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## UNIT 4 THE CLASSROOM AS A SPACE FOR DISCOURSE

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### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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After you have read this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain classroom interaction, its aspects and types;
- Critique the Initiation Response Feedback (IRF) exchange structure;
- Discuss how we can promote meaningful interaction in our classrooms;
- Enumerate a few techniques for promoting negotiated interaction;
- Manage classroom discourse effectively to promote learning
- Develop classroom interactional competence

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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Learning takes place in the classroom through interaction. The aim of every lesson is to facilitate learning and increase learning opportunities for the learner. The language that we use in the classroom plays a very important role in determining the classroom discourse through which the learner engages with the syllabus and materials. Teachers can improve their professional practice by developing a closer understanding of classroom discourse specifically by focusing on the complex relationship between language, interaction and learning. In order to make the classroom space dynamic and more engaging teachers as well as learners need to develop classroom interactional competence (CIC), a concept which will be introduced and described towards the end of this unit.

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### 4.3 CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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In a classroom the teachers and learners come together and language learning is expected to happen. However, this language learning happens as a result of the reactions amongst the teachers and the learners. We need to note that learners do not come 'empty-handed' into the classroom. The learners bring their whole experience of learning and of life in classrooms along with their own reasons for learning the language. They have their own needs that must be addressed. The teachers also bring in her experience of life and learning and of course of teaching. She also gets the syllabus in the form of materials. Therefore how the teachers and learners react to each other when they are together in the classroom is of utmost importance. 'React' has been used in the research literature to refer to the constant interaction that takes place between the learners and the teacher and among the learners themselves.

How successful this constant interaction is, cannot be taken for granted. The interaction cannot be completely planned. That would be too artificial. Therefore, interaction in the classroom needs to be managed rather than planned. Moreover, the interaction cannot be managed by the teacher alone, even the learners play an important role in the management of interaction. As a social event these contributions on the part of the teacher as well as learners are crucial for interaction to be successful.

From this viewpoint interaction is a kind of 'co-production' and it involves a few complications. The major concern is that successful interaction in the classroom involves everybody managing at least five different things simultaneously. These five factors are:

Who gets to speak? (participants' turn distribution)

What do they talk about? (topic)

What does each participant do with the various opportunities to speak? (task)

What sort of atmosphere is created? (tone)

What accent, dialect or language is used? (code)

#### **All wright & Bailey (1991)**

Another problem is that these five aspects of interaction are means as well as ends. Thus, language teachers recognize that using a language also involves the ability to handle interaction in that language. Thus, classroom environment also provides opportunities to learners (as well as teachers) to involve themselves in interaction management.

Here it becomes important to understand interaction in the context of learning. In a classroom the teacher and the learners manage interaction for language learning to happen. However, in most cases it is considered to be solely the teacher's job to plan a sequence of lessons and execute them effectively in the classroom. The teacher may get the best plan to class but finally what each learner learns depends on what happens in the course of classroom interaction and whether or not the learner is able to make use of the language learning opportunities available to him/her.

In order to facilitate language learning, classroom interaction needs to be understood and optimized. Moreover, the quality of interaction is largely determined by teachers during their face-to-face communication with the learners. As quality of interaction contributes to learning, it is important to optimize it rather than maximizing it. To improve language learning in the classroom, appropriate interaction in tandem with desired learning outcomes has to be encouraged.

Any second language lesson can be viewed as a dynamic and complex series of interrelated contexts, in which interaction is central to teaching and learning. Latest studies in classroom interaction indicate the need to consider the idea that teachers and learners together co-construct (plural) classroom contexts.

Van Lier (1988) identifies four types of second language (L2) classroom interaction:

Type 1: The first, which he calls ‘less topic- orientation, less activity- orientation’, is typical of everyday conversation. Thus, it is the least structured, allowing the most freedom for self- expression.

Type 2: Second is ‘more topic- orientation, less activity- orientation’ which is typical of the type of interaction that occurs when information is provided in instructions or a lecture. The interaction is one- way and involves little space for exchange of ideas or opinions.

Type 3: The third category, ‘more topic- orientation, more activity orientation,’ occurs when information has to be exchanged following specific and predetermined lines, as in an interview, joke or story.

Type 4: The final category, ‘less topic- orientation, more activity- orientation’ is typified by substitution drills, pair work and activities that have very specific procedures.

van Lier’s classification is definitely not exhaustive and may not be capable of accounting for all types of interaction. However, it is certainly representative of the typical patterns that occur. It also makes some attempt to connect language use to activity; rather than proposing a purely functional framework. van Lier’s scheme relates classroom activity to type of language used.

### **Check Your Progress 1**

**Notes:** a) Write your answers in the space given below:

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Why do we need to understand classroom interaction?

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## **4.4 CLASSROOM DISCOURSE**

It has been established by experts in the area of classroom discourse that the teacher plays an important role in understanding, establishing and maintaining patterns of communication that foster, to the greatest extent, both classroom learning and second language acquisition. Therefore, classroom discourse needs to be understood to promote learning in the classroom.

Let us first understand the typical structure of classroom discourse. We have all been part of various classrooms as learners and teachers. It is easy to identify and present a very clear structure of classroom discourse. In most classrooms teachers control both the topic of conversation and turn-taking. Learners take cues from the teacher through whom they direct most of their responses. In a second language classroom the teacher is often considered to be the main point of reference and he/she controls most of the patterns of communication primarily through the ways in which the teacher restrict or allow learners' interaction, take control of the topic and facilitate or hinder learning opportunities.

The underlying structure of second language classrooms typically represent sequences of discourse 'moves' IR (E/F), where I is teacher initiation, R is learner response and E/F is an optional evaluation or feedback by the teacher (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). In later versions of the model, F became follow-up. This model is referred to as the IRF sequence, as illustrated below:

**Extract 1.1**

(I) *Teacher: There are two things that the writer establishes at the beginning of the story. One is situation ...situation. What is the situation at the beginning of the story? anybody? What's the situation Anita? Have you read the story Anita?*

(R) *Student: No ma'am.*

(F) *Teacher: Ah that won't help then will it? Who's read the story? What is the situation at the beginning Rahul?*

As you can see in the above Extract 1.1, for every utterance made by a learner (R), teachers typically make two (I,F). Thus, teacher talk (speech of the teacher in the classroom) represents approximately two-thirds of classroom speech. It is both particular to the classroom and characterized by it. This is the traditional IRF interaction which prevails in most classrooms.

