



Module: English For Specific Purposes (ESP)
Language Skills in ESP
Level: Master 2
Option: LLA
Semester:2
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Teaching Listening

Aural comprehension is the skill of listening, understanding and responding in an appropriate way. This skill provides the foundation for learning a foreign language. It is basic, for communicative methodology, which emphasizes listening as a vital part of the language acquisition process. Thus, unless the learner hears accurately and understands correctly, he will not be able to respond adequately. The skill of listening comprehension may also be regarded as the first step to achieving oral fluency and accuracy. In addition, the skill is needed in situations where oral response is not required. Instances include listening to a lecture, a discussion, a dialogue.

Importance of the Listening Skill

The teacher's task is to provide opportunities for the learners to listen to living English used in everyday situations such as in shops, restaurants, public speeches and interviews. The teacher must also train the Learners to listen and to understand speech of native speakers of the target language. In this regard a lot of practice in listening is needed in order to increase the keenness of hearing so that students can:

- a. distinguish sounds, words and structures,
- b. associate meaning with sounds,
- c. infer meaning from speaker's discourse,
- d. process message,
- e. understand conversational English in all kinds of speech situation, and
- f. understand, evaluate, organize, take notes, and retrieve information.

Requirements for Listening Practice

1. The ability to distinguish English sounds
2. The ability to identify the international devices of English: rising intonation, falling intonation, stressed words versus unstressed words, the length of pauses, etc.
3. The ability to understand grammatical signals indicating:
4. The ability to understand the meaning of the lexical items from the context or the situation being discussed
5. The ability to understand collations of words.

6. The ability to understand cultural aspects implicit in the utterances. Recognizing these cultural concepts would increase students' understanding of the content.
7. The ability to differentiate between written and spoken language.

Factors Affecting the Process of Developing the Listening Skill

The Listening Material

This should be:

- a. of an appropriate level
- b. carefully stated or designed;
- c. taught in a sequential manner, progressing from simple to more complex activities;
- d. suitable for Learners' age, sex, intelligence, and interests;
- e. compatible with the Learners' knowledge or social background;
- f. motivating to Learners' concentration and understanding;
- g. stimulating and not testing Learners' language abilities.

Acoustic Environment

The listening setting should be away from distracting noise and interference, and provided with audio and visual aids, preferably a language laboratory where audio facilities are available.

The Listener (Learner)

Who should be:

1. familiar with the target language in its various aspects: phonology, lexis, syntax and cohesion;
2. aware of the theme or objective of the listening; material or the tonic under discussion;
3. recognition of the subject matter of the text;
4. able-to recognize redundant clues, such as false starts, attention claimers; connectors and function words;
5. able to analyze and select, that is, to distinguish between main points, major ideas and supporting or minor ones,
6. used to radio listening or TV viewing;
7. familiar with reading/speaking habits; and
8. trained in note-taking or summary making.

The Speaker

Who should have:

1. Good language ability.
2. Clarity of pronunciation, accent, variation, voice, etc.

3. Comprehensible speed of delivery.
4. To some extent, prestige and personality
5. In addition to the elements listed above, regular listening practice, adequate exposure to authentic language, and a favorable attitude towards the language and its speakers.

Activities Involved in the Listening Skill

The following model activities may stimulate teachers to produce their own. They are sequenced to meet different levels of learning or language proficiency.

1. Listening for stress.
2. Game and competitions.
3. Closely related to word recognition.
4. Another listening comprehension activity is dictation.
5. A variation of this technique is question/answer practice.
6. Another technique is multiple-choice exercises.
7. Listening for drawing.
8. Listening to short interviews.
9. Listening to dialogues..
10. Listening for gist.

Teaching Speaking

Learning to speak is a lengthy, complex process. Many foreign language teachers realize that fluency in speaking is the most difficult skill to develop. In addition to linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Requirements for the Speaking Skill

There are other requirements that should be available in order to develop this skill. They include the following:

1. A competent teacher who is fluent in conversation.
2. Appropriate classroom atmosphere.
3. Equal opportunity for Learners' participation.
4. Clear objectives in speaking so that Learners' can think of the ideas they wish to express.
5. A knowledge of the appropriate functional expressions.
6. A variety of learning activities including manipulative drills, guided conversation, communicative practice and free oral work such as discussion groups, debates, panel discussions, skills competitions, etc.
7. Sensitivity to any change in the situation in which communicative operations are taking place.
8. Contextualized language in terms of who is speaking to whom, where and why.

Importance of the Speaking Skill

Learning to speak English is, more effectively, achieved by speaking than by listening, or reading. Learners, therefore, must have the opportunity to express their likes and dislikes, to talk about their interests, etc., in living natural English. Without this training in the productive skill of speech, students' ability to communicate in spoken English, will be meagre despite all knowledge of rules of pronunciation, of grammar and of sentence formation.

