Chapter 2
Theoretical Framework for Oral Fluency

2.1 Introduction
This chapter attempts to give definitions and approaches towards oral fluency. It discusses the place of fluency in various language teaching methods. It also throws light on the measures of fluency and the factors that affect its development. Furthermore, the challenges that are involved in making fluent English speech are also being highlighted. Later in this chapter, a brief review of the research in the area of fluency development has been presented.

2.2 An Overview on the Concept of Fluency
In an era where English language is being globalized, people are often judged by the way they speak the language. Therefore, poor speakers are tagged as incompetent and uneducated. Hence, these speakers experience social isolation among the natives or the good speakers of English, face employment difficulties and find very limited opportunities for higher studies. People should not only know the language well, but must know how to use it communicatively also, in order to interact with the English speakers.

Singh (2005) says that for gaining basic command of the language, a teacher must:

- favour such teaching programme that meets the L2 learners’ specific needs.
- Use such teaching activities which the learners think are useful for them.
- Follow such approach in teaching that has flexibility. (p. 18)

Further, the author states that if teaching exists in a communicative learning context then there should be a sharing of responsibilities not only between a teacher and
students, but also among students. According to Gefen (1989a), “if communication is
the aim of teaching, then communication must be the means of learning” (as cited in
It is considered that if students get the opportunity to develop fluency in the English
speech while they are pursuing their academics, it would really be a very beneficial
effort for them from various perspectives.

2.3 Place of Fluency in Language Teaching Methods
The emphasis on fluency has kept on changing with the emergence of different
teaching methods over the years. A brief study of various teaching methods that has
focussed on the role of fluency in language learning is given below.

In Grammar–Translation method accuracy in the language use is much focused, as
students are asked to show a “high standards in translation” (Richards and Rogers,
1986, p. 4). During this era, speaking and listening are hardly given any attention.
In Direct method, both speaking and listening are given due importance. Accuracy in
pronunciation and grammar is much emphasised and the use of mother tongue is
avoided.

The aim of Situational Language Teaching method is to begin the teaching with the
spoken language. Here, the target language remains the medium of instruction.
Richards and Rogers (1986) have cited Pittman (1963) as:

Our principal classroom activity in the teaching of English structure will be the
oral practice of structures. This oral practice of controlled sentence patterns
should be given in situations designed to give the greatest amount of practice
in English speech to the pupil. (p. 35)

Hence, structure has to be practiced orally in the context of different situations.
In the Audio-lingual method, all the four skills of the language, i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) are emphasized. Here oral skill is given much attention. It is based on structuralism which believes that “...medium of language is oral” (Richards and Rogers, 1986, p.49). The focus on speaking is linked to accuracy in speech here because proponents of this method think that “Good habits are formed by giving correct responses rather than by making mistakes” (p.51). Therefore, drills and rote- memorization are thought to be quite helpful in learning the target language.

In late 1960s, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced. This method gives importance to the communicative competence where meaning, unlike the structure is the focus of learning and aims at effective communication. This method is flexible in its approach to teaching, because intelligible pronunciation is sought and any approach which helps the learners is accepted. In this method, teaching language aims at developing fluency in the target language.

Thus, it can be said that fluency with flexible approach in language learning plays an important role here. It is a learner centred approach where teachers help the learners in every possible way that encourages them to use language. It can also be concluded from the above discussions that language learning is least pressurized in CLT.

2.4 Definitions and Approaches to Oral Fluency:

Carroll (1968) describes four types of fluency (as cited in Riggenbach, 2000, p.16):

a) Word fluency: The ability to recall words with given phonetic-orthographic characteristics.

b) Ideational fluency: The ability to call up names or ideas appropriate for given semantic characteristics.
c) Expressional fluency: The ability to compose appropriate sentences for
given grammatical requirements rapidly.

d) Oral speaking fluency: The ability to use integrated language skills which
depends on the psycholinguistic mechanisms.

According to Krashen, fluency and accuracy are the two aspects of language learning.
(as cited in Richards and Rodgers 1986). Fluency is the result of language acquisition and acquisition is an unconscious process which needs a lot of exposure. In the words of Krashen “the ability to speak fluently cannot be taught directly but it emerges independently at time when acquirer has built linguistic competence by understanding it” (as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p.132). It is difficult for second language learners to speak well and with ease because they do not get exposure to communicate in the target language outside the classroom.

Faerch, Haastrup, and Philipson define fluency as “the speaker’s ability to make use of whatever linguistic and pragmatic competence they have” (as cited in Hedge, 1993, p.275). They have discovered three types of fluency which are mentioned below:

- Semantic fluency: Connecting together propositions and speech acts.
- Lexical-syntactic fluency: Connecting together syntactic constituents and words.
- Articulatory fluency: Connecting together speech and segments.

