

Fostering Communication and Language

Introduction

Speech, that is to say talking and understanding the speech of others, is a particular form of communication which utilises sounds and hearing. In this section we shall be concerned with encouraging communication generally, prompting the use of sound as a medium, interest in and use of sound through hearing and its production as vocalisation and articulation, and the use of these in speech.

The section on encouraging an understanding of speech is deliberately placed before that of promoting talking for a very good reason, even though the two functions develop simultaneously:

- (i) Rarely is understanding of speech (do not confuse with general understanding) as good as it might appear in the presence of severely limited speech
- (ii) A child under pressure to improve his speech but having an unrecognised difficulty with understanding speech is likely to be seriously handicapped
- (iii) As adjustment improves, talking becomes easier for many language-delayed children and, being openly and warmly approved of, it may start to outrun understanding, so introducing further complication.

Understanding the Speech of Others

As we shall see later in encouraging speech we first help the child, when necessary, to develop a familiarity with using his own voice and making sounds of various sorts just for the sake of making them. Meanwhile we foster a desire and will to deliberately make his needs known. Then having established the motivation and provided him with the raw materials we proceed to help him to exploit these by imposing meaning on certain of the various sound patterns which the child makes.

Similarly in encouraging an understanding of the speech of others the child must be given experience and the raw materials for developing and demonstrating appropriate responses to speech, and a need and will to understand must be kindled within him. In this case however, the basic apparatus for active responding is his motor skills and his general understanding of the things about him. These have been the main topics of the previous sections hence it is the child's discovering the usefulness of accepting the control of another as a means

of gaining personal advantage which is the remaining preliminary to be built up as a basis for the linking of spoken instruction with a motor response.

From the practical point of view we might divide the development of understanding the speech into three phases:

- (i) The early language period
- (ii) The period of linguistic orientation and
- (iii) The period of consolidation and linguistic expansion

The early language period The early period of linking the speech of another with the child's own activities, roughly equivalent to the first year of normal development, might be thought of as a time during which the child familiarises himself with the sensations which accompany the production of speech sounds as he plays with babble and other sounds.

In the later stages of this period, from about six to nine months in normal development, the child comes to be influenced more specifically in his activities by the speech of others but situational factors and gesture continue to be the major outside influences guiding the form and direction of his behaviour. At this time speech often initiates and encourages an activity but the number of clearly discriminated and 'understood' speech patterns are few and only crudely differentiated. The sorts of pattern to which the normal child in this country commonly responds during this stage of early language development are exemplified by phrases such as: 'Clap hands', 'Wave bye-bye', 'How big' (signal to raise both hands), 'Where's Daddy?', 'Kiss Mummy', etc.

The period of linguistic orientation Then follows what may be conveniently thought of as a period of transition during which the child comes to be expected to respond not only more accurately to a wider range of speech patterns but more often and more consistently. We now expect him to be interested in and alert to our increasing tendency to control his behaviour at a distance, and we expect our speech to interrupt and modify his activities.

This stage which normally comes within the second year I call the period of establishing a 'linguistic orientation' or an expectant willingness to accept regulation of one's behaviour by others through the agency of meaningful gestures, normally including spoken utterances. Once this stage is fully accomplished language advances rapidly. Superficially the most obvious sign of linguistic advancement is increase in 'vocabulary' both spoken and understood, but of much greater fundamental importance is the child's ability to handle and utilise speech in communication, which involves his gaining mastery over the various 'grammatical' patterns of speech.

The period of language consolidation and proliferation From this time onwards the child is learning to be more confident in his responding to speech, and to discriminate and respond appropriately to, to understand, the principles of word order and combination, the uses of inflexions etc., to denote tenses, number, moods etc., as well as expanding the size and range of the number of words within his vocabulary.

Before describing practical methods of encouraging an understanding of speech at these three levels we shall consider a few basic principles which derive from a study of normal early language development and which should govern our efforts at every stage.