Musumeci (1996) discusses four reasons for the dominance of the IRF sequence in our classrooms:

1. Teachers' and students' expectations consider question and answer routines as appropriate classroom behaviour. This is how conversation, in a classroom, is characterized.
2. Teachers feel the need to make learners 'feel good'. The feedback given by a teacher to a student is important and necessary.
3. The system of power relations in most classes means that it is the teacher who has more of the 'floor' owing to asymmetrical roles.
4. Finally, the time constraints facing teachers make them believe that question and answer routines are the most effective means of advancing the classroom discourse.

However, experts have frequently highlighted that the IRF sequence has a negative effect on classroom communication because it gives minimum interactional space to the learners.

The teacher talk considerably increases and learners don't get enough opportunities for language use. In order to facilitate learning in the classroom we need to grant greater participation rights to our learners and allow them to play a more central role in classroom interaction. If our classroom discourse is dominated by the IRF sequence then interaction can become very mechanical and also monotonous. We need to be aware of this and we should consciously try to break the IRF pattern. In the following sections we will discuss various strategies that we can use to make our classroom discourse interacting and effective.

In the L2 classroom, teachers control both the content and the procedure of the learning process. L2 classes exhibit some typical characteristics:

1. teachers control the topic of discussion;
2. teachers control who may participate and when; students take their cues from teachers;
3. role relationships between teachers and learners are unequal; teachers are responsible for managing the interaction which occurs; teachers talk more.

Thus one may conclude that teachers often control both the content and structure of classroom communication, at least in part, by their use of language. Furthermore, their decision as to whether to tightly control the topic of discussion or whether to allow a more egalitarian discourse structure in which students self-select and have a more equal share in turn-taking, is not random. Thus, teachers influence learner participation both by the ways in which they use language and by what they bring to the classroom. Therefore, it is important to be aware of our language use in the classroom.

In Extract 1.2 below, for example, note how the teacher selects who may talk (turn 1), controls the topic of conversation (1), selects another speaker (7), evaluates the learner's performance (3, 5, 7), manages both language form (what's the verb in 5) and the message (they go to in 5). Note too how the predominance of an IRF structure characterizes this extract as a piece of classroom discourse.

**Extract 1.2**

- 1 (I) *Teacher: ok Rita could you explain something about law and order in our country?*  
*what happens if you commit a crime?*
- 2 (R) *Learner1: if we do crime policeman come to take somebody to police station*
- 3 (F) *Teacher: yes...*
- 4 (R) *Learner1: and prisoner questioned and if he is (5 seconds unintelligible)*
- 5 (F/I) *Teacher: yes what's the verb Rita... if she or he yes... commits a crime they go to...*

- 6 (R) *Learner1: they go to court ... but if they... he... they didn't do that they can go home*
- 7 (F/I) *Teacher: they can go home (...) very good indeed right what happens in the court?*

Thus, we find how the teacher controls the classroom discourse. The responsibility for promoting efficient and effective language use resides with the teacher. Thus, the teacher's use of language can get the best out of a group of learners– that is, facilitating contributions, helping them say what they mean, understand what they are studying and making sure the rest of the group is able to follow – is dependent on a teacher's ability to make professional use of language. This ability has to be learned and practised over time, in the same way that we teachers acquire and perfect classroom teaching skills. In order to make our classroom discourse meaningful and effective we need to understand some of the desired features of an effective classroom discourse. In the next section we will discuss these features of classroom discourse.

**Check Your Progress 2**

**Notes:** a) Answer the following questions in not more than 100 words each.  
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Answer the following questions in not more than 100 words each.

- a. Why do we need to understand classroom discourse?  
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- b. What is IRF structure? Why is it the most dominant pattern in most classrooms?  
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- c. What are some of the problems of IRF structure?  
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.....
- d. What are some of the typical characteristics of L2 classroom discourse?  
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2. Read the following statements and mark true (T) or false (F) against them. Correct the ones which are false.

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| a. Half of the classroom discourse constitutes teacher talk.                              | T/F |
| b. IRF stands for initiation, reaction, final response.                                   | T/F |
| c. Teachers play a very important role in determining the quality of classroom discourse. | T/F |
| d. Teacher's decision making in the classroom has an impact on learner participation.     | T/F |
| e. We should strictly follow the IRF structure of classroom discourse.                    | T/F |

## 4.5 FEATURES OF CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

In this section we will discuss features of classroom discourse. This will also help us to understand the desired strategies that we need to incorporate in our discourse to facilitate interaction and hence learning in the classroom. The following features enable the teachers to manage classroom discourse effectively.

### ● Elicitation techniques

Elicitation is a technique by which the teacher gets the learners to give information rather than giving it to them.

For example: a teacher elicits the rules for the structure of the first conditional by asking learners to look at some examples, then writing 'We make the first conditional in English with...?' on the board.

In the classroom, elicitation is an important technique for various reasons. It helps develop a learner-centred dynamic, it makes learning memorable as learners can link new and old information, and it can help produce a dynamic and stimulating learning environment.

Typically, classroom discourse is dominated by question and answer routines, with teachers asking most of the questions as one of the principal ways in which they control the discourse.

Many of the question- types selected and used by language teachers are of the closed variety and produce only short responses from students. Our questions in the classroom need to have the ability to produce responses which are 'communicative'. In order to be able to do so let us discuss the different types of questions that we may use in our classroom.

### ● Display questions:

A display question is one to which the teacher already knows the answer. In most cases, the learner too knows that the teacher knows the answer but she answers it to satisfy the teacher.

### Examples:

When was Mahatma Gandhi born?

Is this a chair or a table?

Display questions do not normally generate new information. They demand little thinking. However, if they are used for a certain pedagogic goal they can serve a very useful purpose. For example, if we are doing accuracy based activity in the class and our pedagogic goal is to give practice for a newly acquired sound or word or repeating a newly learnt sentence pattern or word stress, display questions can work successfully in such situations. Also for classroom management purposes (maintaining control of your class) display questions can be used.

- **Referential questions**

Referential questions or genuine questions demand real answers. They often require thought and effort. Such a question may ask the student to infer a meaning, to evaluate a statement or to separate fact from fiction.

**Examples:**

How is swimming more or less satisfying exercise than jogging?

In what ways do dogs make easier pets than monkeys?

These questions seek real answers. They demand an explanation, often generate new thinking and can elicit individual answers.

