Language and Language Teaching

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Language and Language Teaching
Volume 8   Number 1   Issue 15   January 2019

Contents

Editorial

Scholars who were invited to contribute to this volume were not asked to address specific topics. Nevertheless, there was a remarkable agreement on the issues selected and on the results of their investigations, despite differences in the methodologies involved in the research. All the contributions were clearly related to the key issue in the field of language education today—the on-going "war" between "incidental" learning of language and "intentional" learning, often referred to as "acquisition" and "learning."

As reviewed in my article in this volume, the Comprehension Hypothesis claims that we acquire language through a subconscious process: when we understand what we hear and read, in other words when we get "comprehensible input". Its rival hypothesis, the Skill-Building Hypothesis maintains that we develop competence in a language when we consciously learn it, when we study its vocabulary and rules of grammar.

In this issue of *LLT*, several contributors describe case histories in which second language acquirers did not make significant progress with traditional instruction, but did much better when they became pleasure readers and listeners (Renandya, Jacobs, Krashen, Ong Hui Min, Lee, Smith). These learners were allowed to choose their own reading and listening material, thus ensuring that the input was interesting, or even "compelling".

Jeff McQuillan, in his article "We don't need no stinkin' exercises" and Beniko Mason, in her interview, examine cases in which the addition of skill-building exercises to the practice of listening to interesting stories resulted in apparent gains in the vocabulary of learners. However, careful analysis showed that reading and listening was more "efficient", resulting in better acquisition per unit time. In other words, learner time is better spent in listening and reading rather than in doing exercises and other skill-building activities. [1]

Krashen (1994), and Lao and Krashen (2008), present evidence to support the argument that students prefer comprehension-based approach to skill-building approach. McQuillan, in his article "And then there were none", provides additional evidence that is more convincing than the usual interviews and surveys, namely, the small number of self-study students who actually persevere with traditional, skill-building based language books and courses. Smith, Renandya et al., and Lee cite the example of the obvious enthusiasm of those who have tried listening to interesting stories and self-selected free reading. This is additional evidence that comprehensible input is not only more effective and efficient but is also more pleasant.

The "pleasure hypothesis" is also confirmed by Cho and Krashen in their article. According to them, college students studying English language who had the time for self-selected reading sessions or were invited to browse English books, showed increased enthusiasm for pleasure reading.

McQuillan notes in his article "Forced pleasure reading", that some in-school reading programs did not produce positive results because they were based on assigned reading as opposed to self-selected reading; moreover the students were required to read a certain amount. This resulted in students doing less reading. As evidence that students were not "lost in the book", students read nearly exactly the amount they were required to read.

A Final Comment

The papers included in this issue show that we have made considerable progress in the field of second language acquisition in the last few years:

They report impressive additional support for what is perhaps the core ideas in our field, compelling comprehensible input, derived from a variety of methodologies. However, Cho and Krashen note in their paper that despite 40 years of positive evidence in support of the Compelling Comprehension Hypothesis, its application has been sluggish. For example, Self-selected reading still remains an after-thought, awkwardly attached to a skill-building program, if at all.

If the problem is at least in part due to lack of familiarity with the research, as Cho and Krashen suggest, hope is that this volume is part of the solution. [2]

Stephen Krashen

Endnotes

[1] Mason's results were based on her studies of foreign language acquisition, while McQuilllan's were based on an examination of first language studies done by others. Nevertheless, their conclusions were remarkably similar. Their methodological breakthrough—considering efficiency rather than overall gains — is an example of what is called a "multiple discovery" (Simonton, 1988, p. 135), which occurs when " …two or more scientists working independently and often simultaneously, make the exact same contribution to science. Classic contributions include the devising of calculus by Newton and Leibniz, the prediction of planet Neptune by J. C. Adams and LeVerrier, the formulation of the law of conservation of energy of Maer, Helmholz, and Joule, the production of oxygen by Scheele and Priestley, the proposal of a theory of evolution through natural selection by Darwin and Wallace, the introduction of anesthesia in surgery by Long and Morton, the invention of the telephone by Bell and Gray" (Simonton, p. 135).

In this case, the introduction of efficiency analysis into the field of language education appears to be a small correction, but it leads to a major re-analysis and a fundamental change in the theory of language acquisition.

[2] I am aware that I have departed from usual practice by including three papers by one author—Jeff McQuillan. There are precedents for such an unusual step. In 1905, Albert Einstein published four papers in the *Journal of Physics*, that revolutionized the field and our understanding of the universe. Three of them—Photoelectric effect, Brownian movement, and Special Relativity—appeared in one issue of the journal. The fourth on Mass Energy Equivalence, which appeared later that year in the same journal, introduced the most famous equation in science: $e = mc^2$. We are, of course, eager to read Dr. McQuillan's fourth paper in this journal.

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Language and LanguageTeaching (LLT)

Objectives

Published twice a year in January and July, Language and Language Teaching (LLT) reaches out to language teachers, researchers and teacher educators on issues and practices relevant to language teaching. The primary focus of the publication is language pedagogy in elementary schools. LLT proposes to establish a dialogue between theory and practice so that practice contributes to theory as much as theory informs practice. The purpose is to make new ideas and insights from research on language and its pedagogy accessible to practitioners while at the same time inform theorists about the constraints of implementation of new ideas.

Guidelines for Submission of Manuscripts

1. MS word version of the manuscripts (British spellings) should be submitted to the Editors of *LLT* via email at the address(es) given below:

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   If need be, you may also send them by post to: Vidya Bhawan Society, Fatehpura, Udaipur 313004, Rajasthan, India

2. *Language and Language Teaching (LTT)* welcomes original papers/articles that have not been published elsewhere and have not been submitted elsewhere for publication at the time of being sent to *LLT*. Copies of letters granting permission to reproduce illustrations, tables, or lengthy quoted passages should be included with the manuscript.

3. Word limit including the reference, abstract and a short bio note is as follows:

   Articles: 2500; Interview: 3000; Landmark: 3000; Book Reviews: 1500; Classroom Activities: 750; Reports: 1000.

4. The first page should contain the article title, author(s) and their affiliation(s). It should also contain the abstract and keywords.

5. For correspondence, contributor should provide his/her name, phone number, complete mailing address and email address.

6. The style for writing numerical expressions should be consistent throughout the manuscript.

7. Notes should appear at the end of the text and before the references. Footnotes are not permitted. Each endnote used in the article should contain more than a mere reference.

8. Single quotes should be used throughout the article. Double quotes should be used only within single quotes.

9. All the references must be cited in text or endnotes, and follow the APA style of referencing in the text.

   For example:

   (Chomsky, 2010: p. 27) or (Labov, 2010, p. 56) or (Halliday, 2010, pp. 56-57)

10. A detailed list of references in alphabetical order must be provided at the end of the article following the endnotes. All details should be provided like: the author's name, name of the book/ name of the journal with issue number, publisher, place of publication, year and page range/ number (in the case of chapter from an edited book, journal, magazine, weekly, periodicals, newspapers).

11. Page numbers for all direct quotations should be provided. Direct quotations of 45 words or more should be indented.

12. Tables and figures should be clear, readable and comprehensible.

13. Book reviews must contain details like name of the author/editor and book reviewed, place of publication and publisher, year of publication, scanned copy of the cover page, number of pages and price.

14. *LLT* is a refereed journal. All manuscripts are subject to the usual process of anonymous review.

A Fulfilling Journey of Language Acquisition via Story Listening and Reading: A Case of an Adult Scholar

Sy-Ying Lee

Supported by case histories and experimental evidence, Krashen (2016) proposed that we achieve the highest level of literacy and language competence over three stages: hearing stories, reading self-selected narrow recreational texts and reading self-selected professional texts in an area of personal interest. In this article, I will describe how an adult learner of English as a foreign language achieved great success by following the reverse order.

Like most Asian learners of English as a foreign language, the main language learning inputs for this adult learner comprised formal instruction. Although her English competence was adequate for her to pass all the nation-wide entrance exams, for years she had been troubled by the thought that her English was poor, especially in informal situations. This feeling persisted until she tried a new approach, in which she herself selected the fiction books that she found interesting and read and listened to audio recordings of these books. Today, she finds fiction reading so interesting that she listens and reads whenever she has a free moment. This has boosted her competence as well as her confidence in aural and spoken English, in both academic and nonacademic situations, in a remarkably short time.

The Rationale

In his response to Hilfer's claim that "adult language development may be learned … formally … through instruction and explicit explanation of a new language's structure", and that full competence in the language requires "… extensive practice speaking … and a large volume of feedback …" (Hilfer, 2018), Krashen (2018), points out that many real life case histories in fact support just the opposite. Such a case has been presented here.

Karey's Problem

Karey used to be an elementary school teacher in Taiwan, where she taught basic English and other subjects for six years, but she never spoke English informally. She studied information science and computer education as part of her graduate degree, in which English was required only for reading research papers. Karey is currently a full professor, and she specializes in developing the competence of pre- and in-service language teachers in the use of technology to enhance foreign language acquisition. She has received several research awards and has served as a guest editor for special issues of prestigious journals. She has not studied in any English-speaking country.

Karey had used English only to write professional papers for publications and for brief professional correspondence. Until recently, she found making presentations in English very frightening, frustrating, and exhausting, especially in front of professors of English as a Foreign Language (information gathered through interviews with S-Y Lee, conducted in Mandarin).

Karey understood that spoken and written language belong to different genres: "When giving a speech in English, you can't simply read

aloud from your power point slides. This would be very boring." When she had to make a speech, she first wrote a script, had it revised by her assistant with an Applied Linguistics background, and then practiced speaking the script aloud for days, before making the presentation. She found dealing with questions from the audience very difficult, especially when it comprised non-native speakers, whose accents varied drastically. Furthermore, her grammar mistakes and incorrect word choices made her feel humiliated in front of an audience.

This lack of confidence in speaking in English is not restricted to Karey alone. Despite having studied English for at least seven years in school, most college graduates in Taiwan are rarely able to use English confidently and comfortably, especially in public. Karey has this problem even though she has read and written several professional papers in English. She realizes that the successful oral delivery of papers includes paralinguistic elements—body language, facial expressions and appropriate gestures and also the occasional joke. She has observed that other speakers include these elements in their presentations with apparent ease, and felt she could never attain this level of competence. Moreover, she has always felt ill at ease while speaking the more informal English called for in non-academic interactions with scholars at workshops and conferences. These include conversation at the dinner table or while accompanying guests to different locations.

Her expertise and research specialty in the use of technology to enhance language learning and teacher training in teaching Chinese as a foreign language helped her understand her problem. What she needed was material for daily life conversations—descriptions of events, locations, scenery, local culture and people, commentaries on international news, educational policies and entertainment.

Carrying with her years of accumulated experiences of frustration, a nearly incurable sense of failure, and the incessant pressure of having to use spoken English on more and more occasions during recent years (for research purposes and because of the increasing popularity of Chinese language), Karey became desperate to find ways to improve her English speaking ability.

She tried a variety of approaches before she turned to reading and listening to stories. She began with attempting to read classic literature, a path that many adults try, without success. The language level was simply too high and incomprehensible, and the necessity of looking up unknown words interfered with her flow of reading; she was unable to keep her attention on making meaning. Then she tried "Tutor ABC" and other online English tutors with a private teacher. She stopped because of the tutors' obsession with correcting her pronunciation. Some friends enthusiastically suggested that she watch TED talks because they seemed to be a good fit with her scholarly background and her need to talk in front of experts and professionals. She did not, however, find them interesting as they were not related to her professional interests.

Karey's journey in acquiring the kind of English she needed began when she read *Comprehensible and Compelling: The Causes and Effects of Free Voluntary Reading*, in Mandarin (Krashen, Lee & Lao, 2017). The authors argued that we acquire language by understanding what we listen to or read. They added that the most effective input for language acquisition is one which is "compelling"—generally a story—and so interesting that we "forget" it is in another language. The authors suggested a three-stage path to advanced language proficiency,

beginning with listening to a large number of stories, followed by self-selected reading for pleasure, and finally ending in personalized reading in areas of special interest to the reader. It is the middle stage, self-selected reading, that helps learners discover their interest and passion. This stage is also instrumental in building expertise and helping learners acquire language.

However, finding input that is both comprehensible and interesting is not easy for adult second language acquirers (Cho & Krashen, 1994). Karey began with simple English books she had bought for her children, the *Magic Tree House* series (now her children have grown up and those books had been lying untouched on the shelves for years). Thanks to her grasp of basic English and her experience in writing and publishing research papers, reading these children's books was not difficult.; moreover, these books were not boring, even though they were written for young readers.

Karey easily immersed herself in the stories. During the interview, we agreed it was her comprehension of these books, rich in scientific knowledge, that kept her motivated to continue with self-selected voluntary reading. Unfortunately, not all the books she read were as interesting as the *Magic Tree House* books. Given that the first stage in the three-path to advanced learning proficiency advocated by Krashen, Lee and Lao was that of *listening* to stories, Karey should have started with that. However, she had no chance of "being read to".

As a researcher familiar with technology as a resource and support for independent learning, Karey found the BBC six-minute news briefs to be of interest. A podcast of *Anne of the Green Gables*, a well-known classic for children, stimulated her interest in seeing the film again, having seen it years ago. When she searched for it on YouTube (Fig. 1: *Learning*
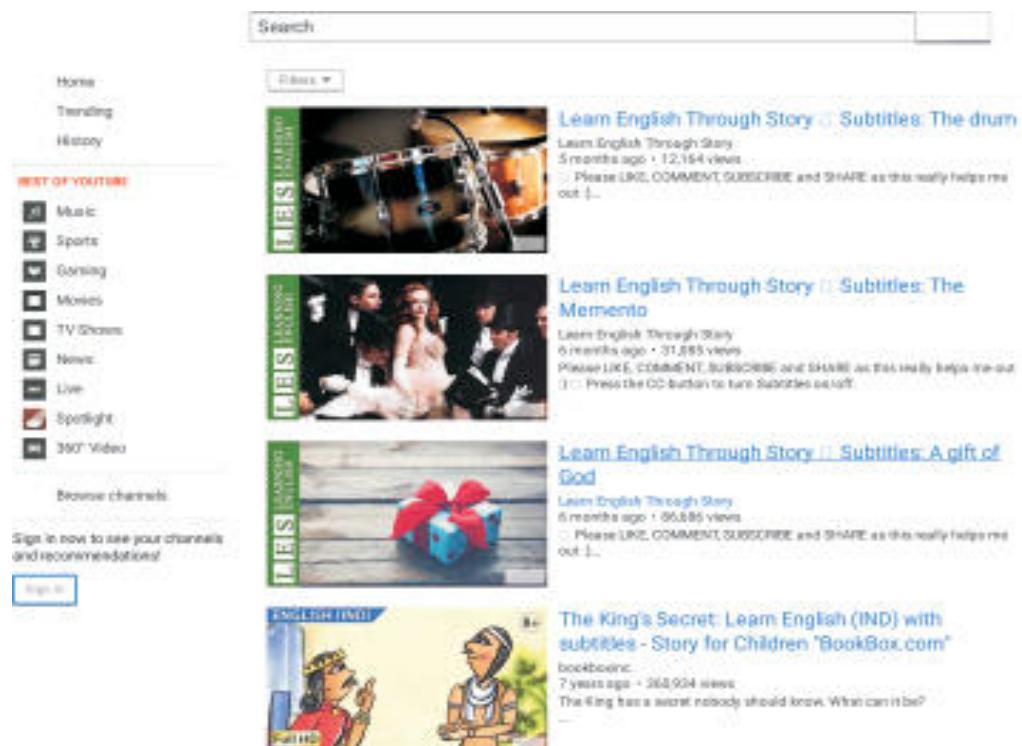
Figure 1. Learning English Through Stories on YouTube.