Stages of Teaching the Speaking Skill

Three components may be distinguished in teaching oral communication: mechanical oral practice, meaningful oral work, and free oral production.

Stage 1: Mechanical Practice

The first step in teaching speaking is to train learners in sound discrimination, oral vocabulary, verb forms and grammatical patterns. These elements are necessary to acquire, a basic knowledge of linguistic competence. Thus, pronunciation should be stressed from the beginning because *habits acquired at the start of language study are often difficult to change later on!* Learners, therefore, must practice hearing and understanding what is said or heard and must pronounce it correctly.

Examples of Mechanical Drills

There are many types of manipulative drill where there is complete control of the Learners' responses. Typical examples of these are repetition, mim-men and substitution drills.

Stage 2: Meaningful Oral Work

At the second stage of learning to speak English, the structural controls are progressively relaxed. The Learners now understand what they are saying structurally and semantically. But there is no real communication taking place because there is still control of the response and the speakers do not add new information, as they are still subject to some restraints. Furthermore, the initiative is still left with the teacher or with the group leader.

This stage introduces the learners to social formulas: greetings, introductions, complaints, asking for information, etc. it also gives them expressions with which express their ideas creatively. It produces few incorrect sentences, and these are corrected by members of the group, not by the teacher. The teacher should make the following points clear:

- a. **Setting.** Where are people talking? What sounds do they hear? What is the weather like? and so on.
- b. **Action.** What do the participants do during the activity? Are they standing, sitting, walking or so? How are they reacting?
- c. **Emotion.** Learners must be encouraged to express their feelings and opinions. The learners will feel the vitality and expressiveness of English.
- d. **Function.** Learners should know why someone says something and what it means;

Procedures and Techniques

For **drilling** guided oral fluency, the teacher provides the class with the situation and content of what is to be said, and learners communicate within this general framework.

Topics and exercises should follow closely the interests of the Learners in order to encourage learner-learner interaction and to make English classes a lively and cheerful experience. **Material** can be drawn from different sources such as textbooks, learners' compositions, English newspapers or magazines, language games, classroom objects, and the like. It is also important to make situations as possible. Persons, places and things should be named rather referred to as generic concepts. Contextualization highlights the social setting of language use. It also motivates the Learners because they are practising the language as it actually used by native speakers.

Stage 3: Free Oral Production

By the third stage of learning to speak, the Learners have the basic machinery to say whatever they want or feel and to tell others what they did. However, the teacher has to set up the situation or to provide the stimuli that arouse the Learners' interest. Visual aids and props are good tools to set up class discussions, dialogues and other speaking activities. Moreover, the teacher has

to fit the oral activities to the Learners' own cultural background in order to meet their interests and to motivate them to participate in the activity. The teacher also has to prepare the material adequately as free discussions are likely to fail if he hasn't planned them carefully in advance. In fact, the success of a free conversation depends on four elements: careful preparation by teacher and learners; the silence of the teacher during the activity; the availability of interesting topics that stimulate learners to participate; and confidence in their ability to communicate.

Procedures and Techniques

Training at this stage is best done with group work in problem solving and role-playing activities, conversation classes, dramatization and the like.

Activities Involved in Developing the Speaking Skill

Speaking English is the primary concern. The teachers can help their Learners achieve this objective through a series of communicative interaction activities. Here are some examples:

1. Dialogues
2. Interviews
3. Role-playing
4. Problem-solving
5. Debates

Teaching Reading

Reading can be described as the process of extracting meaning from printed or written material. That is, the ability to decode meaning from graphic symbols as illustrated by Goodman (1967, p.113): **graphic code** **decoding** **meaning**.

Reading, however, involves a whole series of subsidiary skills. These include the recognition of the alphabetic system, the correlation of the graphic symbols with formal linguistic elements, as well as intellectual comprehension and mechanical eye movement. Each of these elements may present a problem to the foreign language learner.

There is also the problem of reading direction; Arabic is read from right to left, the opposite direction to English. Cultural aspects are another problem which requires guidance on the part of the teacher when training the Learners in the reading skill.

However, Learners should not start any kind of reading before they are familiar with the material they are about to read. A learner is not expected to read words he has not heard and said several times. He must not be overwhelmed at the beginning. Instead, he/she must be given graded materials beginning with pictures to identify the reading of simple sentences, paragraphs, and short paragraphs, and short passages.

Furthermore, the content and vocabulary should be of some relevance to the Learners' environment and interest. As the learners' progress in learning the language the level of the reading texts also develops.

There is also the question of teaching the mechanics of reading:

1. the alphabet,
2. the direction of reading,
3. pauses,
4. reading speed, and
5. English sounds.

Attention to all these mechanical aspects is necessary to develop reading skills properly.

