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Developing Speaking Skills in Criteria to Assessing Speaking Abilities

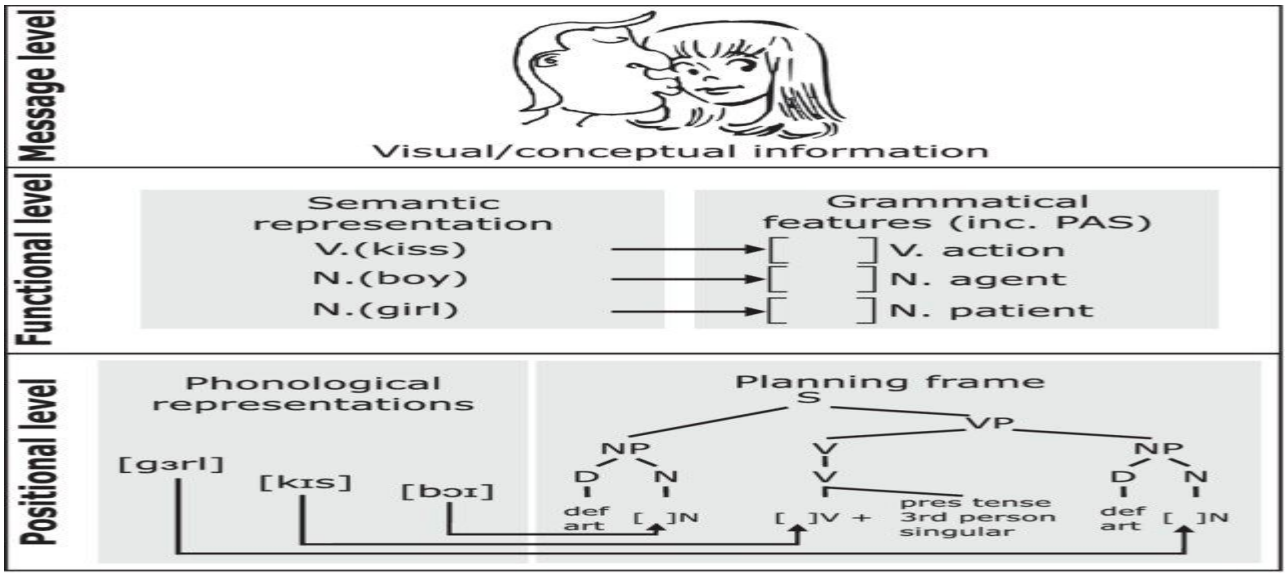
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Abstract: ***Right from our childhood, we have been listening to speakers of various kinds. We have heard stories and discussions. Although we communicate every day in a hundred and one different ways, why is it that we remember some stories and some discussions and forget others? It appears some have acquired the art of conversational skills naturally, by listening to others, through exposure and some have developed it through practice and perseverance.***
In this paper we shall briefly discuss these two perspectives to the development of speaking skills. On the other hand, the development of speaking is seen as a form of skill learning in which the items to be learnt are isolated and presented separately to the students who must practice them to master.
Keywords: Developing Speaking Skills, Assessing ,Speaking Abilities, Criteria,

I. INTRODUCTION

We do teach the skills of language in an integrated way, the awareness of what the skills and sub-skills of language are essential for effective teaching. This is more conspicuous in the case of speaking because of its centrality in the case of any language acquisition of once own mother tongue seems to be an automatic and easy phenomenon but when speech is taught in the case of second language, it seems more difficult even when it is not formally taught, it is often difficult for us to speak another language effectively or confidently.

In Garrett's model our cognitive processes cause speech to pass through four levels of representation before it is produced as sound. First conceptual planning creates the message level at which ideas and general meanings are represented, second broad syntactic frames are assembled, and word meanings are selected to create what Garrett calls Functional level. Third the exact sentence structure and word forms are defined to create plans at the positional level.



Figure;1 Garrett's model of Speech Production

Let us look at two approaches to the development of oral communication skills.

II. LEARNING AS A SKILL IN THE CLASSROOMS

Developing spoken skills through exposure and use.

Learning language as a skill; within this framework there are three main aspects which belong to the learning of a skill.

1) Learners must become aware of the key features of the target performance, so that they can create the mental plans which are necessary for producing it themselves.

2) They must practice converting these plans into actual behavior, so that in due course the basic concept plans can operate automatically, in response to higher level decisions.

3) Language learners must be capable of expressing an idea or taking part in a conversation by selecting particular structures or vocabulary not only as part of a controlled activity in which their focus is on the items in questions but also in response to a particular communicative intention which arises, unpredicted during interaction.

The two basic types of motivation are *intrinsic motivation* and *extrinsic motivation* (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation refers to a disposition to engage in a task for one's inner pleasure. An example of intrinsic motivation is a student reading a history textbook for fun. It is human nature for people to engage in activities that they are intrinsically interested in. Intrinsic motivation often leads to high levels of engagement and performance (Deci & Ryan, 2000).



