UNIT 2: LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

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2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- specify the skills of listening and speaking
- understand the segmental and supra-segmental features of English speech.
- organize listening and speaking activities
- develop phonemic drills for improving pupils’ English speech.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Listening and speaking are two of the four basic language skills, the other two being reading and writing. Learning a language entails the development of these four skills. However, depending language needs in a
social context for some speakers the skills of listening and speaking may take precedence over reading and writing and vice-versa. Yet, for others, there arises the need for developing all the four skills simultaneously.

One way of looking at the development of listening and speaking skills is to see it as the development of oral communication in social contexts. When we talk about the development of these skills for communication in English, we have to concern ourselves with strategies for their development primarily because for us English is a second language and has invariably to be learnt in a formal situation. We have to develop these oral skills because of various social needs in our multilingual situation.

It is important to note that oral skills have two major components. One is the ability to recognize and produce characteristic language speech sounds, stress, rhythm and intonation patterns along with the rules of the use of words, phrases, clauses and sentences. The other is the ability to transfer this knowledge of the language to a situation of language in use for the purpose of communication. Thus, while one of the components focuses on usage, the other focuses on use. The language that we use for the purpose of communication should be both intelligible and acceptable. A speaker’s speech must be understood by the listener without affecting comprehension.

A person’s speech can be difficult for the listener to comprehend when it becomes affected by one thing or the other. Every language has its own distinctive sound system. The sound system of English is not absolutely similar to that of our mother tongue. In order to speak the language properly, we have to learn the different sounds of the language which we call vowel and consonant phonemes. There are some English phonemes which are difficult for most Indian speakers. Then there are problems of stress, rhythm and intonation which we must overcome.

Moreover, considering that there are various spoken varieties of English like American English, British English, Indian English, Australian English and within these broad terms, there are even smaller variations like Scottish English or regional variations of Indian English, we have to decide upon a model for our spoken English. It may be stated that in most cases, the variations that had given rise to the different types of spoken English
have grown out of regional features, class features etc. of the language. We may think of a variety of English that is regionally neutral and is intelligible at a national level as well as an international level.

2.3 DEVELOPING LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

The aims of listening and speaking skills are to enable the users of English to cope with a variety of situations where oral English would be necessary. Some of the situations where a person requires good oral skills are listed here –

- listening to various radio and television programmes
- listening to a talk or an announcement
- participating in a discussion, debate, seminar or a meeting.
- participating in a face-to-face or telephonic conversation
- listening to sports commentaries, music songs etc.
- facing interviews
- facing oral tests etc.
- transacting day-to-day activities in shops, banks, hospitals and other similar organizations.

In order to develop these skills, we need to have at our disposal a number of linguistic and socio-linguistic abilities. The term socio-linguistic abilities refers to the learner's knowledge of social conventions that govern the use of language in real life situations. The difference is one of 'rules of usage' and 'rules of use'. An utterance like 'close the window' is grammatically correct. But rules of use suggest that 'could you close the window please' is one of the more acceptable forms.

2.3.1 Listening skills

The achievement of the skills of listening by a learner who is pursuing a school course at the upper primary level involves a number of abilities. We can say that the learner at the end of class VIII will be able to–
grasp the significance of stress and intonation of English when spoken and follows their significance.

- grasp the meaning of words, phrases and sentences in context.
- grasp the idea or ideas in a piece of connected speech.
- follows the sequence of idea or ideas expressed or events narrated live or over the radio or TV.
- grasp relationship between objects, persons, ideas, events etc. occurring in speech or in pages read out to her/him.
- grasp the substance and the central idea of a connected speech.

The above statements of objectives make it obvious that the learners should develop such a level of listening ability that would enable them to cope with various listening situations. It is indeed a rather challenging task to second language (L₂) speakers of English because of several problems of listening situations that learners may encounter in real life. One of the problems is the variation in informal speech in English that may grow out of some of these features—

- **Variation in Pronunciation**: Even within India, regional first language (L₁) features have brought about striking variation in the pronunciation of English.

- **Vocabulary**: There is a noticeable tendency among speakers to use colloquial or informal words which might be unfamiliar to the listener.

- **Use of clipped forms**: There is also a fair amount of use of what is known as clipped forms in speech. Sentences are shortened thereby leaving a lot of scope for guess work for the comprehension of the utterance.

