UNIT 17 TEACHING-LEARNING SPEAKING SKILLS

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17.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will help you to:

- understand the major aspects of speaking skills
- identify and distinguish between the needs of the learners
- use some accepted techniques in teaching speaking skills
- understand the difference between written and speaking and use this understanding in teaching speaking skills
- understand and appreciate the role of activities to teach the speaking skills
- understand, analyse and evaluate the importance of group work in developing oral skills
- identify the characteristics of an effective speaking class and provide for the same in your speaking activities
- study, analyse the different stages of a speaking lesson
- understand your role at various stages of a speaking lesson and provide the maximum support to the learners for an effective speaking lesson

17.1 INTRODUCTION

'An important element of communicative approach is a student's ability to use and understand the spoken language' (Leech and Svartrik, 2000). This is because, underlying any social interaction, is the human desire to make contact with other people and to cross the gap between their thoughts and one's own. Vygotsky, (1962) has said that 'language is the primary tool through which we use words to capture our own and other people's 'sense', our own contextualised understandings and connotation for events and ideas.'
As human beings, we are driven by a need to make sense of and to make 'sense to' others, in what has been described as an innate drive for 'coherence...' (Meadows 1993).

Most of the language used is in the spoken form. In fact, language derives its vitality, sustenance and dynamism from speech. In the learning of any foreign language we need to first comprehend the import of the spoken utterance and then make active use of language to express meaning, which other people can make sense of.

Speech skills or oral skills have two major components. The first comprises the motor perception skills wherein the learner of a foreign language is exposed to sounds and structures of the target language, which the learner perceives, recalls and articulates in the correct order. The language in these imitative and repetitive exercises is presented in a discrete manner without a context. The learners practice the sounds of the language (phonology), vocabulary (lexis) and grammar (syntax) without the basis of content and situation. Though it serves a purpose at the elementary level, this does not prepare them for fluent use of the language in real life for personal use. The learner is not able to transfer his/her knowledge from a language-learning situation to language-using situation.

The second major component of speaking comprises the 'interaction skills'. As the learner progresses through various listening-speaking contexts, s/he begins to reach a level where the foreign language is merged as it were with the situation and the learner begins to think in the language.

Interaction skills involve the use of language for a certain purpose, according to the audience or listener and the situation. The learner may have to seek information either in a face-to-face contact or over the telephone, describe things, express opinion, narrate incidents or converse with friends.

In the second language classroom there is now a growing need for the development of speech skills where a learner develops a wide range of language resources and skills. Language using experience in a variety of situations means that a learner's resources can be used across an increasing range of contexts. This would have to be developed by a variety of activities in different language contexts.

Taking responsibility for how other people will understand what you say and for making sure that you understand them, is an aspect of discourse that develops as one grows.

17.2 NEEDS OF THE LEARNER

By the time the learner reaches the secondary level, s/he would have acquired the skill of using both conversation (face-to-face or telephonic) and extended talk comprising descriptions and narrations, which are part of linguistic discourse.

Spoken language, especially conversation, requires quick, almost instantaneous production and understanding. There is no time to prepare what to say in advance. We need to shape our message as we go along. That is why informal talk is characterized by pauses, fillers, false starts, repetitions, etc. which give us time to think. One need not use a complete sentence in order to make oneself understood—sometimes a word or two or even our facial expression and gesture will do.