In attempting to induce an understanding of speech in a language-delayed child the instruction should logically follow a similar pathway to that encountered and negotiated by a normal child during his early acquisition of linguistic comprehension, the necessary adjustments being made to allow for the various discrepancies in the slower child's non-linguistic abilities and behaviour.

Language is not an end in itself but a tool, a means to an end. That end is communication or the regulation of behaviour by means of transmitted information. Therefore it is communication which is to be learned, spoken language coming in due course to take precedence as the most efficient vehicle. Hence there is little point in attempting to build up associations between speech patterns and their significations ('meanings') if these do not actively and immediately effect some sort of communication.

(i) In normally developing young children the speech they come to respond to first is that which demands active response from them, and the speech patterns which make up their earliest spoken repertoire are those which elicit an active response from an audience. Speech is primarily injunctive.

(ii) The basic linguistic orientation and foundation of language is laid down during the first eighteen months or so, during which time the child's whole perceptual and social organisation ensures a minimum of irrelevant distraction and a maximum of active and appropriate stimulation under optimal situational and temporal conditions.

(iii) Throughout this period the child is given more than ample physical, situational and gestural indication of what is expected of him, and there is no time during this period when absolute dependence on verbal understanding is demanded of him, so that language, at least at this early stage of development, never normally becomes associated with anxiety.

In fact at every stage the parents' behaviour tacitly implies that their child 'understands everything' they say to him. In abnormally developing children it is almost always a failure 'to talk' which arouses concern in the parents, even when general development is recognised to be significantly delayed.

(iv) There is no evidence that the young child responding to speech is normally aware of the carrier medium of communication itself. He simply responds to a spoken utterance and comes to expect responses to his own speech activities. The normal young child's attention is not usually drawn deliberately to sounds of voice and speech, and the movements of a speaker's mouth. It is quite irrational to deliberately engage the child's attention before speaking to him. Real speech is necessarily quite sufficiently attention-arresting when required. (See (d) below.)

Bearing these points in mind any method of teaching a child to understand speech should:

(a) be preceded by and based on a functional non-verbal system of communication;

(b) take the form of demanding active movement response to spoken instructions under conditions in which the child has adequate indication from non-verbal sources of what is required of him. *No attempt should be made to have him depend on speech alone;*

(c) ensure that, although the child is not expected at any time to depend on this understanding of speech, *the spoken instruction is always given fractionally before the gestural support* so that it can readily come to initiate the response and eventually to obviate the need for the non-verbal instruction;

(d) *make no attempt to have his attention drawn to the visible concomitants or audible sounds of speech* which can distract him and interfere with his responding efficiently to the significative content of the message. It is adequate that the child comes to expect an instruction and it is not necessary that he is actively awaiting any particular stimulus pattern which must then be consciously interpreted for the contained information;

(e) attempt to approximate the conditions as far as possible to those which operate for the normally developing child during the first eighteen months or so and further ensure that virtually all the speech the child hears during formal teaching sessions is pertinent to him, requires and exacts an appropriate active response. To begin with at least no major spontaneous behaviour can be tolerated for each activity engaged in must be a direct response to a physically imposed, gestural or spoken instruction. This can be quite difficult to ensure/'enforce' for the spontaneous activity is often 'intelligent' seeming and in other circumstances would be encouraged, e.g. picking up and using an object sensibly, or even talking appropriately.

Encouragement of language in the early stages If the vulnerable child has not yet established a satisfactory 'linguistic orientation' the preliminary work, co-ordinated as always with directed play designed to increase total experience, can

be roughly modelled on the form of speech a mother might normally make to a child of between six and eighteen months. Meanwhile organised efforts are made to bring about the necessary 'linguistic orientation' in the sufficiently mature child by making use of restriction techniques and various methods of eliciting the required responses as described in a previous section, linked to the language methods to be described.