### 2.3.2 Speaking skills

Let us now identify the abilities involved in the achievement of the speaking skills by a learner who is pursuing a school course at the upper primary level. It can be stated that at this level the
learners at the end of class VIII will be able to—

- use proper pronunciation, stress and intonation
- select appropriate words, phrases and sentences
- use appropriate pauses in speech
- use varied types of sentences
- present her/his ideas in proper sequence
- demonstrate reasonable speech and flow in speech, suited to the situation
- uses conventional greetings and made of address.

From the above statement of objectives, we discover that speaking skills involve fluency development. Indeed, of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems to be the most important skill. Yet we discover that when L2 learners attempt to speak English, they encounter a number of problems. The following are some of them.

- **Shyness**: Unlike reading, writing and listening activities, speaking requires some degree of real-time exposure to an audience. Learners are often shy about trying to say something in English either to their classmates or to others. They are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.

- **Lack of motivation**: Even if some of the learners are not shy to express themselves in English, there still remains the problem of lack of motivation to say something in English when they know that they will be more comfortable in another language.

- **Preference for L1**: In classrooms where most of or all of the interactions take place in the learners L1, speaking English may appear to be rather unnatural them. Consequently, students hardly develop the habit of speaking in English. The situations outside the English classroom can hardly be encouraging for learners to use English.
CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Say whether the following statements are true or false—

(a) The activity to recognize and produce characteristic language speech sounds stress, rhythm and intonation focuses on the usage of language. T/F

(b) Use of language for oral communication refers to the ability to transfer the knowledge of the language—the usage—to a real-life situation where communication takes place. T/F

(c) The sound system of one language is similar to that of another language. T/F

(d) Socio-linguistic abilities play an important role in oral communication. T/F

(e) Shortening of sentences in speech is referred to as clipping forms. T/F

Q 2: Give brief answers:

(a) List the skills of listening that a student at the end of class VIII has to acquire.

(b) List the skills of speaking that a student at the end of class VIII has to acquire.

(c) List three problems of listening that the L₂ learner encounters.

(d) List three problems of speaking that the L₂ learner encounters.

(e) Which of the four skills appear to you to be the most important skill.

2.4 LISTENING WITH COMPREHENSION

The listening activity that a learner encounters in real life can be described in terms of extensive listening and intensive listening.

- Extensive listening refers to a listening task which could be an interesting story, a radio programme or an anecdote. The learner listens for pleasure and enjoyment. It is an activity that can take place both inside and outside the classroom.
Intensive listening refers to a close listening task usually carried out as a part of classroom activity. It is an activity that requires a high degree of concentration in listening because it invariably follows a task. The most common classroom intensive listening activity includes dictation, oral classroom interaction and so on. In the first type of listening activity learners do not have to make any overt progress; however, facial expressions and body language often show whether they are following or not. Once a while, learners can make some comments or observations on the listening input which include—

- stories, jokes or real-life anecdotes related orally or read out from a book.
- songs, poems etc recited out well
- entertainment films, radio plays, video programmes etc. Learners will be motivated to make the effort to understand because of the engagement involved in it.

In the second type of listening activity, learners would be required to give short responses or long responses. Some of the tasks for listening comprehension include—

- **Carrying out instructions**: Learners are required to perform actions or draw shapes or pictures in response to an instruction.
- **Ticking m. c. items**: Learners listen either on tape or orally to a story or an anecdote or an account and tick of the multiple choice responses in a work-sheet or marking True/False in a worksheet.
- **Detecting mistakes**: Teachers tell a well-known story or describe something the class knows, but with a number of deliberate changes or mistakes. Learners will react to these mistakes by providing the correct version.
- **Responding orally or in writing to oral questions**: Teachers, as part of the silent reading activity, ask the class short or very short answer type questions (usually called teaching-induced questions) and invite responses either orally or in writing as part of reading comprehension activity.
- **Translating**: Learners listen to sentences in English and translate them either orally or in writing.
- **Summarizing**: Learners listen to a long text and summarise the passage.

- **Encouraging group work and pair work**: Classroom activity must provide scope for group-work and pair work activities. These activities provide a great deal of scope to the learner to practice need-based listening.

- **Problem solving**: A problem is described orally. Learners discuss how to deal with it and/or write out a suggested solution.

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### A sample Listening activity ‘A’

Pupils listen to the following story related by the teacher:

Once a cunning jackal jumped into a big tub of blue dye. He saw that his whole body had turned blue.

