**GSEG S4**

**Exam code : SENG**

# Spoken English

## SEMESTER IV

## BLOCK 2

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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# BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This is the 2nd Block of the Course on Spoken English. In this Block, we shall mainly discuss the different aspects and skills of Communication through English in our daily life and activities either at home or at the office. With this focus, the Block consists of a total of six units, which are as the following:

**Unit 9** shall help you to discuss the different types of communication and the strategies for the effective use the English language as a means of communication. However, these strategies are not merely rules of grammar. We can call them the rules of using the language so as to achieve maximum communication, in oral or written mode, with the target audience.

**Unit 10** shall help you to discuss the features of telephonic communication. Irrespective of the fact that a telephonic conversation is carried out in a formal or an informal context, it is important to remember that your voice is your sole means in a telephonic conversation. To keep a bright voice on the telephone, smiling can be helpful. Secondly, another feature of telephonic conversation is to identify the different stages of conversation.

In **Unit 11,** you will be introduced to the art of interviewing. Interviewing has been considered one of the most important methods of collecting information for some specific purposes. It is a basic skill that needs to be mastered in order to serve different purposes. The purposes of interviews may range from collecting research data from a specified group of informants to job interviews and media interviews. However, the main focus of the unit has been primarily on two types of interviews namely job interviews and media interviews.

In **Unit 12,** you will be introduced to the art of public speaking. In order to discuss the same, we shall discuss two different types of speeches: speeches that aim to persuade, and speeches that aim to inform. These two types are distinguished mainly from the point of view of the intent of the speaker and the purpose of the speech.

**Unit 13** shall introduce you to some speeches on special occasions. The unit thus begins by highlighting the character of an address of welcome. For this purpose, to give a sense of authenticity to otherwise fictitious speeches, some situations have been contrived. The first is an address of welcome, the second is a speech introducing the persons, and the third is a vote of thanks. In the second part of the unit, we shall introduce you to some of the techniques of group discussion.

**Unit 14** is the last unit of the course on Spoken English. In this unit, we shall try to consider some dialogues that will help you to practise the English language in some day-to-day real life activities and situations. You may therefore read the dialogues/conversations in this unit silently for a number of

times, and we hope that the practice shall help you to use some of the sentences in similar situations of your day-to-day life.

While going through a unit, the learner may notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in “LET US KNOW” along with the text. We have kept “CHECK YOUR PROGRESS” questions in each unit. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study. The answers to these questions are given at the end of the unit. We strongly advise that you answer the questions immediately after you finish reading the section in which these questions occur. We have also included a few books in the “FURTHER READING” which will be helpful for your further consultation. The books referred during the preparation of the units have been added at the end of each Course or Block. Despite our attempts to make a unit self-contained, we advise that you should read some of the books referred and certain additional resources for a thorough understanding of the different important aspects of Spoken English.

# UNIT 9: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## UNIT STRUCTURE


9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 What is Communication?

9.4 Types of Communication

- 9.4.1 Written Communication
- 9.4.2 Spoken Communication
- 9.4.3 Non-Verbal Communication

9.5 Essentials of Written Communication

9.6 Essentials of Oral Communication

9.7 Let us Sum up

9.8 Further Reading

9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.10 Model Questions


## 9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- define the term communication
- describe the types of communication
- explain the essentials of written and oral communication
- develop competence in these two types of communication activities

## 9.2 INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of Block 2 of the course on Spoken English. The title of this unit is made up of two terms or concepts. The first term is “communication”. The term refers to modes of exchanging ideas, information etc. between two or more persons. The term ‘mode’ in the above sentence means manner. Thus, we can talk about the written mode, the spoken mode and the non-verbal mode of communication. The next term is “skills”. It is a term central to language learning and teaching. The

objectives of teaching/learning a language is to develop certain skills or abilities to understand the language when spoken; speak the language, read different types of texts in the language and express oneself in writing different kinds of texts. Letters, reports, etc. are all means of written communication. This unit seeks to introduce you to these different types of communication and devise strategies for their effective use. These are not merely rules of grammar. We can call them the rules of using the language so as to achieve maximum communication, in oral or written mode, with the target audience.

## 9.3 WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

The word 'communication' is derived from the Latin word *communis*, which means 'common'. It essentially implies the different ways of conveying and receiving information and messages on the part of different individuals. Humans communicate through words – written and spoken. They also make use of non-verbal signals for transmitting information. This act of exchanging information and ideas between persons is called communication. We leave out the non-verbal part for the time being and let us concentrate on words as the medium of communication.

In order to use words for communication one requires knowledge of the language system. In the prehistoric times, humans used sounds, symbols and gestures as means of communication. However, as human civilisation and culture progressed, different languages evolved and came to be used for communicating between individuals. The knowledge of grammatical rules help us to form different types of sentences for the purpose of communication. However, communication involves much more than knowledge of and ability for grammatical forms. There are social conventions, certain rules of use that need to be considered without which the rules of grammar remains inadequate.

We also require knowledge of appropriateness of an expression to a situation or context. This knowledge of appropriateness is often referred to as socio-linguistic competence, which is necessary for effective communication. A sentence can be grammatically correct but may still fail to communicate if it is not appropriate in relation to a context in which it is used.

Thus, we can define communication as exchange of information or ideas. It is the art of expressing a message that a person has so as to allow others to understand the message. Communication takes place when the sender:

- has a message to communicate
- has a purpose to communicate the message
- has the knowledge of grammatical rules that would enable him/her to construct the message
- has knowledge of the social use of language to enable users to rephrase sentences for achieving appropriateness.

This would entail that effective communication involves the following three things:

a) The communicators understand the situation and the people involved in it.
b) They understand the message being communicated, and
c) They respond appropriately.

## 9.4 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication can be categorised into different types depending upon the mode that has been used for communication. One of the modes is the written mode, which can take place in different situations, notably formal, semi-formal and informal situations.

Secondly, communication can take place through the oral mode. It can be face-to-face communication where two persons are exchanging information in a formal, semi formal or informal situation. It can even be a group of persons listening to a speech with very little interaction, or listening to electronic communications like the radio or television programmes where there is no interaction at all.

Thirdly, communication can take place through the non-verbal mode. It is a type of communication that does not use words. Instead the communicator uses

- body language –facial expressions, eye contact.
- postures/gestures – shrugging, nodding etc.

- handshake
- attire
- appearance etc.

By looking at the facial expression of a person, it is possible to receive a message.

### 9.4.1 Written Communication

The range of written communication is very wide. It could include the following written activities:

1. Factual description of a process, of objects, instruments, description of places.
2. Report writing, which includes reporting seminars and meetings, proceedings, newspaper reports, reports for school/college magazine, reporting experiments.
3. Letter writing which includes personal or informal letters, formal letters, business letters, letters of invitation, replies to invitations.
4. Note making which includes summarising and abstracting.
5. Advertisement, which includes both classified and non classified advertisements.
6. E-mails, notices and circulars.
7. Essay writing which includes descriptive, narrative and reflective essays.

Again, depending upon the situation, written communication can be formal in both vocabulary and syntax. Here is a piece of communication:

> Mr. and Mrs. Dilip Kr. Dutta request the pleasure of your company at the wedding of their daughter Tina with Ravi, the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Pradip Das…

This is a formal piece of text. People normally in day-to-day conversation do not say, “request the pleasure” of something. However, the formality of the style suits the formality of the occasion. The situation being a formal one, the written communication is made

formal to suit the occasion. Formality is achieved by the use of formal words and phrases and sentence structures.

Here is another piece of formal written communication. Note the choice of words and structure in this piece of text.

> The Life Insurance Corporation (hereinafter corporation) having received a Proposal and Declaration and the first premium from the proposer and the Life Assured named in the schedule and the said Proposal and Declaration with the statements contained and referred to…

The above extract is not even a complete sentence. It is the subject part of a very long sentence that would have pleased Dr. Samuel Johnson. Note that formal written communication does not have a close connection with the language of everyday speech. Formal language can accommodate complicated syntax. Such language is suitable for formal contexts.

Secondly, depending upon the situation, written communication can be semi-formal or informal. Semi-formal written communication is the language that most people find most natural and easy to use for writing. It also does not directly imitate speech, but it has the character of being spoken out. Here is a piece of semi-formal written communication.

> Colour blindness is much more common in boys than in girls. About one out of every 25 boys is definitely colour blind, and another one in 25 cannot distinguish between green and red. But only about one in 200 girls suffers from colour blindness and that too only slightly.

This extract is free from the use of uncommon vocabulary and complicated syntax. The material of this unit on “Communication Skills” can be seen as an extended example of semi-formal communication. We are attempting to communicate with you in semi-formal language. However, the extract above is a specific example of semi-formal communication, which can also be called a neutral style. Semi-formal communication is characterised by a

precision. An informal piece of communication would prefer shorter sentences. Even some of the words may tend to give the feeling of casual humour. Given below is an example of an informal communication.

> Colour blindness is much more common in boys than in girls. At least one out of 25 boys is colour blind. Again at least one in 25 cannot distinguish between green and red. However, in girls it is one in 200, that too only slightly.

In written communication, the margin between semi formal and informal communication is less obvious unlike as in spoken communication. We are looking into spoken Communication in the next section.



**LET US KNOW**

Formal communication is structured. Informal communication is spontaneous. Examples of formal communication are departmental meetings, circulars, interviews etc. Examples of informal communication are talks at social gatherings, casual conversation at lunch or tea etc.

### 9.4.2 Spoken Communication

The range of spoken communication is no less wide than that of written communication. It could include the following spoken activities:

1. Factual description of a process.
2. Reporting or commentary of an event
3. Interviewing
4. Public speaking
5. Announcing in media, meetings etc.
6. Interacting with people on various communication activities like–

- Identification, description of people, things
- Requesting, providing information
- Expressing opinion
- Suggesting, advising, reminding, warning etc
- Enquiring, providing information etc.

7. Telephonic communication.

As in the case of written communication, depending upon the situation, spoken communication can have different levels of formality. A person can be formal in his/her speech, semi formal or even informal depending upon the situation in which language has been used orally.

In speaking, how do we know that we are using a semi formal or an informal variety of the language? Some dictionaries often label words and expressions that are considered to be informal. For example, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* has shown *Cop* to mean 'a police officer' as an informal word. Similarly, 'mom' to mean 'mother' is also identified as an informal word. Likewise, 'dad' to mean 'father' is also an informal word. Making use of informal words in speech can bring your speech to the level of informal communication.

However, the hallmarks of informal oral communication are contracted forms of common auxiliary verbs. Here is an extract of a semi-formal communication and note how their informal version differs.

**Semi-formal**

John : By the way, how is your child doing?

David : I would say it is hard work all the way. He does not have any time for his parents these days.

In this extract, one colleague is asking another about his child. There the style is semi formal.

Now, here's another version of the communication:

**Informal**

John : By the way, how about your kid?

David : I'd say it's hard work all the way. He does not have any time for his mom and dad these days.

This is an example of informal speech. You will discover that in informal speech, the use of informal words and phrases makes the language more natural than in the case of semi-formal or formal communication.

### 9.4.3 Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is one where words, phrases, and sentences are not used. It is a communication that takes place through gestures, signals, behaviour, body contact and so on. A brief account of what is meant by non-verbal communication is given here.

Gestures are expressions using body language. Our face can also express different moods and feelings. Our feelings of happiness and sadness, anxiety and annoyance can all surface in our facial expressions. A striking statement of the importance of facial expressions and how they can be very much communicative is found in the following lines from *Macbeth* in which Lady Macbeth tells her husband about his state of mind:

*"Your face, my thane, is a book where men may read strange matters." (I. 5.61-62)*

Likewise, our body language or gestures can express different feelings. Shrugging shoulders, making some gestures with the hands can be communicative of these feelings. Movement of the face and body can give clues to a person's personality. In addition, the face and body send signals about the way a social interaction is taking place. David Crystal, in his *Encyclopaedia of Language* makes the following observation about non-verbal communication:

> *"Visual effects interact very specifically with speech. Gestures and head movements tend to co-incide with points of emphasis. Hand movements, in particular, can be used to add visual meaning to what has been said…"*

The point that is made here is that non-verbal communication can be combined with oral communication to make our communication more explicit or expressive.

Pure non-verbal communication is a distinct field of study, which is beyond the scope of this unit. Some of these fields are:

a) Semaphore
b) Deaf and dumb language
c) Traffic communication

and a host of other non-verbal communication modes can be brought in for an exclusive study of this field.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q 1:** Say whether the following statements are True or False:

a) The term communication refers to the act of exchanging information and ideas between persons. T/F
b) The rules of grammar alone will develop communication skills. T/F
c) The written mode of communication always takes place in formal situations. T/F
d) Oral communication is always informal. T/F
e) Dr. Samuel Johnson wrote in a very formal style. T/F

**Q 2:** Fill in the blanks to complete these sentences by choosing the appropriate choice:

a) A wedding invitation letter is an example of _____ communication.

A. semi-formal B. informal
C. formal D. oral

b) The unit on "Communication skills" can be seen as an extended example of _____ communication.

A. formal B. semi-formal

C. informal D. non-formal

c) Contracted forms are abundantly used in _____ communication.

A. all written B. all oral

C. formal D. informal

d) Non verbal communication can be combined with oral communication to _____.

A. illustrate gesture

B. make communication expressive

C. show-off D. confuse listeners.

## 9.5 ESSENTIALS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

In section 9.4.1, you were introduced to the range of written communication. You have seen that written communication skills involve an advanced level of writing skills. Here we shall examine some of the essentials of written communication.

1. **Grammatical Competence:** Grammar provides the logical framework without which verbal communication in any language would be impossible. The basis of verbal communication is words. Words combine in a meaningful grammatical framework to form phrases, clauses and sentences. Why is grammar important? It is important because it teaches us different structures of sentences. Besides, it teaches us the skills of manipulating structure so as to (a) make a statement, (b) ask a question, (c) instruct someone to do something and (d) to express our feelings or emotions. We also gain the knowledge of appropriate optatives, performatives etc. which help in real-life communication.
2. **Textual Knowledge:** When we give a factual description of a process or write a report, a letter or a note, we have to engage ourselves with stretches of language that is larger than the sentence.

