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Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Chapter one: Humanistic approaches

The period from the 1950s to the 1980s has often been referred to as "The Age of Methods," during which a number of quite detailed prescriptions for language teaching were proposed. Situational Language Teaching evolved in the United Kingdom while a parallel method, Audio-Lingualism, emerged in the United States. In the middle-methods period, a variety of methods were proclaimed as successors to the then prevailing Situational Language Teaching and Audio-Lingual methods. These alternatives were promoted under such titles as Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, and Total Physical Response. They are frequently described as Humanistic Approaches because their designers are primarily concerned with the students' affect and with removing the psychological barriers to learning.

1. The Silent Way

The Silent Way is an approach to language teaching designed to enable students to become independent, autonomous and responsible learners. It is part of a more general pedagogical approach to teaching and learning created by Caleb Gattegno. It is constructivist in nature, leading students to develop their own conceptual models of all the aspects of the language. The best way of achieving this is to help students to be experimental learners. The Silent Way allows this.

The main objective of a teacher using the Silent Way is to optimize the way students exchange their time for experience. This Gattegno considered to be *the* basic principle behind all education: "Living a life is changing time into experience."

1.1. Origin of the Silent Way

The approach is called the Silent Way because the teacher remains mainly silent, to give students the space they need to learn to talk. In this approach, it is assumed that the students' previous experience of learning from their mother tongue will contribute to learning the new foreign language. The acquisition of the mother tongue brings awareness of what language is and this is retained in second language learning. The awareness of what language is includes the use of non-verbal components of language such as intonation, melody, breathing, inflection, the convention of writing, and the combinations of letters for different sounds. Rods, pictures, objects or situations are aids used for linking sounds and meanings in the Silent Way.

1.2. Materials

The materials usually associated with Silent Way are in fact a set of tools which allow teachers to apply Gattegno's theory of learning and his pedagogical theory -the subordination of teaching to learning- in the field of foreign language teaching. The tools invented by Caleb Gattegno are not the only possible set of tools for teachers working in this field. Others can and indeed have been invented by teachers doing research in this area.

A. Sound / color chart: This is a wall chart on which can be seen a certain number of rectangles of different colours printed on a black background. Each colour represents a phoneme of the language being studied. By using a pointer to touch a series of rectangles, the teacher, without saying anything himself, can get the students to produce any utterance in the language if they know the correspondence between the colours and the sounds, even if they do not know the language.

B. Fidel: This is an expanded version of the Sound/Colour chart. It groups together all the possible spellings for each colour, thus for each phoneme.

C. A set of colored **Cuisenaire rods:** For low level language classes, the teacher may use Cuisenaire rods. The rods allow the teacher to construct non ambiguous situations which are directly perceptible by all. They are easy to manipulate and can be used symbolically. A green

rod standing on the table can also be Mr. Green. They lend themselves as well to the construction of plans of houses and furniture, towns and cities, stations… - However, the most important aspect of using the rods is certainly the fact that when a situation is created in front of the students, they know what the language to be used will mean before the words are actually produced.

D. <u>Word charts</u>: These are charts of the same dimensions as the Sound/Colour chart and the Fidel on which are printed the functional words of the language, written in colour. Obviously, the colours are systematized, so that any one colour always represents the same phoneme, whether it is on the Sound/Colour chart, the Fidel or the word charts. Since the words are printed in colour, it is only necessary for someone to point to a word for the (other) students to be able to read it, say it and write it.

E. A set of **10 wall pictures**: These are designed to expand vocabulary for low level groups.

F. The pointer: This is one of the most important instruments in the teacher's arsenal because it allows teaching to be based consciously and deliberately on the mental powers of the students. It allows the teacher to link colours, graphemes or words together whilst maintaining the ephemeral quality of the language. It is the students' mental activity which maintains the different elements present within them and allows them to restitute what is being worked on as a phonetic or linguistic unit having meaning.

Thus, each of the tools associated with Silent Way plays its part in allowing the teacher to subordinate his teaching to the students' learning. The tools correspond to the theory and stem directly from it.

1.3. The Teacher's Silence

Firstly, the teacher's silence is a constant reminder that, in this approach, the teacher's role is not to transmit knowledge but to create situations in which the students can build linguistic know-hows: pronunciation, syntax, morphology... all the aspects that constitute being able to speak a language.

Secondly, the teacher's silence forces him to reflect constantly on his own clarity, and this changes the preparation of his class completely. The teacher always has to try to find strictly non-ambiguous means of presenting each situation.

Thirdly, the teacher's silence allows him to keep his students in direct contact with the unknown. It is the teacher's silence which allows the lesson to become an improvisation played between the students and himself jointly as they advance. For the class to take place at all, the teacher has to stay with the students wherever they happen to be, following them in their exploration and working on their errors and mistakes as they are produced.

2. Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia is one of the teaching methods developed by Bulgarian psychotherapist Georgi Lozanov based on the study of Suggestology. The method has been used in different fields of studies but mostly in the field of foreign languages learning. Lozanov claimed that by using this method one can teach languages approximately three to five times as quickly as conventional methods.

The theory applied positive suggestion in teaching when it was developed in the 1970s. However, as improved, it has focused more on "desuggestive learning" and now is often called "desuggestopedia." The name of Suggestopedia is from the words "suggestion" and "pedagogy."

2.1. Purpose and Theory

The intended purpose of Suggestopedia was to enhance learning by lowering the affective filter of learners. Lozanov claims that "suggestopedia is a system for liberation," the liberation from the "preliminary negative concept regarding the difficulties in the process of learning" that is established throughout their life in the society. Desuggestopedia focuses more on liberation as Lozanov describes "desuggestive learning" as "free, without a mildest pressure, liberation of previously suggested programs to restrict intelligence and spontaneous acquisition of knowledge, skills and habits." The method implements this by working not only on the conscious level of human mind but also on the subconscious level, the mind's reserves. Since it works on the reserves in human mind and brain, which are said to have unlimited capacities, one can teach through this method more than other methods can teach in the same amount of time.

2.2. In Practice

Physical surroundings and atmosphere in classroom are the vital factors to make sure that "the students feel comfortable and confident", and various techniques, including art and music, are used by the trained teachers. The lesson of Suggestopedia consisted of three phases at first: deciphering, concert session (memorization séance), and elaboration.

A. Deciphering: The teacher introduces the grammar and lexis of the content.

B. Concert session (active and passive): In the active session, the teacher reads the text at a normal speed, sometimes intoning some words, and the students follow. In the passive session, the students relax and listen to the teacher reading the text calmly. Music ("Pre-Classical") is played background.

C. Elaboration: The students finish off what they have learned with dramas, songs, and games.

Then it has developed into four phases as lots of experiments were done: introduction, concert session, elaboration, and production.

A. Introduction: The teacher teaches the material in "a playful manner" instead of analyzing lexis and grammar of the text in a directive manner.

B. Concert session (active and passive): In the active session, the teacher reads with intoning as selected music is played. Occasionally, the students read the text together with the teacher, and listen only to the music as the teacher pauses in particular moments. The passive session is done more calmly.