The learner needs to be able to talk intelligently, using appropriate word stress. Some of the important language functions that the learner would need to perform at this stage are:
- greeting friends, superiors, strangers
- introducing self and others
- making telephone calls or answering them
- asking for or giving information
- asking for things in shops, counters and restaurants
- asking questions for clarification, advice or help
- expressing opinion or reactions to programmes, plays, books or films
- participating in discussions and debates
- giving or receiving instructions
- describing things, places or persons
- narrating anecdotes, stories and discussing them
- carrying on sustained conversation with friends, family or strangers
- giving a report of an event

Check Your Progress 1

1. Suggest three more functions of the spoken language, which learners may require.

2. What are the three aspects, which govern what we say? Give an example of an utterance to explain your point.

17.3 INTERACTIVE AND NON-INTERACTIVE USE OF LANGUAGE

Of the various language functions mentioned in the previous section some require an interactive use of language like talking to friends, asking for things, asking for information or seeking clarifications. Some functions require a largely non-interactive use of language like telling a story, reporting an event or speaking in a debate where there is limited interaction with the audience. Interactive and non-interactive uses of language are the two varieties of spoken language.

Conversation is private speaking and normally has two or more participants who take turns to speak. This kind of speech is more spontaneous and cannot be prepared beforehand. It is impromptu and needs alertness and a constant processing of ideas and language in the mind of the speakers as they respond to each other.

Non-interactive use of language is public speaking. It is less interactive than conversation. Sometimes it is not interactive at all. For instance, a speech is generally prepared and written down beforehand. It may be read out to an audience. Public speaking is intermediate between speaking and writing.

These two kinds of speaking can also be called conversation and extended talk.

17.4 OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING SPEECH SKILLS

The major responsibility of a teacher are the following:

- teaching of sounds of the language as well as stress, rhythm and intonation.
- stringing together features of pronunciation (sound, stress, rhythm and intonation) in grammatical and meaningful sequences.
Teaching, Speaking, and Listening

- teaching the speech sequence in appropriate social situations to enhance social acceptability
- teaching the learners to identify and select points relevant to the purpose and situation as per social acceptability.
- teaching the sequencing of ideas into a coherent whole in extended talk
- helping individual learners to develop fluency, pleasant conversation and ease of speech.

17.5 ACCEPTED TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING CONVERSATIONAL/ORAL SKILLS

The communicative classroom lays a lot of emphasis on the learning of speech or oral skills. By the time the learners reach the secondary classes they would have mastered the sounds of English, aspects of stress and intonation to an extent that they are intelligible to others. Their expression or the sentences they construct may be simple. There may be some who may not have obtained language proficiency to this level. It thus becomes the task of the teacher to practice and consolidate what the learners may have learnt in their previous classes.

Some of the techniques to teach oral skills are given below.

The Conversation Class or the Question and Answer sessions

One of the common methods of teaching oral skills is the 'Question and Answer session' in which the teacher sits with a group of learners and asks them questions about their home, family, study, play, etc. The learners answer the questions with no other motivation but to respond to the teacher's queries. Thus, this is not always very productive as it is not very interesting. It also lacks a clearly defined topic or purpose to talk. With young learners it serves a purpose, however limited it may be, as the learners are still learning to string words into appropriate responses. But with older learners this is not a very motivating activity.

The Topic Based Discussion Class

Another kind of fluency-based activity is the topic-based discussion. The teacher plans discussions on different topics and encourages all the learners to participate while taking turns. Even though the topics are interesting, the learners may or may not be inclined to participate, as it is a discussion for the sake of discussion. In addition, the discussion may not carry personal relevance for the learners and thus they have no incentive to talk.

It is thus important that the learner must have some involvement with the topic so that s/he may share his/her understanding of the topic with others.

Another disadvantage in the topic-based discussion is that if it was carried out with the full class, which might, at any given time be a group ranging from 30 to 50 learners, the linguistic gains would be minimal. In a whole class discussion, not many learners would get a chance to speak. Moreover, the time available to each speaker would not be much. As in any normal class the brighter learners would monopolize the activity while the rest of the class would lose interest.

Task Centred Fluency Practice

With increasing importance being given to Communicative Language Teaching, communicative tasks are being used to develop fluency. These activities are done in
small groups by the learners, and may involve interaction, asking and answering questions, exchanging notes, agreeing or disagreeing or role-play. The tasks have a clear purpose and a tangible output, which depends on effective interaction between or amongst the learners. The learners of one group share the outcome of their activity, which might be in the shape of a report, a speech or a presentation. with the other groups in the class.