‘I am your king’ he announced in the jungle. All the animals big and small, believed him and bowed before him. The clever jackal smiled. Now he was the most powerful animal in the forest. He was proud to be king.

Once the jackal woke up in the middle of the night. The jackals were howling at the full moon in the sky. The blue jackal forgot that he was a king. He too began to howl ‘Hu..aah! Hu..aah!’

The animals discovered that their king was only a jackal. They shouted and ran to attack him.

“Stop, stop. I am sorry I tricked you. Please do not kill me’, the jackal said.

The animals forgave him but only after giving him a good beating.

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### A sample listening activity ‘B’

After listening to the story ‘A’, pupils work out the following tasks.

Tick the most appropriate answer.

(a) The animals thought that the jackal was a king because the jackal

- A. had a loud voice
- B. was blue in colour
- C. was very brave
(b) The jackal became blue because–
A. he was a king
B. he jumped into a tub of blue dye
C. he had a bath

(C) When the animals saw the blue jackal, they
A. bowed before him
B. ran away
C. chased him away

(D) On hearing the other jackals howling at night, the blue jackal
A. wondered what was happening
B. became angry
C. also began to howl

(E) The animals knew that their king was only a jackal when they
A. did not see his blue colour at night.
B. heard him howling like a jackal
C. saw him very closely.

(F) On discovering that the jackal had tricked them, the animals
A. drove away the jackal
B. killed him
C. forgave him.

**ACTIVITY 2.1**

**Read the following instruction:**
Learners are required to perform actions or draw shapes or lines in response to an instruction given by the teacher. Now design an activity based on the above instruction. Here is a model:

Teacher will write up the following columns of words on the blackboard:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>king</td>
<td>children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doctor</td>
<td>courtiers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5 SOUND SYSTEM OF ENGLISH

Read the following words aloud:

*Keep cap chemist occasion*

You will note that each of these words contain the sound /k/ pronounced [ka]. But the letter ‘k’ is seen only in the first word *keep*. In the word *cap*, the letter ‘c’ is pronounced /k/, in *chemist* the letters ‘ch’ are pronounced /k/ and in *occasion* the letters ‘cc’ are pronounced /k/.