- **Display vs referential questions**

Referential questions are more likely to produce 'natural' responses than display questions.

Traditionally, display questions, to which the teacher already knows the answer (e.g.: what's the past tense of go?) are seen as being functionally different from referential questions, where the answer is not known in advance (e.g. do you have any brothers and sisters?).

Display questions typically produce shorter, simpler responses from learners. While accepting that the purpose of all questions is to elicit responses, the display/referential distinction is important.

- **Closed question**

A closed question has a single, correct answer.

Examples:

Is Mumbai the capital of Maharashtra or of Gujarat?

Is Kuala Lumpur part of Singapore or Malaysia?

- **Open-ended question**

Open-ended question allows for opinion as it has more than one correct answer.

Examples: All banks in the city provide the same quality service. Discuss.

When is it better to travel by rail or road than by air?

These questions allow for different responses based on differing experiences.



● **Factual questions**

These questions help determine if students know some required facts or information. They may not normally call for reflection on events, attitudes or beliefs. Examples:

Who is the President of United States?

How far is Chennai from Delhi?

The above classification of questions clearly shows that these question types may overlap. Therefore, while classifying a question we may have to use multiple terms. A display question could be also factual or close-ended. A referential question can also be open-ended.

Another classification of types of questions was proposed by Benjamin Bloom (in Tickoo, 2003). He divided the questions into six types and defined each of them as follows:

1. Knowledge questions that ask students to get information given in their book or in any other source of knowledge. Example: Where is the Gir Forest?
2. Comprehension questions that ask for understanding. Example: What does the author mean by ‘surrender value?’
3. Application questions that involve using one’s understanding. Example: ‘How does yoga help build concentration?’
4. Analysis questions that ask for looking at parts of a situation. Example: ‘In what ways is a solar heater better or worse than an electric heater?’
5. Synthesis questions which ask students to combine their skills to create new ideas. Example: ‘What can we do to make roads safe for visually challenged people?’
6. Evaluation questions which ask people to make judgements. Example: ‘Are large dams best answers to water and power shortages?’

**Check Your Progress 3**

**Notes:** a) Write your answers in the space given below:

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Give at least two examples of each of the following question types:

a. Display questions:

b. Referential questions:

c. Close-ended:

d. Open-ended:

2. How did Benjamin Bloom classify questions? Explain with examples.

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3. If we want to promote thinking in our classroom what types of questions should we ask?

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Using questions appropriately in the classroom

Our choice of questioning strategies can have a huge impact on learner participation. Questions can serve to signal turns, help understanding, provide opportunities to learners and even compel involvement. Our use of questions helps in discourse modification and maintains participation among learners. In other words, classroom discourse differs from ‘normal’ communication in terms of the number of questions used and their function.

Each of the above question types would contribute positively to classroom discourse if the question type matches our pedagogic goals. Pedagogic goals are the learning outcomes that we have in our mind for our lessons.

According to a teacher’s pedagogic goal, different question types are more or less appropriate: the extent to which a question produces a communicative response is less important than the extent to which a question serves its purpose at a particular point in a lesson. In short, the use of appropriate questioning strategies requires an understanding of the function of a question in relation to what is being taught (Nunn, 1999).

The table below shows different types of pedagogic goals that require specific types of question:

Question type Pedagogic goals

Display questions/closed questions/factual questions

- To enable learners to produce correct forms
- To provide corrective feedback
- To display correct answers
- To provide language practice around a piece of material
- To elicit responses in relation to the material
- To provide students practice in sub-skills
- To clarify when necessary
- To evaluate learner contributions

Pedagogic goals	Question type
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To enable learners to produce correct forms</li> <li>● To provide corrective feedback</li> <li>● To display correct answers</li> <li>● To provide language practice around a piece of material</li> <li>● To elicit responses in relation to the material</li> <li>● To provide students practice in sub-skills</li> <li>● To clarify when necessary</li> <li>● To evaluate learner contributions</li> </ul>	Display questions/closed questions/factual questions

Pedagogic goals	Question type
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To enable learners to express themselves clearly</li> <li>● To establish a context for discussion</li> <li>● To promote oral fluency</li> </ul>	Referential questions/open-ended questions

● **Why-questions**

Questions which use the wh-word why are called why-questions. For example: if a student says he/she likes action movies, then we can ask why does he/she like action movies?

The more the number of why-questions the better would be the quality of our classroom interaction. Why-questions initiate longer responses and allow us to initiate and sustain discussions in class. In most classrooms the frequency of why-questions among teachers and students is extremely low which in turn suggests that both the quantity and quality of student contributions is likely to be mediocre.

In Extract 1.3 below, note how turn-taking and length and type of learner contribution are very strongly influenced by the nature of the questions being asked. In this extract, all questions are of the display, ‘closed’ variety, evolving from a reading passage which the class has just read. If the teacher’s agenda at this stage in the lesson is to check comprehension, then her choice of elicitation technique is appropriate and in line with her pedagogic goal. If, however, she aims to promote class discussion, a different type of questioning strategy would be needed, using more open, referential questions.

### Extract 1.3

1. *Teacher: now if you look at the first sentence Rohan...can you read the first sentence please*
2. *Learner 1: lot of gold in the sea*
3. *Teacher: uhuh and then the LAST sentence (reading) the treasure in the ocean might just as well not exist ... what treasure? ... Priya?*
4. *Learner 2: in the seawater*
5. *Teacher: yes yeah so the SEA water is another name for? ... in this case? Another way of saying ... what? Raman?*
6. *Learner 3: ocean*
7. *Teacher: ocean right and what's in the ocean ... treasure and what's in the seawater*
8. *Learner 4: gold*

Now look at the next extract 1.4 which is quite different from the above extract 1.3. In Extract 1.4 it is clear that the learners have more interactional space and freedom in both what they say and when they say it. It is, in many respects, much closer to casual conversation because learners produce longer turns (in 5 and 7), and because the teacher's comments (in 4 and 6) are non-evaluative, relating more to the content of the message than the language used to express it. While we, as outsiders, are not privy to the precise meanings being exchanged here, it is apparent that the referential prompt question do you believe in this kind of thing produced longer, freer responses by learners and resulted in a more equal exchange as might be found in a casual conversation.

