

Models of Reading and Writing Relationships

*Pratin Pimsarn**

Abstract

Reading and writing are two interrelated skills. The article discusses various models of reading and writing relationships proposed by Page (1974), Anderson (1982), Ruddell (1974), Marshall and Glock (1979), and Reid (1994), and it concludes with the author's own reading-writing model for ESL learners.

It has been evident that reading and writing are interrelated. In response to this belief, several interactional models of these two skills have been proposed.

Page's Model

According to Page (1974), language-formed concepts play a predominant role in the processes of writing and reading, each of which is considered a constructive process. The constructive process is subject to variation due to experiential differences of the author (writer) and the reader, including knowledge and experiences in constructing and interpreting language. Furthermore, Page believes that surface structure, deep structure, meaning, and knowledge are related to one another in the process of writing and reading. In short, Page views writing and reading processes as constructive. In his model (see Figure 1), he assumes that the process performed by the writer starts from knowledge in which specific concepts are selected that suit the purposes the writer seeks to meet in writing. These concepts are developed into a tapestry of

* Thammasat University Language Institute

meaning, some of which are selected for encoding into writing. Deep structures and other grammatical relationships are assigned to the selected meanings. Once deep structure or clause and phrase relationships have been assigned to meanings, the writer's language rules permit the internal production of conceived surface structure. By applying the orthographic rules, the writer transforms the conceived surface structure, his thought sentence, into observable writing, or a graphic surface structure.

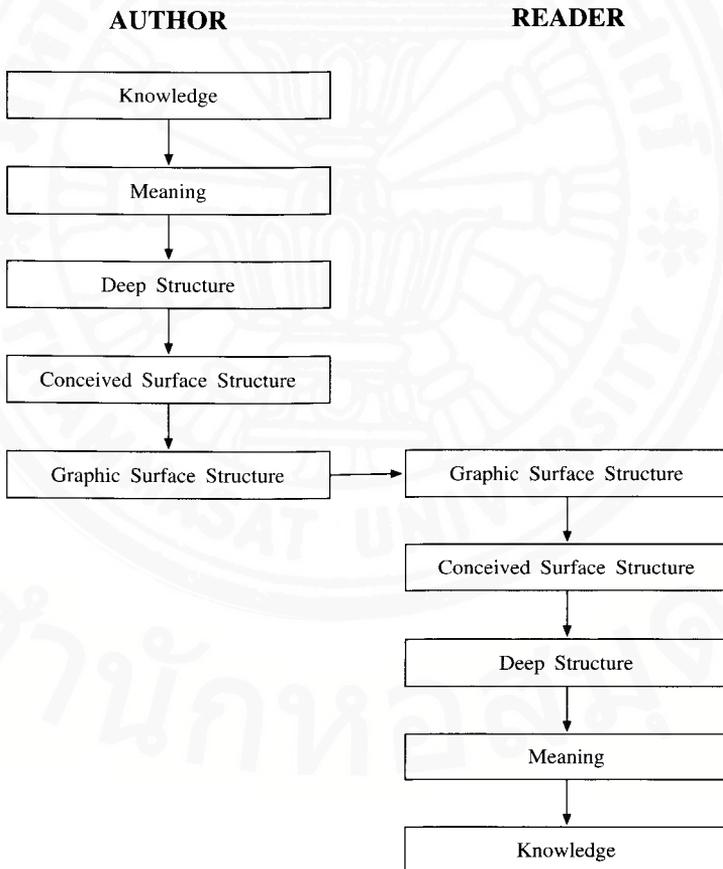


Figure 1. A general concept of writing and reading

In turn, Page generates the process performed by the reader in a way that, once the reader perceives the written surface structure, it is transformed into an internal, unobservable circumstance. In reading, language knowledge predicts and guides the selection of images the reader will perceive. Page believes that at this point reading is a sampling process in that not all of the graphically displayed information is used or even required. Page also assumes that reading may be conceived of as a psycholinguistic guessing game wherein the reader samples information from print and then constructs guesses that are verified, rejected, or held in abeyance. Additional sampling, language knowledge, and experiential background are the sources of verification or rejection of guesses. Page completes the model by assuming that the reader uses the rules of personal language knowledge to assign deep structure to the perceived surface structure by which meaning is constructed. The constructed meaning will become knowledge for the reader. The observable link between the domains of the writer and the reader can be found at the point labeled “graphic surface structure.” In summary, the writing process proceeds from knowledge to print, while the reading process goes from print to knowledge (comprehension).