The learners have a concrete task to work with and clear guidelines given by the teacher in a situation, which is akin to problem solving. It also provides a basis for feedback.

Check Your Progress - 2

1. Have you tried the three types of activities discussed in this section? In which activity did you have to provide the maximum support? Specify the support that the learners required from you?

2. Which activity did you find most effective with your learners? Give reasons.

17.6 DEMANDS OF AN ACTIVITY THAT INVOLVES DISCOURSE

Teachers plan different kinds of speaking activities in their classes involving conversation or extended talk like narration or description and are sometimes disheartened at the sudden and abrupt end of the activity with the interaction reaching a deadlock. In spite of his/her best efforts, the activity falls flat as it may be too challenging for the learners or too simple for them.

If the teacher was aware of the demands that a speaking activity places on the learners, s/he would be able to provide the impetus or support that would help to sustain the activity.

The teacher could give the following suggestions to his/her students:

Cognitive demands: Access previous knowledge on the topic. Make choices. Utilize this knowledge effectively in interaction for the successful completion of the task. Think of ideas and organize them.

Language demands: Find words and phrases related to the topic on hand or the topic selected. Find appropriate words and phrases to use during interaction with fellow learners.

Discourse demands: Carry on the conversation in a way that it does not come to an abrupt end. The activity may be supported by the teacher's prompts if help is solicited.

Interactional demands: Carry on a conversation with classmates as would lead meaningfully to the successful end of the activity. Use language that is appropriate and socially acceptable during the interaction especially while disagreeing or citing a different point of view. Elicit the required response from the classmates according to the demands of the activity.
This is supported by the fact that only familiar people (their classmates) have to be talked to, which makes the activity less threatening.

Involvement/demands: Be motivated to elicit the required information and create an interesting presentation. Be motivated to convince other groups regarding the findings or the outcome of their activity.

The teacher may thus prepare and plan accordingly and enhance both the interaction and learning in the activity.

17.7 READING ALOUD DOES NOT HELP MUCH IN LEARNING SPEAKING

A large number of teachers use reading aloud as a main weapon to improve their learners' oral English. They ask the learners to read aloud from their textbooks/course books. They listen for mistakes and 'correct' them as they arise by interrupting the reader and requiring him/her to repeal a word or phrase according to the model they provide.

Research has shown that this activity is not recommended on a number of counts (J.A. Bright & G.P. McGregor).

1. The test in a textbook is for a reading lesson. A reading lesson creates an imaginative response in the mind of the reader from the visual stimulus of black marks on the paper. (imaging and picturing). Reading aloud interferes with this business of imaginative response.

2. Where reading aloud is used frequently, it slows down the speed of reading whereas the purpose of teaching reading is to increase the speed of reading.

3. Only a few individuals get practice and the others have nothing to do and hence are bored.

4. It may be a very embarrassing experience for the reader. If there are a large number of corrections it will lead to a deterioration of performance.

5. The pupil's practice is random instead of specific. Nobody knows when the reader will be asked to stop – on an error of pronunciation, stress, intonation or phrasing. With so many interruptions there can be no fluency in reading aloud. The teacher then urges the pupil to read with more expression, which cannot be forthcoming in such a situation.

6. The use of the text in the book may not lead to learning the cut and thrust of real conversation.

7. The job of reading aloud a literary text without any practice or preparation is a difficult one and only the best pupils can do it.

8. Unless the pupils are going to be announcers or teachers the ability to read aloud is of little practical value compared with the ability to play an effective part in conversations, discussions and committee meetings.

9. Reading aloud of this kind is purposeless. Nobody listens because everybody has the text. The sensible ones ignore the background mumbling and read on.
Reading aloud is and remains a kind of theatrical activity where one is performing in front of others. Stories and speeches are read aloud with expression and gestures more as entertainment. Moreover, those who have to read aloud professionally always read from a prepared script or text and the mental processes that are required in speaking do not come into play.