### Extract 1.4

1. *Teacher: I agree... do you? do you believe in this kind of thing? We talked about UFOs and all yesterday (Wait time 2 seconds)*
2. *Learner 1: no ...*
3. *Learner 2: well maybe yes...*
4. *Teacher: maybe no why not? (Wait time 7 seconds)*
5. *Learner 1: um I'm not a religious person and that's the thing I associate with religion and believe in super naturals and things like that and believe in god's will and that's so far from me so no...*
6. *Teacher: Okay...I understand so and why maybe Monica? ...*
7. *Learner 2: well... I'm also not connected with religion but maybe also something exists but I erm am rather sceptical but maybe people who have experienced things maybe...*
8. *Teacher: uh huh and what about you [do you]*

Thus, we have seen how our choice of questions has a huge impact on learner response and hence classroom discourse.

We should also keep in mind that our questions need to be evenly distributed in our classroom. A teacher who restricts her questions to one section of the class (e.g. front benchers or the more articulate students) may often fail to involve the rest of the class. Opportunities for answering questions or initiating them should be given to every section of the class.

### **Wait Time**

The time that the teacher gives to the students to think and frame an answer is called wait time. Studies have shown that students are often given insufficient time to process a teacher's question before answering it. This often results in responses that are far from complete and more often without adequate thought. Research suggests that increasing wait time from one second to three or four seconds brings about greater learner participation and significantly contributes to higher-quality classroom discourse. Specifically, increase in wait time results in an increase in:

- the average length of student responses
- the number of speculative responses
- student-initiated questions
- student-student interaction
- statements and responses based on inference
- interactional space that enables turn-taking to be slowed down
- thinking or rehearsal time
- **Teacher Echo**

Teacher echo refers to the repetition of utterances in the class by the teacher. When a teacher repeats his/her previous utterance or a learner's contribution it is called teacher echo.

Teacher echo may have several functions:

- amplifying a learner's contribution for the rest of the class
- confirming correctness
- acknowledging the relevance of an utterance

However, when overused, teacher echo can disrupt the flow of the discourse and reduce learners' interactional space. Therefore, we teachers need to be aware of the function of echo and of the 'dangers' of overusing it. Reduced echo is regarded as a positive strategy that has an important role to play in facilitating learning opportunities in the classroom. There is a strong sense in which reduced teacher echo has the same effect on the flow of the discourse as extended wait- time. Both of these strategies increase the interactional space available to learners and increase opportunities for involvement.

Thus, to facilitate classroom discourse we should try to extend wait time and reduce teacher echo.

<b>Check Your Progress 4</b>	
1. Look at the pedagogic goals given below. Suggest question types that would match with each of these pedagogic goals to give us the desired effect in the classroom.	
<b>Pedagogic goal</b>	<b>Question type(s)</b>
	a. Give practice in grammatical structure
	b. Help improve pronunciation
	c. Initiate discussion
	d. Develop oral fluency
	e. To teach subskills of reading (scanning/skimming a text)
	f. To encourage learners to express their opinion
2. What is wait time? Why do we need to increase wait time in our classroom? ..... ..... .....	
3. Why do we need to reduce teacher echo? ..... ..... .....	

**Repair**

Apart from questioning, the activity which most characterizes classroom discourse is correction of errors. Repair is also called error correction. The term error correction is a broader term which encompasses all types of teacher feedback.

Error correction may be direct or indirect, overt or covert. Teachers have many options – our split- second decisions in the rapid flow of a lesson may have consequences for the learning opportunities we present to our learners.

Just like our questions need to match our pedagogic goals similarly our choice of specific repair strategies should match our goal. Repair can be language centred repair or content centred repair. Repair is closely related to the context of what is being done. The implication being that repair, like other aspects of classroom discourse should be related to pedagogic goals.

Direct repair: This refers to overt error correction. Direct repair involves correcting an error quickly and directly.

**Example:**

Student: My brother like bikes...

Teacher: not like...likes...he likes bikes

Indirect repair: This repair strategy is covert. In this strategy instead of correcting an error directly, the teacher tries to get the correct response from the learner by giving hints and cues. In other words the teacher tries to elicit the correct response through questions or appropriate prompts.

**Example:**

Student: My brother like bikes...

Teacher: Your brother....?

Student: like bikes...

Teacher: he...you are talking about your brother...he...

Student: likes bikes...

Form-focused feedback: This is also called language centered repair. It refers to feedback given on the words used, not the message. See the example below:

Student: I am belonging from the Delhi

Teacher: I am from Delhi...not the Delhi...not am belonging...

Content feedback: This is also called content-centered repair. It refers to feedback given to the message rather than the words used

Student: During summers I go my grandmother's house...I like spending time there

Teacher: What do you do there?

Student: I likes play football and listen stories of grand mother

Teacher: ok...that's interesting...grandmother's stories are always interesting...Does your grandma make those stories? Or does she read them from a book?

As we can see here the teacher gives feedback on the message and ignores the language errors of the learners. She further asks genuine questions related to the content of the message. The teacher's aim in this interaction is to clearly promote fluency and get learners to speak.

If our pedagogic goal is to develop fluency then direct repair is not recommended. However, if our goal is to develop accuracy then grammatical input in the form of direct repair is desired. In other words language- focused feedback is appropriate for accuracy based tasks whereas content based feedback allows learners to express themselves freely without getting conscious. For fluency based tasks we should avoid direct repair. Therefore, to facilitate interaction we need to match our pedagogic goals with our repair strategies just like our questioning strategies need to match our desired pedagogic goals.

**Check Your Progress 5**

1. What do we mean by repair? What are the different types of repair?  
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.....
2. Read the extracts of classroom discourse and match them with the type of repair :
  - Type of feedback: form-focussed feedback or content feedback
  - Type of repair: direct or indirect repair
  - Teacher’s possible pedagogic goal(s)
    - a. Student: I goed to the market yesterday...  
Teacher: um... goed...? what is the past tense of go?  
Student: ...went...sorry..I went to the market yesterday
    - b. Student: I like collect stamps...  
Teacher: oh! That’s very nice...How many have you collected so far?
    - c. Student: Recently...Bharat Ratna given to Atal Bihari Vajpayee...  
Teacher: ...was given to Atal Bihari Vajpayee
    - d. Student: My mother is my strength...she always help me to solve problems  
Teacher: my mother also helps me a lot...

● **Modifying speech to learners**

As already discussed, two third of classroom discourse involves teacher talk. Therefore, to ensure that teacher’s discourse in the classroom is able to maximise learning opportunities we need to discuss the importance of modifying speech to learners. Lynch (1996) discusses the reasons for the interest in language modification by teachers for learners.