Anderson’s Model

Anderson (1982) designed a model which he labels the Writing-Reading Process--a Total Interacting System. He concluded that the writing-reading process may be conceived as comprising four subsystems. First, there is the writer or encoder; second, the text or message encoded by the writer; third, the reader who decodes the text; and finally, the context or communicative environment in which the encoding and decoding take place (see Figure 2).

In communication terms, Anderson states that writers are the source of the message; they have certain ideas and thoughts they wish to communicate. In encoding or expressing these, the information is transformed into words which in turn are transformed into graphic symbols. In so doing, writers bring to the writing task all their encoding habits--the product of their accumulated knowledge and experience, knowledge of the world and knowledge of language, their purpose, as

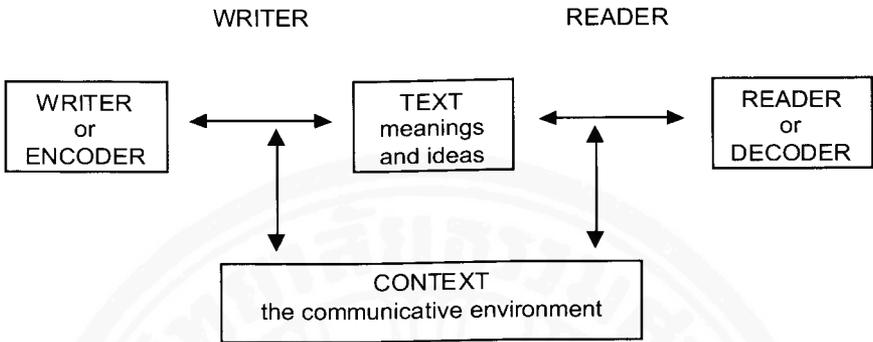


Figure 2. The writing-reading process – A total interacting system

well as their assumptions about language and about text. In order to decode the expression of thoughts and ideas, readers bring to the reading task the same things that writers do, namely, their accumulated knowledge, their background and experience, including their facility with language, knowledge of vocabulary and syntax, all their assumptions about language and about text, their attitudes, values, associations and purposes.

Ruddell's Model

Another model of the reading and writing relationship is Ruddell's communication model (1974). Ruddell concentrates on decoding strategies, meaning strategies, and interpretation abilities (see Figure 3).

As shown in Ruddell's model, reading and writing are dual processes, as are speaking and listening. Reading goes from visual perceptions to meaning construction and interpretation processes; then the reader's interests, attitudes, values, and knowledge will cause one to conceptualization of what has been read. In the same manner, writing is assumed to be expressed through the writer's interests, attitudes, values and language knowledge in order to form his meaning and interpretative construction into graphic symbols. The basic interaction of the reading and writing process is viewed as a communicative model in that the affective mobilizers and cognitive strategies are the main link between these two skills.