Intrinsic motivation to communicate

As the diagram above shows, motivation to communicate must be aroused. In most of our classroom situations, motivation will need to be fostered by the intrinsic attraction of the task proposed and the students' interest in developing it. It is observed that when we try to organize group work, the extroverts try to steal the show, and the introverts keep quiet we have to accept that some people are temperamentally in capable of interacting with a babble of words to force them to do so is to force them back into pseudo-communication and into mouthing learned phrases. The quality of the interaction will be judged by the ability:

- To receive and express meaning.
- To understand and convey intentions
- To perform acceptability in situations and in relations with others.

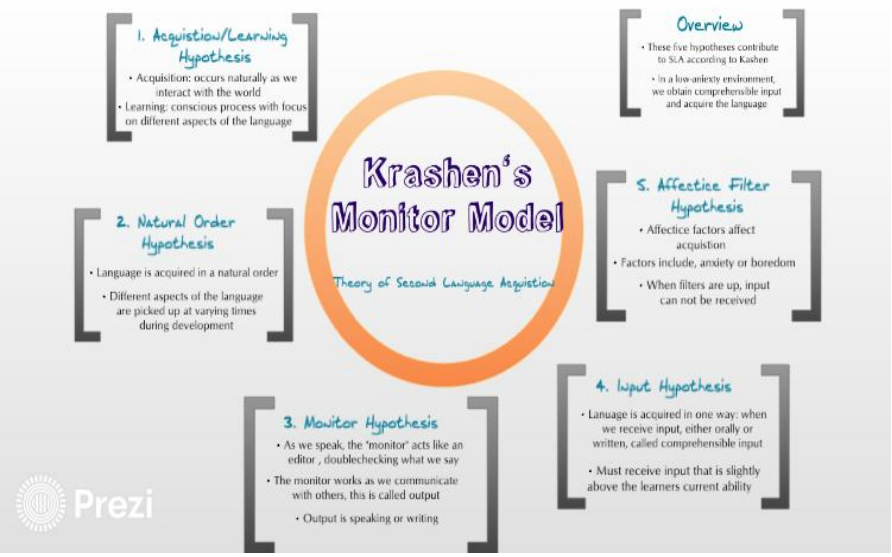
The natural process of developing spoken skills through exposure and use; these are the conditions that seem to be necessary for successful language learning to take place.

- The most obvious condition is that there must be some kind of exposure to language input, so that the natural learning mechanisms have something to work on, Krashen (1982, 1985) uses the term "rough tuning" for the way that speech addressed to foreigners is often simplified to enable them to cope with it better. For the sake of our learners in our classrooms and outside the classroom, we often must expose them to English through clearer pronunciation, slower pace, simpler structures and common vocabulary.

- Many writers (eg. long, 1985) believe that it is interaction with other people, rather than simple exposure to language, that plays the most crucial role in enabling acquisition to take place
- Since natural learning depends on the learner's active engagement with the language, motivation is an important factor. In the study of the first language learning, the child feels the urge to communicate with his or her mother. If we observe the contexts where second learning takes place successfully, the need to use the language for communication is a crucial factor. For ex: A child brought up in a multilingual cosmopolitan setting will pick up a new language faster than a child brought up in a monolingual setting.

III. INTEGRATING SKILL- LEARNING AND NATURAL LEARNING

One framework which won a lot of attention in recent years, is the Monitor Model of Stephen Krashen (1981, 1985).



Monitor Model of Stephen Krashen (1981, 1985).

This model solves the question of integration by assuming that we possess two sets of learning- learning mechanisms which operate separately from each other. One set of mechanisms enables us to learn in a conscious way to learn rules, memorize vocabulary, benefits from drills and so on. A different set enables us to learn in a natural, subconscious way.

Following krashen, let us use the term learning for our conscious processes and acquisition for our sub-conscious processes.

Krashen argues that it is the system of language that we acquire by natural processes that underlies our ability to communicate. The system which we consciously learn plays only a subordinate role; it enables us to monitor what we produce and increase its accuracy. The practical implication that krashen draws from this is that is that language teachers should devote most of the available classroom time to creating situations in which natural acquisition can take place- in other words, situations in which the learners can use the language for communication.

Therefore, as teachers we need to be more observant and see that we give enough reception-practice in listening and providing opportunities where the learners must be sensitive to what others are saying to our students, as much as practice in conversation. We need to focus on both the aspects.

*Comprehension (Is A able to follow what B is saying?)

*Comprehensibility (Is A comprehensible to B?)

Criteria for assessing speaking ability; We can just look at one of the scales used for assessing oral work. Bird and Dennision (1987) have suggested a four- point scale.

