Module 5

Supporting oral language development

Introduction

Oral language development, or speaking and listening, usually (but not always) comes before written language development. Usually learners can understand more than they can say, for quite a long time. You can find more information on oral language development in the *English Language Learning Progressions*, *Introduction* pp 21-26, including the input and output charts.

For bilingual teacher aides, using first language to support oral language development in English is very important. It is also important that bilingual teacher aides help families understand that they should continue to use first language to talk at home about their children's ideas, books and experiences. The primary Home-School Partnership programme materials has a section on ideas for parents on talking with children to expand their language. These materials are in many schools and will be available on the Home-School Partnership website from 2009.

Oral language is used at school for social purposes and for learning in curriculum areas. One very important idea is that oral language practice should be integrated with the development of reading and writing, not separated from this.

Making planned use of oral language for learning helps students understand what they are reading and writing, and what they are listening to and how to use spoken language for different purposes. Effective approaches to increasing oral language proficiency are based on:

- having rich experiences and talking about them
- bridging from the student's home language and culture to the new culture and language (e.g. making **Ethnic Boxes,** *NESB Students: A Handbook for Schools,* MOE, 1999 pp 36-7)
- using real objects to stimulate talk and help understanding e.g. using mirrors to show 'reflection'; growing plants in science; bringing in instruments for music and explaining them to the class; bringing in maths and science equipment/objects to talk about. Museums will often lend these types of materials to schools.
- providing many different visual materials to help understanding (e.g. charts, maps, diagrams, photographs, pictures, picture dictionaries). Students often enjoy bringing in their own photos or creating drawings based on class topics.
- helping learners expand their ideas (not just using short simple sentences).

Oral language development can be supported through individual pair work, group work and self-access learning (which includes use of computers, DVDs and tapes). It is especially important that older learners use these approaches. Learners need support to develop **listening skills,** as well as speaking skills. Practice in listening can be done with guidance individually, in pairs, or in groups. An example is given in the next section in the Module Tasks.

The task section of this module shows four examples of how to support oral language learning for students beyond the early primary years: picture sequences, strip stories and speaking frames and grids.

The *ELIP* or *English Language Intensive Programme Resource* (both *Years 7-13 Resource* and the *Primary Resource*) has more examples of how to help students make planned use of oral language, what sort of tasks can help students and what level to work at.

Using a picture sequence

Picture sequences can be used with students who are in the early stages of learning to read and write, as well as with students who are literate. They provide opportunities to expand oral language use with children, and to practise using words that organise ideas (connectives).

Picture sequences work well for stories, processes, and sequences of events – e.g. science experiments, instructions, or class trips. The way the picture sequence is used depends on the purpose of the learning, and the age and stage of the learner. They can be used before, during or after reading a text or observing a process or doing an activity.

Using a picture sequence learning task is a good way to include listening, speaking, reading and writing in the same task and the resource can be used over several days. The stage of the learner will determine how much support and scaffolding is appropriate.

A picture sequence can be:

- drawn by the students from previous reading or topic work
- drawn by the students as part of a picture dictation (e.g. *Effective Literacy Strategies, Years 9-13 pp 48-49)*
- prepared by the teacher (or bilingual tutor)
- pre-cut and sorted/sequenced by the student
- pre-cut with each student having only one picture. Students have to describe their picture and work together to sequence the pictures without looking at each other's pictures.
- used for oral retelling of the process or story, in pairs or groups
- used as one picture (large OHT) at a time by the teacher for finding out which words students know, teaching vocabulary, expanding students' oral language output or collaboratively retelling (and recording) the story/process
- labelled (with pre-prepared labels) by the student, reinforcing new or previously learned vocabulary
- used for picture/caption matching (especially for Foundation Stage students)
- used for the students to write a caption or several sentences underneath the picture
- used as a stimulus for writing for more proficient students
- added to, to create a different text type. For example the picture sequence of a storm (*Activity forty-seven on p 72 of the Student Workbook in Focus on English: English for Science #5 Weather)* could be used to retell or write a report on a storm, or the students could add a family, by naming the family members and retell the experience of the storm as a personal recount or narrative. The picture sequence of baking an apple in "15 c, To Bake An Apple", *Reading, Understanding and Responding, Stage 1, ELIP Primary Resource,* 2008 could be used to retell a sequence, for oral language.
- used with an ABC 123 (or Say-It) grid to retell the process or story for a different audience, in different text types or registers
- used as a preparation resource for a 3, 2, 1 speaking activity.