We call this level the 'text' or 'discourse'. The ability to combine sentences to make a paragraph and paragraphs into an essay requires a person to have knowledge of the text. You must understand that just as one word in a sentence leads to another, so also in a paragraph one sentence leads to another. In between, there are certain features that contribute to the textuality of the paragraph. These are **cohesion** and **coherence** among others.

3. **Cohesion:** Let us suppose you have written a few sentences in the form of a paragraph giving an account of the menace of ragging. These are the first four sentences of your composition. The sentences are not given here in the way you may have written.

a) It is gratifying to note that the authorities and the thinking public have at last woken up to the danger posed by this not so innocent mirth. However, later events showed that they were sadly mistaken. Even a section of the guardians at first regarded it as mere innocent mirth indulged in by young people. Not much attention has been paid very recently to the menace of ragging sweeping like an epidemic in the campuses of the educational institutions of the country.

Does the 'passage' make sense? In other words, is there a cohesive relationship within and between the sentences? Think out the answers yourself first.

Now read the passage in the box given below and ask yourself the same two questions.

b) Not much attention has been paid until very recently to the menace of ragging sweeping like an epidemic in the campuses of the educational institutions of the country. Even a section of the guardians at first regarded it as mere innocent mirth indulged in by young people. However, later events showed they were sadly mistaken. It is gratifying to note that the authorities and the thinking public have at last woken up to the danger posed by this not so innocent mirth.

This piece of text has a texture and this is what distinguishes it from text (a) above. Text (b) has a cohesive relationship within and between sentences. Look at the second sentence. What does the word *'it'* mean? To find the answer you refer back to the first sentence and find that 'the menace of ragging' is referred to. Thus, you discover a connection between the two sentences. The 'it' in the third line again refers back to the 'menace of ragging which in the fourth line surfaces as "innocent mirth". This relation between sentences is known as **cohesion**.

**Coherence:** Why is it that you could not comprehend passage (a) above? The answer is that there is no relation between the parts of each sentence. There is no logical development of the ideas as noted in the four lines. However, this is not the case with text (b). Here we discover transitional signals that guide us smoothly from one sentence to another. We see the obvious transitional signals:

> Not much attention to → the menace of ragging → Even regarded as innocent mirth → But sadly mistaken → gratifying → thinking g public has woken up.

Coherence is thus an indispensable feature of a piece of text.

Remember, when you write something on a given topic, there should be logical development of the ideas. Each sentence must be linked to the other to make the passage coherent.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q 3:** Rewrite the passage into a cohesive piece of text.

However, most important of all, the Egyptians learnt how to preserve speech for the benefit of future generations. They knew about irrigation. They had invented the art of writing. They had invented a calendar, which proved such a useful instrument for measuring time that it had survived with a few changes until today. They built temples, which were afterwards copied by the Greeks. They were excellent farmers. The Egyptians taught us many things.

## 9.6 ESSENTIALS OF ORAL COMMUNICATION

In section 9.4.2, you were introduced to the range of oral communication. You will note that oral communication skills involve an equally advanced level of speech skills. Here we shall note some of the essentials of oral communication:

1. **Oral fluency:** In addition to grammatical competence, it is important for the language user to have an oral competence. This would entail that he can use the language orally for the purpose of communication. He would know how to use language orally not only for giving factual description, reporting, interviewing etc., but also for interacting with people on various communicative activities.
2. He/she should understand how spoken communication differs from written communication at the level of vocabulary and syntax. He will understand that
   - the syntax of spoken language is much less structured than that of written language
   - in conversational speech generally active, declarative forms are normally used; passive forms are seldom used.
   - in conversational speech, the speaker uses a good deal of rather generalised vocabulary: e.g. a lot of, got, do, thing, nice, etc.
3. Oral communication makes use of weak forms. A weak form is a spoken form such as the pronunciation of am as /m/ instead of /æm/. Weak forms are normal in speech.
4. Most importantly, oral communication requires you to make use of certain forms suitable for a given communicative function.

The above part (no 4) requires a bit of explanation. Below a few functions are identified along with some of the forms that can be used to perform that function. A few illustrative examples are also given.

a) **Describing:** Structures/Forms

- Asking for a description

  What's it like?

What kind/type/sort (of …) is it?

What colour/shape is it?

How big/small is it?

Could you describe it for me?

- Giving a description :

  It's quite/rather/fairly/very…

  The unusual thing about it is that …

  It looks like…

- Example

  Adity : I've got a new watch

  Bini : Oh, have you? What is it like?

  Adity : Well, it's golden with a black leather strap.

  Bini : Nice.

b) **Exchanging opinions:** Structures/Forms

- Asking about opinions

  What do you think/feel (about …)?

  What's your opinion on/about … ?

  Do you have your views on …?

- Giving opinion

  I believe/think/feel (that )…

  In my opinion …

- Not giving opinion

  I don't know enough about it

  I don't feel strongly about it

- Examples

  Adity : What do you think about the misuse of mobile phones by students?

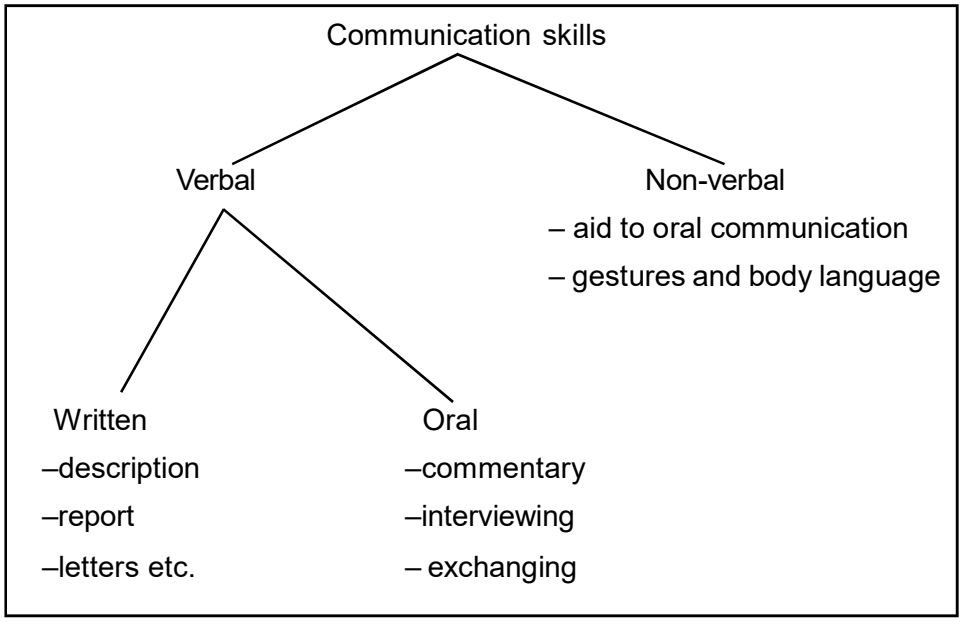
  Bini : I believe parents should be more conscious about their children's behaviour.

  Adity : I think you are right.



## 9.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have looked at the concept of communication as a skill to enable a person to perform the act of exchanging information and ideas with other person/s. We noted that communication skills can be distinguished as follows:






## 9.8 FURTHER READING

Brown, G. & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse Analysis.* Cambridge University Press.

Eastwood, J. (1994). *Oxford Guide to English Grammar*. Oxford University Press.

Seely, J. (2005). *Oxford Guide to Effective Writing and Speaking*. Oxford University Press.

Sethi J. et al. (2004). *A Practical Course in English Pronunciation*. Prentice Hall of India.

## 9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q 1:** a) True, b) False, c) False, d) False, e) True

**Ans to Q 2:** a) C, b) B, c) B, d) B

**Ans to Q 3:** The Egyptians have taught us many things. They were excellent farmers. They knew all about irrigation. They built temples, which were afterwards copied by the Greeks. They had invented a calendar, which proved such a useful instrument for the purpose of measuring time that it had survived with a few changes until today. However, most important of all, the Egyptians learnt how to preserve speech for the benefit of future generations. They also invented the art of writing.



## 9.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Give brief answers:

(a) Define communication.

(b) State how humans communicated in pre-historic times.

(c) Besides grammatical knowledge, what else is needed for oral communication?

**Q 2:** Answer the following questions.

(a) What are the three things involved in communication?

(b) Explain the features of oral mode of communication.

(c) Explain some of the modes of non-verbal communication.

**Q 3:** Answer the following questions:

(a) You have recently attended a book fair in your town and you were impressed by the sale of books. Write a brief report of the exhibition. (150-200 words)

(b) You are attending a symposium on the World Environment Day. Write a short speech in about 200 words on the pollution that has affected your town.

(c) You want accommodation for a night in Hotel New India, Jorhat. Write a dialogue between you and the Hotel Receptionist in not more than 200 words specifying the kind of accommodation you want and other details.

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 10: TELEPHONE SKILLS

## UNIT STRUCTURE


10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Understanding Telephone Communication

10.4 Handling Calls

10.5 Making Requests

10.6 Request to Do Things

10.7 Giving Instructions

10.8 Let us Sum up

10.9 Further Reading

10.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.11 Model Questions


## 10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- explain the different stages of a telephonic conversation
- use proper opening and closing phrases and expressions in telephonic conversation
- analyse the speaker's mood and intention through his/her intonation/ voice quality
- use proper forms/structures in communicating information through the telephone.

## 10.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall discuss a few features of telephonic communication. Irrespective of the fact that a telephonic conversation is carried out in a formal or an informal context, it is important to remember that your voice is your sole means in a telephonic conversation. Even so, your body language and facial expressions affect the way you sound. To keep a bright voice on the telephone, smiling can be helpful. Secondly,

another feature of telephonic conversation that we have discussed here is that it is possible to identify the different stages of a telephonic conversation. By looking at samples of telephonic conversation, we have noted that the most common characteristic of a telephonic conversation is that it begins with a 'Hello' or any other variations of the word that serves as the opening of a conversation.

An equally common characteristic is the closing of the conversation. Commonly, a conversation ends with 'Bye' or some other closing word. In between the opening and closing stages, there are a few stages like warming up, giving the message and rounding off. Different functions are performed at each of these stages. We also discussed how the speaker's voice quality, voice pitch and intonation can contribute to the understanding of the message. We discussed this point by contrasting the two modes of conversation – the face-to-face mode and the telephonic mode. We noted that face-to-face conversation has more cues for understanding a message than in a telephonic conversation. By manipulating the specified structures, the caller will have at his/her disposal the skill to communicate effectively through the telephonic mode.

## 10.3 UNDERSTANDING TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION

Telephones, especially the mobile phones and smart phones have become common household items for all sections of people in our country today. It has become an indispensable part of the lives of everyone in this country. We have been communicating with various people and in various modes in various situations all the time that an SLM on telephonic communication skills seems to be rather redundant. This unit doesn't profess to "teach" telephone skills but to make you aware of certain codes of telephonic conversational behaviour, certain sensitivity to telephonic interaction – and especially how we can interpret the message beneath the utterances and a variety of other related things that we have been taking for granted. Let us begin with an anecdote.

The authenticity of the following conversation between the former Prime Minister of Britain Sir Winston Churchill and his Private Secretary has not been established. However, it does make a point and is not irrelevant to the context of this unit.

PM : Bernard? Who's that in the next room… screaming at the top of his voice?

PS : If you'll excuse me Mr. Prime Minister, it's the Assistant Private Secretary Frank. He's talking to Scotland.

PM : Tell him to use the telephone.

What is the "point" that the above exchange makes? The point is that the Assistant Private Secretary to the PM was screaming "at the top of his voice" while making a phone call from White Hall, the Prime Minister's office in Central London to Scotland which is a one day journey by bus. Frank, for that is the name of the Assistant Private Secretary, ought to have known that it was hardly necessary to scream while talking over the phone to someone. We may call it "Lesson 1" of Telephone skills: *never scream or speak in an unusually loud voice over the telephone. Talk, but don't shout.* That is the point of Sir Winston Churchill's annoyance.

The key word to this section on 'understanding telephone communication' is "understanding". The word requires us to draw a comparison between face-to-face mode of conversation and telephone conversation. Obviously, the level of "understanding" the message communicated by a speaker is much higher in face-to-face conversation than in telephone conversation. Here are some characteristic features of face-to-face conversation that contrast with telephone conversation.

a) Understanding conversation through the face-to-face mode is facilitated by the use of various clues that face-to-face conversation makes available. These include the following:
   i) the speaker has a full range of voice quality effects that is denied to telephone speech that is carried out with poor acoustic quality.
   ii) he has cues from facial expression of the person engaged in conversation which is denied to the telephone speaker.

iii) when a person leans forward, smiles and with a warm and friendly voice tells the speaker "I'm very happy to see you", the listener will appreciate the significance of what is being said much more than when a person says over the phone "I'm very happy to hear your voice".

b) Understanding conversation through the face-to-face mode is also facilitated by observing postural and gestural cues that are denied to speakers over the telephone mode. There is a very interesting anecdote that had made its rounds in journalistic circles regarding the postural and gestural cues of a former Chief Minister of Assam who used to express his impatience by tapping his fingers on the armrest of the sofa he was reclining on. By observing such postures and gestures, the speaker can,

i) if he wishes, modify what he is saying to make his utterances more acceptable to the listener

ii) find some excuse to defer further conversation to some other time and make a hasty exit.

The telephone speaker has no access to postural and gestural cues of the listener.

The speakers in a telephonic conversation rely entirely on the words exchanged, the tone and pitch of the voice to interpret the meaning of the words spoken. Even so, their body language and facial expressions can affect the way they sound in a telephonic conversation. For example, if a person is talking with his body in a slumped position, his voice may sound tired or breathless. Then, even in this respect, there are certain problems of interpreting features like tone and pitch of a person's voice because these features may not be homogeneous among speakers. There may also be regional variations in the speech patterns whose knowledge is also necessary for understanding telephone communication clearly.

However, there are certain features of conversation that are shared by speakers of both the face-to-face and the telephonic mode of communication. One of them is **code switching**, an inevitable fact in bilingual or multi-lingual speakers. The term code switching refers to the practice of

switching over from one language to another as the conversation proceeds. A speaker may begin a conversation in the mother tongue, but at a later phase, may choose to switch over to English or vice-versa. Similarly, in conversation there is the tendency among speakers to mix more than one language. This phenomenon is known as code-mixing or conversational code switching.



**ACTIVITY**

Observe two persons talking in Assamese. Do they make use of words, phrases and sentences of English in their conversation? If they do, can you find some reason for this code mixing?