At the earlier stage however, we make use of language opportunities as they arise during the use of methods to enlarge general experience and understanding. For example, throwing something down onto a table in front of the child we can say 'Pick up the ...', knowing that the child will almost certainly reach out and take it almost automatically. 'Put it into the ...' followed by appropriate pointing or offering a receptacle, or 'Give it to me' followed a fraction of a second later by an extended palm, make further use of 'anticipation'. 'Passive imposition' may be used in various activities such as banging on a drum, shaking a rattle, picking up and throwing a ball etc.

The under-responsive or young autistic child may ignore even the simplest gestural signals and have to have activities imposed on him. Here close social contact is gained gradually with the child through active movement accompanied by simple conversational level speech of the sort 'Come along, let's have a game'. Taking the child's hands in one's own and enclosing a plastic or wooden block in each, these can be brought together or struck against some other object in a series of rhythmic taps (five is a good number to choose) accompanying each tap with a vocalisation such as 'bang... bang... bang...bang...bang'. This can be repeated several times or more if the child seems to continue to enjoy the game; but his expressional behaviour needs to be watched carefully for signs that he needs a change of interest.

Then perhaps, 'Let's have a different game', (but do not use forms such as 'Would you like to' or '...for Mummy', etc.). For example – dispense with the bricks. Take child's empty hands in teacher's and: 'Sawing' (pause) 'Go! Saw-saw-saw-saw-saw', accompanied by reciprocal and alternating sawing movements with the hands and arms.

This might lead to 'twisting' or some other word-activity where full onomatopoeic relevance can be given to the words; the word long-drawn-out, replete with glottal plosion and grunt! (It will be observed that linguistically we are working over the range 0-9 months.)

One game which always goes down well if the child has reached this general developmental stage (12m) is 'push-pull' using two interlocking plastic bricks or beads.

Here, after some alerting or trigger phrase the bricks held within the child's hands are pushed together accompanied by 'P-u-s-h', culminating in a click when the nipple of one brick enters the hole of the other.

Then, 'Now let's pull. P-u-l-l' said together with all the counterfeited show of effort which can be mustered until, after a brief manufactured delay, the bricks separate with a 'plop'. They should be disengaged fairly readily but make a loud noise when they part, for quite soon the child will do his own pulling but may continue to require help with the more complicated task of rearticulation for a while.

He will then pull, encouraged by the 'teacher's' sympathetic grunting vocal accompaniment, but offer the bricks for rearticulation after a brief personal attempt. This manoeuvre will also be most valuable when encouraging the child's own expressive language. I have found this gesture to be the first social overture from a primarily autistic child just emerging from his remote and insular condition.

With children who show less physical or emotional opposition to free movement with the hands, the simpler speech-activities such as banging, shaking, pulling, etc. may be introduced early but used as 'energy-release' (letting off steam) interludes to alternate with the more controlled activities.

Here the banging activity can be organised into banging on various objects set out before the child. Several objects which may be referred to as 'the tin', 'the box' etc. are best struck with a wooden hammer or drumstick if the child has reached this stage of perceptual development. (Note: The use of the far end of a prolonged extension of the hand, as a stick or hammer, is a much more complicated skill than the use of an object which behaves simply as part of the closed fist.) A simple arrangement might consist of a drum, propped a little so as to direct the inclined drum-head towards the child, on one side and a toy xylophone, glockenspiel or set of chime bars on the other with somewhat of a gap in between so that the child has to turn a little to reach either of them.

The sort of spoken instructions to be followed a second or so later by the appropriate manoeuvre required to elicit the activity would be: 'Here's the hammer...You bang on the table...bang on the drum again...bang hard...and again...bang, bang, bang...Put the hammer into your/the other hand, into the other hand...bang on the table...put the hammer down...give it to me...', etc.

The gestural support might consist of 'passive imposition', proffering a hand or object, pointing to or tapping on the target, a subtle sound or gesture designed to divert attention in the required direction, 'anticipation' or a combination of all methods.

These more organised kinds of play imply an increasing amount of control over the child and the child over himself. As we extend the games to more constructive enterprises and simple imaginative play we need the discipline which a linguistic orientation brings.

