

## How to Integrate Receptive and Productive Skills into Reading Instruction

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**Abstract:** The four language skills in English are generally grouped into receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). While these distinctions are broadly recognized, their integration within classroom practice is often underdeveloped. This paper discusses how to implement teaching stages that cover receptive and productive skills in a reading class. The teaching stages include *brainstorming*, *receptive priming*, *ordering activities*, *reading comprehension*, *productive extension*, and *cross-cultural reflection*. It is expected that, aligned with the students' level and needs, English teachers find the teaching stages useful in helping their students achieve the lesson objectives and eventually improve their overall English competence.

**Keywords:** English skills; productive skills; receptive skills; reading instruction; teaching stages

## INTRODUCTION

The four language skills in English are commonly grouped into receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) skills. While these divisions are widely recognized, their integration within classroom practice is not optimally developed. Yet, research underscores that receptive and productive skills are interdependent: comprehension of input and production of output work together to build communicative competence (Brown, 2014; Harmer, 2015; Hinkel, 2017). Therefore, teaching approaches that deliberately connect these skills are essential for effective language learning.

In Indonesia, the need for skill integration is particularly evident. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2022) ranks the country's reading literacy 70<sup>th</sup> out of 80 participating nations, highlighting a significant educational challenge. Reading, as a foundational receptive skill, underpins both academic and language development. When supported by productive tasks such as retelling, summarizing, or dramatization, reading can

serve as a springboard for critical thinking, communication, and deeper engagement. For this reason, embedding productive elements into reading instruction is both pedagogically necessary and socially relevant.

Reading has long posed difficulties for English learners due to various internal and external factors. Vocabulary limitations, weak grammar mastery, and ineffective reading strategies often slow comprehension and lead students to rely heavily on dictionaries (Hezam et al., 2024; Masduqi, Fatimah, & Subiyanto, 2021; Suryani, 2022). Internal challenges, such as lack of concentration and fatigue, combine with external ones, including limited exposure to English outside school, insufficient parental support, and poor reading environments (Bano et al., 2018; Masduqi, 2014; Susanty et al., 2021; Suryani, 2022; Wahyuni et al., 2024). These challenges confirm the need for instructional designs that go beyond isolated skill practice.

From a theoretical standpoint, integrating receptive and productive skills is consistent with the input–processing–output model of language acquisition. Learners acquire language through exposure to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985), process it cognitively by attending to form and meaning (VanPatten, 2015), and consolidate learning through output, which enables hypothesis testing and feedback (Swain, 2005). In this light, reading instruction that incorporates productive tasks such as retelling, summarizing, or dramatizing texts allows learners to move beyond passive comprehension and actively construct language, reinforcing both accuracy and fluency.

This article, therefore, aims to explore how receptive and productive skills can be integrated into reading instruction through concrete, classroom-based teaching stages. The discussion begins with an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of receptive and productive skills, followed by an examination of practical teaching stages, including brainstorming, vocabulary work, text prediction, paragraph sequencing, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and dramatization activities. By presenting these examples, the article intends to demonstrate how skill integration can be both manageable for teachers and beneficial for learners. Ultimately, the integration of receptive and productive skills should not be treated as an optional supplement but as a core instructional principle. When lessons are carefully aligned with students' language proficiency levels and learning needs, this approach can foster deeper engagement, support communicative competence, and contribute to improved literacy outcomes.

## **RECEPTIVE SKILLS**

Receptive skills, often referred to as passive skills, consist of listening and reading. These are the skills in which learners primarily receive and understand language input rather than producing it. In the process of acquiring a new language, learners typically begin with receptive exposure to linguistic forms and meanings before progressing to productive use. This developmental sequence reflects the interdependent nature of receptive and productive skills, where growth in one domain can naturally support the other. For example, improvement in reading skills has been shown to contribute to the development of writing ability, as learners transfer lexical, syntactic, and discourse knowledge from input to output (Brown, 2014; Masduqi, 2008b; Zhang & Graham, 2020). Similarly, listening plays a crucial role in supporting speaking, as exposure to authentic input informs pronunciation, vocabulary choice, and pragmatic awareness (Field, 2008; Graham & Macaro, 2021; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