C. Elaboration: The students sing classical songs and play games while "the teacher acts more like a consultant

D. Production: The students spontaneously speak and interact in the target language without interruption or correction.

2.3. Teachers

Teachers should not act directive although this method is teacher-controlled rather than students-controlled. For example, they should act as a real partner to the students, participating in the activities such as games and songs "naturally" and "genuinely." In the concert session, they should fully include classical art into their behaviors. Although there are many techniques that the teachers use, the factors such as "communication in the spirit of love, respect for man as a human being, the specific humanitarian way of applying 'techniques'" etc. are crucial. The teachers need not only to know the techniques and theoretical information but also to understand the theory and to acquire the practical methodology completely because if they implement those techniques without complete understandings and acquisition, they could not provide learners with successful results, or even could give a negative impact on their learning. Therefore the teacher has to be trained in the course that is taught by the certified trainers.

Here are the most important factors for teachers to acquire, described by Lozanov.

1. Covering a huge bulk of learning material.

2. Structuring the material in the suggestopaedic way; global-partial – partial-global, and global in the part – part in the global, related to the golden proportion.

3. As a professional, on the one hand, and a personality, on the other hand, the teacher should be highly prestigious, reliable and credible.

4. The teacher should have, not play, a hundred percent of expectancy in positive results (because the teacher is already experienced even from the time of teacher training course).

5. The teacher should love his/her students (of course, not sentimentally but as human beings) and teach them with personal participation through games, songs, a classical type of arts and pleasure.

2.4. Side Effects

Lozanov claims that the effect of the method is not only in language learning. There seem to be confirmed favorable side effects on health, the social and psychological relations, and the subsequent success in other subjects.

3. Total Physical Response

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method developed by Dr. James J. Asher, a professor of psychology at San José State University, to aid learning second languages. The method relies on the assumption that when learning a second or foreign language, that language is internalized through a process of codebreaking similar to first language development and that the process allows for a long period of listening and developing comprehension prior to production. Students respond to commands that require physical movement.

3.1. Theoretical assumption

According to Asher, TPR is based on the assumption that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural language on earth - including the sign language of the deaf. The process is visible when we observe how infants internalize their first language.

It looks to the way that children learn their native language. Communication between parents and their children combines both verbal and physical aspects. The child responds physically to the speech of their parent. The responses of the child are in turn positively reinforced by the speech of the parent. For many months the child absorbs the language without being able to speak. It is during this period that the internalization and codebreaking occurs. After this stage the child is able to reproduce the language spontaneously. With TPR the language teacher tries to mimic this process in class.

3.2. Classroom usage

In the classroom the teacher and students take on roles similar to that of the parent and child respectively. Students must respond physically to the words of the teacher. The activity may be a simple game or may involve more complex grammar and more detailed scenarios.

TPR can be used to practice and teach various things. It is well suited to teaching classroom language and other vocabulary connected with actions. It can be used to teach imperatives and various tenses and aspects. It is also useful for story-telling.

Because of its participatory approach, TPR may also be a useful alternative teaching strategy for students with dyslexia or related learning disabilities, who typically experience difficulty learning foreign languages with traditional classroom instruction.

3.3. Advantages

According to its proponents, it has a number of advantages: Students will enjoy getting up out of their chairs and moving around. Simple TPR activities do not require a great deal of preparation on the part of the teacher. TPR is aptitude-free, working well with a mixed ability class, and with students having various disabilities. It is good for kinæsthetic learners who need to be active in the class. Class size need not be a problem, and it works effectively for children and adults.

3.4. Disadvantages

However, it is recognized that TPR is most useful for beginners, though it can be used at higher levels where preparation becomes an issue for the teacher. It does not give students the opportunity to express their own thoughts in a creative way. It can be a challenge for shy students.

Chapter two: Teaching the Language Skills

Language educators have long used the concepts of four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are aspects of a unified system through which language operates. A knowledge of them is, therefore, necessary for interpreting or transmitting the language appropriately.

The four basic skills are related to each other by two parameters: the mode of communication: oral or written and the direction of communication: receiving or producing the message.

We may represent the relationships among the skills in the following chart:

	Oral	**Written**
Receptive	Listening	Reading
Productive	Speaking	Writing

Although these skills will be treated separately in this course, they are interdependent. Thus, one may listen and speak or write, or read and write, and so on.

Teaching the Listening Skill

Listening is the language skill that is used most frequently. It has been estimated that adults spend almost half their communication time listening, and students may receive as much as 90% of their in-school information through listening to teachers and to one another. Often, however, language learners do not recognize the level of effort that goes into developing listening ability.

Far from passively receiving and recording aural input, listeners actively involve themselves in the interpretation of what they hear, bringing their own background knowledge and linguistic knowledge to bear on the information contained in the aural text. Not all listening is the same; casual greetings, for example, require a different sort of listening capability than do academic lectures. Language learning requires intentional listening that employs strategies for identifying sounds and making meaning from them.

Listening involves a sender (a person, radio, television), a message, and a receiver (the listener). Listeners often must process messages as they come, even if they are still processing what they have just heard, without backtracking or looking ahead. In addition, listeners must cope with the sender's choice of vocabulary, structure, and rate of delivery. The complexity of the listening process is magnified in second language contexts, where the receiver also has incomplete control of the language.

Given the importance of listening in language learning and teaching, it is essential for language teachers to help their students become effective listeners. In the communicative approach to language teaching, this means modeling listening strategies and providing listening practice in authentic situations: those that learners are likely to encounter when they use the language outside the classroom.

1. Objectives and Techniques for Teaching Listening

Teachers want to produce students who, even if they do not have complete control of the grammar or an extensive lexicon, can fend for themselves in communication situations. In the case of listening, this means producing students who can use listening strategies to maximize their comprehension of aural input, identify relevant and non-relevant information, and tolerate less than word-by-word comprehension.

Focus: The Listening Process

To achieve this objective, teachers focus on the process of listening rather than on its product.

- They develop students' awareness of the listening process and listening strategies by asking students to think and talk about how they listen in their native language.
- They allow students to practice the full repertoire of listening strategies by using authentic listening tasks.
- They behave as authentic listeners by responding to student communication as a listener rather than as a teacher.
- When working with listening tasks in class, they show students the strategies that will work best for the listening purpose and the type of text. They explain how and why students should use the strategies.

- They have students practice listening strategies in class and ask them to practice outside of class in their listening assignments. They encourage students to be conscious of what they're doing while they complete listening tape assignments.
- They encourage students to evaluate their comprehension and their strategy use immediately after completing an assignment. They build comprehension checks into in-class and out-of-class listening assignments, and periodically review how and when to use particular strategies.
- They encourage the development of listening skills and the use of listening strategies by using the target language to conduct classroom business: making announcements, assigning homework, describing the content and format of tests.
- They do not assume that students will transfer strategy use from one task to another. They explicitly mention how a particular strategy can be used in a different type of listening task or with another skill.

By raising students' awareness of listening as a skill that requires active engagement, and by explicitly teaching listening strategies, teachers help their students develop both the ability and the   confidence to handle communication situations they may encounter beyond the classroom. In this way they give their students the foundation for communicative competence in the new language.