Encouraging linguistic orientation In setting out to foster understanding of speech our object is not to induce simply a passive willingness in the child to

carry out instructions in so far as he understands them but a positive attitude of expectancy towards such instruction. We have so far been concerned to precede the child's actions with suitable speech as often as possible and to accompany repetitive activities with spoken encouragement. In time we shall expect the child's activities to be more and more influenced by the speech itself, specific patterns coming eventually to initiate or bring about particular actions under suitable conditions.

The kinds of instruction remain basically the same although undergoing expansion and variation as will be described; however, progressively greater demands for self-discipline must be imposed on the child's responding. This may be encouraged deliberately through a series of successively overlapping stages of maturity in accepting control and following instruction. These begin with the kinds of instruction already described but under conditions of insistence on immediate response to every instruction.

Speech initiating and defining the action 'Shake the...', 'Pick up the...', 'Throw the...'. The emphasis is put on the activity, whatever is being acted upon being taken for granted. For example, it may be already held in the hand: '*Shake* the rattle', '*Throw* the ball'; dropped provocatively in front of the child: '*Pick up* the brick'; or, exposed as the obvious target: '*Bang* on the drum'.

The action may be qualified even at this stage by such words or phrases as 'Bang *hard*', '*...gently...up here...down there... over here*' etc., as an object such as a tambourine is moved about in space so inducing the child to 'follow' it with his instructed activity; however it is unlikely that the child will actually interpret the qualifying instruction until he has reached the later or last stages of acquiring linguistic orientation.

Speech directing the action towards a target Very soon the emphasis may be given to the object acted upon: 'Put it in *the box...on the table*' etc; 'Give me *the car...the ball*'; 'Bang on *the drum...the tin*', etc.

This capacity to attend to the target indicated through gesture, and in time to the spoken director, may be very usefully reinforced and refined by an increasing insistence on preciseness in the direction of response, not only towards the target object but towards the exact place indicated and the exact manner prescribed, usually with added gesture. For example 'Put it on the table ...just there' or 'Put it in that hole', a tapping finger insisting on precise placement. The special word 'No' may profitably be introduced at this stage. It is said in a quiet and slightly drawn-out way so as to distinguish it from the peremptory 'No!' which the child is bound to hear at other times and intended simply to check his activity or to teach him to not do something. The quiet 'No', accompanied or supported by gently shaking the head, is intended to signify 'Not that one...try another' or 'Not yet'.

This sort of exercise encourages the child's alertness: the slightly suppressant instruction, by helping him to spend a little more time in carrying out simple

operations, gives him greater opportunity to attend to alternatives and leads into the next stage of maturity.

Speech delaying and then initiating action Once the child has accepted the directing of his actions he can begin to accept enforced delay in starting to act. In order that his spontaneous desire to carry on with any activity at his own rate may be opposed, whether it be simply a strong compulsion to handle visually-attractive materials or an impatience coupled with a more advanced ability to cope with the necessary manipulations, a brake must be put on such runaway behaviour however sensible and intelligent it might seem, for our object is to encourage self-restraint and self-control in the child and a readiness to have his behaviour regulated by the speech of others.

The delay should be of short duration at first and only applied to tasks which the child already finds easy. The word 'wait' should now be introduced. This word accompanied by a raised and symbolically - and if necessary physically - restraining forefinger is to come to indicate, support and reinforce the enforced delay to be regularly imposed on the child's activities once he has reached a stage of sufficient maturity and until language is well founded.

For example: an object is tossed onto the table and the word 'wait' is backed up with raised finger and restraining hand. Then after a delay of a second or two release follows the instruction 'Now....pick up the peg'. Then 'Wait', (restraint and slight delay) 'Put it in the box....put it in there'.

More and more the child should become used to having something put in front of him which he must not touch until told to do so. Naturally this prohibition must be introduced very gently but also very firmly, and the duration of delay extended reasonably slowly over a period of days or weeks. Spoken instruction should progressively take over the role of delaying-influence until a stage is reached when the child will be restrained from touching something put down in front of him by a spoken injunction alone 'Wait ... don't touch it yet'. We must remember however, that it will be necessary for some time to support or encourage the child's restraint in waiting in an exactly similar way to our encouraging his continuing engagement in some more positive activity.