Importance of the Reading Skill

The main goal of teaching reading is to train learners to read efficiently and quickly to get enough information or meaning from written material rapidly and with full understanding. Besides this general aim, there are other reasons for reading such as the following:

1. At the initial stages of learning the foreign language, reading serves primarily to introduce basic linguistic forms –phonemes, words, structures, sentence patterns and language functions– in an appropriate context. It also helps learners to recognize visual symbols, appreciate sentence rhythm, acquaint themselves with English spelling and improve their

pronunciation. Reading, at this elementary stage, takes the form of oral practice or rote recitation. Learners usually read aloud words, sentences, short paragraphs, simple dialogues, songs and the like.

2. After grasping the essentials of sound-symbol relationships and having mastered the basic techniques of reading, Learners are guided to read and comprehend long selections. The objective is to develop their ability in comprehending specific information implied in the reading text, and to broaden their knowledge of more vocabulary, new ideas, cultural content, language functions and expressions, etc. and to reinforce the basic knowledge they have acquired in the foreign language. Furthermore, reading serves to integrate a variety of language activities, namely listening, speaking and writing. Thus Learners' reading experience provides topic for oral discussion and writing. Similarly, listening to stories, poems or reports will enable Learners to develop their ability in aural comprehension.
3. Individualized reading gives Learners, the freedom to select what they wish to read. Here, reading skills have practical or recreational purposes. Learners may sometimes read books, magazines and journals either for enjoyment or to acquire general information, and widen their background knowledge.
4. Reading helps foreign language Learners improve their English competence partly because it involves linguistic aspects and cultural allusions, and partly because it provides them with real life situations.
5. Reading forms a tool of communication in addition to listening and speaking. People who have opportunity to talk with native speakers of the target language can have an access through reading to their literature, and consequently understand more about their civilization. In this sense, reading is the window through which they can see other cultures and gain more general or specific knowledge.
6. In our country, the reading skill is often more important than any language skills, this is because English is taught more for business or academic purposes than for daily communication.

Types of Reading

Reading falls into two major categories: *intensive* and *extensive*.

Intensive Reading

It is a classroom activity carried on under the guidance of the teacher. It is mainly concerned with texts and involves focusing upon new words, structures, expressions, functions, pronunciation and cultural insights.

Extensive Reading

It is usually done at home for pleasure, or to acquire general information. It has a supplementary role in the process of learning a foreign language as it broadens the general knowledge of the learner and reinforces previously learned items. The material usually takes the form of short stories, novels, plays, poems, texts, magazines and journals.

Silent Reading

Silent reading is reading for understanding or for comprehension. It is a very important skill that needs practising by Learners. This skill requires more teacher guidance and assistance in the early stages of learning the language. It should be introduced only after the new words and expressions have been learned.

Supplementary Reading

Supplementary (free) reading differs from both basic reading and reading comprehension, in that, it does not contain any and structures which Learners have not met before. This reading activity aims at increasing the Learners' skill in the language and their command of words. It enriches their knowledge of the culture of the foreign people through introducing them to more mature and more timely material than that found in school textbooks. It also provides an opportunity for correlation with any special field in which the learner, is interested: science, sports, music, and so on.

Reading Stages

Reading is a development process which goes through several stages starting from words and phrases to advanced reading and communication practice. The FL teacher must have authentic reading materials for all these stages to help learners develop their reading efficiency.

Stage One: Word Level

At the word level, the concern is with the association of form and sound symbol, spelling and sound- regular or irregular.

Stage two: Sentence Level.

At this level, the teacher gives learners practice in patterns of high frequency. Subsequently, they may read sentences developed from dialogue material familiar to them, for the sake of meaning intonation and stress.

The following activities provide techniques for teaching at this stage:

- 1- Asking Learners to read sentences with words they already know.
- 2- The teacher writes sentences on the chalkboard or on overhead trans-potencies for Learners to read.
- 3- Learners may practice reading sentences in the class or in the language laboratory or with cassette/tape-recorder, etc.

4- Songs are an excellent technique for improving learners' pronunciation, rhythm and stress.

Stage three: Paragraph Level

At this stage Learners are introduced to simple narrative or conversational material. Passages should not exceed one printed page. This is done under the guidance of the teacher who often uses the materials provided in the textbook. The following are some reading activities which are suitable for this stage:

1. Reading for structure signals. The teacher draws the Learners' attention to written grammar signals.
2. Techniques of inference. The teacher guides Learners to infer meanings or simple conclusions from paragraph context.
3. Techniques of paraphrase. With this technique learners try to grasp the meaning of selection in its entirety.
4. Reading for information. This involves three levels of reading practice:
 1. The beginning level with questions that require restatement of the text;
 2. The intermediate with content questions that require learners to demonstrate their understanding of the entire texts;
 3. The advanced level with questions initiated by Learners who also provide the answers to their own questions and suggest a suitable title for the whole passage.

