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## Teaching Language Arts Skills in Primary Schools: Similarities and Differences between Receptive and Productive Skills for Teachers.

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By

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### **Abstract**

*Language Arts skills are the basis by which communication is established. All languages either used by man or animals apply the Language arts skills for prompt communication. This paper specifies the essence for emphasising the similarities and differences in both the receptive and productive skills in the language arts for easy communication when teaching any subject to the child in the primary school. Implications for not adhering to the language skills rules are also well specified. The paper however recommends that all children educators should be well trained in the use of the communication skills.*

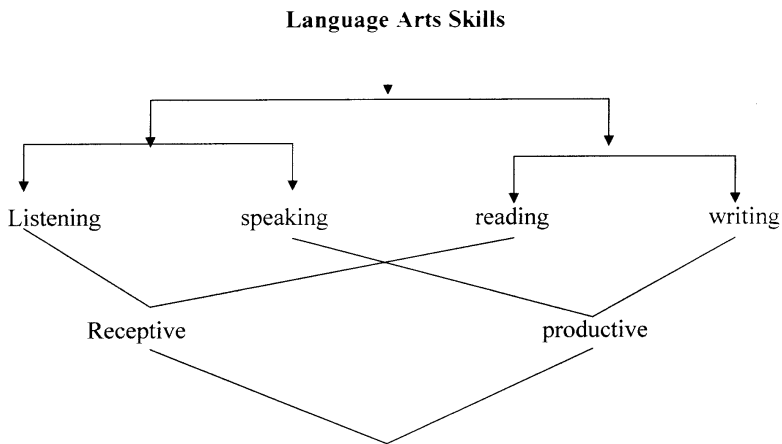
Communication skills are required in all languages and could be taught for effective usage rather than teaching a child a language he could ordinarily learn to speak naturally. In the primary school, the child is virtually being taught all subjects with professional combinations. These subjects with their vast expressions can easily be understood when taught by a teacher armed with the use of effective communication skills. The fact exists however that there are still very distinct similarities and differences between the receptive and productive skills which in usage, could be at variance. For the child, language is the sound heard every day which could either be made by humans, animals or things in the environment. Care therefore, should be taken to express proper application of the language skills for an understanding of what is being taught.

### **Definition**

The receptive skills are the means by which ideas and information are received. These skills involve the listening and reading skills. Productive skills are the process by

which information is generated. These are the speaking and writing skills. They could most times in common language, be referred to as expressive skills as well. This further interprets the audio–aural skills and oracy skills, which involve the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills which are all referred to as literacy skills.

Language which involves receptive and productive arts remains the standard human practice for the definition of unity and togetherness because, there is understanding for which response could be prompted. The language Arts therefore, tend to integrate the language skills for effective daily communication. Language forms the foundation for learning. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) hence emphasizes the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction, national cohesion and preserving of cultures. The first goal of primary education in policy aims at, inculcating permanent literacy, numeracy and ability to communicate effectively. For this reason, most language exponents like, Omojuwa (2003) simply defined the language arts as the process of listening, speaking, reading and writing, while Akudolu (2004) referred to language as a means of communication by which humans express ideas, opinions, intentions, feelings, establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. This is because these skills are required for communication. These communication skills are represented in the illustration below.