English Through Story), she found audio versions of many interesting stories with subtitles, all free, and all edited to a level comprehensible for her.

To help her take full advantage of these stories, she got a mobile connection with unlimited internet access, which made it possible to listen to stories while driving, and her husband helped her connect her mobile phone to their TV monitor. She found the stories so compelling, and the visual support so helpful that she had less of an urge to look up unfamiliar words, which, it can be argued, resulted in greater gains of vocabulary through context. Furthermore, thanks to an e-book website she discovered, the pdf files of many of the stories she had listened to online, were now available for her to read in print, over a cup of coffee at Starbucks, or while waiting for friends or colleagues for meetings or appointments, or at home after work.

From March 2018, Karey began keeping a reading log of all the books she had listened to or read, or both (see Table 1 for her partial reading list; this list did not begin with the first book she had read and she eventually discontinued the list). She developed a strong interest in knowing more about how language was used to create a story that could be so enthralling. Reading became a welcome part of her daily routine.

Table 1

Karey's Reading List

Number	Story	Author	Listen	Read
1	*A Christmas Carol*	Charles Dickens	x	
2	*A Shot in the Night*	Ridley Anew	x	
3	*A Hacker's Revenge*	John Backhouse	x	
4	*About a Boy*	Nick Hornby	x	
5	*Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp*	Philip Pullman	x	
6	*Ana Karenina*	Leo Tolstoy	x	
7	*Blackbeard's Treasure*	Jenny Dooley	x	
8	*Count Vlad*	Jenny Dooley	x	
9	*Dante's Peak*	Dewey Gram	x	
10	*Hampton House*	Jerry Dooley	x	
11	*Home for Christmas*	Andrea M. Hutchinson	x	x
12	*Ireland*	Tim Vicary	x	
13	*Jane Eyre*	Charlotte Brontë	v	
14	*Life Exchange*	Jenny Dooley	x	x
15	*Madame Bovary*	Gustave Flaubert	x	
16	*Mary, Queens of Scots*	Tim Vicary	x	
17	*My Cousin Rachel*	Daphne Du Maurier	x	
18	*Murder on the Orient Express*	Agatha Christie	x	x
19	*Orpheus Descending*	Jenny Dooley	x	

Narrow Reading

The pace of Karey's reading gradually accelerated. In the five months since March 2018, she has read and/or listened to nearly 100 stories (Fig. 2). This includes classic children's fiction such as *Peter Pan, The Little Mermaid, Swan Lake, and The Secret Garden*; and simplified literary works of titles such as *Jane Eyre, Anna Karenina, A Christmas Carol*, *The Great Gatsby*, etc. She has also read other stories that she found appealing—some much-loved and touching such as *The Railway Children*, some thrilling but metaphorical such as *Life Exchange*, and others horrifying yet profound, with life messages such as *The Stranger*.

During the interviews, she described the plots of these stories with great passion, as if she had just finished reading them. She also shared her reflections by explaining how she interpreted the meaning of these stories in the context of her own life experience, religious beliefs and social values.
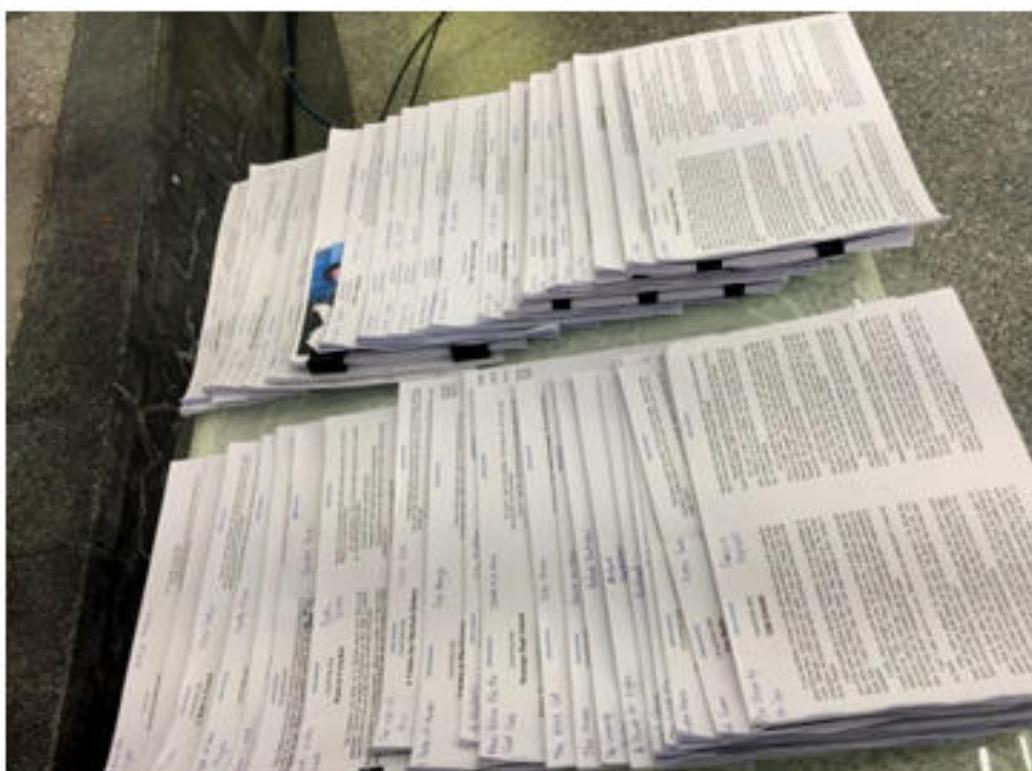
Figure 2. Some stories printed out for reading

Interestingly, one story by Agatha Christie, *Murder on the Oriental Express*, aroused in her an intense enthusiasm for detective stories, reading preference in which the reader focuses on the work of same genre or works by the same author.

This newly developed interest in detective stories was especially valuable because she found that these stories allowed her to acquire the language of action, location, motion and motive. This was precisely the language she was lacking when having conversations with guests or when giving speeches. She was happy when she realized that she did not need to attend conversation classes, or practice speaking under artificial conditions, or memorize grammar or vocabulary for her next presentation.

Agatha Christie books are now her favourite reading material. To read more of the author, once again she has found an online e-reader with lots of Agatha Christie books (Figure 3).
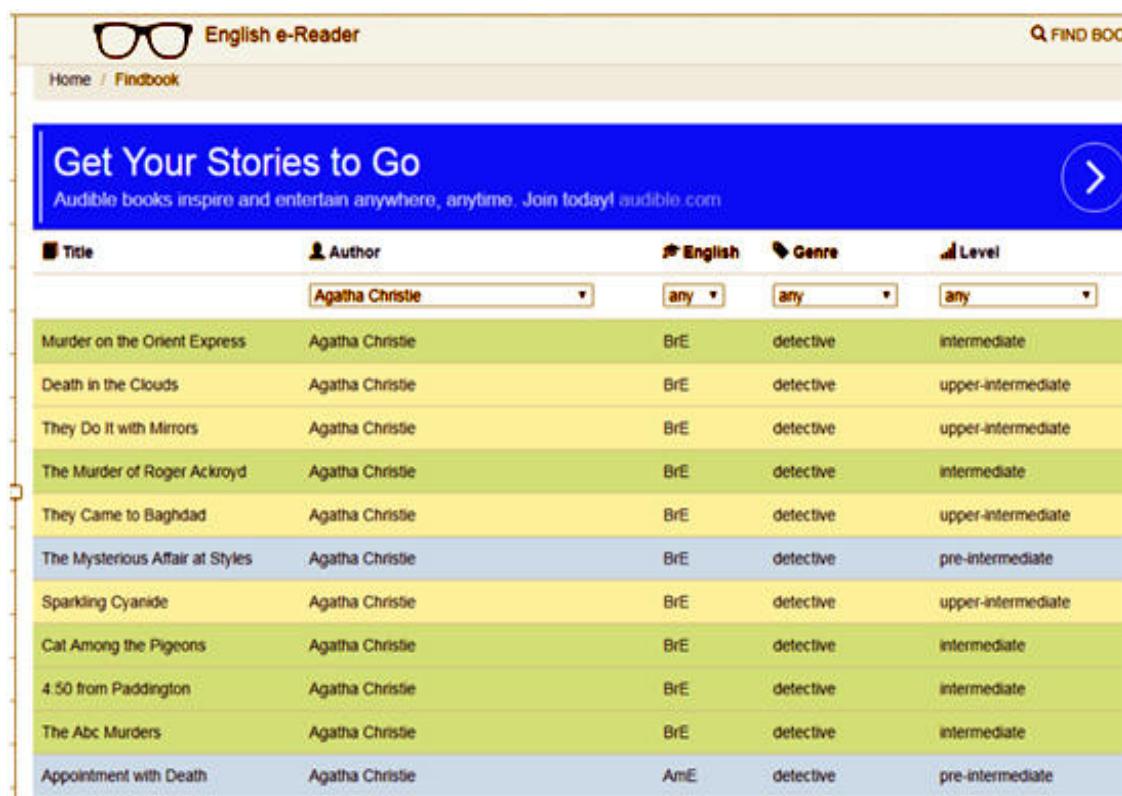
She has recently discovered another author, Richard Macandrew, who has written several book series, including detective stories for students of English as a foreign language.

Title	Author	English	Genre	Level
	Agatha Christie	any	any	any
Murder on the Orient Express	Agatha Christie	BrE	detective	intermediate
Death in the Clouds	Agatha Christie	BrE	detective	upper-intermediate
They Do It with Mirrors	Agatha Christie	BrE	detective	upper-intermediate
The Murder of Roger Ackroyd	Agatha Christie	BrE	detective	intermediate
They Came to Baghdad	Agatha Christie	BrE	detective	upper-intermediate
The Mysterious Affair at Styles	Agatha Christie	BrE	detective	pre-intermediate
Sparkling Cyanide	Agatha Christie	BrE	detective	upper-intermediate
Cat Among the Pigeons	Agatha Christie	BrE	detective	intermediate
4.50 from Paddington	Agatha Christie	BrE	detective	intermediate
The Abc Murders	Agatha Christie	BrE	detective	intermediate
Appointment with Death	Agatha Christie	AmE	detective	pre-intermediate

Figure 3. English e-reader

Progress Perceived During the Five Months

I had not planned to write a report on Karey's reading progress when I first started talking to her. It was Karey's own discovery of the gradual improvement in her reading speed, oral fluency, expressive richness and listening ability that motivated me to write about her. Thus, neither does this paper contain any statistics to show how many words she gained, nor any test scores. Also Karey has now stopped recording what she reads due to her very tight work schedule and another important reason, "I am now reading for pleasure! There is no need to know how much I have listened to or read each day."

I conducted several hour-long interviews with Karey in coffee shops to gather the material for this report. As I spoke to her, it became increasingly clear that Karey's experiences needed to be shared. They showed that it was possible to improve without formal instruction, output practice, private tutors and constant assessment, as long as the supply of stories was sufficient and free selection was granted. The most significant outcome of Karey's experiment was that she felt less apprehensive about speaking English in public – something that had troubled her for years.

In April 2018, only one month after she started reading and listening to stories, Karey was

invited to give a fifteen-minute presentation about her research on the use of technology in language teaching, at an international conference on Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching. In this presentation, for the first time she felt good about her performance, "I used to feel extremely nervous when giving presentations in English with even only one English teacher in the audience!"

In June, she was invited by two top universities in Hong Kong to talk at seminars. She was also asked to consult with faculty members at one of the two universities. This is what she had to say:

> Compared to the visit to Hong Kong a few years ago, which was like a nightmare, my confidence this time was much better. Interacting with each professor or researcher, each with different ideas and topics, was much easier this time. When focusing on the content, I simply forgot that I was using English in all discussions!

In August, Karey invited a journal editor from the United States to give a talk at the university where she taught. This time her experience was very different from her previous experiences of interacting in English:

> No stuttering, no embarrassment, no frustration! Our conversations at the lunch and dinner tables were full of laughter, pleasantries, and intellectual exchanges of viewpoints on different topics. I owe it all to the stories I have enjoyed in the past few months!

Just two days before this article was completed, Karey called and told me, "Can you believe it? A one-hour long-distance Skype meeting is no problem for me now!" Nearly all speakers of English as a second language know how challenging it is to listen to someone on the phone or in front of a monitor.

Observing the improvement resulting from reading and listening to stories in real situations is a better assessment of language acquisition than paper and pencil test results, that do not reflect the changes in behavioral, cognitive and affective aspects.

Conclusion

Karey's progress, it can be argued, may be largely due to her strong motivation. However, many language learners have very high motivation levels, but they quit because of lack of proper materials and a solid understanding of the theory of language learning. To conclude, I will present two issues worth further contemplation:

First, many scholars or teachers strongly argue in favour of form-focused approaches. This argument, however loud, is not backed by longitudinal investigation. If formal learning is so effective, Asian students, having received so many years of school instruction focusing on form, should be very strong in all aspects of language performance. Proponents of this approach have apparently not noticed that research shows that the effect of form-focused instruction is fragile (Krashen, 2003).

Karey's experience, in conjunction with that of so many others, (see e.g. Elley, 1991; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Krashen, 2004; Krashen & Mason, 2017; Mason & Krashen, 2017; Mason & Krashen, 2004; Wang & Lee, 2007), shows the opposite, both cognitively and affectively. Karey, a distinguished professor as well as an outstanding student throughout her school years, had six years of formal instruction in English, three in junior high school and three in the first three years of the five-year teachers' college. Other than this, she was also exposed to English during her graduate studies, when reading and writing journal papers. The language instruction in school was clearly not enough for her to deal

with the varied and complex ways in which language is used in real life situations.

Fiction contains exactly the materials we need to face this challenge; it includes communication of all types such as chatting, negotiation, discussion, description, narration and even teasing or joking. No school text will encompass all the language features we are likely to encounter in real life (Hsieh, Wang & Lee, 2011; McQuillan, 2016).

Second, formal instruction did not help Karey overcome her extreme anxiety when it came to public speaking in English. Her case was similar to that of an adult Spanish learner, who had to take a pill (valium) before going to class because "it freaks [her] out" when she has to do an oral report or is called upon to speak in class (Krashen, 2017). Karey said that the "pounding in her heart" was hard to bear and she considered herself to be a boring speaker and conversationalist.

After reading and listening to stories that contained a lot of rich language input, she is now a much more natural conversationalist, willing to share her own stories and experiences in addition to her research expertise, and brave enough to comment on issues others bring up spontaneously. Even without the chance to study abroad, she is now becoming more confident in non-academic situations. At the end of our interview, she concluded, "I think I have almost crossed over the border built by fear".