2. Listening for Meaning

To extract meaning from a listening text, students need to follow four basic steps:

- Figure out the purpose for listening. Activate background knowledge of the topic in order to predict or anticipate content and identify appropriate listening strategies.
- Attend to the parts of the listening input that are relevant to the identified purpose and ignore the rest. This selectivity enables students to focus on specific items in the input and reduces the amount of information they have to hold in short-term memory in order to recognize it.
- Check comprehension while listening and when the listening task is over. Monitoring comprehension helps students detect inconsistencies and comprehension failures, directing them to use alternate strategies.

3. Developing Listening Activities

As teachers design listening tasks, they should keep in mind that complete recall of all the information in an aural text is an unrealistic expectation to which even native speakers are not usually held. Listening exercises that are meant to train should be success-oriented and build up students' confidence in their listening ability. To achieve this aim teachers should:

Construct the listening activity around a contextualized task.

Contextualized listening activities approximate real-life tasks and give the listener an idea of the type of information to expect and what to do with it in advance of the actual listening. A beginning level task would be locating places on a map (one way) or exchanging name and address information (two way). At an intermediate level students could follow directions for assembling something (one way) or work in pairs to create a story to tell to the rest of the class (two way).

Define the activity's instructional objective and type of response.

Each activity should have as its goal the improvement of one or more specific listening skills. A listening activity may have more than one goal or outcome, but the teacher should be careful not to overburden the attention of beginning or intermediate listeners.

Recognizing the goal(s) of listening comprehension in each listening situation will help students select appropriate listening strategies.

- Identification: Recognizing or discriminating specific aspects of the message, such as sounds, categories of words, morphological distinctions
- Orientation: Determining the major facts about a message, such as topic, text type, setting
- Main idea comprehension: Identifying the higher-order ideas
- Detail comprehension: Identifying supporting details
- Replication: Reproducing the message orally or in writing

Check the level of difficulty of the listening text.

The factors listed below can help you judge the relative ease or difficulty of a listening text for a particular purpose and a particular group of students.

How is the information organized? Does the story line, narrative, or instruction conform to familiar expectations? Texts in which the events are presented in natural chronological order, which have an informative title, and which present the information following an obvious organization (main ideas first, details and examples second) are easier to follow.

How familiar are the students with the topic? Remember that misapplication of background knowledge due to cultural differences can create major comprehension difficulties.

Does the text contain redundancy? At the lower levels of proficiency, listeners may find short, simple messages easier to process, but students with higher proficiency benefit from the natural redundancy of the language.

Does the text involve multiple individuals and objects? Are they clearly differentiated? It is easier to understand a text with a doctor and a patient than one with two doctors, and it is even easier if they are of the opposite sex. In other words, the more marked the differences, the easier the comprehension.

Does the text offer visual support to aid in the interpretation of what the listeners hear? Visual aids such as maps, diagrams, pictures, or the images in a video help contextualize the listening input and provide clues to meaning.

Use pre-listening activities to prepare students for what they are going to hear or view.

The activities chosen during pre-listening may serve as preparation for listening in several ways. During pre-listening the teacher may :

- assess students' background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text;
- provide students with the background knowledge necessary for their comprehension of the listening passage or activate the existing knowledge that the students possess;
- clarify any cultural information which may be necessary to comprehend the passage;
- make students aware of the type of text they will be listening to, the role they will play, and the purpose(s) for which they will be listening;
- provide opportunities for group or collaborative work and for background reading or class discussion activities .

Sample pre-listening activities:

- looking at pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs
- reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures
- reading something relevant
- constructing semantic webs (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related)
- predicting the content of the listening text
- going over the directions or instructions for the activity
- doing guided practice

Match while-listening activities to the instructional goal, the listening purpose, and students' proficiency level.

While-listening activities relate directly to the text, and students do them during or immediately after the time they are listening. Keep these points in mind when planning while-listening activities:

If students are to complete a written task during or immediately after listening, allow them to read through it before listening. Students need to devote all their attention to the listening task. Be sure they understand the instructions for the written task before listening begins so that they are not distracted by the need to figure out what to do.

Keep writing to a minimum during listening. Remember that the primary goal is comprehension, not production. Having to write while-listening may distract students from this primary goal. If a written response is to be given after listening, the task can be more demanding.

Organize activities so that they guide listeners through the text. Combine global activities such as getting the main idea, topic, and setting with selective listening activities that focus on details of content and form.

Use questions to focus students' attention on the elements of the text crucial to comprehension of the whole. Before the listening activity begins, have students review questions they will answer orally or in writing after listening. Listening for the answers will help students recognize the crucial parts of the message.

Use predicting to encourage students to monitor their comprehension as they listen. Do a predicting activity before listening, and remind students to review what they are hearing

to see if it makes sense in the context of their prior knowledge and what they already know of the topic or events of the passage.

Give immediate feedback whenever possible. Encourage students to examine how or why their responses were incorrect.

Sample while-listening activities

- listening with visuals
- filling in graphs and charts
- following a route on a map
- checking off items in a list
- listening for the gist
- searching for specific clues to meaning
- completing cloze (fill-in) exercises
- distinguishing between formal and informal registers

4. Assessing Listening Proficiency

You can use post-listening activities to check comprehension, evaluate listening skills and use of listening strategies, and extend the knowledge gained to other contexts. A post-listening activity may relate to a pre-listening activity, such as predicting; may expand on the topic or the language of the listening text; or may transfer what has been learned to reading, speaking, or writing activities.

In order to provide authentic assessment of students' listening proficiency, a post-listening activity must reflect the real-life uses to which students might put information they have gained through listening.

- It must have a purpose other than assessment
- It must require students to demonstrate their level of listening comprehension by completing some task.

To develop authentic assessment activities, consider the type of response that listening to a particular selection would elicit in a non-classroom situation. For example, after listening to a weather report one might decide what to wear the next day; after listening to a set of instructions, one might   repeat them to someone else; after watching and listening to a play or video, one might discuss the story line with friends.

Use this response type as a base for selecting appropriate post-listening tasks. You can then develop a checklist or rubric that will allow you to evaluate each student's comprehension of specific parts of the aural text.

For example, for listening practice you have students listen to a weather report. Their purpose for listening is to be able to advise a friend what to wear the next day. As a post-listening activity, you ask students to select appropriate items of clothing from a collection you have assembled, or write a note telling the friend what to wear, or provide oral advice to another student (who has not heard the weather report). To evaluate listening comprehension, you use a checklist containing specific features of the forecast, marking those that are reflected in the student's clothing recommendations.

Teaching the speaking Skill

Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. These learners define fluency as the ability to converse with others, much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. They regard speaking as the most important skill they can acquire, and they assess their progress in terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication.

Language learners need to recognize that speaking involves three areas of knowledge:

- Mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary): Using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation
- Functions (transaction and interaction): Knowing when clarity of message is essential (transaction/information exchange) and when precise understanding is not required (interaction/relationship building)
- Social and cultural rules and norms (turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants): Understanding how to take into account who is speaking to whom, in what circumstances, about what, and for what reason.