The relationship between receptive and productive skills can also be understood through broader frameworks of second language acquisition. Krashen's (1985) *Input Hypothesis* emphasizes that comprehensible input is essential for language development, while Swain's (2005) *Output Hypothesis* argues that opportunities to produce language consolidate knowledge gained through input. Recent scholarship continues to confirm the centrality of this cycle. For instance, Teng (2021) highlights that reading–writing integration enhances depth of vocabulary knowledge, while Webb and Nation (2017) show that vocabulary gains from reading become more robust when learners are encouraged to use new items productively. Furthermore, Anderson's (2010) model of information processing reminds us that comprehension requires interaction between bottom-up decoding and top-down prediction, an idea echoed in more recent work emphasizing metacognitive awareness in reading and listening (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021; Teng & Zhang, 2021).

To illustrate how receptive skills can be taught, the lesson "Things at Home" (Masduqi, 2008a) demonstrates an integrated approach. The teacher begins with a listening activity in which the students complete sentences using "There isn't/aren't" and "Is/Are there?" based on descriptions of household objects. This task provides indirect exposure to target grammatical structures, allowing learners to infer rules inductively rather than being presented with explicit explanations. Inductive learning is considered effective for long-term retention, as it engages learners in noticing patterns and constructing their own understanding (Ellis, 2002; Suzuki & DeKeyser, 2017; Thornbury, 2018). After the listening activity, the teacher highlights forms from the script and asks students to practice the expressions in pairs by asking and answering questions about items in their partner's bag. In doing so, the teacher encourages not only controlled practice of the structure but also meaningful communicative interaction. Recent

classroom studies have confirmed that such integration of inductive grammar learning with receptive tasks fosters greater learner engagement and confidence (Larsen-Freeman & Marti, 2020; Teng, 2022).

In essence, receptive skills are not merely preparatory but play an essential role in shaping learners' overall communicative competence. Through carefully designed activities that blend input, noticing, and practice, teachers can transform listening and reading into active, engaging processes that provide the groundwork for productive language use. When receptive instruction is scaffolded and contextualized, it enhances learners' comprehension, supports productive development, and fosters confidence in using the target language (Nguyen, 2020; Teng & Zhang, 2021).

### **PRODUCTIVE SKILLS**

Productive skills, i.e., speaking and writing, are called “active” because learners must produce language after first making sense of input. In well-sequenced instruction, receptive exposure (listening/reading) is followed by opportunities to use the target forms and meanings in speaking or writing. Research continues to show that productive work consolidates learning: when learners are “pushed” to speak or write, they notice gaps, test hypotheses, and refine form–meaning mappings, which in turn strengthen overall proficiency (Swain, 2005; Zhang & Graham, 2020). Recent syntheses further indicate that designed output improves measurable outcomes in both speaking (e.g., oral narrative/interaction tasks) and writing (e.g., integrated reading-into-writing, feedback-rich drafting) (Hou et al., 2024; Mao, 2024; Wei et al., 2023)

Teaching productive skills requires a careful balance between providing sufficient input and creating opportunities for learners to generate language actively. One principle supported by research is the input–processing–output cycle: after exposure to comprehensible input, learners consolidate their knowledge through production tasks that require them to notice gaps and refine their language use (Swain, 2005; VanPatten, 2015). Recent studies confirm that designed output tasks, such as oral narrative practice or integrated reading-to-writing tasks, can significantly improve both spoken and written performance (Hou et al., 2024; Mao, 2024; Wei et al., 2023). Another principle involves task design and repetition. Sequencing tasks from simple to complex and giving learners multiple opportunities to repeat them has been shown to enhance fluency, accuracy, and complexity in speaking (Muhammadpour et al., 2023; Zhang, 2023). Equally important is a brief but deliberate focus on pronunciation: meta-analyses suggest that targeted work on segmental and suprasegmental features enhances comprehensibility, which is crucial for successful oral communication (Saito, 2021; Suzukida et al., 2022).