A plethora of studies on second language acquisition have provided empirical evidence that the path Karey followed is the most powerful means to improve aural and oral language proficiency (Elley, 1991; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Krashen, 2004; Krashen & Mason, 2017; Mason & Krashen, 2017; Mason & Krashen, 2004; Wang & Lee, 2007). Thus far, the available evidence indicates that it works for children as well as adults. Therefore it has

important implications for the school curriculum, and can make a huge contribution to informal, out of school language use for people such as Karey. Her story adds one more piece of evidence to support the Comprehension Hypothesis in that language is successfully acquired when we understand what we read and hear (Krashen, 2003). Finally, Karey's case shows that it is never too late to acquire a second or foreign language or improve fluency via story reading and listening.

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Call for Papers for LLT 16 (July 2019)

A Special Issue on Literacy

Guest Editor: Professor Sadhna Saxena

The language of instruction in schools and at the higher education level is an important but unresolved issue in a multilingual country such as India. This is because India does not have a national language and in principle, each state is free to use either its state language or English for the state level official work as well as for communicating with the central government. As education is included in the concurrent list, states can exercise this freedom in the field of education as well. There is research-based evidence that brings clarity on teaching in the mother tongue of the students at the elementary level. However, there is neither a unanimous opinion, nor any evidence or policy with regard to the language of education at the post-elementary and higher education level. One view, that has a very strong rationale, is in favour of teaching in English at higher education levels for two reasons. First, lack of knowledge of English impacts the employment opportunities of the students and second, it hinders their academic progress. That is, without a good command over English, neither are students of higher education able to access knowledge in the academic writings which are mostly in English, nor are they able to publish their research. The other view however is that for the majority of people in India, English is not the language of communication. Therefore, the imposition of a culturally alien language, especially by ill-informed and ill-equipped teachers, has serious learning consequences. That is to say that if the medium of instruction in higher education is English, neither do the students gain in-depth knowledge of the discipline nor do they learn the language.

This special issue of *LLT 16* focuses on issues related to language and education. This covers the role played by language in acquiring knowledge and learning a discipline, and whether the lack of command over the language of instruction has an impact on learning and cognition. As the nature of each discipline is different, for this special issue, we are inviting papers on themes such as language and mathematics, language and social sciences, language and humanities, language and physical sciences and, language and literacy. The last date for submission of articles is March 07, 2019.

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The Power of Reading: Case Histories of Second and Foreign Language Readers

Willy A. Renandya, George M. Jacobs, Stephen Krashen and Crystal Ong Hui Min

In this paper, we will present two case histories of learners of English as a second/foreign language. We will focus on how their reading habits resulted in remarkable improvements in their linguistic competence. These case histories provide additional evidence in support of the Reading Hypothesis, which claims that high achievement is possible when L2 learners engage in self-selected reading, that contains comprehensible and compelling language input.

Introduction

Case histories have the potential to make important contributions to both theory and practice (Nye, 2012). In terms of theory, although they have largely been used to help generate new hypotheses, they can also be used to test existing hypotheses by providing supporting or contradictory data. In terms of practice, they can be used to give guidance on application by examining cases of successful and unsuccessful implementation. Lastly, case histories serve to inspire other language learners by demonstrating that high achievement is indeed possible.

The case histories presented here focus on the Reading Hypothesis, which derives from the more general Comprehension Hypothesis. Comprehension Hypothesis claims that we acquire language when we understand what we read, when we obtain comprehensible input.

Research strongly suggests that the most potent form of reading is one that is not only comprehensible, but also "compelling" or highly interesting (Krashen, Lee, & Lao, 2017). A good way to increase the likelihood of obtaining compelling input is to encourage self-selection. There is strong evidence from experimental and correlational research that confirms that self-selected reading leads to superior development of literacy, including vocabulary, grammar, writing style, reading ability, and spelling (Krashen, 2004; Krashen, Lee, & Lao, 2017).

The two cases of self-selected reading examined in this paper are superficially different, but in both cases, the similarities are far more important than the differences between them. In the first case, the learner's reading habit started before she began school; she read in a second language that she spoke very well. In the second case, the reader developed the reading habit in English as a foreign language, when he was a young adult. In this case, there was clearly room for improvement in the learners' foreign language competence.

Crystal Ong Hui Min

Crystal Ong Hui Min was born in Singapore in 1998. The reading culture in her family was, and still is somewhat varied. Her maternal grandmother grew up in Malaysia at a time when society generally thought that girls did not need to go to school. Thus, Hui Min's grandmother was illiterate, a fact that she bemoaned till her death. Hui Min's maternal grandfather left school when he was about 12 years old, but he did learn to read, and he continues to read a daily newspaper in Chinese. On Hui Min's father's side, her grandmother

moved from China to Singapore, and lived her life as a non-reading Hainanese monolingual speaker. Her paternal grandfather, who passed away long before Hui Min was born, dropped out of school after the primary level, but was literate. Hui Min's parents dropped out of secondary school. Their reading is largely restricted to newspapers, with the mother preferring Chinese newspapers, and the father English newspapers.

Since her birth, Hui Min has lived in a multi-generational home. Currently, she lives with more than ten extended family members in the same flat. Although Mandarin is the main language spoken in her family, Hui Min has always been quite comfortable in English, since she was very young. She attended a bilingual preschool, and spent the weekends with her uncle and another of the authors of this paper George Jacobs (GJ) and his wife. Conversation with GJ was in English and he and his bilingual wife read to Hui Min in English. In fact, it would be accurate to describe Hui Min as an English dominant bilingual.

Even before starting primary school, Hui Min stood out as an avid reader of fiction in English. Her family supported her reading habit by taking her to well-stocked public libraries and bookshops, and her aunt (Hui Min's father's sister) who lives in the US regularly sent her English books.

A few things were significant about Hui Min's reading habits. First, she read the same book as many as five or more times. Second, she enjoyed series books, such as the Junie B. Jones series, as well as multiple books by the same author, such as Beverly Cleary and later Jodi Picoult and Haruki Murakami. Third, she was a quick reader, as GJ realized one day when he asked the then eight-year old Hui Min if she was enjoying a book she had been reading. When Hui Min said that she had already finished the book, GJ was very surprised. Unable to

escape his role as a teacher, GJ decided to read the book himself and give his niece a quiz, which she passed with flying colours.

A fourth characteristic of Hui Min's reading was her insistence on reading fiction exclusively. Even when she was told about the many academic and knowledge benefits of including non-fiction in her reading portfolio, and even when she was offered inducements, she insisted on keeping to fiction for her out-of-school reading. Fifth, Hui Min read anywhere and everywhere—at the dinner table, when travelling on public transport and even when she was supposed to be asleep.

What have the results been so far for Hui Min? She has consistently been a top student at all levels of school. At the time of writing this article, she was about to begin studies at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, rated among the world's best on many international indices. In addition to excelling in her studies, Hui Min also has an active social and extracurricular life. In contrast, Hui Min's only sibling, a brother born in 2001, never developed a reading habit despite receiving the same encouragement that his sister received, and despite having his older sister as a role model. According to our observations, to date he has been markedly less successful in his studies and markedly less active in social and extracurricular activities.

Willy A. Renandya

Willy Renandya was born in Indonesia and did all of his primary, secondary and undergraduate education in Indonesia itself. Like most Indonesians, he acquired several languages, including Indonesian, Javanese and a bit of Mandarin and Hokkien. Hokkien was spoken mainly with his father and his circle of Hokkien-speaking friends.

The reading culture in Willy's family was rather weak during his childhood. Besides school

textbooks, there was practically no reading material at home. When he was in secondary school, Willy started reading comics and series books in Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of Indonesia. He borrowed these books from the neighbourhood libraries. He became a ferocious reader of serialized fiction; rarely, if ever, did he read non-fiction material such as newspapers, magazines, or any "serious" books.

Willy's favourite author was Asmaraman Kho Ping Ho, a Chinese Indonesian writer, who had written some 120 serialized kung fu stories. His novels were among the best-selling novels, attracting millions of fanatic readers who impatiently waited for the next title of his book to be released. Kho's books were not just about fighting and revenge, the usual staple of kung fu stories. He skillfully infused other powerful ingredients into his stories such as love, friendship, hatred, loyalty and betrayal. Born in 1926 into a Chinese Indonesian family, Kho died in 1994. Many of those born in the 50s and 60s fondly remember reading Kho's delightful novels.

Like most of his peers who spent six years studying English in high school, Willy's English proficiency was almost non-functional, probably at the A1 level on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) band scale. He was familiar with a few words and knew how to put these words into sentences, but that was about all. He had never used the language for any meaningful communication, either orally or in writing.

Willy graduated from high school in 1975, and armed with this very basic knowledge of English, he applied for admission into the English language education department of a teacher's college in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Willy admitted that he got accepted by sheer luck. All the lectures were conducted in English, so it was quite a struggle for him to understand the

lessons. Most of the time, he would just listen without really comprehending much of what was happening in class.

The English Department had a small reading library that was managed by the students. The collection in this library mainly consisted of simplified classics such as Moby-Dick, David Copperfield, Wuthering Heights, and Oliver Twist. Willy had to read these books and then write book reports on them. He found the books boring for the most part, and the book reports burdensome. His initial enthusiasm died very quickly and he began to lose interest.

One day, Willy stumbled upon a novel in a local book shop—a Perry Mason book written by Erle Stanley Gardner (Perry Mason is the main character of more than 80 detective novels written by Gardner). He had never heard of the author before, nor had he watched the Perry Mason TV series. He picked up the book simply because the title and the book cover looked attractive. Although it was an unabridged novel, Willy was able to read it with sufficient comprehension. This was partly because the novel contained dialogues written in simple, conversational language. There were words and expressions he did not understand, but the storyline was so captivating that he continued reading the book and finished it within hours. He felt exhilarated. He had been able to finish reading an entire novel in English with complete comprehension and enjoyment! This produced in him a strong urge to read more books by the same author. He went back to the bookshop and bought a new Perry Mason title. Five more books later, he was addicted to Perry Mason. He kept going back to the shop and eventually bought and read about 50 Perry Mason titles. He then moved on to the Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot series. In the meantime, his classmates continued to read graded readers from the department library.

This self-selected reading of books had a huge impact on Willy's language proficiency. He had started out at the bottom of the class in terms of language proficiency, and was even falling behind in his studies. By contrast, his classmates were quite fluent (most of them were able to express themselves clearly), and did not seem to have any difficulty with their lessons. However, by the end of his undergraduate studies, Willy had become very fluent in English and was able to communicate both orally and in writing, as well as if not better than most of his classmates. He graduated with the highest GPA in his class. Other than his reading habits, there was nothing that could explain his extraordinary progress. He did not have any friends or family members with whom he could practise speaking in English, nor had he travelled to any English-speaking countries to practice his English.

Soon after Willy completed his education degree, he landed a teaching job in an English language school in Indonesia, joining the staff of ten English teachers. Since they all had different educational backgrounds, their levels of proficiency in English were rather varied too. To support their professional development needs, the school asked the teachers to take the TOEFL test (paper-based), so that they could identify the skill areas that needed improvement. All 10 teachers signed up for the test. The majority of them scored slightly above, at, or below the mean score of 500. However two teachers, both of whom were avid readers of English novels, scored above 600, placing them roughly in the 85th and 97th percentiles. Willy was one of these two.

At the time, Willy could not understand how he had managed to increase his fluency in English in such a short period of time. When people asked him how he had done it, he simply said, "I don't know, I just did". It was much later when he did his graduate studies in TESOL, and was introduced to the works of Stephen Krashen,

Richard Day and other SLA experts, did he understand the power of self-selected narrow reading in the context of language development.

Conclusion

The impressive growth in the language of Hui Min and Willy described in the case studies presented here is consistent with the results of experimental and correlational research, as well as previously reported case histories (Krashen, 2004). Recent results include Sullivan & Brown, 2014; Yeo, Chew & Krashen, 2016; Cho, 2016, 2017; Mason & Krashen, 2017. Both learners showed unexpected and unusual development in literacy and school performance. They did not read for improvement, but for pleasure. As was the case in previously published case histories, superior language development and school success were unexpected and came as a surprise (Lin, Shin & Krashen, 2007; the case of Cohen in Krashen, 2004; Mason 2017).

Outside of their schoolwork, both Hui and Willy largely read fiction, which they selected themselves. Both were "series" readers and read books by a single author, thereby continuing the same story or theme. Previously published case histories show that many dedicated readers prefer fiction, and often stay with a few favourite authors and series books (Cho, 2016, 2017; Mason, 2017; Henkin & Krashen, 2015; Mason, 2017). Both Hui and Willy maintained their reading habit for a number of years.

Based on case histories of second language acquirers who were long-term pleasure readers in English, Cho and Krashen (2016) concluded that the following conditions contributed to the establishment and maintenance of a reading habit:

1. An initial pleasant reading experience

2. Access to interesting reading material

3. A time and place to read regularly

4. The freedom to select own reading

5. No tests, no workbook exercises and no rewards for reading

It appears that all these conditions were met in the cases presented here. The two case histories thus confirm not only the Reading Hypothesis, but are also consistent with the importance of a pleasant initial reading experience, access, time and place to read, and self-selection.

Meeting these conditions can result in impressive achievement in a pleasurable manner.

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King Felix: The Case of a Taiwanese Man Acquiring English through Major League Baseball Broadcasts

Ken Smith

While philosophies behind teaching and acquiring English may vary around the world, the two most common approaches can be defined as belonging to either Skill-Building or Comprehension-Based methodology (Krashen, 2017).

In Taiwan, in-school English education largely follows the Skill-Building methodology, or at best an eclectic approach consisting of both Skill-Building and Comprehension-Based techniques, despite evidence to support a purely Comprehension-Based approach (Mason, 2004; Smith, 2006). The following case study of an adult learner, Felix, offers additional evidence to support comprehension-based methodology for foreign language acquisition.

Meeting Felix

Felix is a 41-year-old Taiwanese man with a high school education, who currently works in the construction industry in Taipei, Taiwan. I first met Felix on my return to Taiwan in August 2018, when I was temporarily living in the *Backpackers Hostel* in Taipei. As is often the case in hostels, rooms at the *Backpackers Hostel* were small and had a number of bunk beds. I was shown where I would be resting my head for the next two nights. When I opened the door, I was greeted with a friendly smile and the following greeting in English: "Hi, my name is Felix. I'm in this one." (pointing to his bunk).

I responded to his greeting with: "Like the cat?"

He said, "No, like the baseball pitcher from the Seattle Mariners, King Felix."

Being from Massachusetts, I had grown up listening to radio broadcasts of baseball games, watching games on television and going to Fenway Park (the oldest ballpark in Major League Baseball) with family and friends. Because Major League Baseball was part of my upbringing and because of my interest in second language acquisition I decided to engage further with Felix.

I think Felix and I connected with each other because neither of us was a typical resident of *Backpackers Hostel.* A casual conversation ensued with this greying, tired-eyed man I was sharing my room with. Felix was a 41-year-old Taiwanese man working in the construction industry. He preferred to live in hostels in order to save enough money so he could some day buy his own apartment.

