teacher as regards teaching vocabulary are listed by Allen (1983:6):

1. Which English words do students need most to learn?
2. How can we make those words seem important to students?
3. How can so many needed words be taught during the short time our students have for English?
4. What can we do when a few members of the class already know words that the others need to learn?
5. Why are some words easier than others to learn?
6. Which aids to vocabulary teaching are available?
7. How can we encourage students to take more responsibility for their own vocabulary learning?
8. What are some good ways to find out how much vocabulary the students have actually learned?

### **CONTENT VS FUNCTION WORDS**

To begin with, we need to distinguish between function and content words.



Function words such as prepositions, are, and, is etc., in English are part of the grammar of the language. They are limited in number, and they express some relational features. The function words are learned early. They are used more frequently than the content words. Sentences are not composed without the function words.

Although content words in themselves have their own meanings, combinations of content words often require the use of function words. The meanings of function words are sometimes very hard to explain, but the students are often able to perceive the meanings of these function words, while having greater difficulty in actually using them. The beginning level textbooks try to explain the usage of function words through pictures with captions such as The cat is on the table, The basket is under the table, Jack and Jill, etc. It is easier in some sense to grasp the meaning as well as the usage of content words. Students will continue to have difficulty with the use of function words even when they are able to recognize their meanings.

### **SOME STRATEGIES TO TEACH CONTENT WORDS**

A simple but a fairly frequent strategy adopted in the TESOL classroom is to introduce the students to the words for things and persons in the classroom. Their meanings are easily explained and understood by the students. These words refer to concrete objects and persons which the students can see, touch, and feel. In addition, learning the names of objects found in the immediate environment both within and without the classroom helps the students to meet some of their needs. In incremental stages words are introduced and explained.

There are several ways in which the meanings of words can be communicated and explained to the students. We may bring in the real object to the classroom and associate the object and the word. We may perform the actual action and associate the action with the word denoting it. We may show the relevant picture of the object or the event, etc., which communicates the meaning of the word. We can give explanations in the students' own language. We can use the words in English already known to the students to give definitions in simple English.

It may be useful if the words are written on the board and then pronounced. Students will then associate the written form with the pronunciation of the word. Seeing the object or the picture or action, associating it with the written form while actually hearing the word pronounced all help the students to internalize the meaning as well as the form of the word.

Let them copy the words in their note books.

We can ask students to demonstrate the actions which the words mean, or go

and touch the object referred to by the object. We can ask them to spell the words letter by letter. However, more needs to be done to help students actually use the words in a grammatically and contextually appropriate manner.

### **EXPERIENTIAL VOCABULARY TEACHING/LEARNING**

In the classrooms where there is a greater emphasis on experiential learning, teachers may prefer to have the students first experience the meanings in some manner before the words for these meanings are given to them.

For example, students may be given a variety of fruits which naturally differ from each other in terms of color, shape, smell, and taste. Students feel and touch the fruits. Sometimes they may even taste the fruits. During and after this experience, words are introduced to refer to the fruits.

These teachers (who prefer an experiential mode of teaching and learning) suggest that we draw the attention of students to meanings before we drill the words.

As Raimes (1983) points out, it is important for us to remember “the ways in which people learn vocabulary outside of school.” We do not seek the words first. We experience something and then we ask for words to denote what we have experienced. Students learn those words better which they really need.

To get the students really use the words and not just recognize them and reveal their understanding of the words, we need to make them compose simple sentences using these words. Putting words in simple commands has been found highly useful by the teachers for this purpose. One student will give a command, and another will perform. The students will take turns and this gives them an opportunity to actually produce the words and use them in a conversation or communication setting.

Remember that from the beginning it is important for the students not only to know the meanings but also to use the words appropriately. The Total Physical Response method is very useful at this stage.

Using real objects and pictures of objects will help teaching the meaning of many non-action words. Parts of the body can be taught using the pictures and nursery rhymes. Again when commands are given to show the hand, leg, finger, etc., students begin to engage themselves in a conversational mode. They take turns in asking and answering questions.