In writing, evidence highlights the importance of feedback and revision. *Written corrective feedback* (WCF) has demonstrated reliable benefits when combined with opportunities for rewriting, while *automated writing evaluation* (AWE) tools provide additional scaffolding for accuracy and text quality (Fleckenstein et al., 2023; Mao, 2024; Wei et al., 2023). Genre-based instruction further strengthens writing outcomes by offering models, guided practice, and opportunities for independent production (Donnelly, 2024; Hyland, 2024). Together, these principles suggest that productive skills develop most effectively when input is systematically linked to output, when learners are encouraged to experiment with form in meaningful contexts, and when feedback is provided to guide them toward greater accuracy and fluency.

Taken together, the principles and lesson example demonstrate that receptive and productive skills, while distinct, are most effective when taught in ways that reinforce one another. Receptive stages provide learners with authentic input, patterns, and pronunciation models, while productive stages allow them to transform that input into meaningful communication through speaking and writing. Without this interplay, students may develop passive recognition of language but lack the confidence or accuracy to use it in real contexts. Conversely, productive practice without adequate input risks leading to fossilization and limited fluency. Therefore, the logical next step is to consider how receptive and productive skills can be deliberately integrated within a single instructional sequence. Such integration ensures that language learning is cyclical, interactive, and sustainable; qualities that are particularly crucial in addressing the literacy and communicative needs of EFL learners. The following section explores strategies for integrating receptive and productive skills in classroom practice, illustrating how their combination can create richer and more effective learning experiences.

## **THE INTEGRATION OF RECEPTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE SKILLS**

The integration of receptive and productive skills in a lesson is an important pedagogical issue that continues to receive scholarly attention. Aydogan (2014) and Brown (2014) emphasize that learners must be given opportunities to use all four language skills in meaningful, functional, and collaborative activities. This integrated approach ensures that language is not only learned as an academic subject but also actively used as a tool for communication. Oxford (2001) reminds us that integrated teaching must involve all skills along with supporting components such as vocabulary, syntax, meaning, and usage, ideally within authentic contexts. More recent work confirms this view, noting that students benefit most

when skills are taught holistically, with tasks that connect listening, speaking, reading, and writing in ways that mirror real-world communication (Choi & Lee, 2020; Liao, 2022).

Integration is also closely tied to learner motivation and engagement. By choosing topics that are relevant and interesting, teachers can make integrated lessons more meaningful and foster stronger participation. Darn (2006) suggested that integrating receptive and productive skills develops fluency, as learners practice using English to communicate for varied purposes. Recent studies have extended this argument by showing that integrated-skills instruction not only improves linguistic accuracy but also enhances learners' confidence, collaboration, and willingness to communicate (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2022; Sun & Wang, 2020). Such findings align with the socio-constructivist perspective, which views language learning as a socially mediated process in which receptive input and productive practice are mutually reinforcing.

In the Indonesian context, the issue of integration is particularly relevant given the longstanding emphasis on reading in English curricula. Reading has been prioritised at all levels of education (Masduqi, 2014; Masduqi, Fatimah, & Subiyanto, 2024), but often in isolation from the other three skills. Yet, recent scholarship highlights that integrating reading with speaking and writing leads to better comprehension and retention, as learners must engage in higher-order processing such as summarizing, retelling, or dramatizing texts (Teng & Zhang, 2021; Graham & Macaro, 2021). Thornbury (2018) and Darn (2006) both argue that an integrated lesson can begin with receptive noticing—such as identifying language patterns in a text—followed by activities that extend naturally into speaking, listening, and writing tasks. This sequencing reflects the input–output cycle widely recognized in SLA research, where input lays the foundation for output, and output consolidates the learning of input (Swain, 2005; VanPatten, 2015).