(p. 275)

Defining spontaneous speech, Abercrombie (1965) says that it “should be illetrate-literally” (p. 6). He finds that the transcripts of spontaneous conversation are most of the time “unintelligible, illogical, ungrammatical, unorganized and repetitious” (p. 6).
Further, he discusses some of the features of a genuine conversation which are listed below:

- A natural conversation shows variation in tempo.
- Pauses and silence have meanings and they maintain the conversation without words also.
- Stammers, repetitions and errors of articulation form the conversation rules.
- Meaningless words and phrases also occur in conversation. They are referred as “silence fillers” (p. 9), which sometimes signals intimacy between the speakers.

Keeping in mind the above mentioned characteristics of a spontaneous speech, Abercrombie (1965) suggests that a language teacher should not teach the spoken language like a spoken prose which is highly structured.

Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) has described fluency as “the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions” (p. 108). They also point out that ESL/EFL fluency characterizes students’ level of communicative proficiency besides the following abilities to:

- Produce written/spoken language with ease.
- Speak with a good, but not necessarily perfect command of intonation.
- Communicate ideas effectively.
- Produce continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or a breakdown of communication.

(Richard et al., 1985, p. 108-109)
Keeping in view the linguistic discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competence, Fillmore (2000) considers four abilities that should be included under the term fluency:

- Ability to talk at length with few pauses.
- Ability to talk in coherent, reasoned and semantically dense sentences.
- Ability to have appropriate things to say in wide range of contexts.
- Ability to be creative and imaginative in language use.

(p. 51)

Brumfit (2000) says that the above mentioned abilities relate to four basic set of abilities psychomotor, affective, cognitive and aesthetic. Further, Fillmore (2000) stresses on the mastery of some fixed expressions by an L₂ speaker in order to be fluent. He states that these expressions cannot be used efficiently if speakers are mere masters of grammar and vocabulary. Their appropriate use depends on the context and situations. He identifies fluency with “articulateness, volubility, eloquence, wit, garrulousness etc.” (p. 51). He goes on to explain that oral fluency depends on the following factors:

- Good command on the appropriate and accurate use of the vocabulary in different situations and in a culturally diverse world. One must also “have control of a number of processes for creating new expressions” (p. 53). Also, the ability to efficiently and appropriately use the “language’s special syntactic devices” (p. 55) plays a vital role. For example, the use of respectively, simultaneously, though, etc.

- Speech should be intelligible enough for the listeners to comprehend the speaker’s intention.

- The ability of speakers to associate linguistic forms with the cognitive, interactional and discourse schemata.
• The ability to use various styles and registers in different settings.

Brown (2003) has discussed an expanded view of fluency which includes:

1) communicative language tools which deals with the below mentioned components like-
   • Paralinguistic features: Like facial expressions, head movements, hand gestures, eye movements and eye gaze.
   • Kinesics features: These deal with the ways in which the body is used in communication, like distance, touching and posture. These features convey emotions without the help of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.
   • Pragmatics: It includes the use of language in specific contexts and social situations.
   • Grammar: Instead of teaching how to make complete sentence, learners should be taught to handle the spoken discourse.
   • Pronunciation: It must include suprasegmental features and the reduced forms besides focusing on phonemes.
   • Vocabulary: Students should know the semantic components of a word and how disparate words can have different meanings in various contexts.

   (p. 3-4)

2) Communicative language choices: These are the choices within the circle of language tools which students select to meet the demands of a communicative situation. Widdowson (1978) distinguished between the two kinds of rule:
a) Reference rules: Rules which build the students’ competence in the language i.e paralinguistic features, kinesics features, pragmatics, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

b) Expression rules: These are the rules that govern the way students would use the language.

(p. 13)

Thus, choices made while communicating in English are based on expression rules. Choices could be due to the differences in settings, social, sexual, psychological rules, register and style (Brown, 2003).

3) Communicative language strategies: These are the strategies that students use in order to make effective communication when they lack accuracy in the use of language. Six such strategies are the abilities:

- To use speed to their advantage.
- To use pauses and hesitations.
- To give appropriate feedback like gestures, facial expressions etc. to signal that whether the message is getting through or not.
- To self-monitor and repair competently the mistakes.
- To clarify effectively by using different communication strategies.
- To negotiate for meaning when necessary.

(p.7-8)

The style of speaking is determined by the audience in context, therefore, students must modify their speech accordingly. This is called “tailoring language” (Leaver, Ehrman, & Shekhtman, 2005, p. 172). Further, Brown (2003) defines fluency as “The ability to switch registers and styles and respond appropriately to different sexual,
psychological and social roles in various settings” (p. 6). Different ways of expressing a register must take into account the following three points:

- Forms of address
- Grammatical forms
- Word choice

According to Brown & Yule (1983), a language has different functions. Each function is used for different purpose and hence takes on different forms i.e. appropriate ‘styles’ for different functions, different registers and so on. They classified the functions of language into two broad terms:

- Transactional function: This helps one to transfer information in language.
- Interactional function: Social relationships are maintained through interactional function of language.

Hence, a good and fluent speaker has the power to dominate a range of abilities from “taking short turns in primarily interactive ‘chat’ to taking transactional turns” (p. 22). They have also said that “when students attempt to reproduce model phrases and sentences in ‘conversation’ exercises, it seems reasonable that he should not be corrected if he produces partial sentences, incomplete phrases of the sort produced by native speakers” (p.21). Even native speakers use language “manipulatively, exploratorily to communicate with and make-up what they say as they go along” (p. 21).