I told Felix that I was American and was doing a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. I had been teaching English for many years at a University in Kaohsiung, and if I wanted to continue to do so, I needed a Ph.D. I added that I was in Taiwan because I had taken a break from my studies, and would be living in Taipei for a little while. All of this seemed to interest Felix.

Communicating with Felix in English

Felix had chosen to engage with me in English. As soon as I opened the door he had greeted me with a "Hi", making it clear that he wanted to converse in English. Although there were

mistakes in his syntax and he was also not very fluent, he was able to communicate quite clearly. I asked Felix to tell me about his English language learning experience in Taiwan. A smile spread across his face as if he had something exciting to tell me that he had been waiting to share, and I just happened to be there to hear it.

Approach 1: English Learning in School

Felix told me that there was nothing exciting or unusual about his English language learning experience in school. He had received a traditional education in high school, however he never finished school. He told me he had not attended any English cram schools (extra schooling students take after school classes mostly to prepare them for examinations). Felix's description of his educational experiences and his attitude could at best be described as "indifferent". When I explained the word to Felix, he did not quite understand it, but he nodded as if to imply, "You understand".

He added that he did not really like school and that learning English was all about memorizing words, studying grammar, doing worksheets and taking tests. He explained that he had lost interest in learning English, and eventually no longer wanted to continue with his studies.

Approach 2: Acquiring English through Major League Baseball Broadcasts

Felix told me that although he had decided to drop out of school, he still thought English was important. Therefore he decided to try a different approach—one in which he combined something that he loved, baseball, and something he felt was important, acquiring English. He decided to listen to the broadcasts of Major League Baseball (MLB, as Felix and many Taiwanese call it, referring to the highest level professional baseball played in the United States and Canada).

Felix explained that in Taiwan, when Major League Baseball games are broadcast, one can

listen to them in either Mandarin or English – something I did not know. As Felix was a fan of baseball and had played it as a young man, he understood the game. Moreover, he found watching and listening to games on TV compelling. Krashen (1996), in a paper titled "The Case For Narrow Listening", provides theoretical support for what Felix was telling me. Krashen states: "Repeated listening, interest in the topic, and familiar context help make the input comprehensible". Felix explained to me that he listened to the baseball broadcast to help him improve his English fluency, which he values and thinks is important for his life ahead. Furthermore, he deeply enjoyed listening to the broadcasts. Krashen, Lee, and Lao (2017), explain that interesting comprehensible input may not be enough; compelling comprehensible input is ideal in order for language acquisition to occur. Felix told me that listening to Major League Baseball broadcasts is now all he does to improve his English. He said that he could have a brief chance encounter with an English-speaking foreigner on the streets or in a hostel where he may be staying, but that was unlikely. Listening to baseball games was a better, more regular way of interacting with English, rather than waiting to come across a foreigner to talk to.

While there were no standardized tests to assess Felix's progress in English, one may conclude that listening to Major League Broadcasts in English has been effective in improving Felix's fluency as he was able to communicate with me quite freely. Felix told me he would most likely not have had the confidence to initiate a conversation or interact with a foreigner prior to his new English language acquisition approach.

Conclusion

I was expecting Felix to be around the *Backpackers Hostel* for a while longer, so I could talk to him some more. However, I did

not see him again after that first night. There are two main conclusions to be drawn from the "King Felix" case study.

(1) Evidence seems to support the conclusion that the ideal conditions for language acquisition include not only comprehensible input, but also highly interesting, or "compelling" input (Krashen, Lee and Lao, 2017).

(2) Some people, despite how they are taught in school, find ways to acquire a second language on their own.

Despite the fact that the Taiwan education system did not work for him, Felix was able to figure out how to acquire English in the best way for himself. Perhaps schools in Taiwan and in other places where English is taught as a foreign language, ought to reconsider their attachment to Skill-Building and adopt a more Comprehension-Based methodology. Not only was this methodology more effective for "King Felix", but it was also more enjoyable for him.

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The Star Method: Will They Do It?

David Miller, Andrew Hasler and Stephen Krashen

Then it occurred to me: Maybe the only authority on 'good books' for kids is a kid. Should we (educators) stand aside and let children recommend books to each other?"

(Adriance 2010).

A number of studies have confirmed the impact of peer culture when it comes to recommending books for pleasure reading (Rinehart, Gerlach, Wisell, and Walker, 1998; Hopper, 2003; Howard, 2008; Mansor, Ransul, Rauf and Koh 2013; Jones, 2015; Scholastic, 2017). In fact, some of the following studies include empirical data:

-   Jones (2015), states that 60 per cent of 76 middle-school English readers in Singapore identified friends as the main source of book recommendations.

-   According to Howard (2008), 40 per cent of "avid" and "occasional" readers were "social readers", who relied a great deal on friends for reading recommendations.

-   As per the Scholastic survey of 2017 (Scholastic, 2017), over 1000 young readers in the United States between the ages 6 to 17 were asked to answer the following question: "From which of the following do you get the best ideas about books to read from?" Options included parents, siblings, librarians, book fairs, stores and websites, and friends. The option "Friends" was a popular choice among all ages, and at just under 20 per cent, it was also the most frequently chosen option in the age group of 12-14 years.

However, in a questionnaire given by Hopper (2005), to 11 to 14 year olds in the UK, only 4 per cent (17 out of 437) mentioned word of mouth by peers, when asked what made them choose the book they were reading at the time. Nevertheless, as indicated above, young readers respect the recommendations made by their peers.

A possible objection to encouraging peer input for book selection is the concern that children will only recommend low quality reading material to each other, such as comic books and series books. However, research on first language acquirers strongly suggests that these objections are unwarranted. Krashen and Ujiie (2005) assert that: (1) Light reading promotes literacy in general, (2) Light reading leads to heavier reading, i.e. it serves as a conduit for heavier reading and (3) Young readers have little interest in books that adults think of as "quality" literature.

Even if peer recommended reading were problematic, critics will be relieved to learn that as readers make progress, their interest in reading expands, and they gradually choose more and more challenging reading matter (LaBrant, 1958; Schoonover, 1938; Krashen, Lee and Lao, 2017).

High school librarian Laduska Adriance (2010), proposed a unique way of encouraging peer recommendation—the "Star Method". Students were asked to draw a star or place a star-shaped sticker on the inside corner of the library books they liked. The idea was that with time, popular books would accumulate stars. Adriance further

recommended that a special display of "starred" books be created in a place that was easily visible to the students entering the library. She reported great interest in this display among her students. This increased the visibility of popular books—not books recommended by Goodreads, or prize-winning books, or books recommended by teachers or librarians, but books that fellow students had enjoyed.

Given the challenge and the importance of supporting the diverse preferences of middle school readers, we wanted to explore a way to highlight the importance of an informal culture of peer recommendation. This is the first of several reports.

In this paper we will focus on the initial reactions of 5th and 6th grade students to the Star Method. We will also report their reaction to the book displays of the starred books, and lastly the impact of this method on their literacy development.

We intend to report our results step by step, as we feel that this method has tremendous potential, is easily implementable and is zero cost.

Method

We implemented the Star Method in a South Korean elementary school in Seoul, for students of English as a foreign language who had had several years of exposure to English in school. The librarian introduced students in grades 5 and 6 to this concept during English library time across two sessions held one week apart to familiarize students with the process:.

- In the first session, the Star Method was explained to students.

  o Students were given fifteen minutes to explore the library and locate a book they had read and enjoyed and would recommend to other students. The librarian specifically suggested that

students seek out old books they had enjoyed in previous years at school.

  o They were given a sticker and asked to place it on the inside front cover of the book. It was made clear to the students that "starring" a book was optional, and that all placement of stars was anonymous.

- In the second session (a week later), students were reminded of the guidelines of the Star Method.

  o The librarian showed the students where they could find the stickers. The stickers had been placed in plastic containers next to the book return box and inside the library in areas that receive the most student traffic, where students often sit and read.

  o Students were reminded that they should only "star" books they really enjoyed reading, books they had finished, and would recommend to peers.

Two faculty observers unobtrusively watched the students do the activity and noted their reactions.

Results

Over two weeks, a total of six classes in grades 5 and 6 (78 fifth graders and 62 sixth graders) were introduced to the Star Method. In the first session, every student was given one star to ensure that each student was given at least one opportunity to "star" a book they loved; more stars were also made available to them. We emphasized once again to the students that it was not compulsory to "star" a book. A total of 202 stars were given out to the students over two weeks. From our observations, we know that many of the stickers ended up in the books. In fact, across all fifth and sixth grade classes, we only confirmed one unused star after classes

ended. According to our observations, nearly every student put at least one star into a book.

During the two weeks, we noticed signs of immediate engagement with the Star method. In the first fifteen minutes of the first session itself, when students were instructed to think about the titles they had enjoyed and would recommend to a friend, one sixth grader approached our librarian to ask for more stickers.

They gravitated toward these books, and commented about the number of stars within the book. One group of fifth graders dived into the Pokémon comics, surprised by how most of the issues had accumulated 8-10 stars within just two or three days of the introduction of the star method. In fact, this appeared to be the case throughout the week across the entire comic book section, with many comics getting ten or more stickers.

We also noticed a recurring habit for students to search for favorite books in groups of two or three. They would hunt these books in groups, put stickers in them and then pass them to their peers. This was a powerful indicator that stickers support and perhaps even promote social reading.

Students also sought out specific titles to place their stars. One fifth grader went looking for a friend of hers who was reading a book she had recommended. She promptly placed a star on the inside cover of the book. Another sixth grader approached the librarian to ask about *A View from Saturday*. She was disappointed when she was informed that it had been checked out, as she was unable to "star" the book. Towards the end of the library class, a couple of excited sixth graders asked the librarian for more stickers, hoping to mark a few more titles they had enjoyed.

Throughout the two weeks, across both fifth and sixth grades, there were always a number of students who required some clarification on the process. At one point, we saw two or three students in each class pick up interesting books, put stars on the inside cover, and then proceed to read the books. This suggests that at least a few students may have placed stars in books they thought would be interesting without reading them; they had not quite understood the directions. Fortunately, the librarian and teacher were readily available to clarify that they should stick the stickers only in books that they had read and enjoyed. However, very few students (less than 10 per cent of students in each class) needed this clarification.

In the second week, students came to the library with various questions and concerns. One fifth grader asked whether he could stick the stickers into books for which he had seen the movie adaptation. This prompted a productive student-led discussion on the which types of books were appropriate to put stickers in. Students came to their own conclusions: it was important to have read a book fully before "starring" it.

As in the previous week, students began their free reading time by scouring the library for starred books and books they wished to read. We heard a number of discussions around the huge number of stars already placed in booksAnother fifth grader noted excitedly that there were fifteen stickers in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*,and then promptly sat down to read the book.

Our next step will be, as suggested by Adriance, to set up a book display in the middle of the library to highlight the books that have received a large number of stars and observe how the students react to them. We intend to follow this with another suggestion from Adriance, that of keeping track of how many "starred" books are taken out of the library.

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We Don't Need No Stinkin' Exercises: The Impact of Extended Instruction and Storybook Reading on Vocabulary Acquisition

Jeff McQuillan

Introduction

Reading stories to young children has a significant impact on a child's vocabulary development (Mol & Bus, 2011).[1]Children acquire words incidentally by being read to, and show growth in word knowledge even upon a single exposure to a novel word (Carey & Bartlett, 1978). In general, the more exposure to an unknown word children have, the more likely they are to acquire that word, without any explicit vocabulary instruction (Robbins & Ehri, 1994). These findings are consistent with current theories of language acquisition (Krashen, 2003; Smith, 2004), which hold that the development of literacy is primarily a result of language comprehension (listening and reading), not of direct instruction and "practice."

Despite the success of "unaided" storybook reading in promoting vocabulary growth, several researchers have attempted to improve the effectiveness of reading stories to children by adding explicit instruction of unknown words in the story. Wasik, Hindman, and Snell (2016) reviewed 36 studies on the effectiveness of various vocabulary interventions with storybook reading, including re-readings, dialogic reading, questioning, defining, props, and additional or "extended activities." They concluded that "word learning was enhanced when adults asked questions and engaged children in discussion about target vocabulary words, relative to simply recasting the meanings of the words" (p. 52). Nevertheless, the overall effects of these interventions were modest, accounting typically for less than 10% of the variance explained in vocabulary scores (p. 53).

Although the gains from instruction appear to be small, some researchers have argued that "at-risk" children especially need intensive vocabulary teaching. Coyne, Simmons, Kame'enui, and Stoolmiller (2004), for example, advocate for what they term "conspicuous instruction":

> Conspicuous instruction is explicit and unambiguous and consists of carefully designed and delivered teacher actions. During vocabulary instruction, this would include direct presentations of word meanings using clear and consistent wording and extensive teacher modeling of new vocabulary in multiple contexts. (p. 149)

Wasik et al. (2016) included in their review 15 studies that contained some form of this intensive approach. All of the studies included giving children word definitions during the reading of the story, as well as post-reading activities intended to promote vocabulary acquisition. In all cases, the researchers found that children receiving direct instruction made significant gains in word knowledgeon immediate post-tests.

But raw score gains on a vocabulary measure alone is an insufficient reason to recommend direct instruction. Teachers must also consider the *time efficiency* of instruction – in this case, how many words are gained per unit of time.

Since at-risk children are thought to need direct instruction in order to "catch up" to their age peers, a focus on efficiency should be of particular interest to vocabulary researchers. Yet in none of the 15 studies did the researchers attempt to calculate the relative efficiency of their approach.

Previous reading acquisition studies have shown that while some forms of direct instruction can lead to greater absolute word gains on post-tests, when the efficiency of instruction (words gained divided by instructional time) is considered, simply reading or being read to is usually as good as or superior to direct instruction. Krashen (1989) re-analyzed several studies of vocabulary instruction and concluded that most forms of instruction were less efficient in terms of promoting vocabulary growth than simply reading. McQuillan (2016) found a similar pattern for second language acquirers: "reading only" conditions were more time efficient as a means of improving vocabulary growth than reading plus direct instruction.

In this paper, I examine the studies from Wasik et al.'s review that included some form of extra or "extended" instruction. I calculate for each study the relative efficiency of storybook reading alone versus storybook reading plus post-reading vocabulary activities to determine if the added instruction really was worth the extra time teachers spent on it. I also compare the rates of "forgetting" in studies that included both an immediate and delayed post-test.

Analysis

Study Selection

Of the 15 studies that included some type of "additional instruction" in Wasik et al. (2016; Table 5, p. 49), eight did not include a reading-only comparison group that used same storybooks as the treatment group (Coyne, McCoach, & Kapp, 2007 (Study 2); Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli, Ruby, Crevecoeur, &

Kapp, 2010; Gonzalez, Pollard-Durodola, Simmons, Taylor, Davis, Kim, & Simmons, 2011; Leung, 2008; Loftus, Coyne, McCoach, Zipoli, & Pullen, 2010; Beck & McKeown, 2007; Silverman, Crandell, & Carlis, 2013; and Zipoli, Coyne, & McCoach, 2011).Three of the studies had appropriate comparison groups but lacked sufficient information on the amount of time spent in the experimental or comparison condition (Wasik & Bond, 2001; Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006; and Zucker, Solari, Landry, & Swank, 2013).[2]

This left only four studies with enough data to calculate instructional efficiency: Coyne, McCoach, & Kapp, 2007 (Study 1); Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli, & Kapp, 2009 (Study 2); McKeown & Beck, 2014 (Study 3); and Weisberg, Ilgaz, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Nicolopoulou, & Dickinson, 2015 (Study 4). To these four I've added: Loftus-Rattan, Mitchell, and Coyne (2016), which was published after Wisek et al.'s review.