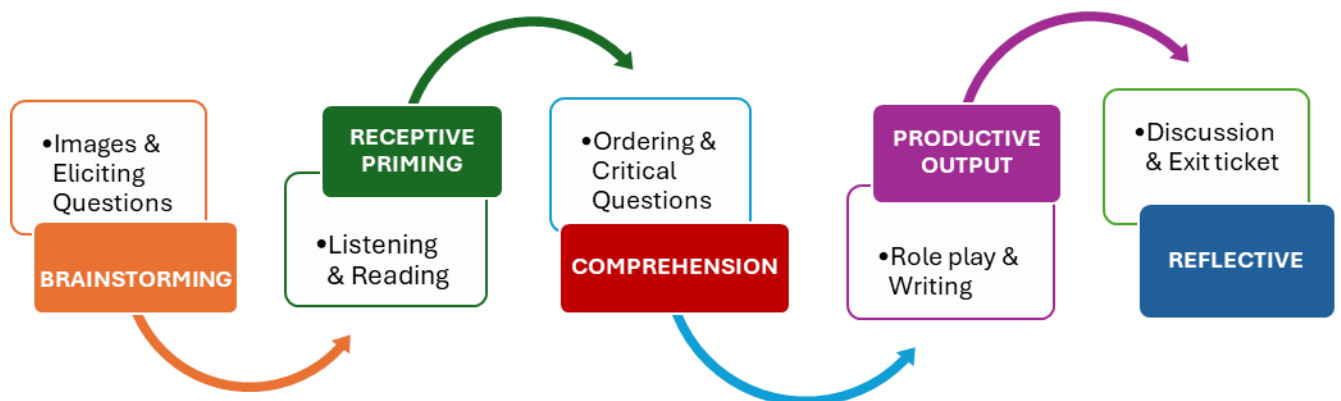
An example of integrating receptive and productive skills in a reading lesson is provided here out of genuine concern for improving literacy skills in Indonesian schools. We adopt the story *King Solomon and the Two Mothers* (also known as *King Solomon and the Baby*) as reading material. Through this lesson, students begin by reading and listening to the text, focusing on comprehension and noticing key expressions. Subsequent activities encourage them to retell the story in their own words, engage in role-play to dramatize the dialogue, and finally write a short reflection on the moral of the story. This progression illustrates how receptive activities (reading and listening) can naturally evolve into productive ones (speaking and writing), creating a cohesive, meaningful learning cycle. Such integration not only supports

literacy development but also enhances learners' communicative competence, aligning with current calls for integrated skills pedagogy in EFL classrooms (Nguyen, 2020; Teng, 2022).

To illustrate how receptive and productive skills can be integrated meaningfully, we propose a lesson based on the theological story of *King Solomon and the Two Mothers* (also known as *King Solomon and the Baby*). The story is supported by online resources, including:

- video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9-6xS8zN8I>),
- images (<https://www.istockphoto.com/id/foto/solomon-mendengar-dari-dua-wanita-gm471863833-26822423>),
- reference texts ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judgement\\_of\\_Solomon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judgement_of_Solomon)).

These materials provide multiple entry points for students to engage with the text and allow for the integration across listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Furthermore, we offer the following teaching stages:



### Stage 1: Brainstorming and Schema Activation

The lesson begins with brainstorming designed to activate learners' prior knowledge and build emotional engagement to the theme. This stage is carried out by:

1. Noticing visual prompts by asking questions such as '*Look at these images for 10 seconds, what do you see? Who are these people? What's happening? Who are they? How do you feel?*'
2. Eliciting personal connection by asking: '*If someone claimed your baby, how would you feel? What would you do?*'
3. Asking students to have a quick pair talk: '*In pairs: What problem do you think they have? Who should decide?*'
4. Listing some words such as *truth, judge, argue, sword, and decide*.

## **Stage 2: Receptive Priming (Vocabulary Exploration & Prediction)**

Before reading, teachers ask students to highlight essential vocabulary and explore meanings through contextualized activities such as miming (for *steal* or *exchange*) or situational enactment (for *settling the matter*). This stage aims to highlight keywords in the story, prepare students for the prediction task, and check the meanings of keywords. Once students are equipped with these terms, they are encouraged to predict the storyline in groups, drawing upon their cultural backgrounds to create “virtual versions” of the narrative. In this stage, teachers can:

1. Check the meaning of any words that may cause difficulties by using mimes, images or a quick demo, for example:
  - sword/divide (show/draw a picture/symbol and ask what it is)
  - swap/steal (act out with another pupil by swapping pens or stealing something from someone when they are not looking)
  - settling the matter (describe a short situation where two people are angry about something and then find a solution)
2. Ask the students to look at the pictures or videos and see if they have similar or even different results in terms of objects, clothes, concepts, or ideas to those shown in the story.
3. Put students in pairs or small groups and ask them to predict the story based on the words given.
4. Ask a few students to share their ideas with the class.
5. Ask some of them to imagine what the ‘kingdom’ looks like using their own creativity (this can be partly based on what the courtroom looks like, how the king dresses up in court, etc.)
6. Ask some of them to compare the representations of the kingdom in the story (texts, pictures, and videos) with any kingdoms, including their local ones, to find differences and similarities.