According to Nation (1989), if learners are not corrected of their errors, they get fossilized. This fossilization of the faulty speech prevents the learners from improving fluency. Ebsworth (1998) says that speech which is full of inaccurate vocabulary,
syntax, or pronunciation is very difficult to comprehend. However, it is possible for the speaker to be halting but accurate.

Therefore, there should be fluency plus accuracy approach while developing fluency in the classroom, which requires a natural reaction while correcting the errors which is known as consciousness-raising (Rutherford 1987). This works as feedback from the instructor that reminds speakers of errors in a positive way.

Moreover, it is very important to inculcate the qualities of a good learner in students before teaching them about fluent communication. Khan (1998) says that research in second language learning suggests that good language learners use a variety of communicative strategies to improve their face to face communication. He claims that speaking strategies are one of the most important aspects in dealing with communication skills, as they improve learners’ confidence and fluency. Various communication strategies are practiced by an active learner of ESL to avoid breakdown in communication. Some of these strategies are: circumlocution, paraphrasing, asking for help, semantic avoidance, etc.

Rubin (1975) suggests that good L₂ learners

- Are willing and accurate guesser.
- Have strong desire to communicate.
- Are uninhibited.
- Attends to form
- Practices –seeks out conversation
- Monitors own speech and the speech of others.
- Attends to meaning.

(as cited in Brown, 1987, p. 91 - 2)
Lennon (2000) states that the rate of articulation or other indicators of “dysfluency” (p. 25) should not be the criteria for assessing fluency of speakers, because these may have “communicative functions in discourse” (p.25). He further states that “temporal variables will vary according to discourse topic, situation, interlocutor, and so forth” (p. 25) for speaker. It is quite important to acquire the ability in language processing apart from the linguistic and pragmatic competence as it will help speakers to achieve proficiency in any language. To put the above discussion in a nutshell, Lennon defines fluency as “the rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language under the temporal constraints of on-line processing” (p. 26). He has also included the term “perceived fluency” (p. 27) in the definition of fluency. It stands for the perception that a speaker has regarding his/her ability in planning the speech and production of the speech. Moreover, the high automatization of phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactical processing is important for a fluent speech. Less proficient speakers have a little command over these processes, because, they learn the language in a non-communicative environment. They try to maintain a high speech rate (as this is what they perceive fluency as) but fail to convey their message. They have the impression that they are fluent in their speech but in fact they are maintaining what Lennon termed as “false fluency” (p. 28). Talking about the bilingual and multilingual, he says that “cross-linguistic influence is the norm” (p. 30) for them, as they can easily access the lexis, phonology, and syntax of their L1. This results in code-switching, code-mixing and use of structures which are based on their L1, or the other language in which they are proficient to carry on the discourse. This may pave a platform for errors that are “interlingual or intralingual, covert or overt (Corder 1971), global or local (Burt and Kiparsky 1974), knowledge-based or processing-based” (p.30). Hence, they have a
tendency to make “errors of competence” (p. 30) which may make students the “fossilized learners” (p. 30). The author says that these learners make use of the dialect of an interlanguage which is performed fluently. He further discusses the speech production model as proposed by Levelt (1989) for monolinguals and as modified by De Bot for bilinguals and multilinguals. The author describes three stages of production as discussed below:

- **Conceptualization**
- **Formulation**
- **Articulation**

**Conceptualization:** Here the speakers build their goal and look for those informations that have some relevance with regards to the goal. Conceptualization takes into account the macro as well as the micro planning, where former focuses on the goal while the latter selects and orders the message to accomplish the goal.

**Formulation:** It changes the conceptualized message into a “speech plan” (Yuan and Ellis, 2005, p. 172) and this is done by recognizing the linguistic knowledge available in the mental lexicon which matches with the conceptualized message. The “phonetic plan” (p.172) is the outcome from the formulator.

**Articulator:** Here the phonetic plan is executed which results in the production of speech.

The model for speech proposed by Levelt (1989) was meant for the production of speech in L1 (as cited in Yuan and Ellis, 2005). The model by De Bot adapted Levelt’s model for speech production in L2 (as cited in Yuan and Ellis, 2005). As mentioned by Yuan and Ellis (2005) “De Bot argues that there are separate systems for the L1 and
L2 as far as the processing components of the formulator are concerned” (p. 172). The L2 speakers face problem as they are “demanding on memory” (p. 173).

It is also said by Lennon (2000) that the problem lies in the formulation stage where speakers grope for the lexis and syntax from their “mental lexicon” (p. 32) to articulate their concept. Bilinguals and multilinguals face this problem because they have access to two or more linguistic systems simultaneously. Hence, for L2 acquisition, there should be a “progressive strengthening of intralingual links relative to interlingual links in the mental lexicon” (p. 32).

According to Mitchell and Myles (2002), fluency development in learners also takes account of psychological models. Towell and Hawkins’ model of second language acquisition is one of them. The model proposed by them “attempts to integrate how learners learn L2 system with how they learn to use the system” (p. 92).