Stage four: Reading Longer Selections

As Learners progress-in learning the language needed for reading, they should read longer selection in addition to guided reading passages.

Reading activities may be classed as intensive and extensive. The former is what they have in the text reader or course book, whereas extensive reading is meant for enjoyment, for general information. Learners should be offered a choice of reading and select topics which interest them. They may also be asked to give a summary or an outline of what they are reading or to rewrite the selection by changing some of the nouns, adjectives, tenses and direct speech. They could then present their version to the others in the class.

Stage five: Individualized Reading

This is the advanced stage of reading. Students are given the freedom to select from a list of available material what they wish to read. Students depend on themselves in reading as they feel confident enough to pick up a book or a newspaper and read it for their own pleasure and enlightenment.

This can be realized as follows:

- a. Selection of reading materials
- b. Purposive reading skills

- c. Question formation
- d. Learners' writing as reading materials
- e. Discourse analysis
- f. Supplementary readers
- g. Questions and self-tests

This plan of a reading lesson may contain the following sequence:

1. The teacher writes on the chalkboard the day and date, lesson number, part number and page.
2. The teacher motivates the class by reviewing the material of the previous lesson regarding content, vocabulary, patterns, spelling and other language components.
3. The teacher presents some of the new words and structures that will appear in the section he has planned to teach.
4. The teacher tries to arouse the learners' interest in the reading. Thus, if the reading is part of a longer story, he should relate it to brief the class on the main theme, and so on. If there is a picture, he can ask learners questions about it. If the more interesting the teacher can make the reading topic, the easier it will be to read.
5. Now learners are ready to read the passage silently.
6. After silent reading, the teacher asks a few comprehension questions on the passage content to evaluate their ability to comprehend what they have read.
7. The next step is model reading. The teacher can read the passage aloud with learners listening or repeating to give them an example they should imitate. The teacher may use taped material recorded by native speakers of English.
8. After model reading, Learners may read the passage aloud and individually. The teacher, however, should not overuse reading aloud as the usefulness of this skill is limited, its main function is to practise special pronunciation problems.
9. The class may then do some of the exercises on words or patterns usually included in the reading test book.
10. The lesson ends with the teacher assigning new homework on material done orally in the class.

These steps are systematic but the teacher is free to omit some of them if, time does not allow him/ her to do all of them. In addition to the above procedures, the teacher may:

1. clarify the purpose of the reading passage;
2. highlight language and their context in the passage;
3. help learners read words in logical groups, that is, small groups of words which make sense;
4. help learners to guess the meaning of words from context; and

5. if time allows, do a *paragraph-by-paragraph* analysis, i.e. engage learners in discourse analysis.

Teaching Writing

Writing has for many years, even centuries, occupied a large place in teaching and learning procedures in schools. To be literate has implied the ability to read and write in the native language, and it is these skills which students have practiced in class. This approach to native language learning has easily transferred to the foreign-language classroom, without too much thought given to its appropriateness or inappropriateness in a situation where the student does not have the spoken form of the language already at his command. Writing exercises keep students busy and out of mischief. They are easy to set; the inexperienced or poorly qualified teacher may take them directly from the textbook, with which a key to acceptable answers is usually provided; they may often be corrected as a group procedure in the classroom; and they yield a wide spread of evaluative grades for entry in the teacher's records.

Before we consider what is the most reasonable role of writing in the foreign-language program, it is as well to recall two facts often ignored by teachers who, by tradition, tend to expect students to write something out as a demonstration of learning: First, that many highly articulate persons express themselves very inadequately in writing in their native language. Second, that only a minority of the speakers of any language acquire the skill of writing it with any degree of finesse, and then only after years of training in school and practice out of school. In writing and even speaking, the foreign student rarely achieves the same degree of mastery as a native speaker, even after the experience of residence in the foreign country; he needs to be able to use what he does know accurately and flexibly, making the most of the resources at his command. This does not mean that writing has little to contribute to foreign-language learning. Apart from its intrinsic interest or value, it is an essential classroom activity. As we shall see, it is of considerable importance for consolidating learning in the other skill areas, it provides a welcome change of activity, and it will always remain useful, although not indispensable, in the area of testing.

Importance of the Writing Skill

The skill of writing in an elegant fashion, according to the canons of the educated elite, is an aim impossible of realization at the high school stage and demands a mastery of the foreign language which many high school teachers themselves do not possess.

The distinctions we have drawn between types of writing activities reflect the four major areas of learning involved in the writing process. The student must learn the graphic system of the foreign language; he must learn to control the structure of the language so that what he writes is comprehensible to his reader; and he must learn to select from among possible combinations of words and phrases those which will convey the nuances he has in mind in the register which is most appropriate. The first three of these processes must be learned so thoroughly that they no longer

require the concentrated attention of the writer, who may then give his mind to the process of selection among possible combination.

