

Block

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LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

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| BES-124 | UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM |
| Block 1 Unit 1 Unit 2 Unit 3 Unit 4 | Language Across the Curriculum Language and Society Language and Learning Understanding Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) Classroom as a Space for Discourse |
| Block 2 Unit 5 Unit 6 Unit 7 Unit 8 Unit 9 | Teaching and Assessing Language Across the Curriculum Teaching Listening Across the Curriculum Developing the Speaking Abilities Reading Comprehension Writing Across the Curriculum Assessing Language Across the Curriculum |

LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Introduction to the Course and Block

‘Language – as a constellation of skills ...cuts across school subjects and disciplines. Speech and listening, reading and writing are all generalized skills, and children’s mastery over them becomes the key factor affecting success at school. In many situations, all of these skills need to be used together. This is why it is important to view language education as everybody’s concern at school and not as a responsibility of the language teacher alone.’

The document further states that, “Language education is not confined to the language classroom. A science, social science or mathematics class is ipso facto a language class. Learning the subject means learning the terminology, understanding the concepts and being able to discuss and write about them critically.

The concept of *Language Across the Curriculum* emphasises the key role language plays in learning. It is based on the understanding that language and thinking are deeply connected and that language promotes learning. Consider the process of learning: learning takes place when new facts are assimilated through listening and talking, reading and writing about what is being learnt, and by relating this new learning to what has been learnt before or the previous knowledge. Speaking and writing involve thinking, what we write and speak is a manifestation of that thinking. To give an example: If a student is asked prepare a project report in Science or History, he/she will plan and structure of the report and use both, language competencies and subject-specific ways of perception, observation, conceptualisation and finally, communicating the same to an audience of peers or teacher. This implies that when one is writing observations, opinions, insights and experiences in Science or History, or in any other subject, not only the content has to be accurate and appropriate but also the language chosen has to be appropriate and communicatively efficient. Language helps in conceptualising and expressing our thought clearly.

The task of the teacher is that of developing language abilities into subject-specific thinking and communication in each and every subject. Teachers need to build cognitive and communicative competencies in learners while teaching their specific subjects. What teachers need to know about the subject matter they teach extends beyond the specific topics of their curriculum. For example, while English teachers need to know about particular authors and their works, about literary genres and styles, they also need to know about interpretation and criticism. A history teacher needs content knowledge but must also understand what history is: the nature of historical knowledge and what it means to find out or know something about the past. History teachers want their students to understand that history is fundamentally interpretive. Learning history means studying accounts of the past have already been constructed as well as learning about alternative accounts of the same phenomenon and how such accounts are constructed. Nevertheless, teachers may adopt either a teacher – centered and teacher-fronted pedagogy or a student-centered approach to teaching the same content.

Language Across the Curriculum, advocates an understanding and transaction of the curriculum based on the following premises:

- Language is more than communication skills
- Language is also linked to the thinking process
- Language is a tool for conceptualising, for thinking, for networking
- Language supports mental activity and cognitive precision
- Language for academic purposes helps to express thoughts more clearly (this is especially true for writing)
- Language helps to structure discourse and practise discourse functions

This Course attempts to sensitise the teachers to the linkages between language and learning and to motivate them to adopt such practices in teaching of their specific disciplines so that language becomes a tool for facilitating learning.

This Course has two Blocks, namely, *Understanding Language Across the Curriculum* and *Teaching and Assessing Language Across the Curriculum*.

The first Block starts with a discussion on the relationship between language and society, this understanding is significant because language is acquired and used in the context of society. Language is subject to variation because of different factors such as region, and social and personal factors. This understanding enables us to view language as a dynamic entity and not a static one and has important implications for classroom teaching, especially in the context of multilingual classrooms. The concept of multi lingualism suggests that the basic functions of language are first acquired in the mother tongue(LS/L1), then *extended* to language use in every subject, and explicitly linked to competence goals defined second language learning. This understanding has significant implications for teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing in the second Block. The third and fourth Units of the Block focus on the need to develop academic language appropriate for specific subjects and to provide opportunities for student-led interactions in the classroom.

In the Second Block, we focus on all four skills of i.e., listening, speaking, reading or writing. In real life however, it is not easy to separate the four skill, as most language are preceded or followed by a different skill. Listening may be followed by speaking or reading or writing. This integration is constant and confusing for the teachers and learners to understand and practice.

However, teaching of these skills separates the skills in the way which is easy to understand and practice, therefore, in the Block these have been presented as separate Units. This order of presentation will help the teachers to organise their activities in some order and will enable them to decide what exactly the aim of their teaching is so that they can make choices accordingly, idea is to organise learning activities in some order.



UNIT 1 LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Regional Variation
- 1.3 Caste Dialects
- 1.4 The Standard Dialect
- 1.5 Personal Factors Leading to Variability
 - 1.5.1 Sex Differences
 - 1.5.2 Age
- 1.6 Variation Due to Register
- 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.8 Key Words
- 1.9 Suggested Reading
- 1.10 Answers

1.0 OBJECTIVES

Language is used primarily to communicate with other people, that is, language is used in society. There is a close relationship between language and society.

In this unit we shall discuss the following dimensions of language in society:

- Language is not a static entity but subject to variation
- This variation could be due to:

Social Factors such as geographical location, socioeconomic status, caste, ethnic group, and so on.

Personal factors such as sex and age.

Context of the situation such as topic of conversation, relationship between participants, and mode of communication

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As teachers teaching in English, sometimes we feel that one of our important jobs is to correct the students' spoken and written English. In other words, we have in our minds a standard English variety, against which we judge the students' responses.

But when you go back home or even listen to other teachers in the staff room, you will notice that not only do they speak different languages, but they speak the same language in different ways from you.

For instance, if you and your neighbours are Hindi mother tongue speakers, you can talk to one another and understand each other quite easily. Yet, you must be aware that you do not speak exactly like your neighbours. A young neighbour (say a teenager) would probably use a lot more slang than you, a particular lady may have a very 'correct' pronunciation. Another neighbour is a 'purist' and insists on speaking a sanskritized variety of Hindi. These unique characteristics of a speaker are referred to as the speaker's idiolect. In fact, we are often able to recognize different individuals by their distinct speech and language patterns (i.e. idiolect), and indeed this is a fundamental feature of self-identity. However, *beyond these individual differences, the language of a group of people may show regular variations from that used by other groups of speakers of the same language. For example, the Hindi spoken by people living in Benaras is systematically different from the Hindi spoken in Delhi and Aligarh. These groups of people are, therefore, said to speak different dialects of the same language.*

The systematic or dialectal differences may be due to social factors, regional separation (as above), class, caste, and ethnic group and so on. The linguistic differences could also be due to personal-social factors such as sex and age. The context of the situation could also lead to a different variety of the language being used.

In this unit, we shall make you aware of these broad social factors which lead to linguistic diversity. We shall also dwell on the question of a standard variety. These factors will enable you to understand that language is a social phenomenon, dynamic and changing, and not a static goal which we all have to achieve.

1.2 REGIONAL VARIATION

If we travel from one place to another in a particular direction, we notice linguistic differences, say, from one village to another. When the areas are close to each other, the differences will be relatively small. However, the further we get from our starting point, the larger the differences will become from that point.

For instance, take the case of Hindi spoken in different parts of India. We can find differences at the level of sounds, as well as vocabulary and grammar.

We give you some examples of Khari Boli (Hindi of Delhi) and Bhojpuri (Hindi of Eastern U.P.)

| Differences at the level of sounds | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| English | Khari Doli | Bhojpuri |
| 'boy' | ladka | larika/laika |
| 'fish' | machali | machari |
| 'fire' | aag | aagi |
| 'to take' | lena | leb |

| Differences at the level of words | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------|
| English | Khari Doli | Bhojpuri |
| 'tree' | per | gaach |
| 'meat' | Illaas s | egoti |
| 'gram' | chana | bhut |
| 'foot' | paer | god |
| 'light' | praliash | anjor |

If we look at the situation in Andhra Pradesh, the dialect spoken in Telangana contains a lot of Hindi-Urdu words which are absent in other areas.

Lets broaden our canvas a little, and consider the native varieties of English. We will notice that there are several differences between British, American and Australian English, not only at the phonological and lexical level, but also at the syntactic level, which is most resistant to change.

Morphosyntactic forms

| Present | British English Past and Past Participle | American English Past and Past Participle |
|---------|--|---|
| burn | burnt | burned |
| dwell | dwelt | dwelled |
| spill | spilt | spilled |
| learn | learnt | learned |
| smell | smelt | smelted |

| Different Words Same Australian English | Meaning British English |
|--|----------------------------|
| paddock | field |
| picture theatre | cinema |
| singlet | vest |
| to barrack for | to support |
| bludger | a loafer, sponger |

| American English | British English |
|------------------|---------------------|
| faucet | tap |
| sophomore | second year student |
| generator | dynamo |
| couch | sofa |
| monkey | wrench spanner |
| can | tin |
| queue | line |
| gas | petrol |
| sidewalk | path |
| molasses | treacle |

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. What are the reasons for people speaking differently from one another?

.....

2. You evidently belong to a particular region, and either speak that dialect or have some knowledge of it. Now talk to another speaker of the same language who belongs to another region. Write down five words which are pronounced differently from your dialect.

.....

1.3 CASTE DIALECTS

In many parts of India, especially rural India, society is stratified into different castes. These caste dialects were originally spoken by stable, clearly marked groups, separated from each other, with hereditary membership, and with little possibility of movement from one caste to another. However, increasing education and urbanization has narrowed down these linguistic differences. Certain examples from Telugu are given below which were initially due to caste differences, but now exist hugely as a case of rural vs urban speakers.

At the level of words

| Word | Urban (originally | Rural/ (originally |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Brahmin) Variety | Non-Brahmin) | Variety |
| ‘What’ | eemiti | eeudi |
| ‘sari’ | chiira | jabbu |
| kooka | sickness | roogam |

At the level of sounds

| | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------------|
| ‘went’ | velleanu | elleanu |
| ‘lakshmi’ | lakshmi | lacmi (Goddess) |

Check Your Progress 2

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

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

1. Are there any linguistic difference because of caste in your language?
Write down the differences that you notice.

.....

1.4 THE STANDARD DIALECT

You must have heard terms such as the ‘prestigious standard’, ‘standard variety’, and so on. What do these terms imply? The standard variety is usually that variety which is used in print, and is normally taught in schools, and to foreigners learning the language. It is a variety that is codified, i.e. grammar books and dictionaries are written on the basis of this variety. Moreover, it is used in news broadcasts, and spoken by educated people. Many people consider this variety as the ‘real language’, and differences from it as dialects. However, this is only one variety amongst many, and its importance lies in the fact that it has attained a certain prestige.

As Hudson (1980) has pointed out, a typical standard dialect often passes through the following processes:

Selection: A particular language is selected to be developed into a standard language. This selection could be due to social or political reasons. However, in some cases the chosen variety has been one with no native speakers at all – for instance Classical Hebrew in Israel and Bahasa Indonesia in Indonesia.

Codification : Some agencies write dictionaries and grammar books about the chosen variety, so that everyone agrees on what is correct. Once codification takes place, it becomes necessary, for the citizens to learn the correct forms, and not to write the ‘non-standard’ forms of their dialects.

Elaboration of function : The standard variety is associated with all the functions of the central government, i.e. parliament, law courts, in bureaucratic, educational and scientific documents of all kind’).

Acceptance: This variety is accepted by the people as the national language of the state. Once this has happened, the standard language serves as a strong unifying force for the state, as a symbol of its independence from other states.

But what are the social reasons for one dialect becoming so prestigious? One reason could be that the dialect is spoken in the political, commercial and cultural centre of the country and gains in importance because of that. The dominance in France of the Parisian dialect, and in England of the London dialect, is attributable to this cause. In the United States, Standard American English is identified with the educated white middle class, and it reflects the general bias in the USA to the white middle class value system.

However, we must be very clear about one point. A standard dialect may have several functions. It may bind people together, or provide a common written form for multi dialectal speakers. But, in linguistic terms it is neither more expressive, nor more logical, nor more correct or complex than any other dialect. There are no scientific or linguistic reasons to consider it superior to any other dialect. All dialects are equally effective forms of language, in that any idea or desire that can be expressed in one dialect can be expressed just as easily in any other dialect. **Labelling one particular dialect as standard is a sociopolitical judgement, not a linguistic one.** In countries throughout the world, the standard national language is the dialect of the subculture with the most prestige and power.

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. What is a standard dialect? How did it attain prestige? Is it scientifically superior to the other dialects?

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

2. Describe the process that a dialect usually passes through to become a standard.

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

1.5 PERSONAL FACTORS LEADING TO VARIABILITY

In the previous sections we discussed the social reasons for linguistic variation even among speakers of the same language. In this section we shall discuss individual attributes of the speakers, i.e. sex and age, which may cause variation in their speech.

1.5.1 Sex Differences

Linguistic research has shown that in many societies, the speech of the men and women differs. In some conservative societies this could be due to segregation of the sexes. But what about societies where men and women communicate freely with one another? Why, then, do such differences arise? Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1972, 1974) have looked at western societies of America and England, respectively. They demonstrated through several examples, that women used linguistic forms associated with the prestigious standard more frequently than men. They suggested three possible main reasons for this:

- (i) The social position of women in society is less secure than that of men, and, generally speaking, subordinate to that of men. Therefore, it becomes necessary for women to signal their social status by how they appear and behave (including linguistically), than by what they do.

- (ii) In most societies a certain roughness and toughness of speech is considered a favourable masculine attribute. Society, on the other hand, expects women to be more correct, discreet, quiet and polite, and increases the pressure on them to use more 'correct' and prestigious linguistic forms than men. For example, use of swear words is acceptable for men, but not for women.
- (iii) Women's traditionally greater role in child socialization leads them to be more sensitive and careful to norms of 'correct' and 'accepted' behaviour, and this includes linguistic behaviour.