Time Estimates

Not all studies reported detailed information on the time spent on instructional activities. For those that did not, I justify my estimate in my discussion of the study, attempting to be as conservative as possible when estimating the total time of the intervention (i.e. using the lowest time estimate I could reasonably derive from the description of the instruction).

Determining a proper estimate for incidental exposure to a word during storybook reading is more problematic, however. How much reading time should be allotted to individual words read within the story? In studies of "context effects" in word acquisition, the single sentence in which the novel word appears is often considered the unit of analysis (e.g. Stanovich, 1982; West & Stanovich, 1978). This would mean the time spent on each incidental exposure would be around five seconds for most sentences in a typical storybook.

Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli, and Kapp (2009, Table 3, p. 14) suggested an estimate of 10 seconds per incidental word exposure, which would effectively extend the "context" for the target word to one or two sentences prior to the one containing the word itself. I use Coyne et al.'s10-second estimate for the incidental exposure conditions in my analysis. A 10-second estimate is sufficient to account for the immediate context around the target word, as well as representing a more conservative approach than the estimates used in previous studies of context effects.

The *relative* efficiency of incidental exposure versus direct instructionis calculated here by first determining the number of words gained per minute in each condition (efficiency), and then using the formula:

(Incidental Exposure Efficiency /Direct Instruction Efficiency)/

Incidental Exposure Efficiency X 100.

Since three of the studies used very similar designs (Coyne et al., 2007; Coyne et al., 2009; and Loftus-Rattan et al., 2016), I discuss those first, followed by the McKeown and Beck (2014) and Weisberg et al. (2015) studies.

Study 1: Coyne, McCoach, &Kapp (2007)

Coyne et al. (2007) used a within-subject design to study the effects of extended instruction versus reading-only with a group of kindergarten children ($N = 31$). All the students heard the same story (*The Three Little Pigs*) read to them three times containing six target words. Students were given a pretest on all of the target words. Direct instruction was given on three of the six target words as part of the "Extended Instruction" condition. The two conditions in which words were encountered were:

1. Incidental Exposure: Teachers read the storybooks as they usually did without any vocabulary explanations or "follow-up" activities related to the target words.

2. Extended Instruction: Teachers reviewed the target words before the story was read, and asked students to listen for the three words and raise their hands when they came up in the story. The teacher then gave a definition of the word (e.g. "A *weald* is forest or some woods" (p. 398)), re-read the line in which it appeared, and had the children repeat the word. After the story was read, there were follow-up activities with additional direct instruction on the three target words.

Children were given a battery of tests that included both "expressive" or recall tests (e.g. "What does *cauldron* mean?") and "receptive" or recognition tests (e.g. "Which of these two sentences uses the word *cauldron* correctly?"). Students scored higher on words in the experimental condition than in the reading-only or incidental condition on both vocabulary measures, but scored relatively higher on the recall measure than on the receptive one. In order to present the "best-case scenario" for direction instruction, I used the recall measure to calculate efficiency, as it favored more heavily extended instruction.

Table 1 contains the recall gain scores on the immediate post-test, the time spent on the target words in each condition, the words per minute gained on the post test, and relative efficiency (that is, how much more or less efficient reading-alone was compared to extended instruction). There was a maximum score of 2 points awarded for each word on the recall test, so gain scores were divided by two to yield the number of words acquired.

The reading-only condition spent a total of 1.5 minutes on the three target words (10 seconds X 3 readings X 3 words). The researchers reported that the total time for the post-reading

vocabulary activities for each of the three readings of the story was around 15 minutes (15 minutes X 3 readings = 45 minutes).

However, to this figure must be added the additional time for vocabulary instruction given before and during the reading. Coyne et al. (2007) did not provide any data on this part of the treatment, but in a nearly identical study design used in a later study (Coyne et al., 2009), the researchers used an estimate of one minute per word per reading for pre- and during-reading instruction (what they called "embedded instruction"). This would add 9 minutes to the extended instruction (1 minute X 3 readings X 3 words), making the total extended instruction time 54 minutes.

As seen in Table 1, the words that children encountered incidentally in the text were acquired almost one-third (31%) more efficiently than those given extended instruction.

Table 1: Word Gains and Relative Efficiency on Recall Tests in Coyne et al. (2007)

	Extended Instruction	Reading Only
Recall scores (immediate post-test) (max. score = 3)	2.12	.085
Time on treatment (minutes)	54	1.5
Words per minute	.039	.057
Relative efficiency of reading-only vs. extended instruction	+31%	--

From Coyne et al., 2007, Tables 1 and 2. Recall gains adjusted for pre-test scores

Study 2: Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli, &Kapp (2009)

Coyne et al. (2009) compared three different conditions of word exposure in a within-subjects design with kindergarten students ($N = 42$). As in Coyne et al. (2007), students heard a storybook (*Goldilocks*) read three times. There were 9 target words included in the story. Three of the words were given "extended instruction" similar to what was done in Coyne et al. (2007). Three words were part of the reading-only condition, and three words were presented in "embedded instruction."

Embedded instruction involved asking students to say the words before the story was read, to listen for the words in the story, and then to raise their hands when they heard them. Teachers then gave "simple definitions" of the words and then re-read the sentence containing the word (p. 7).

Coyne and colleagues estimated the amount of time spent on embedded instruction (before and during the reading) was approximately 1 minute per word per reading (Table 3, p. 14), so the total time was 9minutes (1 minute X 3 readings X 3 words). The extended instruction (post-reading activities) took about 15 minutes per reading, for a total of 45 minutes (15 minutes X 3 readings). As in Coyne et al. (2007), we must add the time spent on embedded instruction (9

minutes) to the extended instruction estimate, for a total of 54 minutes.

Similar to Coyne et al. (2007), students were given a pre-test on the target words and then both recall and comprehension vocabulary measures as post-tests. However, since the researchers determined that students were not performing above chance on the pretests, only post-test scores were used in their analysis. The greatest raw score advantage for the extended and embedded instruction conditionscompared to reading-only was again on the recall tests, so

that is the data I used for the efficiency calculation.

Table 2 lists the number of words gained, the time on treatment, the words gained per minute, and the relative efficiency of the reading-only condition versus embedded and extended instruction.

Words in the reading-only condition were acquired at the same rate as those in the embedded instruction condition, meaning there was no advantage for the pre- and during-reading activities on vocabulary growth. The

Table 2: Time Efficiency of Extended Instruction and Reading-Only for Vocabulary Acquisition in Coyne et al. (2009)

	Embedded Instruction	Extended Instruction	Reading Only
Recall scores (immediate post-test) (max. score = 3)	.73	1.89	.12
Time on treatment(minutes)	9	54	1.5
Words per minute gained	.08	.04	.08
Relative efficiency of reading -only vs. condition	0%	50%	--

From Coyne et al., 2009, Table 1, p. 11

extended instruction condition did far worse, however, with reading-only proving to be 50% more efficient than providing extended direct instruction.

Loftus-Rattan, Mitchell, &Coyne (2016)

Loftus-Rattan et al. (2016) is a partial replication of Coyne et al. (2009). The researchers compared three storybook reading conditions in a within-subjects design with a group of preschool children ($N = 25$), with three unknown target words per condition. The three conditions were identical to those described previously for Coyne et al. (2009): reading-only, embedded instruction, and extended instruction.

The children were randomly assigned to one of the three storybook conditions, and heard the story (*Goldilocks*) three times over a period of one week. There were given similar recall and comprehension vocabulary measures as post-tests as used in the Coyne et al. (2007).

For reasons that are not explained, Loftus-Rattan et al. used different instructional time estimates for the embedded and extended conditions than those used in previous studies, even though the descriptions of the procedures used were the same. This may be due to better tracking of teacher instructional time in this study, but no explanation is given.

For the embedded instruction condition, Loftus-Rattan et al. estimated teachers spent 2 minutes per word per reading, for a total of 18 minutes per three word set (2 minutes X 3 reading X 3 words). For the extended condition, the post-reading instruction time is estimated to be 5 minutes per word. Adding this 5 minutes to the 2 minutes used in pre- and during-reading instruction, we get a total of 63 minutes (7 minutes X 3 reading X 3 words). Results from the three conditions are shown in Table 3.

The reading-only condition was 79% more efficient for word acquisition than extended instruction, and 75% more efficient than the less intensive embedded instruction. Alternatively, we

Table 3: Time Efficiency of Embedded Instruction, Extended Instruction, and Reading-Only in Loftus-Rattan et al. (2016)

	Embedded Instruction	Extended Instruction	Reading Only
Recall scores (immediate post-test) (max. score = 3)	.30	.94	.10
Time on treatment(minutes)	18	63	1.5
Words per minute gained	.016	.014	.066
Relative efficiency of reading -only vs. condition	76%	79%	--

From Loftus-Rattan et al., 2016, Table 1, p. 402

could calculate efficiency by simply dividing the words per minute gains of the reading-only condition by the gains made by experimental conditions. Using this approach, we find reading-only words were acquired at more than four times the rate of those in either the embedded or extended instruction conditions.

Study 3: McKeown & Beck (2014)

McKeown and Beck (2014) compared three storybook reading conditions using a within-subjects design with a group of kindergarten students (N = 131): repetition, "interactive," and control. The researchers choose (or inserted) 10 target words into each of three stories, for a total of 30 target words. Words presented in the control condition were heard just once in the context of the storybook, without any explanations or extension activities. Words in the repetition and interactive conditions were heard at least 12 times over a seven-day "instructional cycle."

On Day 1 of the repetition condition, the first reading of the storybook included a brief definition of each target word after it occurred in the story, followed by additional review for five of the 10 target words for that story. The review consisted of re-reading the sentences in which the target words occurred, "paraphrasing the context, and presenting the friendly explanation." On Day 2, the story was read again with target word definitions inserted, and the other five target words were reviewed after the reading. Day 3 included reading the story a third time, with definitions given for all the words once more while reading. Days 4 to 7 consisted of "activities to practice the friendly definitions," including "game-like formats such as "Concentration" that required matching words to their definitions (p. 523).

The interactive condition's seven day cycle began by reading the entire story to the children without interruption, followed by reviewing five of the target words in a manner similar to the repetition condition review. Then "follow-up" activities took place for the first five words "in which students were asked to distinguish between examples and nonexamples of the word's application" (p. 523). Day 2 was a repeat of Day 1, but with the second set of five target words. Days 3 to 7 involved even more activities related to the 10 target words, such as asking if the use of a word in a particular sentence made sense and explaining why or why not.

Unlike one of their previous studies on storybook reading and direct instruction (Beck & McKeown, 2007), McKeown and Beck gave no time estimates for any of their activities.[3] For the "control" or reading-only condition, I again used 10 seconds per word based on Coyne et al.'s (2009) estimate for incidental exposure. This gives us a total of 5 minutes (10 seconds X 10 target words X 3 stories).

For the repetition group, I estimated 30 seconds for the within-the-story definition (listening to the sentence with the target word plus explanation), similar to previous estimates from

Coyne et al. (2009). To this I added three minutes per day to review the five words after the story was read for Days 1 to 3, for a total of 24 minutes. For Days 4 to 7, I added an additional 10 minutes per day to review the 10 target word definitions and engage in related follow-up activities. This gives us a total estimate of 54 minutes for the seven-day cycle.

For the interactive condition, I estimated slightly more time, since the treatment description indicates this was a more intensive form of instruction, presumably with more time and activities per word. I estimated an additional 5 minutes per day for each seven-day cycle, for a total of 101 minutes (54 + (7 X 5)). Based on the descriptions of the instruction provided by McKeown and Beck, 5 minutes per day is almost certainly an underestimate of the actual instructional time.

Children in all three conditions were given a several vocabulary assessments, including meaning recognition and production tests. Since the effect size differences between the control and experimental conditions were overall highest in the production/recall measure on the raw number of words gained ($d = .44$ for repetition condition and .70 for the interactive condition),

Table 4: Time Efficiency of Repetition, Interactive, and Control Conditions in McKeown and Beck (2014)

	Repetition	Interactive	Control (Reading only)
Production scores (immediate post-test) (max. score = 10)	1.43	1.92	.61
Time on treatment (minutes)	54	104	1.6
Words per minute gained	.027	.018	.381
Relative efficiency of reading-only vs. condition	93%	95%	--

From McKeown & Beck, 2014, Table 7, p. 526

I used that measure in Table 4 to estimate the time efficiency of the instructional conditions.

Words presented in the reading-only condition were acquired 93% more efficiently than those in the repetition treatment, and 95% faster than in the more intensive, interactive condition. Not only is simply reading the storybook more efficient than direct instruction, but the more time spent on direct instruction, the less efficient it became. Compared to the reading-only condition, the relative efficiency of the more time-intensive interactive condition was lower than the repetition condition, despite the fact that the interactive condition took almost twice as long.

Study 4: Weisberg, Ilgaz, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Nicolopoulou, and Dickinson (2015)

Weisberg, Ilgaz, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Nicolopoulou, and Dickinson (2015) compared three conditions under which a group of preschool children ($N = 154$) encountered novel vocabulary. In the "exposure" condition, words appeared in either "realistic" or "fantastical" themed storybooks, but were not defined or discussed by the teacher. In the second condition, "target" words appeared in realistic themed books, which were alsotaught using direct instruction. The third condition was identical to the second, but the words appeared instead in "fantastical" themed books.

Each book contained 10 target words that were taught explicitly, and each child heard two stories from their assigned theme, for a total of 20 target words taught over the eight storybook reading sessions. In addition to the target words, there were eight realistic and nine fantastical exposure words that appeared in the stories to measure incidental, uninstructed word acquisition.

Teachers in the experiment were given "bookreading scripts" to guide their instruction.

After one of the target words appeared in the story, teachers stopped and gave a definition of the word (e.g. "The little dragon came out of the egg; he *emerged* from it. See how Grog is *emerging* from the egg?" (Weisberg et al., 2015, p. 5)). At the end of each book, teachers reviewed all of the target words, using both hand gestures and illustrations from the book. In addition, the realistic and fantastical target words were included in a set of "play" activities that were also scripted for the teachers. Toys related to the 10 target words from that book were used during this post-reading instruction.

Weisberg et al. noted that the storybook reading sessions, including during-story definitions of target words and the post-reading play sessions, each took 10 minutes. I estimated that the reading only "exposure" condition took a total of 11.3 minutes (average of 8.5 words per story X 10 seconds X 8 sessions). For the target word instruction, I assigned 30 seconds per during story word definition, plus the 10 minutes of "play" activities, for a total of 120 minutes ((10 words X 30 seconds) + 10 minutes of post-reading activities) X 8 sessions).