These points notwithstanding, reading aloud, is not totally without purpose. It can be used to improve expression, voice modulation, stress and intonation for those who wish to become radio/television announcers.

Check Your Progress - 3

1. While conducting a speaking activity what kind of support do you normally lend to your learners? Have you found any difference between carrying a prepared task to class and doing an activity on the spur of the moment?

2. Does reading aloud help in developing speech skills?

17.8 DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT FEATURES OF WRITING AND SPEAKING

In order to teach conversational skills effectively, it is important to understand the differences between speech and writing.

Speech and writing have different transmission systems. The language of speech is not 'spoken' writing. In fact normal conversation which sounds so normal to the ears looks fragmented, rambling, unstructured and difficult to read if transcribed. In the same way in normal communication we do not speak like the book.

This does not mean that speech and writing have two different grammars. They do not. The shared grammar is used differently on the two channels.

For example the apparent statement - He hasn't left (?) said with a rising intonation means that a person is asking if someone has left, something that is not desired in the situation. If transcribed, this word order of a statement is concluded with a question mark.

Normal speech is processed in real time, and being transitory, it leaves no trace other than what we remember. It requires fast, almost instantaneous production and as a result it has many pauses, repetitions and incomplete sentences. There are silent pauses, voice filled pauses like 'ummm', false starts and regression, fillers like you know, short forms and ellipsis in which a few words that are otherwise understood are left out.

This is because the speaker had to plan, organize the message and control the language. On the other hand, the listener has to process the stream of speech, which
may have an unfamiliar accent, complex words or a quick pace of delivery. There is a
great demand both on the speaker and the listener. Contrary to this, written text is
organized and in complete sentences which a reader can read and reread in order to
got to the meaning.

In spoken language, the speaker has a direct contact with the listener. In fact the
speech situation requires a listener who influences the direction of the conversation
by providing feedback or seeking clarification. The feedback given by the listener
may be verbal or non-verbal like raising of the eyebrows. The speaker thus adjusts
and adapts his/her speech according to the listener. It is only then that communication
takes place.

In writing there is no such direct contact, although the writer always has an idea
about his/her audience. But in the case of newspapers and periodicals, the writer does
not even know who his/her reader would be. That does not imply that written
communication is not reciprocal. As said above, it is important to keep the needs and
background information of the reader in mind while writing so that the written
message can be comprehended easily. If faced with difficulties that hamper
understanding, the reader cannot seek immediate clarification from the writer. S/he
may decide to continue reading or give it up.

To maintain the reciprocity of speech it is essential that the speaker checks whether
the listener has understood by asking whether s/he has understood. Conversation is
not just a matter of giving and receiving information, it requires the cooperation of
both participants. There is a lot of turn-taking as the speaker and the listener share the
role of speaker and listener. Cooperation is also achieved with the use of "Excuse me as
you see, well and tag questions like Have we covered the whole book? haven't we?"

Finally speech, as in daily life (not recorded ones), is transitory and has no permanent
record except that the main import of the message or an interesting portion of the
utterance remains in our memory. Written communication can be recorded
permanently.

Check Your Progress - 4

1. Write five differences between speaking and writing.

17.9 GROUP WORK FOR SOCIALIZING AND
DEVELOPING ORAL SKILLS

Developing oral/speech skills does not amount to practicing the structural elements of
speech i.e. phonology, vocabulary and grammar alone. There ought to be a basis of
content and situation to keep the learner motivated. Since speaking is a
communication tool in society by which people stay in touch, make contact and share
understanding, practice in speaking also ought to be done in groups with a concrete
task on hand. Living through a situation and finding the appropriate language always
helps in acquiring sound speech habits (Kishanika Bose).