With regard to Indian languages, not many studies have been conducted. There was one study by Mukherjee (1980) who worked on the assimilation of Hindi speech by Bengalis and Panjabis living in Delhi. She too found that females of these communities showed a higher percentage of assimilation of linguistic features associated with Hindi, than males. She also attributed this phenomenon to social insecurity.

In so far as foreign/second language learning is concerned, the majority of the studies seem to favour females as better second language learners and users than males.

Some other interesting psychological reasons have been cited for better linguistic performance by girls. Robinson (1971) has suggested that one reason why girls seem to perform better than boys is probably due to there being more females' teachers in schools. It is possible that boys react to this kind of female domination in a negative way and reject the standard English which is taught along with other aspects of the female value system.

It is also speculated that girls are more adept in second language because of their differential socialization from boys. Girls are socialized in such a way that they find it easier to muster the "empathic capacity". the ability to identify with other people's feelings and appreciate details of their behaviour which is such a significant factor for fluency in L2.

1.5.2 Age

It has been observed in several sociolinguistic studies that there is a marked difference between the speech of the older generation, and that of the younger generation, One of the factors for this could be age grading. It is widely recognised that there are characteristics of linguistic behaviour which are appropriate for different stages in a speaker's life span. For example, teenagers use certain slang items, and give them up when they become adults. You'll also notice that older people use certain forms only when they become old.

The difference in the speech of different generations is also useful for indicating language change in progress. William Labov (1972) talks about language change in real time and apparent time. Studies of linguistic change in 'real time' are longitudinal in nature and, therefore, not always possible for a researcher to carry out. An alternative is to investigate linguistic change in 'apparent time', which is done by comparing the speech of the older people with that of the younger people, whereby the speech of the older persons constitutes the older patterns, and those of the younger persons, the newer patterns, and the difference between them are considered to show language change in progress. This language change may occur due to purely

linguistic reasons, but it is often the consequence of various socio-psychological pressures which operate on different generations and which get reflected in their speech.

Check Your Progress 5

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

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

1. Is there any difference between the linguistic ability of the girls and boys in your class, especially with regard to English 'Uf there is, what do you think is the reason for it?

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

2. Describe the difference between "age grading" and language change.

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

1.6 VARIATION DUE TO REGISTER

So far, we have looked at language variation according to the social-personal characteristics of the speaker (such as the region to which one belongs, social class, caste, sex, age, and so on). Now we will look at speech variation according to the different social situations/contexts in which a speaker finds himself/herself'.

Many factors can come into play in controlling the kind of language a speaker uses on different occasions. For example, if one talks to one's colleagues about their work, the language is likely to be rather different than one will use, say, at home with one's family. In other words, the language will depend on the relationship between the participants engaged in the act of communication. With one's family one is likely to be informal, with one's colleagues the language would be more formal, and with the boss the most formal.

Example

To wife: Hurry up we'll be late

To colleague: It's time we left, we'll be late for the meeting

To Boss: Sir, it's 3 o'clock, and the meeting's at 3.15, shouldn't we leave?

This type of variation is more formally encoded in some languages than in others. In Japanese, there are different terms used for the person one is speaking to, depending on the amount of respect or deference one wishes to show. Franch has two pronouns (tu and vous), with the former reserved for close friends and family. Although English does not have such pronoun distinctions, there are definite options available for indicating one's relationship with the person one is addressing (Yule, 1985).

Differences in formality also occur in the written language as well. Example,
Just a short note to tell you that we reached home in one piece.

This is to inform you that we've reached home safely.

The formality-informality scale overlaps with another variable, namely the subject matter of the conversation. Topics such as quantum physics and international economics are likely to produce linguistic varieties which are more formal than those used in discussions on cooking and politics. Moreover, the language of the various disciplines itself is different. **The language of law is quite different from the language of medicine, which in turn is quite different from the language of engineering. The 'variation is mostly at the level of vocabulary, although in a few cases, there is a specialized syntax as well.**

Example:

All one can say is that the child's lexicon is drawn from more than one language, while the grammar is still in the early developmental stages.

The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, ———

In batch system models, the biological components and a supporting nutritive medium are added to a closed system.

The filamentous bacteria comprise only a few genera.

Language also varies accordingly to whether it is written or spoken.

Other things being equal, written English is more formal than spoken English, and this pertains to other languages as well. To give an extreme example, in Tamil and in Bengali, there is a clear and rather considerable difference between a literary variety (grandika) of the language and a colloquial variety (vayavahirka) . Therefore, variation could be due to the mode of communication.

From the above discussions we have distinguished speech according to three general types of dimension: relationship between participants, subject matter of conversation and mode of communication, i.e. speech or writing. Michael Halliday (1978) calls these three general types of dimensions: **field, mode and tenor**. Field is concerned with the purpose and subject matter of communication, mode refers to the means by which communication takes place, notably speech or writing; and tenor depends on the relations between participants.

Another widely used model has been proposed by Dell Hymes (1972), in which no less than thirteen separate variables determine the linguistic items selected by a speaker, apart from the variable of 'dialect'. It is very doubtful if even this number reflects all the complexities of register differences. Nevertheless, each of these models provides a framework within which any relevant study of speech similarity and difference may be located.

Check Your Progress 5

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 three examples of language variation according to the relationship between the participants.

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

2. Look at the general as well as the business section of a newspaper. Are there differences only in the lexicon - or are there differences in the syntax as well?

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

Languages in the Classroom : Multi Lingualism

Have you ever wondered how easily you are able to talk to your parents in Punjabi (or whichever language is your mother tongue), or in English to your school Principal, or in Hindi to your school-teacher-friends, or sometimes in a mixture of English and Hindi to your students in school? Isn't it amazing that this quality of being able to talk in several languages to different people in different situations comes as naturally to us as perhaps, smiling! Its almost as if we maintain multiple identities at the same time.

And what about our students in school? You must have observed Moloy, Priya, Subroto, Arthi, Sukhvinder and many others from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds communicating freely with each other outside the classroom. Why is it, then, when these very students who are adept users of language, face major difficulties in a language inside the classroom? and the smiling faces become sad in no time.

It is ironical yet true, that in a multilingual country like ours where there are more than 1,652 languages spoken, where print media uses around 87 languages, where radio broadcasts are in over 71 different languages, where schools use more than 47 different languages as a media of instruction and where administrative work is conducted in 13 different languages (Census of India, 1971), we have classrooms where the freedom to use one's language has remained a distant dream. There is a continuous pressure on students to only talk in English in a English classroom and in Hindi in a Hindi classroom.

Should we not, as language teachers, rethink about our classroom practices and see how best we can help our students enhance their power of expression? Should not a multilingual classroom setting demand multilingual solution? Is it not time that we stop playing lip service to multilingualism and begin using it as a classroom resource?

This unit is an attempt to urge you to keep the multilingual reality in mind each time you enter your language classroom and help them explore the potential and power to develop language skills us naturally as smiling!

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. Think about your own classroom practices for a while. Do you conduct your classroom teaching only in English or use Hindi Regional language as well? Why! Justify your approach.

.....

2. Do you allow your students to respond in Hindi or any other language in the English classroom? What are your reasons for allowing or disallowing the use of other language(s) in the English Language classroom.

.....

3. How do you view your role as a teacher? Do you think your role is to impart knowledge or do you think it is simply to facilitate the students'? Give reasons to support your answer.

.....

1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to show you the close interrelationship between language and society. A person’s speech may vary due to regional separation, differences in socio-economic status, caste and ethnic background.

Personal characteristics such as the sex and age of a person also lead to differences in language.

Finally languages vary due to the situation one is in, which would include whom one is talking to, the topic of conversation and the mode of communication .

1.8 KEY WORDS

- Dialect** : A variety of a language, spoken in one part of a country (regional dialect), or by people belonging to a particular social class (social dialect).
- Idiolect** : The linguistic system of an individual, i.e., her/his personal dialect.
- Language variation** : Difference in linguistic behaviour because of differences in region, social class, occupation, sex, etc.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Purist | : One who insists on preserving what s/he considers the 'correct' form of language, and is against language variation and language change. |
| Register | : Variety of language defined according to their use in situations, i.e. according to the relationship between the participants, the topic of discussion and the mode of communication. |
| Regional variation | : Variation in speech according to the particular area when' a speaker comes from. Variation may occur with respect. to pronunciation, vocabulary, or syntax. |
| Social dialect | : a variety of a language used by people belonging to a particular/ similar socioeconomic and/or educational background. |
| Standard variety/dialect | : the variety to a language which has the highest status ill a community or nation, and which is usually based on the speech and writing of educated native speakers of the language. A standard variety is usually described in dictionaries, grammars, taught in schools and universities; and used in media. |

1.9 SUGGESTED READING

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1.10 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress - 1

Check Your Progress - 2

Check Your Progress - 3

Check Your Progress - 4

1. A standard variety is a dialect which has gained prestige in a speech community. It cuts across regional differences, and therefore provides a uniform means of communication. It is a variety that is codified, i.e., dictionaries and grammar books are written on the basis of this variety. Moreover, this is the variety used in mass media and education. One reason why a dialect attains prestige and becomes the standard is that it is spoken in the political and cultural centre of the country, and gains in importance because of that.

No, there is no scientific reason for its superiority.

Check Your Progress - 5

UNIT 2 LANGUAGE AND LEARNING

Structure

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- understand the relationship between language and learning in the context discipline-based teaching;
- understand what mother tongue, bilingualism and multilingualism mean in the Indian context;
- discuss the responsibilities of a subject teacher in a language across the curriculum classroom;
- discuss the role of a teacher in motivating learners to think critically, analyse and synthesize in the context of teaching different subjects and the role of language in facilitating these aspects;
- explain (with examples) how various texts are structured in different styles and recognizable patterns; and
- analyse the significant role of language proficiency to teach content areas and the need for a teacher to integrate acquire the knowledge to do so with the help of different approaches.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of this unit, as you can see from the title, has two important segments – Language and Learning. What is the connection between the two? Let us attempt answering the questions given below.

- Is it essential to learn more than one language?
- Do we need to be proficient in a language to learn mathematics?

- Is it important for our students to be careful about spelling, grammar, and coherence in and among paragraphs besides being aware of the diverse but relevant organizational patterns when we are studying different school subjects? Or because these elements pertain to language classrooms, they need not be the concern of the subject teacher?
- Will being an efficient and competent reader and an adept writer in a language help us in transferring the skills learnt in language classrooms to master other curricular subjects?
- What is the difference between skill subjects and content subjects?

2.2 LANGUAGE LEARNING – FROM THE MOTHER TONGUE TO OTHER TONGUES

Matlin (1989) has observed that ‘the use of language is one ability that most differentiates humans from other animals’. Humans acquire language naturally and use it for a variety of purposes, including communication, self-expression and information storage and transmission. It is during period of infancy and early childhood that humans under normal circumstances acquire language naturally. While language comprehension precedes and outstrips language output, children grow increasingly skilled in monitoring their language output and correcting their mistakes. At more advanced stages of cognitive development, children become aware of the interactive nature of communication. They also become aware of their role as listeners and monitor their own responses to other speakers as they develop a sense of which responses are appropriate and which are not.

MOTHER TONGUE

The language to which a child is predominantly exposed from infancy is known as the mother tongue or first language. In most cases, the language acquired is that of the biological parents, but adopted children acquire the language of their adopting parents. Thus, one’s first language is associational in the sense that it is acquired from the environment and learning, not from any physiological inheritance. The mother tongue is so labelled not because it is the mother’s tongue but because like the mother it is the central factor behind the nurture of the children’s mental and emotional makeup. Their perceptions, comprehension, responses, creative expressions, thinking and analysis – all are maximally developed through the medium of the mother tongue (NCF-2005). To quote Sri. S. N. Chattopadhyay, ‘Besides being the most potent means of communication, mother tongue is the most effective means of transmission of culture. Mother tongue is endowed with the eloquent virtues of speed, clarity, spread and comprehension.’ None of the educationists and policy makers contend or challenge the importance of the mother tongue in introducing the child to literacy i.e. when the child begins knowing words, instructions, their contextual and associational meanings for appropriate application in day-to-day life, or the role of the mother tongue in concept formation, critical thinking and creativity and in imparting social values. At the same time, merely conversing in and comprehending the mother tongue to complete reading and writing tasks set in the classroom is not sufficient for a child in a country like India. Why? Because if literacy is monolingual and restricted to the language of the ethnic community, wouldn’t all channels of interaction with other communities speaking other languages be closed? And wouldn’t the consequent isolation from other communities and the fragmentation of the society, in general, lead to inevitable stagnation?

LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN INDIA

Way back in 1894, Sir George Grierson, a British magistrate resident in India, conducted a Linguistic Survey of India, (which included what are now Pakistan and Bangladesh,) and found the existence of 179 languages and 544 component dialects of these languages in Northern India. He excluded the Dravidian speaking parts of South India. Shortly after gaining independence, the Indian government created states based on linguistic boundaries. For the most part, each state has a majority language which takes precedence over the many others which exist in the region. The official language is not always the majority language of the state; for example, many of the north-eastern states use English for this purpose. Others, such as Gujarat, use Gujarati and Hindi as their official language. The linguistic demography brought out by the 1961 census of India listed 1652 mother tongues. In the findings of the 1971 census the figure was substantially reduced, and only 108 languages spoken by more than 10, 000 people were officially recognised. The census of 2001, recorded the existence 1365 rationalised mother tongues, 234 identifiable mother tongues and 22 major languages. The language-related data of the 2011 Census have not been released by the Government of India.

