

Receptive Skills

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Abstract: The training of reading and listening ability is very important in a comprehension lesson of English as a second language teaching. It refers to some factors, for example, inherent in the reading and listening material (its linguistic difficulties, contents, length and types), some are presented on the students (their motivation and level). The receptive skills of listening and reading is different in many ways, the essay provides a basic model and specific activities for teaching and organizing them.

Keywords: Second language acquisition; Receptive skill

1. Concept of the receptive skills

In the second language acquisition, there are four skills to obtain, listening, reading, writing and speaking. The receptive skills, in terms of literal, it is a kind of input hypothesis. Listening and reading are kinds of forms of input. In other words, their main purpose is receiving the information of the second language. Susan Gass and Alison Mackey (2005) pointed that Input refers to language that is available to the learner through any medium (listening, reading, or gestural in the case of sign language). And all theories of second language learning recognize the significance of input as a basic component in the acquisition process. Ferguson's original works in this regard, input forms the positive evidence that learners use as they construct their second language grammars, many researchers have attempted to characterize and describe the input that learner receive. However, receptive skills are not only receiving but also language processing. In other words, through language use as well as exposure to input. Susan Gass and Alison Mackey (2005) claimed that conversational interaction, along with input, is central to the interaction approach to understanding SLA. Interaction is believed to be helpful in exchanges between learners.^[1]

Receptive skills can follow a cycle, the start of the cycle is from leading in to pre-task work, then to do the task and go to the text, next waiting for the feedback, finally go back to the task again. In a receptive skills lesson, it is divided seven stages:

Building interest in the topic of the text

Pre- teach some vocabulary if necessary

Set a gist, scanning or listening for specific information task

Learners read or listen and compare answers then check the answers with teacher

Set an intensive reading or listening task

Do the stage 4 again

Set an extension activity (reaction/speaking/writing)

According to Jeremy Harmer (1998, p.270), a typical procedure for getting students to read a written text or listen to a recording involves both Type1 and Type2 tasks. Type1 tasks are those where students do not need details rather reading or listening for some general understanding. Type2 tasks, focus on looking for more detail, such as specific information or for language points. The procedure for teaching receptive skills generally starts with a lead in. That means when a teacher teaches the receptive skills, they provoke students to get in touch with that knowledge, they can predict what a text is likely to be about, and what they are going to see or hear. Once students are ready to read and listen, teachers set kinds of a comprehension task so that they will read and listen in a general way. After the lead in, teacher directs comprehension task, students read and listen for task, then teacher gives the feedback. Generally, students were suggested go through the answers in pairs or small groups, they can get more opportunities to work together. Jeremy Harmer (1998, p271) claimed that sometimes the teacher directs a text- related task immediately this Type 1 task has been completed. Then students got involved in looking at the text again for a Type 2 task in which they are required to examine it in more detail. They repeated the comprehension cycle. However, the difficulty of the text is longer words and longer sentences, also the number of unfamiliar words which a text contains.^[2]

Having outlined the basic concepts involved in the receptive skills to second language acquisition, we turn now to a discussion of how reading and listening skills are considered to be receptive skills.

2. Concept of Reading Skills

There are four main stages in reading skills: prediction, read for gist, scanning, intensive reading task. In order to engage students' interests, they are encouraged to predict before reading. Then they are asked for doing extensive reading task: skimming to get the

gist and scanning to obtain the details. And intensive reading task for the specific information during the reading. According to Jeremy Harmer, to get maximum benefit from their reading, students need to be involved in both extensive and intensive reading. The importance of the extensive reading is to develop students' word recognition. But it is not enough to tell students to read a lot. They should be given the appropriate material which they can understand to read, this means that students at the appropriate level can read them easily and confidently. Intensive reading tasks might be effectively if students are willing to find out the specific information. Jeremy Harmer also demonstrated that students are far more likely to be engaged in a text if they bring their own knowledge and interests to the task, rather than only responding to someone else's ideas of what they should find out.^[3]

In the reading sequences, after the prediction, reading for gist and details, students are asked to compare their ideas with others, this process is not only input, but also language processing. Teacher may get students to read texts for communicative purposes as part of other activities, as sources of information, or in order to identify specific uses of language.

3. Concept of Listening Skills

Listening skills consist of extensive and intensive listening. It is important skill because it provides the perfect opportunity to hear voice other than the teacher's, so they can improve their pronunciation, this is an evidence that the appropriate input can promote the language output. Like extensive reading, extensive listening can also have a dramatic effect on language learning. While intensive listening, teachers rely on records materials to provide a significant source of language input. When students do the listening tasks, the record material should not be play once, it should be replayed over and over again until students have already got the specific information which they are asked to find out. This can make students get the maximum benefit from listening. John Field suggests, students get far more benefits from a lot of listening than they do from a long pre- listening phase followed by only one or two exposure to the listening text (Field 1988a, 2000b). In this process, students get the information of the target language and know the clear clue about what they are going to listen. That is to say, after the instruction of the task, they will communicate with other students about the topic, and also teacher will give the feedback, it is a process of acquiring the target language. Nunan (1989:194) also stresses that it is carried out meaningful tasks if the activity involves oral communication. However, this might be a time-consuming process and dangerous of wasting time on useless repetition.^[4]

4. Conclusion

The essay has sought to how the reading and listening skills are considered to be receptive skills, and give the analysis of the appropriate activities which refer to reading and listening skills. As it mentioned before, receptive skills are not only receiving the target language, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, but also a process of language acquisition, it is also an interactive skill. On the other words, Susan Gass (2005) pointed out that interaction approach considers input, output and feedback on production. And reading and listening is kinds of input, but when students do the tasks, they also get involved in the language using. They have to do some preparation for the task, pre-reading task and pre-listening task make them communicate with others and feedback from teacher, after reading the whole article, they will use the target form to complete the question, all of these are a process of acquiring the target language.

References:

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