In a 3,2,1 Speaking Activity, students work in pairs. They talk to a partner for 3 minutes about a topic given by the teacher. The 3 minutes includes time to think about their response. Then they change partners and talk about the same topic for 2 minutes, then they change partners again and talk to another person about the same topic for one minute. Each time they should have fewer pauses and be more fluent and confident. The last time they are assessed for fluency by the partner. The times can be adapted for younger learners – 1 minute, 30 seconds, 15 seconds.

Strip texts

Strip texts are a useful scaffold to help students to predict and negotiate the sequence of a text in a small group. Language that students need to use when putting items in order may also be introduced (e.g. first, next, then). This strategy gives students practice in analysing and predicting story sequence.

Speaking frames

Speaking frames provide a language scaffold that support students as they talk. They are based on the same idea as writing frames (see Module 8) which provide a language scaffold that helps support students as they write. Speaking frames provide sentence starters and models for English language learners who may not have sufficient knowledge of standard sentence structure to be able to create sentences independently.

Speaking grid (Say-its)

A speaking grid gives students the opportunity to show that they understand the content of what they have read by speaking in a "role" or in the voice of someone or something in the text. It also gives them a chance to use the vocabulary of the topic as they speak and listen to each other. There are more examples of Say-Its in the *ELIP Resource*. Make sure you use a text which matches the age and needs of the learners you work with. You don't always need to give the page number for them to refer to. You need to model how to do it for the students before they try it themselves.

Listening grid

Listening grids help students to listen for key vocabulary and main ideas and details, depending how they are written. Teachers can judge what students are understanding when they listen by checking what they have recorded on the grid.

Module 5 Task 1   Using a Picture Sequence

Purpose: to develop language of sequences and increase oral language fluency

Individual and workshop task

Find a picture sequence that you could use with the students you work with and think what language structures and vocabulary you could use in first language and English to talk about the sequence and then order it or use Making Koko Resource 5A.

Some suggestions are: a life cycle of an insect or animal, a procedure, or process (see the *ELIP Resource*), the water cycle, as well as retelling stories.

Choose a picture sequence of a **process.**

- Sort out the correct sequencing of the pictures with the co-ordinating teacher or the workshop group.

As you sort out the sequence, pay attention to the language you use during the process, e.g. *Then the picture showing the boy making the fire, should come next.*

- When you have reached agreement on the correct order, take turns to explain the process, using the sequence to support your explanation.

Module 5 Task 2   Using a Strip Text (for oral language and reading)

Purpose: Strip texts are a useful scaffold to help students to predict and negotiate sequence of a text in a small group. It can be a task which combines oral and written language.

Working with young learners

Young learners can have the text read to them, then work as a group, with one strip and picture each.

Individual and workshop task

Using your own examples or the strip text Making A Rubber Kilikiti Ball Resource 5B, (pictures and text) and put the strip text into the correct order, then match them to the pictures. Describe the process in order in your own words.

A variation is to ask students to arrange themselves into a line, rather than the strips, to reassemble the story, visuals or account.

Module 5 Task 3   Using a Speaking Frame

Purpose: Speaking frames provide sentence starters and models for English language learners who may not have sufficient knowledge of standard sentence structure to be able to create sentences independently. They are a support, which should gradually be withdrawn.