Children were given vocabulary comprehension and production tests pretests and immediate post-tests. The comprehension test included four illustrations, and children were asked to point to the one closest to the meaning of the word. The production measure involved asking the child to recall the meaning of the word in a one-on-one interview with the experimenters.

Since there were fewer total exposure words than target words, the researchers reported their results as the percentage of correct answers. In Table 5 below, I have multiplied the percentage gain, pretest to post-test, by the number of total number of words encountered in that condition: out of 20 words for the instructed words, and out of 17 words for the

Table 5: Time Efficiency of Extended Instruction and Reading-only Conditions
in Weisberg et al. (2015)

	Instructed: Fantastical	Instructed: Realistic	Exposure (Combined)
Production scores (max. score = 20 instructed; 17 exposure)	7.8	7.4	2.5
Time on treatment (minutes)	120	120	11.3
Words per minute gained	.065	.062	.22
Relative efficiency of reading-only vs. condition	70%	72%	--

From Weisberg et al., 2015, Table 3, p. 9

exposure condition (combining fantastical and realistic themes).

The reading-only words were acquired 70 - 72% more efficiently than words encountered in the direct instruction conditions, with little difference between the themes of the words.

Vocabulary Retention: Studies with Delayed Post-Tests

Three of the five studies reviewed above included delayed post-tests to measure the amount of vocabulary retention (Coyne et al., 2007; Coyne et al., 2009; and Loftus-Rattan et al., 2016). I summarize in Table 6 the recall vocabulary scores (raw scores) for all three studies for the immediate post-test (done within a few days after the treatment) and the delayed post-test, given 6 – 8 weeks later. When there was more than one treatment group, I used the data from most intensive form of instruction provided (extended instruction) for the experimental group. Both the immediate and delayed post-test cores for Coyne et al. (2007) were adjusted for pre-test scores.

To calculate the percent of word knowledge loss over time, the delayed post-test score was

Table 6: Vocabulary Retention in Extended Instruction vs. Reading-Only Condition Vocabulary
Recall Scores from Immediate to Delayed Post-Test

	Coyne et al. (2007)		Coyne et al. (2009)		Loftus-Rattan et al.(2016)	
Group	Extended Instruction	Reading-Only	Extended Instruction	Reading-Only	Extended Instruction	Reading-Only
Immediate Post Test (words gained)	2.12	.09	1.89	.12	.94	.10
Delayed Post Test (words gained)	1.45	.17	.91	.12	.76	.08
% Change in recall scores*	-27%	+88%	-52%	0%	-19%	-20%

*% Change = (Immediate posttest - Delayed post-test)/Immediate post-test

subtracted from the immediate post-test score, and that result was divided by the immediate post-test score.

In two of the three comparisons, scores in the direct instruction condition declined considerably more than the reading-only condition. In Loftus-Rattan et al. (2016), the decline in scores was virtually the same. The average change for the extended instruction words across the three studies was -33%; for the reading-alone condition words, it was +23%.

Discussion

Reading alone was more efficient for vocabulary acquisition than reading plus extended instruction in eight of the nine comparisons reviewed here, and was as efficient in the remaining one. This was true even though we used measures that most favored the direct instruction conditions (production or recall tests). The average of the efficiency advantage for "just reading" over explicit instruction was 63%. This is a large, practical difference for teachers to consider when allocating their limited instructional time.

Our findings are similar to those from other areas of literacy acquisition in both the first and second language. Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985) found that incidental acquisition of vocabulary during reading could account for a much larger proportion of word knowledge growth among elementary school students than could direct instruction. Mason and Krashen (2004) found for their adult second language acquirers that simply listening the a story being read to them was more efficient than adding additional "extension" or "practice" activities. Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch, and Krashen (2008) reached a similar conclusion: simply listening to a story was more efficient than listening plus vocabulary instruction for adults studying German. Mason (2007) reported that English students in traditional form-focused language

classrooms acquired vocabulary less efficiently than those who listened to and read stories. McQuillan (2016) also found similar results in his review of seven studies of adult second language vocabulary acquisition.

Simply reading storybooks to children is not only more efficient that the use of direct instruction, but it also produces more lasting vocabulary gains. Studies that included a delayed post-test reported consistent losses on the vocabulary recall scores of the direct instruction words, and an overall greater loss of knowledge compared to those words gained incidentally. This finding is again consistent with previous research on vocabulary growth as well as other areas of language acquisition (Krashen, 2003). McQuillan (2016), for example, found in a survey of second language vocabulary studies that there was far greater retention when words were encountered incidentally versus in direct instruction.

Why have so few reading researchers used time efficiency calculations to evaluate their own studies? One reason may be due to the nature of incidental vocabulary acquisition. As Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985) demonstrated, increases in word knowledge each time a reader sees a novel word are very small (around 10-15%). When measured in an experimental setting, then, the incidental gains for aset of target words on the post-test may seem negligible. Simply comparing the *absolute* number of words gained in a given period of instruction, without calculating the *rate* of acquisition, has led researchers to conclude that direct instruction of vocabulary "works" better than incidental acquisition. Once we correct for the time spent on each condition, however, it becomes clear that the opposite is true, as found in the studies reviewed here.

None of the studies reviewed here measured the affective impact of the pre-reading, during-

reading, and post-reading forms of direct instruction on young children.Krashen (2013) points out in his analysis of storybook "interruptions" (questioning, pointing out features of print, giving definitions) that there are possible negative effects when attempts are made "improve" the efficacy of storybook reading through explicit instruction. Biemiller and Boote (2006) provide some evidence of this. During their storybook reading experiment with kindergartners and 1st graders, they point out that "1 or more children expressed complaints about interruptions for explaining word meanings" when the story was read to them the first time (p. 48).

The results of this analysis do not mean that teachers should *withhold* explanations of words from children during storybook reading, especially when the children ask for them. That would be annoying for the children, even disrespectful. None of the studies included in Wasik et al.'s review, however, looked at the effects of explaining words that the children themselves asked about.

Direct instruction in vocabulary is less efficient for word acquisition than simply reading, results in lower retention of the target words, is more work for the teacher, and is likely to providea less enjoyable experience for the children it is supposed to benefit. It is difficult to see how any of these characteristics would recommend the practice to parents and teachers.

Endnotes

[1] The title of this article is an adaptation of a line from the movie, *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (Blanke & Huston, 1948): "We don't need to stinkin' badges."

[2] Wasik and Bond (2001) claimed that their experimental and reading-only comparison groups spent "a similar amount of time" (p. 245) on storybook reading, but the description of the comparison and intervention conditions suggests otherwise. Although comparison teachers were given the same books and asked to read them to their children the same number of times as the intervention group, there was no measure of how long this took. Teachers in the intervention group not only read the story, but also introduced the vocabulary to students before reading, interrupted the reading to ask questions, and did activities related to the target words after the reading, all of which would take more time than merely reading the books to the children. In any case, no total times were provided by Wasik and Bond for either condition.

[3] Beck and McKeown said that they did not prescribe the amount of time teachers should spend on the activities, since the instruction was not "rote": "For example, some activities might produce longer discussions, or students might spend more time recalling a certain word's definition or generating an associated word or definition" (p. 528). Oddly, the researchers did tape record the teaching sessions to check for treatment fidelity (p. 525), but did not analyze the data in order to calculate an accurate assessment of time spent in each condition.

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Why Don't We Take Advantage of the Power and Pleasure of Reading?

Kyung Sook Cho and *Stephen Krashen*

The Power of Reading

Research conducted on the impact of reading on language acquisition since the publication of the first edition of *The Power of Reading* (Krashen, 1993/2004a) has been validated over and over again. Reading, especially self-selected pleasure reading, is the primary cause of literacy development. It has in fact been difficult for the author to produce a third edition of *The Power of Reading*, because so much confirming evidence has emerged to support his theories. We now have overwhelming evidence that in both first and second language development, more reading results in more development of language, including better reading, better writing, bigger vocabulary size, better mastery of complex grammar and better spelling. Studies also confirm that those who read more, know more about literature, history, science, and even practical matters. Supporting evidence includes experiments, multivariate correlational analyses and case histories carried out in a wide variety of places and conditions (Krashen, 2004).

The Pleasure of Reading

Self-selected reading (SSR) done in-school is consistently considered to be more pleasant than time spent in traditional instruction (Krashen, 1994), and recent research shows that even one brief period of free reading can result in increased interest in reading, as can a visit to a good library (Cho and Krashen, 2018).

Case histories describe readers who become fanatic pleasure readers, and who quite unexpectedly make impressive progress in their literacy development (Cho, 2016,2017a; Cho and Krashen, 1995, 2015). It is hard to imagine such dedication to traditional instruction.

The Enthusiasm for English

Without question, English has become the world's second language, the first language of science and the most important language for the internet. An editorial in the journal *Molecular Biology of the Cell* (Drubin and Kellog, 2012) declared that "English is now used almost exclusively as the language of science". DuFour (2017), examined the prestige rankingsof professional journals by SCImagoJournal Rank and reported that "all of the top 50 journals are published in English and originate from either the U. S. or the U.K.". English is also the most used language on the internet. According to data gathered in 2015, about 55 per cent of internet content is in English (https://unbabel.com/blog/top-languages-of-the-internet/)

Cho (forthcoming) gave a questionnaire to parents (mostly mothers) of elementary schools and middle school students in a metropolitan city in Korea, who were participating in a Parents' English Education program organized by the city board of education. The questionnaire was distributed to the parents on the first day of the five-day program, and was collected after the program ended. It included the following question:

What is your level of interest in English? '(1) very low (2) low (3) moderately (4) high (5)

very high. Only 2 per cent of the participants reported low or very low interest (17/928) while 7 per cent reported high or very high interest (698/928)

The Status of Pleasure Reading

Given the importance of English, the power of reading to improve English fluency and the pleasure that reading offers, one would expect reading to be a popular way of improving fluency in English as a foreign language, but it is not.

As part of the same study, Cho asked the parentshow many English books their children read in a month. Eighty-four per cent (n = 778) of the parents said that their children read little in English (either no books at all, or just one or two books per month).

This figure could be an underestimation, because it represents students in both elementary and middle school and does not include students at the beginning level, those not yet ready to do independent reading in English.

Other studies, however, show only limited interest in pleasure reading among university students taking education courses to prepare them to teach English, or get advanced degrees. When asked if they read books in English for pleasure, very few indicated that they were dedicated pleasure readers. (Cho and Krashen, 2017b). Already included.

As noted earlier, we have had some success in increasing enthusiasm for reading by engaging students ina SSR experience, however short it may be, or by arranging a brief visit to an English library. However, the enthusiasm is short-lived; six months to one year later, we see that while there has beenan increase in English pleasure reading, it is very modest (Cho, 2017b).

Why Don't Language Acquirers Take Advantage of the Power of Reading?

Kim and Krashen (1997) asked this question in a paper published over 20 years ago. They interviewed five adult learners of English as a second language. All five gave the same answer: their English classes emphasized on grammar and drill. The tests were grammar-based and reading was not only not recommended, it was never even mentioned. Kim and Krashen noted that "the only English books to which the five women were exposed were textbooks, grammar books, and workbooks. When coherent texts were included, the material was often boring and difficult" (p. 27). We sent a copy of this paper to colleagues who were familiar with the pedagogy of English as a foreign language, as it is taught currently, and asked if anything had changed. The consensus was that while language educators are paying some attention to reading, it does not yet occupy a central role.

Language education, in most cases, is still backing the wrong horse; it is backing the Skill-Building Hypothesis rather than the Comprehension Hypothesis. Skill-Building Hypothesis claims that we develop competence in a language by consciously learning its grammar rules first. We then gain fluency by producing our freshly learned rules over and over (speaking and writing), and improve accuracy by getting our errors corrected. According to this view, reading plays no role in language development.The Comprehension Hypothesis claims that we develop language competence by understanding what we hear and read. "Comprehensible input" leads to subconscious absorption (or "acquisition") of grammar and vocabulary. The Reading Hypothesis is a special case of the Comprehension Hypothesis.

The Skill-Building Hypothesis is still preferred in language teaching, despite lack of evidence to support it. Current pedagogy only pays lip service to the Reading Hypothesis and its parent, Comprehension Hypothesis. Reading is often included, but it is obviously an add-on.

We received comments from two colleagues, Andrew Hesler, chair of the English Department at the Uchon Elementary School in Seoul, and Sy-Ying Lee, chair of the Applied Foreign Languages Department at National Taiwan University of Science and Technology.

Hesler felt that there had been only "slight shifts" in the direction of more emphasis on reading, and these occurred largely with younger students in private schools that offer supplementary English classes. These schools possibly had libraries for pleasure reading, but very often the core instruction was based on traditional Skill-Building, with some reading included as an add-on. Hesler talked about his teaching experience at a private English school in Korea:

> The structure of their classes was two hours of class in a skill-driven format. Worksheets, drills, discussions. Students did get the chance to watch US TV shows for 30 minutes each day. They would then go to the library for an hour of unstructured reading … reading was an afterthought. A good afterthought, but I felt like it was just a plus to tack onto the "classes" students took … Teachers with similar experiences have told me that reading was not really a big part of instruction where they worked, outside of perhaps, a novel study class for 30 minutes of round-robin reading. My positions with older students have always been "grammar centric" and there was a great emphasis on speaking and teachers' providing corrections. Reading was nearly non-existent outside of materials I would hunt down, or articles in business English classes. It seems to me that parents these days are more aware that reading matters for their children. But they still want skill-driven classes that, they feel, provide instant results: a test with a high score, and lists of new vocabulary that students have "learned".

These educational institutions are clearly not aware that the amount of pleasure reading is the best predictor of scores not only on standardized English tests, but also competence in vocabulary, reading, grammar, writing style and spelling (Krashen, 2004, 2011).

According to Sy-Ying Lee, there is a strong movement to teach subject matter in English, which is problematic because of teacher and student limitations in English. This means that subject matter can be taught in English only for subjects that can be taught in simple English, at least to begin with. Lee pointed out that "A possible result is that both the content and the language learned through these courses will be greatly limited." Therefore, we suspect that for the English as a foreign language, content-based instruction might be unnecessary. Perhaps a strong focus on pleasure reading in English may bring students to the point where they can understand "academic" language.

Additional Problems in Current Foreign Language Reading Programs

There are some additional problems in the current foreign language reading programs that we would like to add. A major problem is access to interesting books. As noted earlier, Cho (2018) found that one brief SSR session resulted in increased enthusiasm for reading, but the effect did not last very long. This is because some crucial elements were missing—continued access to books and a time and place to read (Cho and Krashen, 2018). Another problem is that even simplified books (graded readers) are often too difficult for beginners, especially when dealing with foreign languages that have few or no cognates with the students' first language.

To deal with this issue, Beniko Mason has introduced two ways to initiate students into self-selected reading, *Story Listening* and *Guided Self-Selected Reading*.

In the *Story Listening* approach, teachers present interesting stories in the second language. They explain unfamiliar language through simple drawings, body movements and the occasional brief translation. Mason has published a number of studies showing that this simple approach results in more efficient vocabulary acquisition than traditional teaching, even though its purpose is simply to make the story more comprehensible and not mastery of vocabulary (e.g. Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch, & Krashen, 2009).