While learning words for individual body parts, students learn also plurals and even possessive forms. In other words, we introduce words and their

meanings while at the same time we teach the variations these undergo in certain grammatical contexts.

A choral drill of spelling for some words whose pronunciation differs radically from the written spelling is a good addition to the classroom exercises at this stage. Dictation may also be considered. Some teachers encourage their students to draw pictures for the word they have just learned. Puzzle-like tasks are given to identify the objects referred to by the word. Some use “fill in the blanks” technique to enable students to recall the spelling as well as the word.

### **WHAT WORDS TO TEACH?**

How do we decide which words to include in our language teaching? Perhaps we should aim at teaching the most useful words for the learner, as well as the most frequently used words in English. However it is very difficult to strike a balance between the two.

Since frequency counts depend upon the topics of passages, etc., frequency count alone will not be of much use. Fortunately for us, scholars have come up with several lists of important and most useful content words as well as function words in English. These words are used in most TESOL textbooks. Most of the TESOL materials at the beginner’s level revolve around these identified words. Hence, if we could choose those textbooks which seem to match our interests and skills in teaching and the needs of our students, then we can follow the suggestions given in the textbook. That is, it may be a safe bet often to follow the order, arrangement, and presentation of words in a textbook, making improvisations wherever necessary.

Freeman Twaddell recommended that we should help develop vocabulary skills by encouraging them to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words. He also recommended that the teachers should tolerate some vagueness of meaning where precision is not absolutely needed.

Content words are innumerable and are used to meet the needs of the context. Addition to the lists of content words can always be made. On the other hand, the structure words are few and additions to these words are not permissible.

Students learn the structure words when they begin to use the content words in larger units in appropriate sentence and social contexts. Structure words are more frequently used, whereas the use of the content words will depend upon the frequency of the field in which it is used. Students add to the content word list as they are exposed to new environments.

### **ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOCABULARY**

Textbooks tend to introduce the basic English words in the beginning level of instruction. Basic vocabulary consists of all the vocabulary items that are found in daily use in listening, speaking, reading, and writing contexts of the native speakers of English. It excludes all the items not found in the every day language activity. Thus the most frequent words that occur in the daily language activities are the basic vocabulary of English. Moreover it is generally assumed that the basic vocabulary consists only of the root words and not their derivatives.

A distinction is often made between **active** and **passive** vocabulary used by the native speakers of English. The TESOL teachers as well as the textbook writers make use of this distinction in classroom practice and in writing lessons and exercises.

The active vocabulary is defined as the number of words we actually use. The passive vocabulary refers to the larger number of vocabulary we are able to understand, but use only rarely. Scholars have defined the active vocabulary as the one which is learned very intensively with respect to form, meaning and use in such a way that the learner will be able to use it in all the listening, speaking, reading, and writing activity.

In contrast, the passive vocabulary is the one which is understood by the students in a spoken or written context but the student cannot reproduce the same on his own. Some words will be taught as active vocabulary, and some others will be treated only as passive vocabulary.

**Recognition** vocabulary is defined as the one which is recognized or identified in listening or reading responses. The **reproduction** vocabulary is identified either in actual spoken or written responses.

Teachers may or may not make much of these distinctions. They may give the meanings for all the words they are about to introduce. However, the distinction between active and passive vocabulary is bound to be established sooner or later in the speech habits of the student. So, in order to use the class time efficiently and economically to the best advantage of the learner, teachers would do well if they give more exercises for the use of the “active” vocabulary.

The teacher presents a lesson, making use of a situation appropriate to the course design and to the particular group of students. She introduces the vocabulary in meaningful contexts, but leaves the students to make their own active/passive choices through her focus or lack of focus on particular words. “The words in a student’s passive vocabulary, when the need for them arises, will move into the active vocabulary. We might also expect some movement from the active to the passive, as students learn more words and don’t consistently review older ones” (Bowen et al. 1985).