The basic points discussed in this model are as follows:

- If hypotheses about the L2 structure that has been derived internally, leads to the production in L2, then this is retained in procedural memory. That means, at first they get stored in the memory as associative form and then as an autonomous form.

- The routines which have been learned (example: how old are you? which is produced without any creative rule for making interrogatives) can be kept in the “procedural memory at the associative level, before going back to declarative meaning for reanalysis under controlled process” (p. 94). When the stages of analysis and reanalysis are over, routines get stored in the autonomous procedure.
• Rules that are explicit may be learned and retained in the procedural memory.

• Strategies of learning form a part of the information processing aspect of the model.

Thus, this model combines the two approaches, linguistic and cognitive, in order to study second language learning.

2.5 Measures of Fluency

Campbell-Larsen (2012) has presented a list of fluency as well as dis fluency markers on the basis of which spoken English can be assessed. These are as follows:

• Fluency markers: “discourse markers and small words, use of chunks, appropriate discourse structuring, active strategizing to resolve communication breakdowns and so on” (p.64).

• Disfluency markers: “use of L1, protracted silence, inappropriately short answers, use of L1 backchanneling systems, failure to use (appropriate) small words, or failure to use them at the appropriate, and so on” (p.64).

Defining fluency, Brumfit says that it is an effective application of linguistic system so far attained by a learner (as cited in Nation, 1990). Keeping in view the definitions of fluency given by Fillmore and Brumfit, Nation (1990) suggests that fluency can be measured by taking into account the following three points:

• The speed and flow of language production.

• The degree of control of language items.

• The way language and content interact.

Some of the measures of fluency have been discussed below:
Non-verbal aspect

The difference between conversation and other kinds of language use lies in the fact that conversation comprises both the verbal as well as non-verbal aspects (Bavelas, 2000). The author says that those non-verbal acts which can be seen and “are tightly synchronized with speech” (p. 91) are important in the study of oral fluency. These kinds of non-verbal aspects are “hand gestures and facial displays” (p. 92) of the speakers. The non-verbal response of listeners also gives a feedback to the speakers.

Intonation

The role of Intonation is very important in fluency. According to Wennerstrom (2000), the variation of pitch differentiates between the “given and new information and to segment chunks of discourse according to turn-taking conventions” (p. 106). Hence a fluent speaker must learn to “speak phrasally” (p. 125) and must exhibit coherence in their utterance.

Temporal Variables:

According to Wood (2004), temporal variables include speed, repairs, amount and frequency of hesitation, location of pauses, and length of runs of fluent speech between pauses. Rate of speech is measured by words or syllables uttered per minute or second, but this is not considered to be a benchmark to measure fluency. An insight into frequency and location of pauses is considered important in measuring fluency. Woods (2004) states that highly fluent L2 speakers and native speakers tend to pause at sentences and clause junctures, or between non-integral components of clauses and clauses themselves. Pausing at other points within sentences gives the impression of disfluency.
Longer length of fluent runs between pauses also indicates a highly fluent speech. Yurong and Nan (2008) used three categories which altogether had six indices to measure fluency. The three categories and the indices that fall under them are as follow:

- **Temporal:** It included mean length of utterances and average length of pauses.

- **Linguistic:** It took into account ratio of error free T-units and mean length of C-units after pruning. T-Unit as defined by the authors is “a main clause plus all subordinate clauses and non-clausal structures attached to or embedded in it.” (Gaies, as cited in Yurong and Nan, 2008, p. 78). C-units are units of communication which have been explained as “grammatical independent predictions or […] answer to questions which lack only the repetition of the question elements to satisfy the criterion of independent prediction” (Mehner, as cited in Yurong and Nan 2008, p. 78).

- **Performance:** It dealt with ratio of reformulation and replacement to total repairs and ratio of inaccurate pronunciation to accurate pronunciation.

### 2.6 Factors Affecting Fluency

Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis in his second language theory states that affective variables such as anxiety, motivation, self-efficacy and so on act as filters, which hinder the development of second language in learners. Defining self-efficacy as the judgement of one’s own ability to carry out certain task, Bandura says that the motivation and self efficacy are directly related (as cited in Schneider, 2001). “The greater one’s self efficacy to do a task, the greater would be the motivation to do it” (p. 2). Success of a task also depends on the factor that whether the motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic, the former refers to the interest in doing a task while the later
denotes the usefulness of a task for the learners. Schneider (2001) also states the attitude that a learner has towards a language judges the ability of learner to master that language. Citing Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde, Schneider (2001) reports that higher self esteem and self efficacy help the students to remain “intrinsically motivated” (p. 4) to perform a task successfully and this also helps in retaining their learning in long term memory.

Acquisition of language also depends on the age of the learner. Referring to the point suggested by Thomas Scovel (1969), Brown (1987) says that before reaching puberty, a child can successfully acquire both the first language and the second language because lateralization begins at the age of 2 and finishes around puberty. During this period, the child assigns different functions including language to the two different hemispheres (left & right) of his/her brain. Consequently, when the process of lateralization is over, it becomes difficult for the people to ‘easily acquire fluent control of a second language or at least to acquire it with what Alexander Guiora et al. (1972a) call “authentic” (native-like) pronunciation’ (Brown 1987, p. 43).

