

Didattica della lingua inglese 1

Lesson 2
The Four Skills
Listen and do

About lesson 2

- In today's lesson we are going to...
 - Look at the four skills
 - Listening
 - Speaking
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - ...and how to integrate them in your teaching
- We are also going to focus on listening activities
 - Total Physical Response
 - Listen and do

Before we start...

- Write some of your concerns about speaking in English with pupils
 - Discuss your list with a partner.
 - Can you think of any solutions?

Before we start...

- Did you mention any of these?
 - My English is very limited: how can I use it to teach?
 - Pupils want me to teach in Italian
 - It's difficult to make children understand me
 - If pupils do not understand me, they lose interest and create discipline problems
- What solutions could you offer to remedy these common worries?

Part 1

THE FOUR SKILLS

The four skills

- We traditionally divide language competence into Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing
 - Listening and reading are both **receptive** skills
 - They relate to understanding
 - Speaking and writing are both **productive** skills
 - They relate to meaning creation
 - Listening and speaking are **auditory**
 - For children this means that they are primary skills
 - Reading and writing are **text-based**
 - For children, these are secondary skills

The four skills

- A note about reception and production
 - When people learn languages they UNDERSTAND more than they can PRODUCE
 - This is true for learners of all ages
 - It is also true irrespective of whether they are learning their first, second or a foreign language
 - It is normal for young children to be able to understand the spoken word, but not be able to respond by speaking.
 - They can respond with actions and gestures
 - Total Physical Response (see later section on Speaking)

The four skills

- Although the skills can be separated out, they are inter-related and inter-dependent.
 - You can't listen if nobody is speaking
 - Writing makes speech permanent
 - You can't read something that has not been written
 - You can read aloud (speak) so that somebody who cannot read can listen to the written words
- Remember that young children learn best by listening and watching, then taking action

Listening

- Some things to remember about listening
 - The things we listen to vanish immediately
 - When we listen, we tend to remember the general idea (=the *gist*), but not the details
 - We usually have to listen several times in order to remember details
 - When we listen, we focus on key words and expressions, not on every word
 - When we listen, we also rely on context, gesture and facial expression to understand

Listening – homework task

- Watch the TV evening news (any channel)
 - Take notes as you watch
 - The words you notice will also be the ones that the newsreader stresses.
- What kinds of words did you note down?
 - I bet that they were
 - Names of people and places
 - Significant objects
 - Times (possibly – but only if highly significant)

Listening

- Children have a good instinct for interpreting the sense or meaning of a situation
 - They do this through using their knowledge of everyday life and the clues provided by the situation, or the picture
 - They work out the meaning first and tend not to pay attention to the words that are used to express the meaning
 - Accuracy is important, but can left for later

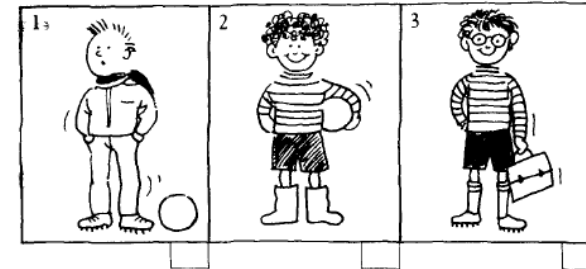
Listening

- How do we know is a child understands when s/he listens?
 - He or she can DO something
 - carry out instructions (e.g. stand up, touch something)
 - identify something (e.g. colour in a picture correctly)
 - He or she can SAY something
 - remember or suggest a word, e.g. “chocolate”
 - repeat a phrase, e.g. “I’m here” when the roll is called

Listening

- Here are the main types of listening exercise
 - Listen and do
 - Children do actions, or they point to things
 - Listen and make
 - Children follow instructions and make something
 - Listen and repeat
 - Children listen and try to imitate as well as they can
 - Listen for information
 - Children listen to discover information, often to complete a written text
 - Listen to stories
 - Children listen for pleasure

What kind of exercise is this?



Has anyone seen this boy? He has dark hair and big ears. He is wearing rubber boots and carrying a football. He has a striped jersey and short trousers.
Put a cross by the right picture

Listening and speaking

- What do children listen to in the language class?
 - Recorded voices (class CD)
 - Their teacher
 - Multimedia files on a computer
- What do these have in common?
- They are forms of SPEAKING
- So listening and speaking are inter-related

Speaking

- Some things to remember about speaking
 - We say less than we hear/ understand
 - Our spoken vocabulary is more limited than our knowledge of vocabulary
 - Speech is formulated spontaneously
 - We all make “on-line processing” errors
 - We are all disfluent
 - We give priority to meaning, not to grammar
→ lesson 3

Speaking – homework task

- Next time you chat with your friends
 - Listen carefully to what they say
 - Notice how many complete sentences they say
 - What are the very first words they say when they start speaking? I bet that ...
 - Before they said anything, they used a discourse marker
 - e.g. beh, allora, senti, ascolta, sai cosa? ...
 - They didn't say very many complete sentences
 - Sometimes they couldn't remember the word they needed, or had to reformulate what they were saying
 - e.g. cioè; voglio dire; sai chi – quella lì – come si chiama?

Speaking – silent period

- Learners understand more than they can say
 - When children learn their first language they respond to language long before they learn to speak.
- Second language learners have a “silent period”
 - During this period they listen to and absorb the language
 - They then formulate their own personal grammar, which they adapt and expand with exposure to more language.
- Some authors argue that second language learners should not be made to speak (or write) until they are ready, i.e. until they do so spontaneously.

Speaking – silent period

- The silent period is the time when a person starts to acquire the language through exposure to it
 - S/he understands a lot but is not yet able to express his or her ideas...