## **USE THE WORDS FOR COMMUNICATION**

“Understanding, hearing, and seeing a word are only first steps toward knowing it. Those first steps should be followed by activities that require students to use the new words for communication. ... the emphasis has been on experiences which require students to use English words for communication. ... the new words are used for making something happen. (An action is performed, or a picture is drawn, according to directions that are given in English.) In other activities, English is used for giving and receiving information. For instance, students find out, by using English, what a classmate is doing or they guess which pictures a classmate has drawn. The instructional value of such activities is this: when someone has to accomplish something which can be done only by using certain words, those words will be learned” (Allen 1983:42).

It is useful to collect pictures which may be displayed in the classroom. Collect and group these pictures showing kinds of animals, vehicles, vegetables, furniture, buildings, occupations, etc. Write below the names of these objects/events/actions. Give the words to students and ask them collect pictures for the words.

Remember that words are learned not only through a formal introduction in a lesson in the classroom but also through reading and conversations/interactions with the native speakers as well as other users of English as a second/foreign language. The lessons given to students for extensive reading should use simple structures and use only those words already known to the learners. A few words, however, may be introduced here and there without affecting the comprehension of the text. Some have suggested that one or two new words out of one hundred words would be a good proportion.

## **USE THE WORDS APPROPRIATELY**

Teachers have recognized the fact that communicating the meaning of a new word is different from learning it to use appropriately. To establish the words in the learner, it is important to repeat the newly introduced words in as many contexts as possible within the classroom, the textbook, and the exercises.

Nation (1994:vi) suggests repetition in several ways: “by setting aside class time for revision, for example reviewing learners’ vocabulary notebooks, by periodically and systematically testing previously met vocabulary and following up on the results and by planning the recycling of previously met vocabulary through pair and group activities.”

Using the newly introduced vocabulary in various contexts will help answer

questions such as “As what part of speech can it function? What range of meanings can it have? What is its core meaning? What prefixes and suffixes can it take? With what other words does it collocate? What grammatical patterns does it fit into? What particular positive and negative associations does it have? Is it a frequently word or an infrequently used word?” (Nation 1994:viii). Many other questions concerning the sociolinguistic appropriateness of the use of the words will also get clarified.

Lexical study should include the pieces that make up words: prefixes, suffixes, stems, inflectional patterns, derivational patterns, enough information for the student to be able to associate the im- of “improbable” or the ir- of “irregular” with the in- of “inadequate” word families (sign, design, signature, assign, designate, etc.).

### **HOW TO ACQUIRE MORE WORDS?**

One way to learn the meaning of unfamiliar words is to observe how they are used and make intelligent guesses. Over time the guesses are refined and the meaning comes to be specific. As Nation (1994:viii) points out, “in addition to learning new vocabulary, learners need to be able to use strategies to cope with unknown vocabulary met in listening or reading texts, to make up for gaps in productive vocabulary in speaking and writing, to gain fluency in using known vocabulary, and to learn new words in isolation.”

Another good way is to ask about one’s surroundings, requesting from friends and acquaintances identifications and definitions.

Quite a few exercise types are found in the commercial textbooks aimed at teaching English as a second or foreign language, which help us to teach and learn words in a graded manner.

Carefully go through these exercises found in series such as Hello English and Success English. Use these exercises every day in your classroom.

### **SOME VOCABULARY EXERCISES**

Consider the following as additional exercises. These are taken from Bowen et al. (1985):

- Pick out things you see around you, and ask what they are, what they are called, what they are used for, etc. This helps direct vocabulary building. Preferably things you don’t know or don’t recognize.
- Phrasal Verbs: Listen carefully to each sentence. Then paraphrase the sentence by substituting an appropriate

phrasal verb for the single verb (or vice versa). (He arose 10 minutes later: He got up 10 minutes later; He ascended to the second floor: He went up to the second floor).

- Picture-cued responses: Describe the activities pictured in the following drawings.
- Noun compounds and noun phrases: From the clue you will be given, produce an appropriate response that distinguishes a compound from a phrase (a store that sells toys: a toy store; a box to keep firewood in: the wood box; a pin to hold your necktie: a tie pin; a toy in the form of a store: a toy store).
- Shortened forms: Your teacher will set up a sentence frame, then will suggest a substitute for the first word. When called on, produce the sentence as modified by the substitution.
- Literal acronyms: Pronounce the acronyms by giving the names of the letters that make each up. Then finish the sentence by giving the equivalent full form.
- Nicknames: As your teacher presents a series of names, make statements following the pattern given.