Here is an observation made by a person on a person's habit of code switching. The person found that when the speaker was angry or excited over something, he would invariably switch over to English. Do you find this to be a general case or a specific one? Discuss amongst your friends on this aspect of conversational behaviour, and write a small note on the tendency of code switching among mother-tongue speakers in your language community.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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

a) Understanding messages in face-to-face mode of conversation is higher than in telephone conversation mode. T/F

b) Poor acoustic quality can be a barrier of telephone conversation. T/F

c) Postures and gestures in face-to-face conversation do not help in the understanding of a piece of conversation. T/F

d) The speaker in a conversation through the telephonic mode relies on the words exchanged, the tone and pitch of voice used in order to understand messages. T/F

e) It is very common among bilingual speakers to mix languages in speech. T/F

## 10.4 HANDLING CALLS

Read this transcript of a telephone conversation between two persons in an office:

A : Good morning. Oxford University Press, Guwahati here.

B : Good Morning, I'd like to speak to Mr Tapan Das

A : May I know who's calling?

B : I'm Paramjeet Singh from Kolkata Office.

A : Oh Mr Singh. I'm sorry Mr Das is not present today. Can I take a message?

B : Sure, could you tell him that ten copies of John Sealy's book are being dispatched?

A : Thanks. It's my pleasure.

B : Goodbye for now.

You may like to note the different stages of the conversation given above and the phrases and responses used–

| **Stage** | **Exchange A** | **Exchange B** |
|---|---|---|
| Opening | Hello!<br>Good morning.<br>Oxford University<br>Press here. | Good Morning. I'd like<br>to speak to<br>Mr. Tapan Das |
| Warming up | May I know who's<br>calling? | I'm Paramjit Singh<br>from Kolkata Office |
| Giving the message | Oh. Mr. Singh<br>I'm sorry. Mr. Das is<br>not present today.<br>Can I take the<br>message? | Sure. Could you tell<br>him that ten copies of<br>John Sealy's book are<br>being despached? |
| Rounding off | Thanks. It's my<br>pleasure. | Good bye for now. |
| Closing | Bye | |

You will note that the opening and closing phrases of telephone conversations are distinctive with rules governing the different stages of a

conversation. When the phone rings, a person lifts the receiver or if it is a mobile phone, presses the call-button and says “Hello!”

Every day you and I handle countless telephone calls. It has become almost a habit with us. What is it that we do while handling calls? We follow the above stages with slight variations depending upon the relationship with the person we are speaking to. From our experiences with handling calls, can we think of some of the problems that we often face? Here are some of the more common ones:

a) Unable to hear well
b) Overlapping in speech
c) The person is speaking too fast
d) You have difficulty in following his/her pronunciation
e) You would like the person to repeat something but out of civility, you don’t say so. Consequently, it affects the comprehension of the message.

Let’s take up the problem of inability to hear properly by taking the following dialogue as an example:

A : Hello! Am I speaking to Mr. Abhijeet Dutta?
B : Yes, indeed. May I know who’s on the line?
A : * * * from ***
B : Excuse me. I can’t hear you properly.
A : *** from Jorhat ***
B : I beg your pardon?
A : ********
B : Could you try to connect me once again?

(Note : The inaudible words are given in stars)

These are very common experiences. Poor network often leads us to request the caller to repeat something and even if that too doesn’t work, you disconnect the call and try ringing again. If you have a caller identity, you may if you like, call back. Now, the most important thing is that when you are handling official and personal calls, you will find that there are levels of formality you have to adhere to.

Here is an exchange between A and B:

A : Hi! Trishna here,

B : Hi Trishna!

A : Neha, where are you?

B : At home, where else? Why?

A : Switch on XYZ channel. There's a good movie on.

B : I'm already watching the movie.

A : Me too!

B : OK, Happy watching. Talk to you later.

A : Bye Neha.

B : Bye.

The above exchange is carried out on a fairly informal plane apparently between two friends. You'll note that the language is chatty. The two speakers are talking as if they are face-to-face. Nevertheless, you are likely to discover the different stages that we had identified in a telephonic conversation even in this informal exchange.

| **Stage** | **Exchange A** | **Exchange B** |
|---|---|---|
| Opening | Hi, Trishna here | Hi, Trishna |
| Warming up | Neha, where are you? | At home, where else why? |
| Giving the message | Switch on XYZ channel There's a good movie on. | I'm already watching the movie. |
| Rounding off | Me, too! | OK! Happy watching. Talk to you later. |
| Closing | Bye Neha. | Bye |

## 10.5 MAKING REQUESTS

In this section, we shall take up a communicative function. We shall call it 'making requests'. You all find yourselves in situations where you make different kinds of requests. Some of them can be requests for information; others may be requests for help in doing something and so on.

Let us suppose you need some information on the train position – whether a train is on time or not. You would be required to obtain that information from the Railway enquiry. Luckily, you have the numbers (they have several telephones) and ring up 'Enquiry'. Let's see how the conversation between you and the receptionist at the desk takes place.

Reception : Hello! Railway enquiry here.
You : Good morning.
Recep : Morning. How can I help you?
You : Could you tell me if the Kamrup Express for Howrah is on time?
Recep : ******
You : Sorry. I couldn't get you. There was this train whistle.
Recep : The Down Kamrup Express? It is two hours late.
You : We can expect it by eight o' clock?
Recep : Late running trains may be further delayed.
You : They make up too?
Recep : Yes, they very often do.
You : I'll ring you again in an hour if you don't mind
Recep : Of course; by all means.
You : Thanks.

(The *** indicates inaudible words)

Let us closely look at some of the structures that will become handy for you to make enquires.

**Structures:** (Excuse me)

- Can/Could you tell me …?
- I wonder if you could tell me …?
- I wonder if you could help me. I need some information on …
- May I ask you something? I'd like to know …

Remember, you are asking a favour. Your language has to be polite. That is perhaps another lesson in telephonic conversation.

## 10.6 REQUEST TO DO THINGS

In our day-to-day lives, there are so many requests that we make or others make to us for various little or big things that a communicative function like “request to do things” attains great importance. Let us suppose you would like to see the dentist. Of course, you’ll need an appointment. He is an extremely busy person and you will have to meet his secretary for an appointment. You have to request him/her to fix up an appointment. From your city guide you have obtained the telephone number and would now ring up the New Dental Clinic with a request for an appointment. Here is a telephonic conversation that might have taken place between the Secretary referred to as A and you referred to as B.

A : Good morning! New Dental Clinic here.

B : Good morning! I’m Ajit Baruah

A : Yes, Mr. Baruah?

B : I’d like to see the dentist.

A : You need an appointment?

B : Yes, please.

A : No problem. When do you need the appointment?

B : When do you open?

A : At nine in the morning except Sundays.

B : Could you fix my appointment for nine o’ clock tomorrow morning?

A : I’m sorry. Someone has already booked for nine o’clock tomorrow.

B : Then, soon after that person?

A : Yes, that’s OK. You may come at 9.15. Perhaps you may have to wait a bit.

B : That’s OK. Thanks.

A : Thanks for calling.

Let us identify some of the possible structures that can be used to perform this communicative function.

**Structures:**

Request to do things

- Could you fix my appointment for …….?
- Could you do me a favour ?
- Do you think you could …?
- I'd be grateful if you could …?
- Would you mind doing …?

Agreeing to do things

- No problem. When do you…?
- Yes, that's OK. You may…
- Sure, that's fine.

Refusing to do things

- I'm sorry. (Someone has already booked…)
- I'm afraid. (nine O'clock is booked)
- I'm so sorry. (but how about 9.15?)
- Well, there's a problem
- Well, I'm afraid…

## 10.7 GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

'Giving instructions' is another frequently used communicative function that many of us perform in various situations. You watch the recipes telecast by various TV channels. You discover how the chef instructs you to prepare a dish. Here are some of the structures that he/she uses by way of giving instructions 'only to you'!

- First I break two eggs in this bowl.
- Now I heat this frying pan.
- Meanwhile, I beat the eggs.
- I put a pinch of salt-just; a pinch will do.
- I cut a few coriander leaves
- A little sprinkle of black pepper
- I pour just a table spoonful of cooking oil into the pan on the gas stove.
- Now I pour the beaten egg onto the pan. Your omlette is ready.

Note the style that the chef uses. He gives you instructions as to how an omelette is made. However, his instructions are such that he seems to be talking to himself. That is of course one way of giving instructions. He knows that instead of saying First you…, next you… it is more acceptable to use the first person. He is not literally 'ordering' you but the instructions are specific.

In telephonic conversation, if you have to instruct someone to do something obviously you'll use the imperative sentence forms. Many of you are familiar with situations where persons obtain directions over the telephone on various matters including cooking or writing a home assignment among others.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 2:** Here is an extract of a telephonic conversation on giving instructions. There are some blanks. Fill in the blanks with suitable information.

A : Can you give me the precise direction to KKH State Open University?

B : Where (1) …….?

A : I'm in Beltola Chari Ali.

B : No (2) ……. You take any bus towards Ganeshguri.

A : (3) ……..?

B : Get down at Housefed Complex bus stop.

A : (4) ……?

B : Take the left road. There's a sign board there for your guidance.

A : Thank you.



## 10.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed a few issues on telephonic communication.

- We noted that there are different stages in a telephonic conversation. Irrespective of the fact that a telephonic conversation is carried out

in a formal or an informal context, it is possible to identify the different stages of the conversation.

- We took up examples to state that the most common characteristic of a telephonic conversation is that it begins with a 'Hello' or any other variations of the word that serves as the opening of a conversation.
- An equally common characteristic is the closing of the conversation ending with 'Bye' or some other variations.
- In between the opening and closing stages, there are a few stages like Warming up- Giving the message — Rounding off. Different functions are performed at each of these stages as you had noted.
- We also discussed how the speaker's voice quality, voice pitch and intonation can contribute to the understanding of the message. We discussed this point by contrasting the two modes of conversation – the face-to-face mode and the telephonic mode.
- We noted that face-to-face conversation has more cues for understanding a message than in a telephonic conversation.
- By manipulating the specified structures, the caller will have at his/ her disposal the skill to communicate effectively through the telephonic mode.



## 10.9 FURTHER READING

Brown G. & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse Analysis.* Cambridge University Press.

Hudson, R. A. (1999). *Sociolinguistics.* Cambridge University Press.

Sasikumar, V. et at. (2005). *A Course in Listening and Speaking.* Foundation Books.

Sealy, John. (2005). *Oxford Guide to Effective Writing and Speaking*. Oxford, University Press.

## 10.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q 1:**

a) True, b) True, c) False, d) True, e) True

**Ans to Q 2:**

1) Are you, 2) problem, 3) Where do I get down, 4) Then where do I go from there?

## 10.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Give brief answers to the following questions.

(a) How can facial expressions affect the way we sound in a telephone conversation?

(b) Explain code switching.

(c) Give the different stages in a telephone conversation.

**Q 2:** Answer the following questions

(a) List four problems of telephone speaking.

(b) State two advantages of face-to-face conversation.

(c) Write a dialogue between two persons illustrating the use of code mixing.

**Q 3:** Answer the following questions.

(a) Discuss the difference between face-to-face and telephonic conversation.

(b) You are Abhijit/Anita Baruah. You would like to lodge a complaint to the Electricity Board that there is no electricity in your house. Write a telephonic dialogue by touching upon these points.

– introducing yourself

– why you have called

– giving a precise description of the location of your house.

(c) You are Ravi/Renee Dutta. You want some information on flight details to Bangalore. Write a dialogue with Glory Travels by touching upon the following points.

– when do you prepare to leave Guwahati?

– when do you prepare to return from Bangalore?

– would you prefer a direct flight.

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 11: INTERVIEW SKILLS

## UNIT STRUCTURE


11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 The Art of Interviewing

11.4 Job Interviews

11.5 Media Interviews

11.6 Let us Sum up

11.7 Further Reading

11.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.9 Model Questions


## 11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- familiarize yourself with the art of interviewing
- develop the techniques of job interviews
- understand the techniques of media interviews
- distinguish between different types of interviews.

## 11.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall familiarize ourselves with the art of interviewing. Interviewing has been considered to be one of the most important methods of collecting information for some specific purposes. It is a basic skill that needs to be mastered in order to serve different purposes. The purposes of interviews may range from collecting research data from a specified group of informants to job interviews and media interviews. Considering the range of this unit, our focus has been primarily on two types of interviews namely job interviews and media interviews.

We began with a discussion on the art of interviewing by giving a working definition of the term. We then took up different objectives of interviewing. We discussed interviews conducted with the objective of

market research. Then we took up academic interviews by observing that applied linguistic and sociolinguistic researches use the interview technique to obtain data on learners' achievements or dialectical variations. Moreover, the interview technique is considered a favourite technique as a part of evaluation of research works carried out by research scholars wherein viva is the last leg in the long process of assessment. Next, we noted that media news stories and feature articles are very often based on information collected through the interview technique. Most of the news stories and features are based on facts obtained from informants and supported by interviews of experts.

We also discussed media interviews in this unit. We noted that media interviews are mostly in the question-answer format with the interviewer asking the questions and the interviewee answering them. We identified some norms to be followed while posing the questions. For example, the questions asked must be clear and unambiguous, they must be kept short and that even for a brief interview, questions must be carefully prepared to make the best possible use of the time and so on. We also noted that the quality of the questions is as important as the quantity. When an interviewer runs out of prepared questions, viewers do not take long in finding that out. Finally, we noted that the questions in an interview must be arranged in such a manner that the interview becomes well structured and not a scramble of questions and answers.

## 11.3 THE ART OF INTERVIEWING

The term interview meaning meeting of persons face to face is derived from the French word *entreveue* meaning 'having a glimpse of or seeing each other for a brief moment'. It is a meeting between two persons unless it is a job interview where the interviewee has to face an interview board consisting of at least two or more persons. This meeting takes place basically for information seeking and gathering. Interviewing is the most common method of collecting information. It is a basic skill that needs to be understood and mastered with the aim of achieving some desired goals.

Interviews may be conducted with different objectives in view. One of the objectives may be market research. The interviewer is a researcher representing a company and his aim is to obtain feedback of some of the products marketed by the company he is researching for. He visits a house and with all politeness, seeks permission to use a few minutes:

**Market Researcher**: Excuse me please. Could you spare just five minutes of your valuable time? I represent XXX company.