First, it is important to modify our speech in the classroom because there is a link between comprehension and progress in second language learning. If students do not understand the input they receive, it is unlikely that they will progress (Krashen, 1985).

Second, there is a strong influence of teacher language on learner language. One of the most important activities performed by second language teachers is to model target language for their learners. In many cases this may be the only exposure to the language that learners receive.

The third reason for speech modification proposed by Lynch is that learners often face difficulties in understanding their teacher’s speech. Without some simplification



or reduction in speed of delivery, it is highly unlikely that students would understand what we say in the classroom.

Research studies suggest that language teachers typically modify four aspects of their speech which are as follows:

1. Vocabulary is simplified and idiomatic phrases are avoided.
2. Grammar is simplified through the use of shorter, simpler utterances and increased use of present tense.
3. Pronunciation is modified by the use of slower, clearer speech and by more widespread use of standard forms.
4. Finally, teachers make increased use of gestures and facial expressions.

It is important to note that the above speech modifications which take place in second language classrooms can be compared very closely with the ones made by parents when talking to young children acquiring their first language. Typically, simpler vocabulary, shorter sentences and fewer idiomatic phrases are used, accompanied by exaggerated facial expressions and gestures.

Tardif (1994) identified five modification strategies:

- self- repetition
- linguistic modelling
- providing information
- expanding an utterance
- using extensive elicitation, where questions are graded and adjusted

Each of these has its own particular role to play in the discourse and is must be used more or less strategically according to desired learning outcomes.

Like Tardif above, Lynch (1996) identified a number of ways in which teachers modify their interaction. They include:

1. Confirmation checks: whereby teachers make sure they understand the learner;  
Example: So you mean...?
2. Comprehension checks: ensuring that learners understand the teacher  
Example: Did you understand?
3. Repetition: whereby the teacher repeats his/her utterance or asks a student to repeat his/her utterance
4. Clarification requests: asking students for clarification  
Example: Do you mean...?
5. Reformulation: rephrasing a learner's utterance
6. Completion: finishing a learner's contribution
7. Backtracking: returning to an earlier part of a dialogue

In most classrooms teachers rarely ask for modifications to learners' speech. We tend to impose our own interpretation. This is the reason why teachers insist on filling the gaps and smoothening learner contributions, as a means of maintaining the flow of a lesson or in order to create a flawless discourse. Unfortunately, by doing so, learners may be denied valuable opportunities for learning. Arguably, by seeking clarification and requesting confirmation, by getting learners to reiterate their contributions, learners' language development is fostered.

In Extract 1.5, for example, one can see that the teacher – by seeking clarification and by negotiating meaning – helps the learners to express themselves more fully and more clearly. In the extract, in which an upper-intermediate class is working on their writing skills, it is clear that learner turns are frequently longer and more complex than those of the teacher (12, 16).

Throughout, the teacher adopts a less evaluative role and instead seeks to clarify (11, 13, and 19) and elicit from the learners, descriptions of their writing strategies.

Clarification requests are extremely valuable in promoting opportunities for learning since they 'compel' learners to reformulate their contribution, by rephrasing or paraphrasing. There is clear evidence in this extract that the teacher's unwillingness to accept the learner's first contribution (in 13,15) promotes a longer turn and higher quality output in 16.

**Extract 1.5**

- 11 *Teacher: ...yes... so tell me again what do you mean by that? (Clarification request)*
- 12 *Learner: the first is the introduction the second eh in this case we have the (pause) who you are to eh introduce yourself a few words about yourself and where you live and what I do...*
- 13 *Teacher: so... yes? (Clarification request)*
- 14 *Learner: ...and then it's the problem what happened ...*
- 15 *Teacher: yes...*
- 16 *Learner: ...and you need to explain it and why you are writing because probably you did something like you gave the information to the police but it didn't happen ...*
- 17 *Teacher: uh...so can I ask you why did you write it in your head as you have said a while back? (Backtracking)*
- 18 *Learner: I don't know it's like a rule*
- 19 *Teacher: right so it's like a rule... what do you mean? (Clarification request)*

For sustained negotiation to occur there is a need for learners to adopt a wider range of interaction modifications, something which teachers could easily provide. Adjustments of both language form and conversational processes are clearly central to the work of the language teacher and essential for learning to take place.

Facial expressions, single interjections, like the ones cited in the above extract, 'uh', 'what' or direct questions all serve the same function: they seek clarification, compelling learners to reformulate what they have said. Not only is reformulation an essential conversational skill, used extensively by native speakers, it is highly relevant to the process of second language learning in the L2 classroom since it promotes negotiation of meaning, an idea that we will discuss in greater detail in the next section.. By accepting a response that is only partially understood, we as teachers may be denying a valuable learning opportunity to our learners. Thus, instead of constructing a smooth- flowing discourse, it is important not to miss a valuable opportunity to clarify.

We as teachers need to be active listeners, constantly reaffirming, questioning and clarifying learner contributions. Note that this is not the same at all as the common practice of getting second language learners to answer 'in full sentences' which, arguably, has little pedagogic value.

- **Scaffolding**

Scaffolding is an interactional feature wherein language is 'fed in' by the teacher during an exchange, to help learners express themselves more clearly. The term scaffolding describes the ways in which teachers provide learners with linguistic cues to help self- expression. Scaffolding provides learners with cognitive support through dialogue as they engage in tasks that may lie outside their capabilities.

While providing scaffold to our learners we may engage in the following:

Reformulation, where a learner's contribution is reworked using language which is more appropriate;

Modelling, where a learner's contribution is simply restated with appropriate pronunciation, stress or intonation;

Extension, where an utterance is extended, made more comprehensive or more comprehensible to other students.

In each of these the teacher's role is to 'shape' the learner's contribution into something more acceptable.

As a conscious strategy rather than a passive feature of teacher's talk, scaffolding can do much to enhance learning opportunities.

In this section we have discussed that we as teachers need to be aware of the value of not accepting a learner's first contribution and of the need to 'draw out' what has been said. Many a times, teachers appear satisfied with any response given by the learners, forgetting the importance of fine-tuning and the need to clarify where necessary. To make classroom discourse effective it is important to use various modification strategies. Scaffolding helps us to increase learning opportunities in the classroom. The skill of taking a learner's contribution, improving it and feeding it back to the learner requires conscious effort and mental promptness.