In an informal attempt to bring to the world's notice the phenomenal language diversity in India, Dr. G.N. Devy, Chief Editor of the monumental People's Linguistic Survey of India, provides an overview of the extant and dying languages of India as perceived by their speakers till 2011-12. It is not surprising that in a country where 780 mother tongues belonging to six language families,(viz. Andamanese, Sino-Tibetan, Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and Tai-Kadai) co-exist-- it is difficult, rather impossible, to use only the mother tongue outside the four walls of one's own home or unless people are compelled to stay in some remote corner of the country not having any contact with others. But this is never the case in India. Language diversity is an accepted fact and way of life. No Indian has one single language. "We speak one language at home, one language of the street, another of the province, besides the language of communication. Even while speaking, we are always translating from one language to another," said the President of the Sahitya Academy in 1995.

THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA

The Indian Constitution recognizes twenty two scheduled languages. But in many cases, a language that may or may not be the mother tongue of the student is used as a medium of instruction in the school that the child goes to. The government schools in the states provide for instruction in the regional language of the state e.g. Bengali in West Bengal or Tamil in Tamil Nadu. The fact remains that no Indian student can ever hope to complete his schooling and higher education without learning two or three languages. The Government of India promoted the three-language formula at least till the secondary level (Class X) as recommended by the Education Commission (1964 -1966) and the National Curriculum Framework -2005 so that school going children in India can learn their mother tongue, the state or regional language and English. Most Indians, particularly those in urban areas, grow up in a milieu of multiple languages. Simply put, having to interact with many languages does not strike most Indians as being anything out of the ordinary. When communicating with others, Indians use whatever language or mixture of languages that is understood by all parties. Code-switching is quite common and extensively used.

In fact, the National Curriculum Framework 2005, states that in many cases, children come to school with two or three languages already in place at the oral – aural level. They are able to use these languages not only accurately but also appropriately. “Grassroots Bilingualism” is widespread in India.

2.2.1 Language Learning – From the Mother Tongue to Other Tongues

Some of us as English language teachers teach English through rules of grammar. Is that the only way we can teach our students English or is there another way? Somebody has rightly said that languages are best learnt when the focus is not on language learning. What does this mean? It means that instead of focusing on language structures, it would be more fruitful to focus on the messages contained in those structures. Let the students explore and discover or derives the rules of English on their own.

But how can we do that? Let us take the cns of teaching plural-formation in English using the multilingual method. In a context like Delhi, it is likely you’ll have Bangla, Punjabi, Tamil, Garhwali and many other mother tongue speakers besides Hindi in your classroom. Follow the following simple steps:

| English | Hindi | Malyalam | Assamese | Bangla |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Cap : caps | टोपी : टोपियाँ | tappu : tappigal | tupi : tupibore | tupi:tupiguli |
| Dog : dogs | कुत्ता : कुत्तें | patti : pattigal | kukur : kukurbore | kukur:kukurguli |
| Book : books | किताब : किताबें | pustakam : pustakgal | kitab : kitabore | boi: boiguli |
| Cat : cats | बिल्ली : बिल्लियाँ | puchcha : puchchagal | mexuri:mexuribore | billie: bilieguli |

Even with this kind of little data on board, the students could be asked to observe and identify the plural makers in each language. In one glance, the students will be able to tell you that the plural makers in English is – s, in Hindi it is iya, and – e, in Malyalam it is – gal, in Assamese it is – bore and in Bangla it is – guli.

The students could be further initiated into thinking that although English has – s as a plural maker, its realizations are different (i.e. it has the sound – s in caps but it has the sound – z in dogs) or that there are certain exceptions in the language which do not take – s as their plural makers (for example ox : oxen, sheep: sheep; tooth: teeth; etc.) Or that Hindi has more than one plural maker or that there is a connection between the singular and plural as the final sound of singular decides the shape or form of the plural in English and Hindi, or that just like English, almost all languages have exceptions where tlic plural maker cannot be suffixed.

Let us take yet another example of question-formation in grammar teaching. Adopt the same approach as in the teaching of plurals. Give them certain questions in English and ask the students to give equivalent of those questions in their LI. Again the data that you elicit may look like the following.

English: Where did you go yesterday?

Hindi: आप कल कहाँ गए थे ?

Haryanvi: तू काल कि गया था ?

Punjabi: तुस्सी कल किथे गए सी ?

English: Why are you crying?

Hindi: आप क्यों रो रहे हों ?

Haryanvi: तू क्या तई रौवे हो ?

Punjabi: तुस्सी क्यों रो रहे हों ?

English: What have you brought?

Hindi: आप क्या लाए हैं ?

Haryanvi: तू के लाया है ?

Punjabi: तुस्सी की लियाये हों ?

The students will be able to identify the question words in all the languages, observe the similarities across the Indian languages such as, that, the question word begins with – K in Indian languages whereas it begins with – wh in English; that the question word always comes at the sentence-initial position in English whereas it is not the case in Indian languages.

You will notice the level of excitement and involvement as the students are initiated into observing, exploring and deriving rules on their own. In the process, they'll soon discover that their own language is just as rule-governed as any other.

Check Your Progress – 3

- Elicit some data of at least two Indian languages on the degrees of adjectives (i.e. comparative and superlative). Derive the rules on the basis of the data and discuss the similarities or dissimilarities across the languages. You could begin like this:

| (a) | (b) | (c) | (d) |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| English | Hindi | _____ | _____ |

2.2.2 Skills Acquired in the Mother Tongue are Transferrable

Research has shown that many skills acquired in the mother tongue or the first language can easily be transferred to another language. e.g. if a learner develops good reading skills in Bengali, he/she is likely to be able to apply these skills for learning English. But in India the craze for English medium instruction leaves thousands of children illiterate in their mother tongue with equally low levels of achievement in English.

Activity 1

1. *What are some of the advantages of knowing and learning your mother tongue very well? Do bilinguals have any advantage over monolinguals?*
2. *In how many languages are you proficient? What is your mother tongue and why and how did you learn your second language?*
3. *What, according to you, would be the effects of learning English on a learner who belongs to:*
 - a. *an educated, affluent family in a metropolitan city and attends an English medium public school from day one of her schooling?*
 - b. *a lower middle class family in a small town who goes to a Government school where English is taught as one of the subjects from class V onwards?*
 - c. *List the factors that affect the learning of English in situations (a) and (b).*
4. *J.C. Richards and T. S. Rodgers state that “some 60% of today’s world population is multilingual. From either a contemporary or a historical perspective bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception.” Justify your answer with examples from at least three countries around the world.*

2.2.3 ‘Translanguaging’ *

‘Translanguaging’ is a relatively new term for an age-old practice – that of switching between the languages one knows in order to maximise communicative potential. Translanguaging is flexible multilingualism. Whether it involves combining elements from different languages in the same utterance (‘codeswitching’) or alternating between languages in different parts of a task, it is a natural means of employing one’s linguistic resources to their greatest effect. It occurs because individuals associate a given language with a specific

Multilingualism in the classroom task, topic or situation, or because some concepts (such as ‘the Internet’) tend to be more commonly expressed in a given language, or because it can be playful and witty. Translanguaging is something most people do all the time with their friends, family and other members of the community without even thinking about it.

In the classroom, translanguaging may involve:

- translating between languages
- comparing and being playful with different languages
- mixing words and expressions from different languages in the same spoken or written utterance
- using the home language in one part of an activity and the school language in another part.

Thus, students might listen to information in one language and explain the gist of it orally or make written notes about it in another. Similarly, they might read a text

in one language and talk about it or summarise it in writing in another. As a resource for both teachers and students, translanguaging has many educational benefits because it:

- validates multilingualism, viewing it as a valuable asset rather than a problem or a temporary transitional interactional tool in early schooling
- represents a more efficient and effective teaching and learning technique than is possible in one language only
- offers opportunities for individuals to develop rich and varied communicative repertoires for use within and outside school.

Case Study: Translanguaging in the classroom

Mrs Indra, a Class IV teacher in a rural school outside Bhopal, describes how she has started to incorporate translanguaging in her language lessons. Many of my students are not first-language Hindi speakers. Since I started incorporating translanguaging practices into their language lessons three months ago, they have become much more talkative and engaged in their learning. Their confidence in using Hindi has noticeably improved too. I have observed that monolingual Hindi speakers in my class are starting to pick up words and phrases from their classmates as well. If my students are going to read a section or page of their Hindi textbook, I begin by introducing the topic, inviting my students to volunteer anything they know about it and encouraging them to translate the key Hindi vocabulary into their home language. I ask them to help me if I can't follow what they are saying. I then ask my students to read a section or page of their Hindi textbook aloud in pairs or small groups, or silently and independently on their own. In either case, I invite them to pause at the end of each page or section and discuss what they have just read with their partner or other group members, making sense of it and establishing the meaning of any unfamiliar words together. I suggest to them that they use their home language for this. I encourage them to add any new words or expressions in the dictionaries they have created. If I want pairs or groups of students to present something to the rest of the class in the school language, I encourage them to use their language to discuss how they will express their ideas first. I do the same if I want them to write a summary or report in the school language. To maintain the interest of all my students, I try to vary the organisation of the pairs and groups, while ensuring that they include at least two students of the same home language each time. At other times, I place a more confident student with a less confident one, so that the former can support the latter in their shared home language. If there is someone in the group who does not speak the shared home language, I ensure that my students translate what they are discussing into the school language. Recently I located a traditional short story that was available in Hindi and my students' home language. I used this with my Class VII students. I made copies of the stories in each language and got small groups of students to read them in parallel. I then invited them to use their home language to compare the different versions of the two stories, including the key words that had been used in each. Students discuss a topic in pairs using their home language.

- Notice which parts of the activities Mrs Indra encouraged her students to do in their home language and which in the school language. Are there any patterns here?

- What instructions might Mrs Indra have used to support the translinguaging practices described in the case study? Make a list of all those you can think of.

Here are some possibilities:

- ‘In Hindi we say xxx, in [your home language], we say yyy.’
- ‘How do you say xxx in [your home language]?’
- ‘What [home language] words do you know for this topic?’
- ‘Work in pairs. One pupil says the word in Hindi, the other in [their home language]. Then change over.’
- ‘I’m going to ask the questions in Hindi. You can tell me the answer in [your home language].’ • ‘You can start in [your home language], then move to Hindi.’
- ‘You can use [your home language] to discuss this topic in your pairs [or groups], and then give your report back to the class in Hindi.’
- ‘Now we have some time for questions in [your home language].’
- ‘Make a list of new words in your notebook. Write the Hindi word on the left and the [home language] equivalent on the right.’

(Adapted from Simpson, 2014)

Source:http://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/pluginfile.php/145491/mod_resource/content/2/LL12_AIE_Final.pdf

2.2.4 Consequences of Using Multi- Lingualism as a Resource

The benefits of using such an approach which is activity based will be far greater and challenging than the usual classes which focus on learning rules.

- 1) Languages of the students will be used more creatively in the classroom. The students will have enormous exposure to multiple languages at the same time.
- 2) The students will learn to make rules across languages in a simulating environment which will help to sharpen their skills of observing, deducing and reasoning, thus leading to greater linguistic and cognitive flexibility.
- 3) The level of participation and involvement will increase in the students are asked to contribute by sharing language data of their mother tongues.
- 4) The amount of data that will be generated from within the classroom could, in effect, turn out to be better than any standardized textbook. These learning materials, based on students’ experiences and communicative needs, would be far more dynamic.
- 5) The sole of teacher will be that of a facilitator and a learner. Apart from planning cognitively challenging tasks to our students. We’ll also learn by becoming a keen listener, observer who’ll have to gradually build on classroom experiences and bridge the gap between the students as us. By giving space to our students to participate and contribute, we’ll help them to boost their confidence and self-esteem.

- 6) We'll have to become reflective teachers who continuously reflect on our experiences and evolve classroom practices that would enhance their linguistic growth. We'll have to be sensitive enough to adjust to their communicative needs
- 7) The whole teaching-learning enterprise will revolve around developing functional proficiency in English rather than focus on academic skills.
- 8) The final outcome may be a social change in which our students in their journey will discover that all languages are patterned, flexible and rule-governed and that their own language is no less complex or inferior as compared to English.

Check Your Progress – 4

1. Do you think using multilingualism as a classroom resource will be an asset to you? Try out this approach and make a list of the changes that you notice in your classroom.

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Language Learning – From The Mother Tongue to Other Tongues

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2. Can multilingual approach work in classrooms in an effective way knowing the time frame of 'covering the syllabus' and examination pressure at the end of the year? Give reasons to support your answer.

.....

2.3 IS LANGUAGE IMPORTANT FOR LEARNING? EVIDENCE FROM RESEARCH

Let us try to answer this question with the help of some research findings of studies carried out in New Zealand (The Relationship between English Language and Mathematics Learning for Non-native Speakers.)

1. The Researchers (Pip Neville Barton and Bill Barton) introduce their topic with the common perception that students from Asian countries, specially China, enter the New Zealand education system with good backgrounds in mathematics and they think that Mathematics is less reliant on language skills.

The purpose of undertaking the research was twofold:-

- To explore the difficulties of the learners in learning Mathematics because of their low proficiency of English;
- To discover particular language features that might cause problems.

The researchers indicated that students were unaware of their disadvantage due to low English proficiency and believed that Mathematics learning is language free. (It must be mentioned here that English was the medium of instruction of these learners whose L1 was Chinese (Mandarin), Tongan and Samoan. The researchers also wanted to explore the relative importance of technical knowledge compared with general language proficiency in the learning of mathematics at senior secondary and undergraduate levels.

All studies undertaken in five different schools reported that students in general performed worse than the teachers and researchers anticipated. Both general and technical English were factors in the problems experienced by these non-native speakers of English. Prepositions and word-order were key features causing problems at all levels. So were the logical structures such as implication, conditionals and negation. Students indicated that they had most difficulty with understanding the contextual questions with combinations of complex phrases, syntax and technical mathematical vocabulary. Mathematics couched in everyday contexts caused problems. Researchers also observed that students having difficulty with language switch off in class, relying on texts or handouts. They tend to focus on procedures and approach mathematics problems in tests by trying to recognize a suitable procedure without trying to understand the context, e.g. the word less produced a response of subtract even when inappropriate. Language difficulties limited students' mathematical solving techniques e.g. such students had difficulty drawing a diagram and were restricted to symbolic mode. Moreover, the type of language causing difficulty is related to mathematical proficiency of the students.