In the communicative model of language teaching, instructors help their students develop this body of knowledge by providing authentic practice that prepares students for real-life communication situations. They help their students develop the ability to produce grammatically correct, logically connected sentences that are appropriate to specific contexts, and to do so using acceptable (that is, comprehensible) pronunciation.

1. Objectives and Techniques for Teaching Speaking

The goal of teaching the speaking skill is communicative efficiency. Learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, and to observe the social and cultural rules that apply in each communication situation.

To help students develop communicative efficiency in speaking, teachers can use a balanced activities approach that combines language input, structured output, and communicative output.

1.1. Language input comes in the form of teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read outside of class. It gives learners the material they need to begin producing language themselves.

Language input may be content-oriented or form-oriented.

- Content-oriented input focuses on information, whether it is a simple weather report or an extended lecture on an academic topic. Content-oriented input may also include descriptions of learning strategies and examples of their use.
- Form-oriented input focuses on ways of using the language: guidance from the teacher or another source on vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar (linguistic competence);

appropriate things to say in specific contexts (discourse competence); expectations for rate of speech, pause length, turn-taking, and other social aspects of language use (sociolinguistic competence); and explicit instruction in phrases to use to ask for clarification and repair miscommunication (strategic competence).

In the presentation part of a lesson, a teacher combines content-oriented and form-oriented input. The amount of input that is actually provided in the target language depends on students' listening proficiency and also on the situation. For students at lower levels, or in situations where a quick explanation on a grammar topic is needed, an explanation in English may be more appropriate than one in the target language.

1.2. Structured output focuses on correct form. In structured output, students may have options for responses, but all of the options require them to use the specific form or structure that the teacher has just introduced.

Structured output is designed to make learners comfortable producing specific language items recently introduced, sometimes in combination with previously learned items. Teachers often use structured output exercises as a transition between the presentation stage and the practice stage of a lesson plan. Textbook exercises also often make good structured output practice activities.

1.3. In **communicative output**, the learners' main purpose is to complete a task, such as obtaining information, developing a travel plan, or creating a video. To complete the task, they may use the language that the teacher has just presented, but they also may draw on any other vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies that they know. In communicative output activities, the criterion of success is whether the learner gets the message across. Accuracy is not a consideration unless the lack of it interferes with the message.

In everyday communication, spoken exchanges take place because there is some sort of information gap between the participants. Communicative output activities involve a similar real information gap. In order to complete the task, students must reduce or eliminate the information gap. In these activities, language is a tool, not an end in itself.

In a balanced activities approach, the teacher uses a variety of activities from these different categories of input and output. Learners at all proficiency levels, including beginners, benefit from this variety; it is more motivating, and it is also more likely to result in effective language learning.

2. Developing Speaking Activities

Traditional classroom speaking practice often takes the form of drills in which one person asks a question and another gives an answer. The question and the answer are structured and predictable, and often there is only one correct, predetermined answer. The purpose of asking and answering the question is to demonstrate the ability to ask and answer the question.

In contrast, the purpose of real communication is to accomplish a task, such as conveying a telephone message, obtaining information, or expressing an opinion. In real communication, participants must manage uncertainty about what the other person will say. Authentic communication involves an information gap; each participant has information that the other

does not have. In addition, to achieve their purpose, participants may have to clarify their meaning or ask for confirmation of their own understanding.

To create classroom speaking activities that will develop communicative competence, teachers need to incorporate a purpose and an information gap and allow for multiple forms of expression. However, quantity alone will not necessarily produce competent speakers. Teachers need to combine structured output activities, which allow for error correction and increased accuracy, with communicative output activities that give students opportunities to practice language use more freely.

2.1. Structured Output Activities

Two common kinds of structured output activities are *information gap* and *jigsaw* activities. In both these types of activities, students complete a task by obtaining missing information, a feature the activities have in common with real communication. However, information gap and jigsaw activities also set up practice on specific items of language. In this respect they are more like drills than like communication.

Information Gap Activities*:* An example of an information gap activity could be the following :

- Filling the gaps in a schedule or timetable: Partner A holds an airline timetable with some of the arrival and departure times missing. Partner B has the same timetable but with different blank spaces. The two partners are not permitted to see each other's timetables and must fill in the blanks by asking each other appropriate questions. The features of language that are practiced would include questions beginning with "when" or "at what time." Answers would be limited mostly to time expressions like "at 8:15" or "at ten in the evening."

Jigsaw Activities

Jigsaw activities are more elaborate information gap activities that can be done with several partners. In a jigsaw activity, each partner has one or a few pieces of the "puzzle," and the partners must cooperate to fit all the pieces into a whole picture. The puzzle piece may take one of several forms. It may be one panel from a comic strip or one photo from a set that tells a story. It may be one sentence from a written narrative. It may be a tape recording of a conversation, in which case no two partners hear exactly the same conversation.

In one fairly simple jigsaw activity, students work in groups of four. Each student in the group receives one panel from a comic strip. Partners may not show each other their panels. Together the four panels present this narrative: a man takes a container of ice cream from the freezer; he serves himself several scoops of ice cream; he sits in front of the TV eating his ice cream; he returns with the empty bowl to the kitchen and finds that he left the container of ice cream, now melting, on the kitchen counter. These pictures have a clear narrative line and the partners are not likely to disagree about the appropriate sequencing. You can make the task more demanding, however, by using pictures that lend themselves to alternative sequences, so that the partners have to negotiate among themselves to agree on a satisfactory sequence.

With information gap and jigsaw activities, teachers need to be conscious of the language demands they place on their students. If an activity calls for language your students have not already practiced, you can brainstorm with them when setting up the activity to preview the language they will need, eliciting what they already know and supplementing what they are able to produce themselves.

2.2. Communicative Output Activities

Communicative output activities allow students to practice using all of the language they know in situations that resemble real settings. In these activities, students must work together to develop a plan, resolve a problem, or complete a task. The most common types of communicative output activity are *role plays* and *discussions*.

In **role plays,** students are assigned roles and put into situations that they may eventually encounter outside the classroom. Because role plays imitate life, the range of language functions that may be used expands considerably. Also, the role relationships among the students as they play their parts call for them to practice and develop their sociolinguistic competence. They have to use language that is appropriate to the situation and to the characters.

Discussions, like role plays, succeed when the teacher prepares students first, and then gets out of the way. To succeed with discussions:

- Prepare the students: Give them input (both topical information and language forms) so that they will have something to say and the language with which to say it.
- Offer choices: Let students suggest the topic for discussion or choose from several options. Discussion does not always have to be about serious issues. Students are likely to be more motivated to participate if the topic is television programs, plans for a vacation, or news about mutual friends. Weighty topics like how to combat pollution are not as engaging and place heavy demands on students' linguistic competence.
- Set a goal or outcome: This can be a group product, such as a letter to the editor, or individual reports on the views of others in the group.
- Use small groups instead of whole-class discussion: Large groups can make participation difficult.
- Keep it short: Give students a defined period of time, not more than 8-10 minutes, for discussion. Allow them to stop sooner if they run out of things to say.
- Allow students to participate in their own way: Not every student will feel comfortable talking about every topic. Do not expect all of them to contribute equally to the conversation.
- Do topical follow-up: Have students report to the class on the results of their discussion.
- Do linguistic follow-up: After the discussion is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.