## **Stage 3: Reading, Listening, and Ordering Activities**

This stage aims to give the correct order and a reason for reading the gist. Students work collaboratively to reconstruct the story. They receive jumbled paragraphs or cut-up video scenes and must negotiate meaning to arrange them in logical order. Afterwards, the original video is shown in sequence, allowing students to check their predictions and engage in reflection on similarities and differences between their imagined and actual storylines. By

doing this stage in groups, it promotes listening comprehension and collaborative problem-solving. Teachers can do the following activities:

1. Jumbled-text skimming. The teacher hands out a cut-up version of the text and asks students in groups to skim the slips for 3 minutes without using dictionaries. The teacher can ask ‘*Which sentence shows the decision? Which shows the conflict?*’
2. Picture sequencing, where groups are asked to match their text order. The teacher informs the students to put the slips in the best order. The teacher can give clues to students to look for time markers and referents.
3. Video check (listening for order/gist). The teacher plays the video once. Then, teachers can ask ‘*Raise your hand when you hear the final decision?*’
4. Teachers with video editing skills can cut the scenes of the video, randomize them, ask the students to look at the scenes and rearrange them later.

#### **Stage 4: Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking**

At this stage, comprehension is consolidated through both literal and inferential questions. This stage aims to focus on the overall meaning or main ideas of the text. The procedures for this stage are detailed below. While initial tasks focus on identifying the main idea and key details, subsequent discussion moves toward higher-order thinking. The next activity is pair or group debates, which allows students to argue opposing viewpoints, enhance speaking fluency, reasoning, and collaborative communication. The procedures for this stage are detailed below.

1. Ask some short questions based on the story to ask some details in the story, such as ‘*What is the main problem? Who are the key participants? What decision is made? Who claims the child first? What evidence do they give?*’
2. Ask questions to elicit inference and evaluation, such as ‘*Why might a false mother agree to the king’s violent proposal? What does that reveal? Why did the king propose such a violent solution? What alternative solutions could you suggest?*’
3. Assign pairs or divide the class into two parties (opponent and proponent) for a structured debate with motions such as ‘*The king’s ‘divide the baby’ proposal is a justified strategy; “Why did the wise king suggest such a seemingly violent act to solve the problem? Is this a ‘necessary violence’, since this act did settle the conflict?*’ Teachers can teach students some useful expressions and persuasive language that might be used in the debate.
4. For more advanced learners, the teachers can even ask more demanding or challenging questions, such as “If you were the king, could you suggest an alternative solution that

would either replace or eliminate the act of violence as shown in the story?” or “Do you have completely different alternatives that could replace the ending or outcome of the story?”

### **Stage 5: Productive Extension (Role-play and Creative Writing)**

The objective of this stage is to measure students’ comprehension in a fun, non-verbal fashion and to cater to their productive skills (speaking). In groups of three, learners role-play the story, creating their own dialogues and staging a short performance. Role-play not only strengthens speaking but also fosters empathy by requiring learners to adopt different perspectives (Choi & Lee, 2020). As a follow-up, students write alternative endings or modern retellings of the story, such as imagining how the conflict would be resolved in today’s legal system. This task integrates writing with critical thinking and creativity while reinforcing the vocabulary and structures introduced earlier. English teachers can follow the following procedures:

1. Put the students into groups of three with one person acting as the main character in the story.
2. Ask them to create relevant dialogues based on what they perceive in the story.
3. Ask them to perform their dialogues in front of the class (such as in a mini-drama or role-play session).
4. Ask the other students in the audience to comment upon or even criticize the performance or the dialogue. Teachers can either guide the observation or follow it up with questions that stimulate cultural diversity, such as “Do you find any asynchronous elements when you consider that your friends are acting out scenes in or against a foreign culture?”
5. Ask the students to write a short piece (120–150 words) about the King Solomon story, but from a specific role to a specific audience, and in a specific format.

