Integrating Receptive Skills and Productive Skills into a Reading Lesson

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ABSTRACT

English teachers in Indonesia have been familiar with the notion of receptive skills (reading and listening) and of productive skills (speaking and writing). Most of them, however, have not realised that integrating receptive and productive skills into an English lesson is important for their students to achieve lesson aims. This paper will address how to implement teaching stages covering those skills in a reading lesson. The writer will elaborate the teaching stages which include eliciting ideas, highlighting lexis and their meanings, predicting text, ordering jumbled paragraphs, listening, reading comprehension, and acting out the story/speaking. The writer expects the audience to realise that integrating receptive and productive skills into an English lesson is feasible and valuable to measure whether or not the students have achieved the lesson aims.

Keywords: lesson aims, integrated English lesson, receptive skills, productive skills

1   Introduction

The receptive skills are listening and reading. Because learners do not need to produce language to do these, they receive and understand it. These skills are sometimes known as passive skills. They can be contrasted with the productive or active skills of speaking and writing. Often in the process of learning new language, learners begin with receptive understanding of the new items, then later move on to productive use. The relationship between receptive and productive skills is a complex one, with one set of skills naturally supporting another. For example, building reading skills can contribute to the development of writing (http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/knowledge-wiki/receptive-skills).

To provide a clear example of teaching receptive skills, the writer will elaborate one of his taught lessons. It was aimed at assisting the students to better able to use *There isn't/aren't* and *Is/Are there?* in the context of things around classroom. First of all, the writer set up a listening activity and ask the students to fill the gaps by using *There isn't/aren't* and *Is/Are there?*. This introduced the pupils indirectly to some examples containing those forms without making them a conscious focus. This '*inductive learning*' is more interesting and natural than '*deductive learning,* in which learners are presented with rules with which they then go on to apply'. It 'pays dividend in terms of the long-term memory of these rules' (Thornbury, 2006, p.102).

Afterwards, the writer took some sentences from the listening task to highlight the form. Then, the students practiced *Is/Are there? Yes, there is/are* and *No, there isn't/aren't* in pairs by asking and answering questions about what was in their partners' bag. This productive stage is valuable in providing more opportunities for them to get more language exposure and practice (Moon, 2005). It would engage the learners talking to one

another to exchange information communicatively. They talk in order to communicate, not just to practice the language (Spratt, et al., 2005).

2   Receptive Skills

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3   Productive Skills

The productive skills are speaking and writing, because learners doing these need to produce language. They are also known as active skills. They can be compared with the receptive skills of listening and reading. Learners have already spent time practicing receptive skills with a shape poem, by listening to it and reading it. They now move on to productive skills by group writing their own, based on the example. Certain activities, such as working with literature and project work, seek to integrate work on both receptive and productive skills (http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/knowledge-wiki/productive-skills).

Similar to the previous section, the writer will elaborate one of his taught lessons in order to give a clear illustration of teaching productive skills. The lesson aimed at helping the students understand and use *determiners: this/that/these/those* in relation with things around classroom. At first, the writer set up a listening activity in which the learners circle the correct answer based on conversations. Afterwards, the writer will play another cassette that focus on pronunciation *this/that/these/those, What's that?, What's this?, What are these?* and *What are those?*. The first listening task provided the students

opportunities to notice the determiners used in real conversational contexts, whereas the second helped them practice saying those determiners and expressions with correct pronunciation.

For productive skill, the writer then set up a pair speaking activity in which the students practiced *What's that?, What's this?, What are these?* and *What are those?*. In this activity, the pupils found the objects in the pictures on the left and test his/her partner about the objects. In the final stage, the writer extended their speaking practice by asking them to point to things in the classroom and ask his/her partner about the things. This extra oral practice potentially supported the previous speaking task. This is in line with Lightbown and Spada's ideas (2003) that the more the students are provided with extra oral practice of a language form, the more they will be able to produce the form communicatively.