Not only does working in groups help the learners to socialize in simulated micro
groups of society, it also allows a larger number of students to participate.
Research has given us the 2/3 formula which shows that a 40 minute class with a strength of 40 learners per class, a learner gets less than a minute to participate in the speaking activity. Group work provides a framework whereby a learner can have maximum participation.

Group work gives an opportunity to learners to speak in small groups comprising of their classmates and this is a non-threatening situation for them. It reduces the hesitation and embarrassment a shy learner may feel in a whole class. It allows the learners to open up and shed some of their inhibitions. In addition group work provides a feeling of security and a sense of belonging as the learners sit huddled, working out a problem, putting their heads together in a non-competitive atmosphere. Thus personal rapport is built leading to cooperation and assistance to each other.

An atmosphere of healthy competition is built when the groups try to see which group has performed best. Individuals have the comfort and security of their group. Gains and losses, if any, are shared by all members of the groups alike. The inter-group competitive spirit helps the groups to move ahead and do the activity as efficiently as they can.

With the physical distance between individuals reduced, communication is more free and better. Learners feel emboldened to experiment with language and receive immediate feedback from their peers, thus modifying or correcting their utterances.

Group work also helps the learners to share visuals or any other material required for the activity. It is also not necessary that all the groups work on the same task. This reduces the tedium and monotony of a single activity being reported repeatedly.

Group work makes allowance for cooperative learning and peer teaching. Learners are likely to learn better from each other than from the teacher as mistakes get corrected as a healthy cooperative atmosphere and incidental learning from each other takes place as learners closely watch each other working.

The basic skills of interaction get honed as the learners begin to take turns while speaking and adjust their speech to suit the others. Clarifications are sought and suggestions made without any anxiety and embarrassment.

The teacher on higher part is free to move about the room and render specific help or support as per the needs of the groups. It also gives them an opportunity to observe the learners and make an assessment of their progress. Teachers can note down the efforts of the teacher and regrouping needs to be done.

While organizing group work a teacher may face certain difficulties. For instance the learners may get too excited and the class become noisy. Or sometimes in a hurry to complete the activity learners may lapse into L1, thus defeating the purpose of a speaking lesson. At times certain learners fail to get involved in spite of the best efforts and regrouping needs to be done.

In a large class, with cramped space, putting the learners in a group becomes a problem. During the activity the teacher may find it difficult to supervise so many groups at a time.

Check Your Progress - 4

Have you done group work with your class? Complete the following:

1. Size of the class: .................................................................
2. Number of groups and size of the groups: ................................
3. Distribution of the kind of learners in each group: ..........................
17.10 AN EFFECTIVE ORAL SKILLS LESSON

It has been noticed that however well meaning a speaking lesson is, it often fails to succeed. The oral skills lesson can be made effective if a few things are kept in mind.

The learners need a stimulus to say something in English. At the same time, it needs some ideas and language items to help the students in the speaking activity.

Here are a few things that could be taken care of:

1. **The Simplicity of the Task**

   It is always wise to make a humble beginning and then move up towards complexity. To set the learners on a communicative activity at the initial stage, it is important that the task should be simple and achievable. The task should give a sense of purpose and direction. Learners should be clear why they are doing the task. It should be interesting and within the range of the learners experience.

2. **Preparation**

   A well-prepared task is a successful task. Hence it is important to carefully work out the different aspects of the task, anticipating the needs of the task and the problems that a teacher may come across in conducting the task.

   In order to avoid problems, it is advisable to set a task which is feasible for the teacher to prepare. It should not be too complex in terms of copying or photocopying or recording. If the speaking lessons need hours of preparatory work then the teacher would not be able to organize too many in a term. It should be simple and easy to prepare and the resources easily available to the teacher.

3. **Tangible Output or Result**

   Both the teacher and the learners should be able to visualize the output of the activity. The learners should know where their interaction would be taking them. The activity in itself should generate thought and the learners may be required to write down the result in the form of a presentation. It could be a story, a short talk, a report, a completed grid or chart. In brief, it could be something that the learners can show and compare.