What did you understand from this strange behaviour of the sound /k/? Obviously, you understood that there is no one-to-one relationship between the letters of the alphabet and the sounds of English. You know that there are 26 letters in the alphabet. But there are 44 sounds in the sound system of English. These sounds are called ‘phonemes’. The 44 sounds can broadly be divided into 20 vowel sounds and 24 consonant sounds. These 20 vowel sounds are again divided into two groups: 12 pure vowels and 8 diphthongs or vowel glides.

```
The sounds of English
phonemes (44)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vowels (20)</th>
<th>consonants (24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pure vowels (12)</td>
<td>diphthongs (8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Some of the sounds in English are similar to the sounds in Assamese and a number of Indian language. These sounds include /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/ and /r/. We do not find much problems in producing these sounds.

Below, you will find the 44 sounds of English with their key words. They constitute the segmental features of the sound system of English while
features like stress, rhythm and intonation come under the category of supra
segmental features.

### 2.5.1 Segmental features

The term ‘segment’ refers to a unit that can be identified either
physically or auditorily in a stream of speech. Segmental features
are small units of sounds which are vowels and consonants. that
combine in a stream of speech to communicate meaning. Take the
sentence: *This is a pen*. When you utter this sentence you don’t
use the letters, but the corresponding sounds

/\diz\pen/

Each of the units of sounds : d, i, s, z, ġ, p, e, n are segments
of the stream of speech. These segments are made up of 20 vowels
and 24 consonants.

It is important to note that what we are talking about now is
not the a, b, c, d– the letters of the English alphabet, but the sounds
of the language and the units of sounds which are basically sound
symbols. The International Phonetic Association has agreed upon a
set of sound symbols which are known as IPA symbols. You must
be familiar with these sound symbols for the purpose of using a
pronouncing dictionary for correct pronunciation and stress which
we shall see in 2.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Expolation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>/i:/</td>
<td>ee, e ea, ie</td>
<td>tree, these, sea, field, seize, key, ski</td>
<td>ঈ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>/I/</td>
<td>i, y, e, ie, a</td>
<td>rich, pity, pretty, ladies, village</td>
<td>ঈ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>/e/</td>
<td>e, ea, a</td>
<td>bed, dead, many</td>
<td>঎’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>a, ai</td>
<td>hand, plait</td>
<td>এ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>/u/</td>
<td>u, o, ou, oo, oe</td>
<td>sun, come, cousin blood, does</td>
<td>অ’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>/ai:/</td>
<td>a, ar, ear, er, a1, au</td>
<td>pass, pant, heart clerk, calm, laugh</td>
<td>আ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>/ʌ/</td>
<td>o, a, ou, ow, au,</td>
<td>dog, what, caught knowledge, because</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>/ɔ/</td>
<td>or, aw, ou, au a, ore, oor oar, our</td>
<td>cord, saw, bought daughter, all, before door, board, four</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>/ʊ/</td>
<td>u, o, oo, ou could</td>
<td>put, wolf, good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>/u:/</td>
<td>oo, o, ou, u, ew, ue, ui, oe</td>
<td>food, do, group, rude, chew, blue, juice, shoe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>/ɜ/</td>
<td>ir, yr, er, err ear, ur, uurr or, our</td>
<td>bird, myrtle, her err, earth, turn purr, word, journey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>/ə/</td>
<td>a, er, o, yr</td>
<td>above, father police, martyr between</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>/eɪ/</td>
<td>a, ai, ay, ei ey, ca, eigh</td>
<td>make, rail, may vein, they, great eight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>/ai/</td>
<td>i, y, igh, eigh, i.e, ye, ei, al</td>
<td>time, cry, high height, die, dye, either, aisle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>/ɔɪ/</td>
<td>oi, oy</td>
<td>noise, boy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>/əʊ/</td>
<td>o, oa, oe, ou, ow</td>
<td>bone, oak, toe soul, know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>/au/</td>
<td>ou, ow</td>
<td>have, cow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>/eə/</td>
<td>eer, ear, ere eir, ier, ea, ia</td>
<td>cheer, near, here weird, fierce, idea, India</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>/ɛə/</td>
<td>are, air, ear</td>
<td>care, pair bear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>/ʊə/</td>
<td>oor, ure, our</td>
<td>poor, pure, tour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>/p/</td>
<td>p, pp</td>
<td>pin, appear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>/b/</td>
<td>b, bb</td>
<td>big, ribbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>t, tt, th, ed</td>
<td>take, butter, thomes, thanked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>/d/</td>
<td>d, dd,</td>
<td>dog, middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>/k/</td>
<td>k, c, cc, qu, ch, ck, lk</td>
<td>kind, cake, accord conquer, stomach, sick, folk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>/g/</td>
<td>g, gg, gh, gu</td>
<td>go, giggle, ghost guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>ch, tch, time</td>
<td>chain, catch, nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>/ʈ/</td>
<td>j, g, dge, gg, de, dj, di</td>
<td>jam, gem, edge suggest, grandour adjunct, soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>/ʈ/</td>
<td>f, ff, ph, gh phy, lt</td>
<td>feat, office, photo tough, physics, calf not in Assamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>/ɭ/</td>
<td>v, f,</td>
<td>over, of – do –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>/θ/</td>