Individual task

Look at Resource 5C of sample speaking frames. If you are a bilingual teacher aide, you could translate it into the language of the students you work with. It's helpful to model the sort of response you want the students to produce. *ELIP* has more examples of these models (e.g. explaining, describing, reporting). Create a speaking frame for a task your students need to do.

Workshop task

Complete the individual task, then discuss with a colleague what speaking frames you have used to support English language learners. Make sure you're familiar with the *ELIP* Oral materials. These are good for creating speaking frames.

Module 5 Task 4   Speaking Grid (also called a Say-It)

Purpose: A speaking grid enables the teacher to hear what students understand about something they have seen or read by speaking in a "role" or in the voice of someone or something in the text. It also gives students a chance to use the vocabulary of the topic as they speak and listen to each other.

With student group, read through the text for which you are going to make a speaking grid, using a *Guided Reading Approach.* Plan this with your co-ordinating teacher.
- *Guided Reading,* 2002 (kit including book, item number 10422*)*
- *Guided Reading: Years 1-4,* 2002 (book, item number 26667)
- *Guided Reading in Years 5 to 8,* 2005 (kit including book, item number 30898)
- *Guided Reading: Years 5 to 8,* 2005, (book, item number 30897)

Individual task

Read the text on which the Speaking Grid (Say-It) is based, *Flood (Coping with Crises, Selections* 2005, pgs. 14-22)**.** Use Resource 5D and spend some time preparing answers in a different voice using each of the boxes.

Workshop task

Use Resource 5D and after you have read the text, get one of the group to act as the caller, to tell you what order to speak in. Choose another text and make up a new Say-It. This can be a factual text (such as one of the texts in *ELIP*) or a story.

Module 5 Task 5   Listening Grid

Purpose: To enable students to listen for key vocabulary and main ideas and details. Teachers can judge what students are understanding by checking what they have recorded on the grid.

Individual and workshop use

Listen to the text from the CD Rom *(Coping with Crises, Selections* 2005, pgs. 14-22) and complete the task using Resource 5E Listening Grid *Flood.* The CD can also be used for a self-access task.

Make up another Listening Grid for a text you need to use with a student or group you work with. You could put the words in first language for those who can read and write in their language.

Good practice

Using first language effectively for oral development in English means helping students to activate what they already know about the concept or topic in their own language. This helps them to link the known to the unknown. Students need opportunities in first language and English to talk in the classroom about what they are learning. They understand and produce written material much better when they have been engaged in planned and structured oral language interaction.

Resources

- *Making Language and Learning Work 1,* Integrating language and learning in secondary Maths and Science (DVD)
- *Making Language and Learning Work 2,* Integrating language and learning in secondary English and Social Sciences (DVD)
- *Making Language and Learning Work 3,* Integrating language and learning in years 5-8 (DVD forthcoming)
- *English Language Learning Progressions*, The Oral Language sections and matrices in the *Introduction*, Years 1-4, 5-8 and 9-13 sections
- *English Language Intensive Programme*, The Oral Interaction sections at each stage.
- *Expanding oral language in the classroom,* Jannie Van Hees, NZCER Press, Wellington, 2007
- *Phonemic Awareness Programme* Student Workbook: English Letters, Sounds, Sentences – download from ESOL online

Next steps

1. Ensure that time is allocated in all your sessions for discussions about what and how the students are learning with the coordinating teacher/s in their mainstream topics.

2. Use the template below to record the strategies used and the impact on your teaching and student learning throughout the year.

Oral Language Development

List strategy chosen and date used.	Classroom topic	Strategy explained in first language or English?	Outcome: How did the students respond? How would you change the strategy the next time you used it?

