



INTERTWINING RELATIONSHIP AMONG BASIC LANGUAGE SKILLS: AN ANALYTICAL UNDERSTANDING

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Abstract: This analytical study is an attempt to project the interrelationship amongst language skills that is usually seen singly. Through a long-observed classroom experience and real-life interaction, it must be pronounced that language skills do have complimentary attributes for harmonious production, reception and function of language acts. It is found that the basic skills of any language – L S R W have their own individual stand with their respective sub-skills; but, when we perceive language as a whole production of certain basics, we can apparently assert how one skill affects the other and consequently to another and the other ways round. Therefore, their relationship cannot be separately seen rather intertwiningly as a whole.

Index Terms: basic language skills, complimentary function, intertwining relations

I. INTRODUCTION

Naturally, language has an ability to create an impact in human communication and existence. It is also found that in the non-human living beings, though the degree is less, communication happens. It is the source of logic and rationality. And also it is the source of emotion that binds humans with relationship building. The following are the examples of the living world's communication.

i. When a dog barks 'bow-wow', the other dogs in and around gathers together. This paralinguistic feature of the so-called unsocial living beings helps them transfer their message and get together to defend against their enemy. It furthers their relationship, their love and affection too.

ii. The Stimulus-Response theory in behavioural psychology of learning also gives the glimpse on the communicative function of the 'bell' and the 'dog's salivation'. When the bell rings the dog responds through salivation. This associative connection between the two implies that communication takes its place.

iii. When a baby takes birth it starts crying. The cry gives a message to the neighbour that a baby is born to the mother. So they reach the parents to greet and congratulate.

The above instances make it clear that every time the living animals – be it social or wild, communicate to help each other staying together. Therefore, language – verbal and/or non-verbal becomes the medium of such communication. It is the means of discovery and innovation. It helps to explore the physical self and the metaphysics thus.

In the human verbal communication repertoire four major language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing - LSRW) play their vital role. These skills cannot stand alone. If they do, the impact is negligible. So, they rely on each other to stand communicative, effective and transformative.

II. OBJECTIVES

This exploration will enable you to –

- Understand the meaning of language skills;
- Differentiate between receptive and productive skills;
- Realize the interrelationship of the skills – L S R W and their complimentary nature.

III. LANGUAGE SKILLS

A skill is an ability to do a task or job well. It refers to an ability of human being essentially. And, language is a means of communicating that ability. So, putting them together, language skill is the ability to communicate well through a language. A user well-versed with the skills of a language wins every game of communication. S/he becomes an effective communicator.

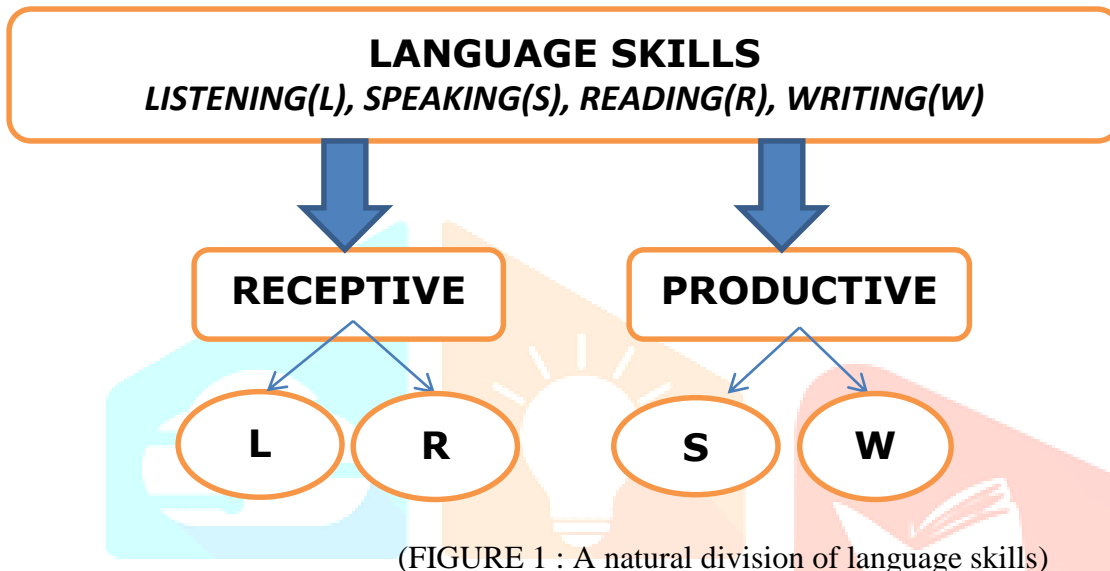
The means of communication called language can be verbal or non-verbal or both. The verbal ability in communication incorporates “four skills” – listening, speaking, reading and writing which are of paramount importance (Brown, 2007). When a child takes birth, s/he starts crying generally. This cry (natural sounds) is unintentional on the part of the baby. However, this cry gets meaning variedly to people in due course. It gradually is shaped to the communicative activity producing ‘maa’ for mother, ‘paa’ for father, ‘humma’ for cow, ‘uuuuu...’ for dog, and the like that culturally and socially varies. These paralinguistic aspects of communication gets into linguistic elements and morphology like mother, father, cow, dog... This happens due to the artificial shaping of sounds through listening to words and to the referred. Eventually the child learns to speak, read and write.