2.7 Challenges Involved in Making Fluent English Speech

The most common problem with the ESL students in producing a spontaneous speech is that they are not adequately exposed to the English language. Speaking needs some kind of real exposure to an audience. These students are conscious of making mistakes and have a fear of attracting criticism from their audience. Naturally, they prefer to remain silent. As mentioned by Ur (1991), L₂ learners feel that they are unable to think of what to say when they are asked to speak English. He further says that the ESL students feel “unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language” (p. 121).
According to Ho (2007), many challenges prop out because the language learnt in an institution is totally different from what is used and spoken in the real world. She puts it succinctly in the following lines:

The second language is found to be based on literate and academic knowledge and preoccupied with the written word (Barnes, 1975; Widowson, 1978; Brynes, 1998) in the sense that emphasis is placed on the standard written code found in formal texts, even in oral communication. (p. 39)

It is also mentioned by the author that learning a language gets priority over using a language. Kramsch (1998, cited in Ho, 2007) claims that oral fluency has not been given much importance in “academic discourse” (Ho, 2007, p.40) and the skill learnt at academics requires one to achieve competence within the school setting. As a result, they are not competent enough to use the language divergently in the outside world. This incompetence in language causes feeling of being tongue tied and creates anxiety and frustration among the learners (Betty, Leaver, Shekhtman, 2005).

Teaching of second language as observed by Fazili (2007) has not been following appropriate methodology in Indian classrooms. The reasons which contributed towards this situation are listed below:

a) A wide heterogeneity in the competence levels of the students.

b) Unmanageable classroom population

c) Lengthy syllabus

d) Literature – orientated courses

e) Teachers are untrained

Language learning/teaching is considered to be a process that is purely mechanical and that ignores the cognitive aspects. Further, she says that the teachers are at the bottom-most position of the curriculum framework. They are only responsible for
transferring the materials advised by higher authorities to the students without analyzing their needs. The other problem lies with the poor examination system because it merely tests memory and luck of the students, instead of their competence and performance in the specific skills. This point is also supported by Ho (2007), who says that ESL learners learn the language to pass the tests. Hence, English is considered “just another subject” (Willis, 1981, p.41) that has to be mugged up to score well in exams. Willis (1981), too, agrees with Ho (2007) and says that “unfortunately the requirements of the exam dictate teaching priorities, and all, too often students leave schools unable to communicate orally in English” (p.41). The author believes that non-native English teachers are compelled to rely mostly on the text books. They are unable to connect classroom teaching of L2 to the need for the same in the world outside the class. Completion of the course becomes the sole aim of both the teachers and the students.

A classroom talk as described by Ho (2007) is characterized by an exchange which is carried out in three parts between the teachers and the students. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) named this three part exchange structure as I – R – F (initiation – response – feedback) (as cited in Ho, 2007). If a teacher initiates the interaction, there has to be a participatory response from the student which in turn is evaluated by the teacher through a feedback move. But for many years, the initiation by teachers is in the form of a display question where teacher already knows the answer. Wells (1999) while analyzing the I-R-F exchange finds that such talk moves around a very limited range of content and thus has a very little capability to promote talk in the target language (as cited in Debbie, 2007). Unless a student is able to participate in the natural use of the target language, she/he cannot be a fluent speaker of that language. It is claimed by Ho (2007) that “the more well defined the structure of authority in the schools and
class rooms the more students are discouraged from using the target language in an interactive and spontaneous manner”(p.21). Rogoff says that there should be a dialogic teacher-pupil relationship and the students must have an active role in negotiating the instructional process (as cited in Ho, 2007).

Another drawback with the ESL classroom talk is that it is teachers centered. As stated by Aslam (2008), a student hardly gets more than ten seconds to speak English in class out of the forty minutes period. The lack of exposure to English in classroom itself makes students incompetent in the language.

Apart from all these, certain phonetic features are problematic for the students learning English as a second language. These phonetic features make them unintelligible to their audience; consequently they prefer to remain silent. Shackle (1987) has discussed certain phonemes that have their equivalents in Indian languages, but there are some which cause problems in the articulation. Some of the phonetic problems are explained below:

- **Consonants:** Consonants like /p, b, g, m, n, j, h, s, f, v, t, d, z, k, l, ñ, r, tʃ, w, dʒ/ do not create much problem of intelligibility and articulation. However, Sounds like / z, ʒ, θ, ð/ cause problems of articulation. Consonants like / θ, ð/ are replaced by aspirated dental /tʰ/ and unaspirated /d/ respectively, which may cause problem of intelligibility at the national as well as international levels. Distinction between /v/ and /w/ is also not very clear with many of the ESL language users but they hardly affect listeners’ comprehension. However, substituting one consonant by another is the most problematic area which is discussed below:
1. /ʒ/ of *measure* is often replaced by /dʒ/ sound which confuses the listener. Thus *measure* becomes *major*. Sometimes /ʒ/ is also replaced by /z/ and *measure* becomes /meːzə/.

