**Lecture 4**

TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS

1. Techniques the teacher uses for Teaching Speaking

2. Prepared and unprepared speech

3. Evaluating pupils’ speech habits

**Techniques the Teacher Uses for Teaching Speaking**

There are two forms of speaking: monologue and dialogue. Since each form has its peculiarities we should speak of teaching monologue and teaching dialogue separately.

In teaching monologue we can easily distinguish three stages according to the levels which constitute the ability to speak: (1) the statement level; (2) the utterance level; (3) the discourse level.

No speech is possible until pupils learn how to make up sentences in the foreign language and how to make statements. To develop pupils’ skills in making statements the following procedure may be suggested:

Pupils are given sentence patterns to assimilate in connection with situations. The sentence pattern is filled with different words. Thus pupils can express various thoughts. For example:

I can see a …

Pupil: I can see a blackboard.

Pupil 2: I can see a picture.

Pupil 3: I can see a map, etc. I am fond of ...

Pupil 1 am fond of music.

Pupil 2: I am fond of classical music.

Pupi1 3: I am fond of pop music, etc. We are proud of ...

Pupil 1: We are proud of our country.

Pupil 2: We are proud of our sportsmen.

Pupil 3: We are proud of our school, etc.

Pupils are invited to perform various drill exercises within the sentence patterns given: —substitution: I have a book (a pen); —extention: I have an interesting book, I have an interesting book at home; —transformation: He has a book, He has no book; —completion: If I have time I’ll ... .

Pattern practice, of course, makes no pretence of being communication. However, pattern practice for communication is what playing scales and arpeggios is to a musician. Each pattern will have to be repeated many times with a great variety of changes in its contents until the pattern becomes a habit.

Pupils make statements of their own in connection with the situations suggested by the teacher.

Give it a name.

Teacher: We write with it.

Pupil: It is a pencil (pen).

Make statements on the picture.

Teacher (silently points to the picture of a cat)

Pupil 1: This is a cat.

Pupi1 2: This is a black cat. Say the opposite.

Teacher: I live in Gorky Street.

Pupil: I do not live in Gorky Street. Teacher (pointing to the boy): He likes to play hockey.

Pupil: I don’t like to play hockey.

When pupils are able to make statements in the foreign language within grammar and vocabulary they have assimilated their speech may be more complicated. They should learn to combine statements of various sentence patterns in a logical sequence.

2. Pupils are taught how to use different sentence patterns in an utterance about an object, a subject offered. First they are to follow a model, then they do it without any help.

Teacher: Say a few words about it. (He points to an object.)

Pupil: This is a pencil. The pencil is green. It is on’the table. I like the pencil. Or Teacher points to a boy. Pupil: This is a boy. His name is Sasha. He lives in Gagarin Street. Get information and sum up what you have learnt from your classmates.

Teacher: She cut her finger.

Pupil: Who cut her finger?

Class: Ann.

* When did she cut it?
* Yesterday.
* What did she cut it with?

—With a knife.

—Why did she cut her finger?

—Because the knife was sharp.

Pupil: Yesterday Ann cut her finger. She cut it with a knife. The knife was sharp. This exercise is useful both for developing dialogic and monologic speech.

Therefore the pupil’s utterance involves 2—4 sentences which logically follow one another. At this stage pupils learn to express their thoughts, their attitude to what they say using various sentence patterns. Thus they learn how to put several sentences together in one utterance about a subject, an object, etc.

3. After pupils have learned how to say a few sentences in connection with a situation they are prepared for speaking at discourse level. Free speech is possible provided pupils have acquired habits and skills in making statements and in combining them in a logical sequence. ‘At the lesson pupils are asked to speak on a picture, a set of pictures, a film-strip, a film, comment on a text they have read or heard, make up a story of their own; of course, this being done within the language material (grammar and vocabulary) pupils have assimilated. To help pupils to speak the teacher supplies them with “what to speak about”. The devices used for the purpose are: visual aids which can stimulate the pupil’s speaking through visual perception of the subject to be spoken about, including a text read; audio aids which can stimulate the pupil’s speaking through auditory perception of a stimulus; audio-visual aids when pupils can see and hear what to speak about.

The three stages in developing pupils’ speaking should take place throughout the whole course of instruction, i. e., in junior, intermediate, and senior forms. The amount of exercises at each level, however, must be different. In junior forms statement level is of greater importance as a teaching point.

**Rule for the teacher:** In teaching monologue instruct pupils how to make statements first, then how to combine various sentences in one utterance and, finally, how to speak on a suggested topic.