In the words of one of the teachers/researchers, the project had uncovered an iceberg. The recommendations not only suggested further research into mathematical discourse (in student's home language) but also further studies on the feasibility and effectiveness of providing opportunities for students to discuss mathematics in their home language as part of the pathway to learning mathematics in English. The project was also a step towards the capacity building of the teachers who became aware of how to transact better to benefit non-native mathematics learners. The feedback from teachers that bear this out are given below:

- I now try to speak slowly and pronounce words clearly.
- I write meanings on the board. Make those meanings clear. Repetition of these keywords is vital.
- Encourage mathematical discourse amongst the students.
- I am more appreciative of the gaps in their mathematical language and encourage them to ask for help or tell me when they do not understand a term used.

The NCF 2005 (Position Paper in English: page 20) makes a point regarding the use of Indian English in the context of mathematics. "...The use of into in mathematics: (it) means the division of one number by another in British English, but the multiplication of two numbers in India." If the teachers are aware of such minor differences, they can make their students mindful of such usage.

2. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2014) (facilitated by Pratham) reports that of all children enrolled in standard V about half cannot read, at standard II level in Hindi (their L1). 48.1% can read standard II level text (or higher). Without being able to read well, will these children progress in the education system? It further provides data for children enrolled in government schools in standard V and reports that apart from a decline in reading levels between 2010 and 2012, reading levels over time are ‘low’ and ‘stuck’. And although reading levels in standard V in private schools are not high, the gap in reading levels between children enrolled in government and private schools seem to be growing over time. Without basic skills in place, it is difficult for children to cope with grade level content. Knowing numbers and operations is needed before tackling higher content. The report suggests that children need to be encouraged to speak, to discuss, to express their opinions and to solve problems together. This has huge implications for the teacher who needs to question his/her role in the context of the role language plays in learning in all subjects.

2.4 LANGUAGE AND LEARNING: THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SUBJECT TEACHER

Think for yourself, can you learn any subject, including Maths or Music, without using a language as a medium of instruction or thinking? **The National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCERT, India)** highlights the role of language in learning:

‘Language – as a constellation of skills ...cuts across school subjects and disciplines. Speech and listening, reading and writing are all generalized skills, and children’s mastery over them becomes the key factor affecting success at school. In many situations, all of these skills need to be used together. This is why it is important to view language education as everybody’s concern at school and not as a responsibility of the language teacher alone.’

The document further states that, “Language education is not confined to the language classroom. A science, social science or mathematics class is ipso facto a language class. Learning the subject means learning the terminology, understanding the concepts and being able to discuss and write about them critically.” In other words, there has to be roughly equal opportunities for learning through the four strands of

- *Meaning focussed input – learning through listening and reading;*
- *Meaning focussed output – learning through speaking and writing;*
- *Language focussed output-learning through deliberate attention to language features; and*
- *Fluency development –learning through working with known materials across the four skills at a higher than usual level of performance. (Paul Nation)*

Given the centrality of the four language skills to promote effective use of language across the curriculum, why do subject teachers restrict themselves only to correcting sentence structures and spelling mistakes in their students work?

HOW CAN SUBJECT TEACHERS SCAFFOLD LANGUAGE LEARNING?

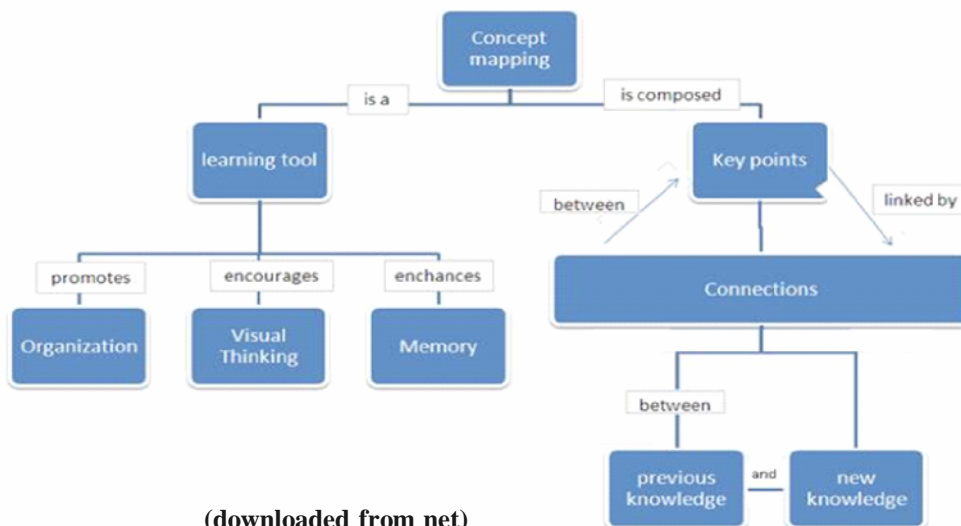
- **Develop in students competency and skills required for comprehending, identifying, selecting and integrating information** in connection with specific tasks and materials, e.g. it is not enough to ask students to extrapolate (from the graph or ask them to write a hypothesis relevant to the experiment or compare source A and source B).

It is very important for the subject teacher to know if the students know how to go about such tasks. Rather than assuming that students have developed these skills, classroom time should be devoted to teaching such thinking skills directly where the subject content becomes the vehicle for thinking.

A word of caution though. Teachers know that students do not learn anything at one go. Hence, the need to repeat similar tasks. But students should be given credit when they try to express any idea in their own way and not just memorize answers from textbooks or teacher dictated notes.

- **Focus on subject-specific vocabulary** These can be either content obligatory (=you must do it) or *content-compatible* (=words that can be used together; consistent with the topic being taught). For example, when studying the topic of volcanoes in geography – content obligatory language might include words like *magma, lava, core, erupt, force, melt* and linking devices such as *therefore, as a result*, etc. Content compatible language can include recycling description of a process with linking devices like – first, then, after that, etc.
- **Highlight the underlying conceptual framework** : Concepts are the building blocks of thinking. A concept is a category used to group similar events, ideas, objects or people. Concepts are abstractions. They do not exist in the real world. Concept learning therefore, refers to the development of the ability to respond to common features of objects or events. Teachers do not just introduce their students to new concepts but also help them to comprehend the relationship between different concepts through **concept maps** which visually illustrate the relationships between concepts and ideas. The concepts are written either in circles or in boxes, and are linked by words and phrases that explain the connection between the ideas, helping students to organize and structure their thoughts to understand information and new relationships. Most concept maps represent a hierarchical structure with the broad concept first with connected subtopics, more specific concepts, later.

Given below is an example of a map concept.



(downloaded from net)

Moreover, if teachers just read out from prescribed textbooks without reformulating the ideas and concepts, if they do not pitch their explanations to the level of their students, then students take recourse to memorising without comprehending a word of the topic being taught. Hence it is important to adapt texts so that it is at the right level of difficulty for the class being taught and is a good model of the sort of phrases that underpin effective expression in different subjects.

- **Analysing subject specific word formation** (i.e. prefixes, suffixes, word roots) and comprehend and apply this knowledge of parts separately and all parts put together to arrive at the meaning of a word. e.g.

| Word meaning | Suffix (meaning) | Prefix (meaning) |
|------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Life Science | -ology (study of a particular science or subject) | Bio – (life) |
| Writing about someone's life | -graphy | Bio – (life) |
| Heat under the earth's crust | -thermal (caused by heat – root word /not suffix) | Geo – (earth) |

Please note: thermo – means heat and is a prefix – hence thermal is an adjective here – thermal means relating to or caused by heat or change in temperature. Don't we use *thermals* – clothes specially designed to keep us warm in cold weather? Hence geothermal springs are hot water springs – springs with water temperatures above its surroundings. Now you can easily understand the meaning of words like geology, sociology, etc. Understanding word formation is essential for improving language because once learned it gives students skills to decode unfamiliar vocabulary.

Activity: Write the meaning of words given below with the help of a dictionary. Can you break the word into prefixes, suffixes and word roots?

genocide, nanotechnology, geothermal, biometric, exothermic, quadrupeds

- **Develop an ability to focus on the structure of texts.** Understanding the features of a text type and how these texts are arranged, are vital to better comprehension and reading and help students when writing. When a student is able to understand texts at a deeper level, they can perceive language not just as a set of rules but as a set of options available for constructing a variety of meanings. Students can anticipate what information would be included and use this knowledge to summarise the key points.

There are a variety of structures that authors use to organize information. Let us go through a few of them.

Chronological/sequential – Related to time, order or a series of events or things that come one after the other e.g. there is a particular procedure to be followed when a new law is made in our country; stories (narratives) also have a chronological order; or you have to follow a particular process (a series of steps) to make cookies or to bake a cake.

Critical words: *First, second, before, after, finally, then, earlier, next, etc.*

Cause and Effect – Informational texts often describe cause-effect (causal) relationships. For example, you must have studied in your geography classes why earthquakes are so frequent in Japan, Nepal, India, Indonesia and the havoc that comes in the wake of earthquakes. Even a simple thing like an apple turning brown when you leave it half eaten can be explained as cause and effect pattern. Of course, you have learnt all about it in your chemistry lessons. But did you ever think about it as a particular style of organizing information? If you think of it, you'll find many examples of causal relationship in our daily lives. (If there is a CAUSAL relationship between two things, one thing is responsible for the other thing e.g. the gravitational pull of the moon on the earth's oceans causes tide. But unfortunately people often misread or misspell the word as CASUAL. Minor changes in spelling thus change the meaning and correct use of a word.)

Critical Words: *Because, since, if/then, due to, as a result, consequently, etc.*

Problem-Solution: The text describes a problem and suggests solutions e.g. Global warming; Road rage on the rise in Delhi; Diabetes – the silent killer, etc.

Critical words: *Propose, conclude, a solution, the reason for, the problem or question.*

Compare and contrast: Text books often highlight the similarities and differences between objects. For example –

A study of two different forms of carbon, diamonds and graphite; differences between deltas and estuaries or hot and cold deserts in the world, etc.

Critical words: *While, yet, but, rather, most, same, either, as well as, like/unlike, as opposed, to, etc.*

Descriptions: Sensory details help the reader to visualize information which can be organized in order of space e.g. a description of a room from left to right or from outside to inside or description of a process e.g. how paper is made.

Critical Words: *Description adjectives and words like – on, over, beyond, within, etc.*

These are just a few text structures that you often find in your textbooks. There are many others like narrative, argumentative (discussing for or against a topic) or classification. You must also understand **that one particular text structure is not used through a lesson/chapter.**

We would also like to draw your attention to the **critical words given after each text structure.** These are different **linkers** (or cohesive devices) that add to the meaning of the text, e.g.

and (addition, more information) Hot *and* humid.

but (difference/contrast) Speed thrills *but* kills.

or (alternative) Igneous *or* sedimentary rocks transform to metamorphic rocks)

because (reason) Because of daily heavy rainfall equatorial rainforest have dense vegetation.

The use of correct and appropriate linkers makes a text coherent and meaningful.

“We often find a science text book, e.g. which asks students to make a conclusion based upon data observed during an experiment. We assume students know how to draw conclusions, yet we seldom teach students that skill.” While we may assume that students know how to summarize, analyse or extrapolate i.e. perform the thinking skills implied in the subject matter, “... we often find they have never learned what it means to perform these basic thinking skills. As a result, students are often dismayed, confused and handicapped when asked to perform them.” (Costa, A.I)

When subject teachers explain the requirements of the task in detail (e.g. to write a summary the students should read the given text carefully; underline the important ideas, pay special attention to the first and the last sentence; should not include examples etc;) and allow the students to write in small groups so that they get an opportunity to formulate their responses in their own words/language, students are compelled to think and learn. Similarly, when a student is expected to analyse trends; interpret bar diagrams or pie charts or graphs, subject teachers in geography/statistics or economics can provide appropriate language prompts like (an increase, growth of or from to, a decrease, went down, plummeted, drastic/sudden change; remained stable, fluctuated; a plateau after a rise etc.). Such verbal cues help students to organize their answers better.

In this section we tried to bring to your attention why and how “language is in every subject” and how language and subject teachers can and should cooperate to encourage learning in schools. While teachers cannot make students learn, they can promote learning by helping students become motivated to learn, handle information and experience, develop knowledge, attitude and skills and transfer their learning from the classroom to the real world. In practice, this means students often need to have the opportunity to say or write things in their own ways, in their own styles rather than copying from books or taking notes from dictation. Thus a learner at any level should be able to reformulate what he/she is learning. It is true that teachers at all levels have time and resource constraints and many of them are more than happy to complete a given syllabus, accept memorized answers from the text or guide books. Moreover, in the Indian context, maintaining discipline in a class means pin-drop silence; thus making pair/small group work for allowing children to construct their own knowledge, formulating and expressing their ideas, paraphrasing a given text or interpreting and analyzing trends difficult if not impossible. But revisiting their teaching in the light of the discussions above will facilitate learning, make the process more exciting and help them save time.

Discussing, explaining, questioning and using talk and writing to tussle with ideas are all means of achieving better understanding of a subject. Structured talks enable students to rehearse their ideas, solve problems, develop thinking skills and prepare for writing. Students would learn better if teachers generate open questions and extend students’ thinking through partner and group discussions. In practice, this means students often need to have the opportunity to say or write things in their own ways, in their own styles rather than copying from books or taking notes from dictation. Thus a learner at any level should be able to reformulate what he/she is learning.

Activity: Regardless of whether you teach science or geography, language is essential. Explain.