2. Most of the speakers from Bihar, Bengal and Gujarat interchange the use of /s/ and /ʃ/ sound. For example, the speaker intends to say “*she’s the one whom I saw at the sea shore*” will say /siː ɹən ai səʊ æt də fɜːr/. Thus the meaning comes out as *cease the one I saw at the sea shore*.

3. Sometimes /z/ is replaced by /dʒ/ by the speakers from Bihar and Bengal. For example /zest/ becomes /dʒest/.

4. /dʒ/ is used in place of /z/. For example *damage* becomes /dæmeʒ/.

5. Most of the Indian speakers use aspirated /pʰ/ instead of /f/ sound. For example *fool* becomes /pʰuːl/.

(Shackle, 1987; Shuja, 1995)

- Vowels also create much problem for the ESL learners, for instance there are certain vowel sounds that make Indian speech unintelligible and hence destroy their fluency. These are as follows:

  1. /e/ and /æ/ are often interchanged when they are used in English speech. For example: *bed* becomes /bæd/, *back* becomes /bek/ and *snacks* becomes /sneks/.

  2. Shortening of the long vowels. Example *seat* becomes /sit/.

  3. Elongation of the short vowels. Example *Delhi* becomes /deːli/.

  4. The diphthongs /ei/ and /əʊ/ are articulated as the monophthongs /e:/ and /oː/, respectively. Example *cake* /keɪk/ as /keːk/ and *boat* as /bəʊt/ as /boːt/.
5. /a:/ generally replaces the vowels /ə/ and /ɔː/. Example- ball becomes /ba:l/.

The above mentioned problems are mostly found in the speakers of Uttar Pradesh.

(Shackle, 1987; Shuja 1995)

- Consonant clusters: English language permits certain consonant clusters at the beginning and at the end of a word. But different languages have different rules for the consonant clusters. For example, English allows initial consonant cluster /sk, sp, st, sn, sm/ which Urdu language does not permit. This feature causes the hindrance in the English speech of Urdu speakers and thus they face embarrassment when exposed to native speakers of English or those which have near native like pronunciation in English. Epenthesis is the most common phenomenon found in the speech of many ESL learners. Due to unavailability of certain English consonant clusters in their mother tongue, they mispronounce the word. Example, insertion of vowel in consonant clusters. Class is mispronounced as /kila:s/, and bread is /bi:red/.

- Stress: It plays a vital role in conveying meaning. If a word is wrongly stressed, it may affect the listeners’ comprehension and the intended meaning of the speaker may get destroyed:

Example: The sentence “The doctor advised me operation (/ɒpə-rei- ʃn/).” Here the syllable /rei/ gets the primary stress. If the stress is wrongly placed on the syllable /ɒpə/ the word becomes oppression (/ɒp-re:- ʃn/). Hence the wrong stress pattern can lead to miscommunication. ESL speakers have the tendency to put the stress in words or sentences improperly because of the interference from the mother tongue which may follow different stress patterns. Thus, they cut a sorry figure among their target language audience.
Intonation: According to Shackle (1987),

The typical rising intonation of question in English is reserved for expressions of surprise in most South Asian languages. Their characteristic interrogative pattern, in which the end of a question is marked by a rise-fall in the intonation, is quite unlike the English norm, and can easily cause misunderstanding (p.232).

Thus, it can be said that correct intonation pattern should be executed in English speech so that the message gets conveyed successfully.

Hence, a sound knowledge of phonetics practiced with activities would be helpful to improve English speech. Further, Betty and Shekhtman (2005) have suggested some remedies that would improve and relax the anxious speakers of English. They are:

- Simplification: Use of short phrases and sentences are to be encouraged.
- Islands: Learning to speak on topics which are frequently used may help ESL learners to use English confidently.
- Focus on the known: Making the language work with the limited knowledge of that language would motivate the students to speak efficiently.

2.8 Literature Review

Quite a comprehensive research has been going on to innovate strategies to develop the oral fluency among ESL learners. It has been observed that ESL students are good enough in their writing skill, when compared to speaking skill. Keeping in mind the observation, many scholars are working on how to improve the oral fluency of ESL learners. Given below is a brief review available in the related area of research under study.
According to Swain (1985), a second language learner can achieve native speakers’ fluency in L2 when the learner is “pushed towards the delivery of the message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently and appropriately.” (as cited in Nation, 1989, p.378). Nation (1989) supports Maurice’s (1983) 4/3/2 technique to develop fluency because this technique leads to:

- Change in audience every time a person speaks.
- Repetition which helps them to access the language easily which has already been produced.
- Reducing time frame puts pressure on students to convey message in a precise and effective way.

Nation (1989) further states that this technique helps L2 learners to use many communication strategies while carrying out the tasks in L2. In this way, the learners learn to omit unnecessary words in repeated talks and also the frequency of false starts, repetitions and hesitations get reduced.

