

Integrating Language Skills for Communicative Competence: A Contemporary Theoretical Approach in EFL

Dr. Ali J. Alwan Al Shiblee,
Islamic University of Diwaniyah.
alwanali1956@gmail.com

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bje.2013/vol13n68590>

Published May 14, 2025

Citation: Al Shiblee A.J.A. (2025) Integrating Language Skills for Communicative Competence: A Contemporary Theoretical Approach in EFL, *British Journal of Education*, Vol.13, Issue 6, 85-90

Abstract: *Incorporating the four language skills has become a fresh movement in the process of language learning and teaching to form an integrating-skills approach. Many English language teachers consider this way of learning as an effective line to improve students' communicative competence to use the language functionally. This line of teaching is unlike the traditional way of teaching which encourage teaching the skills separately. Presenting all language skills together help learners to know the language and to be able to use it naturally in communication. This paper reviews ideas related to integrating skills method to offer a good way of understanding of using it in the process of learning. Interconnection of the language skills are explored through this paper and highlight the reinforcement among them. Also, it explores the cooperative relationship between receptive and productive skills.*

Keywords: language skills, integrating-skills approach, communicative competence, Interconnection

INTRODUCTION

The four skills have always been of great importance in education and learning processes. Yet, the teachers have to take active roles in teaching listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the acquirement of foreign language, it is necessary to improve language skills at the same degree, but many issues affect language education particularly the four basic language skills. Age,

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

gender, ability, motivation, cognitive style, personality and teaching strategies are the specific factors affect the process of learning. So, the duty of any teacher is to evaluate this effect on the four skills. This paper places an emphasis on the necessary skills as most students complain about challenges of the slow learning of using the language functionally. Generally, students are not prepared to perform the four skills carefully and in most of educational institutions (Aliwie, 2005). All language skills have to be improved in language learning at the same time, but sometimes, their development is not balanced. Students face some challenges in listening. Also, production is not easy to perform during lessons. So, during listening, it is not easy for learners to understand reading sentences. When students are reading, they can understand what they read. Therefore, the close relationship and impact receptive and productive skills should be explored so that we can specify effective ways of integrating them. Methods of teaching the four skills based on both output and input hypothesis (Han, 2016; Guan, 2015). The importance of developing oral and written skills had been discussed by Zhao, 1980; & Zhang, 1995; |Aliwie, 2024). They explore the development of English listening comprehension on the basis of understanding the interrelationship between speaking and listening. Eckhoff (1983) states, through a study of the relation of reading and writing, that students' writings holds features of their reading texts. So, reading is the source of writing style.

In real communication the four language skills have to be interactive and interrelated. Interaction and coordination among the four skills results in progress of the whole language ability. Therefore, the four language skills have close and strong impact upon one another and teachers should work on improving all language skills by an effective way.

Interconnectedness of skills in language learning process:

Writing activities are of great importance for learners of English as a foreign language. Sanchez (2000) stated that these activities support students to practice using the language and join various words and produce meaningful sentences. Also, knowledge could be reinforced and could be pragmatic in different situations. In addition, Sanchez expresses that encouraging learners to read texts closely to identify the various ideas of the text need to form questions based on the reading passages. He added that linking between writing and other skills results in good outcome. So, writing accurately can be enhanced by listening, reading, and speaking. Good writing results can be caused by frequent practice across the four language skills. Besides, Sanchez (2000) proposes that active discussions among students should be stimulated by teachers.

Also, an active connection between listening and other skills, Al Khanaisawy (2017) referred to the essential role of listening to enhance the success of process of learning among the four

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK
language skills. He illuminates that long learning sequence including activity of listening makes students feel confident in understanding and learn the language. This is because listening is the solidest skill to develop. In fact, listening is the roughest for cognitive challenges and difficulties with sound. So, teachers have to support their students to develop listening skills.

In other hand, writing as skill practicing students to operate structures, combine lexical elements, and consolidate to use knowledge in other areas. Also, Sanchez explains that written questions about passages enable students to be more active in comprehending areas that need to be analyzed. Therefore, more practice on all four skills will improve the process of teaching and learning. If there is repeated integration of practicing all four skills, there will be positive consequences in writing activities. Thus, ensuring possible influence of skills need promoting discussion of what has been read and heard.

Statement of the problem:

The development of four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing are required for complex process of learning language. English language teachers used to teach these skills separately, but several studies showed they are interconnected. Zhao (1980) and Zhang (1995) have discussed the importance of developing both oral and written skills in English language teaching. Zhu, 1997 confirms that the improvement of certain language skill is the result of effective cooperation with other skills. Thus, progress in one skill leads to an improvement in the other. In spite of this, the focus on isolated skill is the goal of several language teaching methods. So, there is a need to explore integrated relation among the four skills and how they reinforce each other during the process of learning. This paper explains the interrelationship among listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Objectives of the study:

1. Exploring the connections among listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
2. Identifying how improvement in one skill may support development in others.

Research questions:

- What is the relationship between receptive skills (listening, reading) and productive skills (speaking, writing)?
- How does integration of skills enhance language proficiency?