1 Read the following paragraph selected from an NCERT Physics textbook. Will it be easy or difficult for an English teacher to teach the given text? Give reasons for your answer.

The Maxwell's equations of electromagnetism and Hertz experiments on the generation and detection of electromagnetic waves in 1887 strongly established the wave nature of light. Towards the same period at the end of 19th Century, experimental investigations on conduction of electricity (electric discharge) through gases at low pressure in a discharge tube led to many historic discoveries. The discovery of x-rays by Roentgen in 1895, and of electron by J. J. Thomson in 1887, were important milestones in the understanding of atomic structure. It was found that at sufficiently low pressure of about 0.001mm of mercury column, a discharge took place between the two electrodes on applying the electric field to the gas in the discharge tube. A fluorescent glow appeared on the glass opposite to the cathode. The colour of the glow of the glass depended on the type of glass, it being yellowish green for soda glass. The cause of this fluorescence was attributed to the radiation which appeared to be coming from the cathode. These cathode rays were discovered in 1870, by William Crookes who later, in 1879, suggested that these rays consisted of streams of fast moving negatively charged particles. The British physicist J. J. Thomson (1856-1940) confirmed this hypothesis. By applying mutually perpendicular electric and magnetic fields across the discharge tube J. J. Thomson was the first to determine experimentally the speed and the specific charge [(charge to mass ratio (e/m)] of the cathode ray particles. They were found to travel with speeds ranging from about 0.1. to 0.2 times the speed of light (3×10^8 M/S). The presently accepted value of e/m is 1.76×10^{11} C/Kg. Further, the value of e/m was found to be independent of the nature of the material/metal used as the cathode (emitter), or the gas introduced in the discharge tube. This observation suggested the universality of cathode ray particles.

- 4 Based on the concept map given in this section (1.4) write two paragraphs focusing on the two questions:
- What is a concept map?
 - What are the advantages of a concept map drawn by a student?

2.5 COMPLEMENTARITY OF LANGUAGE SKILLS AND SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHERS

In the words of John Clegg, "...The problem comes to a head in urban poor, (small towns) or rural areas where children get little exposure to English....It is difficult for students to learn school knowledge in a language in which they are still struggling. It is also difficult for teachers

to teach, and they may be struggling with the language almost as much as their students... There is no hiding the fact that learning school subject-matter knowledge satisfactorily is often well-nigh impossible when neither teacher nor pupils can really speak English adequately to use it as a vehicle for giving or getting an education..."

(From Innovation and Best Practice: 1999; pp.70-77)

Reading out from textbooks by teachers, without adequate explanations and discussion, compel students to memorise information without comprehension. What is true in the subject of Maths, as discussed earlier, is true for all content areas. As Buchmann (1984) quoted in the study – The Subject Matter Preparation of Teachers by Deborah L. Ball and G. W. McDiarmid – points out,

'It would be odd to expect a teacher to plan a lesson, for instance, writing reports in science and to evaluate related student assignments, if that teacher is ignorant about writing and about science, and does not understand what student progress in writing science reports might mean.'

What teachers need to know about the subject matter they teach extends beyond the specific topics of their curriculum. For example, while English teachers need to know about particular authors and their works, about literary genres and styles, they also need to know about interpretation and criticism. A history teacher needs content knowledge but must also understand what history is: the nature of historical knowledge and what it means to find out or know something about the past. History teachers want their students to understand that history is fundamentally interpretive. Learning history means studying accounts of the past have already been constructed as well as learning about alternative accounts of the same phenomenon and how such accounts are constructed. Nevertheless, teachers may adopt either a teacher – centered and teacher-fronted pedagogy or a student-centered approach to teaching the same content.

As teachers, we know that each subject has its own vocabulary and sentence patterns. As Julia Strong points out in her paper, 'Literacy Across the Curriculum' that the language of explanation for science is different from the patterns of arguments needed by the historian. She observes that '...Talk is central to learning. To deepen understanding, talking through problems plays an important role. Discussing, explaining, questioning and using talk and writing to tussle with ideas are all aspects of the struggle towards clarity and deepening thought in any subject. If teachers know how to generate open questions and extend their students thinking through focussed discussion and through partner and group discussion, they can not only promote thinking but also encourage learning. Similarly, by promoting co-operation among students, encouraging active learning, by providing prompt feedback, by communicating high expectations from students, a teacher can impact a learner. Let us conclude this section by saying that there is no doubt about the fact that subject matter is an essential component of teacher knowledge but integrating it with the use of language is important. After all, if teaching involves helping others to learn, then understanding what is to be taught is a central requirement of teaching. We all accept that teaching involves, not just dissemination of a particular thing or concept, rather it is the responsibility of the teacher to offer

many interconnected concepts in such a way that students are cajoled into making difficult connections. This can be done with the help of making language-content connections. The teacher's ability to frame thought provoking questions would definitely encourage students to become independent thinkers if shown the right direction.

2.6 LET US SUM UP

The very basis of language and learning are the four language skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing where the ability to think is the invisible thread that runs through all the four strands. However, if the foundation of literacy is poor, any attempt to progress further would collapse like a house of cards.

Leaving the development of language skills to the English teachers per se would compel students to struggle to express their ideas in other subjects. Each subject has its own vocabulary and sentence patterns. The language of explanation for science is different from the patterns of arguments needed by historians. Each subject has its own pattern of language that is tied up inextricably with meaning. An English teacher cannot teach students the vocabulary of science let alone the patterns of language needed to express scientific thoughts effectively. Only a science teacher can do that. Having said that, all teachers whether teaching science or geography need to be proficient in the language used in the classroom for purposes of instruction.

2.7 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READING

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UNIT 3 UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 How Language Varies: Everyday Registers and Academic Registers
 - 3.2.1 Oral and Written Registers
 - 3.2.2 Differences in Language Features of Registers are Not Arbitrary
 - 3.2.3 Same Individuals Use Different Registers in Different Situations
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- 3.3 Academic Registers-Language
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- 3.8 Suggested Readings And References

3.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you will be able to:

- appreciate that language is the foundation for learning;
- understand that particular kinds of activity requires particular kinds of language and language reflects the activity; the nature of an activity can be determined by the style of language use;
- comprehend that use of the particular type of language in a specific context, is referred to as 'Register'.
- differentiate between everyday registers and academic registers and analyse the features or components of academic registers;
- analyse that different subject areas employ their own languages and appreciate the importance of learning registers of school disciplines to facilitate learning of the discipline;
- appreciate that reading, writing, listening and speaking need to be integrated within each discipline to ensure that students have opportunities to develop subject-specific literacy skills so that; and
- design activities to promote language learning through content learning and integrate language and disciplinary literacy in subject classrooms.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

All learning involves language. Language enables us to understand new concepts, exchange ideas and communicate our thoughts. The language that children use at home, especially in the later years, is different from the language spoken at school. In school, the use of language differs according to the subject area. While teaching in English, teachers teach the English of Science and Technology, the English of the Classical Literature, the English used in official documents, and the spoken English of Mathematics. The word 'English' is therefore an abstraction which conveniently refers to a wide range of different forms of communication. But if we want to understand any language and use it for various purposes, or to teach that language, whether it is English or any other, as a first, second, or foreign language, we must look a little more closely at the nature of the varieties within that language. *We need to understand that particular kinds of activities require particular kinds of language and language reflects the activity. It is easy to determine the nature of an activity by the style of language use. By changing the style, tone or the vocabulary, we can change the language and the situation. When we talk about the use of the particular type of language in a specific context, we are referring to the term 'Register'. Learning a school subject involves learning its register.*

Students need to learn the requirements in a particular subject area by understanding the specialized 'registers' of a particular discipline, whether, Chemistry, Sociology, Commerce, or English. By doing so, they can produce written texts like persuasive or argumentative essays in History or Science, lab reports in Science and summary/synthesis prose responses in Literature on final exams. While students have complex and sophisticated ideas, the way they present them, does not meet the academic expectations. Students do not understand the specialised vocabulary, meaning of technical terms, grammatical and lexical features and are therefore unable to write well-constructed essays. Students also wrestle with comprehending meaning of passages they read in the textbook. The lack of focus on language affects students from weaker socio-economic backgrounds more as they continue to underachieve.

3.2 HOW LANGUAGE VARIES: EVERYDAY REGISTERS AND ACADEMIC REGISTERS

Think and reply. Do you speak the same way at home as you speak with your students in the classroom? Do you speak differently when talking with your doctor than when you are chatting with your friend on the telephone? The answer is obviously 'no' because we all speak in different ways in different situations. These ways of speaking differently are called registers of language.

Think of the following spoken texts :

Conversation between friends

Commentary of a football match

Dialogues in a popular TV serial

News bulletin on radio

An academic lecture

Conversation between two doctors about a patient's surgery.

Examples of register include the language of a newspaper article, the language of a conversation about the weather, academic prose, a recipe in a cookery book, and so on.

Consider the following samples from different 'registers' of English taken from the newspapers:

1. PLAINTIFF alleged that defendant did beat, punch, and torture the plaintiff, and did damage and/or destroyed the expensive furniture belonging to plaintiff.'
2. EMBASSY SALE: By virtue of a Power of Attorney, issued by the District Magistrate, Saket, all the property of the Embassy of Timberlane, will be sold at Public Venue on Friday the 29th day of December, 2016, at 12 o'clock, local time noon of said day, property located as described below. [description omitted].
3. SAUTEED MARINATED VEGETABLES. Cut the vegetables in thick slices and parboil them. Marinate for several hours in a mixture of 1/2 cup olive oil, 3 tbsp. lemon juice, 1/4 tsp. Tabasco, 1 tsp. salt, and 1 tbsp. each chopped coriander and chopped chives. Remove from marinade, dip in flour, and fresh bread crumbs, and saute in hot oil until golden brown. Serves 4.
4. SITUATION VACANT. Requires 1. Teaching Faculty 2. Lab Assistant cum support. Faculty Qualification: BE/B.Tech/MCA from recognised University/'B' level from NIELIT. Experience: Minimum 1 Year. Application with Boi-data should reach 103, Pusta Road, Delhi by 30.03.2016.
5. LOST AND FOUND I, Shahana Khan, D/O M.A Khan, R/O 186/16 Shivaji Nagar, Hissar, inform you that my Birth Certificate and marksheet of Secondary School Examination, CBSE has been lost.
6. PUBLIC NOTICE CHANGE OF NAME: TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN. I, Sachin Malhotra, S/O Sh Pravin Malhotra, hereby give notice to the public at large that my name is changed to Siddhant Malhotra from the date of publishing this newspaper.
7. WEATHER Forecast. IMD, DELHI: Sunshine followed by increasing clouds. Temp: Max 40 degree celsius Min 35 degree celsius. Likelihood of winds and shower tomorrow.
8. MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCE WANTED ;Wanted a tall, fair ,beautiful English speaking girl for our Engineer son employed with a MNC, earning a six figure salary.

What does the language in each of these 'registers' tell you about the situation, the vocabulary, the style or the tone of the language? What is the difference between the language of a weather forecast and that of a recipe.

The kind of language used in each of the above examples reflects something of the situation in which it was produced. Particular kinds of activities require particular kinds of language. Very often, the nature of an activity can be determined by the style of language use. The style, tone or vocabulary of language changes with a

new type of activity.

What do you gather from the above? Is there a difference in the vocabulary and syntax? When we observe language use in various contexts, we find differences in the type of language selected to suit different types of situation. We know that a certain kind of language is appropriate to a certain use and we can often guess the source of a piece of language from our familiarity with its use. For example, a religious discourse, a popular film song, a sports commentary, a teacher's lecture on biology, and a politician's election speech are linguistically distinct. The language of recipes certainly differs from the language of describing a scientific process.

Language variation is a result of differences in the social situation of use. This affects the word choices and syntactic ordering of utterances (lexicogrammar) and is called a register.

THINK AND REFLECT

1. Register is situationally appropriate language. For example, "Hello, there" is okay for the friends, but how do we say this to our teacher in school/college? How about 'Excuse me, Professor'?"

We need to remember that varying our language according to the context is important. What we say, and how we say it, actually counts.

2. Notice use of register in everyday situations. Notice the different registers people speak with. Read the letters to the editor in that day's paper, listen to a radio broadcast, watch people in conversation at a dhaba or a tea shop.

What register are they using? What features identify it as that register? Why do you think the speakers chose that register?

3. You have to write a letter of complaint to the Electricity Department for an inflated bill you have received.

Will you write it in "usual" more conversational English or in precise business English? Will the two letters get different results? In what way? Which would the people in the Department, as readers or recipients of the letters be more likely to respond to favorably and why?

4. Identify different varieties of registers and their use in your everyday life. For example, a 'business' register? What are its features? When might it be useful? Is there a "medical" register?

When we visit a doctor, often, we do not understand what he/she is saying. This is because, while speaking English, doctors use a medical register that is difficult for people outside the field to understand. Patients might be described by doctors as having "hypertension" rather than "high blood pressure," "anaemia" rather than "too little haemoglobin," and "cardiac arrest" instead of "heart attack." Learning some of these words helps us in learning the language of power—that is, the language used in doctor's, lawyer's offices, and business offices.

5. How does knowledge of language help people become powerful?

3.2.1 Oral and Written Registers

All speakers use language in different contexts, under different circumstances, for different purposes. A language is primarily distinguished into spoken and written forms, both having different roles. Radio talks, academic discussions, and sermons are examples of registers within the spoken mode, while essays, technical articles, or sets of instructions in manuals are clear instances of registers within the written mode. You will agree that spoken and written English differ both in grammar and lexis. Even within the same field, like literature, we may identify different modes such as the fictional or narrative, dramatic, and poetic - corresponding to different genres - and hence distinct registers within the register of literature. Because situations tend to change and are varied, linguistic differences are a result of the differences in situations. For instance, the language of football differs from that of a church sermon in lexis as well as in syntax.