1) Pronunciation. Use of vocabulary and fluency are such that very limited or virtually no communication takes place.

2) Responds to the task with limited communication and exchange of information, which may be in incomplete sentences and with a possible resort to English.

3) Respond quite well to the task and although there are mistakes in pronunciation and accuracy together with some hesitancy, this does not interfere with the basic communication of all or most of the message.

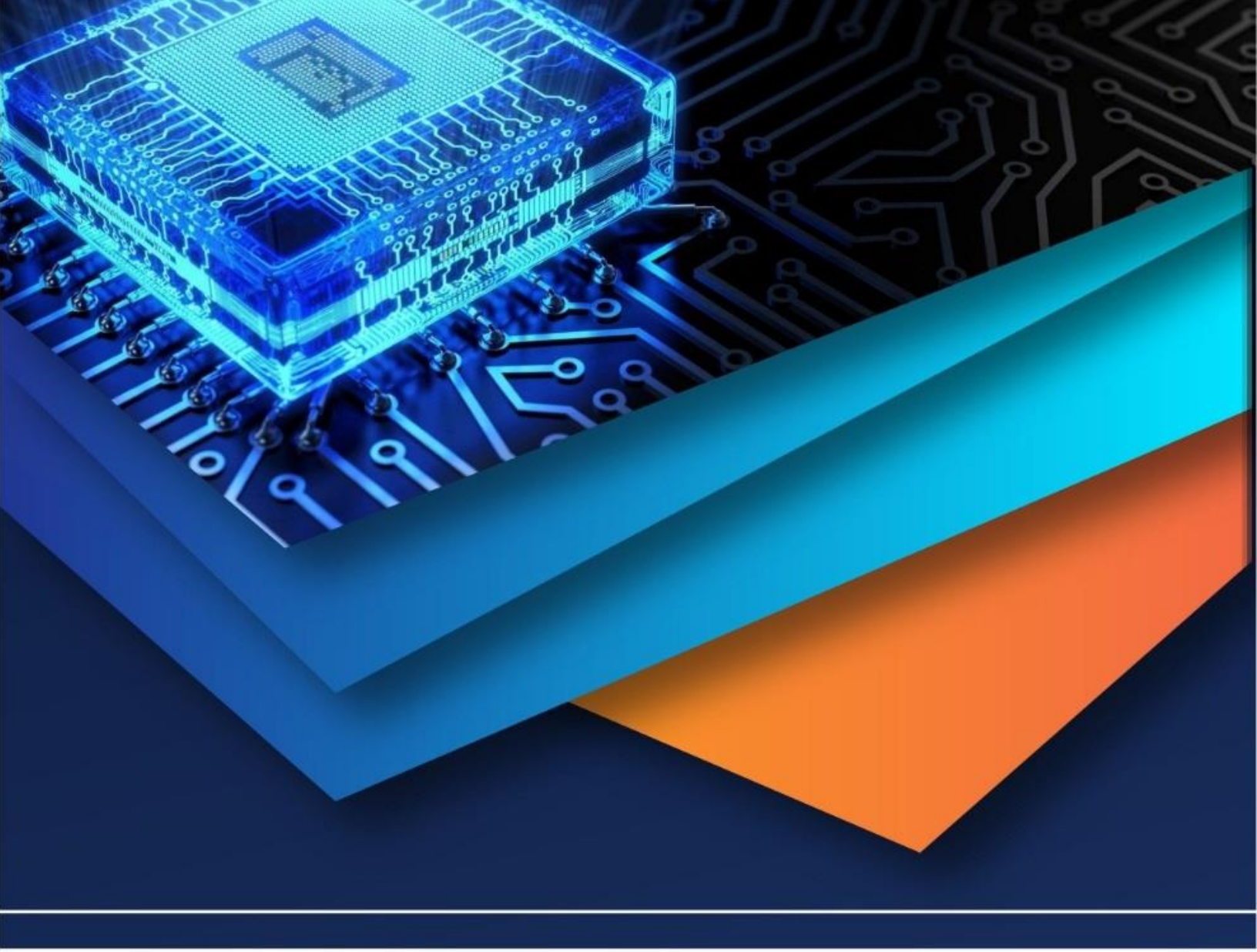
4) Responds well to the task. Pronunciation and accuracy are generally good. There is a fluency of utterance and all or most of the information is conveyed using appropriate expressions. Shows ability to take initiative where required and to go beyond a basic response.

IV. CONCLUSION

The abilities to listen critically and to express oneself clearly and effectively contribute to a student's success in school and later in life. Teachers concerned with developing the speaking and listening communication skills of their students need methods for assessing their students' progress. These techniques range from observation and questioning to standardized testing. However, even the most informal methods should embrace the measurement principles of reliability, validity, and fairness. The methods used should be appropriate to the purpose of the assessment and make use of the best instruments and procedures available.

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