Speech: delaying, initiating and directing activity As the child's proficiency in controlling the urgency of his response matures we can begin to direct his activities towards any of several alternative targets. It will now be found that the delay in initiating the activity not only increases the expectancy towards speech but also facilitates his selecting the correct choice in virtue of the increased duration of time between instruction and response-activity. Hence in addition to introducing enforced hesitations into the interaction it is also necessary subsequently to use unexpected instructions even though these may involve superfluous activities and roundabout routes, and to choose an alternative instruction whenever an activity seems to be governed more by the child's own drive and common-sense than by the imposed instructions.

Speech correcting an activity already in train Now the child can be expected to learn to undo/reverse a move he has made without leave, and to correct a response he has carried out wrongly. For example: 'No....take it out again' or 'No...put it back' or 'No...not in the box...on the table', etc. As the child comes to accept this kind of correction which must never carry any blame or disapproval it will be found that he will start spontaneously to correct his own mistakes following correctly interpreted but wrongly carried out instructions.

From the time deliberate efforts are made to establish in the child an attitude of expectancy towards speech, the lessons need to consist of periods of concentrated activity guided by instruction. These periods are designed to associate speech and instruction despite the fact that during most of the day most of the speech sounds reaching the child's ears will not be relevant to him, and so until he is fairly sophisticated in the use of language this will tend to establish or reinforce a tendency to ignore speech.

This means that during a lesson the 'teacher' must talk almost continually but always relevantly and usually as a string of orders. She must talk very much more than one normally does to a young child and always in a suitable form. This is a skill which takes a lot of practice and can be very tiring. At first every action of the child's should be preceded by the spoken instruction, but in due course whole operations may be 'defined' and initiated with little further prompt.

Notice how this work contrasts in some respects with the almost completely non-verbal atmosphere in encouraging the development of general understanding.

An instruction such as 'Come and sit in your chair' should in the early stages be followed by a series of component instructions each preceding or accompanying the activity. 'Come and sit in your chair... come and sit down...turn round...sit down...pull up your chair...pull it right up...etc.

Using large sized peg boards and leading in time to insert-shapes and picture inset boards (simple 'jig-saws') responses can be engineered by direct gesture and spoken instruction by the method of 'anticipation' where an obvious need is created within the child. For example the action-inducing phrases 'Pick up the..' 'Put it on the..', 'in the..', 'Turn it over', 'Turn it round', etc., can be readily introduced by the method of anticipation, making use of the child's obsessional tendencies, as he soon reaches the stage of spontaneously putting right something which seems wrong to him. Using for example, 'Rowing Eight with Cox' (Escor Toys Ltd.) the 'little men' may be fed to the child one by one from various directions with the injunction to 'put this one in the boat', spoken from continually varying positions to either side or behind or above the child's head.

Once this activity is in happy train it becomes possible, whilst offering a 'little man' from one side, to surreptitiously slip another into the boat but in an inverted position. The injunction '(You) turn that one over' is timed from the moment the child is observed to become aware of the anomaly and seems about

to redress the situation. If necessary of course, his attention can be drawn to the upside-down-man.

A slightly older child using a form board or picture insert board can be induced to reorientate in one plane or reverse a purposely misplaced piece before fitting it into its recess.

'There's another one...(or) here's the dog...you turn it over' or 'turn it round...that's right turn it round...and push it in', etc. ... introducing descriptive names for the various pieces and allowing a brief interval between an introductory or interrogative phrase and the appropriate action.

Activities involving 'putting in', 'tipping out', 'stirring round' etc. can be developed into complex operations in their own right and into 'imaginative play' activities such as 'feeding baby', 'cooking' and playing 'shops'. For a child who has reached the stage of play at approximately an 18 months level doll play at the table and domestic parallel play and self-help tasks about the house may be used as the activity vehicles for encouraging speech comprehension.