## **VOCABULARY IN WRITTEN LANGUAGE**

Vocabulary teaching is a very important step. Even as we focus on the mastery of language skills and grammar, adequate attention must be paid to the mastery of words in English.

Words are learned in many ways. Reading is an important means to learn new words. Is there any one best approach for teaching vocabulary in English? No.

## **SOME WAYS TO LEARN AND TEACH VOCABULARY**

Bowen et al. (1985) suggest the following:

- Glossaries and Dictionaries.
- Use of the Thesaurus.
- The practice of penciling a small dot in front of an entry every time it is looked up.
- The idea of a vocabulary notebook. List the interesting words in a notebook where it will be convenient to review them from time to time.
- One widely acknowledged way to build vocabulary is through an understanding and application of word formation processes.
- Learning the Synonyms and the nuances that distinguish the synonyms.
- Connotations.

- Interpretation of words that are very similar in appearance.
- Structure Vs Content vocabulary
- Collocations Lists of words. Examples: Measurement vocabulary, color terms, converse form of verbs, semantic associations (homonyms, homographs (pairs of words with the same spelling, but with different pronunciations and meanings), relative generality-specificity of words with overlapping meanings, antonyms.
- Idioms.

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## CONTENTS PAGE

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# **CHAPTER 11 USE OF LITERATURE IN TEACHING LANGUAGE**

## **MAINTAINING THE ATTENTION OF STUDENTS**

Is there any one who doesn't like to listen to or read stories?

It is possible that many TESOL students may or may not have any interest at all in English literature. They may come to a TESOL class simply to learn the language to meet practical ends.

At the same time, many students are able to hold their attention and progress further in learning another language only if the materials they are exposed to are interesting, not just meet their practical ends. Literature plays a crucial part in maintaining the interest of the students. Use of short stories, short novels, and plays helps maintain the interest of the students in learning the language. Teaching a short poem or a nursery rhyme helps enliven the atmosphere. When a nursery rhyme is acted out, the entire class enjoys the performance, and learns some intonation patterns not easily mastered otherwise.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIETY AND ITS VALUES**

Through the short stories, plays, and novels, which often try to portray the society in some realistic way, students have a glimpse of the culture of the native speakers of English. The conversations give them the nuances used by the native speakers of English in performing various roles in the society. They learn the social etiquette and the words, sentences, tone, and tenor which go with the etiquette.



Through the study of literature, the second/foreign language learner of English is introduced to the historical as well as the current culture of the English speaking peoples. With the culture, they also come to study and understand the world view of the native speakers. No language makes sense to its learner without some understanding of the world view it represents.

English speaking peoples do have a unique history, even though aspects of this history may be shared by the Europeans in general. The industrial revolution in Britain inaugurated the industrial revolution throughout the world. The evolution and progress of modern democratic institutions owe a lot to British history and traditions. Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence plays its unique role all over the world. University and other professional institutions of education have been established in most of the Third World countries through the efforts of the English speaking peoples. The Anglo-American alliance continues to be a great blessing for peace and prosperity.

True, the British and American dominion have been criticized by many for their alleged self-serving interests. And yet the balance is in favor of English education in the Third World countries. Students in the Third World countries (some of which may have been closed for Christian missionary work) flock to the TESOL classes in large numbers fully knowing that English does represent a culture and a religion which may militate against their own.

The morals and ethics represented by the English diction owe their origin largely to Christian morals and ethics with universal appeal. These universally applicable moral and ethical concerns are easily conveyed, raised, and impressed in the minds of the learners through English literature, even as they enjoy reading and listening to the stories. Movies further accentuate these concerns.

*Our goal is not the teaching of English literature, but teaching and improving English already acquired by the TESOL learners. Through a careful selection of literary pieces which match the learner's difficulty level, self-learning of English is greatly accelerated.*

### **DIVERSITY AND VARIED USE OF LITERARY MATERIALS**

It is important for us to recognize that "the English language is no longer the preserve of a few nations, but is now used globally" (Lazar 1993:5). This means that quality literary products by the non-native writers of English from other countries as well as the translation of masterpieces in the native literature of the TESOL learners may have to be included as part of our course materials.