**Housewife:** Yes please.

**MR**: You may have been using water purifiers?

**Housewife:** Yes, of course.

**MR:** May I know the brand you use?...

**MR:** Thanks for giving us your time.

The objective of this interview is to enquire if a particular product is being used by the interviewee or not and if used, to obtain feedback from the customer concerned on the quality. In the above extract, the market researcher interviews a housewife on the type of water purifier that she has been using at home and if she has any plan for changing the item.

Secondly, academic researchers may make use of interviews as a means of collecting data from a cross section of the population, which will be used for research experiments. Here is a sample:

**Researcher:** Can I take a few minutes of your time, Sir?

**Principal:** Yes, but what do you want to see me about?

**Res:** I am working on a small project on Gunutsob.

**Principal:** Oh yes, what do you want to know?

**Res:** Some feedback on the assessment tool used for English that has been used.

**Principal**: The material is very good.

**Res:** In what sense, if I may ask Sir?...

**Principal:** Thanks. You may give me some information on your findings.

Applied linguistics research uses the interview technique among others to obtain data on language acquisition, samples of learner

achievement and so on. On the other hand, sociolinguistic researches use the interview technique to obtain samples of dialectical variations among a host of other issues. Moreover, in higher education, the interview technique is considered to be a favourite technique as a part of evaluation of research scholars through viva as the last leg in the long process of assessment.

Thirdly, media news stories and feature articles are very often based on information collected through the interview technique. Most of the news stories are based on facts gained by asking questions. News and feature writings are supported by interviews of experts. Media interviews look for three basic things:

- **Information:** what happened, when did it happen, where were you at that time, type of information can be obtained through this technique.
- **Quotes:** to add authority colour and impact.
- **Authority:** providing reliable sources, difficult to disbelieve.

Even personal interviews have the same objectives. The journalist interviews a celebrity and culls out information on the person's achievements making use of quotes and authority. The police also use the interview technique, though the term in this case is "Interrogation".

Moreover, interviews are useful techniques for selection of persons for the purpose of employment. There are different types of job interviews. One of the most common ones is what is known as the walk-in interview. These interviews are generally announced by classified advertisements in newspapers in the following style and format:

> A walk-in interview will be held in Modern English Medium High School, Bishnupur, Hajo, for the following posts on 6.5.2018 (Sunday) at 10 a.m.(1) Asst Teacher English (2) Asst Teacher Hindi. Salary negotiable.

Walk-in interviews are on-the-spot affairs. Candidates are not required to send the CV beforehand, nor will they be served call letters beforehand. They just walk in to the venue, report their presence and await their turn to face the interview board set up for the purpose.

Of late, the telephonic interview has also gained popularity. These interviews could be on a variety of issues where an interviewer at the other end would ask the interviewee his or her views on a particular topic. Even job interviews are conducted telephonically these days based on the CV mailed on-line. However, the traditional face-to-face interview has still retained its value though in some academic jobs the weightage of credit in the interview may be a small number considering that different credit points are allotted to a candidate on different academic attainments, higher degrees, publications with ISBN or ISSN, among others.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** Answer the following questions in brief.

(a) Give one objective of market research interview.

(b) Give the objective of the interview between the Principal and the researcher on gunotsov.

(c) Name the talk show conducted by Tim Sebastian and the channel that airs this show.

## 11.4 JOB INTERVIEWS

We have stated that though an interview is a piece of conversation, there are striking distinctive features that distinguish a conversation from an interview especially if it is an interview for selecting individuals for a job. Unlike as in normal conversation, by its nature, a job interview sets up an artificial and often daunting relationship between the candidate and the interview board. This is especially so because most candidates for a job take an interview as an oral test. In many cases, an interview may supplement a written or an electronic test that might have been conducted earlier. This awareness makes most candidates fairly nervous.

The interviewing committee also in this case has a serious responsibility to select the right candidate or candidates from a group of candidates. The committee has to identify norms for selection. In this context, the role of the text of the advertisement is significant. Most of the

norms have to be earlier laid down specifically in the advertisement for the concerned job. The advertisement should be specific about the qualifications, work experiences, relevant skills such as handling the internet, advance level communication skills in specified languages and a host of other norms that the employer considers to be essential requirements for employment. The interviewing committee will definitely use a copy of the job advertisement published earlier where the required qualifications were laid down carefully worded, as terms of reference for the selection process.

The selection process of the candidates has actually started with the screening of the applications sent by the candidates to the employer. The application forms provide the employer an opportunity to narrow down the list of candidates to be invited for the interview. Once again, one has to be careful in short-listing candidates for an interview. The copy of the advertisement will be the most effective reference material.

The interview may be conducted by a committee of more than two members of the interviewing committee. It may even be conducted by two persons and rarely by a single person. The interviewing room must look comfortable enough and the committee members must ensure that there is no disturbance from incoming telephone calls when the interview is in progress. The interviewer often plays the role of a host and that requires the interviewer or the interviewing committee to observe the normal formalities of social behaviour as evident from the following extract.

**(Extract begins)**

**Chairman**: Please take your seat Mr Dutta.

**Candidate:** Thank you, sir.

**Chairman:** Tell us something about yourself Mr Dutta. We would be interested to hear what exactly had prompted you to apply for a job in our organization.

**Candidate:** Sir, I have been working as an Assistant Professor in Jorhat College for the last ten years. Of late, I have been wondering if a changeover to an administrative job would provide me with newer challenges from an otherwise routine existence. Hence, when I saw the ad in the papers the other day, it struck me that this could be a job after my heart.

**Chairman:** I am sure you realize that this job is very challenging.

**Candidate:** Yes sir, I do.

**Expert:** From your CV, I see that you have done some research on public examinations. Would you like to tell us something about your research?...

**(End of extract)**



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 2:** Give brief answers to the following questions.

(a) State briefly how an interview is different from a conversation.

(b) State the role of the advertisement on the job interview.

(c) Briefly state the process of screening the candidates for the interview.

## 11.5 MEDIA INTERVIEWS

We are all familiar with media interviews. Various regional, national and international radio and television news channels have provided viewers with ample media interview programmes from which a critical viewer may explore the methods, approaches and techniques followed in such interviews. Here are a few of them.

- One of the regional media interview programmes that immediately come to mind is the regular interview programme conducted by the illustrious Shri Homen Borgohain using the title *katha barta* on News Live, Northeast India's leading satellite channel. It is a programme remarkable for the high quality of the content and especially the excellent style of interaction by providing a rich flavour of the Assamese language very rarely used by most educated mother tongue speakers today.
- The next is the regular weekly English interview programme that has been conducted excellently by eminent political journalist Mr Wasbir Hussain since 2008 that uses the term *Talk Time with Wasbir Hussain* again in News Live channel. It is a programme no viewer

would love to miss considering the relaxed atmosphere that Wasbir Hussain creates with his smiling and friendly demeanour when he talks to celebrities like Ruskin Bond or for that matter any personalities alike invited to his programme.

- At the national level there is the celebrated Mr Arnab Goswami's immensely popular and well researched media interview programmes now on *Republic TV*, earlier on *Times Now*, most of which have gone viral with a huge international following. For a change, unlike his debates, which are stormy affairs, his interviews are characterised by a restrained use of language critically observing the interviewee, missing out nothing.
- At the international level, the BBC interview *Hard Talk* conducted by Tim Sebastian is yet another interview programme that we see as role models of media interview programmes.

There are many other well-known interviewers in the electronic media, but we have mentioned only a few of them as examples. As an illustration of media interview, the following excerpt from one of Wasbir Hussain's interviews in *Talk Time with Wasbir Hussain*, with Shri Tarun Gogoi, when he was Chief Minister of Assam is given here:

**(The Interview)**

(**WH to the viewers)**: Hello and welcome to Talk Time. I have with me today veteran Congress leader and Chief Minister of Assam Mr Tarun Gogoi.

**Wasbir Hussain:** Welcome to my show Mr Gogoi. As a student of class nine your teacher once asked you about your aim in life and you replied, 'Prime Minister of India'. That has not happened yet, but you have been Chief Minister of Assam twice. How does it feel?

**Tarun Gogoi:** No, I'm happy being the Chief Minister of Assam. Being Chief Minister, I got an opportunity to serve the people of Assam, particularly the poor and downtrodden, the student community and then the women, in fact, all the communities in Assam. As you know when I became the Chief Minister, the economic condition of Assam was really very bad. It was absolutely in a very very bad shape, the government could not pay the salary

to the employees, all the development activities had come to a grinding halt. Now during my tenure at least I have got the opportunity to change the economic scenario or the entire scenario of Assam. We have been able to change the mindset of the people. Earlier the mindset was negative. Therefore, that has been my achievement. I look at my chief ministership as an opportunity to serve the people.

**Wasbir Hussain:** You get a personal satisfaction out of all this?

**Tarun Gogoi:** Personal satisfaction in the sense that during my tenure I could change the whole face of Assam. Assam has taken what you call all the positive steps; it is on the march towards economic development.

**Wasbir Hussain:** you had once told me that as a student of class three, you attended a meeting addressed by Pandit Nehru. That was in Jorhat, you were small then and you quite remember the sandals Jawaharlal Nehru wore.

**Tarun Gogoi:** Ya, ya.

**Wasbir Hussain:** And later as a young man you first interacted with him in 1960 when he had come to Assam during the language agitation. Was Nehru your political hero?

**Tarun Gogoi:** Yes, definitely he was my hero. I don't know, he was my ideal from the very beginning since my school days. I got an opportunity to see him at Jorhat and I still remember his dress and his *Kabuliwallah* sandals also...

**(End of extract)**

The general picture that emerges from the media interview session of Wasbir Hussain and Mr Tarun Gogoi is that a media interview is after all, a piece of conversation between two persons with a specific purpose. However, it is not exactly like any other conversation that takes place in various real life situations. Most importantly, we note that a good media interview is hardly extempore; there is a lot of preparation involved on the part of the interviewer.

Mr Arnab Goswami's interviews (available in social media and u tube) are an example on this point. His interviews have a striking compactness and are well structured in design. In this context, his interview with Mr Rahul Gandhi may be referred to. This interview was a first-rate media event with high-profile publicity. Elsewhere, Arnab Goswami is reported to have said that he had used more than a hundred questions in the interview with Mr Rahul Gandhi and some of them had to be repeated over and over again. The interviewee took the strategy several times to side-track questions or to provide a different kind of answer when Arnab had to repeatedly tell him with a cold stare: "You still haven't answered my question". The huge amount of background research of Arnab becomes obvious in the interview.

From the various media interviews, we discover that

- Media interviews are mostly in the question-answer format with the interviewer having the privilege to put the questions and the interviewee answering them.
- The questions asked must be clear. The interviewer must avoid constructing 'leading questions' that steer the interviewee towards a predetermined answer.
- It is desirable to ask one question at a time, not one with two or more parts the questions must be kept short.
- Even for a brief interview, questions must be carefully prepared to make the best possible use of the time.
- The quality of the questions is as important as the quantity. When an interviewer runs out of prepared questions, viewers do not take long in finding that out.
- The questions must be arranged in such a manner that the interview becomes well structured and not a scramble of questions and answers.

It is important to win the trust of the interviewees before anything else. Most of you may have seen in the Hindi film *Nayak*, the interviewer Anil Kapoor, playing the role of a media journalist, interviewing the Chief Minister Amrish Puri in a television studio live telecast. From the very

beginning of the interview, the hostility of the interviewer was obvious. More than asking questions, he was trying to embarrass the Chief Minister by showing him unpleasant visuals of a riot. In a few minutes time, the interviewee Amrish Puri signalled that the interview be stopped and he marched out of the live telecast programme.

That is an example of a bad media interview that often happens in our real-life media interviews. The interviewer must realize that journalism is about forging relationship and relation about people. So in any relationship, being sensitive to the situation is the key. A smile, a nod, a laugh goes towards building a trust. Therefore, the words that the interviewer uses should show the speaker's empathy – an ability to share another person's feelings and emotions, as they were your own.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** Answer the following questions in brief.

(a) Account for the popularity of Shri Homen Borgohain's media interview programme.

(b) Explain the achievement that Shri Tarun Gogoi mentions in *Talk Time*.

(c) State in what way was the TV interview in *Nayak* a bad media interview.



## 11.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed the following aspects of interviews.

- We initiated our discussion on the art of interviewing by giving a working definition of the term.
- We then took up different objectives of interviewing. We discussed interviews conducted with the objective of market research.
- Next, we discussed academic interviews that aim at obtaining samples of learner achievement or dialectical variations besides the use of the interview technique as a part of evaluation of research

works carried out by research scholars wherein viva is the last leg in the long process of assessment.

- Next, we discussed media news stories and feature articles that are very often based on information collected through the interview technique and supported by interviews of experts.
- We also discussed media interviews and identified some norms to be followed while posing the questions. For example, the questions asked must be clear and unambiguous, they must be kept short and that even for a brief interview, questions must be carefully prepared to make the best possible use of the time and so on.
- We also discussed the importance of quality and quantity of the questions.
- Finally, we noted that the questions must be arranged in such a manner that the interview becomes well structured and not a scramble of questions and answers.



## 11.7 FURTHER READING

Barker, Alan. (2008). *Improve your Communication Skills*. Kogan Page.

Ussain, Wasbir. (2010). *Tarun Gogoi.* Guwahati: Wordsweaver.

Karal, Rajeevan et al. (2016). *English for Successful Communication.* Oxford University Press.

Koneru, Aruna. (2913). *Professional Speaking Skills.* Oxford University Press.

Readers Digest. (2009). How to Write and Speak Better*. Reader's Digest*, London.

## 11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q 1:**

(a) The objective of this interview is to enquire if a particular product is being used by the interviewee or not and if used, to obtain feedback from the customer concerned on the quality.

(b) Try yourself from 11.3.

(c) Try yourself from 11.3.

**Ans to Q 2:**

(a) See the first paragraph of 11.4.

(b) Try yourself by stating that the advertisement provides the terms of reference for selecting the candidates in the interview.

(c) Try yourself.

**Ans to Q 3:**

(a) See the first point of 11.5.

(b) See the second point of 11.5.

(c) Try yourself by reading the interview at 11.5.

## 11.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Briefly answer the following questions:

(a) Define the term ‘interview’.