...in WORDS
- Think back to when you started learning English... or maybe even now.
 - You understood more than you can say
 - You maybe felt you couldn't say anything at all
 - Remember this is a PERIOD – it doesn't last forever

Speaking – silent period

- What does the silent period mean for teachers?
 - Children may understand you, but they can't show that they understand you by answering
 - They may be able to answer with a single word
 - They will certainly be able to react (do something)
 - It can be a frustrating for teachers
 - They feel that they are not succeeding in teaching
 - It seems that pupils are not progressing
 - All you need is TIME
 - They will produce language, eventually
 - Before they do, use Total Physical Response exercises

Speaking - chunks

- After the silent period, children learning a foreign language may suddenly start to use phrases
 - *I don't know*
 - *Come on*
 - *Goodbye*
- These are sometimes called **chunks** because they are learned and used as “long words”
- Children may not have been taught these chunks
 - They pick them up from listening
- Chunks help learners to communicate

Speaking - chunks

- Later chunks can be broken down and the words recombined
 - *I don't know*
 - *I don't know its name, I don't know spelling*
 - *We don't know, They don't know*
 - *He doesn't know*
- When children begin to break down a phrase in this way, it is a sign of language development
- The use of songs, rhymes, poems, drama and classroom routines all help
 - This way, children can acquire ready-made bits of language so they can begin to communicate

Speaking

- Children's desire to communicate is very powerful
 - If they are doing an interesting activity, they will talk a lot
 - This is very useful because pupils get lots of practice in using the language
 - It doesn't matter if the grammar is not perfect – it will improve with TIME
- Be careful if you use speaking ability as a measure of how much children have learned
- Remember:
 - Younger children (age 5-10) tend to be more enthusiastic and willing to talk than older children
 - But some children are quieter than others
 - This does not mean that their English is not good

Speaking

- The main types of speaking exercises are:
 - Listen and repeat
 - They listen to a sound, word or phrase and try to say it exactly the same way
 - Guided speaking
 - They describe a picture, place, time or person
 - Role-play and dialogues
 - They learn formulae then use them to perform a task
 - Free speaking activities
 - Often at the end of a unit, the students discuss the topic, expressing their experiences, feelings & opinions

What kind of exercise is this?

A: Good morning. Can I help you?
 B: Yes, please. I'd like an ice cream.
 A: Here you are.
 B: How much is that?
 A: 45p. Thank you.
 B: Goodbye.
 A: Goodbye.



Speaking

- We will look in detail at speaking in lessons 4 and 5

Reading

- Some things to remember about reading
 - Primary school children are still learning to read
 - If you have immigrant children in your class, they may not know the Roman alphabet very well
 - Reading is more difficult for children than adults
 - Children find listening easier than adults do
 - Reading is self-paced
 - Reading is not (necessarily) linear
 - You can re-read and take notes

Reading

- The English spelling system is more complicated than the Italian one.
 - Many English-speakers find it difficult to spell
- The current method for teaching reading in the UK is the phonics method
 - Children learn the sounds of letters
 - They also learn the sounds of **clusters** (groups)
 - e.g. th, sh, tion; ea, ous, ; bla, sk, rl
 - They then learn to combine the sounds
- How did you learn to read?

Reading

- The main types of reading exercises are:
 - Look and say
 - Children look at a single word, or a phrase, or a sentence, and say it (together, usually)
 - The words are presented on flashcards, the board, paper
 - Reading aloud
 - Children read words or phrases from a page
 - Silent reading
 - Children read alone, often with comprehension questions to check their understanding

What kind of exercise is this?



Treasure!

Lost April two English boys, Martin and John, found some treasure. They went for a walk with their dog, Sandy. Sandy had a stick in his mouth. He jumped into the river with it. It was a hot day. So Martin went into the river, too. He saw something in the water. It was an old metal box. The boys opened the box. There were 172 gold coins in it. They went to a museum with the coins. The museum gave them a lot of money. So the boys were very happy. It was a very lucky day for them.

Sheila's rabbits

Sheila has got two rabbits. One is grey with a white nose. His name is Earl Grey. The other is white with a black spot over one eye. His name is Spotty.

Earl Grey is two years old. Spotty is only eight weeks old. He is very small. Sheila thinks he is wonderful. "But you are nice, too," she says to Earl Grey.



Reading

- We will look in detail at reading in lesson 6

Writing

- Some things to remember about writing
 - Primary school children are still learning how to write
 - Writing requires support
 - Writing in a foreign language is for MEANING
 - Do not worry about how neat their writing is
 - Do not consider writing exclusively as a way of checking grammar
 - Let children express themselves
 - Encourage children to use drawings as well as words

Writing

- The main types of writing exercises are
 - Copying, copying & re-arranging; delayed copying
 - Children copy words and phrases by hand (or on the computer, but best by hand)
 - Dictation
 - Children listen and write what they hear
 - Fill-in exercises
 - Children read and fill in spaces with a word or phrase
 - Controlled practice
 - Children follow a schema, e.g. letters & postcards
 - Free writing
 - (usually as homework) Children write about the topic studied

What kind of exercise is this?

Complete Kate's letter:

163 Palmetto Dunes
Miami
July 14th, 1984

Dear Michael,

Miami is Fantastic.

Yesterday

Tomorrow

Love, Kate

we went to the cinema. It's got beautiful beaches.
There are a lot of hotels and restaurants.
Then we went to a restaurant.
we're going to visit the famous Aquarium.
The water is green and warm. We saw a very good film.

Writing

- We will look in detail at writing in lesson 7