### **Stage 6: Cross-Cultural Reflection and Transfer**

The objective of this stage is to help students connect the themes of the Solomon story (justice, wisdom, family) with their own cultural narratives, thereby fostering intercultural awareness and a deeper understanding of universal versus culture-specific values. At the same time, it provides an opportunity for students to use English meaningfully in oral summaries, comparisons, and reflective statements. Finally, through short exit-ticket reflections, students

consolidate their learning from reading, speaking, and writing activities, while the teacher gathers feedback to inform future instruction. The classroom activities are as follows:

1. Ask students to identify local folktales or cultural stories with similar themes of justice, wisdom, or family. Teacher says: *“Think of a local folktale or cultural story from your community that also teaches about justice, wisdom, or family. For example, a wise judge, a clever king, or a story about parents and children.”*
2. Ask them to give short oral summaries of these tales, compare them with the Solomon story, and discuss universal versus culture-specific values. Teachers can ask them to share *‘Who are the main characters? What problem do they face? How is the problem solved?’*
3. Ask students to discuss the similarities and differences between their story and the Solomon story. Teachers can guide students by asking *‘How is your story similar to Solomon’s judgment? What is different? Is the solution based on wisdom, punishment, or kindness?’*. In this step, teachers highlight universal values (e.g., truth, sacrifice, wisdom) vs. culture-specific values (e.g., local traditions, beliefs about family, respect for authority).
4. Ask students to reflect by sharing in pairs what they learned from reading and writing and contribute to a whole-class 3–2–1 activity (three new words, two difficulties, one helpful strategy). They can start their reflection by saying *“Reading helped me... Speaking helped me... Next time I need...”*.

This designed sequence demonstrates that receptive and productive skills are not isolated but mutually reinforcing. Brainstorming and prediction activities build background knowledge and anticipation. Reading, listening, and ordering tasks strengthen comprehension and noticing. Productive stages, such as role-play, debate, and creative writing, push learners to transform input into meaningful output, while cross-cultural reflection situates learning in a broader context. By integrating these stages, the lesson provides a coherent input–output cycle that is communicative, critical, and culturally responsive.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article has outlined a set of teaching stages and learning resources designed to integrate receptive and productive skills within a reading lesson. With the abundance of freely available materials such as videos, images, and online texts, teachers have greater opportunities to enrich traditional reading instruction with multimodal resources. The stages presented, ranging from brainstorming and vocabulary exploration, through comprehension and

sequencing activities, to role-play, creative writing, debate, and cross-cultural reflection, illustrate how a single story can generate diverse learning opportunities. These examples are not prescriptive but rather serve as adaptable models that teachers can modify according to the level, needs, and interests of their students.

Implementing integrated tasks does require careful planning to ensure that receptive activities (listening and reading) are balanced with productive opportunities (speaking and writing). Although the activities may appear simple on paper, teachers will need to adapt them to classroom realities such as varied student proficiency, motivation, and available resources. Nevertheless, the central message of this paper is that integration is both feasible and valuable. Properly designed, such lessons not only enhance literacy and communicative competence but also promote critical thinking, engagement, and intercultural awareness.

For English teachers, several implications emerge. First, adaptation is essential: tasks should be calibrated to the learners' current abilities, with scaffolding provided through vocabulary support, sentence starters, and structured tasks. Second, variety and balance must be maintained so that input is consistently transformed into meaningful output. Third, incorporating intercultural perspectives, such as comparing the biblical account of King Solomon with local folktales, can make lessons more personally and socially relevant, thus motivating learners and broadening their worldview. Finally, teachers are encouraged to view these lesson stages as flexible frameworks rather than rigid prescriptions. With thoughtful customization, integrated lessons can foster interactive, student-centered learning that advances both language proficiency and cultural competence in sustainable ways.

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