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Communicative Language Teaching is an approach that introduced in 1970s based on the disadvantages of previous methods. Its aim was to enable learners to use the language in communication (Desai, Citation2015). So, achieving communicative competence is the main aim of teachers during the process of teaching that enhances the students' skills and knowledge to create communicative competence. Richards & Rodgers (2014) state that Communicative competence is the skills of learners to use the language functionally that motivate students to gain grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Hence, communication could be assessed according to classroom activities, roles of both teachers and students, and interaction of teachers and students. Teachers' roles in CLT classroom are facilitators of communication among students while students are communicators (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011). English language teachers have to be conscious of how to improve their students' language efficiency. So, students should be able to use the language as a vehicle for communication.

Communicative language teaching (CLT):

In the 1960s, Communicative language teaching (CLT) appeared during the big changes of language teaching ideas several parts of the world. Before those traditional methods of language teaching controlled foreign language teaching for a long time. However, linguists started to evaluate the process of teaching and learning according to Chomsky's view of language acquisition and linguistic competence. They excluded the previous theories of teaching and learning as "Audiolingualism" that brought attention to the weaknesses of the traditional approaches of teaching (Klapper, 2006, P.107). Linguists in Britain realized that there was a need of focusing on communicative proficiency (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, P.153). Several disciplines like sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, language philosophy, anthropology had influenced the theory of communicative approach.

Integrated skills approach (ISA)

In everyday communication, various skills are interconnected that leads to develop the 'integrated-skills approach' (ISA) (Su, 2007; Abd Aliwie, 2025). Also, Peregoy and Boyle (2001) express skills occur together. ISA aligns with CLT and other ways of teaching emphasize communicating and developing oral and written skills that enhance learning. Moreover, all four

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

skills have to be regarded as interdependent parts of language learning. Teaching task should consider the language skills all together. Teachers should not separate oral and written language skills during the process of learning. In most communication, oral and written skills are integrated (Peregoy & Boyle (2001). Finally, listening, speaking, reading, and writing have to be viewed together in the process of language learning. These skills are integrated, interdependent, and inseparable.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The most essential objectives of English learning is to have a communicative competence to use English language functionally in the society for various purposes as this language is the major medium of publishing information worldwide. So, implementing integrated language skills in the process of learning is a successful option to get communicative competence. Integrated language skills and traditional method are unlike in the way of presenting the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Traditional method presents a language skill in isolation while integrated language skills present the four skills together so that the learners would be able to use the language naturally. Several studies confirm the successful positive results when teachers use integrated language skills methods during the process of teaching and learning. This way improves and supports both students and teachers. However, teachers should have a confidence and ability that integrated language skills teaching approach can be functioned effectively in the process of learning. The integrated method needs an understanding of discourse, using texts flexibly, and willingness to use the student-centered learning way.

This paper confirms the interdependence among the language skills. Reading skill improves vocabulary and comprehension that promoting the skills writing and speaking. Writing enriches articulation and organization. As well, spoken texts promote fluency. This paper stresses pedagogical significance of integrating the language skills within classroom activities to take full advantages of the four skills. Therefore, the interchange among all skills raises language development, supports comprehension. English language teachers have to adopt teaching all skills to adjust students learning production and linguistic skills.

REFERENCES

- Abd Aliwie, A. N. (2024, August 12). A pragmatic analysis of wish strategies used by Iraqi EFL learners. *Salud, Ciencia y Tecnología - Serie de Conferencias*, 3, 1151. <https://conferencias.ageditor.ar/index.php/sctconf/article/view/1151>

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

- Abd Aliwie, A. N. (2025). A pragmatic analysis of persuasive arguments in the 2011–2020 US presidential campaign speeches. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, 7(1), 480–494. <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i1.7243>
- Abdrabo, N. (2014). Integrated-skills approach: Teaching vs. practice in L2 acquisition. Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 1-21.
- Adem, H., & Berkessa, M. (2022). A case study of EFL teachers' practice of teaching speaking skills vis-à-vis the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). *Cogent Education*, 9(1), 2087458.
- Akhmadjanovna, N. R. N., Abdukhalilovna, M. H., & Habibullaevna, M. B. (2019). Integrating language skills into the process of the English language teaching. *Вестник науки и образования*, (19-2 (73), 53-55.
- Al Khanaif sawy, A. N. (2017). A stylistic study of euphemism in John Donne's selected poems. *The Islamic University College Journal*, 35–38.
- Aliwie, A. N. A. (2024). A pragmatic study of irony in Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, 6(6), 147–161. <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i6.7056>
- Aydoğan, H., & Akbarov, A. A. (2014). The four basic language skills, whole language & intergrated skill approach in mainstream university classrooms in Turkey. *Mediterranean journal of social sciences*, 5(9), 672-680.
- Ju, F. A. (2013). Communicative language teaching (CLT): A critical and comparative perspective. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(9), 1579.
- Nan, C. (2018). Implications of interrelationship among four language skills for high school English teaching. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(2), 418-423.
- Nan, C. (2018). Implications of interrelationship among four language skills for high school English teaching. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(2), 418-423.
- Pardede, P. (2019). Integrated skills approach in EFL classrooms: A literature review.