Use of literature in language teaching helps improve the knowledge of

English in many ways. Literary pieces are susceptible to multiple level of interpretation. In a literary work, content is communicated in many novel ways, with metaphors and multiple meanings, sarcasm, cynicism, etc. The intent of the message is hidden and needs to be unraveled by the individual readers. The writers use the words in some unique manner to create novel meanings and expressions.

These and many other characteristics of literary pieces help the TESOL learner to improve his skill in understanding and using English effectively, since they will be confronted with similar characteristics even in their day to day conversations.

Students master new sentence and phrasal patterns through reading literary works. They learn to use familiar words in new contexts with new meanings.

### **STUDY VS USE OF LITERATURE**

Whether literate or illiterate, sophisticated or not, all of us have an inherent ability to understand the basic story-telling conventions. This helps us enjoy literature and appreciate the meaning it conveys. It is this implicit competence that we try to take advantage of in using literature to teach language. Students get absorbed in the story, and the language (sentences, sentence and phrasal patterns, and words) is understood and mastered without much effort in the process.

However, we need to distinguish between the study of literature per se and the use of literature as a resource for language teaching.

Our goal is not teaching literature. Our goal is teaching language. We intend to use literature to teach language.

The most important function of using literature in a TESOL class is its motivating role for performance within the classroom. Study of literary pieces provides opportunities to the class to reflect on the events and characters, share the opinions of the readers, and get them involved in discussions.

Introduction to the cultural background is another important function.

### **A SUBSTITUTE FOR FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION**

Study of literature helps language acquisition in another peculiar way: The students in Third World countries have only a limited access to spoken English. Face to face communication with the native speakers is a rarity. Under this circumstance, students can have continued touch with English mostly through the written English. If this written English is motivating,

interesting and instructive, students will come back to use English day after day.

## **SELECTION OF MATERIALS**

We need to select materials which match the interests of our students. Often the textbooks used to teach English as a second or foreign language in the Third World countries contain stories, dramas and poems. Some of these, especially stories and dramas, may be from the same cultural and literary background of the learners. These texts may not pose cultural problems for students. They are certain to pose problems for the TESOL teacher!

Classical British and American texts (novels, plays, etc.) abridged and re-told would be an excellent addition to TESOL textbooks.

English is an international language. Many talented creative writers from the former colonies of Britain and the countries which have been traditionally close to the United States, have chosen to express themselves in English.

In addition, there is an excellent body of literature from other languages in English translation. It is possible to supplement our TESOL textbook with materials taken from all the above four categories.

Lazar (1993:62) points out that “although students may find it easier to respond personally to a text from within their own culture, there is a strong argument for saying that exposing students to literature from other cultures is an enriching and exciting way of increasing their awareness of different values, beliefs, social structures and so on.” You may have to edit these pieces to bring some native-English naturalness to the texts. You may have to edit the material for its difficulty level and length as well.

In general, the following factors are always recommended for consideration while selecting the text (Lazar 1993):

“The students’ cultural background, linguistic proficiency, literary background, availability of texts (kinds and ease with which these are available), length of text (Do you have enough time available to work on the text in class? How much time do students have to work on the text at home? Could you use only part of a text, or an abridged version of it? If so, how much background information will you need to give students to make the text intelligible?), exploitability (What kinds of tasks and activities can you devise to exploit the text? Are there resources available to help you exploit the text, for example, a film or a particular novel the students are studying, recordings of a play or poem, library materials giving information about the life of an author, etc.), fit with syllabus (How do the texts link with the rest of the syllabus? Thematically? In terms of vocabulary, grammar or

discourse? Can you devise tasks and activities for exploiting the text which link with the methodology you have used elsewhere in the syllabus?).”