Writing is not, then, a skill which can be learned in isolation. In the apprentice stage of writing, which will last for a con peculiar difficulty of spelling or script, is a counterpart of what he has learned for the mastery of listening comprehension, speaking, and reading, with the activity of writing helping to consolidate learning in these areas. Writing gives the student practice in manipulating structural variants, adding the reinforcement of the kinesthetic image to the auditory and visual. It is recognized by reading experts as a desirable complementary activity to reading. By drawing attention to the form of words and phrases writing helps the student to distinguish one from the other and to build up a memory of the graphic forms and their associations which facilitates the reading process.

In its more advanced form of composition, it is itself dependent on progress in the other skills. Accurate and idiomatic writing are quite different from the mere piecing together of language elements in some artificial patchwork which would never be encountered outside the classroom. Only by hearing and reading a great deal of the language as it is spoken and written by native speakers can the foreigner and combinations, which is basic to expressive writing. What he is unable to say over to himself, he will be unlikely to write with ease, and until he has read a great deal he will not be familiar with the way native speakers express themselves, for all kinds of purposes, in writing.

It is obvious, then, that the most effective writing practice, and the most generally useful, will have a close connection with what is being practiced in relation to other skills. Writing practice will at first be a service activity, consolidating work in the other areas; yet, while the student is using it to reinforce other learning, he will be mastering the technical details of the art. The higher levels of composition will be possible only when the student has attained a high standard in composition in the foreign language, just as they have not attained it in the native language. These students should not be driven into a state of frustration by examinations heavily weighted in favor of the writing skill when it is obvious that they have achieved a satisfactory mastery of the skill of listening comprehension, speaking, and reading.

Many writing weaknesses in advanced classes can be traced back to lack of systematic training during the early stages of the foreign-language course. The student must be trained systematically through five stages of development: copying, reproduction, recombination, guided writing and composition/these stages will overlap, practice of the activities of the previous stage, continuing as more complicated work is introduced.

Stages Involved in Developing the Writing Skill

Copying

The first stage, coping (sometimes called **transcription**), is often despised by foreign language teachers as an unworthy and unchallenging occupation for adolescent students. This attitude is unfortunate and ignores the fact that there are many aspects of another language which are very strange to the -student and with which he needs to familiarize himself very thoroughly if he is to write the language confidently. Where there is a new script to be learned this attitude, is not so prevalent, because the necessity for accurate copying for purposes of recognition and reproduction is too obvious to be ignored. Where the script is the same as in the native language, and where there are many similarities between the two languages, careful copying helps to overcome the interference of native-language habits by focusing the student's attention on the differences. The work set for copying should consist of sections of work already learned orally and read with the teacher. As the student is copying, he should repeat to himself what he is writing. In this way he deepens the impression in his mind of the sounds the symbols represent, and he has further repetition practices of basic dialogue or pattern sentences. After he has had some practice in copying accurately, with correct diacritical and punctuation marks, he may continue to copy as an aid to memorization. At this stage, he repeats a sentence to himself as he copies it, and then tries to say it over to himself two or three times without referring to the script.

In languages where sound-symbol combinations are particularly complicated, copying activities may be continued side by side with more advanced writing practice. Students who have made lists of sentences containing different spelling of the same sounds may copy these lists several times, concentrating on the variations in spelling. If they are assigned lists of words to be learned because of peculiarities of orthography, they may be asked to copy the words several times as they are learning them, thus imprinting the graphic outlines more firmly in their minds. In the early stages credit should be given for accuracy in copying in order to encourage students in careful observation of details.

Reproduction

During the second, or reproduction, stage the student will attempt to write, without originality, what he has learned orally and read in his textbook. Thus he will be able to do all the more successfully if he has been trained in habits of accuracy during the copying stage. If sound writing habits are to be firmly established, the learning situation must be continually structured so that the students will write correctly, not incorrectly; for this reason the student will at first be asked to reproduce without a copy only the sentences and phrases which he has learned to copy. As a first step he will be asked to rewrite immediately each sentence he has copied without reference to his copy or to the original. He will then compare this version with the original for correction. Next, he

will be asked to write down sentences he has memorized, read, and copied as they are dictated to him. When dictation procedures are employed it is as well for the teacher to realize that he is calling for the exercise of two skills at once: listening comprehension and writing. Since all the skills are finally integrated in language knowledge, this is not necessarily a disadvantage, but the teacher must be aware of the fact that he is requiring more of the student than a simple exercise in writing. Where particular difficulties of spelling are being emphasized, the spot-dictation procedure may be adopted: a complete sentence will be read, but only the word or words which are repeated will be written. Some teachers supply an outline with blanks to avoid confusion in spot-dictation exercises.