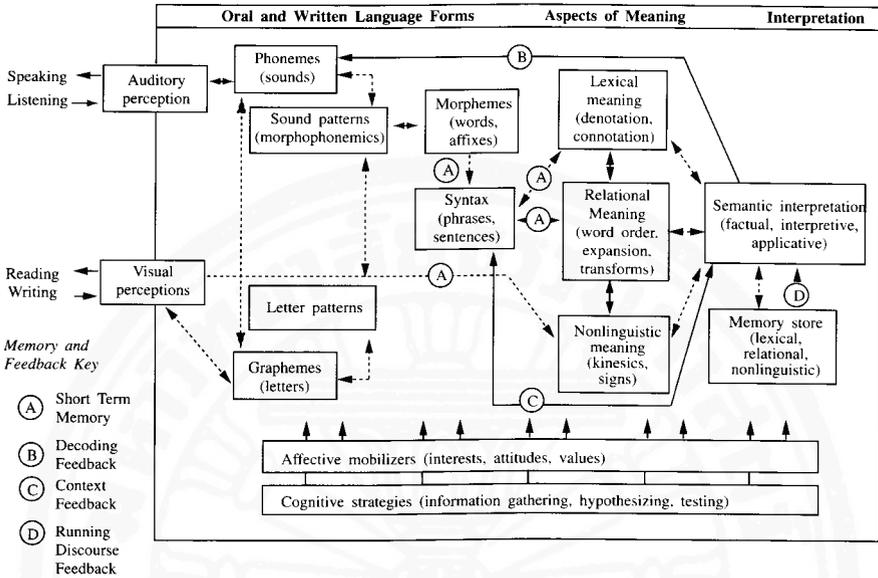


Figure 3. Ruddell's communication model

Marshall and Glock's Model

Another model of communication emphasizing the relationship between reading and writing was proposed by Marshall and Glock (1978-1979). They viewed comprehension as part of a circle of communication between the writer and the reader (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 shows the communication act as an unbroken circle with only two points of entry, the mind (at the top) and the actual discourse (at the bottom). It is presented as a circle because, for comprehension to be tested, regardless of the type of test, the person comprehending must produce, in part or whole, discourse. Marshall and Glock stated that one of the important aspects of the comprehension act is that the arrows in the model go in two directions: from discourse to memory and from memory to discourse. The bidirectionality is intentional. It allows for the fact that there are two participants in the comprehension act: the writer, through the discourse, and the reader.

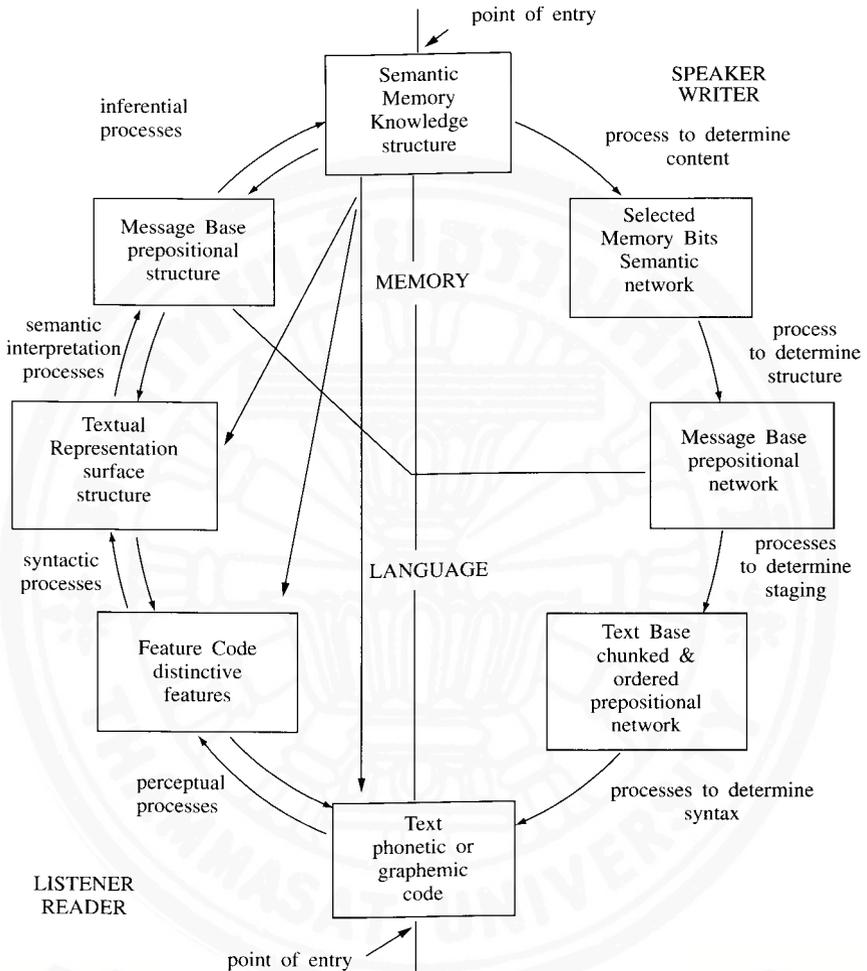


Figure 4. Model of the communication process

Starting from the point of entry at the top of the model and moving in a clockwise direction, writing is viewed as a linear progression moving from the mind (memory) through the processes to determine content which is extracted as semantic memory bits from the mind. Then processes to determine structure are employed to determine staging used to achieve the text base. Finally, processes to determine syntax are involved in deriving the text.