### Check Your Progress 6

**Notes:** a) Write your answers in the space given below:

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Complete the following sentences by using appropriate words or phrases:
  - a. We should modify our speech in the classroom because if learners do not understand .....  
.....
  - b. To ensure that our students understand what we say in class we need to .....  
.....
  - c. Reformulation is.....  
.....
  - d. Clarification request is .....  
.....
  - e. Scaffolding is.....
2. What aspects of teacher's speech are generally modified?  
.....  
.....  
.....
3. Read the following extracts (a-e) and identify the modification strategy which is being used by the teacher in each of them:
  - a. Teacher: You have just mentioned that you like villages...can you elaborate why?
  - b. Teacher: Is it clear?
  - c. Student: I mean...when we go to mall we see things...many things...then we like some...but we not buy...we spend time with friend...roaming, enjoying...then eating and come back...not buy anything  
  
Teacher: yes...you mean we do window shopping...that is we only see things and we do not buy...
  - d. Teacher: I didn't understand...can you please clarify what do you mean by a nice job?
  - e. Student: I like going to my friend's place and a lot of time with her...we spend together...then download movies and um...sometimes buying...  
  
Teacher: ...and go for shopping...

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## 4.6 NEGOTIATED INTERACTION

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The above strategies need to be incorporated in our classroom discourse in a balanced manner so that we can facilitate learning. Matching each of these strategies with our pedagogic goals will give us the desired effect. When we use multiple and appropriate strategies to manage our classroom interaction we succeed in promoting negotiated interaction. Instead of accepting the first learner contribution we need to push the learners to interact adequately. In order to understand negotiated interaction we now turn to the issue of talk management and topic management.

### **Talk management**

Talk management is defined as an “activity” of classroom discourse. It refers to the ways in which the participants (teacher and the learners) conduct their classroom conversation in order to achieve their immediate learning goals. The structure of information exchange determines the way in which the talk is managed. In other words, the types of questions asked and the kinds of responses determine how it is controlled.

The IRF sequence (as discussed in earlier sections) is considered to be the most commonly found structure of information exchange where I stands for teacher initiation, R for learner response and F is the feedback provided by the teacher. This structure doesn't allow learners to interact freely or to genuinely communicate and express their ideas. In classrooms where the teacher tightly controls the talk it gives rise to an IRF sequence dominated interaction which is extremely limited.

Negotiated interaction helps teachers to break the IRF pattern as teachers engage in jointly generating meaningful classroom talk. For example, the teacher's questions may try to elicit learner responses which are based on their own opinions and interpretations and not facts directly taken from textbook.

We should try to encourage the learner to struggle to express themselves by providing linguistic and paralinguistic cues. In classrooms where negotiated interaction is missing the teachers end up answering their own questions or they stop with the first ‘correct’ response. This doesn't allow opportunities for other learners to stretch their linguistic repertoire and take part in classroom discourse.

Asking more referential questions that seek information and allow open-ended answers facilitate meaningful interaction as compared to asking display questions that restrict teachers and learners to exhibit their linguistic competence only.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) points out that asking referential questions alone need not break the IRF chain. Teachers need to pay attention to the meanings of the responses rather than treat questions and responses in a routinized and ritualized manner.

Real negotiated interaction can take place only if we focus on the meaning contained in the learners' responses rather than evaluate it linguistically and move on. We need to connect our talk management with effective topic management.

### Topic management

We should give freedom to the learners to nominate topics as it provides an effective basis for interactional opportunities. Topicalization is defined as a process by which learners take up something the teacher or another learner says and (attempt to) make it into next topic. There are several advantages of letting learners have control over the topic:

- Linguistic complexity of the input can be tailored to the learner’s own level.
- It can also create better opportunities for negotiating meaning when a communicative problem occurs
- It can also facilitate the production of more complex and extensive output on the part of the learner

Research has shown that learners benefit more from self-and peer-nominated topics than from teacher-nominated topics as they are more likely to create and sustain motivation among the learners and give them a sense of freedom and achievement in taking some control of the classroom discourse. Even learners who do not participate directly in the interaction by initiating a response benefit unknowingly from their peers’ contributions. Thus it not only results in increased opportunity for practice but also enables learning.

In topic as well as turn management we teachers play a crucial role. It cannot be denied that the structure of information exchanged (whether it will be IRF or not) to a large extent depends on the teacher, his/her questions, ways to manage turns and the degree of freedom he/she allows to let learners take over topic nomination.

#### Check Your Progress 7

1. Answer the following questions in not more than 100-150 words
  - a. How can we encourage negotiated interaction in our classroom and thereby break the IRF structure?  
.....  
.....  
.....
  - b. How can we give greater participation rights to our learners?  
.....  
.....  
.....
  - c. What is topicalization? What are its advantages?  
.....  
.....  
.....

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## 4.7 CLASSROOM INTERACTIONAL COMPETENCE (CIC)

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Classroom interactional competence (CIC) is defined as, ‘Teachers’ and learners’ ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning’ (Walsh 2006:132). This notion of CIC puts interaction at the centre of teaching and learning and argues that by improving CIC, both teachers and learners will immediately improve learning and opportunities for learning.

When we interact in the classroom we often focus on the learner’s ability to produce correct utterances, rather than to negotiate meanings or clarify a point of view or idea. Therefore, teachers need to consider how effectively learner interacts. In other words, our attempt should be to understand how well a student co-constructs meanings with other students and the teacher. Thus, CIC demands a shift in focus on individual learner to a collective competence. Proponents of this idea of CIC argue that being accurate or fluent speakers in themselves is not sufficient. Learners need to be able to pay attention to the context of interaction, to listen, and show that they have understood, to clarify meanings, to repair breakdowns and so on.

A focus on interactional competence allows us to concentrate more on the ability of learners to communicate intended meaning and to establish joint understandings in the classroom. Essentially, interactional competence is concerned with what goes on between participants (of an interaction) and how that communication is managed. Rather than fluency, CIC is concerned with confluence: which is the act of making spoken language fluent together with another speaker. Confluence highlights the ways in which speakers attend to each other’s contributions and focus on collective meaning-making. This concept of confluence lies at the heart of classroom communication, where the participants (learners and teacher) are engaged in a constant process of trying to make sense of each other, negotiate meanings, assist and query, support, clarify and so on. Thus, both inside and outside the classroom being confluent is more important than fluent.