(b) Explain briefly the objectives of market research.

(c) Give an objective of academic research.

(d) Give your views on Arnab Goswami’s interviews in Republic TV.

**Q 2:** Give brief answers to the following questions.

(a) Explain the importance of interviews in writing news stories and feature articles.

(b) State the function of a walk-in interview.

(c) Explain the functions of telephonic interviews.

(d) Briefly discuss the importance of the quality and quantity of questions in media interviews.

**Q 3:** Answer the following questions.

(a) Discuss the distinctive features of a job interview.

(b) Discuss the features of a media interview.

(c) Construct a media interview with a celebrated author.

(d) Construct a job interview for a post of travel agent for the travel agency World Travels.

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# UNIT 12: PUBLIC SPEAKING

## UNIT STRUCTURE


12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Techniques of Persuasive Speech

12.4 Techniques of Informative Speech

12.5 Let us Sum up

12.6 Further Reading

12.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.8 Model Questions


## 12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- understand the art of public speaking
- develop techniques of persuasive speech
- distinguish between persuasive and informative speech
- develop techniques of informative speech.

## 12.2 INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is an art. We remember among the great speeches of Swami Vivekananda, his monumental “Addresses at the Parliament of Religions” at Chicago in the US. We remember the eloquence of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, especially his “Tryst with Destiny” and “The light has gone out of our lives” speeches. We remember the wonderful speech “Our finest hour” of Sir Winston Churchill among his other speeches. In our time, we remember the inspiring speeches of Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam with his dreams of a developed India in 2020. We admire Narendra Modi’s “rockstar” speech at the US in his address to the NRIs there at Madison Square Garden among a host of his other speeches including his Sunday AIR speeches titled *Man ki Baat*. Of late, Dr Shashi Tharoor, eminent author and parliamentarian, has shot into fame as an outstanding public speaker with

his famous “Oxford Debate” and a host of his other speeches over the length and breadth of the globe, speeches with his remarkable dash of humour, that have made him the role model of oratory among the newer generation of our country. These speeches have remained masterpieces of excellent oratory. They play and replay in our consciousness as well-known celebrated oratory with a display of artistry, grace, style, a pleasant voice, a pleasing personality, having captivated millions of people across the world. The aim of this unit is to analyse some of the techniques of public speaking that good speakers have always used in their celebrated speeches.

In this unit, we discussed two different types of speeches: speeches that aim to persuade and speeches that aim to inform. These two types are distinguished mainly from the point of view of the intent of the speaker and the purpose of the speech. To illustrate the intent and purpose of persuasive speech, we have taken the world-famous Earth Summit speech by Severn Suzuki in 1992 and analysed the structure of the speech that had made the speech a remarkably persuasive speech. Next, we took up the “Eulogy of Diana, Princess of Wales” speech by Earl Spencer in delivered on 9 September 1997 that is seen in terms of an informative speech. We outlined a number of distinctive features of that speech and noted how the speech fulfils the criteria of an informative speech. We also brought out the distinctiveness in these two types of speeches and showed how an informative speech contrasts with a persuasive speech. We noted that the most striking difference between them is that in an informative speech, the primary aim of the speaker is to increase the knowledge of the audience on the subject and create understanding unlike as in a persuasive speech where the speaker attempts to change certain beliefs, attitudes or values of his/her audience.

## 12.3 TECHNIQUES OF PERSUASIVE SPEECH

Public speaking may have different aims and objectives. When a politician addresses a mammoth election rally, the speaker’s objective is clear. He or she would attempt to sway the crowd on the issues of the

vision document of the party the speaker represents. The aim is to influence the listeners with his or her power of persuasion. A persuasive speech should be able to make the audience feel certain, at the same time driven to be convinced so as to accept a point of view. That is the character of a persuasive speech; the audience is influenced to adopt a set of principles leading them to perform the act of carrying out certain tasks. If a speaker's speech is effective, the listeners would ultimately persuade themselves to come around to the point of view of the speaker.

To illustrate this point concerning the power of persuasion, the following speech by a world-famous public speaker Severn Suzuki is given. The speech was delivered in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (available in U-tube) when the speaker was only 12 years of age. Her speech lasting six minutes was heard all around the world. Al Gore, the soon to be US Vice President rushed to congratulate her on what he said was the best speech he had heard at the Summit.

**(The Speech)**

Hello, I'm Severn Suzuki speaking for ECO, the Environmental Children's Organization. We are a group of twelve and thirteen year olds from Canada trying to make a difference: Vanessa Suttie, Morgan Geisler, Mitchelle Quigg and me.

We raised all the money ourselves to come six thousand miles to tell you adults you must change your ways. Coming here today, I have no hidden agenda. I am fighting for my future. Losing my future is not like losing an election or a few points on the stock market. I am here to speak for all generations to come.

I am here to speak on behalf of the starving children around the world whose cries go unheard. I am here to speak for the countless animals dying across the planet because they have nowhere left to go. We cannot afford to be not heard. I am afraid to go out in the sun now because of the holes in the ozone. I am afraid to breathe the air because I do not know what chemicals are there in it.

I used to go fishing in Vancouver with my dad until just a few years ago we found the fish full of cancers. And now we hear about animals and plants going extinct everyday – vanishing forever.

I my life, I have dreamt of seeing the great herds of wild animals, jungles and rainforests full of birds and butterflies, but now I wonder if they will ever exist for my children to see.

Did you have to worry about these little things when you were my age? All this is happening before our eyes and yet we act as if we have all the time we want and all the solutions.

I am only a child and I don't have all the solutions, but I want you to realize, neither do you!

You don't know how to fix the holes in our ozone layer. You don't know how to bring salmons up a dead stream

You don't know how to bring back an animal now extinct.

And you can't bring back forests that once grew where there is now desert.

If you don't know how to fix it, please stop breaking it!

Here you may be delegates of your governments, business people, organizers, reporters or politicians – but really you are mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles – and all of you are somebody's child.

I am only a child, yet I know we are part of a family five billion strong, in fact, 30 million species strong and we all share the same air, water and soil – borders and governments will never change that. I am only a child, yet I know we are all in this together and should act as one single world towards one single goal.

In my anger, I am not blind, and in my fear, I am not afraid to tell the world how I feel.

In my country, we make so much waste, we buy and throw away, and yet northern countries will not share with the needy. Even when we have more than enough, we are afraid to lose some of the wealth, afraid to share.

In Canada, we live a privileged life, with plenty of food, water and shelter – we have watches, bicycles, computers and television sets.

Two days ago, here in Brazil, we were shocked when we spent some time with some children living on the streets. And this is what one child told us, “I wish I was rich and if I were, I would give all the street children food, clothes, medicine, shelter and love and affection.”

If a child on the street who has nothing, is willing to share, why are we who have everything still so greedy? I can’t stop thinking that these children are my age, that it makes a tremendous difference where you are born, that I could be one of those children living in the Favellas of Rio. I could be a child starving in Somalia, a victim of war in the Middle East or a beggar in India.

I’m only a child, yet I know if all the money spent on war was spent on ending poverty and finding environmental answers, what a wonderful place this Earth would be! At school even in Kindergarten, you teach us how to behave in the world. You teach us

not to fight with others,
to work things out, to respect others,
to clean up our mess,
not to hurt other creatures,
to share – not to be greedy.

Then, why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do?

Do not forget why you are attending these conferences, who you are doing these for – we are your own children.

We are deciding what kind of world we will grow up in. Parents should be able to comfort their children by saying: “everything’s going to be alright”. “We’re doing the best we can and it’s not the end of the world.”

But I don’t think you can say that to us anymore. Are we even on your list of priorities? My father always says, “You are what you do, not what you say.”

Well, what you do make me cry at night. You grown-ups say you love us. I challenge you: please make your action reflect your words.

Thank you for listening.

**(End of speech)**

We have taken Severn Suzuki's speech as an example of persuasive speech. Let us examine how she attempts to persuade the huge audience in front of her. Let us closely observe the techniques that her speech has demonstrated to make it a persuasive speech.

**(a) Ability to persuade:**

The first thing that we note is that Severn Suzuki's approach involves highlighting the contemporary situation with ample convincing statements;

- I am afraid to go out in the sun.
- I am afraid to breathe the air because I do not know what chemicals are there in it.
- And now we hear animals and plants going extinct every year.

Through these statements, she persuades her audience by presenting her reasoning and sums up her arguments by stating: "I challenge you, please make your action reflect your deeds."

**(b) Posing Rhetorical Questions:**

Secondly, Severn Suzuki makes use of a number of rhetorical questions which are effective tools of persuasion in her speech. (Note that rhetorical questions are questions that are used in speech as a stylistic devise and not necessarily demanding an answer).

- Did you have to worry about these things when you were my age?
- If a child on the street who has nothing, is willing to share, why are we who have everything still so greedy?
- Then, why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do?

Raising rhetorical questions in course of a speech is a powerful device to make the listener to feel as if the speaker is addressing commonly held concerns.

**(c) Repetition of structures:**

Thirdly, Severn Suzuki makes use of repetitions of structures in order to make herself more convincing.

- I am only a child and I don't have all the solutions, but I want you to realize, neither do you!
- I am only a child, yet I know we are part of a family five billion strong.

- I'm only a child, yet I know if all the money spent on war was spent on ending poverty and finding environmental answers, what a wonderful place this Earth would be!

**(d) Appeal to emotions:**

Moreover, Severn Suzuki appealed to the emotions not only of the delegates of the Earth Summit, but of all those who had heard the speech.

- Here you may be delegates of your governments, business people, organizers, reporters or politicians – but really you are mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles – and all of you are somebody's child.
- Do not forget why you are attending these conferences, who you are doing these for – we are your own children.

Severn Suzuki had made the audience think of their past knowledge and experiences in relation to the ones she had been presenting in her speech. These techniques had made her speech fairly persuasive.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** Give brief answers

(a) Explain the term "persuasive speech".

(b) Whom did Severn Suzuki try to persuade in her speech?

(c) What was the reaction of Al Gore, the soon to be US Vice President, to the speech of Severn Suzuki?

## 12.4 TECHNIQUES OF INFORMATIVE SPEECH

In the above section, we discussed the concept of persuasive speech by examining the speech of Severn Suzuki at the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro. We shall now move on a discussion on informative speech. We begin by bringing out a distinction by examining the differences between these two types of speeches.

The most striking difference between persuasive and informative speech is that in an informative speech, the primary aim of the speaker is to increase the knowledge of the audience on the subject. The speaker

attempts to share knowledge and create understanding. On the other hand, in a persuasive speech, the speaker attempts to change certain beliefs, attitudes or values of his/her audience.

Secondly, the difference between the two types of speeches depends on the purpose or objective of each type of speech. Persuasive speeches are designed to influence the listeners and to change their thinking and motivate them into a certain kind of action. Informative speeches on the other hand, give more information and explanation on the topic, but do not ask for any action from the audience. The audience only acquires more information and knowledge on the topic.

Thirdly, persuasive speech implies that there can be more than one points of view on a topic and the speaker's aim is to influence the audience to his/her point of view by convincingly presenting the merits of that point of view. The approach of the informative speech is entirely different; it aims to provide more details on a particular topic.

Moreover, persuasive speech focuses more on justifying a point of view over others through arguments and solutions of the problem whereas informative speech adds to the knowledge of the audience with more information in the field.

To illustrate the nature of an informative speech, here is an example. This is a speech by Earl Spencer delivered at Westminster Abbey, London on 9th September 1997 in the form of a eulogy for Diana, Princess of Wales.

**(The speech)**

I stand before you today, the representative of a family in grief in a country in mourning before a world in shock.

We are all united not only in our desire to pay our respects to Diana, but rather in our need to do, because such was her extraordinary appeal that the tens of millions of people taking part in this service all over the world via television and radio who never actually met her feel that they too lost someone close to them in the early hours of Sunday morning.

It is a more remarkable tribute to Diana than I can ever hope to offer to her today.

Diana was the very essence of compassion, of duty, of style, of beauty. All over the world, she was the symbol of selfless humanity. A standard-bearer for the rights of the truly downtrodden. A very British girl who transcended nationality. Someone with a natural nobility who was classless and who proved in the last year that she needed no royal title to continue to generate her particular brand of magic.

Today is the chance to say 'thank you' for the way you brightened our lives, even though God granted you but half a life. We will all feel cheated always that you were taken from us so young and yet we must learn to be grateful that you came at all.

Only now, you are gone do we truly appreciate what we are without, and we want you to know that life without you is very, very difficult.

We have all despaired for our loss over the past week and only the strength of the message you gave us through your years of giving has afforded us the strength to move forward...

I would like to end by thanking God for the small mercies he has shown us at this dreadful time, for taking Diana at her most beautiful and radiant and when she had joy in her private life.

Above all, we give thanks for the life of a woman I'm so proud to be able to call my sister the unique, the complex, the extraordinary and irreplaceable Diana whose beauty both internal and external, will never be extinguished from our minds.

**(End of speech)**

We have taken Earl Spencer's eulogy to his departed sister as an example of informative speech. The technique that the speaker uses is to *increase the understanding and feelings* of the audience that they so far had held about Princess Diana.

- such was her extraordinary appeal that the tens of millions of people taking part in this service all over the world via television and radio who never actually met her feel that they too lost someone close to them in the early hours of Sunday morning.

- We have all despaired for our loss over the past week and only the strength of the message you gave us through your years of giving has afforded us the strength to move forward.

Secondly, the speaker *provides more information* about the Princess touched by the poignancy of his highly charged emotional words.

- All over the world she was the symbol of selfless humanity.
- A standard-bearer for the rights of the truly downtrodden.
- A very British girl who transcended nationality...



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 2:** Answer the following questions:

(a) Briefly explain informative speech.

(b) Give an example of how informative speech contrasts with persuasive speech.

(c) Give an example as to how the speaker makes the speech informative.



## 12.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we analysed some of the techniques of public speaking that good speakers have always used in their celebrated speeches by taking up two different types of speeches: speeches that aim to persuade and speeches that aim to inform.

- We noted that these two types are distinguished mainly from the point of view if the intent of the speaker and the purpose of the speech.
- We illustrated the distinctive features of persuasive speech by taking the Earth Summit (1992) speech of Severn Suzuki
- We analysed the techniques followed that had made the speech to be persuasive speech.
- We also outlined a number of distinctive features of informative speech noting that the most striking difference between persuasive

and informative speech is that in an informative speech, the primary aim of the speaker is to share knowledge and create understanding.