Through well-prepared communicative output activities such as role plays and discussions, you can encourage students to experiment and innovate with the language, and create a supportive atmosphere that allows them to make mistakes without fear of embarrassment. This will contribute to their self-confidence as speakers and to their motivation to learn more.

3. Assessing the speaking skill

3.1. The oral test

In this test, the learner is placed in a situation where he has to talk about a topic either chosen by the teacher or by himself. The mark allocated in this test must take into account:

- The ability to comprehend the spoken language (the question), the interaction with the one who conducts the test;
- The ability to frame a response: the ideas and the organisation of ideas;
- The ability to express the ideas intelligibly, with correct structure, appropriate lexical items and, to a certain extent, acceptable articulation of sounds, stress, intonation and juncture (co-articulation of word groupings); and
- The ability to express one's ideas fluently.

This test is considered unreliable because the mark allocated varies from one scorer to another due to different focus on the different aspects covered by the mark. Moreover, as very little time is available for deciding on the mark, we arrive at some subjective counterbalance of the various elements, so it is not always clear whether all the elements are given credit.

In order to achieve more objectivity, the test can be recorded and listened to later so that more time is given to the evaluation of the learner's performance.

Another way of achieving more objectivity would be to prepare a grid (a table) with the different aspects to be evaluated and the percentage of the score allocated to each aspect. At the end of the test, the scorer adds the sub-scores to get the final score. This can be done by several teachers (a jury).

3.2. Sub-tests

Many sub-tests of pronunciation, stress, intonation… etc, can be organised to evaluate the different aspects of speech separately.

3.3. Classwork

This consists of keeping a regular record of learners' production in class. This type of evaluation gives a fairer picture of the learners' capacities but it is very time-consuming.

Teaching the Reading Skill

Traditionally, the purpose of learning to read in a language has been to have access to the literature written in that language. In language instruction, reading materials have traditionally been chosen from literary texts that represent "higher" forms of culture.

This approach assumes that students learn to read a language by studying its vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure, not by actually reading it. In this approach, lower level learners read only sentences and paragraphs generated by textbook writers and instructors. The reading of authentic materials is limited to the works of great authors and reserved for upper level students who have developed the language skills needed to read them.

The communicative approach to language teaching has given teachers a different understanding of the role of reading in the language classroom and the types of texts that can be used in instruction. When the goal of instruction is communicative competence, everyday materials such as train schedules, newspaper articles, and travel and tourism Web sites become appropriate classroom materials, because reading them is one way communicative competence is developed. Instruction in reading and reading practice thus become essential parts of language teaching at every level.

1. Reading Purpose and Reading Comprehension

Reading is an activity with a purpose. A person may read in order to gain information or verify existing knowledge, or in order to critique a writer's ideas or writing style. A person may also read for enjoyment, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. The purpose(s) for reading guide the reader's selection of texts.

The purpose for reading also determines the appropriate approach to reading comprehension. A person reading poetry for enjoyment needs to recognize the words the poet uses and the ways they are put together, but does not need to identify main idea and supporting details. However, a person using a scientific article to support an opinion needs to know the vocabulary that is used, understand the facts and cause-effect sequences that are presented, and recognize ideas that are presented as hypotheses and givens.

Reading research shows that good readers

- Read extensively
- Integrate information in the text with existing knowledge
- Have a flexible reading style, depending on what they are reading
- Are motivated
- Rely on different skills interacting: perceptual processing, phonemic processing, recall
- Read for a purpose; reading serves a function

2. Reading as a Process

Reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. The text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that

encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is.

Reader knowledge, skills, and strategies include

- Linguistic competence: the ability to recognize the elements of the writing system; knowledge of vocabulary; knowledge of how words are structured into sentences
- Discourse competence: knowledge of discourse markers and how they connect parts of the text to one another
- Sociolinguistic competence: knowledge about different types of texts and their usual structure and content

The purpose(s) for reading and the type of text determine the specific knowledge, skills, and strategies that readers need to apply to achieve comprehension. Reading comprehension is thus much more than decoding. Reading comprehension results when the reader knows which skills and strategies are appropriate for the type of text, and understands how to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose.

3. Objectives and Techniques for Teaching Reading

Teachers want to produce students who, even if they do not have complete control of the grammar or an extensive lexicon, can fend for themselves in communication situations. In the case of reading, this means producing students who can use reading strategies to maximize their comprehension of text, identify relevant and non-relevant information, and tolerate less than word-by-word comprehension.

Focus: The Reading Process

To accomplish this goal, teachers focus on the process of reading rather than on its product.

- They develop students' awareness of the reading process and reading strategies by asking students to think and talk about how they read in their native language.
- They allow students to practice the full repertoire of reading strategies by using authentic reading tasks. They encourage students to read to learn (and have an authentic purpose for reading) by giving students some choice of reading material.
- When working with reading tasks in class, they show students the strategies that will work best for the reading purpose and the type of text. They explain how and why students should use the strategies.
- They have students practice reading strategies in class and ask them to practice outside of class in their reading assignments. They encourage students to be conscious of what they're doing while they complete reading assignments.
- They encourage students to evaluate their comprehension and self-report their use of strategies. They build comprehension checks into in-class and out-of-class reading assignments, and periodically review how and when to use particular strategies.
- They encourage the development of reading skills and the use of reading strategies by using the target language to convey instructions and course-related information in written form: office hours, homework assignments, test content.
- They do not assume that students will transfer strategy use from one task to another. They explicitly mention how a particular strategy can be used in a different type of reading task or with another skill.

By raising students' awareness of reading as a skill that requires active engagement, and by explicitly teaching reading strategies, instructors help their students develop both the ability and the   confidence to handle communication situations they may encounter beyond the classroom. In this way they give their students the foundation for communicative competence in the new language.

4. Using Authentic Materials and Approaches

For students to develop communicative competence in reading, classroom and homework reading activities must resemble (or be) real-life reading tasks that involve meaningful communication. They must therefore be authentic in three ways.

4.1. The reading material must be authentic: It must be the kind of material that students will need and want to be able to read when traveling, studying abroad, or using the language in other contexts outside the classroom.

When selecting texts for student assignments, remember that the difficulty of a reading text is less a function of the language, and more a function of the conceptual difficulty and the task(s) that students are expected to complete. Simplifying a text by changing the language often removes natural redundancy and makes the organization somewhat difficult for students to predict. This actually makes a text more difficult to read than if the original were used.

Rather than simplifying a text by changing its language, make it more approachable by eliciting students' existing knowledge in pre-reading discussion, reviewing new vocabulary before reading, and asking students to perform tasks that are within their competence, such as skimming to get the main idea or scanning for specific information, before they begin intensive reading.

4.2. The reading purpose must be authentic: Students must be reading for reasons that make sense and have relevance to them. "Because the teacher assigned it" is not an authentic reason for reading a text.