Remember that our goal is not teaching literature. Our goal is to use literature to teach language. Literary pieces can be easily integrated with the syllabus for the course. At the lower level, stories are part of the textbook. The story lesson may be “taught” following the usual steps, with focus on vocabulary and sentence structure. Students may be given tasks to paraphrase the story in their own words and manner. They can “listen” to the story, they can tell the story orally, they can “read” it aloud to others, or read it silently, they can rewrite the story in their own words, they can play with the words and find the meanings for the crucial words and use them in their own sentences.

They may try to identify the technique of narration, and adopt the same to write their own stories. They can identify the conversational strategies the characters in the story have employed, and try to use the same in conversations with their fellow students in the class. They can enact the story as a team and learn to behave like the characters.

There is no limit to the kinds of activities which could be developed based on the story in the textbook. All language skills are covered in teaching the story in the class.

There is no better material than literary pieces for reading assignments outside the class. Quite a few abridged and re-told materials are available which could be assigned for reading outside the class. Short story collections and short novels are more useful than full length fiction. Ask the students to pencil those words, phrases, and idioms which are unfamiliar to them. Let them check with a second language learner’s dictionary such as Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English not only for their meanings but also for their usage. Let them write a brief report or gist of the story to confirm that they have indeed read the book. Have a brief discussion in the class about the reading assignment.

Lazar (1993) suggests three types of activities: Pre-reading activities, While-reading activities, and Post-reading activities.

## **POETRY**

If you are good in reciting poetry with passion, then you should give your students a taste of what English poems are. If your students show great talents in appropriate recitation with passion, then have several poetry reading sessions.

Poems also help teaching language. Students need to make decisions about

the correct order of the lines, decipher the metaphor and other poetic devices used by the poet, and convert them to the ordinary language syntax. Comprehension of meaning of a poem is more intricate than the comprehension of an ordinary text, either in story form or in business correspondence, etc.

As Lazar (1993) points out, poems are marked by unusual syntax, rich in words coined by the poet, reinforcing the students' knowledge of the norms of language use, and the manner in which they can be adapted to achieve different communicative purposes. Integrating poetry into the syllabus provides for an enjoyable way of reinforcing and revisiting contents, enabling students to make confident interpretations, understand figurative meanings, and nuances of creative literature in English.

Poems may have only a limited role to play in teaching language in a TESOL classroom. However, the textbooks prepared and used in the Third World countries correctly look at teaching languages as a means for comprehensive education. They always give an important place to poetry in their syllabus. So, some training in teaching poetry is not out of place for the TESOL teacher.

I would encourage you to be proficient in reciting and performing a number of nursery rhymes, as well as the poems written by poets such as Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost, and the reputed Indian poets.

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[CONTENTS PAGE](#)

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## **CHAPTER 12**

### **TEACHING ENGLISH TO CHILDREN**

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN**

This course is written and taught to help you to teach English as a second or foreign language to adult learners. However, there will be plenty of occasions during which you will be called upon to teach English to children. Most of what we have learned so far can be used to teach English to children, with suitable modification to meet the special needs of children. These special needs become the focus of our discussion in this chapter.

Children learn English as a second or foreign language much faster than the adults. They imitate the teacher's pronunciation, sentences, phrases, and words more easily. They do not ask for explicit rules which explain how

sentences are put together, produced, and pronounced. They may ask for the meanings of words, but they are able to intuitively identify salient features of the meanings of a word and use the word more or less correctly.

An important prerequisite for effective learning and retention appears to be that instruction should be activity-based, rather than explanation- or theory-oriented. And the activities should be of an engaging nature. The teacher should be pleasant and sweet-natured, able to communicate at the level of the children. She should not be a terror! Use of audio-visuals is more important than the printed text. The printed text should be colorful, full of pictures, and should have only few language elements such as words, phrases, and sentences.

Language learning should be encouraged in all the classes and in all the environments. Children have a natural curiosity to investigate the environment in greater detail. When they go to the bazaar, they see a lot of signboards and they start reading the same. They start reading the road signs with great interest. The teacher can create a bazaar inside the classroom for reading and conversation purposes. Pretend situations are greatly enjoyed by children, and they do actively participate in such games.

### **ACTIVITY-BASED LESSONS**

Children are interested in group activities. Devise group work which would require use of words and sentences for communication among members of the group. Devise group work which aim at accomplishing some language-related task such as language games.