CIC allows participants of a discourse to display and orient to learning through interactions that are co-constructed and demonstrate abilities to jointly create discourse that is conducive to learning. CIC focusses on the ways in which teachers’ and learners’ interactional decisions and subsequent actions enhance learning.

### **Developing CIC**

We need to consciously develop our CIC in order to make our classroom discourse effective and to facilitate learning. A teacher who demonstrates adequate CIC uses language which is appropriate to his/her teaching goals. Essentially, this entails an understanding of the need to use language appropriate to teaching goals that is adjusted in relation to the co- construction of meaning and the unfolding agenda of a lesson. Second, CIC facilitates interactional space. Learners are given adequate space to participate in the discourse, to contribute to the class conversation and to receive feedback on their contributions. Third, the interactionally competent teacher is able to shape learner contributions by scaffolding, paraphrasing, repeating and so on. Essentially, through shaping the discourse, a teacher is helping learners to say

what they mean by using the most appropriate language to do so. Finally, CIC makes use of effective eliciting strategies. The ability to ask questions, to refine and adjust those questions and to clarify for learners is central to the notion of CIC.

Enhanced CIC results in more learning oriented interactions and it facilitates interactional space. We can maximise interactional space in our classrooms by increasing wait-time, by resisting the temptation to fill silence (that is by reducing teacher echo), by promoting extended learner turns and by allowing planning time. By increasing learner space, we can allow learners to be able to contribute to the process of co-constructing meanings, which is at the heart of classroom interaction.

**Check Your Progress 8**

**Notes:** a) Write your answers in the space given below:

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. What is classroom interactional competence (CIC)?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

2. How do we develop our CIC in order to enhance our classroom discourse and hence learning? Discuss some of the strategies that a teacher with a good CIC consciously uses it in her classroom discourse.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

3. Based on your reading of the entire unit complete the table below. The first one has been done for you.

<b>Interactional feature</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>
a. Scaffolding	
b. Direct repair	
c. Content feedback	
d. Form-focused feedback	
e. Extended wait-time	
f. Referential questions	
g. Display questions	
h. Seeking clarifications	
i. Confirmation checks	
j. Extended learner/teacher turn	
k. Teacher echo	
l. Turn completion	



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## 4.8 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we discussed the importance of promoting meaningful classroom interaction in order to enhance learning in our classrooms. Classroom discourse directs and sustains classroom interaction. The primary responsibility to promote meaningful and effective discourse in the classroom lies with the teacher. As two third of classroom speech constitutes teacher's speech or teacher talk it is very important to understand how we can optimise our discourse instead of maximising it. We discussed the typical and restrictive IRF structure of classroom discourse and we also discussed a number of strategies that we need to consciously develop in order to break the IRF structure and facilitate learning in our classroom. Some of the strategies are:

1. First of all, we should use appropriate question types which match our pedagogic goals/intended learning outcomes. Effective elicitation compels learners to think and engage in deep learning.
2. Wait time needs to be extended so that learners get adequate time to think about our questions and frame their answers without feeling pressurised and anxious
3. Reducing teacher echo can increase interactional space for learners
4. While giving feedback we must choose appropriate repair strategy (direct/indirect; form-focused and content feedback) to suit our pedagogic goals.
5. We need to use modification strategies to modify our speech to learners. This ensures learner participation and comprehension. Some modification strategies are: Confirmation checks, comprehension checks, repetition, clarification requests, reformulation, completion and backtracking.
6. Scaffolding is a useful way to enhance learner participation by reformulating, modelling and extending learner responses.

We highlighted the importance of promoting negotiated interaction in the classroom in order to provide rich learning environment. Instead of accepting the first learner response it is essential that we push learners to express more clearly. Focusing on the meaning of the message rather than looking for a 'correct' answer facilitates interaction. Letting learners take control over topic selection allows room for learner participation. Therefore as teachers we need to be active listeners, constantly reaffirming, questioning and clarifying learner contributions in order to co-construct meanings effectively in the classroom thereby maximizing learning opportunities.

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## 4.9 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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## **4.10 ANSWERS**

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### **Check Your Progress 1**

1. The word 'react' in the context of classroom is often used to describe to the constant interaction that takes place between the learners and the teacher and among the learners themselves.
2. Who gets to speak? (participants' turn distribution)  
What do they talk about? (topic)  
What does each participant do with the various opportunities to speak? (task)  
What sort of atmosphere is created? (tone)  
What accent, dialect or language is used? (code)
3. We need to understand classroom interaction in order to facilitate language learning. The quality of interaction is largely determined by teachers during their face-to-face communication with the learners. As quality of interaction contributes to learning, it is important to optimize it rather than maximizing it. To improve language learning in the classroom, appropriate interaction in tandem with desired learning outcomes has to be encouraged.

### **Check Your Progress 2**

1. a. Research in the area of classroom discourse suggests that teacher plays an important role in understanding, establishing and maintaining patterns of communication that foster, to the greatest extent, both classroom learning and second language acquisition. Therefore, classroom discourse needs to be understood to promote learning in the classroom.
- b. Sinclair and Coulthard(1975) proposed that the underlying structure of second language classrooms typically represent sequences of

discourse 'moves' IR (E/F), where I is teacher initiation, R is learner response and E/F is an optional evaluation or feedback by the teacher. In later versions of the model, F became follow-up. This model is referred to as the IRF sequence or structure.

IRF is the most dominant sequence in most classrooms because of the following reasons:

- Teachers' and students' expectations consider question and answer routines as appropriate classroom behaviour. This is how conversation, in a classroom, is characterized.
  - Teachers feel the need to make learners 'feel good'. The feedback given by a teacher to a student is important and necessary.
  - The system of power relations in most classes means that it is the teacher who has more of the 'floor' owing to asymmetrical roles.
  - Finally, the time constraints facing teachers make them believe that question and answer routines are the most effective means of advancing the classroom discourse.
- c. The IRF sequence has a negative effect on classroom communication because it gives minimum interactional space to the learners. The teacher talk considerably increases and learners don't get enough opportunities for language use. In order to facilitate learning in the classroom we need to grant greater participation rights to our learners and allow them to play a more central role in classroom interaction. If our classroom discourse is dominated by the IRF sequence then interaction can become very mechanical and also monotonous. We need to be aware of this and we should consciously try to break the IRF pattern by using various strategies.
- d. Some typical characteristics of second language classrooms are:
- teachers control the topic of discussion;
  - teachers control who may participate and when; students take their cues from teachers;
  - role relationships between teachers and learners are unequal; teachers are responsible for managing the interaction which occurs; teachers talk more.