He also suggested games like Marketplace and Messenger. In Marketplace, students are asked to play the roles of sellers and buyers. Each seller has to deal with different buyers and convince them to buy the products. In this way a seller addresses different audiences with the same talk. Another game, Messenger, divides students into different groups, like there is one who describes ( describer), and then one who conveys the message (messenger) and the one who makes the pictures. Here, a student who plays the role of describer has some pictures to describe and it cannot be seen by others. A describer describes the picture to the messenger and the messenger goes to the maker and guides him to make the picture as explained by the describer. Hence the author insisted on adapting 4/3/2 technique while using fluency activities in the larger classroom.
To promote fluency, Nation (2003) suggests maximizing the use of second language in the classroom and at the same time also incorporating first language in the teacher talk to some extent. This can be done by carrying out managing the L2 classrooms which takes into account the following features:

- Telling the class what to do.
- Controlling behaviour of students.
- Explaining activities etc.

The author also states that before starting an activity in the classroom, a teacher should use L₁ to instruct them how to do an activity. This technique would ease out students’ cognitive load of what to speak and how to speak in the second language. Communication strategies also help to maintain fluency in the second language, because learners can paraphrase, practice circumlocution, etc. when they lack appropriate vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to express themselves (Brown, 2003). Tam (1997) in her article incorporates the teaching of suprasegmental elements (e.g. voice control, stress, pitch etc.) in a teaching program that is meant to develop fluency. The author conducted an experiment on the students from People’s Republic of China to develop their English speech where they were engaged in three components of activities. These components are as follows:

- Fluency Practise: The students were instructed to follow 4/3/2 technique while performing activities.
- Oral reading: The students were encouraged to read in order to practise the articulation of tough words and correct stress pattern. This also helped them produce appropriate rhythm in sentences and reading in “meaningful thought-groups” (p.26). This activity was carried out in groups. One member
used to read the text aloud and the others gave feedback on the comprehension of message, pronunciation etc.

- **Dialogue practice:** This practice used a lot of reduced forms such as contraction, elision, assimilation and reduction which are the characteristics of a natural and fluent talk. These phonological processes result in the fading of word boundaries, deletion of end vowels and consonants and substitution of elements within words.

Bresnihan and Stoops (1996) discussed three activities to promote fluency which can be quite effective in larger classrooms. These are:

- **Talking Zone:** The students are required to discuss with other students on the topic which has been covered in the classroom that day without looking into the written notes. The teacher has to create two zones i.e. non-talking zone and talking zone. The students keep all the written materials in the non-talking zone where students come for help when they feel that they are unable to talk in the talking zone. As the students have access to the materials, they feel less anxious and speak successfully.

- **Speaking Line:** Here students have “totally unscripted conversations on their own” (p. 30) and can have longer conversations with their partners, if they wish.

- **Conversation game:** The students are asked to discuss a topic in a group of four or five, only in English. The teacher provides some “game markers” (p. 30) like beads, buttons, sea shells etc. to each group. As a rule, each speaker of the group has to speak in English only, in order to get a game marker. And if any speaker uses any other language he has to put his earned mark back on the piles of markers. At the end of the game, one with the highest number of
the markers wins the game. Hence, in this game all the speakers of the same group monitor their own as well as others’ speech. The fear of being penalized and the happiness of being rewarded motivate the speakers of group to converse in English only.

Brumfit says that the activities for developing fluency in the classroom should incorporate “a pattern of language interaction within the classroom which is as close as possible to that used by competent performers in the mother tongue in normal life” (as cited in Nunan, 1989). Hedge (1993) mentions a list of criteria important for the activities that are to be practiced for developing fluency in a classroom as suggested by Brumfit. The list goes as follows:

- Activities should focus on meaning, not on the forms.
- Learners should actively determine the content of the activity.
- Activities should be so designed that they encourage speakers to negotiate meanings.
- All the four skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing should be duly given due importance.
- Teachers’ should not interfere too much to correct the errors of the learners as this diverts their attention from the actual message.

Another way to promote oral fluency is to make learners practise the speaking activities without putting any emphasis on the pace of their speaking. It is so because speech rate is not the prime marker of oral fluency. Speaking rate of non native speakers is somewhat slower than the native speakers (Munro & Derwing, 1998; Brown 2003). However, to communicate in English does not necessarily mean to communicate with the native speakers always, but ESL learners must be able to use
“accent and varieties of educated standard English” in order to be intelligible at the national and international levels. (Singh, 2005, p. 18-19)

According to Brown (2003), communicative language strategies can help learners communicate fluently with whatever proficiency they happen to have and at any given time, including the ability to use speed, pause and hesitations efficiently. He also maintains that:

...teachers must expand their traditional boundaries of accuracy to offer rules of appropriacy including knowledge of the communicative language tools students must be able to use, the communicative language choices they should make, and the communicative language strategies they must use to compensate for the fact that they, like all users of the language including native speakers, lack 100% knowledge of the language. (p. 2)

Brown (2003) emphasizes on the five points that can help the teachers to promote fluency in academics. These points are mentioned below:

- Motivating students to make constructive errors.
- Exposure of opportunities for students to practice a lot.
- Activities are to be designed in a way that requires students to get the message across.
- Focusing on students’ fluency rather than their accuracy.
- Talking openly to the students about fluency and convincing them so that they can actively participate in the teaching methods adopted to teach fluency. (p. 10)

Today much emphasis is placed on using communicative approach so as to develop fluency among learners because as Johnson states that “there is more to the business of communicating than the ability to produce grammatically correct utterances” (as cited
in Fysh, 1990, p. 20). Hence, tasks done in groups or pairs are preferred over the tasks done in isolation. But, Bresnihan & Stoops (1996) criticized group or pair work to some extent, believing that such activities done in group or pair are not so effective, as desired by the teachers in countries where they share a common tongue and have little or no exposure to English outside the class and they often end up chatting in their native language.