   The tangible output or result helps the learners to focus on what has to be done. It also provides a clear signal to the teacher and the groups that the task is complete. A tangible output is easy to compare, assess and provide feedback on.

4. **Language Practice**

   The task or oral activity should allow for optimum language practice by the learners. The language items and ideas could be suggested to the learners so that they could launch on the speaking activity right away. Learners should not have to spend time puzzling out the activity with no speech taking place.
5. Interaction

Open-ended activities which allow the learners to use their imagination and brainstorm ideas generate a lot of talk. This will help them to exercise their thinking skills, refer back to their previous knowledge and past experience and help their interactional skills to come into play. This would also lend some variety to the activity and the feedback session would be interesting and animated.

6. Interest Level

As said earlier, it is of paramount importance that the learners should have a purpose to talk. The task ought to be interesting with the output well in view of the learners. If the learners have a personal season to talk, then motivation would be very high. Hence the choice of the topics for the activity could be closely related to the lives of the learners.

The activity should not be too challenging as to deter the learners. It should neither be too simple or be boring. A bit of a challenge is essential to keep the interest level high.

Fantasy or exotic topics requiring the use of day-to-day language can also prove to be interesting and motivating for the learner.

7. Organisation

Physical aspects like the organisation of the class during group work also play a significant role in the success of the activity. Learners should be comfortable with adequate space to sit and face each other. Rows of students can be asked to turn around and face their classmates behind them.

Groups should be of mixed abilities so that the bright ones can be distributed amongst the different groups. Some activities can be done well when learners of the same caliber are bunched together. This is a decision that the teacher would have to make.

Groups need not be fixed and a little change from time to time helps to rejuvenate the groups and enables them to bond with other children too.

Check Your Progress - 5

1. Select a speaking activity from your textbook and discuss it in terms of the criteria mentioned in this section.
The various stages of the activity should be clear before setting it up. A well-planned activity in which the broad outcomes are predictable to the teacher goes on smoothly and efficiently. A lot of time is often wasted when the teacher needs to think in the class what the next step ought to be.

**Presentation**

The teacher can gently remind that some suggestions may be made and the interaction will be inhibited. Hence, it is important to see the vocabulary for the learners to pick up. The teacher goes to a group and asks what they need to do in the activity. A trial run may also be conducted to ensure that all have understood the activity.

If the teacher feels that certain groups may finish earlier than the others. They can be asked to move on to the next stage. Say, for example, if the tangible output is a story then the group can practice how to present it to the other groups.

Some groups take an unusually long time to complete a task. They may spend valuable time discussing at length or digressing or getting into an argument. The teacher can gently remind the group to move towards the output. To avoid this, it is
important that time be fixed for an activity and the learners reminded once in a while that feedback session is fast approaching. This will help the slower ones to windup the activity faster.

Feedback

As soon as the learners have completed the task and the outcome achieved, both the learners and the teachers feel that the activity is over. But the activity the learners have completed was a means to practice specific language. The language used or the ideas collated need to be appreciated and evaluated from the language point of view.

Feedback is an integral part of an activity and can be organized in a variety of ways. Learners may be asked to make an oral report, make a presentation by enacting or reading aloud. All the groups should have a chance to present their report and the teacher or other learners in the class provide feedback. It is here that the teacher gives his/her comments, which the learners note down for future reference.

The teacher also gives his/her comments based on his/her observation of the groups as the activity was in process. Important aspects like discussion skills, turn taking, points of grammar with the help of questions can be discussed during the feedback session.

Language errors are discussed and the correct forms given to the learners. The teacher may even give a remedial exercise to help correct the errors that come to light during the activity.