To identify relevant reading purposes, ask students how they plan to use the language they are learning and what topics they are interested in reading and learning about. Give them opportunities to choose their reading assignments, and encourage them to use the library, the Internet, and foreign language newsstands and bookstores to find other things they would like to read.

4.3. The reading approach must be authentic: Students should read the text in a way that matches the reading purpose, the type of text, and the way people normally read. This means that reading aloud will take place only in situations where it would take place outside the classroom, such as reading for pleasure. The majority of students' reading should be done silently.

5. Reading Aloud in the Classroom

Students do not learn to read by reading aloud. A person who reads aloud and comprehends the meaning of the text is coordinating word recognition with comprehension and speaking and pronunciation ability in highly complex ways. Students whose language skills are limited are not able to process at this level, and end up having to drop one or more of the elements.

Usually the dropped element is comprehension, and reading aloud becomes word calling: simply pronouncing a series of words without regard for the meaning they carry individually and together. Word calling is not productive for the student who is doing it, and it is boring for other students to listen to.

- There are two ways to use reading aloud productively in the language classroom. Read aloud to your students as they follow along silently. You have the ability to use inflection and tone to help them hear what the text is saying. Following along as you read will help students move from word-by-word reading to reading in phrases and thought units, as they do in their first language.
- Use the "read and look up" technique. With this technique, a student reads a phrase or sentence silently as many times as necessary, then looks up (away from the text) and tells you what the phrase or sentence says. This encourages students to read for ideas, rather than for word recognition.

6. Developing Reading Activities

Developing reading activities involves more than identifying a text that is "at the right level," writing a set of comprehension questions for students to answer after reading, handing out the assignment and sending students away to do it. A fully-developed reading activity supports students as readers through prereading, while-reading, and post-reading activities.

As you design reading tasks, keep in mind that complete recall of all the information in a text is an unrealistic expectation even for native speakers. Reading activities that are meant to increase communicative competence should be success oriented and build up students' confidence in their reading ability.

Construct the reading activity around a purpose that has significance for the students

Make sure students understand what the purpose for reading is: to get the main idea, obtain specific information, understand most or all of the message, enjoy a story, or decide whether or not to read more. Recognizing the purpose for reading will help students select appropriate reading strategies.

Define the activity's instructional objective and the appropriate type of response

In addition to the main purpose for reading, an activity can also have one or more instructional purposes, such as practicing or reviewing specific grammatical constructions, introducing new vocabulary, or familiarizing students with the typical structure of a certain type of text.

Check the level of difficulty of the text

The factors listed below can help you judge the relative ease or difficulty of a reading text for a particular purpose and a particular group of students.

- How is the information organized? Does the story line, narrative, or instruction conform to familiar expectations? Texts in which the events are presented in natural chronological order, which have an informative title, and which present the

information following an obvious organization (main ideas first, details and examples second) are easier to follow.

- How familiar are the students with the topic? Remember that misapplication of background knowledge due to cultural differences can create major comprehension difficulties.
- Does the text contain redundancy? At the lower levels of proficiency, listeners may find short, simple messages easier to process, but students with higher proficiency benefit from the natural redundancy of authentic language.
- Does the text offer visual support to aid in reading comprehension? Visual aids such as photographs, maps, and diagrams help students preview the content of the text, guess the meanings of unknown words, and check comprehension while reading.

Remember that the level of difficulty of a text is not the same as the level of difficulty of a reading task. Students who lack the vocabulary to identify all of the items on a menu can still determine whether the restaurant serves steak and whether they can afford to order one.

Use pre-reading activities to prepare students for reading

The activities you use during pre-reading may serve as preparation in several ways. During pre-reading you may:

- Assess students' background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text
- Give students the background knowledge necessary for comprehension of the text, or activate the existing knowledge that the students possess
- Clarify any cultural information which may be necessary to comprehend the passage
- Make students aware of the type of text they will be reading and the purpose(s) for reading
- Provide opportunities for group or collaborative work and for class discussion activities

Sample pre-reading activities:

- Using the title, subtitles, and divisions within the text to predict content and organization or sequence of information
- Looking at pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs and their captions
- Talking about the author's background, writing style, and usual topics
- Skimming to find the theme or main idea and eliciting related prior knowledge
- Reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures
- Reading over the comprehension questions to focus attention on finding that information while reading
- Constructing semantic webs (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related)
- Doing guided practice with guessing meaning from context or checking comprehension while reading

Pre-reading activities are most important at lower levels of language proficiency and at earlier stages of reading instruction. As students become more proficient at using reading strategies, you will be able to reduce the amount of guided pre-reading and allow students to do these activities themselves.

Match while-reading activities to the purpose for reading

In while-reading activities, students check their comprehension as they read. The purpose for reading determines the appropriate type and level of comprehension.

- When reading for specific information, students need to ask themselves, have I obtained the information I was looking for?
- When reading for pleasure, students need to ask themselves, Do I understand the story line/sequence of ideas well enough to enjoy reading this?
- When reading for thorough understanding (intensive reading), students need to ask themselves, Do I understand each main idea and how the author supports it? Does what I'm reading agree with my predictions, and, if not, how does it differ? To check comprehension in this situation, students may
  - Stop at the end of each section to review and check their predictions, restate the main idea and summarize the section
  - Use the comprehension questions as guides to the text, stopping to answer them as they read

7. Assessing Reading Proficiency

Reading ability is very difficult to assess accurately. In the communicative competence model, a student's reading level is the level at which that student is able to use reading to accomplish communication goals. This means that assessment of reading ability needs to be correlated with purposes for reading.

7.1. Reading Aloud

A student's performance when reading aloud is not a reliable indicator of that student's reading ability. A student who is perfectly capable of understanding a given text when reading it silently may stumble when asked to combine comprehension with word recognition and speaking ability in the way that reading aloud requires.

In addition, reading aloud is a task that students will rarely, if ever, need to do outside of the classroom. As a method of assessment, therefore, it is not authentic: It does not test a student's ability to use reading to accomplish a purpose or goal.

However, reading aloud can help a teacher assess whether a student is "seeing" word endings and other grammatical features when reading. To use reading aloud for this purpose, adopt the "read and look up" approach: Ask the student to read a sentence silently one or more times, until comfortable with the content, then look up and tell you what it says. This procedure allows the student to process the text, and lets you see the results of that processing and know what elements, if any, the student is missing.

7.2. Comprehension Questions

Instructors often use comprehension questions to test whether students have understood what they have read. In order to test comprehension appropriately, these questions need to be coordinated with the purpose for reading. If the purpose is to find specific information, comprehension questions should focus on that information. If the purpose is to understand an

opinion and the arguments that support it, comprehension questions should ask about those points.

In everyday reading situations, readers have a purpose for reading before they start. That is, they know what comprehension questions they are going to need to answer before they begin reading. To make reading assessment in the language classroom more like reading outside of the classroom, therefore, allow students to review the comprehension questions before they begin to read the test passage.

Finally, when the purpose for reading is enjoyment, comprehension questions are beside the point. As a more authentic form of assessment, have students talk or write about why they found the text enjoyable and interesting (or not).