4   Integrating Receptive and Productive Skills

Integrating receptive and productive skills in one lesson has attracted language teachers for years. Yet, there is no absolute format for the integrated lesson lessons. The underlying principles being that language is used to learn as well as to communicate and that it is the subject matter which determines the language that students need to learn. It should also attempt to follow the 4Cs curriculum in that it includes content, communication, cognition and culture, and includes elements of all four language skills. Furthermore, in the integrated lesson, learning is improved through increased motivation and the study of natural language seen in context. When learners are interested in a topic they are motivated to acquire language to communicate. In this case, fluency is more important than accuracy and errors are a natural part of language learning. So, learners develop fluency in English by using English to communicate for a variety of purposes (Darn, 2006).

As stated in the introduction, to carry out the integrated lesson the writer will apply teaching stages covering those skills. For practical reasons, the writer will apply the stages in a reading lesson. This is in line with Thornburry's view (2006) and Darn's (2006) that the most common opportunities to exploit four skills in English learning arise through reading texts. In this case, the int egrated lesson draws on the lexical approach, encouraging learners to notice language while reading followed by activities involving the other three skills. As a result, teachers can potentially diversify methods and forms of classroom teaching and learning, improve learners' overall and specific language competence, introduce learners' to the wider cultural context, and increase learners' motivation.

More specifically, the teaching stages which utilises a reading text **(please see the reading material on the appendix/the last page of this article)** include:
(1)   Eliciting ideas
    a)   Ask students if there is a baby in their family. How would you feel if someone stole their baby? What would they do? Why do people steal babies?
    b)   Dictate words from the reading text about the King and the Baby: woman, baby, dead, exchange, steal, insist, settle the matter, sword, divide, give.
      The objective of this stage is to introduce the topic of the story to students to help them relate more easily to the characters and action in the text.
(2)   Highlighting lexis and their meanings/Vocabulary
    a)   Check meaning of any words that may cause difficulty.

e.g. -sword/divide (show/draw a picture/symbol and ask what is this?)

-exchange/stal (act out with another student by exchanging pens or stealing something from someone when they are not looking)

-settle the matter (describe a short situation where two people are angry about something then they find a solution)

The objectives of this stage are to focus attention on key words in order to prepare students for the prediction task and to check meanings of key words given so that the task can be achieved.

(3)   Giving the title of the story

Give students the title of the story they will read: *The King and the Baby*

The objective of this stage is to prepare students mentally for the prediction task.

(4)   Predicting text

a) Put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to predict the story based on the words given

b) Ask few students to tell the class their ideas

The objective of this stage is to prepare students mentally to read the text by creating a version of the text first in their minds.

(5)   Ordering jumbled paragraphs/Skimming

a) Hand out cut up version of the text

b) Ask students to skim the story and order the paragraphs

c) Ask them what they looked for to help them decide on the order of the paragraphs

The objectives of this stage are to apply group work in order to negotiate meaning and to do skimming.

(6)   Listening for the right order

Play a cassette telling the right order of the story and ask students whether or not their prediction is correct.

The objective of this stage is to provide the correct order and a reason for gist reading

(7)   Reading comprehension

Ask some short questions based on the story

The objective of this stage is to focus on overall meaning or main ideas in the text.

(8)   Acting out the story/Speaking

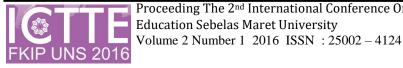Put students into groups of 3, one person for each character in the story

The objective of this stage is to measure students' comprehension in a fun, non verbal way.

(Adapted from CELTT 1 Handbook. 2008. Indonesia: LAPIS-ELTIS Project; Masduqi, 2014)

5   CONCLUSION

By applying teaching stages above, the writer expects the audience to realise that integrating receptive and productive skills into an English lesson is feasible and valuable for the sake of the development of students' English skills. Indeed, this is not an easy task to do because we have to make sure that the integrated lesson is reasonably inter-related and suitable to the students' level and needs.

We also need to balance the receptive and productive skills and vary the activities in order to teach the lessons interactively as well as to achieve the aims of the lessons.

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