If the textbook lessons are not activity-based, you should be able to convert the lessons in such a way that there are abundant activities built into the teaching of the lesson. Conventional textbooks provide for some activities as part of the exercises.

An activity-based lesson centers around the activity to teach the language. Children are given some words and some simple sentences. They are asked to perform a task as a group, conversing with each other. They will use the words and sentences, some in full and most of the time in abbreviated form to communicate with one another. They may use many gestures while performing the task. Ultimately they would achieve what they set out to achieve. They would complete the task and would be greatly involved in doing the task. In this process children are introduced to the use of English in natural communicative contexts.

“This language is meaningful and understandable, because the activities are meaningful and understandable. Children are taught in English; children are not introduced to English language in an artificially pre-determined

sequence of grammatical structures or functions; the input from the teacher, and their learning about their world, is in English” (Vale and Feunteun 1995).

## **ORIENTATION TO TEACH ENGLISH**

Vale and Feunteun (1995) suggest the following orientation when we teach English to children:

- build confidence;
- provide the motivation to learn English;
- encourage ownership of language;
- encourage children to communicate with whatever language they have at their disposal (mime, gesture, key word, drawings, etc.);
- encourage children to treat English as a communication tool not as an end product;
- show children that English is fun;
- establish a trusting relationship with the children, and encouraging them to do the same with their classmates;
- give children an experience of a wide range of English language in a non-threatening environment.

Physical activities help in learning the words and sentences. An activity-based approach is always better than mere classroom teaching mode with repetition, imitation drills, etc.

## **EMPHASIZE FLUENCY, NOT CORRECTNESS**

Remember that children are in for a long haul. They will have several years of English. If the fundamentals of motivation, fluency and correct pronunciation are built in a steady manner without overemphasizing correctness of speech at the entry level, and if the teachers themselves have a good command of English with model setting pronunciation capabilities, children will learn English better and faster.

## **CLASS ACTIVITIES**

Nursery rhymes and songs acted out help children to internalize some words and sentences. Use nursery rhymes and songs for testing their knowledge and command of English. Use English all the time in the class. However, do not refuse to give brief explanations in the native language of children. But such explanations should have the focus on strengthening the use of English, not the mastery of translation from one language into another. Do not use the native language to elicit English responses. Use objects and actions instead.

Keep the corrections to the minimum. But you can ask children to repeat an utterance several times so that some approximation to your pronunciation will be encouraged.

Do not focus on the quantum of words, phrases and sentences to be mastered. Focus on developing an ability to communicate in contexts meaningful to the children.

Comics appropriate to children may be used. Children will see the pictures, listen to your reading, and will reproduce in their own language the utterances of the characters in the book as much as they can.

Let the children act out the story. This will develop their listening and speaking skills.

Reading and writing will take deliberate effort on the part of the students. Reading and writing should be less in quantum than speaking and listening in English classes for children.

Quite a few materials in print, audio and video are available in the market which aim at teaching English script, spelling, reading, and writing. Select those which match your children's needs and mastery level. Use these in the order suggested by the book. Add to the exercises in an innovative and interesting manner.

**Children learn English effortlessly, but the teacher needs to be well prepared!**

Ask for the catalogues of textbooks for children from the leading publishers! Collect stories from the children's native language and tell these stories in simple English to them.

Class activities should center around and cover all language skills. However, the extent to which the reading and writing will be covered in a children's class will depend upon the proficiency so far attained. Children, like adults, have some difficulty in mastering the reading and writing skills. Do not accelerate the pace of learning in these skills.

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[CONTENTS PAGE](#)

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**CHAPTER 13  
TESTING**



## **TEST PERFORMANCE, NOT KNOWLEDGE**

Tests in the TESOL class are performance tests. We do not aim at testing the students' knowledge of English grammar. We would like to test how students produce, understand, and use English in communicative contexts. We are not interested in testing how well the students remember the facts about English language. We are interested in testing how well the students actually use English in communicative contexts.