17.12 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have become aware of the need to make a conscious effort to teach the speaking skill instead of making acquisition of oral skills to be an incidental part of an English lesson. You would now agree that Spoken English should be formally included in a language course. You have also discovered how the spoken and the written forms of English use grammar differently and how their characteristics differ. You have become aware of the different techniques to teach/practice oral skills in your English class. You can now enumerate the characteristics of an effective speaking class and your role at different stages as a facilitator.

17.13 KEY WORDS

coherence: the quality in speech that holds the ideas together and provide a smooth transition from one idea to another

motor perceptive skills: the skill of perceiving and producing the sounds and structure of language

interaction skills: deciding what to say, when to say it and how to say it

reciprocity of speech: the need to adapt speech according to the listeners responses

contextualised: used in a particular situation
17.14 SUGGESTED READINGS


ANSWERS

1. Suggest three more functions of the spoken language, which learners may require.

   Three (more of the) functions that the learners may require are:
   - asking for and giving advice
   - thanking
   - apologizing

2. What are the three aspects, which govern what we say? Give an example of an utterance to explain your point.

   The three aspects which govern appropriate speech are:
   - our audience - who we are speaking to
   - our purpose - why we are speaking (language function)
   - in what situation we are speaking.

   Our choice of words, our intonation, our stress patterns and our posture and facial expressions will depend on these. Say, for example if we are talking to a friend who is in a senior position in the same office our conversation will differ at home and in
the office. If we are talking to child, we use different tone and words than we would use with an adult. We also choose our words according to our purpose. We would use polite words if we are making a request.

Check Your Progress - 2

1. Have you tried the three types of activities discussed in this section? In which activity did you have to provide the maximum support? Specify the support that the learners required from you?

   If you conduct a classroom conversation you need to provide support in the shape of:
   - suggest ideas
   - prompt with cues
   - give examples/illustrations
   - help to begin the sentence, etc.

   For the topic discussion class you might also need to:
   - select a topic that would be interesting for your learners
   - provide a sample/demonstration
   - suggest the appropriate grammar
   - help generate ideas through leading questions.

   For the task-based activity class, the students may get support from each other. You would need to be around to give help if it is solicited and give clarifications during the feedback session.

   Here too you might need to demonstrate before the learners launch on the activity themselves.

2. Which activity did you find most effective with your learners? Give reasons.

   The task-based fluency exercise would be the most effective as there would be:
   - a clear purpose to do the task as it would have a tangible output
   - more interaction amongst the learners
   - since the task is a problem solving one, the learner motivation is high.

Check Your Progress - 3

1. While conducting a speaking activity what kind of support do you normally lend to your learners? Have you found any difference between carrying a prepared task to class and doing an activity on the spur of the moment?

   You might help them
   - with the ideas and their logical sequence
   - by providing appropriate vocabulary and grammar
   - with discursive markers for a coherent piece
   - to remain motivated so that the activity does not collapse.

4. Does reading aloud help in developing speech skills?

   It doesn't because:
   - It provides only a few learners an opportunity to read in a class.
   - There are too many interruptions while the teacher corrects their pronunciation.
It is embarrassing for the reader as s/he gets continually snubbed with the teacher's checks and corrections.

The learners do not get any practice or exposure to real conversation. In addition, it also does not help teaching reading skills because of the interruptions and focus on production of sounds rather than getting at the meaning.

Check Your Progress - 4

1. Write five differences between speaking and writing.

The differences are-

- Writing is largely formal except in the case of notes, messages and personal letters one writes. Day to day speaking is mostly informal.

- Speaking/conversation makes allowance for incomplete sentences and once in a while imperfect grammar whereas writing stresses on accuracy.

- Meaning in speaking depends on pronunciation, stress and intonation whereas in writing it is the correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- The listener has to process the stream of speech, which may have an unfamiliar accent, complex words or a quick pace of delivery. On the other hand, writing is more organized and complete to which a reader can return again and again to puzzle out the meaning.

- Spoken language has direct contact with the audience who influences the speech unlike writing which has a particular audience but no direct or immediate contact.