3.2.2 Differences in Language Features of Registers are not Arbitrary

Think of a sermon and a conversation between two or more participants. They are both in the spoken mode but they differ in the level of interactivity. Conversation is highly interactive, with two or more participants participating, whereas sermon is given by one person. Conversation can be about any topic and the purpose may not be specific, it can shift depending on the participants feelings and attitudes. Sermons, on the other hand, are more specific in terms of topic (religion, lifestyle, philosophy) and purpose (informative, persuasive). The language of conversation has many second person pronouns, whereas a sermon is likely to have more complex sentences and repetitions.

Language features like words, vocabulary distributions, grammatical classes, syntactic constructions, and so on are not arbitrarily used and different registers use the structure in varying degrees.

3.2.3 Same Individuals Use Different Registers in Different Situations

Individual speaker usually controls a range of registers extending from informal ones to formal ones. Small children control fewer registers than adults. Age and socio-economic status determine register control. We should also remember that the same individual uses different varieties of a language or registers in different situations. For example, the kind of English a person uses with his wife is certainly not at the shop or at the railway booking counter.

Register is a set of linguistic forms used in given social circumstances the kind of English he may use with his colleagues or his superior in the office. Later in the same day, the same person uses yet another variety of English.

Each register is signaled by changes in phonology (sounds), syntax (structure), and lexicon (vocabulary).

THINK AND REFLECT

If you had access to only a single variety of language, how would you express such things as seriousness, mockery, humor, respect, and disdain? Will you have difficulty in expressing yourself as the social situation changed around you?

3.2.4 Academic Registers

The term 'academic registers is used to describe the characteristics of language

that make it academic. What are the characteristics of the language spoken at home and the one spoken at school? Is the language of school different from the language of everyday use? What is the difference? One difference is that, as compared to the language of everyday use, school language is more formal. The language of school is the language which the pupils use for thinking, for formulating and comparing ideas in specific subjects, for interacting with their peers to test their understandings and for making meanings of what they learn. It is the language that students must master in order to succeed in any content area.

Although Cummins has been criticised for creating a differentiation between conversational ability and the ability to use language for advanced literacy in this model, it is interesting to read and give one's opinion on it.

BICS AND CALP (Cummins, J. 1979)

It is important to note in the context of language skills, the distinction between two sets of language skills – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS refers to the everyday language needed to interact socially- the abilities of interpretation, expression and negotiation are essential for interpersonal communication. BIC skills are mostly employed by students in social situations, when they are in the playground, canteen, bus, and talking on the phone, etc. Since these interactions take place in a meaningful social context, the language required in these situations is neither very specialised nor cognitively very demanding.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, on the other hand, is the type of language which is essential for students to succeed in school. It is concerned more with the abilities of thinking and learning effectively from the curriculum processes. Since it refers to formal academic learning, it includes listening, speaking, reading and writing about the subject area and content material. Academic language proficiency is, however, not only about understanding of content and good vocabulary. It includes other higher order skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating and inferring. Academic language tasks depend on the context of the subject and as student progress to higher classes, language becomes cognitively more demanding. In bilingual contexts, skills and concepts learnt in the first language are transferred.

Go through the above box and write down. What do you think of the differentiation? Let us go through the following definitions offered by various scholars to reinforce our understanding of academic language

- Academic language is “the language that is used by teachers and students for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge and skills . . . imparting new information, describing abstract ideas, and developing students’ conceptual understandings” (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994, p. 40).
- “Academic English is the language of the classroom, of academic disciplines (science, history, literary analysis) of texts and literature, and of extended, reasoned discourse. It is more abstract and decontextualized than conversational English” (Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson, Collins, & Scarcella, 2007, p. 16).

In other words, we can gather from the above that:

1. Academic language is the oral and written language (and visual, auditory, etc) that students need in order to
 - Understand (read, listen, think)
 - Communicate (listen, speak, write, connect)
 - Perform (think, read, write, listen, speak, solve, create)
2. Academic language is necessary to participate in the content to
 - think
 - question
 - talk
 - learn

| LANGUAGE | |
|---|---|
| <p>Academic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formal and authoritative ● Display of knowledge and ideas mostly through written work ● Sentences used are long and complex. ● Action is changed into nouns to build concepts (pollution) ● Passive voice is common (How much money was spent) ● Long noun phrases (identifying the causes of pollution in cities...) | <p>Everyday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Casual and friendly ● Verbal, informal, use of everyday meanings ● Smaller and simple sentences are used. ● Action is through verbs indicated (smoke, dust) ● Active voice is used much (use of money did they spend?) ● Noun phrases which are short (polluting Cities...) |

The use of academic language also differs from grade to grade depending on the learner characteristics like age, etc. The language which a child is able to master at the age of five varies greatly in sophistication and complexity as compared to the writing of a research thesis by an adult learner. Academic language is therefore developmental in nature, proceeding from simple to complex.

Mastering school language is a challenge for all students. It is important for pupils to develop competencies to deal with the language demands placed on them for learning specific subjects. The teaching of school language is a complex process and requires an understanding of language needs of the learners and language demands of the content. Teachers need to identify and consider the language demands as they plan to support student learning of content.

3.3 ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

What is Academic Language

Academic language is characterised by linguistic features which are specific to academic disciplines (Mathematics, Arts, Science, Social Science and Language) including grammar, vocabulary and discourse features across the four domains of language, namely, reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Is reading, writing, speaking and listening in Science different from reading, writing, speaking and listening in Social Science? If it is, then in what ways? What are the different thinking skills that underpin the language structures in different subject areas? In certain content areas such as Science, language and literacy may be exploratory and hypothetical; whereas in areas such as Social Sciences, language and literacy may be sequential or descriptive, The language for Physical Education focuses mostly on instructions and adverbial phrases ,whereas in English as a subject, the emphasis is on literary language that may have features such as metaphors and similes, etc.

Using School Registers to Teach

In the Mathematics classroom, language is required to be used in a particular kind of way which is different from how language is used in a science classroom. *Learning mathematics involves learning its register as learning science or history involves learning registers of science and history. the language of a discipline does not only mean a list of vocabulary or specialised words with specific meanings but the competence to communicate effectively and to contribute to the knowledge of the discipline (oral and written) necessary.*

To continue our discussion, let us take a look at the language of NCERT's Science textbook of class IX, Chapter 3 Atoms and Molecules. (NCERT,

According to Dalton's atomic theory, all matter, whether an element, a compound or a mixture is composed of small particles called atoms. The postulates of this theory may be stated as follows: (i) All matter is made of very tiny particles called atoms. (ii) Atoms are indivisible particles, which cannot be created or destroyed in a chemical reaction. (iii) Atoms of a given element are identical in mass and chemical properties. (iv) Atoms of different elements have different masses and chemical properties. (v) Atoms combine in the ratio of small whole numbers to form compounds. (vi) The relative number and kinds of atoms are constant in a given compound.

Take a look at the underlined sentences, phrases or clauses. They are in the passive voice or in simple present tense. This denotes that the Science register expresses neutrality, i.e. that facts have been proved, experimented or tested and accepted universally as truth. Textual language in Science tends to emphasize the passive voice, as a result, people are rarely present in Science talk or text, as either agents or participants (Lemke, 1990) There is an element of authoritativeness and human beings or any reference to self is hidden behind events, discoveries or concepts. Scientific discourse is kept "objective" as opposed to "subjective" by the use of simple present tense and passive voice. This gives the impression of an invisible ,objective author providing expert information. Abstract noun phrases that are derived from nouns are used,(e.g., the revolution of the sun around the earth). Complex content is put within shorter sentences with the help of long and complex noun phrases and clauses and technical vocabulary is used to pack more dense information effectively. (e.g., a natural solid with a definite chemical structure, the heat and pressure deep inside the earth;) Narrative and dramatic words are avoided and so are colloquial words.

Science requires different reading skills than reading fiction. This means understanding specialized vocabulary terms and phrases that are unique to Science, making sense of patterns and organisation of structure and texts of textbooks, recognising implicit and explicit cause and effect relationships and drawing inductive and deductive inferences. Writing in Science focuses on students learning how to describe, explain and predict phenomenon (Hand, Wallace & Yang, 2004).

Words are important in Science but more than in any other subject, there is a great deal of combination and interaction of words, pictures, diagrams, images, animations, graphs, equations ,tables and charts (Lemke 1998, Jones 2000). They all convey meaning in different ways. Students need to master these” multi-modal” or “non-linguistic” modes of representation to gain an understanding in Science A Science teacher should be sensitive to the linguistic features which reveal the characteristics of science and scientific processes viz. observers, formulation of hypothesis, testing and so on.

Even though Mathematics has a “universal” language, academic language plays an important role in Mathematics instruction. Mathematics has its own distinctive language ,grammatical features and language structures that make Mathematics texts are more precise, authoritative and technical. It is the challenges these features pose that may hinder student learning. As Dale & Cuevas, 1992 point out, challenges of the language of Mathematics include specialized vocabulary and discourse features along with everyday vocabulary that acquires a different meaning in mathematics .

Similarly, following is a corpus based analysis of .NCERT Mathematics textbook of class VI which shows how the language of Mathematics operates and where the use of determiners and prepositions are used to convey the mathematical concept of problem solving and abstraction. The most frequently used words are not the ‘content’ words, they are function words like articles, prepositions and so on. The word ‘number’ appears as the ninth most frequently used word. This reveals how the mathematical ideas and thinking are conveyed in language in assumptions, calculations, logical sequencing and thinking. Prepositions, determiners and conjunction play important role in making the calculations effective. For example ‘into’ matters more when we do a multiplication.

| N | Word | Freq | % | Texts | % |
|----|----------|------|------|-------|--------|
| 2 | THE | 410 | 5.19 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 3 | TO | 179 | 2.26 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 4 | IS | 165 | 2.09 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 5 | AND | 164 | 2.07 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 6 | IN | 153 | 1.93 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 7 | OF | 143 | 1.81 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 8 | A | 133 | 1.68 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 9 | NUMBER | 122 | 1.54 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 10 | NUMBERS | 113 | 1.43 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 11 | WE | 103 | 1.30 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 12 | DIGIT | 72 | 0.91 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 13 | YOU | 63 | 0.80 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 14 | ARE | 50 | 0.63 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 15 | AS | 50 | 0.63 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 16 | FOR | 47 | 0.59 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 17 | OFF | 46 | 0.58 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 18 | IT | 45 | 0.57 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 19 | PLACE | 44 | 0.56 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 20 | CAN | 43 | 0.54 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 21 | THIS | 41 | 0.52 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 22 | DIGITS | 39 | 0.49 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 23 | AT | 38 | 0.48 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 24 | GREATEST | 38 | 0.48 | 1 | 100.00 |
| 25 | HOW | 38 | 0.48 | 1 | 100.00 |

Figure: Corpus analysis of mathematics textbook:
Frequency counts of chapter 1 Class VI.

The discipline of History has its own specialized vocabulary, grammatical patterns and genres. Vocabulary in History comprises of words for naming objects (artefacts, monument,) describing time (decade, century, medieval, modern, ancient) and historical processes and historical concepts (colonialism, revolution, invasion, archaeology). Some Tier 2 words that are used are analyse, describe, explain, compare and contrast, etc.

History makes great linguistic demands on students as it is constructed mainly through texts and unlike Science cannot be experienced ‘hands-on’ through observations. History texts have information that is densely packed with multiple meanings, background information of the previous events, is presented, which is significant to the remainder text, followed by a chronology or record of events and the final part deduces the historical significance of events. Since History is one of the most text -rich subjects taught at school, much of what students learn is derived from textbooks, popular magazines, primary and secondary sources and supplementary readings and this poses a big challenge to students which is evident in what Jean Fritz (1982) wrote,

“I skimmed through pages but could not find mention of people at all, there was talk of dates....., cultivation... ..population,immigration.....but no human beings.....”

Whether children are learning Mathematics, Geography or Science, language is the tool for learning. Reading, writing, listening and speaking are indispensable tools for the learning process as the students move across the curriculum. Surveys carried out by different agencies, national and international, each year point out to the poor performance of students in the area of reading, comprehension and writing leading to poor achievement in different subjects.

According to the Report of the National Achievement Survey published by NCERT in 2014, based on a sample comprising of 1,88,647 students from 6722 schools, from 33 States and Union Territories of the country.

Report of the National Achievement Survey

A reading comprehension test was administered to Class 8 students. The items were designed to test a range of relevant cognitive processes or ‘reading skills’, classified as abilities to: ‘locate information’, ‘grasp ideas and interpret’ and ‘infer and evaluate.’

Locating Information : NCERT data on the performance of students of Class VIII on the cognitive process of locating information shows that overall, 54% students were able to respond correctly to items based on the ability to ‘locate information’, i.e.; simple retrieval of information from the given text.

The data on performance of Class VIII students on the Cognitive Process of Infer/Evaluate clearly shows that NOT even half of the students could respond correctly to a single item within this cognitive process.

Overall, it can be confirmed from the above presentation and discussion that ‘Locating information’ was found easiest whereas the abilities to ‘Infer and Evaluate’ were found to be the most difficult. The difficulty of items testing the ability to ‘Grasp ideas/ Interpret’ fell between the above stated competencies.

http://www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/esd/pdf/NAS_8_cycle3.pdf, p 86

Activity: Read the above information in the box and think of the implications of the results of the survey on learning in different subjects like Mathematics and Science. What is the relationship between the ability to infer and evaluate and learning Science and Mathematics?

The weakest area is in writing skills, the majority of children are underachieving in this vital area. This indicates the need for children to read more and to be taught strategies for improving vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures to meet their language needs in the content areas – Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

Attention to the language demands of subjects and how curriculum content is taught and learned through language (Mohan 1986) enables mainstream teachers to plan for these needs. Within any activity or topic, teachers can plan for different strategies for conveying curriculum content and developing students' thinking skills by using language structures and content specific vocabulary.