## **KINDS OF TESTS**

Achievement tests test the progress the students have made in reference to particular lessons. Students' level of achievement in terms of the structures and words taught through a lesson or a specific number of lessons is the focus of achievement tests. The drills and exercises given in a lesson gauge the progress of students even as these help him to understand, master, and use the content, structures, and words given in the lesson.

Proficiency tests, on the other hand, focus on the overall mastery of the students in English irrespective of the lesson. It may be described as a cumulative test, taking into account all the structures and words that a student may have been exposed to so far: a sort of final exam, a comprehensive exam.

## **PRODUCTIVE AND RECEPTIVE TESTS**

TESOL tests may be of a productive nature where students are asked to produce - speak, read aloud, write - utterances, or perform tasks. These may be of a receptive nature where students are asked to read silently and answer multiple choice questions, which demand correct recognition rather than the production of the answer. More often than not, most well-prepared and widely-used TESOL tests are in the form of answering multiple choice questions.

## **VOCABULARY TESTS**

Vocabulary tests are of several kinds. Beginner's vocabulary skill is tested through questions which expect a yes or no answer, or by asking them to perform a simple task. In multiple choice questions, "a sentence with a missing word is presented; students choose one of four vocabulary items given to complete the sentence. A third type, multiple choice paraphrase, is a test in which a sentence with one word underlined is given. Students choose which of four words is the closest in meaning to the underlined item. A fourth kind of test, simple completion (words), has students write in the missing part of words that appear in sentences" (Madsen 1983:12).

Synonyms and antonyms may also be elicited. Testing the knowledge and use of subtle shades of meanings reflected in words somewhat synonymous is another useful test. Asking the students to use words in appropriate sentences is another exercise which has been traditionally used in language textbooks.

### **GRAMMAR TESTS**

Limited response questions which ask students to perform certain tasks, multiple choice completion, simple completion of sentences, and cloze test are some of the test forms used in the grammar section. The grammatical structures offer an endless list of test items. We have listed a variety of exercises in the earlier chapters of this book. These exercise models can be used to test the students' mastery of structures.

### **PRONUNCIATION TESTS**

Pronunciation tests focus on effective communication, not on perfect pronunciation. Pronunciation of individual sounds, phrases, or sentences is not any more highlighted. "One reason for this view is that even after much training, very few adolescents or adults ever achieve perfect pronunciation in their second language" (Madsen 1983:57). Oral repetition, multiple choice hearing identification, reading aloud, simple dialogues, and simple narrations are very useful forms to test the pronunciation skill.

### **READING TESTS**

Reading tests range from reading aloud to reading comprehension. Students in the beginning levels need to be tested as to their ability to "read" the words, phrases, and sentences with appropriate pronunciation and sentence melody. This requires the mastery of the letter-sound correspondence and other phonological rules such as vowel reduction, placement of stress, and use of appropriate syllabic pauses. The exercises we have dealt with in our chapter on reading will be found highly useful here.

Reading comprehension, reading speed, and skimming techniques are other items of importance to be covered in reading tests.

### **WRITING TESTS**

Sentence combining, sentence expansion, sentence reduction, copying, and dictation are often used in the beginning level tests in writing. Guided writing and changing the passage are also popular test forms.

### **LISTENING TESTS**

Picture cues have been found very effective in testing listening skill. Again we have given a number of exercises in our chapter on listening which can be profitably used to test the progress and proficiency in the listening skill.

You should test your students only in forms that are familiar to them. Do not introduce new test forms during testing. However, you may combine several situations already familiar to your students and create new ones from out of the familiar contexts. Do not introduce new vocabulary or idioms or new structures in your tests. Keep your tests brief and focused upon specific language skills.

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## [CONTENTS PAGE](#)

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\*\*\* \*\*

[CONTENTS PAGE](#)

---

[HOME PAGE](#) | [Gojri and Its Relationship with Rajasthani, etc.](#) | [Teaching Communicative Competence in Diglossic Indian Languages](#) | [The Constitution of India: Provisions Relating to Languages](#) | [The Official Languages Act, 1963 \(As Amended 1967\)](#) | [Language News This Month: Language Loyalty, Indian Drama, and Artistic Freedom](#) | [CONTACT EDITOR](#)

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