What Speakers Do
Speech Production

- Takes place in real time – linear
- At the level of utterance, speech is produced utterance-by-utterance in response to the person we are talking to (our interlocutor)
- This contingent nature of speech accounts for its spontaneity – planning time is severely limited
- The planning of one utterance may overlap with the production of the previous one
- It is ‘real-time processing’
- Turn – the duration of one speaker’s contribution to the talk before yielding to, or being interrupted by, another speaker
Articulation

- Involves the use of the organs of speech to produce sounds

- A stream of air is produced in the lungs, driven through the vocal cords, and ‘shaped’ by, among other things, the position and movement of the tongue, teeth and lips

- Speakers of English produce a range of over 40 phonemes – sounds that determine the meaning of a word
Self-monitoring and Repair

- Self-monitoring – a process that happens concurrently with the stages of conceptualization, formulation and articulation (example: self-correction)

- Self-monitoring at the formulation stage – results in a slowing down, a pause and the subsequent backtracking and re-phrasing of an utterance

- Self-monitoring of articulation – results in the kind of corrections that even fluent speakers have to make when the wrong word pops out/the pronunciation goes awry
Self-monitoring and Repair

• Repairs – In response to self-monitoring or to the messages conveyed by one’s interlocutors

• Can take the form of an immediate correction or ‘retrace-and-repair’ sequences
Automaticity

• Necessary in order to achieve any degree of fluency

• Allows speakers to focus their attention on the aspect of the speaking task that immediately requires it, whether it is planning or articulation

• Automaticity at the level of formulation – partly achieved through the use of prefabricated chunks
  • Example; *I remember + -ing*, as in *I remember saying to my mum*
Automaticity

- Automaticity at the discourse level
  - Example; story is told with little hesitation and no false starts

- More practice is needed to gain fluency
Fluency

Factors in the perception of fluency:

1. Speed – the ability to speak fast
2. Pausing – to allow the formulation of an utterance to catch up with its conceptualization
3. Appropriate placement of pauses
4. Length of run (the number of syllables between pauses) – the longer the runs, the more fluent the speaker sounds
Fluency

• Production Strategies
  • Pause fillers – *uh, um*
  • Vagueness expressions – *sort of, I mean*
  • Repeats – the repetition of a single word at the point where formulation has been temporarily paused
Managing Talk

• Interaction
  • Example; jockeying for conversational turn, introducing new topics, and engaging in word play

• Turn-taking
  • Speakers should take turns to hold the floor
  • No two speakers should be speaking at once
  • In some contexts, it is signalled by the raising of one’s hand
  • The use of discourse markers – *that reminds me, like I say* (refer p.9)
  • Backchannel device – *uh-huh*

• Paralinguistics
  • The interactional use of eye gaze and gesture
  • Apply only in face-to-face conversation