At a further stage the teacher will call for the writing of the learned phrase as a response to a question he is asking, or as a description of a picture he is showing. Here he is requiring a clear understanding of meaning, and memory for learned response, as well as ability to distinguish aurally and write accurately. Further practice in reproduction may take the form of the writing of pattern-drill responses of the repetitive type, as a variation from the oral repetition or reading of these. Where audio-lingual texts are not in use, the students will be asked to reproduce, at a cue from the teacher, pattern sentences which have been practiced orally in classroom activities and studied in the textbook. In no circumstances, at this stage will the writing, activity on the part of the student require variation of the learned phrases since the emphasis is entirely on accuracy of reproduction.

Recombination

The third stage is the recombination stage, where the student is required to reproduce learned work with minor adaptations. This parallels in conception the recombination stage in oral work and reading. It must, however, be continually borne in mind that the work of recombination in writing will always be some distance behind what is being spoken and read.

The writing of recombination of the learned sentences requires not only the ability to manipulate grammatical structures, which is basic to the speaking skill, but also a sound knowledge of the intricacies of representing graphically what the student is required only to recognize in reading; more effective results will be achieved in writing exercises if there is a continual integration of practice in all the skills. The student will have already heard, produced orally, and read in his textbook recombinations of the type he will write. Only when the teacher is confident that the student can say over to himself correctly what he is to write he be asked to make recombinations himself. This is in conformity with the principle already enunciated of structuring the situation so that the student has the greatest possible chance of writing correctly.

At this stage, writing practice may take a number of forms. Students will write out structure drills of various kinds: making substitutions of words and phrases, transforming sentences, expanding them to include further information within the limits of learning phrases, contracting them by substituting pronouns for nouns or single words for groups of words. Many of the drills discussed in chapter 4 can be used in this way. The writing of drills not only gives valuable practice in accurate and correct construction of sentences, but consolidates what has been learned orally. It is useful home study exercise, ensuring that the student gives careful thought to work studied during the day in class. This becomes difficult where the textbook supplies all the responses to the drills. In such a case the teacher will need to construct drill cues of a similar type to give the students home study practice in recombination.

When students have acquired some confidence in writing simple substitutions and transformations, they may be asked to make recombinations around a theme presented to the class in the picture or a series of pictures. These pictures will, of course, represent situations in connection with which the students have learned orally. The recombinations may take the form of variations of memorized dialogues which, after correction, may be acted out in the classroom. At first these recombinations will not involve any new vocabulary. Later they may provide an occasion for some expansion of vocabulary, carefully introduced orally and learned as a group exercise before being used in writing. At no point, however, will a student be required to make a recombination, which involves a structural change and new vocabulary at the same time.

The simple rule of one thing at a time will decrease the possibility of error and make for more effective learning. To further ensure correctness in writing, recombinations will first be constructed orally in class. Students will not be asked to write such recombination unsupervised until they have had sufficient practice to ensure success. If written combinations are kept together in a special section of their workbooks, in a progressive series, the students will take more interest in recording them accurately. If books are taken up and these writing sections checked and graded as part of the regular assessment, the students will be encouraged to take pride in well-written work.

An exercise which combines recombination and reproduction is recombination dictation. Dictation of this type will consist of rearrangements of dialogue sentences, or narratives constructed from the conversational material and pattern sentences. Since dictation involves ability to recognize recombinations aurally and retain them, as well as reproduce them graphically, such dictations must be constructed with great care to see that the problems of aural recognition do not coincide with problems of graphic representation. Work to be written from dictation must contain no new elements, that is, no elements which have not already been practiced and learned thoroughly, studied in graphic form, and used, in some kind of writing practice. The dictation will then serve as a form of review and the possibility of error will be reduced.

The teacher should dictate at a normal speed of utterance, not distorting the phrases and the flow of speech in any way. Segments dictated should consist of a meaningful word group. Each phrase should be repeated clearly only once before students are expected to write it. Since some students become flustered when expected to retain what they have comprehended aurally long enough to write it accurately, students should be trained to repeat aloud what they have heard before attempting to write it from dictation, and then to repeat it over to themselves as they have heard long enough for them to write the whole phrase, the same segment should be repeated to allow the students an opportunity to check what they have written and correct any inaccuracies.

At the end of the dictation of the whole passage, time should be allowed for rechecking of accuracy of writing before the passage is reread a final time, with normal intonation and fluency. This period for checking forces each student to do some thinking for himself before the final reading, and makes him more alert to the sections of the final reading which he most needs to hear again. If the procedure outlined is adopted from the early stage of foreign-language learning, students will be trained to retain whole phrases in their immediate memory, and the dictation practice will be reinforcing the practice in listening comprehension as well as providing practice in accurate writing. As students advance in language learning, phrases dictated will be gradually lengthened, until the students are eventually able to retain complete sentences in their immediate memory and write them down correctly.