- We noted how informative speech differs from a persuasive speech where the speaker attempts to change certain beliefs, attitudes or values of his/her audience.
- We took Earl Spencer's "Eulogy for Diana, Princess of Wales" as a sample of speech that fulfils the criteria of an informative speech and examined how the speech becomes an informative speech.



## 12.6 FURTHER READING

Barker, Alan. (2008). *Improve Your Communication Skills.* New Delhi: Kogan Page.

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Koneru, Aruna. (2913). *Professional Speaking Skills.* Oxford University Press

Readers Digest. (2009). How to Write and Speak Better. *Reader's Digest*, London.



## 12.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q 1:**

(a) See paragraph 1 of 12,3.

(b) Severn Suzuki was trying to persuade through her speech the delegates attending the Earth Summit held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

(c) See last part of paragraph 2 of 12,3.

**Ans to Q 2:**

(a) See paragraph 2 of 12.4.

(b) Take any of the four examples at 12.4 (paragraphs 2,3,4 and 5)

(c) The speaker makes the speech informative by increasing the understanding and feelings of Princess Diana and by providing more information about her.



## 12.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Give brief answers to the following questions.

(a) Who is the speaker of “Our finest hour”?

(b) Name two public speeches of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

(c) Explain the term “persuasive speech”.

**Q 2:** Answer the following questions.

(a) Give four characteristics of persuasive speech.

(b) Explain the characteristics of informative speech.

(c) State the occasion of Severn Suzuki’s speech.

**Q 3:** Answer the following questions.

(a) Discuss in what sense is Severn Suzuki’s speech a persuasive speech.

(b) Discuss the features that make Earl Spenser’s speech an informative speech.

(c) Discuss the distinction between persuasive and informative speech.

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# UNIT 13: SPEECHES FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

## UNIT STRUCTURE


13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Public Speaking on Special Occasions

13.3.1 Address of Welcome

13.3.2 Introducing the Speaker

13.3.3 Vote of Thanks

13.4 Group Discussion

13.5 Let us Sum up

13.6 Further Reading

13.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.8 Model Questions


## 13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- develop the techniques of public speaking on special occasions
- develop the techniques of group discussion
- understand the use of appropriate expressions in public speaking
- learn the interactive strategies of group discussion.

## 13.2 INTRODUCTION

In his *Autobiography* M. K. Gandhi relates the experience of his first public speech which is of interest to us because we know Gandhiji as a successful public speaker who could move masses of Indian men, women and children to a great Nationalist cause by following the path of non-violence. Yet, in his first speech at his high school, which was a thanksgiving speech in his honour on the eve of his departure to England for his studies in Law, he tells us: "I had written out a few words of thanks. However, I could scarcely stammer them out. I remember how my head reeled and how my whole frame shook as I stood up to read them". The task before Gandhiji was to present a thanksgiving speech on the special occasion of his farewell

organized by his school. A thanksgiving speech is a speech for a special occasion. These are the types of speeches for special occasions that we intend to discuss in this unit.

The term “special occasions” is used in this unit to refer to speeches that are distinguished from informative and persuasive speeches that are delivered at boardrooms and seminars, conferences and public rallies. The speeches for special occasions are speeches where speakers deviate from the themes of the conferences to address the distinguished dignitaries and speakers and the audience especially with the purpose of welcoming them, introducing some of the distinguished speakers to the gathering, offering vote of thanks at the end of the proceedings and so on. The main feature of these speeches is the note of goodwill of the host and the members of the committee.

The unit thus begins by highlighting the character of an address of welcome. For this purpose, to give a sense of authenticity to otherwise fictitious speeches, some situations have been contrived. The first is an address of welcome delivered by the President of the Celebration Committee at the Closing Ceremony of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Banikanta College of Teacher Education. The second is a speech introducing Professor Dilip Kumar Baruah to the delegates of a symposium prior to his speech. The third is a vote of thanks by the secretary of an organizing committee of the State Academic Council. In the second part of the unit we introduce you to some of the techniques of group discussion. We explained the term “Group Discussion” as an oral communication process in which a small number of participants meet to discuss a particular problem, topic, issue or situation among themselves. We concluded the unit with an illustration of the concept of group discussion by taking up a group discussion session between eight participants on the theme of vocational education in Assam.

## 13.3 PUBLIC SPEAKING ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS

The term “special occasions” is used in this unit to refer to the type of speeches that are distinguished from persuasive or informative and persuasive speeches. Let us imagine a situation in order to explain to

you the notion of public speaking on special occasions. These speeches are also delivered at seminars and conferences but they do not tackle the issues that are been taken up. Instead, these speeches are generally delivered by the President and/or Convenor of the celebration committee by playing the role of host and other members of the celebration committee. These speeches include: “Address of Welcome”, “Introducing the speaker”, “Vote of Thanks” and so on. The important feature of these speeches is expression of goodwill of the head of the Celebration Committee who plays the role of the host, besides a few other members of the committee. Their speeches aim at creating a feeling of warmth and good will. In this section, we shall discuss a few of these speeches for special occasions.

### 13.3.1 Address of Welcome

One type of speech that falls in the category of speech for special occasions is the “Address of welcome” generally presented by the head of the organization or such other persons who being the host has the privilege to say a word or two to the gathering before the main agenda of the conference is taken up. Such speeches begin with the speaker’s expression of his/her feeling of happiness to see so many dignitaries and delegates who had made it possible to be present in the programme in spite of their busy schedule. Here is an extract of an address of welcome presented by the Principal of Government Banikanta B. Ed College in her capacity as President and Convenor of the Golden Jubilee Celebration.

**(The speech)**

Hon’ble Member of the Legislative Assembly representing 53 East Guwahalt LAC Shri Siddhartha Bhattacharyya, respected Director of Elementary Education Shri Pritam Saikia, distinguished dignitaries and guests, teachers and ladies and gentlemen.

As President and Convenor of the Golden Jubilee Celebration of Government Banikanta College of Teacher Education, I take this privilege to welcome you to the Closing Ceremony of the Golden

Jubilee Celebration we are organizing today. We are very much honoured that all of you have been able to make it convenient to be present in this auspicious occasion. I feel happy to state that we the entire Banikanta family have always remained committed to work for the development of secondary school teachers. We have always taken steps to streamline the process of supervision and empowerment of these teachers...

Once again, I extend a hearty welcome to all of you. I hope you will bear with us in case there is any shortcoming in our hospitality towards you all.

**(End of speech)**

The address of welcome can be seen as the prologue to the proceedings of the conference.

## 13.3.2 Introducing the Speaker

A second type of speech for a special occasion is a speech on introducing a speaker. It is customary to introduce a speaker to the audience just before the speaker takes his/her stand at the lectern. The introducer may be the President or a member of the organizing committee. If the speaker happens to be a celebrity, who needs no introduction, still it is customary to introduce the speaker. The introduction may be something like this:

**(The speech)**

I deem it a privilege to introduce Professor Dilip Kumar Barua though all of you will agree with me that Professor Barua hardly needs any introduction. An alumni of Banaras Hindu University and the University of Leeds in England, Professor Barua holds a Ph D from the University of Sheffield. He began his teaching career at St Anthony's College, Shillong, before joining Cotton College where he served for a few years before going abroad. After his return, he joined Gauhati University for a brief stint prior to his joining the then newly founded Dibrugarh University as the Head of the Department of

English. Towards the end of 1977, he left Dibrugarh to join the University of Burdwan from where he retired in 1998 after an illustrious career as a poet, literary critic and an eminent translator. His latest translated work *Aadhunik Mohadexio Kobitaa* (2010) is a rich contribution to modern Assamese poetry by providing a lot of fresh images and metaphors from the continental poets of Europe. I welcome Professor Barua to the lecture stand.

**(End of speech)**

Indeed, the objective of a speech for introducing the speaker is to create a desire in others to listen attentively to the speech of the speaker who is being introduced.

### 13.3.3 Vote of Thanks

Vote of Thanks is a very short speech presented by a speaker on behalf of the organizing committee or the secretary of the organization or his/her representative to formally propose a vote of thanks to the dignitaries and all concerned. The person who has been given this responsibility has to listen carefully to every speaker and make notes of pertinent points that he/she could highlight. The person also must ensure that no one whose name needs to be mentioned is left out. This includes not only the speakers or the delegates and guests but also the in-house workers whose silent work had contributed to the success of the programme.

**(The speech)**

As we come to the end of the proceedings, I, on behalf of the Organizing Committee of the State Academic Council, take the privilege to propose a vote of thanks to Shri Phanindra Jidung, the Director of Secondary Education who is also the President of the State Academic Council, not only for his illuminating speech but also for the great help and encouragement that he has been extending to the Council in all academic maters that we have been taking up. I also propose a vote of thanks to Shri Nasir Sultan the Secretary of

the State Academic Council for his contribution towards the development of the State Academic Council as an apex body for heads of secondary schools of the state....

Last but not the least, I propose a vote of thanks to the members of the local committee that has worked so hard to ensure that the delegates were well looked after and the programme was a success. Thank you to all.

**(End of speech)**

The person proposing the vote of thanks must remember that he/ she is the spokesperson for the organization and therefore he/ she should not make any personal observations. Moreover, the speaker ought not to introduce any new topic to the speech.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** Give brief answers to the following questions.

(a) Define speech for special occasions.

(b) Apart from the three speeches for special occasions illustrated in the unit, state at least two other speeches that come under this category.

(c) State the objective of a speech for introducing the speaker.

## 13.4 GROUP DISCUSSION

The word 'group' in the present context means a number of persons or participants who are gathered together or associated in a discussion. Thus, the term "Group Discussion" (GD hereafter) is used to refer to an oral communication process in which a small number of participants meet to discuss a particular problem, topic, issue or situation among themselves. Before the group starts the discussion on an issue, it must know the problem it is going to discuss. Let us assume that the group is going to discuss vocational education in schools. The best way to define the issue is to phrase it as a question of policy. The question of policy generally

includes the word “should”. The topic for discussion may be phrased as “What measures should be taken to popularize vocational education in schools?”

In the process of discussion that takes place, the participants exchange information, analyse situations and attempt to arrive at conclusions. Thus, GD is essentially an interactive oral communication.

We have seen such GDs taking place in various news channels where the term “Talk Show” is preferred. Some channels call it a “debate” as well. By whatever name you prefer to call, the fact remains that there is the inevitable group of participants, a common topic for discussion and a mover who prefers to initiate the discussion. It is different from a debating competition where everything has to be addressed to the “Hon’ble Speaker Sir” who is present in the gathering in a privileged position, usually centre-stage.

The aim of GD is not persuasion by an individual speaker. On the contrary, it is a way of collective thinking on a particular topic or issue on which different participants present their individual points of view and cooperation. This point becomes obvious from the nature of the language that each participant uses while carrying on the discussion. Here we shall attempt to identify the interaction strategies and useful expressions of group discussions.

**Opening move:**

Imagine a group of participants sitting in a circle in a conference room ready to make the opening move. Obviously, one of them takes the initiative and makes the move. The opening utterance can be any of these expressions:

Ladies and gentlemen. We assemble today to discuss a thought provoking topic. Shall we start?

- Ladies and gentlemen, may I begin?
- Ladies and gentlemen. Before we begin, shall we introduce ourselves?
- Friends! It would be nice to know each other at the beginning. Shall we introduce ourselves?

- Hello everyone! I am (name) but you can call me (a pet name). Shall we introduce ourselves before we go on to the topic of discussion?

After the activity is carried out, you will note a climate of informality among the participants. Each one is more or less relaxed and appears ready for the discussion. The opening mover now introduces the topic as briefly as possible. He/she should not usurp the time and ensure that each gets his or her turn to participate. The rules of conversational behaviour especially "turn taking" operates here. Hence, when a speaker completes the point made someone in the group may take up the discussion.

**Getting into the discussion:**

How does one take up the discussion after a speaker had completed speaking? There are several lead sentences that can be helpful. Individual speakers have their own choice, but by and large, the utterances are of the following nature.

- You have made an interesting point, but can I add another point?
- Well, what you say is quite interesting. Could I add a point to what you have said?
- Well you see, your point of view seems OK. However, there is a more valid angle to that point of view.
- Can I add an example to your point? It'll substantiate the point beautifully.
- Yes, that's true. However, don't you think it can be debated when we look at the issue from another angle?

**Making a point:**

Once when a speaker gets into the discussion, he/she has to present a new point of view or add to what the earlier speaker had just said on the topic. These are useful lead phrases for you to choose from:

- I fully endorse what Mr Das says. However, there is another angle to the issue...
- I am strongly in favour of the observation made...
- I'm afraid the proposal may not be feasible in the present situation.
- Could I add a small point here?

We may now illustrate the observations we had made by taking up an example of GD. Let us assume there are eight participants taking part in the discussion.

**(The GD)**

**Participant 1: Karabi**

Hello everyone! I am Karabi Kalita but you can call me Karabi. Shall we introduce ourselves before we go on to the topic of discussion?

**The group:** Sure (each introduces himself/herself)

**Karabi**: We assemble today to discuss a thought provoking topic. "What measures should be taken to popularize vocational education in schools?" I'd like to begin with a quick survey of the entire scenario of vocational education in the mainstream school education sector of the state of Assam. The picture is rather ironic as you will see. On the one hand, there are national level recommendations of the several august National Policies of Education on the importance of introducing vocational courses in school education so as to address various socio-economic issues with the major thrust on employability and self-employability. However, the ground reality is different. Look at the position of the pre-vocational courses offered by SEBA and vocational courses offered by AHSEC. There are hardly any takers. I feel that the mindset of the students is not prepared for vocational education.

**Participant 2: Neha**

I think you are right Karabi. I understand that the number of students offering pre-vocational subjects in SEBA is not more than 200. However, the total number of students appearing in the HSLC exams is four lakh plus. The situation is no better at the AHSEC level. There are a total of four streams: Arts, Science, Commerce and Vocational. Out of a total of around 2.5 lakh students appearing in the HS examination in all these four streams, the number of students offering Vocational stream is a little more than a thousand. This data shows that there is reason to suspect that the Vocational stream of AHSEC as an option has been viewed as an inferior stream, don't you think?

