

SOCIAL USE OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE



What is social use of speech and language?

This is about how we use speech and language differently in different situations.

It is about knowing what to say, how to say it and when to say it. It is also about following rules of talking together.

1. Knowing what to say

This is about using different words and sentences for different things. For example, if we are **asking** someone for something we might say, “Can I have it?” But if we are **ordering** the person we might say, “Give it to me!”

2. Knowing how to say things

This is about knowing how to say something depending on the situation. For example, we don’t usually talk to a small child in the same way we talk to an adult. We use different speech and language. We usually use simpler words and sentences when talking to a child.

Another example is a child talking at school. The child will talk one way to the teacher in the classroom. They will talk another way in the playground to their friends. For example, they might say “Thank you” to their teacher. But they might say “Ta!” to their friends.

3. Knowing when to say things

This is about knowing the right time to say things. For example, if someone’s pet has just died this is probably not the right time to tell jokes about animals. They might get upset.

Another example is chatting with our friends. It is OK to do this in a café but not in a cinema.

4. Following rules of talking together

There are some rules that we must follow when talking with other people. For example, we must take turns in a conversation and not talk all the time.

Another example is explaining what we are talking about. So, if I just launch in and say, “It was great!” this might be confusing. You won’t know what I’m talking about. But if I explain things first by saying “I went to the park today” this makes it easier to understand.

Is social use of speech and language called anything else?

- The social use of speech and language is also called **pragmatics**.

Using social speech and language successfully

1. We must **know what to say**. We must use language for different things. For example, either asking someone for something or ordering them to give it to you.
2. We must **know how to say things**. We must change our speech and language in different situations. For example, we should be able to talk differently to a friend than to a teacher or our boss.
3. We must **know when to say things**. For example, we must realise that it is not right to be chatting when our teacher or boss is talking.

We must **follow rules of talking together**. For example, we should take turns and explain what we are talking about.