<td>th</td>
<td>think, author – do –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>/ð/</td>
<td>th</td>
<td>that, other – do –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>s, ss, ce, sc, ps</td>
<td>soul, grass, nice, science psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>/z/</td>
<td>s, ss, z, zz, x</td>
<td>dogs, scissors, zoo, dizzy, exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>/ʃ/</td>
<td>sh, ch, sch, s, ss, ti, si, sc, ci, ce</td>
<td>shoe, machine, schedule, sure, assume, nation mansion, conscience special, ocean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.5.2 Supra segmental features

The term supra segmental refers to a vocal effect that extends over more than one sound segment in an utterance. The supra-segmental features include stress, rhythm, and intonation. While segmental features are concerned with individual sounds of English and their combination, when we come to supra-segmental features, we are concerned with the production of correct sounds in a correct sequence.

The production of correct sounds i.e., pronunciation of words of one syllable (having one vowel sound in the sequence of sounds) or words of more than one syllable and the sequence of words in a sentence requires us to make use of stress, rhythm and intonation.
In isolation, pronunciation of individual words of more than one syllable, requires us to follow certain rules. Not all the syllables in a word are equally prominent. Those that are more prominent than others are said to receive the stress. When we write out the words, the syllable which is stressed has a small upright mark [’] in front of it. For example, the word ‘table’ takes the stress on the first syllable, about takes the stress on the second syllable. How will you know which syllable in a word of more one syllable is stressed? In certain cases, the word class can give us a clue on the syllable to be stressed. But by and large L2 users will find the dictionary showing pronunciation with the IPA symbols very helpful. In this section, a few example of word stress are given for your reference.

(a) First syllable stressed words:

| ‘always’ | ‘early’ | ‘idle’ | ‘over’ |
| ‘better’ | ‘figure’ | ‘jealous’ | ‘public’ |
| ‘country’ | ‘golden’ | ‘lady’ | ‘river’ |
| ‘doctor’ | ‘honest’ | ‘number’ | ‘yellow’ |

(b) Words with stress on second syllable:

| ac’cord | em’ploy | offend | to’day |
| be’tween | for’get | per’haps | un’less |
| con’cern | in’stead | re’ceive | up’on |
| de’cide | mis’take | suc’ceed | wi’thin |

(c) Words with stress on the third syllable:

| after’noon | intro’duce | under’stand |
| disap’pear | recom’mend | disap’point |
| engi’neer | repre’sent | enter’tain |

We shall find more examples in the next section.

When we move away from individual words to connected speech, we discover that connected speech in English has its own pattern of accent. Words that are important for meaning—content words like nouns, principal verbs, adjectives and adverbs—are generally stressed. On the other hand the function words or grammatical words are not stressed.

In English utterances, the stressed or accented syllables which are
pronounced with greater force than the other syllables, form a succession of beats coming at regular intervals of time available between the stressed syllables. Read the sentence with the stress on the accounted syllables.

I ‘think he’ wants to ‘go

In this sentences think, wants and go are stressed. These stressed syllables occur at regular intervals. If you put more unstressed syllables between the stressed syllables, you will still find the stressed syllables occurring at regular intervals:

I ‘think that he’ ‘wants us to go.

Here are a few sentences for you to practice aloud. Note that the slant line as in pen is a symbol of falling tone.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>He ‘bought a pen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>She’s ‘gone to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I ‘promise to come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>We went to the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I ‘want to ‘buy a pen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>He was sitting on the ‘bench.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>‘There were ‘forty in the ‘class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>It’s difficult to be ‘lieve it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The ‘teacher was ‘angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>‘Leave her a’lone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Along with stress and rhythm, another element that constitutes supra–segmental features of English speech is intonation. Intonation plays a very important role in conveying meaning. A single word like ‘yes’ can mean a statement a question or an exclamation. Intonation has a grammatical function as it relates to sentence types. For example, the falling tone is associated with statements and w-h questions.

1. I ‘came to ‘see him. |
2. She ‘bought a ‘book. |
3. We ‘can’t ‘come ‘now. |
4. ‘When did you ‘come ? |
5. ‘What’s the ‘hurry ? |

The rising tone is associated with yes-no questions and imperatives.
1. Are you \textit{ready}?
2. Won’t you \textit{come in}
3. Don’t go a \textit{way}
4. Be \textit{careful}.

In addition, intonation expresses the attitude of the speaker. A falling tone can express assertiveness on the part of the speaker. On the other hand, the rising tone expresses tentativeness and a certain degree of uncertainty.

### 2.6 USING DICTIONARY FOR CORRECT PRONUNCIATION

When you are not sure about the pronunciation of a word, what do you do? The best thing to do is to consult a dictionary where the pronunciation is described with the help of IPA symbols. That is the main objective of giving the sounds of English in 2.5. Once you are familiar with the symbols, you can comfortably look up a word in a dictionary.

Indeed, a familiarity with the IPA symbols can help us in consulting a dictionary for correct pronunciation and stress.