**Fig 1: Communication Skills**

### **Similarities in Language Skills**

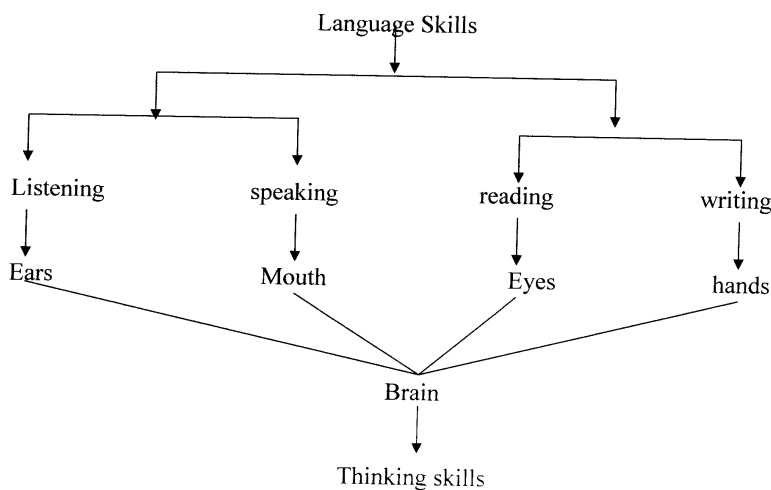
Irrespective of the uniqueness of the language skills, there are very noticeable similarities expressed in practice. Evidently, all language skills require attentiveness and understanding. Attentiveness is required for both receptive and productive skills else, communication might not take place. For example, while listening, what is listened to must be heard and understood; as much as what is read, should be legible

and audible and written in understandable language, and read with concentration and comprehension. Except there is an understanding of what is read, spoken, written and listened to, communication would generally be very difficult. Attention hence, is recommended in the use of all skills for understanding to take place. The primary school teacher should be armed with the right expressions when teaching any subject as to direct the pupils attention to what should be understood.

There should be articulated expression in all the skills as to warrant feedback. The speaker and writer must be articulate for the listener and reader to give an impressive feedback based on understanding. In giving feedback, the listener and reader require articulated presentation of reports to be understood. All skills express a good level of storage which is repeatedly interrupted by feedback for clarification, and improves the spelling skills, composition and tenses. These must strictly be noted in the development of children text.

The language arts skills are all conducted through a channel, with the effective use of diverse media. These skills generally develop library skills. The receptive and productive skills also observe the three complimentary rules which are pitch, pause, and tone in speaking, reading, writing and listening. The receptive and productive skills are very informative, they could also be used to develop and improve the child's moral education. For example in greeting elders, expressing appreciation, prayers, being honest, polite and using low voice tone when necessary. Irrespective of these similarities, there are also very unique distinctions that are firmly connected in their functions.

### **Basic Differences between the Language Skills**



**Fig II: Connectivity of Organs for Language Skills**

All sensory organs for effective communication are transmitted to the brain and back. There is a distinct connectivity between the similarities and differences in the language skills. The skill of listening uses the organ of hearing, (the ear), while the speaking skill makes use of the organ of speech (the mouth). In reading, the organ of sight is primarily important and the hands are required basically for writing.

Irrespective of how these organs are coordinated, they all require alertness and the thinking skills to be effective. They are all connected for effective functionality to the brain. The positioning of these senses makes this experience of connectivity very effective.

For example, listening takes place when sound is generated through the practicing of the speaking skills and reading skills as the case may be. What is listened to and spoken could be easily recalled or documented when written and read. In reverse, what is written could be read, listened to, and spoken in response. All four skills could be practiced simultaneously.

In distinct classification, the productive skills produce information from their storage and the receptive skills receive information and store as well for future production during feedback; but they all rely on the thinking skills to function. There could be some exceptional cases where there is a defect of one of the organs conducting the language skills. To remedy the defect, all active and alert senses for expression of other skills get activated. However, there is also an evidence from special education researches as Ugal (2002) pointed out, that even when there is no biological defect of any of the organs, nor is there an identifiable possible defect in language, if a growing child or individual exists within an environment without sound nor any form of communication system, nothing could really be identified in relation to language skills nor could that child make any utterance to depict sound. Assuming the sound of birds is heard in that environment, that would be precisely what that human individual would mimic, store and produce.

As much as the organs used in the practicing of the language skills are different, there are basic distinct differences in the receptive and productive skills when in application. By implication, it could be acceptable that the receptive and productive skills could be defective at any point in time or underdeveloped or underutilized. Isangedihi (1999) asserted that the development of the language skills improves from 500 words as at when a child is three years, to five thousand (5000) or more at five years, which could be in competition with some adults.