Very easy reading is nearly completely absent in foreign language programs, forcing students to move prematurely to texts that can only be read slowly and painfully. Even texts that appear to be very easy often contain items that students have not yet acquired, or have only partially acquired. In *Guided Self-Selected Reading*, the teacher recommends texts that students can read easily. Such texts build confidence and promotes language development in the learner.

Summary and Conclusion

The need to learn English is obvious in many professions. There is now compelling evidence that pleasure reading is a powerful means of developing second language competence. Also, it is evident from current research that young adults are more likely to develop an interest in English reading after experiencing the opportunity to browse and read English books.

However, only a modest percentage of learners who acquire English as a foreign language are active readers in English. The problems that existed in 1997 therefore appear to persist. While educational institutions now include some pleasure reading, it appears to be a weak concession to research results, with no meaningful change in actual practice. The core of language education remains focused on skill-building which involves conscious learning of grammar and its rules. Even when reading is

recognized as central to language acquisition, we still have the problems of insufficient access to interesting and comprehensible reading material.

Finally, we would like to assert that ignoring the power of reading is a rejection of natural language acquisition and comprehensible input. It is not clear whether this failure is the result of policy-makers and curriculum specialists not being aware of research and theory, or a deliberate rejection of it.

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And Then There Were None? Measuring the Success of Commercial Language Courses

Jeff McQuillan

Introduction

Self-study language courses have a long history in L2 education, but they have failed to capture the interest of researchers in applied linguistics (see Krashen, 1991, and Krashen & Kiss, 1996). These courses have been produced by several companies, including Berlitz, Pimsleur, Living Language, the Rosetta Stone and more recently, by independent producers via podcasts and websites (McQuillan, 2006). Some of the courses are limited to books and CDs, while others include an internet component or are delivered exclusively online. Lessons tend to focus on expressions related to travel or daily conversation, and are often guided by a grammatical syllabus.

Most companies that produce these courses have not released sales figures, but if the sales rank on the e-commerce site Amazon.com is a valid indication of popularity, at least some of the courses are among the most popular educational items sold. At the time this article was written (summer, 2018), for example, the book *Easy Spanish Step by Step* by Bregstein had an Amazon.com sales rank of 978, making it one of the top 1,000 books sold on the site. By comparison, books written by two recent U.S. presidential candidates Trump and Clinton had sales ranks of 8,548 and 3,990 respectively.

While popular, few of these courses have been evaluated for their effectiveness in promoting foreign language fluency. The only exception is Harry Winitz's *Learnables* (2003), which has been evaluated numerous times (Winitz & Reed, 1973; Winitz, 1981, 1996).

Arough measure of gauginghow successful a self-study course is to look at perseverancein study. Do the students manage to reach the intermediate and advanced levels of the course? One of the earliest studies of persistence in foreign language study was conducted by Dupuy and Krashen (1998). The researchers collected background data and observed the classroom behaviour of a group of intermediate and advanced level college students. Their main interest was to document the characteristics of those who had "survived" the lower-level courses, and had advanced to the upper-division classes. They concluded that only a very small percentage of lower-division students did in fact reach what they refer to as the "Promised Land" of upper-division courses. Those who did advance in their studies, had extensive exposure to the language outside of the classroom: 84.5 per cent had participated in a study abroad program.

Data from other sources confirm Dupuy and Krashen's findings on the high attrition rate in language courses. Table 1 summarizes data on foreign language course enrollment in high school over a period spanning 75 years. Coleman (1930) reported on statewide high school foreign language enrollments by level, for an unnamed northeastern U.S. state in 1925. Draper & Hicks (2002) provide more recent data from the year 2000, covering all 50 states. In addition to the raw figures, I have calculated the percentage of the students who "survived" each passing year of study, dividing the number of students at each course level by the total beginning (Level I) enrollment.

Table 1
Foreign Language Enrollments by Level in High School in 1925 (1 State) and 2000 (50 states)

Level	Total Enrollment, 1925	% Survivors	Total Enrollment, 2000	% Survivors
I	3,594	/	1,133,626	/
II	2,839	79%	797,800	70%
III	364	10%	346,200	31%
IV	160	4.5%	201,805	18%

Note. For the year 2000, the data includes any higher levels (e.g. Spanish V or VI) plus Advanced Placement courses. Data from Coleman (1930) and Draper & Hicks (2002)

Note that there are similar declines from Level I (freshman) to Level IV (senior) in both sets of data. Also, the attrition rate is particularly steep after the second year. In 1925, 95.5 per cent of students had dropped out of study before reaching Level IV. In 2000, it was marginally better at 82 per cent, but still high.

The situation does not improve at the college level. Furman, Goldbert, and Lusin (2007), report that of the 1,536,614 undergraduates enrolled in the top 15 foreign languages in the U.S. colleges in 2006, only 17 per cent were enrolled in upper-division courses. This attrition rate is similar to what we find at the high school level.

There are probably a variety of reasons as to why students fail to advance in formal language study. Many students take these courses as a requirement for graduation and therefore stop at the lowest class necessary to reach that goal. Ramage (1990) conducted a survey across a group of high school students (N=138). He asked them to indicate their agreement to statements related to their reasons for foreign language study on a 3-point Likert scale, in which "3" meant the subject agreed. A clear majority of the students indicated that one of the reasons they were taking the class was to fulfill a graduation requirement (mean score of 2.59).

Yet, a significant number of students also said they genuinely wanted to learn the language. More than half of the students said they were "interested in learning to read and write" (mean score of 1.69), and nearly as many said they had a "particular interest in Spanish/French culture" (mean score of 1.59).

There is little data available on the motivations of independent adult second language students who pursue study outside the formal classroom. Presumably, some students have short-term objectives such as travel to another country, and seek only a very basic level of proficiency. However, as in the case of Ramage's (1990) subjects, many adults would no doubt like to reach higher levels of competency in the language.

Although there are few independent evaluations of commercial language programs, we do have some evidence on persistence rates within and across language course levels. I will summarize the results from three such studies: McQuillan (2008), who used unobtrusive or "non-reactive" methods of examining a set of course books used by adult acquirers; Nielson (2011), who conducted a quasi-experimental study of a group of mostly government workers who were given access to two commercial language courses;

and Ridgeway, Mozer, and Bowles (2017), who reported attrition rates based on more than 125,000 users of one of the largest self-study language courses, *Rosetta Stone*.

McQuillan (2008): Use of Library Self-Study Books

McQuillan (2008) attempted to gauge the persistence of independent language students who used print versions of self-study language books that they borrowed from a large, urban library system. He created an "unobtrusive measure" (Webb, 1966), called the "Wear and Tear" Index, to measure roughly how much of a book was read by the patrons. Similar indices have been used by previous researchers such as Debois (1963) and Moestller (1955) (as cited in Webb, 1966), to determine which parts of a library reference book were most frequently consulted, and which newspapers advertisements were seen by readers.

These indices often use a combination of markers indicating both "erosion" (physical degradation, such as tears in a book page or bend back page corners) and "accretion" (added dirt, dust, and smudges). McQuillan's Wear and Tear Index (2008), included both types of measures:

1. The separation of the pages close to the binding.

2. Fingerprints or smudges on the pages or the corners.

3. Worn or wrinkled corners likely caused by page turning.

He examined a set of 10 self-study language books, representing six different languages. He recorded the highest page number in the book that showed some evidence of one or more measures in the Wear and Tear Index. To ensure that there had been a sufficient amount of patron use of the books, only those books that had been in circulation for at least one year were examined. Table 2 (adapted from McQuillan's Table 1) reports the name of the book, the last page used, the total number of pages, and the

Table 2

Use of Commercial Language Courses by Library Patrons

Course Title (Publisher, Year)	Last Page Used	Total Pages*	Percent Read/Used
E-Z Spanish: A beginner's course (2001)	35	328	11%
Teach Yourself: Spanish (2003)	86	318	27%
Learn Spanish the fast and fun way (1997)	37	264	14%
Rush Hour Spanish (2003)	21	104	20%
Spanish Now! Level 1 (2005)	80	505	26%
Portuguese for Dummies (2006)	20	304	7%
Learn German the fast and fun way (1997)	15	252	6%
Chinese for Dummies (2005)	38	314	12%
Teach Yourself Beginner's Italian (1999)	44	193	23%
Teach Yourself Cantonese (1995)	56	254	22%
		Average	16.8%

*Note. * = excluding glossaries or bilingual dictionaries at the end of the volume; adapted from McQuillan (2008)*

estimated percentage of use and progress in the course. Note that in no case did the average percentage of course book use exceed 27 per cent, with an average of 16.8 per cent read.

McQuillan's study may actually have understated the dropout rates, since he measured only the highest page number showing evidence of some use by patrons. This is not the same as the *average* use of the course book. One or two outliers could have used the book more extensively, skewing his estimates. For a more accurate measure of persistence, we need to measure course use more directly, as was done in the next two studies.

Nielson (2011): Users of Rosetta Stone and Tell Me More Software

Nielson (2011) looked at two groups of U.S. government employees working in agencies that provide self-study language training. The Rosetta Stone group (N = 150) consisted of employees from a number of different agencies. All the employees were "absolute beginners" in the language they had chosen to study (Arabic, Chinese, or Spanish), i.e. they had no previous coursework in the language. The Tell Me More group (N = 176) consisted of students employed by the U.S. Coast Guard. The Tell Me More group only studied Spanish, but unlike the Rosetta Stone group, the students were at various proficiency levels. All subjects were volunteers who had sought to participate in the study, and Tell Me More students had been given time off their regular duties to do so (up to three hours per week).

The Rosetta Stone group used a popular internet-based software program designed for self-study of languages. While the program is available on CD-ROM, participants could only access an online version, as per the procedure of the participating government agencies. The Tell Me More group used Aurolog's *Tell Me More* software, also available only online.

Rosetta Stone students agreed to use the course materials online for 10 hours per week for 20 weeks, giving them time to complete the recommended 200 hours for Level I of the courseware. Tell Me More students agreed to use the courseware for at least five hours per week for 26 weeks.

To measure the program's effectiveness, Rosetta Stone students were given proficiency interviews over the phone, in which they were asked to identify and describe pictures similar to the ones that appeared in their course. The tests were administered after the completion of each 50-hour segment of the 200-hour long study period. They were also given an ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) as an exit test.

The Tell Me More students took the program's placement and exit tests, as well as the Versant for Spanish oral proficiency assessment, which correlates highly with the OPI exam (Fox & Fraser, 2009). Tell Me More students who already knew some Spanish were given the Versant as a pre-test, and all students were to be given it as a post-test. Students in both groups were asked to keep a "learner log" to track how much time they had studied the materials.

Although Nielson's (2011) intention was to measure the effectiveness of the programs in promoting language acquisition, she found that "the most striking finding [for both groups]…was severe attrition in participation" (p. 116). I have summarized the attrition data from her study in Table 3. In both the Rosetta Stone group and the Tell Me More group, there were steep dropout rates, as indicated by the "percentage of survivors" column (the number of students reaching that level divided by the total number of students enrolled in the program at the outset). Nielson used different categories to report the data for the Rosetta Stone and Tell Me More groups (as noted in Activity column of Table 3). For the Rosetta Stone results,

Nielsen used signing into an online account as the third milestone, whereas for Tell Me More the third milestone was "Used TMM for 5 hours." Other differences are noted in column 1 of Table 3. Despite these differences, the pattern is very clear.

Of the students who signed up for the Rosetta Stone courses, only 21 per cent completed even

Table 3
Attrition in Participation Using the Rosetta Stone and Tell Me More Software Programs

Course Progress	Rosetta Stone (RS)	% Survivors*	Tell Me More (TMM)	% Survivors*
1. Volunteered and signed consent forms	150	/	176	/
2. Obtained RS account / Took TMM placement test	120	80%	103	58.5%
3. Actually signed into RS account / Used TMM for 5 hours	73	49%	61	35%
4. Spent more than 10 hours using the course	32	21%	17	9.6%
5. Completed lst RS assessment (50 hours) / Used TMM 1525 hours	21	14%	9	5%
6. Completed 2nd RS assessment (100 hours) / Used TMM more than 25 hours	6	4%	7	5%
7. Completed final RS assessments and OPI / Took TMM exit test	1	.6%	4	2.2%

Note. From Nielson (2011) Tables 1 and 2, pp. 116-117
* % Survivors = Number of students reaching level/Total number of student who signed up for the course

10 hours of the 200-hour course (5 per cent of the total). Only one of the 150 volunteers made it to the end. For the Tell Me More course, less than 10 per cent made it to the 10-hour mark (13 per cent of the way through the course), with a mere four completing the final assessment. The attrition rate from beginning to end was 99.4 per cent for Rosetta Stone, and 97.8 per cent for Tell Me More.

Although the language proficiency assessments were taken by only a fraction of the participants, Nielsen found that more hours spent on the course did produce better scores on the interim assessments. She concluded, however, that the number of subjects who took the exams was too small to be of much use in evaluating the effectiveness of the programs.

Nielsen noted that not all of the attrition could be blamed on the programs. A significant percentage of the students apparently had a variety of technical problems with the software (browser plugins that would not load, system crashes, etc.). Some of the participants reported dropping out as they were assigned overseas during the course of the study, others cited not having enough time, or a change in their work situations. Most of them however, did not provide reasons for dropping out. In addition to the technological problems, there were also complaints about the content of the courses

themselves. Nielson (2001) concluded that the high dropout rates for the software programs meant that such self-study products are "unlikely to work by themselves", without proper support (p. 125).

Ridgeway, Mozer, & Bowles (2016): Institutional Use of Rosetta Stone

Ridgeway, Mozer, and Bowles (2016) analyzed a large set of data (N = 125,112) gleaned from students of the Latin American Spanish online course offered by Rosetta Stone. Rosetta Stone itself supplied its internal tracking data to the researchers; this data included "institutional" clients only (universities, governments and private companies). Ridgeway and colleagues looked at student enrollment and completion of the Level I, II, and III courses (beginning to advanced Spanish) between 2008 and 2014. Each level of the courses had 16 units, with a review/assessment activity at the end of the unit. Ridgeway et al. calculated the completion rates for each unit across the three levels, reporting the results by unit.

I summarized their findings by level, including the first unit, the 8th unit (mid-point), and the 16th and final unit, in Table 4. I estimated the approximate number of students on each level from Ridgeway et al.'s (2016) Figure 2 bar chart (p. 931). The data was reported by the researchers on a logarithmic scale, so my estimates are only approximate. I also calculated the "per cent of survivors" using the same approach as in my discussion on Nielson (2011) (number of students reaching that level divided by total enrollment in Unit 1).

Table 4
Attrition in Participation for Institutions Using Rosetta Stone

Course Progress	Level I Enroll.	% Survivors	Level II Enroll.	% Survivors	Level III Enroll.	% Survivors
Unit 1	86,000	/	12,000	/	6,000	/
Unit 8	25,000	29%	6,000	50%	2,000	33%
Unit 16	5,000	5.8%	1,000	16%	1,000	16%

Note. Data from Ridgeway et al. (2016).