A doll (best called 'baby' rather than dolly at first; a 'little table', and 'little chair' (to distinguish them from the larger articles the child is using), plastic bath, bed, spoon, cup, clothes, articles of toilet etc., would be a suitable set of equipment to be introduced, one at a time, into the play situation, some being taken out during play.

The one-sided dialogue might begin as follows: 'Here's the little chair...Put the little chair down there...here's baby...you put baby on the little chair...here's the little table... put the little table down there ... push baby up to the little table (handing the child a doll's cup),...give baby a drink...that's right...give her some more drink...now put the cup down...down on the little table...(producing spoon and indicating cup as source of food)...now give her something to eat...and some more to eat...give mummy something to eat...and some more to eat...here's a flannel...wipe baby's face...' etc.

This can be developed incorporating the fairly frequent use of such phrases as 'Give me the...', 'Put down the...' 'Now the other one...', etc., and extended to patting, bathing, tooth-cleaning, hair combing, bedding etc. With the younger children it is often a good idea to confine undressing and dressing to a pair of doll's pants or a nappy but greater complexity of play may be introduced in due course.

Subsequently 'imaginative play' using miniature vehicles and animals etc. can be used to extend the understanding of more complex speech instructions and the use of grammatical subjects other than 'you'.

At a suitable stage of development, perhaps when the child is discriminating and matching shapes at or beyond a 27 months level, speech may be used in

conjunction with controlled constructive activities as in taking to pieces and rebuilding a wooden or plastic motor car, aeroplane, work-bench etc.

Using the assembled vehicle etc. (e.g. Escor 'Chara') so that the child has an image of the complete structure to start with, the child can be instructed to remove the various components one at a time until the whole is reduced to its simplest elements. Then it can be systematically rebuilt.

As always no operations are permitted, under the language-promoting conditions, except following instruction and to facilitate this rule numerous superfluous instructions should be given and, once the whole task is familiar and enjoyed, the order of the operations may be varied from time to time. The former ruse has the additional advantage that it increases the range of possible reiterable (refrain) instructions such as 'Turn it over', 'Turn it round', etc.

Each component as it is removed should be placed (under instruction) in some particular place on the table or in a special receptacle so that a sort of spatial classification of elements into groups is made. This ordered arrangement will facilitate both the use of supportive non-verbal instruction when necessary and aid the child's memory, whilst reducing to a minimum any anxiety generated in his efforts to please himself or his parents.

Just how much of the actual manipulation the child should do for himself and how much he should depend on minimal instruction will, of course, depend on the difficulty of the task for the child and the individual child's abilities and stage of development; however the whole procedure should be completed on each occasion, or whatever section is taken to pieces rebuilt and not left half assembled.

During the earliest essays, especially with the less mature child or the one only just coming to have control over his enthusiasm, it is unlikely that he will be tired by the time the toy has been disarticulated, and under these conditions it is important that the remainder of the task be hurried through under conditions which continually involve the child but which demand very little of him in the way of sustained concentration.

Instruction such as: 'Unscrew that nut' (indicating a nut by loosening it)...unscrew it...(and at the appropriate moment)...pull it off...put it down there' (indicating with a finger) may be used. Thereafter all the nuts must be placed together, not simply put down anywhere. 'Now...wait (indicating finger)...both hands...(passive imposition)...pull the wheel off...put the wheel down there' (indicating) and so on.

Wooden or plastic toys to be suitable for this kind of play must be resolvable into complete individual and nameable components not into segments which simply fit together to form a shape. Thus a suitable motor car might consist of 'chassis', engine, seats, axles, wheels, nuts, steering wheel, and driver.