IV. TYPES OF LANGUAGE SKILLS

The language skills are receptive and productive in nature. The receptive skills are the listening (L) and the reading (R) skills. Receptive skills input the information to be processed. For instance, a new-born baby is instructed to imitate and utter ‘maa’. The sounds of the word ‘maa’ get through the ear to the brain and memory of the child in due course and, as a result, the child imitates and utters the word ‘maa’ in course of time. The instructor (the mother) produces some sounds like ‘maa’ to be followed. Similarly, while reading a piece of information or a text, the reader takes the information into his brain and memory through the eyes for comprehension and reproduction which eventually lead through productive skills.

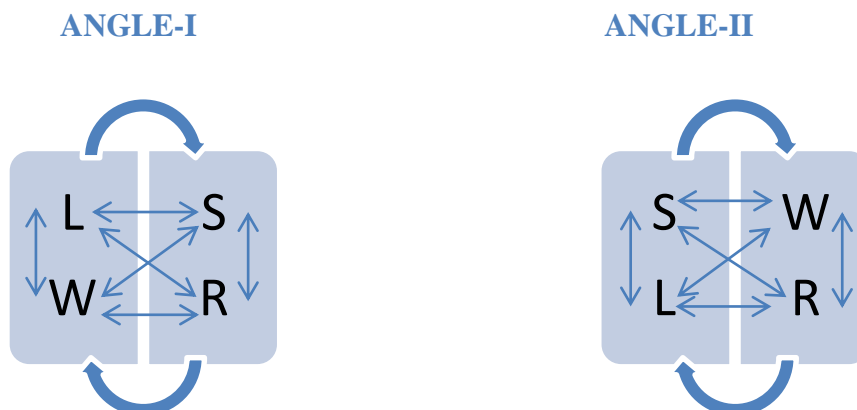
The productive skills - speaking(S) and writing(W) work correspondingly. The speaker(child) through the listened and encoded memory utters the words like 'maa', 'paa' out. In course of time, the child produces meaningful and longer utterances. In the case of writing, the child imitates and copies the shape and size of the letters and figures to be produced. S/he writes on the shapes given and keeps it on. In the course, it gets into her/his writing memory through his sense of touch and hands and fingers. The user of a language learns these skills in formal setting to be productive and effective. So, s/he speaks and writes to convey his message thus.

Look at the following (Figure No. 1) on the natural division of language skills.



V. INTERTWINING LANGUAGE SKILLS

There is an intertwining complex relationship among all the four basic language skills. Looking, from the Angle-I in the following Figure No. 2, at the interrelationship, L influences S, R, and W; S to R, W, and L, and vice versa in all the other cases. In the same way, Angle-II projects the relationship. That is why, it is difficult to demarcate the separation of the influence of one skill to the other and vice versa. So, the integration of language skills is genetically essential to strengthen any other language skill. Brown(2007) emphasizes **whole language** approach in language teaching as very often one skill will reinforce another.



We cannot say that Speaking as a language skill can be taught alone. One cannot stand alone without the help of the other. “It makes little sense to talk about skills in isolation since, as Eli Hinkel points out, in meaningful communication, people employ incremental language skills not in isolation, but in tandem”(Harmer, 2007).

VI. OVERVIEW

Language is, hence, a complex phenomenon and its skills form an inseparable network. A language skill is the ability to communicate well in a language. Every language has four basic language skills. The four language skills – L, S, R, W – have an intertwining relationship that influence each other for a sensible and impactful language act. Thus, Listening and Reading are called receptive skills as they input and are receiving in nature, and Speaking and Writing are productive as they output and are producing in nature.

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