7.3. Authentic Assessment

In order to provide authentic assessment of students' reading proficiency, a post-listening activity must reflect the real-life uses to which students might put information they have gained through reading.

- It must have a purpose other than assessment
- It must require students to demonstrate their level of reading comprehension by completing some task

To develop authentic assessment activities, consider the type of response that reading a particular selection would elicit in a non-classroom situation. For example, after reading a weather report, one might decide what to wear the next day; after reading a set of instructions, one might   repeat them to someone else; after reading a short story, one might discuss the story line with friends.

Teaching the Writing Skill

Writing is the act of putting down sounds in conventional graphic forms (i.e. letters), then combining these letters into words, words into meaningful sentences and sentences into meaningful paragraphs for the expression of ideas.

Writing is an active means of communicating ideas. It could be equated with speech since both aim at conveying information. Thus a learner practices in writing what he has already practiced orally and expresses through it his intentions. In addition to its communicative function, writing is a major classroom procedure, an important language activity (e.g. dictation, composition, summary making, written exercises, tests, etc.) and an effective technique to reinforce the oral and written language material.

1. Requirements for learning the writing skill

Writing is considered a significant language skill that should be developed at an early stage of learning the foreign language. It requires the following:

- Knowledge of the English alphabet, so learners can learn how to spell and how to identify letters in print.
- An understanding of the orthographic system, i.e. the relationship between sounds and written symbols. That is, pupils must learn control of the graphic symbols that represent the sounds of the language.
- A knowledge of the mechanics of writing: spelling, capitalisation, punctuation, paragraph indentation, leaving spaces between words, syllable division, and other writing conventions.
- A knowledge of possible sentence structures in English
- Familiarity with grammatical, referential and anaphoric connectors.
- Familiarity with lexical connectors, e.g. repetition of key words or the same word in different form, or the use of synonyms and antonyms, etc.
- Skill in sentence combining to create an effective paragraph, and a knowledge of the organisation of the whole composition.
- Familiarity with words and phrases expressing meanings such as addition, comparison, result, contrast and concession, enumeration, example, summary, etc.
- Adequate control of syntax and vocabulary in order to put ideas into writing
- Some experience of listening, speaking and writing.

2. Objectives of teaching the writing skill

Teaching the writing skill aims at enabling the learners to handle the graphic system of the language (the alphabet) and the spelling according to the conventions of the language; controlling the structure of the language so that what they write is comprehensible to the reader; selecting from possible combinations of words those that convey the ideas they have in their minds, in the register most appropriate to the situation.

3. Stages of the development of the writing skill

Learning to write is a gradual process which begins with simple copying and ends with free expression. With the help and guidance of the teacher, pupils should be trained systematically through several stages of writing experiences that have to follow a specific gradation in order to develop the writing skill logically and cumulatively. These stages are handwriting, copying, dictation, controlled, guided and free writing. The mastery of one level is necessary before the pupils proceed to the next level. In what follows, the writing programme is divided into three main stages: **Controlled writing, guided writing and free writing**. In what follows, there is a detailed discussion of them.

3.1. Controlled writing

This is the first stage of teaching the writing skill. It includes handwriting, copying (or transcription), dictation and spelling. The main aim of these aspects of writing is to enable the learners to manipulate the mechanics of writing accuracy and readiness for further writing activities. Good habits of writing need to be fostered right from the beginning of language instruction and, therefore, much practice of these mechanics is required.

A. Handwriting

This activity is central to the learning of the writing skill. It teaches the pupils to write the alphabet and familiar words. While training the pupils in handwriting, the teacher must take into account the following points:
- In order to avoid developing bad habits of writing which will be reflected in their writing activities, the teacher must teach pupils correct manners in holding a pen and a copybook and how to maintain a good posture.
- The teacher should write a model on the blackboard in order to show pupils the direction of letter formation.
- The teacher must move around the class to check the manual movement of the pupils. He has to make the activity interesting and purposeful

B. Copying

As soon as the learners have an adequate mastery of writing letters and combining these letters to form words or phrases, they can move to copying these words and phrases. It is important that the copied material should be familiar to the learners because this activity aims at reinforcing previously learned words and patterns, developing young learners' consciousness of spelling and fixing the correct written forms in their minds, drawing pupils' attention to punctuation marks and training pupils further in handwriting.

At the beginning of practice in copying, he may give pupils two or three sentences; then as they gain experience with the language, he may increase the copying assignment accordingly. Short dialogues and substitution drills are good exercises for this activity which should be practiced frequently especially at the early stages. The following activities are examples of effective techniques that can maintain pupils' interest in copying;

- Fill in the blanks: In this technique pupils fill in the blanks by copying model sentences in their classwork copybook

- Scrambled sentences: Pupils are asked to rearrange sentences in the correct order so as to make a simple discourse or a short dialogue.

- Putting sentences in the correct order: Pupils rewrite a set of sentences in the correct order so as to make a simple discourse or a short dialogue.

- Magazine pictures: The teacher brings to the class magazine pictures or draws figures on the board then he asks pupils to write corresponding lines of dialogue.

- Matching questions and answers: In this technique, pupils copy questions and their appropriate responses.

- Correcting sentences: The pupils change the sentences by adding yesterday/tomorrow or the point of view, or the subject or the gender of the subject, etc.

- Sentence building: Pupils are given forms on a chart and are asked to select the components that may correctly be used together in order to create sentences.

- Crossword puzzles: pupils fill in crossword puzzles with given words that go with their standard of English.

C. Dictation

After enough work on handwriting and copying has been done by the pupils, dictation is introduced. It is very important for the development of the learners' spelling consciousness. However, it is more difficult than copying because the learner uses his mind's eye with which he visualizes the spelling of word and because English spelling does not always correspond with the sound. Dictation material should be brief, familiar and not beyond the pupils' range of comprehension. Dictation may help, if presented properly, in practicing other aspects of language learning such as aural comprehension, distinguishing sounds and words, comprehension of the meaning of a passage, and recognizing grammatical forms and accuracy.

In the early stages of spelling, pupils are usually given words or simple patterns from their main readers. Gradually, this practice is generalized to more complex materials. At a later stage, pupils can be given a short paragraph, a dialogue or a passage selected from the textbook.

To help pupils improve their spelling, the teacher may provide them with some suitable generalisations which can help in developing their ability to spell correctly. Examples of these generalizations are forms of plurals of nouns, of numbers, of letters, of words ending in 'y', doubling final consonants, suffixes, combinations and abbreviations.

3.2. Guided writing

The second stage of teaching writing involves two graded steps of composition writing, namely controlled composition and guided composition. The principle of these aspects of composition writing is to provide graded guidance in vocabulary and structures so that pupils will not make many mistakes.

A. Controlled composition

In this activity, pupils are provided with the needed keywords and expressions or a model of some type with directions for manipulation in rewriting the model. The aim of this is to ensure that what pupils write is grammatically correct. This activity may take any of the following forms:

- Missing words: A passage or isolated sentences are given with some deleted words. The task is to supply the missing items.

- Word ordering: A group of jumbled words is given to pupils who are to rearrange them to make complete sentences, e.g. speak, he, French, fluently. He can speak French fluently, or Can he speak French fluently?