### **Factors Affecting Receptive and Productive Skills**

Azikiwe (2007) opined that receptive and productive skills could be influenced by the environment and also affected in function by biological factors. However, Abam; Eyo; Jemialu; Okorie; Okpokam; Umanah, (2006) recorded three factors affecting the receptive and productive skills. These include:

#### **1) Biological Factors which are:**

- a. Articulating apparatus in speech. The different parts for speech, tongue, palette, mouth enclosure should be in good functioning condition for sound production
- b. The brain- should be in order.
- c. The auditory system-this should be in good functioning condition to identify and receive sound.

#### **2) Environmental Factors**

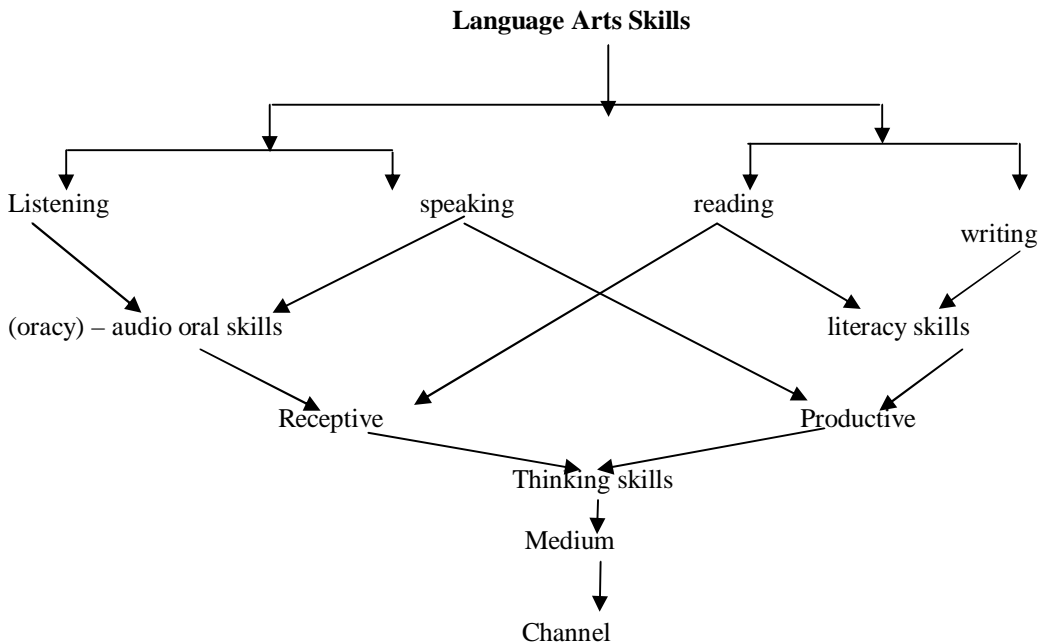
- a. The home- what language(s) do they speak?
- b. School-who are the teachers, what does the curriculum state and what are the teaching and learning objectives expected?
- c. Society- what are the frequently used languages for communication?
- d. Bilingualism-does the child speak two languages?
- e. Multilingualism- does the child have the opportunity to master the use of more than two languages?
- f. Listening skills-how well directed are these languages for effective listening?

#### **3) Language Disorder**

This could result as an irregularity in birth or earlier during conception.

### **Connectivity in the Language Skills**

Irrespective of the factors affecting the receptive and productive skills, they can not function independently. The model below illustrates the inter-relatedness of the receptive and productive skills in communication.