We have already spoken about the linguistic characteristics of dialogue. Some more should be said about its structure.

A dialogue consists of a series of lead-response units. The significant feature of a leadresponse unit is that the response part may, and usually does, serve in its own turn as a fresh inducement leading to further verbal exchanges, i. e., lead response ► inducement ► response.

A response unit is a unit of speech between two pauses. It may consist of more than one sentence. But the most characteristic feature of a dialogue is that the lead-response units are closely connected and dependent on each other. The lead is relatively free, while the response depends on the first and does not exist without it.

—Where is the book?

—There, on the shelf.

In teaching dialogue we should use pattern dialogues as they involve all features which characterize this form of speech.

There are three stages in learning a dialogue: (1) receptive; (2) reproductive; (3) constructive (creative).

1. Pupils “receive” the dialogue by ear first. They listen to the dialogue recorded or reproduced by the teacher. The teacher helps pupils in comprehension of the dialogue using a picture or pictures to illustrate its contents. They listen to the dialogue a second time and then read it silently for better understanding, paying attention to the intonation. They may listen to the dialogue and read it again, if necessary.

2. Pupils enact the pattern dialogue. We may distinguish three kinds of reproduction:

*Immediate*. Pupils reproduce the dialogue in imitation of the speaker or the teacher while listening to it or just after they have heard it. The teacher checks the pupils’ pronunciation, and intonation in particular. The pupils are asked to learn the dialogue by heart for homework.

*Delayed*. After pupils have learned the dialogue at home, they enact the pattern dialogue in persons. Before calling on pupils it is recommended that they should listen to the pattern dialogue recorded again to remind them of how it “sounds”.

*Modified*. Pupils enact the dialogue with some modifications in its contents. They change some elements” in it. The more elements (main words and phrases) they change in the pattern the better they assimilate the structure of the dialogue: —Will you help me, sonny?

—What shall I do, Mother?

—Will you bring me a pail of water?

— Certainly I will.

The use of pictures may be helpful. Besides pupils user their own experience while selecting the words for substitutions.

The work should not be done mechanically. Pupils should speak on the situation. As a result of this work pupils master the structure of the pattern dialogue (not only the contents), i. e., they can use it as a model for making up dialogues of their own, that is why pattern dialogues should be carefully selected.

The first two stages aim at storing up patterns in pupils’ memory for expressing themselves in different situations, of course within the topics and linguistic material the syllabus sets for each form.

3. Pupils make up dialogues of their own. They are given a picture or a verbal situation to talk about. This is possible provided pupils have a stock of patterns, a certain number of phrases for starting a conversation, joining in, etc. They should use those lead-response units they have learned in connection with the situation suggested for a conversation.

At the third stage the choice of stimuli is of great importance, as very often pupils cannot think what to say, though they know how to say this or that. Therefore audio-visual aids should be extensively utilized.

**Rule for the teacher**: In teaching dialogue use pattern dialogues; make sure that your pupils go through the three stages from receptive through reproductive to creative, supply them with the subject to talk about.

In teaching speaking the problem is what form of speech to begin with, and what should be the relationship between monologue and dialogue. This problem may be solved in different ways. Some methodologists give preference to dialogic speech in teaching beginners, and they suggest that pupils learn first how to ask and answer questions which is mostly characteristic of a dialogue, and how to make up a short dialogue following a model. Others prefer monologic speech as a starting point. Pupils are taught how to make statements, how to combine several sentences into one utterance in connection with an object or a situation offered.

These approaches to the problem are reflected in school textbooks now in use. A. D. Starkov and R. R. Dixon in their textbooks prefer to begin with dialogic speech. They start by teaching pupils how to ask various types of questions. For example: The book is on the desk.

The book isn’t under the desk. Is the book on the desk? Yes, it is. (No, it isn’t.) Is the book on the desk or under it? It’s on the desk. Where’s the book? It’s on the desk. (Fifth Form English. Teacher’s Book.)

S. K. Folomkina and E. I. Kaar give preference to developing pupils’ monologic speech. For example:

I see a pen.

I see a desk.

Pete sees a desk and a pen.

As to the relationship between monologue and dialogue, it should vary from stage to stage in teaching speaking in schools. In the junior stage (5—6 forms) dialogic speech, the one which allows the teacher to introduce new material and consolidate it in conversation, must prevail. In the intermediate stage (7—8 forms) dialogue and monologue must be on an equal footing.

In the senior stage (9—10 forms) monologic speech must prevail since pupils either take part in discussion and, therefore, express their thoughts in connection with a problem or retell a text read or heard. To sum it up both forms of speech (monologue and dialogue) should be developed side by side with preference for the one which is more important for pupils’ progress in learning a foreign language at a certain stage.