**Participant 3: Sweta**

Can I join in? You see, Neha is right. Such a pitiable number of takers in the vocational subjects means just that, But the surprising thing is that you can see a large number of vocational institutions operating not only in the towns and cities of the state, but also in rural areas. These courses offered by these institutions are outside the purview of SEBA or AHSEC courses. This is interesting, don't you think?

**Participant 4: Rani**

Of course Sweta! Look, all the National Policies of Education had recommended for the introduction of vocational courses with a specific aim. It was proposed that inclusion of technical and vocational courses in the school curriculum, especially at the HS level, would stimulate the economic foundation of India. There was the proposal for enhancing individual employability through the introduction of vocational subjects at the HS level.

**Participant 5: Nimisha**

But sadly this has not happened. It is fairly an ideal situation to think that vocational courses can provide an alternative for those pursuing higher education. Simply by proposing a distinct stream, intended to prepare the students for identified occupations, spanning several areas of activity will not work. I would like to suggest that there should be close coordination between the national and state level agencies on the one hand and sectors dealing with employment avenues and assistance in entrepreneurship on the other. The stream of VE in HS level lacks linkage with the world of work and employability which has made its existence rather bleak.

**Participant 6: Ravi**

So, where do we go from here? Could I suggest that we should move in a phased manner towards a new programme of Vocational Education and Training. There should be a strong proposal for the establishment of separate vocational education centres and institutions in villages, blocks, and sub-divisional and district towns. These will be in addition to institutions like ITIs polytechnics, technical schools and vocational training colleges.

**Participant 7: Rakesh**

Ravi has made an interesting suggestion. I would like to add to that that the State Government should seriously review the vocational stream of AHSEC to make vocational more acceptable, more futuristic, industry linked and more positive. I suggest that a separate full-fledged statutory Board of Vocational Education be set up that would be the apex body of the state in vocational education with the authority to accredit and affiliate autonomous existing vocational education institutions. Besides, there is the need to strengthen existing vocational institutions and to develop mechanisms of quality control of institutions. The Board would act as an authoritative body to design need-based courses for self-employment, provide financial assistance to successful students for setting up self-employment enterprises, carry out research and development in VE, besides offering appropriate placements to successful students.These are not merely rules of grammar. We can call them the rules of using the language so as to achieve maximum communication, in oral or written mode, with the target audience.

**Participant 8: Abhi**

Some of the courses of VE can be offered by the distant education mode with frequent contact programmes. Feedback needs to be obtained from the efforts of Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University and other universities offering vocational education courses both through the face to face and the ODL mode. This feedback would be helpful in our attempts to explore the feasibility of streamlining VE in our state.

**(End of GD)**



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q 2:** Give brief answers to the following questions.

(a) Give a definition of the term “Group Discussion”.

(b) As a participant in a group discussion, state at least two useful expressions that can be used to defend your opinion.

(c) State at least two useful expressions that can be used to reject a speaker's point of view.



## 13.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we learnt that speeches for special occasions are speeches delivered for the purpose of welcoming the invited guests/ delegates/participants. Other functions include –

- Introducing some of the distinguished speakers to the gathering,
- Offering vote of thanks at the end of the proceedings and so on.
- The main feature of these speeches is the note of goodwill of the host and the members of the committee.
- The unit highlights the character of a speech for special occasions by taking three examples: (a) an address of welcome delivered by the President of the Celebration Committee at the Closing Ceremony of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Banikanta College of Teacher Education, (b) introducing a speaker and (c) a vote of thanks by the secretary of an organizing committee.
- In the second part of the unit, we explained the term "Group Discussion" to refer to an oral communication process in which a small number of participants meet to discuss a particular problem, topic, issue or situation among themselves.
- We concluded the unit with an illustration of the concept of group discussion by taking up a group discussion session between eight participants on the theme of vocational education in Assam.



## 13.6 FURTHER READING

Barker, Alan. (2008). *Improve your Communication Skills.* New Delhi: Kogan Page India.

Karal, Rajeevan et al (2016). *English for Successful Communication.* Oxford University Press.

Koneru, Aruna. (2913). *Professional Speaking Skills.* Oxford University Press.

Readers Digest. (2009). How to Write and Speak Better. *Reader's Digest*, London.



## 13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q 1:**

(a) see 13.3

(b) Two other speeches are: first, a felicitation speech. It is the kind of speech that Gandhiji's High School had presented on the eve of his departure to England for higher studies. The other speech is the response to the felicitation speech that Gandhiji attempted to give.

(c) The objective of a speech for introducing the speaker is to create a desire in others to listen attentively to the speech of the speaker who is being introduced.

**Ans to Q 2:**

(a) See 13.4

(b) To defend my opinion, these expressions may be helpful:

- I would like to restate what I stated earlier
- The point made by ..... really supports my view.

(c) To reject other's opinion, these expressions may be helpful:

- I'm sorry to say that the view of ..... is hardly feasible in the present context.
- I'm afraid, the suggestion put forward by..... needs to be reviewed...



## 13.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Give brief answers to the following questions.

(a) Give a definition of the term "speech for special occasions".

(b) Give two examples of speech for special occasions.

(c) Give a definition of the term “Group Discussion”.

**Q 2:** Answer the following questions.

(a) State the characteristic feature of a speech for special occasion.

(b) State the objective of a speech on vote of thanks.

(c) Give the objectives of a group discussion.

**Q 3:** Answer the following questions.

(a) Draft a speech introducing a speaker who happens to be the Principal of the school/college you attended last.

(b) Imagine that a friend of yours had got a prize in India Got Talent competition. Draft a speech felicitating him/her.

(c) As one of the participants in a group discussion, draft a speech in about 100 words on the topic; English should be one of the compulsory subjects in all competitive examinations.

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# UNIT 14: DIALOGUES IN CONTEXTS

**(Non-Credit Unit)**

## UNIT STRUCTURE


14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Some Dialogues in Contexts

14.6 Let us Sum up

14.7 Further Reading

14.9 Model Questions


## 14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- see the nature of spoken dialogues in different contexts
- use some of the sentences from these dialogues in some specific day-to-day activities and situations

## 14.2 INTRODUCTION

This is the last unit of the course on Spoken English. In this unit, we shall try to look at a few dialogues that will help you to practise the English language in some day-to-day activities and situations. After going through the different previous units, you must have realised that the purpose of this course has been to help you to speak English either in the form of 'what to say', or in the form of 'how to say' what you want to say. The first question usually focuses on English conversation, and the second on English pronunciation. The first question aims to teach how to express communicative functions, such as asking questions, making requests, getting things done, or expressing greetings, farewells, apologies, regrets, thanks, etc.; while the second aims at teaching the pronunciation of words, phrases, and sentences. In units 7 and 8 of the previous Block, you have read about the importance of correct pronunciation in verbal communication. You may therefore read the dialogues/conversations in this unit silently for

a number of times, and the practice shall help you to use some of the sentences in similar situations of your day-today life. This is however; a non-credit unit and no evaluation shall be made on this unit.

## 14.3 SOME DIALOGUES IN CONTEXTS

The following are some of the dialogues in contexts adapted from the book entitled *Spoken English: A Self-Learning Guide to Conversation Practice* by V. Sasikumar, & P. V. Dhamija. You can also get a copy of the book and start reading the same for a better grasp of Spoken English.

**AT THE POST OFFICE**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| RUBUL | : | Excuse me. |
| COUNTER CLERK | : | Yes? |
| RUBUL | : | I want to send this letter, please. |
| COUNTER CLERK | : | Do you want to send it by general letter post or registered post? It'd be five rupees by general letter post, and twenty-five rupees up to 20 grams by registered post. |
| RUBUL | : | You'd better send it by registered letter post. It might be quicker. |
| COUNTER CLERK | : | All right. Anything else I can do for you? |
| RUBUL | : | Yes. Could you weigh this letter, please? |
| COUNTER CLERK | : | It's just over 30 grams. It'll cost you twenty eight rupees. Here're the stamps for the letter. Will you affix them, please? |
| RUBUL | : | I also want twenty inland letter sheets and ten stamped envelopes. |
| COUNTER CLERK | : | But, wait a minute, please. Let me first give you the receipt for the registered post. Here's the receipt. And, here's the postal stationery that you are in need of. However,don't forget to put the letter in the box over there. |
| RUBUL | : | Oh, yes. Thank you very much. |

**AT THE DOCTOR'S**

PATIENT : Good evening, doctor.

DOCTOR : Good evening, sir. What's your trouble?

PATIENT : I haven't been feeling well lately.

DOCTOR : What exactly is the problem?

PATIENT : I often feel quite sick. I've had a lot of pain in the stomach for several days. I've also had severe headaches for over two days.

DOCTOR : What's your appetite like?

PATIENT : Not at all good. I don't feel like eating anything. I feel full up all the time.

DOCTOR : Have you had any fever?

PATIENT : Well, I do feel feverish all the time. I've also had a bad taste in the mouth since I've fallen sick.

DOCTOR : All right, let me take your temperature first. There! Give me your wrist, please. There's nothing wrong with the pulse. Now take off your pullover. And, your shirt too. Loosen your clothes a little. I'll examine you, if you lie down on that couch. Do you feel any pain here?

PATIENT : Yes, some.

DOCTOR : And here?

PATIENT : Oh, that's quite painful!

DOCTOR : All right. You may get dressed now.

PATIENT : I hope there's nothing serious, doctor?

DOCTOR : No, nothing serious. I'm prescribing two kinds of tablets. Take one before meals. And, the other after meals for three days. Don't eat any fried or spicy food. Drink milk and have milk foods as much as you can. And, do take some rest.

PATIENT : Do I need to stay away from work, doctor?

DOCTOR : No, not at all. Just take it easy and have rest whenever you can. Come and see me again if the trouble continues.

PATIENT : Thank you very much, doctor. Good-bye!

DOCTOR : Bye! Take Care.

**BUYING A SHIRT**

SHOP ASSISTANT : Good afternoon, madam. What can I do for you?

CUSTOMER : Good afternoon, I'd like to buy a shirt.

SHOP ASSISTANT : Cottons or synthetics, madam?

CUSTOMER : Terycots, if you have some.

SHOP ASSISTANT : Sure, madam. Over here, if you don't mind. We have an excellent range of shirts in terycot. These striped ones are new arrivals.

CUSTOMER : I rather fancy those blue ones with red stripes.

SHOP ASSISTANT : Well, they're men's shirts. But, nowadays . . .

CUSTOMER : Could you take them out, please?

SHOP ASSISTANT : What's the collar-size, madam?

CUSTOMER : Fifteen.

SHOP ASSISTANT : Fifteen? Are you sure, madam?

CUSTOMER : Yes. I'm sure.

SHOP ASSISTANT : Here you are, madam.

CUSTOMER : How much is it?

SHOP ASSISTANT : That's five hundred and ninety rupees. Plus taxes. Would you like to try it on?

CUSTOMER : Try it on? No. Could you gift-wrap it? You see, it's a gift to my husband on his birthday!

SHOP ASSISTANT : I see! (Later) Here it is! I've also stuck on it a little card saying 'Happy Birthday!'

CUSTOMER : That's very kind of you, young man. Bye!

SHOP ASSISTANT : Good-bye, madam. Come again.

**AT THE MARKET**

JANAKI : (to her husband Bolin). Why don't we come to the market more often?

BOLIN : I don' find it a very enjoyable place.

JANAKI : But I do. I want to come here every day.

BOLIN : Come here every day, then. Who stops you? You have nothing better to do . . .

JANAKI : Now, don't shout, dear. I didn't say I *will* come here every day; I said I *want* to come here.

BOLIN : Let's not argue any more. Let's quickly do the shopping and go home. The children must be getting impatient.

JANAKI : OK, here's the shopping list. We'll first buy toiletries and groceries, and then go to the vegetable stall.

BOLIN : That's right. Let's go to the department store next door.

SHOP ASSISTANT : What can I do for you, madam?

JANAKI : We're new to this store and we don't know where things are. Can you tell us where the groceries are? And the toiletries?

SHOP ASSISTANT : For the groceries turn right, madam, and then walk straight on until you come to the end of the corridor. And for the toiletries, just turn left and you walk right into them.

JANAKI : Thanks.

BOLIN : I want these 15 items. Please make me the bill quickly.

COUNTER CLERK : I'll take only a minute, sir. Here's the bill.

JANAKI : Most of the vegetables I wanted to buy are stale. Some of them are even rotten. You should've thrown them away.

COUNTER CLERK : Sorry, madam. In fact, yesterday the wholesale market was closed, and so we couldn't bring in fresh supplies.

JANAKI : But that doesn't mean you should sell rotten vegetables.

COUNTER CLERK : Sorry, madam.

JANAKI : I won't come to this place again.

BOLIN : Not until next week! Bye!

**IN THE LIBRARY**

STUDENT : I want to return these four books.

LIBRARY ASSISTANT : But two of these were due on Monday. You're late by three days. I'm afraid you'll have to pay the fine.

STUDENT : Oh yes, I know that. But... I was sick and have not been able to come to college these four days. You condone the delay under special circumstances, don't you? And my sickness is a special circumstance, isn't it?

LIBRARY ASSISTANT : Yes, it is. But you should talk to the librarian. My duty is just to charge the fine if it is due according to the rules.

STUDENT : Very well, I'll see the librarian. Meanwhile, please issue me with these two books. Oh, wait a minute. I want another book too. Let me go to the racks and find out that one also.

LIBRARY ASSISTANT : OK, I'll wait and lend you all the three together.

STUDENT (later) : Here's the book I wanted. Now please issue them.

LIBRARY ASSISTANT : Would you sign here, please? And here also?

STUDENT : Oh, I want to point out something. In this book, one page is missing. It's page 251. You can have a look.

LIBRARY ASSISTANT : Somebody has torn it away! How callous! ... I must stamp page 230 to indicate that page 231 has been torn out.

STUDENT : Is this necessary?

LIBRARY ASSISTANT : Yes, very necessary. Otherwise this may be blamed on you, or the next borrower after you.

STUDENT : Thanks very much.

LIBRARY ASSISTANT : That's all right.

**AT THE RAILWAY STATION**

MOHAN : Good afternoon.

ENQUIRY CLERK : Good afternoon. What can I do for you, sir?

MOHAN : What time is the North East Express expected?

ENQUIRY CLERK : The scheduled time of its arrival is 4 o'clock.

MOHAN : But it's already fifteen minutes past four and there's yet no sign of its arrival.