Over a period of time more and more complex speech, especially using qualifying words and phrases, may be introduced. Understanding of adverbs such as 'tightly', 'properly'; positional and directional relationship words - 'behind', 'through', 'over'; and adjectival words - 'round', 'green', 'big red', etc - may be encouraged by the deliberate splitting up of objects belonging to one class and placing them in particular places and in particular ways. For example: 'Pull off the nut and...put it on the chair beside you/on your chair behind you', 'Lift up the book and...put the nut underneath', '...round, behind the box'; 'The red nut...in the bowl', '...with the wheels', '...all by itself...on the table', 'The other way', 'very tightly', 'with the others', etc.

More complicated mechanical constructions may be built in due course from such materials as 'build-fix' or 'plastic Meccano'. Such structural toys it will be seen provide not only ample opportunity for regulative speech but also excellent substrata for the learning of controlled manipulation and insightful behaviour.

Free range activities In addition to the speech used casually at any suitable opportunity during the day, from 'open your mouth' when feeding baby, 'Push you arm through', 'Push (pull) open the door for Mummy', etc., speech can be used in a more intensive way under free-field conditions.

This presents a means of giving the child interludes which interrupt his sitting at table either as regular brief 'refrains' or as periods of more lusty movement to alternate with the sedentary sessions. The former activity consists of such operations as moving the small furniture about when appropriate, such as carrying the little chair and helping to carry the little table etc. at the start and termination of a 'lesson': 'Bring your chair', 'Help me with the table', 'Lift up the table...put it down...push it up against the wall' etc.

During the 'lesson' each completed project may (under suitable circumstances) be put aside by the child before the next is broached: 'Now push back your chair...stand up...pick up the...turn round...put it on the big table...push it back...good...come and sit down again...pull your chair up...(together with the necessary supportive measures and appropriate timing).

Free-range projects proper can involve moving apparatus, as in ball games, moving limbs as in hand games or the whole body as in 'follow me' games.

Ball games may range from those which are controlled by simple instructions, such as 'throw the ball...pick up the ball...throw it to me' etc., to 'throw the ball...over the table.' 'roll it...under the table', 'bounce it/the ball...on the table', etc.

Limb games could take the form: 'Put your hands...(pause)...on your head', (followed by action to be imitated), 'behind your back', 'up in the air' etc., or use action rhymes as:

(Hands Open (open hands), shut them (action). open (action), shut them

-) (action)
- Give a little clap (followed by action)
- Open _____ , shut them, open _____ , shut them.
- Lay them in your lap (action)
- Roll them (rolling hands), roll them, roll them, roll them
- Roll the...just like this
- Wave them (waving), wave them, wave them, wave them
- Blow a little kiss (action).

In follow me games the instructions apply to the child's whole person:
 'Run...faster...slowly...little tiny steps...great big steps...go round the table...up on the chair...under the table...hide behind the door...', etc.

More and more complex speech patterns may be used at the appropriate stages as progress is made and the activities become more complex and constructive. However, considerable structuring may be exercised in regard to the categories of activity which the speech accompanies and eventually controls.

Linguistic advancement is not a question of adding new 'words' to a child's comprehension-vocabulary but of enlarging *the spheres of reference*; at the same time sharpening the preciseness of the meanings of the utterance patterns, whether this involves the acquisition of additional elements or not.

Finally, it may be pointed out once more that whatever the variety and complexity level of the speech used during these early stages of linguistic development, the spoken phrase employed in conjunction with an appropriate action is redundant in that the action *does not depend entirely on* (even at all on) the speech. The word does not demand but only invites an action which will, however, follow inevitably, and is therefore associated with any pleasures which the activity brings, and never of itself induces anxiety.

Methods which attempt to condition a direct association between a vocal signal and a referend however, apart from their other failings mentioned earlier, *do necessarily evoke a measure of uncertainty, emotional insecurity and resulting anxiety*. Learning in this way is motivated and reinforced by non-specific reward in which relief or lowering of anxiety also plays a significant role and the anticipation of this end is often the major 'motivating' (incentivating) factor.

Transition to ordinary everyday language conditions It must be remembered that the methods described here are designed to deliberately create the most suitable conditions for learning. Competing 'distractions' are excluded through concentrated interest, unwanted habits are prohibited, whilst the time is filled up with high concentrations of activities almost invariably crowned with whatever 'success' is required and virtually one hundred percent efficient time-association between speech and response activity.