- Re-arrangement of sentences: In this exercise a group of jumbled sentences is given. Pupils re-arrange them logically to build up a complete paragraph.

- Imitation of a specific pattern: In this activity, the teacher gives the class a model sentence and a group of substitutes which are to be patterned after the model. Alternative forms often require the selection of the appropriate pronoun, verb tense, subject-verb concord, and so on.

- Parallel paragraph: In this exercise, a model paragraph is given with direction for rewriting it by employing specific language manipulations. Pupils substitute some words in the model paragraph for others to get a new paragraph grammatically parallel to the given one. Pupils either change or expand the structural patterns of the model passage. This activity may include change of the subject, change of the subject and verb to the plural or vice versa, change by adding yesterday, tomorrow, now…etc, change the point of view of the paragraph from affirmative to negative for example or the opposite.

- Sentence completion: In this sentence a part of a sentence or phrase is omitted and the pupils are required to supply the missing part. Guidance for writing should be provided so that pupils can add the correct and proper forms.

- Guided writing using pictures: In this activity, the teacher shows the class a picture or a wall chart. He gives them any necessary vocabulary and structures. Then he asks pupils to write about it, or he may ask questions about things or objects in the picture in order to illicit a series of statements that will form a composition.

- Dicto-comp: This activity involves two aspects of the writing skill. The first one is dictation and its function is to check accuracy of spelling and punctuation, while the other one is text reconstruction. In this activity, the teacher reads a short passage of some interest or tells the class an interesting story. After that he asks some questions about the content of the material

and he gives some cue words to help pupils recall the events. Then he asks them to rewrite the material previously read.

- Sentence-combining exercises: The teacher gives the pupils a group of simple sentences (with or without connectors), and then asks them to combine them into more complex ones to form a paragraph. When making such exercises, pupils may try various combinations, or change the tenses or change the names of the persons or pronouns, etc.

B. Semi-controlled composition

It is an important transitional step towards free composition. In this stage, the control exerted by the teacher is relaxed and pupils can add specific ideas or constructions to their composition. However, there is still some structural control or guidance in order to develop the ability to write correctly. Suggestions regarding the content or form of what pupils should write are also given. The following are examples of exercise that can be used in that stage:

- Written interviews, real or imaginary: Pupils can imagine interviews with famous people, football players or artists,… etc, and conduct them with their teacher or classmates. The teacher may give the class some key words, directions and a few lines which can stimulate pupils to develop the dialogue.

- Pictorial exercises: The teacher can give the class a series of pictures or film strips. The pupils are asked to write about the content or the sequence of events in these pictures, guided by the teacher's questions and discussions.

- Narrative exercises: The teacher reads a story or an event. He writes some leading questions on the blackboard. The pupils retell the story in written form or summarize it.

- Short story completion: The pupils may complete a dialogue of which the first few lines are given, or write an ending to a story by using their imagination.

- Letter writing: The teacher reads a letter and shows the pupils the method of writing letters (writing address, salutations and ending), gives some key words or expressions and the theme of the reply. Pupils write a letter on the basis of the information provided.

- Cloze procedure: The teacher gives the pupils a passage in which some words are deleted. The pupils fill in the missing words.

- Writing a summary or an outline of material which pupils have read

Correcting guided composition

It is very important that pupils receive feedback on their production as soon as possible. Mistakes should be indicated by underlying. The teacher can indicate the different types of mistakes by writing some abbreviations or symbols in the margin: sp= spelling, S-V= subject-verb agreement, prep= wrong preposition, tns= wrong tense, WW= wrong word, neg= wrong negative form, etc. Mistakes should be corrected by pupils themselves. This may require re-writing the composition in its correct form. After correcting the composition, the teacher should discuss some common mistakes in the class. This is part of the teaching process which leads to re-learning.

3. 3. Free writing

This stage involves free composition. After having gone through the previous stages, pupils are supposed to be able to manipulate language with some originality of thought and freedom from common mistakes. This activity requires adequate preparation. Thus the teacher must introduce the pupils to the mechanics of free composition and the qualities of a good paragraph such as unity, coherence, the ordering of sentences and ideas, clarity of thought and correctness. It is also of great importance to analyse models of composition to show the class the unity and coherence of all the paragraphs. The topic to be developed by the pupils should be of particular significance to them and lends itself to facility of expression.

A. Preparation

In preparation for the composition, the teacher may organise an oral discussion in order to introduce the topic the pupils will write about. During this discussion the teacher will clarify any difficulties related to the topic and write an outline, vocabulary and expression related to it. This discussion provides the pupils with a good opportunity to communicate facts and ideas from their own experience, to express themselves freely and to use English in a realistic context.

B. Writing

It is desirable to have the pupils write their composition in the classroom under the supervision of the teacher. This is to ensure to ensure that they write from their own knowledge and are not tempted to copy the information from outside sources. While they are writing, the teacher moves about the classroom to give individual help where needed but he must be careful not to distract the pupils' concentration.

C. Correcting compositions

In correcting pupils' composition, the teacher may correct all mistakes or select some of them. He may also circle those errors that he feels pupils can correct themselves because the correct forms were given during the discussion stage. The teacher should avoid writing the correct alternative forms. Instead of writing corrected items on the pupils' papers, he may use abbreviations or symbols characterizing different types of errors. Hen correcting composition, the teacher must also indicate features that lead to ambiguity, redundancy in expression, incoherence or lack of sequence and subject development. These are important tin writing.

D. Re-learning

The final step in the procedure of composition writing is the reinforcing or re-teaching process. Thus, after correcting and returning the composition, the teacher reviews with the class the common mistakes he has come across. Bad compositions as well as good ones are to be discussed and analysed. This will provide pupils with feedback on their writing. To reinforce some grammatical constructions or other items involved in the writing of the composition, the teacher may give the class exercises (oral or written) with the purpose or re-teaching. Pupils are required to correct mistakes pointed out by the teacher and the teacher should make sure that the pupils check their compositions.

4. The Integration of the skills

Writing is not a skill that can be learned in isolation. In the process of learning this skill, learners learn- in addition to spelling or script- a counterpart of what has to be learned for the mastery of listening comprehension, speaking and reading, in other words, a nucleus of linguistic knowledge. The activity or writing helps to consolidate the learning to render it available for use in these other areas. Writing gives the learner practice in manipulating structural variants and in selecting and combining lexical elements. Where a new script is involved, writing helps the learner distinguish one form from another. It is impossible to reproduce forms correctly if one cannot visually detect the differences among them. As one becomes familiar with forms and shapes, rapid recognition for reading purposes is facilitated. Written questions based on a reading passage encourage the student to read the text more attentively and discover areas which were misinterpreted in the first reading.

Only by hearing and reading a great deal of the language as it is spoken and written by native speakers can language learners acquire a feeling of appropriate use of language forms and combinations which is basic to expressive writing. It is obvious therefore, that the most effective and useful writing practice will have a close connection with what is being practiced in relation to other skills. The higher levels of composition will be possible only when the student has attained some degree of mastery of the other skills.