3.3.1 Components of Academic Language

In this section, we will discuss the key components of academic language. These are:

1. *Vocabulary*
2. *Syntax*
3. *Language function and*
4. *Discourse*

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary refers to students' understanding of oral and print words and includes conceptual knowledge. In the early 20th century, John Dewey (1910) had stated that vocabulary is critically important because a word is an instrument for thinking about the meanings which it expresses. Vocabulary instruction in school is neither frequent nor systematic. Many words are unfamiliar to most students as they contain ideas necessary for a new topic. These are subject specific words that label content discipline concepts, subjects and topics. They are not very frequently used and are learnt when a specific need arises such as learning '*fulcrum*' or '*pulley*' during a Physics lesson will come across many new and unfamiliar words.

SYNTAX (Structure of a sentence)

The word 'syntax' refers to the set of rules and principles that govern the structuring of a sentence or a phrase in a language. Different words, if not put in an order, can create confusion or make meaning ambiguous. Syntax is how different parts of speech are put together to convey a complete thought. To convey meaning is one of the main functions of syntax. It involves the ordering of words to say what is meant to be said.

LANGUAGE FUNCTION

Language is used in a variety of purposes-both informal and formal. The purposes for which we use language to communicate is called language function, we use language to accomplish something in formal or informal settings, for social or academic purposes. Academic language function is the function through which students can express their developing understanding of the newly learned content. While using language for a specific purpose or function, learners also use grammatical structures and vocabulary.

Making the learners understand the language from the language functions perspective makes it easy for them to identify the language demands associated with specific academic tasks like *comparing* and *contrasting*, describing and *sequencing*, etc. If the learner learns how to use the language function *comparing* for instance, she can apply that skill to a range of contexts across different content areas.

She can compare events, ideas, phenomenon, objects in Science, Mathematics, Social Science, Literature, etc. With increase in competence in language functions, the learner can gradually use complex sentence structure.

Many of these language functions coincide with the higher order thinking skills in Bloom's taxonomy.

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| 1 Knowledge Identification and recall of information | define fill in the blank list identify | label locate match memorize | name recall spell | state tell underline |
| | Who _____ ? What _____ ? Where _____ ? When _____ ? | | How _____ ? Describe _____ ? What is _____ ? | |
| 2 Comprehension Organization and selection of facts and ideas | convert describe explain | interpret paraphrase put in order | restate retell in your own words rewrite | summarize trace translate |
| | Re-tell _____ in your own words. What is the main idea of _____ ? | | What differences exist between _____ ? Can you write a brief outline? | |
| 3 Application Use of facts, rules, and principles | apply compute conclude construct | demonstrate determine draw find out | give an example illustrate make operate | show solve state a rule or principle use |
| | How is _____ an example of _____ ? How is _____ related to _____ ? Why is _____ significant? | | Do you know of another instance where _____ ? Could this have happened in _____ ? | |
| 4 Analysis Separating a whole into component parts | analyze categorize classify compare | contrast debate deduct determine the factors | diagram differentiate dissect distinguish | examine infer specify |
| | What are the parts or features of _____ ? Classify _____ according to _____ . Outline/diagram/web/map _____ . | | How does _____ compare/contrast with _____ ? What evidence can you present for _____ ? | |
| 5 Synthesis Combining ideas to form a new whole | change combine compose construct create design | find an unusual way formulate generate invent originate plan | predict pretend produce rearrange reconstruct reorganize | revise suggest suppose visualize write |
| | What would you predict/infer from _____ ? What ideas can you add to _____ ? How would you create/design a new _____ ? | | What solutions would you suggest for _____ ? What might happen if you combined _____ with _____ ? | |
| 6 Evaluation Developing opinions, judgements, or decisions | appraise choose compare conclude | decide defend evaluate give your opinion | judge justify prioritize rank | rate select support value |
| | Do you agree that _____ ? Explain. What do you think about _____ ? What is most important? | | Prioritize _____ according to _____ ? How would you decide about _____ ? What criteria would you use to assess _____ ? | |

Source: <http://www.flicker.com/>

DISCOURSE (Vocabulary, syntax, language function)

Discourse refers to how members of a subject area speak and write about their content area. Discourse is putting words and sentences together to clearly communicate complex ideas. It contains several elements such as structure and organisation, manner of speaking, complexity, intelligibility and audience. Discourse can be understood as a process of communication. It is communication but it is a specific style of communication which is used mostly in the world of academics. Textbooks, research articles, dissertations, science journals, logs, etc., are examples of different types of discourse.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

In the initial years there is a marked overlap between the language child uses at home and the language used at school. Gradually, there is an increase in the level of sophistication and complexity in the language used at school. Academic language is not exclusive of features of social language, the overlap continues in classroom situations in the two registers in the form of classroom language and social interaction as well as language related to academic study.

Academic language proficiency is acquired over a long period of time. Research studies suggest that that academic language is best learned through meaningful input, focus on content and language (dual focus) simultaneously, and practice in the use of language and by drawing students' attention to linguistic forms and language functions.

3.5 LANGUAGE IS THE FOUNDATION OF LEARNING

For teachers to incorporate the goal of making their students acquire proficiency in reading and writing the language of Science, Mathematics or Social Science, it is important that they have an understanding of the various forms of literacy attainment.

Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) work is important in this regard .They examine how literacy development progresses in three stages: basic literacy, (decoding and knowledge of words that appear frequently in all reading tasks) intermediate literacy, (common word meanings, basic fluency)and disciplinary literacy (literacy skills in specific disciplines: history, science, mathematics, literature, etc). The third stage of literacy called disciplinary literacy is where the skills are not formally taught but are difficult to learn because the nature of discipline specific texts becomes difficult and abstract. These three stages can be presented graphically in the form of a pyramid. Although these stages do not develop in a linear fashion, it is important to master each of these stages to acquire proficiency in reading. Proficiency is acquired in each stage when readers repeatedly draw on their previous understandings of supporting comprehension for reading new texts.

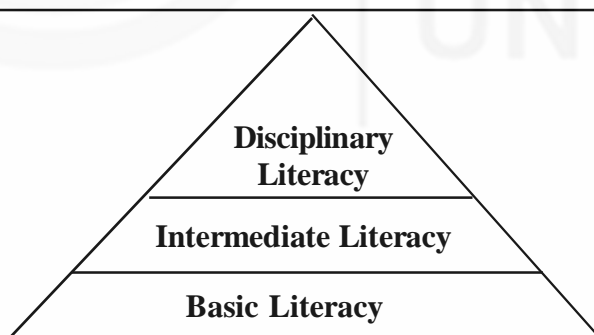


Figure: The Increasing Specialisation of Literacy Development

Basic Literacy: Literacy skills such as decoding and knowledge of high-frequency words that underlie virtually all reading tasks.

Intermediate Literacy: Literacy skills common to many tasks, including generic comprehension strategies, common word meanings and basic fluency.

Disciplinary Literacy: Literacy skills specialised to history, science, mathematics, literature or other such matter.

Source: Timothy Shanahan and Cynthia Shanahan (2008) “Teaching Disciplinary Literacy to Adolescents Rethinking Content-Area Literacy”, Harvard Educational

Review, Volume 78: 1 (Spring 2008, p.44).

You will notice that at the *base* of the pyramid, we have the basic skills which are foundational for all reading tasks. These are decoding skills, comprehension of print and literacy conventions and recognition of high frequency words.

At the *upper primary level*, students move into the *second stage*, i.e., *intermediate literacy*. At this stage, students are better adept at comprehension and can overcome weaknesses in comprehension by using different strategies for comprehension. They are also able to identify and interpret different text structures, i.e., cause and effect, comparisons, problem-solving, etc.

The *third stage* of disciplinary literacy is the stage where students are at the *secondary level* and it is here that the teacher's intervention in development of skills is required the most. At the third stage, the narrowing of the pyramid suggests the specialised nature of reading and learning, it is more focussed to the needs of a particular discipline and less generalizable to other areas.

At this stage, the discipline -specific texts become more abstract and complex and students find the abstract nature of textbooks and other reading materials difficult to comprehend. Students do not usually pay much attention to the language that is used in texts, in fact this is an aspect neglected both by the teachers and the students. Students read but they do not think about the meaning of the words they encounter. If they understand the text they just think about the meaning and not be bothered about the grammatical and lexical features of the text for a deeper understanding. Subject teachers do not teach any skills formally and the language teacher, trained in teaching literacy skills in literature, may not find it easy to guide students to comprehend meaning of *polynomials* from a Mathematics text or *Force* from a Science journal. Consider the following example:

Language in Academic Development

An 8th grade item on the NAEP test shows a rectangle that is twice as long as it is wide, and asks, *What is the ratio of the width of the rectangle to its perimeter?*

It doesn't seem difficult, but only 11% of American 8th graders got it right as opposed to 56% of 8th graders in Singapore. What was hard about it? The language looks easy enough and there are no numbers to mess with! There are some technical terms: *perimeter* and *rectangle*. There could be a problem with the words long and wide. We assume the students know the word *ratio* and what it means by the 8th grade. The student needs to interpret the descriptor *perimeter* as meaning twice width and length from the dimensional words wide and long. The next step is to recognize what is called for, and this is the difficult part.

Source: The Role of Language in Academic Development 2003 CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TEST SCORES Lily Wong Fillmore, Ph.D. Jerome A. Hutto Professor in Education, University of California, Berkeley.

In the above example, contrary to the popular belief, we find that Math learning is not just about technical terms. It is important to understand that in Math, ordinary terms are used to refer to relationships which students need to understand. The student needs to recognize that what is called for is the proportional relationship of width to perimeter. This often seems to confuse the students because they are not always conscious of what is expected of them and what the language is saying.

3.6 ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

3.6.1 Providing Rich and Varied Language Experiences

If students have access to reading materials in a variety of texts, to discuss and write, they will come across many new and unfamiliar words. Books and readings are culturally specific, so learners may not be able to use their background knowledge to make meaning from a text which they cannot relate to. The choice of book should be taken care of and the teacher should support the learners through discussion and pre-reading activities.

3.6.2 Teaching Individual Words

Teaching individual words that are important to the content is a challenging task. Teachers can use the strategy of teaching aloud and make it more comprehensible to learners by using props, gestures and images. Themes from the text can also be repeated and opportunities for role play, text enactment, discussion, etc can be created in the classroom to support word building, reading and comprehension in different subjects like History, Political Science, Geography, Literature, etc.

Fostering Word Consciousness

This essentially means that teachers foster curiosity and interest about words in their students. The advantage of word consciousness activities is that they are exciting and enjoyable and build on the existing pool of words that children may possess. By creating a word rich environment, promoting word play and teaching students about words, teachers can build a framework for fostering word consciousness.

Morphemes - Prefixes, Roots, Suffixes

Many words in the English language are made up of word parts called prefixes, roots and suffixes. These word parts have specific meanings that when added together can help determine the meaning of the word as a whole. However, words may not always have a prefix and a suffix.

Prefixes

1. Direct instruction of pre-fixes, suffixes and root words can greatly enhance and build the vocabulary and reading comprehension of secondary school students. Students at this stage need to understand that most words are structured according to logical patterns of meaning and spelling. Together with clues from the context, a morphological approach may benefit diverse learners (Carlo et al, 2004)

Students improve their learning by learning the most common prefixes. Prefix is a group of letters which have a special meaning and appears at the beginning of a word. Dis (not, opposite) is a prefix which gives meaning to words such as disagree, disharmony, disintegration, etc. Sub (under, less) can be used as a prefix and result in creation of words like subtract, submarine, substation, etc, Examples of other prefixes are : un, re, en, over, mis, non, trans, etc. English teacher might introduce the prefix trans (across, through) and this can be subsequently reinforced by the content teachers. Social Science teacher can use the prefix to discuss terms such as transportation, transformation, transatlantic, transcultural, etc and give examples from terms beyond her domain area. To reinforce understanding.

Science teachers could discuss the terms transfusion, transponders, transparent, transplant, etc. Teachers can make connections to related words beyond their domain, giving the students a chance to deduce that all terms that contain the prefix trans means across or through.

| Common Prefixes | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Prefix | Meaning | Examples |
| un- re- | not, opposite back, again | unkind, uncertain, unchanging replay, regress, reform |
| in- (im-, il-, ir-) | not | inedible, immortal, illegitimate, irreversible |
| dis- | not, opposite | disagree, disharmony, disintegration |
| en- (em-) | to make, cause, put | enlighten, encompass, embark, empower |
| non- | not | nonsense, nonfiction, nonpartisan |
| in- (im-) | inside, within | insight, introvert, insert, implant, import |
| over- | above, superior | overlord, oversight, overarching |
| mis- | wrong, bad | mistrust, misnomer, misconstrue |
| sub- | under, less | subtract, submarine, substation, subset |
| pre- | before | preheat, predict, preposition |
| inter- | between | interstate, international |
| fore- | before | forewarn, forerunner, before |
| de- | remove, from | derail, dethrone, deduct |
| trans- | across, through | transcontinental, transfer |
| ex-, exo-, e- | out | exhale, exit, exoskeleton, evaporation |
| com (cor, col, con) | with, together | committee, correspond, colleague, congress |

Adapted from : <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/linking-language-cross-discipline>

Numeric Prefixes

Math and Science teachers are better placed to use and point out the meaning of numeric prefixes such as mono, bi, tri, tetra, hexa, etc. Teachers can start with the use of simple words by using the prefix, such as bicycle, triangle and hexagon and move to more complex words like tetrahedron, polycarbonate, etc.