This learning situation, although more closely resembling the normal child's condition during the first year than might at first sight appear obvious, is in

many respects artificial. The child must learn to behave in equivalent ways under more normal conditions but he cannot be expected to simply transfer his efficiency immediately to ordinary social life. In fact we should not expect him to cope efficiently with language under normal social conditions until his understanding of speech has reached at least two-and-a-half years level, and long after this he will benefit from individual lessons in language and speech.

To some extent the transition is facilitated by the progressively increasing complexity and length of the verbal instructions being used, the forcing of decisions among alternatives, and later in verbally guiding and encouraging freer activities such as problem solving. However, this transition, from close to one-to-one regulation of the child's behaviour to his accepting speech competently under normal social conditions, can be further eased in two other ways.

From a fairly early stage it will be necessary to move away from the child from time to time to collect apparatus, etc., and at these times contact will be maintained with the child through speech and bodily expression. Once the child is well established in his closely controlled lesson situation and his understanding of speech has reached about a two years level, the at-a-distance control should be practised quite deliberately for its own sake, using a relatively quiet voice and sometimes limiting gesture to some extent. Having the child fetch and carry, or negotiate obstacles to get at some carefully placed object, are very suitable activities for this sort of teaching.

At a slightly later stage a brother or sister might be introduced occasionally into the special lesson situation to ease weaning into the social situation in which the child will find it necessary to distinguish between speech intended for him and that meant for another.

Expanding and extending the understanding of speech So far we have increased the range and forms of instruction in a 'natural' way without much thought about the structures of speech. It is quite reasonable to continue in this using everyday language as the occasion arises. The programmes at the end of this section suggest some further ideas, propose words and phrases which may be useful in the various situations and attempt to indicate how a simple activity or game with limited vocabulary can be developed in company with increasingly complex verbal instruction.

Some may find it easier to use and devise suitable verbal instructions by understanding a little of the practical grammar involved.

The kinds of speech we use when instructing young children tend to have the form:

Definer ('do something')

Director ('to something' – subject 'you' being understood)

'Kick...	the ball'
'Pick up...	the doll'
'Kiss...	mummy'

Commonly the actual sentences of this form that we use also contain words which qualify 'the doing' and the 'done to' as e.g.

'kick...(hard)...	'green...ball...'
'pick up...(carefully)...	'little...doll'
'kiss...(gently)...	'your...mummy'

but the young child in the early stages attends only to certain parts of the utterance according to his level of maturity, experience, etc.

	' <u>kick</u>	the ball'	where there is no obvious choice of object
and later	' <u>kick</u>	<u>the ball</u>	hard'
	' <u>kick it</u>		<u>hard</u> '
	' <u>put it</u>		on the <u>table</u> '

The child's ability to attend to and retain longer sequences increases and his ability to discriminate between similar words enlarges as his general linguistic capacity matures. He learns to differentiate phrasal forms like 'on the chair' from more general ones such as 'the chair'. Likewise 'on the table' from 'under the table', at first assisted by the differing contexts.

e.g. 'Put it...on the table'

'...your legs...under the table'.

And eventually the individual words come to be understood in their own right as well as parts of the 'clusters' in sentences.

'...on	<u>the table</u> '
'... <u>under</u>	<u>the sofa</u> '
' <u>Pull</u>	<u>hard....</u> '
'...'	... <u>Tom's book</u> '

This is beginning to happen during the third year in the normally developing child so from the time our child is responding to speech roughly as a two year old we can build our sentences to deliberately vary the qualifying words and phrases.

'Give me the car...the big red car...by the box.'

Not only does the child come to understand more varied and more complicated kinds of straightforward instruction he also learns to distinguish between instructions meant for him and those meant for others, to understand questions, speech which points out things, and that which tells him something about something else; to cope with pronouns, plurals and tenses.

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