Guided Writing

At the fourth stage, guided writing, the student will be given some freedom in the selection of lexical items and structural patterns for his written exercise, but within a framework which restrains him from attempting to compose at a level beyond his state of knowledge. He will begin with outlines which allow for some individuality, but which also help him to keep to what he has learned, and he will gradually move on to composition, which is so closely associated with what he has read or heard that he has no choice but to restrict himself to the known. As his control of writing techniques increases he will be ready to move into the fifth stage, composition, where he may attempt to express his personal meaning in an acceptable foreign-language expression.

Composition

The final stage of composition involves individual selection of vocabulary and structure for the expression of personal meaning. In a foreign-language, the student is still not capable of being truly creative in his writing at this level, since he must write as a native speaker would write, without having, as yet, the same mastery of language in all flexibility. His knowledge of the foreign language is still very inferior to his knowledge and control of his native language. If he has carefully trained for a sufficiently long period through the preceding four stages, he will have

developed an attitude of mind which will prevent him from committing the work excesses of clothing native-language expression and structures in foreign words.

If asked to write on subjects, which are too general, too philosophical or too literary, however, he will be frustrated by his desire to write at the standard which is expected of him in native language composition classes, at a stage when his resources of expression in the foreign language are still extremely limited. The key word for him to keep in the forefront of his thinking, in this dilemma is "simplify". He must cloth his thoughts in simple, lucid language which is well within his command. With the systematic training we have advocated; he will not be tempted to write first in his native language and then translate, realizing that this can lead only to the stilted foreign-language expression, at the best and to absolute incomprehensibility at the worst. Encouraged to use a monolingual, dictionary rather than a bilingual dictionary he will be forced to use what he know, checking on its accuracy and examining the possibilities of suggested alternatives, rather than seeking inexact and misleading equivalents for notion he has not as yet encountered in his experience with the foreign language.

At this stage he will be increasing his understanding of the differences between speaking and writing a foreign language. Apart from conventional difference in style, he will be trying to express himself more concisely, more descriptively, less casually. This will severely test his control of structure and his precise understanding of lexical meaning. The composition stage provides teacher and student with the opportunity to identify persisting areas of misunderstanding on an individual basis, so that remedial practice may be undertaken where necessary.

When students have reached what is considered to be an advanced class the teacher will need to exercise great care to see that they are not plunged abruptly from guided writing into a limitless sea of free expression. The transition has to be gradual. Exercise in composition will at first be closely linked with material being read and discussed; the student will be asked merely to describe, narrate, and explain, or to summarize. As he becomes more accustomed to expressing himself within consciously a accepted restriction, he will be asked to comment on or develop ideas beyond those in the material read. While at high school, he will not be expected to imitate the style of great writers but will concentrate on developing for himself a simple, lucid form of expression which would be acceptable to a native speaker. Nor will he be asked to write literary criticism or discuss ideas. At a philosophical or sociological level. For these types of exercise, he must possess a specialized vocabulary and training in concepts, which the high school teacher cannot aspire to give him, or can give him only at the expense of the further training in language skills to which class time should be devoted at this stage.

Not all students have a ready flow of ideas when asked to write, even in the native language. Composition exercise which are not closely related to intensive reading assignments should be so

designed that do not become tests of originality and invention. Precise descriptions of persons, places, and things provide excellent training in exact expression. The writing of an original dialogue, using the vocabulary area of some recent reading, keeps the student practiced in the style of speech, further practice in a more casual style of writing is provided by the keeping of a personal diary in the foreign language and by the encouraging of international correspondence on an individual basis. In the later case, students are appropriately instructed in the accepted formulas for letter writing. Students may have read to them, or be asked to read, part of stories; which they are then required to complete for themselves; in this way, they have already been initiated into the appropriate vocabulary area and level of language before they attempt to write on their own.

Composition exercise may very profitably be linked with assignments for extensive reading. As each book, story, or play is completed, the student is asked to submit, for correction and evaluation, a short, composition based' on it. This composition may consist, of summary of the content with a personal commentary, for the narration, of some aspect of the story assigned previously by the teacher. Such extensive reading assignments may direct the student to articles of a serious nature in current foreign-language magazines or newspapers, in this case it is better to the teacher to select the article, with due regard to the special interests of the student, to ensure that it is not too difficult in standard of expression and ideas. Otherwise, discouraged students will take little pleasure in what is planned as an interesting activity. Where foreign-language newspapers are freely available, the students may be asked to submit, at regular intervals short, accounts of items of news from the country where the language is spoken. These reports may also be given orally, thus providing subject matter for class discussion and further exercise in the speaking skill.