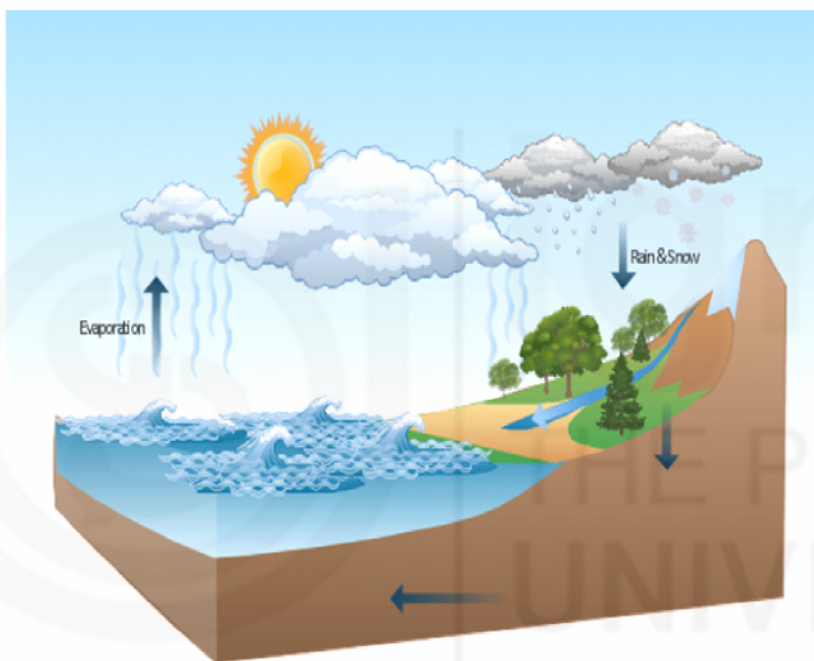
| Numeric Prefixes | | | |
|------------------|-------|--------------|---|
| Meaning | Greek | Latin | Examples |
| 1 | mono | uni | monotone, monoxide, unicorn, unicycle |
| 2 | di | bi, du, duo | dioxide, dilemma, binoculars, bipartisan, duet |
| 3 | tri | tri | triangle, tricycle, triplicate, triumvirate |
| 4 | tetra | quad (quart) | tetrahedron, quadruplets, quartet, quarter |
| 5 | penta | quint | pentagon, iambic pentameter, quintuplets, quintet |
| 6 | hexa | sext | hexagon, sextuplets |
| 8 | octo | | octo octopus, October, octagon, octave |

Adapted from : <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/linking-language-cross-discipline>.

Chunking Long Sentences

- Chunking sentences and words Teachers need to pay attention to long sentences that contain too many clauses, extended noun phrases, conditional sentences, passive voice, etc and help students unpack the different parts of the sentence;
- Students can be given tasks from different texts to break long sentences in different parts and ask the meaning of the parts
- Teachers can get the students to underline the transitional words and phrases and ask them as to how they relate with the sentence, what relationship do they convey
- Teachers can give fill in the blank paragraphs to students to fill noun phrase, verb phrases, transitional words and punctuation.

3.6.3 Sample Lesson Plans



Source: <https://www.google.co.in/>

Water cycle Lesson Plan 1

- Subject : Science
- Topic : Water Cycle
- Objectives : Students should be able to explain the water cycle
- Resource : Textbook, Worksheet 1, Speaking Activity I
- Duration : 1 lesson
- Procedure:
- Brainstorming : Show the picture to the students ask them what it makes them think of. Write down their answers after writing the word 'WATER'.

1. Show the students a wet piece of cloth.
2. Ask students what will happen to the piece of cloth if you put it in the Sun for few hours.
3. Ask students why a piece of cloth becomes dry and where the water has gone.
4. Ask students to turn to textbook with the Chapter entitled 'The Water Cycle'.
5. Ask students : What does the word 'cycle' mean to the Suggestion:
6. Draw students' attention to the new words in the paragraph. Teach students how to pronounce the words accurately by separating the words into chunks.

- iii. va/pour
- ix. e/va/po/rate
- x. e/va/po/ra/tion
- xi. con/dense
- xii. con/den/sa/tion

Work for pronunciation (to be taken in groups)

Draw students' attention to the pronunciation of the following endings

- d) Pronounce '-tion' as/ n/
- e) Pronounce the /v/sound as in 'vapour', 'evaporate' and 'evaporation' correctly by putting the teeth on the lower lips.

Work for vocabulary building (to be taken in groups)

Draw students' attention to the parts of speech of the following words:

- a) evaporate (verb), evaporation (noun)
- b) condense (verb), condensation (noun)

1. Tell students that water changes and there are many forms of water. Write the word 'forms' on the blackboard in red. Ask them to pay attention to how water changes and the forms of water when they read the paragraph.
2. Ask students to explain the water cycle by activating their existing knowledge about the forms of water. Draw simple pictures on the blackboard as students explain the water cycle.
3. Pair work: refer to Worksheet 1.

"Characteristics of 'Worksheet 1':

- i. Provides students with clear instructions

ii. Provides students with an example.

*Extension work for grammar.

Draw students' attention to the use of 'Simple Present tense' in describing a process.

4. Pair work: refer to Speaking Activity 1

*Characteristics of 'Speaking Activity 1':

i. Provides students with clear instructions

Worksheet 1

Name: Class: No.:

The water cycle

The words in the following sentences are in wrong order. Make the students work in pairs. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. Sun/water/from/heat/sea/the.

The sun heats water from the sea.

2. Water/the/and/into/water/evaporates/changes/vapour

.....
.....

3. water/the/the/up/rises/sky/vapour/to

.....
.....

4. the/vapour/cool/water/down/and/to/droplets/small/form/condenses

.....
.....

5. water/gather/form/and/clouds/droplets/the

.....
.....

6. water/bigger/grow/the/clouds/in/the/droplets

.....
.....

7. the/rain/when/as/ground/the/water/droplets/to/fall/may/they/enough,/big/are

.....

8. sea/the/to/back/travels/rain/the/when/falls,/water

.....

Speaking Activity 1

The water cycle

III. Instructions:

Explain the water cycle to your partner.

II. Language support:

During Group Work

Starting group work

A. Can you explain the water cycle to me. Please?

- Let's start. I am A and you are B.
- Would you like to start first?

B. Yes, sure. Water

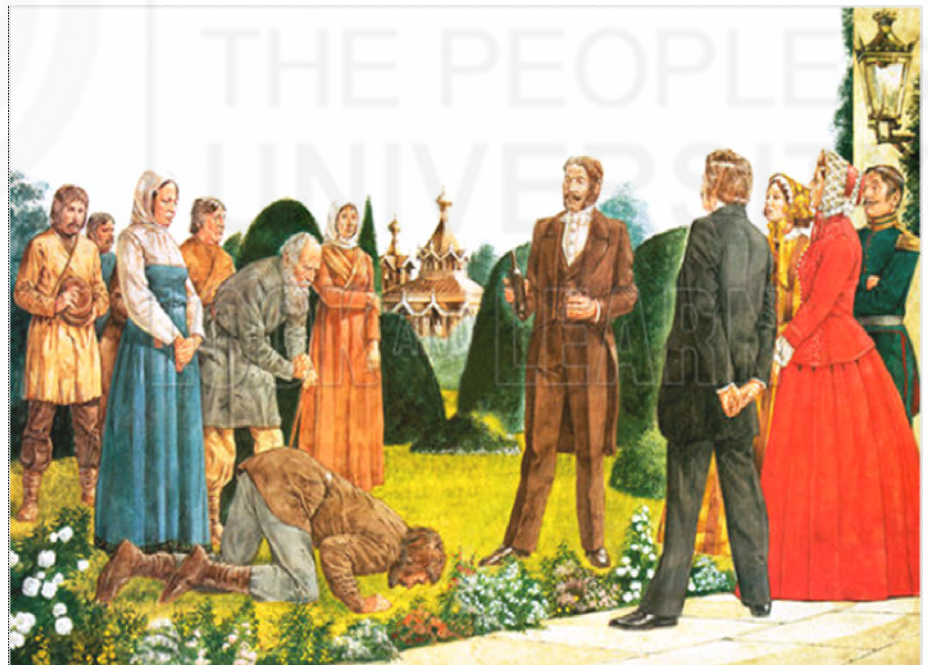
A. Thank you.

B. You're welcome.

Useful phrases

- water changes into ...
- water evaporates
- water vapour condenses
- water droplets gather

Source: <http://www.edb.gov.hk>



The picture shows a nobleman watching as a serf kisses the ground at his Emancipation ceremony.

Source: <http://www.lookandlearn.com/blog>

Lesson Plan 2

History : Subject
Nobles and Peasants : Topic
Students should be able to compare and contrast the lives of nobles and peasants. : Objectives
Textbook, Worksheet 1, Speaking Activity I : Resource
1 lesson : Duration

Procedure:

1. Show students the picture and ask students them if they have any knowledge of the lives of nobles and knights. Ask them what does the picture say?
2. Tell students that 'peasant' is a French word and is pronounced in a different way .
3. Explain to students about the two kinds of peasants: serfs and freemen. Ask them to break the word freemen into two parts, 'free' and 'men' and to guess the meaning of the word 'freemen' first. Then ask them what 'serfs' would probably mean. Ask them if there is any similarity between words like 'serve' and 'servant'.
4. Ask students to guess the difference between these two kinds of peasants. Write down their answers on the blackboard.
5. Ask students to compare their answers by reading the relevant paragraph in the textbook.
6. Check the answers with the students.
7. Pair work: refer to 'Speaking Activity 1'

*Procedure:

Worksheet 1

Instructions to the Teacher:

Provide students with clear instructions

Provide students with a language initially and withdraw it gradually.

Name: _____ Class: _____ No.: _____

The lives of nobles and the peasants in the Middle Ages

Complete the following paragraph:

The nobles and the peasants in the Middle ages had ways of life. The nobles lived in but the peasants lived in The nobles wore but the peasants

Speaking Activity 1

(A)

Instructions to the Teacher:

Provide students with clear answers

Provide students with a speaking frame a text.

I. Complete the following table by interviewing your classmate who has got ‘Speaking Activity 1(B)’:

| Nobles | Peasants |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. lived in _____ | 1. Lived in small huts |
| 2. wore _____ | 2. wore simple cloths. |
| 3. _____ | 3. worked hard |
| 4. _____ | 4. had a poor life |

II. Language support in the classroom:

| | |
|---|----|
| May I ask you a few questions? | A: |
| Yes. | B: |
| Thank you. What kind of house did the peasants live in? | A: |
| They lived in | B: |
| What kind of clothes did the peasants wear? | A: |
| They wore | B: |
| What did the peasants do every day? | A: |
| They | B: |
| What kind of life did the peasants have? | A: |
| They had a | B: |
| You’ve been very helpful. Thank you. | A: |
| You’re welcome. | B: |

Speaking Activity 2

(B)

Instructions to the Teacher:

Provide students with clear answers

Provide students with a speaking frame a text.

- I. Answer the following questions in complete sentences:
1. What would you like to be in the Middle Ages, a noble or a peasant?
I would like to be _____ in the Middle Ages.
 2. Why?
They are reasons why I would like to be
..... in the Middle Ages. First,
Second,
.....
.....
(To express more reasons, use the words 'Third', 'Fourth',
'Fifth', 'Sixth' and so on.)

II. Pair work:
Find out what your neighbour would like to be in the Middle Ages.

III. Language support:

During pair Work

Starting pair work

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| A. What would you like to be in the Middle Ages, a noble or a peasant? | • Let's start. I am A and you are B. |
| B. I would like to be | • Would you like to start first? |
| A. Why? | |
| B. There are _____ | |

Source:<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/primary-secondary/applicable-to-secondary/moi/support-and-resources>

3.8 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have discussed that language is the foundation for learning and that literacy skills become more difficult progressively due to the abstract nature of discipline-based texts. In this context there is a need to understand the concept of language across the curriculum, its significance in learning, and the role of the teacher in identifying the language demands of the subjects and providing necessary language support to students.

The focus of the language across the curriculum approach is

- *enabling students to understand that different subject areas draw on different sets of lexical and grammatical resources to construct their own disciplinary knowledge, values, and cultures, is therefore an important objective of language across the curriculum.*
- *helping students to understand the variability of academic language, the general patterns of academic language and to appreciate how these patterns find a place in different school subjects is the focus of language across the curriculum approach.*

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UNIT 4 THE CLASSROOM AS A SPACE FOR DISCOURSE

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Classroom Interaction
- 4.3 Classroom Discourse
- 4.4 Features of Classroom Discourse
- 4.5 Negotiated Interaction
- 4.6 Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC)
- 4.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.8 References and Suggested Readings
- 4.9 Answers

4.0 OBJECTIVES

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

4.1 INTRODUCTION

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.

4.3 CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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)

Allwright & 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?

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

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?
.....
.....
.....

b. What is IRF structure? Why is it the most dominant pattern in most classrooms?
.....
.....
.....

c. What are some of the problems of IRF structure?
.....
.....
.....

d. What are some of the typical characteristics of L2 classroom discourse?
.....
.....
.....
.....

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.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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"> ● 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 | Display questions/closed questions/factual questions |

| Pedagogic goals | Question type |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To enable learners to express themselves clearly ● To establish a context for discussion ● To promote oral fluency | 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.

| Check Your Progress 4 | |
|--|---|
| 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. | |
| Pedagogic goal | Question type(s) |
| | 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?
.....
.....
.....
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...

4.6 NEGOTIATED INTERACTION

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?
.....
.....
.....

4.7 CLASSROOM INTERACTIONAL COMPETENCE (CIC)

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.

| Interactional feature | Descriptions |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 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 | |

4.8 LET US SUM UP

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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4.10 ANSWERS

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.

| Check Your Progress 4 | |
|---|---|
| 1. Question type(s) | Pedagogic goal |
| 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

- It can also facilitate the production of more complex and extensive output on the part of the learner

Check Your Progress 8

1. 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.
2. 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.

3.

| Interactional feature | Descriptions |
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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Scaffolding Direct repair Content feedback Form-focused feedback Extended wait-time Referential questions Display questions Seeking clarifications Confirmation checks Extended learner/teacher turn Teacher echo Turn completion |