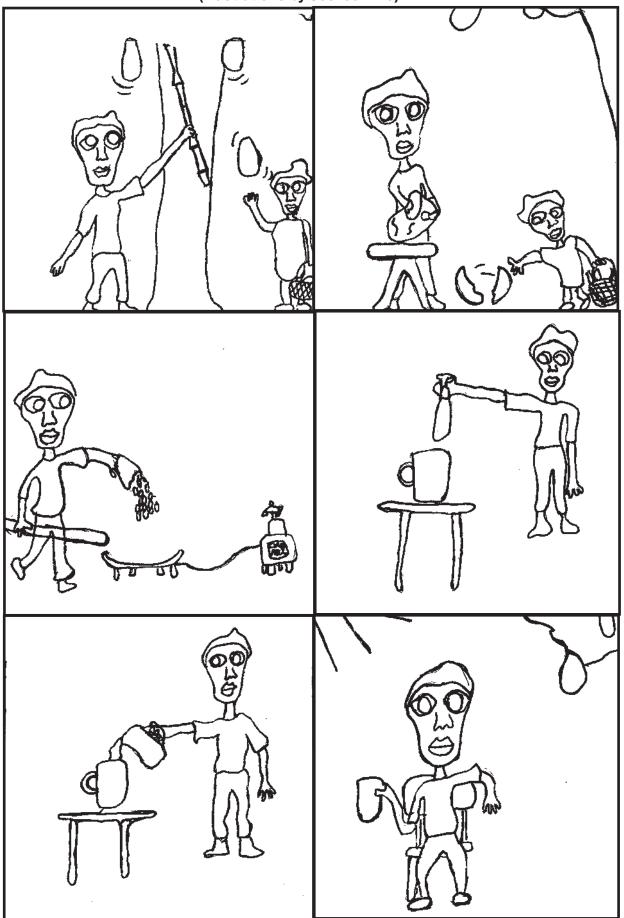**Module 6** is about supporting questioning.

Preparation:

List the sort of questions you ask the students. Are they just questions which can be answered "Yes", or "No" or with a specific answer (**closed questions**) or are they questions which can have more than one answer (**open questions**)?

Ask one of the classroom teachers if you can record on the **Teacher Questioning** sheet the types of questions they ask during a 20 minute section of the lesson (This is probably best done from the start of the lesson). Then discuss the results with the teacher and your coordinating teacher.

Think about why it is important to ask both open and closed questions.

Teacher Questioning

Subject	Topic	Examples and number of closed questions used	Examples and number of open questions used	Comment: How did bilingual students respond?

1.8 Using visual text as a way of expanding language: Strip Text

by Rae Siilata based on
'Le Polo Pulu' by Jill MacGregor
School Journal Part 2 no.2 1999

Mikaele makes rubber cricket balls to sell at the market in Apia. The rubber to make the cricket balls comes from the pulu tree. He needs to get up early before school to collect latex from the pulu trees near his village.

Latex is a milky, white liquid found under the bark of the pulu tree. It contains tiny particles of rubber. By the time pulu trees are six years old, they have slash marks and blotchy, white stains from being tapped for latex.

Early in the morning is the best time to collect latex. It is cooler and it flows more freely. Mikaele makes a slanting cut with his machete, being careful not to damage the wood underneath.