In the classes where the students have been encouraged to undertake group or individual projects to deepen their understanding of the culture of the people who speak the language they will have valuable practice in composition as they draw up reports of their research in various areas (geography, history, sociology, art, music, education, political institutions, lives of famous men and women, and so on). For such projects the students should be required to draw their information from foreign-language sources so that they may use authentic forms expression in their written and oral reports. They should be trained to submit short reports on sections of their research for correction at regular intervals, rather than one long report at the end. The teacher can then guide them in the progressive improvement of their writing efforts. These reports, like those on extensive reading, should also be given orally to the class and used as a basis for further discussion.

Correction of Written Exercises

Many experienced teachers will say: "this is fine. This is what we aim to do, but is it possible?" the practical problem is that systematic training in writing requires systematic correction of individual scripts if it is to be effective. This can impose an intolerable burden on the most willing teacher. Method must be evolved which will the most help to the student while making reasonable demands on the teacher.

Ideally, individual efforts at writing should be read by the teacher as soon as possible after completion, then corrected and sometimes rewritten by the student without delay. A great deal of uncorrected writing is merely a waste of time and energy. It consolidates the student's bad habits, which are very difficult to eradicate at a later date. Short writing-assignments, given at frequent intervals and then carefully corrected and discussed, provide the most effective form of practice.

The following suggestions may be useful for the stage when students are launching out into the area of free expression in the foreign-language. First, the students should be asked to write only one or two well-planned, carefully written paragraph until they have acquired some skill in writing. The approximate number of words may even be stated, so that the more enthusiastic will not stretch their concept of a paragraph beyond reasonable limits. The teacher can cope with the correction of one or two paragraphs where complete compositions would take up far too much of his time.

Second, from the very early stage of their writing experience students should be rigorously trained to study their own scripts systematically in order to eliminate as many errors as possible before submitting them for the teacher's perusal. Carelessly presented scripts should be refused and given back for rewriting. In this way the teacher will make a considerable saving in correction time, and the student will be given valuable training in habits of accuracy.

Third, the teacher should anticipate certain common types of errors, by given regular practice in in class groups in the use of tenses, ways, of combining clauses within sentences, and conventional phrases used for making smooth transitions in thought. Fourth, teacher and class should agree on some system of symbols for correction of compositions. Teachers waste much time writing in comments and suggested improvements on composition scripts. The student who peruses these in a cursory fashion gain little from the teacher's laborious effort. Correction time is reduced by underlining errors and using a letter symbol to indicate the type of mistake made, whether lexical, syntactical, morphological, or orthographical, with special attention to errors would make the composition incomprehensible to a native speaker. The symbols should correspond to precise categories of errors, so that the student realizes quite clearly the type of correction he should make.

When this system is used, the teacher returns the scripts to the students in class, allowing sufficient time for individual correction of mistakes under supervision and for discussion of the implications of the commonest faults. If class size permits it, students may resubmit corrected

versions for further checking. By making the students think through the mistakes they have made, the teacher will be using the compositions for teaching, and not merely for unsystematic practice or for constant testing. This system of correction, also, helps the teacher to evaluate the work more quickly and systematically.

An overall intuitive grade for written composition can be seriously influenced by neatness and clear writing. The grade should be a composition one, allowing a certain percentage for grammatical accuracy, for lexical choice, for expression of time sequence, for general idiomaticity or feeling for authentic expression, and for arrangement of ideas. Where a symbol, system is used, the teacher can more quickly assess the relative degree of error in the different area. The emphasis given to each area will vary as students acquire more skill, so that at an advanced level liability to communicate ideas without native-language interference in structural and lexical choice will receive considerable weight.

How Much Writing?

The listening of so many possible forms of written exercises may confuse the inexperienced teacher, who, having glimpsed the core of the problem (the thorough, graded training required if students are to be able to write well in the foreign language), may feel that writing practice should occupy a large part of the teaching time at his disposal. This would bring us back to the traditional situation of the silent classroom, disturbed only by the busy scribbling of pens on paper. Some people have tried to estimate the percentage of time which should be allotted to the various skills at different levels of instruction in his first edition (1960) of *language and language learning*, Brooks tried to set down such percentages allotting 5 per cent of student time to writing at level I, 10 per cent at level II, and 20 per cent at level III. We are told, "differs little in general produce from level III". It is interesting to note that calculations at this type are omitted from the second edition of the book (1964). Such precision of time allotment can be more than suggestive.

What is clear is that writing is a skill which must be taught; it cannot develop haphazardly to any degree of usefulness. It is most efficiently acquired when writing practice parallels practice in the other skills. Writing provides an excellent consolidating activity. Through it the teacher can bring welcome variety into classroom work. It is also useful for setting homework exercises and for some of the class tests. It must not, however, be allowed to absorb time, which should be devoted to aural-oral training and to further development of the reading skill. If, as has been suggested, it is considered a service activity rather than an end in itself, the teacher will find that the problem "how much writing" soon solves itself the type of writing which the students are engaged will become more sophisticated as students acquire greater facility in the exercises of the other skill.