Conversation gambits for oral exams

1) Placeholders – devices when you are at a loss for words or need time
   - uh what’s-her-name / what’s-her-face/
   - uh thingy / thingumajig / thingymabob/ whachamacallit /what-d’you-call-it
   - uh hang on
   - uh well
   - uh it’s on the tip of my tongue
   - uh, wait a minute
   - uh, just a second
   - well, let me think
   - how shall I put it?
   - well, that’s a good question

2) Repair – devices for correcting yourself
   - I mean
   - what I mean is
   - let me put it this/another way
   - what I’m saying is
   - what I’m trying to say is
   - let me rephrase what I’ve just said

3) Repetition request – devices for getting the other person to repeat
   - repeat what the other person said with a question intonation
   - she did what? / he went where? / they are going when?
   - the what?
   - what was that again?
   - sorry, I didn’t catch that / the last part
   - sorry, I didn’t get the bit about…
   - would you mind repeating that?
   - can you repeat that please?
   - sorry, you’ve lost me
   - sorry, I don’t follow you
   - sorry, what did you say?
   - pardon?
   - aye? (informal)

4) Comprehension check – devices for checking whether the other person is following
   - you see?
   - you know what I mean?
   - you know
   - are you still with me?
   - is that clear?

5) Backchannel – showing the other person that you are following their words
   - right
   - I see
   - yeah
   - uhm