Kluge (2000) has talked about the benefits of partner taping which is done outside the classroom. Here, students record their conversation (done outside the classroom) with their partners and submit their recordings weekly to their teacher which is supposed to be their home assignment. In the classroom, the students are provided with two kinds of tape named as “Tape K” which is a “keepsake tape” and “Tape W”, a “working tape”. The students were required to submit their individual recordings on the side A of the Tape K at the beginning of the academic year and at the end of the academic year, they had to submit their recording on the side B of the Tape K. The Tape W was used to record their weekly free conversation with their partner, thus, at the end of the session, Tape K was used to judge their improvement in oral fluency using some measures of fluency. This method motivated them to actively participate in second language communication and shown some improvements and developments in the learners. The author has given a list of benefits of partner taping. These are:

- Students develop real fluency and ease in using English.
- Students nearly always stay in English while taping, as they are conscious of a listener.
- Students get hours of extra practice and a concrete record of their progress.
- Students have a concrete record of their progress.
Students gain a sense of responsibility for their progress beyond the classroom.

Teachers gain a better sense of who the students are and what their language problems may be.

Most students enjoy the taping and recognize its value.

The spirit of the school is transformed as hallways, lobbies and lounge areas fill up with students chatting in English.

(Kluge, 2000)

Pair-taping suggested by Schneider (2001) made learners to make recording of their speech in pairs in the language laboratory. The students had a choice, either to attend the class once a week or make recording of their conversation with their pair on any topic for the same time as allotted for the class. The students who opted for pair-taping were more benefited than those who chose to attend class. In the words of Schneider (2001):

Pair taping learners reported greater quantitative increases than classroom learners in self-confidence and improvement (in expectancy and achievement), in enjoyment and wanting to improve (in intrinsic valuing and desire to achieve), and in relaxation and ease of speaking. (p. 21)

Gonzalez (2000) says that use of stories and narrative discourse structures also enhance fluency, because there are some patterns which are repeated in stories. The author also mentions a model of story grammar that could be used in the second language classroom. The model is as follows:
Developing vocabulary that is appropriate in its context of use is another technique that helps to articulate fluently (Brown 2003; Lennon, 2000). Even teaching the expressions as a whole helps the students to speak language confidently, (Gonzalez, 2000). Qi (2003) suggests activity which is based on movies to develop oral fluency of English learners, because they are rich in idiomatic expressions. The activity suggested by the author progressed in a way that allows students to imitate first, then repeat and at last use English creatively.

Further, it has been suggested by Singh (2005) that the use of referential questions (‘how’ and ‘why’ questions) and inferential questions (where opinion can lead to a discussion of opinions) instead of display questions may enhance the communicative proficiency of the learners of English.

According to Larsen (2012), students’ training in fluency should take into account both the engagement of students in certain behaviour and avoidance of some other. Despite the subjectivity in the nature of fluency, it has been claimed that this notion can be taught (ibid). The author has further stressed the point that fluency can be gained with the help of confined language resources available in the mental map of the students. It can be done by nurturing autonomy in their speech. Autonomy as explained by Larsen (2012) is as follow:

In terms of the development of fluency in the classroom, it may be useful to see students as doers, that is, people who are trying to use their existing
language resources to the best effect to achieve real world communicative goals. Autonomy in doing is the sense in which autonomy is here used. (p. 62)

Morgan (2012) has emphasized on the use of oral poster presentation as an efficient strategy to develop fluency. The author has justified this technique of fluency development in the words:

Oral poster presentations, now commonplace in EFL classrooms (Bayne, 2005), along with the linked skills tasks that scaffold the target task, can neatly encompass the above oral fluency development criteria. Such speaking presentations can not only improve oral proficiency, but careful topic choice and timing of engaging themes within a classroom syllabus can also lead to knowledge fluency. (p. 167)

Citing Kellem’s (2009), Morgan (2012) in her article has mentioned seven principles that should be taken account when designing and carrying activities for fluency development. These are as follow:

1. Incorporate repetition
2. Increase speaking time
3. Prepare before speaking
4. Use familiar and motivating topics
5. Ensure appropriate level
6. Impose time limits
7. Teach formulaic sequences

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the importance of fluency development in second language learning. It has attempted to define the term fluency from the point of views of various
scholars. It has also touched upon the factors related to the concept of fluency. This chapter ends with a review of research carried out in the area of developing fluency.