#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: You had consulted your dictionary for the pronunciation of a few words. These are the representations of the sounds given in IPA symbols.

Write out the words against each pronunciation.

(a) /kaːm/ ___________________
(b) /laːf/ _________________
(c) /ˈvɪlɪdʒ/ _______________
(d) /siːz/ _________________
(e) /ˈmeni/ ________________
(f) /meɪk/ _________________
(g) /wɜːd/ _________________
2.7 PHONEMIC DRILLS

Read the pairs of words given in the below

1. beat /biːt/ - bit /bɪt/
2. head /hɛd/ - had /hæd/
3. come /kʌm/ - calm /kæm/

Look at the first pair. The word beat is made up of three sounds /b+/i:+/t/. Likewise, the word bit is made up of three sounds /b+/i+/t/. When the difference between pair of word is just one sound unit, and that difference begins a meaning differences that pair is called minimal pairs.

Let us take the second pair, The word 'head' has four letters of the alphabet, but only three sounds /h+/e+/d/. The word had has three sounds. We can say that head and had are a minimal pair as they differ in meaning and only in one phoneme of the world.

We use minimal pairs as phonemic drills to contrast a sound with another in the language.

To illustrate this point, let us look at a few minimal pairs drills.

1. Drill to contrast /i/ and /ɪ/
   - eat - it
   - leave - live
   - sleep - slip

2. Drill to contrast /e/ and /æ/
   - beg - bag
   - mess - mass
   - pen - pan

3. Drill to contrast /ʌ/ and /aː/
   - come - calm
   - hut - heart
   - cut - cart

4. Drill to contrast /p/ and /b/
   - pan - ban
   - cup - cub
   - pull - bull

5. Drill to contrast /s/ and /ʃ/
   - sea - she
   - sell - shell
   - sun - shun

6. Drill to contrast /f/ and /v/
   - fan - van
   - fat - vat
   - safe - save
CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Construct minimal pair drills to contrast (3 pairs each) the following sounds of English

(a) /ʌ/ and /ɜː/
(b) /u/ and /uː/
(c) /eɪ/ and /æɪ/
(d) /z/ and /dʒ/  

2.8 ORGANIZING LISTENING AND SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

There are a large number of ways by which we can organize listening and speaking activities. There can be some activities that mainly focus upon listening. Take the following example.

(a) Listening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Listening and sketching/drawing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Listening for details in the description of a person, an object or animal or a route in a map of a locality in a town or city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Read a description of a person, object, animal or place. First of all, ask the listeners to listen to the whole description without drawing. After listening to the description, the listeners start drawing in their answer books with a pencil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The listening text

A traveller had just returned from a visit to an ancient land. After his return, he reported to us what he had seen. He told us that he had seen a broken statue in the middle of a vast desert. The statue was standing on a pedestal. But there were only the two legs of stone on the pedestal. The body was not there. He saw the head of the statue lying half buried in the sand. It was the face of a king. There was an angry look on the face of stone.
After relating the account of the traveller, the teacher will ask the class to draw the broken statue.

Display the pictures drawn by the students. Check the pictures against the text to see if the details are correct.

(b) Listening and speaking

This activity can be extended to a speaking activity as well. The teacher can ask different students to come over to the front and describe the picture he/she had drawn. Let the other students comment on the drawing.

Let us now take another example of listening and speaking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Listening and speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Listening for information and speaking out by providing information and vice versa in pair-work/group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Organizing role-play by planning situations eg. interaction of group of students with academic career consult exchanging information on various matters etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we looked at the concepts of listening and speaking skills in terms of their aims and the various abilities involved in the development of these two skills. we focused upon these points:

- The listening activities that learners engage themselves in, include extensive listening and intensive listening. We illustrated both types of activities for teacher’s guidance while developing these skills in the classroom.
- The sound system of English and the stress and intonation patterns formed a part of this unit. It was expected that the teacher would be able to carry out remedial work in imparting the pronunciation of the pupils.
- Organizing listening and speaking activities constitute a major part of the teacher’s classroom work. The unit section 2.8 focussed upon some activities as guidance for the teacher to carry out similar activities.
2.10 FURTHER READING


2.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:
(a) True  (b) True  (c) False  
(d) True  (e) True

Ans to Q No 2: (a) see 2.3.1  
(b) see 2.3.2  
(c) see 2.3.1  
(d) see 2.3.2  
(e) speaking skill

Ans to Q No 3:  
(a) calm  (b) laugh  (c) village  (d) seize  
(e) many  (f) make  (g) word

Ans to Q No 4:  
(a) hut - hurt  (b) pull - pool  
   bud - bird  full - fool  
   cud - curd  wood - wooed  
(c) hate - height  (d) zoo - jew  
   late - light  zest - jest  
   bane - bine  raise - rage
2.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Formulate the specification of the skills of listening.
Q 2: Formulate the specification of the skills of speaking.
Q 3: Design a classroom activity for the development of listening skills.
Q 4: Design a classroom activity for the development of speaking skills.
Q 5: Identify four of the problems your students face in pronunciation of English sounds. Design a drill to remedy these problems.

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