ENQUIRY CLERK : I'm afraid it's running late by over an hour, and we've already announced it's running late.

MOHAN : I haven't heard any such announcement. I've been at the station for over ten minutes.

ENQUIRY CLERK : Perhaps, it was made before you came. Let me check...It was made at 3.55, exactly 20 minutes ago.

MOHAN : Do you make only oral announcements?

ENQUIRY CLERK : No, we also write them on the notice board just in front of the ASM's office.

MOHAN : Don't you think these announcements should be a little more frequent?

ENQUIRY CLERK : Well, I can't answer that question. For that, you can speak to the ASM, if you like.

MOHAN : Very well. When exactly will the train arrive?

ENQUIRY CLERK : At 5.10. This is the position at the moment. But, it may cover some time, or it may be delayed further. We'll make another announcement as soon as we receive a message.

MOHAN : This will mean a lot of inconvenience to the people gathered here. Have you thought of that?

ENQUIRY CLERK : I'm sorry, but I can't help it. Bear with me for some more time, please, and make yourself comfortable in the waiting room.

MOHAN : All right. Thank you.

On the public-address system: Your attention, please. The North East Express is running four hours late . . .

**AT THE TEA STALL**

CUSTOMER : What's the idea? I've been waiting for half an hour now. Do you want me to wait forever?

OWNER : I'm sorry, sir. I'll give you your tea in a few minutes.

CUSTOMER : But I can't wait any more.

OWNER : I haven't served tea to anybody who's come after you. Everybody here waits for his turn. If I served you out of turn, the other customers who came before you would complain.

CUSTOMER : All right, I'll wait for my turn, but you should work a little faster.

OWNER : Here's your tea, sir. Would you like some biscuits or some namkin to go with it?

CUSTOMER : Yes, I think I need some biscuits, some good biscuits, if you have any.

OWNER : I have Eatwell Glucose and Sultana Bikis. Which would you like?

CUSTOMER : Well, give me two or three Sultanas.

OWNER : All right, sir.

CUSTOMER : God, how dirty this plate is! Look here. Its edges are broken, and it's covered with grease, ash, and grime.

OWNER : I'm sorry, sir. But. . .

CUSTOMER : Take this plate away. I don't need any of your biscuits.

OWNER : May I bring you another cup of tea, sir?

CUSTOMER : Do you think I can survive this cup to order another?

OWNER : What's the matter with this tea, sir?

CUSTOMER : What's the matter? It's bad…It's over boiled and bitter. I wonder if you've mixed any sugar at all. I've never taken worse tea in my life.

OWNER : Nobody's ever told me anything about my plates and tea. You're the firstperson to make a complaint and I promise to be careful in future, sir.

CUSTOMER : I hope you'll keep your promise. How much do I pay for the tea?

OWNER : Nothing, sir. Thanks a lot for your comments. You can pay me next time.

CUSTOMER : Thanks.

**AN INTERVIEW**

VINOD (Interviewee) : Good morning.

INTERVIEWERS (A, B, C, D, E): Good morning.

A : Please sit down.

VINOD : Thank you.

B : Please tell us your name.

VINOD : I'm Vinod Sharma.

C : Your name gives the impression that you're a very learned man.

VINOD : I wish I were. If only names could be an index of the mind of the people who bear them.

D : What about your name? Do you think it indicates your personality?

VINOD : I can't answer that question, but I'm sure I can't make any claim to any great learning or knowledge that my name . . .

E(interrupting him) : Well, don't worry about your name. Please tell me what subjects you studied for your B.A.

VINOD : History, economics and political science.

E : I wonder why most of you offer these subjects.

VINOD : That's because most colleges teach only these subjects. They have no facilities to teach certain subjects which most of us would like to study.

A : Can you name some of these subjects?

VINOD : Yes, sociology, for example. Or education, psychology. Or still more useful and career-oriented subjects like business management, social work, journalism, international understanding, oceanography.

B : But do you think you can mention social work and oceanography together, in the same breath?

VINOD : Oh, I just named them as they came to me, at random. I wasn't in any way attempting a classified list.

C : Can you tell me why you're interested in an administrative career? Most candidates for jobs try their luck at everything and plump for whatever job they can lay their hands on. They don't care whether they are fit for a certain career or not.

VINOD : Well, I don't know much about others. I'm taking this interview because I'd, any day, prefer an administrative position to any other. B: Why?

VINOD : Well, I think I'm good at getting things done rather than doing them myself. A: That's a good answer! Thank you.

VINOD : Thank you.

**AT THE BOOK SELLER'S**

SA : Shop Assistant

C : Customer

C : Do you, by any chance, have *a* copy of *Midnight's Children*, please?

SA : I'm afraid it's sold out.

C : Sold out? I don't think it's possible. This book cannot be in such great demand.

SA : Wait a minute, sir. Do you have the history book in mind, the one written by John Brown?

C : Oh, not at all. I mean the world-famous novel by the great Russian novelist Dostoevsky. I doubt if there is any history book of this name. I think you're mixed up.

SA : Oh dear, I'm really mixed up. I'm sorry, sir. Perhaps I should've been a little more careful.

C : Now, don't worry about that. Tell me how long it will take you to get me a copy of the book. I need it soon.

SA : If you could give me two weeks' time . . . I'll place the order right away.

C : Thank you...Could you guide me to your fiction department? I'd like to browse through some of your latest arrivals, and may select some of them to buy.

SA : Yes, by all means, sir. From here, you just move straight down and then turn left. You'll find fictions there on both sides.

C : Where exactly can I find the latest arrivals?

SA : In the beginning of the corridor, on either side. You'll find a boy there. He'll help you, I'm sure.

C : Thanks.

**AT THE GARAGE**

MECHANIC : I've checked everything, sir, and it's definitely the carburettor. Everything else has been found fine. The battery is fully charged. The ignition plug is all right. It gives out a nice spark.

RAMESH : But what's the carburettor to do with the starting trouble?

MECHANIC : Oh, it's everything to do, sir. It's here that the mixture is ignited.

RAMESH : But the mixture is ignited, isn't it?

MECHANIC : Yes, but probably the mixture doesn't bum long enough to start the engine. And sometimes even when the engine gets started, it soon runs down since the supply of fuel is cut off.

RAMESH : OK, I'll take your word for it. Start working on it right away. Can you give the scooter back to me in two hours?

MECHANIC : I don't think I can, sir, but I'll certainly try.

RAMESH : By the way, what'll be your charge?

MECHANIC : Not much, sir. It'll be only fifty rupees.

RAMESH : Fifty rupees? But it's only a minor repair.

MECHANIC : It is a major repair, sir. The carburettor has to be cleaned up. The parts around it have to be

cleaned up too, and then the carburettor has to be adjusted. This will mean a lot of trial and error. Two of my boys will be busy handing me tools and things.

RAMESH : Oh, you make the work sound so heavy and complicated!

MECHANIC : I just don't make it sound so; it is heavy and complicated.

RAMESH : All right. Do it then, please.

MECHANIC : Right away, sir!

**HIRING A TAXI**

TD : Taxi-driver

P : Passenger

P : Taxi, taxi!

TD : Yes, sir? Would you like to hire the taxi, sir?

P : No, I just want to make an enquiry. Where can I find a taxi for the airport?

TD : Well, you have it right here. I can take you to the airport. Which airport, sir?

P : Indira Gandhi International Airport.

TD : Indira Gandhi International, or the other one for domestic flights?

P : The International. What'd be the fare?

TD : I'll charge by the meter-reading. It'd come to around 250 rupees.

P : Why around? You should be taking passengers to the airport every day. You should know what exactly the fare will come to.

TD : I do, sir. And that's why I'm saying it'd come to around 250 rupees.

P : But why?

TD : Because the taxi doesn't cover exactly the same distance every time it goes from this taxi stand to the airport.

P : But why? What's the mystery there? You mean to say that the road from this point to the airport is flexible? Does it expand and contract with the temperature like a rubber band, or something?

TD : Come on, sir. There's no mystery at all, sir. It's straight and simple. The airport is quite far from here. The distance travelled, as the meter records it, will depend upon the lane you travel in, the number of times you change lanes, the number of times you overtake, and so on.

P : All right, all right. Let's go. Would you help me with these bags?

TD : By all means, sir. Let's put them in the boot, sir. Here…That's right. Now take your seat, sir…Are you comfortable enough, sir? Can I start?

P : Yes, you can.

**AT THE RESTAURANT**

JOHN : Well, here we are. Do you like the place?

MUKESH : Lovely! Very nice!

JOHN : Ah, I hoped you would like this place. Let's go and sit in the corner there, shall we?

MUKESH : Yeah.

JOHN : Now then, let's see if we can get some service.

MUKESH : Well, we need a menu first, don't we?

JOHN : We haven't got one here, have we? Could you ask those people behind us?

MUKESH : Mm, excuse me, could you possibly give us a menu? Oh, they haven't got one either!

JOHN : Haven't they? Let me see ... I think I'll ask these people on my right. Um, sorry to interrupt. I wonder if you could give us a menu. Oh, they don't seem to have one either.

MUKESH : We'd better get the waiter. I say . . . Waiter!

WAITER : Yes, sir?

MUKESH : Er, we haven't got a menu.

WAITER : Oh, I'm sorry. I'll bring you one straight away.

MUKESH : Thank you.

WAITER : Here's the menu, sir. Er, I'm very sorry to trouble you, but I wonder if you could possibly move to another table. I'm afraid this table is reserved.

JOHN : Oh yes, by all means.

WAITER : Thank you very much, sir. Ah! here's the menu. You were sitting on it, sir.

**AT THE BANK**

CUSTOMER : Can I cash a cheque here?

COUNTER CLERK : Go to another counter, sir. That one there.

CUSTOMER : Can I cash this cheque, please?

(at the second counter)

COUNTER CLERK : What's the amount? Let me see the cheque. It's less than two thousand. Go to the teller's counter, sir. She'll cash it right away.

CUSTOMER : Take this cheque please, and give me the amount.

(at the teller's counter) Be a little prompt, will you? I've already spent some time here going from counter to counter, and I'm in a hurry.

TELLER : All right, sir. Bear with me for two minutes, and I'll give you the money. (After a minute) I'm sorry to bother you, sir, but there's an over-writing on the

date, which you've not signed. Would you put your signature here, just over the date on the right-hand corner?

CUSTOMER : Of course. Here it is, young lady. Now go ahead and pay the amount, please.

TELLER : It shouldn't take much time now. An entry has to be made, and that's all. But could I bother you again? Would you sign on the back of the cheque, here?

CUSTOMER : Certainly not. Why do you want me to sign on the back when I've put my signature on the front of the cheque?

TELLER : We need this signature as evidence that you've received the money, sir. The signature on the front only means that you've ordered the bank to pay.

CUSTOMER : Well, you have a point there, but this order should be enough evidence that the payment has been made.

TELLER : But it doesn't prove who's received it, does it?

CUSTOMER : That's true.

TELLER : Here's the amount, sir. Sorry for the little delay.

CUSTOMER : That's all right. Thank you.

TOM : Come, everybody. Let's have some tea now.

**AT THE HOTEL**

TOURIST : Good morning. Have you any room vacant?

RECEPTIONIST : Yes, sir. Double or single?

TOURIST : I want one double.

RECEPTIONIST : I have a double room on the second floor.

TOURIST : Oh, but I wanted to have one on the ground floor, or the first floor.

RECEPTIONIST : Let me see if I can . . . I'm sorry, sir. There's no double room vacant at the moment either on the ground or on the first floor. But I wonder if' you could wait till the check-out time. I'll have two vacancies then. Could I book one of the rooms for you in advance, sir?

TOURIST : Yes, I don't mind waiting for an hour or so. What's your check-out time?

RECEPTIONIST : It's 12 noon, and it's already a quarter past eleven. So you'll have to wait for less than an hour, sir.

TOURIST : How come? My watch shows ten minutes *to* eleven! That means there's more than an hour to go. I'm not going to wait. . .

RECEPTIONIST : I'm afraid your watch is a little too slow, sir. My watch makes 11.20 now. I set the time only a few minutes before you came.

TOURIST : Oh, dear, there's something wrong with my watch. You're right. I'll wait for some time.

RECEPTIONIST : Thank you, sir. Would you take a seat, on the sofa over there?

TOURIST : Oh, but I don't know anything about the facilities you provide here.

RECEPTIONIST : Don't worry about that, sir. Here's a brochure giving all information about the hotel. On page ten, you'll find everything about the rooms.

TOURIST : Thank you, young lady.



## 14.6 LET US SUM UP

This unit is meant for all those learners who know the structure of English, but cannot communicate effectively while speaking. The dialogues provided here shall help to guide all those learners who find communication in English a difficult task, as the they can take adequate hints from these

dialogues regarding what to say and how to say certain things while communicating in a particular situation or context.



## 14.7 FURTHER READING

Sasikumar, V. & Dhamija, P. V. (1993). *Spoken English: A Self-Learning Guide to Conversation Practice.* Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited.

Carmen, Robert. (ed.).*Spoken English: Flourish Your Language.* Abhishek Publication: Chandigarh.



## 14.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Write imaginary dialogues in the following contexts and situations.

a. At the Cinema Hall
b. Introducing Yourself to a Stranger
c. Waiting for the bus on the road side
d. An Invitation to Tea
e. An Invitation to Lunch/dinner
f. Going out on a long drive
g. At the Marriage Party
h. At a religious place
i. At the Tailors
j. Sending good wishes
k. At the Stadium
l. At the workplace
m. In a Park
n. Starting a conversation with a Stranger
o. Student-Teacher conversation
p. Conversation with a Police Officer
q. At a Shopping Mall

r. Conversation with an Interior Designer

s. In the Hospital

t. Asking for direction at a new place

u. At a mobile repairing shop

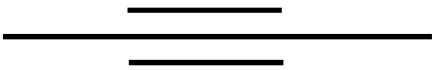
v. At an automobile dealer

w. Conversing with Customer Care Executives/Insurance Agent

x. Conversing with a Consultancy Service

y. At the Gym

z. Conversation between an employer and employee





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12. Sethi J. et al. (2004). *A Practical Course in English Pronunciation*. Prentice Hall of India.
13. Ussain, Wasbir. (2010). *Tarun Gogoi.* Guwahati: Wordsweaver. (refer to pages 268-280)