



RECEPTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE SKILLS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this article is to discuss receptive and productive skills in teaching process as they are very essential part of teaching.

KEY WORDS: receptive skill, productive skill, teaching.

Since language learning is one of the most pressing issues of today, we can see that many educational and organizational activities are being carried out today to teach foreign languages. As language is one of the most important factors of human development, it is becoming vitally important day by day.

For this reason, linguists and Methodists approach this issue separately.

When learning foreign languages, we come across "receptive" and "productive" skills. So what are they? What skills are called receptive and what are productive? It is no exaggeration to say that the answer to these questions is the main goal of our thesis.

Reading and listening involve receiving information and so they are called the receptive skills. Speaking and writing are known as the productive skills because they involve producing words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. The four types of communication skills that are taught in an English language classroom are speaking, writing, reading and listening. These four separate language skills are also commonly referred to as the productive and receptive skills. So, speaking and writing are known as the productive skills as they both require some form of language output, while reading and listening are known as the receptive skills. Alternatively, we may also find the productive skills referred to as the active skills and the receptive skills referred to as the passive skills. It is up to the situation.

Actually, Reading and listening involve receiving information, as a result, they are called as the receptive skills. Speaking and writing are known as the productive skills because they involve producing words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs by personally being based on the mind of the speaker.

It is important to consider each skill when teaching a foreign language. Because if we approach each ability with special attention, the educational process will be effective. Reading aids in improving grammar and vocabulary skills while listening aids in understanding a language better. Furthermore these skills aid in the use of productive skills meaning that all skills form a unity when used equally, thus, resulting in more smoothly and easily of learning a language. In





order to develop productive skills, before giving such assignments, the teacher should try to develop the thinking speed of the students. That is, various interactive methods can be used to develop writing and speaking. Then it would be appropriate to give Speaking or Writing assignments.

For the experiment, we could use the following exercises:

- 1) Students can be shown pictures representing different content and asked to describe the picture first;
- 2) They recall the terms related to this topic through illustration. Of course, this will increase vocabulary;
- 3) We can say that teaching students to find the opposite and similar aspects of two pictures and asking them which one they prefer will also expand their thinking. For instance, let's look at the two pictures which are describing city centre and countryside:



By describing these two pictures, students can gather in their minds the words that describe "city" and "countryside" and recall their characteristics. This is a very useful exercise for speaking practice, and you can also ask the students various questions after describing the picture. For example:

1. Where do you prefer to live city or village?
2. What are the advantages of living in the city?
3. What are the disadvantages of residing in the downtown?
4. What are the advantages of living in the village?
5. What are the disadvantages of living in the village?
6. Have ever been to village/city?
7. Which place is quieter village or city? And many other types of questions can be given being based on the pictures.

While having a little discussion with these questions, students can warm up their minds and create English atmosphere in the class.

We often call these prewriting strategies "brainstorming techniques." Five useful strategies are listing, clustering, and free writing, looping, and asking the six



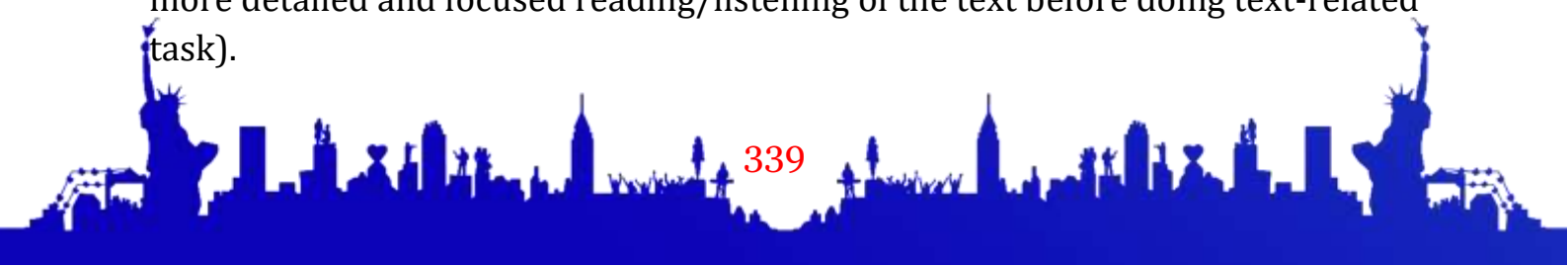


journalists' questions. These strategies help you with both your invention and organization of ideas, and they can aid you in developing topics for writing.

As already mentioned in the introduction, receptive language skills consist of the abilities to successfully read and listen, and consequently comprehend a foreign language. Since nobody is born with these abilities, these skills have to be learned and mastered. Even listening, which seems an obvious inborn ability, must be learned too. An act of listening cannot be compared merely to "tape-recording", as Nunan nicely portrays, but has to be actively engaged and aimed to comprehension and storing of meaning. At this point, we need to stress the importance of comprehensible input. Comprehensible input, whether it is oral or written, cannot be just any stream of sounds we hear or words we read, it is an input we clearly understand and are able to reproduce. Then is when real learning takes place.

When we talk about the teaching of receptive skills, we have to point out that there is a basic methodology for teaching both listening and reading (Harmer, 270). For both types of input, students have a choice between listening or reading superficially, with the aim of comprehending a general idea of the text, and listening or reading carefully, with the focus on the search for the specifically required information. These are two different skills and need to be equally practiced. Teachers hence have a responsibility to develop both of the skills of their students. Harmer further on suggests a few basic steps related to teaching practice, which can be seen in Figure 1. The steps for teaching receptive skills are as following:

- leading-in (which means introducing students to the topic of the text, activating their background knowledge, and asking them to predict what the text is going to be about),
- directing comprehension tasks (which means asking students to try to comprehend the general idea)
- providing text or tape for students to read/listen,
- directing feedback (which means e.g. dividing students in pairs or smaller groups to go through answers together; the teacher informs them about the level of their accomplishment while focusing on the positive things)
- directing text-related task (which means questioning students about the content or some language aspects of the text)
- repeating of the process (this step is optional, but welcome, and includes more detailed and focused reading/listening of the text before doing text-related task).





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