In reading, moving from the point of entry at the bottom of the model in a clockwise direction, perceptual processes are made use of to get the feature code; then syntactic processes are applied to result in textual representation (surface structure). Next, semantic interpretation processes are applied and result in a message base. Inferential processes are finally employed to arrive at semantic memory.

When examining Marshall and Glock's model, reading and writing processes are considered a vital part of a circle communication in which discourse and memory are interrelated. Marshall and Glock believe that the memory of the reader can affect the way in which text is processed just as the semantic structure of discourse can affect the memory (p. 50).

Reid's Model

The last model of the reading and writing relationship is proposed by Reid (1994). See Figure 5.

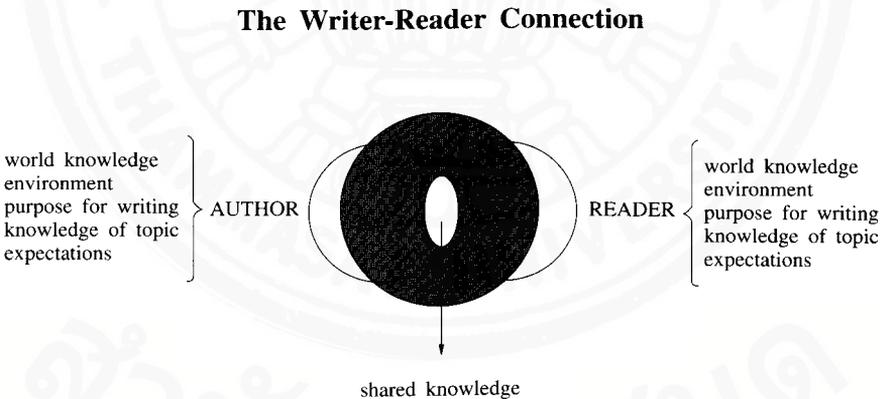


Figure 5. Reader-writer relationships

Based on this model, both writers and readers bring their life experiences to their reading and writing tasks; that is, as writers or readers begin to engage in their language learning, they utilize their background knowledge to achieve their communicative purposes. This shared knowledge increases as outside circles move closer and closer.

A Proposed Model of Reading and Writing Relationship for ESL Situations

Being an English as a second language learner, the writer presents a proposed model of the reading and writing relationships, drawn from the learning procedure encountered while learning a second language. It must be understood that this model is not applied to the truly bilingual. The writer believes that translation plays a vital role in learning a second language. While the translation process from the native language to the second, or from the second to native is an evitable procedure when one is first beginning to learn the language, as one's linguistic competence and fluency increase, the translation process diminishes as the learner becomes truly bilingual, or fluent (see Figure 6).

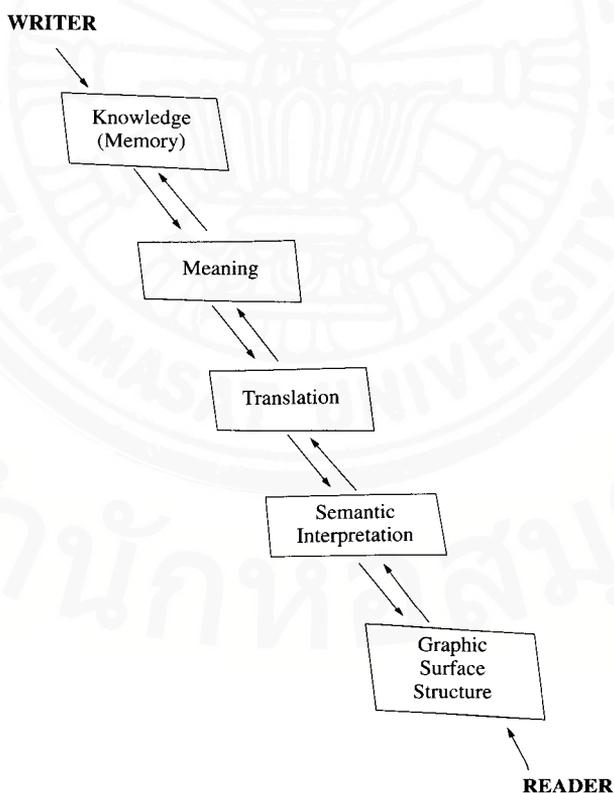


Figure 6. A proposed model for ESL reading and writing relationship

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