**PREPARED AND UNPREPARED SPEECH**

Pupils’ speech in both forms may be of two kinds: prepared and unprepared. It is considered prepared when the pupil has been given time enough to think over its content and form. He can speak on the subject following the plan made either independently at home or in class under the teacher’s supervision. His speech will be more or less correct and sufficiently fluent since plenty of preliminary exercises had been done before.

In schools, however, pupils often have to speak on a topic when they are not yet prepared for it. As a result only bright pupils can cope with the task. In such a case the teacher trying to find a way out gives his pupils a text which covers the topic. Pupils learn and recite it in class. They reproduce the text either in the very form it was given or slightly transform it. Reciting, though useful and necessary in language learning, has but little to do with speech since speaking is a creative activity and is closely connected with thinking, while reciting has to do only with memory. Of course pupils should memorize words, word combinations, phrases, sentence patterns, and texts to “accumulate” the material and still it is only a prerequisite. The main objective of the learner is to be able to use the linguistic material to express his thoughts.

This is ensured by the pupil’s ability to arrange and rearrange in his own way the material stored up in his memory. Consequently, while assigning homework it is necessary to distinguish between reciting and speaking so that the pupil should know what he is expected to do while preparing for the lesson — to reproduce the text or to compile a text of his own. His answer should be evaluated differently depending on the task set. If the pupil is to recite a text, the teacher evaluates the quality of reproduction, i. e., exactness, intonation and fluency. If the pupil is to speak on a subject, the teacher evaluates not only the correctness of his speech but his skills in arranging and rearranging the material learnt, i. e., his ability to make various transformations within the material he uses while speaking. The teacher should encourage each pupil to speak on the subject in his own way and thus develop pupils’ initiative and thinking.

The pupil’s speech is considered unprepared when, without any previous preparation, he can do the following:

—Speak on a subject suggested by the teacher. For example, winter holidays are over and pupils come back to school. They are invited to tell the teacher and the class how each of them spent his holidays. Pupils in turn tell the class where they were, what they did, whether they had a good time, and so on.

—Speak on the text read. For example, pupils have read two or three chapters of “William”. The teacher asks a pupil to give its short summary or to tell the class the contents of the chapters as if the other pupils have not read them.

—Speak on the text heard. For example, pupils listened to the text “Great Britain” (there is a map of Great Britain on the wall). The teacher asks them (in turn) to come up to the map and speak on Great Britain. While speaking pupils can use the information they have just received or appeal to their knowledge about the country.

—Discuss a problem or problems touched upon in the text read or heard. For example, pupils read about education in Great Britain. After the teacher makes sure that his pupils understand the text and have a certain idea of the system of education in Great Britain, he arranges a discussion on the problem. He asks his pupils to compare the system of education in Great Britain and in our country. The teacher stimulates pupils’ speech either by questions or through wrong statements.

—Have an interview with “a foreigner”. For example, pupils are studying the topic “London”. The teacher may arrange an interview. One of the pupils is “a Londoner”. The classmates ask him various questions and express their opinions on the subjects under discussion.

—Help a “foreigner”, for example, to find the way to the main street or square of the town; or instruct him as to the places of interest in the town. This may be done directly or with the help of “an interpreter”.

There are, of course, other techniques for stimulating pupils’ unprepared speech. The teacher chooses the techniques most suitable for his pupils since he knows their aptitudes, their progress in the language, the time he has at his disposal for developing speaking skills, the concrete material at which pupils are working.

In conclusion it should be said that prepared and unprepared speech must be developed simultaneously from the very beginning. The relationship between prepared and unprepared speech should vary depending on the stage of learning the language. In the junior stage prepared speech takes the lead, while in the senior stage unprepared speech should prevail.

**EVALUATING PUPILS’ SPEECH HABITS**

Pupils’ speech habits may be evaluated in two ways:

(1) constantly, during every lesson when pupils perform various exercises in hearing and speaking and the teacher has an opportunity to watch every youngster working (in a group of 20 pupils the teacher can pay attention to everyone);

(2) regularly, after finishing a lesson (a unit of the textbook), a topic studied. The teacher may conduct a quiz. He may ask pupils to retell the text heard, to speak on a picture, to talk on a situation, in other words, to perform all oral activities possible in this particular form, with this group of pupils, within the language material and the topic covered.

The former may or may not result in assigning pupils marks for their speech activities. The latter results in evaluating speech activities of those pupils who are called on to speak.