2. True/False

- a. False

Two third of the classroom discourse constitutes teacher talk

- b. False

IRF stands for Initiation, Response and Follow-up

- c. True

- d. True

- e. False

We should try to break the IRF structure by using appropriate strategies.

### Check Your Progress 3

1. Some examples of each question type are given below:
  - a. Display questions:

Who is the prime minister of India?

What is the capital of Britain?
  - b. Referential questions:

Do you like your school?

Why do you like dogs?
  - c. Close-ended:

When do we celebrate children's' day?

Is Pranav Mukherjee the President of India?
  - d. Open-ended:

What is your opinion on euthanasia?

Do you think schools should stop having uniforms?
2. Benjamin Bloom divided the questions into six types and defined each of them as follows:

Knowledge questions that ask students to get information given in their book or in any other source of knowledge. Example: Where is the Gir Forest?

Comprehension questions that ask for understanding. Example: What does the author mean by 'surrender value'?

Application questions that involve using one's understanding. Example: 'How does yoga help build concentration?'

Analysis questions that ask for looking at parts of a situation. Example: 'In what ways is a solar heater better or worse than an electric heater?'

Synthesis questions which ask students to combine their skills to create new ideas. Example: 'What can we do to make roads safe for visually challenged people?'

Evaluation questions which ask people to make judgements. Example: 'Are large dams best answers to water and power shortages?'
3. In order to promote thinking in the classroom we need to ask referential questions which are genuine questions and demand thinking on the part of the learner. Moreover, open-ended questions which have multiple answers also promote thinking and learning.

<b>Check Your Progress 4</b>	
<b>1. Question type(s)</b>	<b>Pedagogic goal</b>
Display questions Closed questions	g. Give practice in grammatical structure
Display questions Closed questions	h. Help improve pronunciation
Referential questions Open-ended questions Application questions	i. Initiate discussion
Referential questions Open-ended questions Comprehension questions Synthesis questions	j. Develop oral fluency
Display questions Closed questions	k. To teach subskills of reading (scanning/skimming a text)
Referential questions Open-ended questions Synthesis questions Application questions Evaluation questions	l. To encourage learners to express their opinion

2. The time that the teacher gives to the students to think and frame an answer is called wait time. Increasing wait time brings about greater learner participation and significantly contributes to higher-quality classroom discourse. Specifically, increase in wait time results in an increase in:
  - the average length of student responses
  - the number of speculative responses
  - student-initiated questions
  - student-student interaction
  - statements and responses based on inference
  - interactional space that enables turn-taking to be slowed down
  - thinking or rehearsal time
3. Increased teacher echo can disrupt the flow of the discourse and reduce learners' interactional space. Therefore, we teachers need to be aware of the function of echo and of the 'dangers' of overusing it. Reduced echo is regarded as a positive strategy that has an important role to play in facilitating learning opportunities in the classroom.

### Check Your Progress 5

1. Repair refers to error correction. The term error correction is a broader term which encompasses all types of teacher feedback. Error correction may be direct or indirect, overt or covert.

Direct repair: This refers to overt error correction. Direct repair involves correcting an error quickly and directly.

#### Example:

Student: My brother like bikes...

Teacher: not like...likes...he likes bikes

Indirect repair: This repair strategy is covert. In this strategy instead of correcting an error directly, the teacher tries to get the correct response from the learner by giving hints and cues. In other words the teacher tries to elicit the correct response through questions or appropriate prompts.

#### Example:

Student: My brother like bikes...

Teacher: Your brother....?

Student: like bikes...

Teacher: he...you are talking about your brother...he...

Student: likes bikes...

2.
  - a. Form-focused feedback, indirect repair; Pedagogic goal: to develop accuracy
  - b. Content feedback ;Pedagogic goal: to develop fluency, encourage learners to speak
  - c. Form-focused feedback, direct repair; Pedagogic goal: to develop accuracy, check knowledge of facts
  - d. Content feedback; Pedagogic goal: to initiate/sustain discussion

### Check Your Progress 6

1.
  - a. We should modify our speech in the classroom because if learners do not understand the input they receive, it is unlikely that they will progress (Krashen, 1985)
  - b. To ensure that our students understand what we say in class we need to match our vocabulary with their proficiency level, use grammatical structures that are not too difficult for them to comprehend, avoid idiomatic expressions, reduce our speed of delivery and use appropriate gestures and facial expressions.
  - c. Reformulation is rephrasing a learner's utterance
  - d. Clarification request is asking students for clarification

- e. Scaffolding is an interactional feature wherein language is ‘fed in’ by the teacher during an exchange, to help learners express themselves more clearly.
2. The following aspects of teacher’s speech are generally modified:
    - Vocabulary is simplified and idiomatic phrases are avoided.
    - Grammar is simplified through the use of shorter, simpler utterances and increased use of present tense.
    - Pronunciation is modified by the use of slower, clearer speech and by more widespread use of standard forms.
    - Finally, teachers make increased use of gestures and facial expressions.
  3.
    - a. Backtracking
    - b. Comprehension check
    - c. Reformulation
    - d. Clarification request
    - e. Completion

### **Check Your Progress 7**

1. Negotiated interaction helps teachers to break the IRF pattern as teachers engage in jointly generating meaningful classroom talk. For example, the teacher’s questions may try to elicit learner responses which are based on their own opinions and interpretations and not facts directly taken from textbook. We should try to encourage the learner to struggle to express themselves by providing linguistic and paralinguistic cues. For instance, asking more referential questions that seek information and allow open-ended answers facilitate meaningful interaction as compared to asking display questions that restrict teachers and learners to exhibit their linguistic competence only. In classrooms where negotiated interaction is missing the teachers end up answering their own questions or they stop with the first ‘correct’ response. This doesn’t allow opportunities for other learners to stretch their linguistic repertoire and take part in classroom discourse.
2. We can grant more participation rights to our learners by encouraging topicalization. When the learners take control of the discussion they gain more interactional space and this enhances learner participation. Along with appropriate elicitation strategies we also need to allow learners to take control over the interaction.
3. Topicalization is defined as a process by which learners take up something the teacher or another learner says and (attempt to) make it into next topic. There are several advantages of letting learners have control over the topic:
  - Linguistic complexity of the input can be tailored to the learner’s own level.
  - It can also create better opportunities for negotiating meaning when a communicative problem occurs