

WHY WE UNDERSTAND MORE THAN WE SPEAK: THE NATURAL ORDERS OF LANGUAGE

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Annotation. In any language acquisition, most learners excel in receptive skills—listening and reading—quickly compared to improving in productive skills, such as speaking and writing. This article explores the main reasons why language learners are faced with this imbalance—that one is superior to the other. In many language proficiency tests, applicants score higher results in reading and listening as they understand well enough; however, balancing the language abilities through speaking and writing seems almost impossible. In turn, this phenomenon creates a paradox in language acquisition: understanding language, mainly listening to real-life conversation or reading, is often prioritized over the ability to express thoughts and use them productively. This study aims to address the notable factors that cause the discrepancy, including cognitive processing, input-output load, and the role of teaching that helps to bring balance to skill development.

Keywords: receptive skills, productive skills, language acquisition, input, output, teaching, learning, language proficiency tests

Annotatsiya. Har qanday tilni o'zlashtirish jarayonida ko'pchilik o'quvchilar qabul qiluvchi ko'nikmalar — eshitish va o'qish —ni ishlab chiqaruvchi ko'nikmalarga, ya'ni gapirish va yozishga qaraganda tezroq va osonroq egallaydi. Ushbu maqola til o'rganuvchilar duch keladigan ushbu nomutanosiblikning asosiy sabablarini o'rganadi: nimaga bir ko'nikma boshqasidan ustunroq bo'ladi? Ko'plab til bilim darajasini aniqlovchi testlarda ishtirokchilar aynan o'qish va eshitish bo'yicha yuqori ball to'plashadi, chunki ular tilni yaxshi tushunadilar; biroq, gapirish va yozish orqali til ko'nikmalarini muvozanatlashtirish deyarli imkonsizdek tuyuladi. Natijada, bu holat til o'zlashtirishda bir paradoksnı yuzaga keltiradi: tilni tushunishga (xususan, real hayotdagi suhbatlarnı eshitish yoki matnlarnı o'qishga) ustuvorlik beriladi, biroq fikrni ifodalash va uni amalda ishlab chiqish ikkinchi o'ringa tushib qoladi. Ushbu tadqiqot ushbu tafovutga sabab bo'luvchi asosiy omillarnı, jumladan, kognitiv jarayonlar, kirish–chiqish yuklamasi va o'qitishdagi yondashuvlarnı tahlil qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: qabul qiluvchi ko'nikmalar, ishlab chiqaruvchi ko'nikmalar, tilni o'zlashtirish, kirish ma'lumotlari, chiqish ma'lumotlari, o'qitish, o'rganish, til bilim darajasi testlari

Introduction

Learning a language is a complex journey that includes much more than relying on vocabulary memorization or grammatical rules. In the essence of

language acquisition, refining the true meaning of learning languages for many learners has been mastering a language in four crucial skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking —the basis for any language. In turn, they are combined and categorized into groups as they share the same nuances: receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (writing and speaking). Together, they form the basis of communicative competence in any language (Nation, 2007). Moreover, when it comes to mastering a language, all of them are highly influenced by grammatical accuracy and vocabulary range —the basis of a language. However, in most cases — either self-study or tutor-based learning — many candidates tend to excel in receptive skills quickly and much more easily compared to productive skills. For instance, in many language proficiency tests, it is often observed that almost all of the applicants score higher results in both listening and reading while struggling in writing and speaking. This particular phenomenon shows that many language learners may understand spoken or written texts but find challenges to express themselves. After all, it creates an imbalance in the learning sphere that needs to be addressed. This issue is supported by standardized testing systems where having such higher results in receptive skills over productive ones. (Swain, 1985). This article explores the reasons for these results in imbalanced learning. It compares pedagogical, cognitive, and input-output learning ways to investigate causes and suggests methods to reduce the gap. Drawing from personal experiences of learning multiple languages as a student majoring in English language and literature, I have witnessed the imbalance not only in the aged sphere but also in real-life communication.

A core principle in second language acquisition is that receptive skills—listening and reading — develop faster than productive ones—speaking and writing. This idea is strongly supported by Stephen Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1985), which points out that “language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence ($i+1$).” In its turn, this is a message for every single person who is learning a new language. Moreover, learners should first receive the language through listening— a basic skill that is often improved by listening to spoken texts in either communication or podcasts— or reading written texts; however, then they may process the language through these skills that were mentioned before producing. There is another Krashen emphasis on language input: “We acquire language not by speaking it but by understanding input” (Krashen, 1981), directly addressing productive skills as the result of acquisition rather than a cause. This theory provides a clear explanation of mastering a language: learners who strongly develop their comprehension will be fluent speakers and writers. Additionally, all of these have found their results in real-life conversation and language proficiency tests as well; moreover, only those who have mastered receptive skills better understand the fundamentals of productive skills and use them in practices.

Strongly supporting Krashen's views Paul Nation (2007) also points to the role of input, addressing "learners need large amounts of comprehensible input through listening and reading to develop fluency." It is concrete that without this input, it is impossible for learners to build a strong system of grammar and vocabulary to develop output. In addition, whatever needs to be produced should have been received first. That is why, it is often observed some of the skills emerge quickly while others take time.

Furthermore, other scholars have been on the same page when it comes to the process why output slows down. Jim Cummin's (2000) theory of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) explains why that conversational skills often improve slightly slower and takes time. This is heavily relied on exposure of speaking and writing instead focusing on listening tasks and reading texts. Cognitive semantics is demanding when it comes to the use of productive skills, as this process often faces procrastination due to heavy input. Many language learners cannot balance the load that they get, so they usually go for listening tasks or reading texts in language classes, which delays the improvement of productive skills. Learners get less practice in speaking and writing — the main reason to slow down the essential skills — and let them stay underdeveloped as students less emphasize their importance. Based on classification of classroom observations and second language learning theories, this article suggests ways to reduce the gap in unbalanced learning development and develop all the essential skills to master the language not only for academic language acquisition but also for general usage. Lack of productive practices and one-skill-based instructions highlight the importance of the theme of improving real-world language competence.

Conclusion:

All in one, these theories beyond the language reveal the message: Taking slower improvement in productive skills doesn't mean the learners aren't improving; in fact, language acquisition begins with mastering receptive ones first. Teachers' and learners' perspective— the way of receiving, methods in teaching and cognitive processing— in language learning change everything dramatically. Most of the teaching techniques still rely on either grammar and vocabulary improvement or the enhancement the language learning through receptive skills. That is why it was considered that acquiring one skill is completely different from the others.

Drawing from personal experiences of learning languages, it was clear that the main role in mastering any language is through receptive skills — not only in second language acquisition but also in a native language as well. As mothers do not use any grammatical rules for their young children while they start speaking, acquiring a language is somehow similar, by adopting just one thing and adding it to the learner's current level. In most cases, these activities are done by receptive skills, so there is no surprise why many people excel in these skills when they are prioritized. This aligns with fundamental principles of physics:

nothing cannot be created from nothing; that is why there should be an input base in mind to produce output. Without it, speaking and writing remain silent — not due to lack of effort, but because there is a lack of sufficient language materials.

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