The milky latex oozes out, dripping slowly down the trunk. Mikaele scrapes the latex from the bark, onto a large taro leaf with his finger.
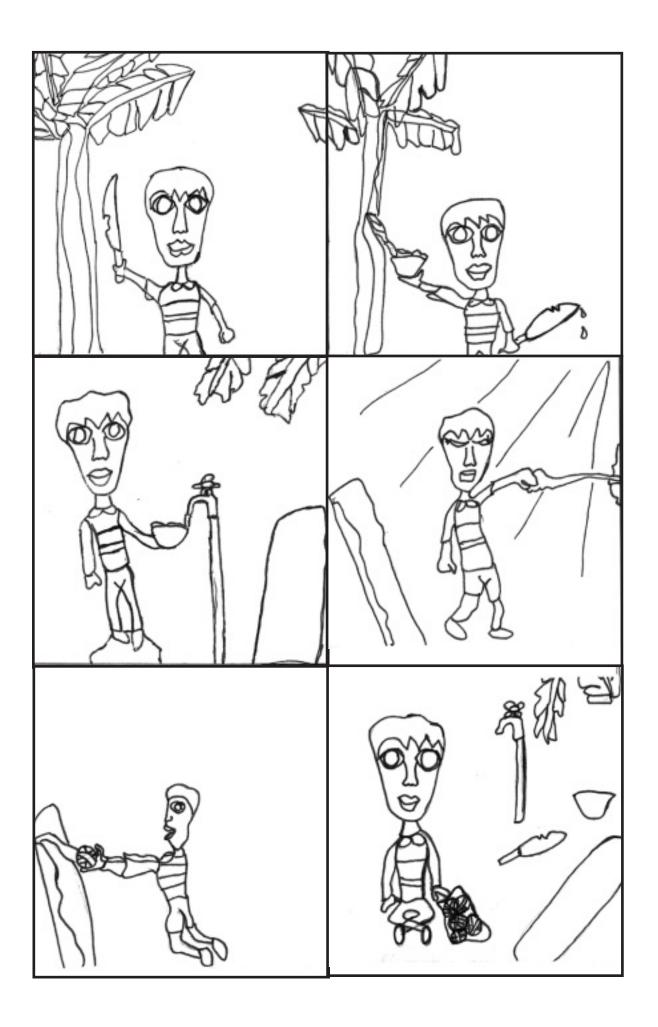
When he has collected enough latex for one cricket ball, he takes it back to his fale. He mixes it with water to stop it becoming too thick and sticky.

Next he drags some sheets of corrugated iron into the sun and cleans off any dirt and dust. Then he uses coconut fibre to paint the latex onto the corrugated iron. He leaves the strips of latex to dry.

Then Mikaele finds scraps of old rubber to make the inside of the cricket ball. He squeezes the pieces together in a small ball. When the strips of latex are dry, he peels them off the corrugated iron and rolls them around the ball.

He stretches the rubber carefully around the ball to make the surface of the ball smooth and even. When it is finished, it is very solid and bouncy.

He adds it to the other balls he has already made. Two dozen – enough to sell at the market in Apia on Saturday.

Module 5   Sample Speaking Frames   Resource 5C

(Foundation and Stage 1)

Opinion
I like the part in the story that talks about…

I like it because… |

Opinion
My opinion about…………………………………………….., is that…………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………...I think this
because…

Stage 3

Explanation
There are differing explanations for ……….. (why how, what, when)

One explanation is that

The evidence for this is

An alternative explanation is…..

This explanation is based on…..

However, it is most likely that ……… |

Module 5 Task 4 Template   Speaking Grid (Say-it) for *Flood*   **Resource 5D**
(Coping with Crises, *Selections* 2005 pp 14-22)

	1	**2**	**3**
A	**You are Ama.** Tell your friend at school what happened in the storm.	**You are mum.** Thank the neighbour who helped Ama and her mother. Pg. 16	**You are Grandmother.** Tell Ama she is safe and you have made her a warm drink. Pg.17
B	**You are mum talking to Dad on the phone.** Tell him what happened. Pg.18	**You are Annie.** Tell Ama about staying the night in Wellington. Pg.18	**You are the man in the dinghy.** When you get home, tell your wife what you saw. Pg.20
C	**You are Ama.** Tell your class what happened.	**You are mum.** Tell Ama how you found the cat. Pg.17	**You are Dad.** Tell Ama everything will be okay, the house can be fixed and she can have a new cuddly blanket. Pg. 21

This can be used for:

- reinforcing new and pre-taught vocabulary items
- reinforcing specialist vocabulary
- focussing on tenses e.g. simple past tense
- focussing on adjectives

Flood (Coping with Crises, *Selections* 2005)

Word	A tick for each time you hear the word.	A definition or translation of the word	One other word linked to this word
rain			
water			
flood			