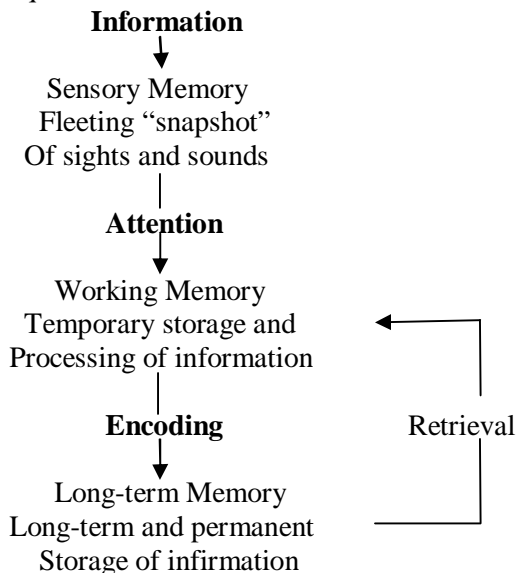


**Fig 111: Sokari’s Proposed Connective Model of Communication (2007)**

The connective model of communication illustrates both the similarities and differences in the receptive and productive skills. These skills though require the application of thinking skills, also maintain their unique identities. An individual cannot at the same time express all the skills, but a group of individuals could. The whole process boils down to adopting a standard of sending information through a channel for communication and feedback to take place, which serves as a confirmation, if communication has actually taken place. In witnessing this process, if not properly conducted, could experience conflicts.

At the point of conflicts, noise is generated, misunderstanding is implied, and a poor or wrong feedback is received. The relevance of language development which includes promotion of social interaction, basically for communication and preparation for leadership positions would be defeated. As much as conflicts could occur in the use of language skills, all skills are different in practice, but conduct a semblance in the rules for application and also require in between functionality to be effective. Listening cannot take place except there is something to listen to in speech, or something is read out. There would be nothing to read except something is written. The teacher should use the language skills effectively as to avoid encountering irrelevance and expect

meaningful storage for feedback from pupils instead. However, the information-process model of memory maps out a route by which information is stored for long term recall when required.



**Fig 1V: Information-Processing Model of Memory (Adopted from Henry I. Roediger 2010).**

The information-processing model of memory permits the transfer of information to the brain and records it briefly in the sensory memory. If the individual focuses attention on the information, it could become part of working memory (which is also called short-term memory), where the information could be manipulated and used. During the process of encoding techniques when repetitions and rehearsals take place, information could be transferred to long-term memory. Retrieving information from long-term memory makes that information active again in working memory. These can only be made possible through the dynamic use of the language skills by a teacher.

### **Implications for Conflicts in the Use of the Language Skills**

Improper use of language skills by teachers holds the following implications:

1. The child would be adequately distracted.
2. Noise would be generated.
3. Attention span would diminish.
4. Interest would be lost in subject taught at the time.
5. Specific objectives would not be attained.
6. Learning will not take place.

## **Conclusion**

The language skills are as old as history itself. Several conflicts have been generated as a result of poor communication and these conflicts have also been rectified by effective communication. The most glaring problem in the application of the skills has been an unconfirmed method of usage due to bilingualism, origin of language and editorial figures. To some good extent though, communication skills take place, hence we have a sane society with functioning activities for convenient living. Sometimes, the similarities and differences between the receptive and productive skills are not noticeable in usage, yet with very close observation, there are distinct differences and unique proper placements in application. The teacher must necessarily arm himself with these when teaching.

## **Recommendation**

The language of communication of every child certainly adopts the frequent application of the language skills. It is therefore recommended that

1. Language Arts be taught as a subject in the primary school.
2. Children should be made to understand that all languages and subject expressions are used effectively for communication with the effective application of the language skills.
3. All languages and subject terminologies are written, could be read, listened to and spoken in discussion. Children should therefore, understand the rules and mode of application to ease communication through a repeated emphasis of the skills which will be followed by a confirmation through feedback.
4. Conflicts like noise, distraction, poor attention and inarticulate expression could be controlled for good feedback if the teacher is armed with a good use of the language skills. These would assist in the issuance of correct answers during class work and exams.
5. Every teacher should be well trained in the use and command of the language skills not just in the language in use for communication.

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