The sharp decline in course completion is evident for all three levels. Dropout rates were highest in Level I, where only 29 per cent of the students completed the mid-point assessment, and just under 6 per cent made it to the end of the course. This is higher than Nielson's (2011) findings, although her data came from a small, more restricted sample. Level II students fared the best, with about one-half of them making it to the 8th unit, and 16 per cent completing the entire course. Level III students dropped out more quickly than in Level II, but had the same completion rate of 16 per cent. The overall dropout rate, calculating from enrollment in Unit 1, Level I, to completion of Unit 16, Level III, was similar to that reported by Nielson at 98.8 per cent.

Ridgeway et al. (2016) noted that there was a "sawtooth" pattern in the data, in that the number of students completing the final unit of Level I was lower than those starting Level II and the number of students finishing Level II was lower than those starting Level III. They attributed

this to the fact that "students tend to drop out within a level of a course, and new students join at the beginning of each of the three levels" (p. 931).

Discussion

Despite the use of very different methodologies and datasets, all three studies reviewed here reported similar outcomes: the number of students who make it to the end of independent self-study language courses is very small, falling somewhere between 1 and 16 per cent. At best, independent students appear to do no better, and usually worse than those enrolled in traditional language courses in high school and college.

Nielson's (2011) concluded from her data that independent adult language students would benefit from more "support" such as that offered in a traditional language classroom. However, attrition rates are only marginally better for students enrolled in "high-support" high school and college classes with live teachers. Indeed, it appears from Ridgeway et al. (2016), that those who enroll in the upper-level courses fare about the same as those in regular classrooms (roughly 16 per cent completion rate).

All three studies suffer from a potential design weakness, one that McQuillan (2008) noted: students who receive a free course may be less motivated than those who have paid for it. In both McQuillan (2008) and Nielson (2011), users of the course materials did not have to pay for the materials. Ridgeway et al. (2016), analyzed data from "institutional" users, where it was likely that the institution and not the individual user had purchased access to the software. Ridgeway and colleagues also note that "[s]ome institutions mandate the use of the software; others make the use optional," but "[w]e have no means of determining usage policy governing individual students" (p. 931).

There is some evidence that many online courses suffer from high attrition. Jordon (2015) examined the attrition rates of 129 "Massive Open Online Courses" (MOOCs), free courses for adults in a variety of fields, offered through websites such as Coursera and Open2Study. She found that the average completion rate for the MOOCs was 12.6 per cent, with shorter courses (fewer than five weeks) and those with auto-graded assessments doing the best at retaining students. This completion rate is in the range of the best-case scenario for language courses, at least at the upper levels.

Many adults who begin their self-study language courses probably do so with the goal of being fluent, or at least conversant, in the language. The data reviewed here indicates that this rarely happens. One possible cause of low completion rates may be poor teaching methods. Krashen (2013) noted that the language instruction provided by the most popular self-study course, Rosetta Stone, was "not very interesting, and a long way from compelling" (p. 2). He concluded that the limited amount of evaluation data on the program provided "only modest support for its effectiveness" and that "studies do not agree on users' reactions" to the course (p. 2).

Similar problems of uninspiring language teaching have been reported in studies of traditional classrooms. Tse (2000) noted that research from the 1970s found that a large percentage of students found their foreign language classes "un-stimulating and uninteresting" (p. 72). McQuillan (1994) reported that one of the most common yet least effective second language classroom activities, grammar study, was judged to be far less interesting for undergraduate students when compared to a rarely used but more effective approach, sustained silent reading (Krashen, 2004). Yet all the courses in the three studies reviewed here relied largely on these same traditional teaching methods, including grammar study,

decontextualized vocabulary drills, exercises, and (in some cases) output "practice".

Little consideration so far has been given by companies producing self-study language materials to teaching methods based on "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1982, 2003). Given the steep dropout rates in self-study language courses and the demonstrated superiority of comprehensible input methods to traditional instruction (e.g. Krashen, 2004; Mason & Krashen, 2004), these companies may wish at least to consider more effective methods, for the sake of both their customers' satisfaction and their own bottom line.

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Interview

Stephen Krashen (SK) talks to
Beniko Mason (BM)

Dr. Mason is a faculty memberat Shitennoji University and its Junior College in Osaka, Japan.She has been doing research on Story Listening and Story Reading (see "Storiesfirst.org) for several decades. Her publications have appeared in many specialized journals such asSystem, the RELC Journal, the TESOL Quarterly, and ITL: Review of Applied Linguistics. She has demonstrated her methods and has presented her findings at conferences in the United States, France, Japan, Taiwan, Korea and Germany.

SK: A great deal of your work in second and foreign language teaching has focused on free voluntary reading. What stimulated your interest?

BM: My first research project involving free reading, changed everything! I call it the Sai Rishu study (the "retakers" study) (Mason & Krashen, 1997a). Sai-Rishu students were those who had failed in the English course in the past, and they were taking this course for the necessary credit, for graduation. It was a group of students who did not like English, did not want to study English, felt bad about themselves for failing the class and did not want to attend the class.

I used a regular text book in the first semester, which was given to me by the university. It did not work, of course. I used SSR (self-selected reading) in the second semester to find out whether SSR would work with these unmotivated failing students. I compared this class to a regular freshmen class that I was teaching at the same time using the regular course book. The Sai-Rishu class was a mixture of students from the 2nd year to the 4th year.

The result was that their progress was faster than the other class who used the regular course book, and they caught up with the regular class in English proficiency at the end of the second semester. The study also revealed that SSR gave the students hope in English study, [and they] developed motivation and confidence in themselves.

As it had been strongly believed that students had to be motivated to study and improve, it was a surprise that they did not have to be motivated to get better. Reading caused motivation. The SSR experience changed them.

I was encouraged with these results and began investigating more. Soon, I found that: 1) SSR was superior to traditional reading methods for literacy and language development; 2) SSR developed reading speed better than the traditional method; and 3) SSR was not only effective with students who liked to study English in the traditional way, but also with students at lower proficiency levels (Mason & Krashen, 1997b).

It was believed in those days that in order to develop writing skills in English, students should be engaged in writing exercises in English. Many teachers assigned writing homework in English and the teachers corrected their writing, but Japanese students were not getting any better in writing. It seemed like it was [a] wasted effort for both teachers and students. But in the same study (Mason & Krashen, 1997b), we found that SSR alone caused writing improvement.

During this time, I designed my reading program in such a way that the students do not have to waste their time searching for books that they could read and that they liked. I read most of the Heinemann Graded Readers, all the 200-word Penguin (Pearson) readers, some from other publishers at different levels, many authentic books for young adults and bestsellers, in order to see which ones were well written and interesting. I wanted my students' experience with book reading to be successful every time, so they would not lose interest in reading. I also did not test students on what they read. My concern was how to encourage my students to read more. Without having them read substantial number of books, I could not evaluate the true effect of reading.

After I saw that reading alone caused significant improvements in writing, I decided to reconsider the validity of the "Output Hypothesis", the hypothesis that we learn to write by writing, and by getting our errors corrected. I did an experiment using three groups who read about the same number of pages, but who did different amounts and kinds of writing assignments. The results did not support the Output Hypothesis—increasing output and adding corrective feedback did not increase improvement over and above SSR alone, on any of the measures (cloze test, writing test and TOEIC reading section). In other words, reading alone was more time efficient than reading plus writing, or reading plus writing and correction (Mason, 2004).

In other studies, I found that reading alone resulted in significant gains on the TOEFL (Mason, 2006) and TOEIC; and that SSR was effective not only for school-age students, but also for adults and senior adults who only read, or read and heard stories in class (Mason, 2011, 2013a, 2013b; Mason and Krashen, 2017)

After all these studies, it became clearer and clearer to me that SSR developed many skills for different age groups and different proficiency levels. It became more and more obvious through my studies, that comprehensible input by way of reading had a strong influence in developing not only reading, but also on listening and grammar.

I came to the conclusion that the important question was not whether reading (input) was the cause of language acquisition—now that we are confident of the validity of the input and reading hypotheses, we should investigate how to get students reading. The answer is simple: Arrange the books so that they will have success every time; provide access to interesting reading without accountability, and do not require conscious learning.

We also want to know how much reading it takes to show meaningful progress. My estimate is that for low intermediate students, a doable reading goal is about 100 to 150 pages per week. We have estimated from students' data that students gain about .6 points on the TOEIC for each hour they read, more than 200 points per year of reading one hour per day (Krashen & Mason, 2015; Mason & Krashen, 2017).

I have been examining the effects of reading for the last 30 years and my interests have never shifted to other areas in the Second Language Acquisition field. I have always felt that the most important question that we need to obtain the answer to in this field is whether the approach should be intrinsic or extrinsic, whether it should be meaning-based or skill-based, whether it should be input-based or eclectic.

No one disagrees with the fundamental concept of the Input, or Comprehension Hypothesis anymore. The hypothesis, however, has evolved from the Input Hypothesis to the Compelling Comprehensible Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 2011a; Krashen, Lee, & Lao, 2017). I suggest that the words "rich" and "frequent" be added.

These conditions have been mentioned in books and papers in the past, but because these two words have not been stressed enough, there are

methods that claim to be CI-based but actually include more skill-based activities than comprehensible input, and do not result in the full effects of the Comprehension Hypothesis.

My interest has been to investigatewhich is better: Methods that are input alone, or a combination, or eclectic. I am glad that I have stayed with this question. My conclusion is that input alone is more effective, as well as more time and cost efficient (Mason, 2013c).

SK: Some people refer to self-selected reading as extensive reading. You no longer use this term. Why?

BM: Extensive Reading (ER) and Self-Selected Reading (SSR) are theoretically different and they use different methods. They are based on different assumptions and approaches.

ER is based on the traditional approach to language teaching. It claims that Extensive Reading (ER) develops fluency and Intensive Reading (IR) develops accuracy. SSR, Self-Selected Reading, takes the position that self-selected reading develops both accuracy and fluency.

I have altered SSR to add a separate pre-stage, "Guided SSR", or GSSR. In this stage students choose books on their own from a collection that has been pre-selected by the teacher. This is of great help to beginning level students, who are unfamiliar with what books are available and need some help in choosing what is right for them.

The GSSR stage helps ensure that students will not waste time, that they will be more efficient in selecting books that are interesting and at their level. They will be able to start reading on the first day of the new semester. It avoids the most frequent complaint I hear: students telling me that they can't find interesting reading material. When students have immediate success with

almost each book from the beginning, the library becomes a pleasant place for them to go to.

The GSSR period need not last very long. Some students become free voluntary readers in the first semester.

As part of GSSR, students keep records of the books that they read (the number of pages and the amount of time she/he spent for reading the book, and a short summary and a reflection of the book.) GSSR does not include formal comprehension questions, but does include occasional checking/sharing reflections and opinions of books that are recorded in the students' notebook.

Returning to the question why I do not use the term ER for my reading program, ER is part of the Eclectic Approach. ER makes the students: 1) do Intensive Reading; 2) answer comprehension questions; 3) write summaries in English; 4) talk about the story in English; 5) study vocabulary, and do other post-reading activities. ER does not assume that reading alone is sufficient for progress in language development.

SK: In your presentations and papers, you have emphasized the difference between measuring overall acquisition and efficiency of acquisition. Why is this important?

BM: If a method is effective, it means that it produces the desired improvements. If a method is efficient, it means that produces improvements without wasting time, energy and money. Any teaching method can be effective when we spend enough time and money on applying it.

Language education research often compares methods without sufficient regard to the theory underlying the method. Some methods are not pure manifestations of one theory but are

combinations, or "eclectic". The results of this research do not deal with [the] core question of whether a method based on comprehensible input alone is more efficient than a mixed method.

There has been a discussion whether it is even possible to use pure comprehension-based methods. Some people cannot even imagine the idea of just having students read in class, or just listen to a story in class. But it is possible.

When these pure methods are used, studies show surprising results every time. Input alone is more effective and is several times more efficient than eclectic methods. (Mason, 2004, 2007, 2018; Mason &Krashen, 2004, 2018; Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch, & Krashen, 2009). These methods are more efficient in two different ways: One, greater gains per unit time in language proficiency (I noticed how efficiency was calculated in a study done by Dupuy and Krashen (1993). I began to apply the idea of dividing the gain by the time it took to produce the gain. This was the beginning of my efficiency studies.) Two, greater gains with less money and less energy spent by teachers;

The notion of efficiency in language teaching interests me, because I want to help the so-called "slower" and "less gifted" students, those who score well below the mean, those students whose spirits are beaten, and who don't know how to do as well as the "smart" ones. Use of more efficient (and pleasant) methods evens the playing field and changes disappointed students into motivated students who enjoy going to class.

SK: You have emphasized [on] "Story Listening" in recent years. Why is this important? Why don't you use the term "story telling"? What is the difference?

BM: It is a good idea to provide auditory input in a language program. I started Story Listening (SL) in my reading program because students wanted to do something besides reading in class. Having the students read in class all the time was almost perfect, but it was not enough for some students and most students needed more auditory input. Story Listening is a good method to introduce new words and students enjoy listening to stories. I have found that SL can be done at all levels, from beginning to advanced.

Story Listening does not have a grammatical syllabus and is not based on a pre-selected list of words we expect students to master. Rather, the teacher tells the story and uses drawings, explanations and occasional translation to help the students understand important words, phrases and grammar to help make the story more comprehensible.

Although the goal is comprehension of the story, not mastery of certain words, Story Listening results in impressive vocabulary acquisition. As I told more stories in class, the students began to remark that they remembered many words from hearing stories even after several weeks. In the studies I did, I found that the rate of vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories wasmuch faster than when students use a textbook based on the traditional approach (Mason & Krashen, 2004, 2018; Mason, et. al, 2009). This occurs without pre-teaching of vocabulary and without comprehension questions during or after SL.

I prefer to use folktales and fairytales for Story Listening. These stories have stood the test of time and use themes that are as interesting today as they were 200 to 2000 years ago. In my opinion, personal stories can be interesting, but are not always interesting to everyone and not always appropriate. In Story Listening, the story does the entertaining. The teacher does not have to bring in costumes, candles, stuffed animals

and other objects. Only a blackboard and colored chalk are needed.

SK: Some people think it common sense that the truth must be "in the middle", that both studying vocabulary and grammar are important. Yet you and some others argue that time is better spent hearing and reading stories. Shouldn't we avoid extreme positions?

BM: The Input Hypothesis is not an extreme position. It is the most natural and ordinary way of acquiring a language. People have acquired foreign languages from listening to what they understand from the beginning of human history.

The traditional, skill-based approach is an extremist method. It is based on a theory that has no empirical support and that students do not consider to be pleasant. My students have told me that Story Listening and Reading reduces their burden, and that they could continue listening and reading indefinitely, because it is easy and fun.

Teaching reading using Story Listening and GSSR is easy. When the teacher has collected 100 or more stories to tell and has selected 100 or more good graded readers, the teacher can guide her beginning level students to the low-intermediate level in one year.

So many children have been suffering with English studies. In Japan, almost 95% of high school students say that they are poor at English while the universities, companies and government require high TOEIC scores for admission, and employment. Students have been painfully struggling to achieve high scores, but their efforts have been in vain.

The popular expression "There is no royal road to learning", suggests that students need to devote hours of hard and painful work to reach advanced levels in language acquisition. This is false. Language acquisition is easy, fun, and fast and does not cost a lot of money. Story Listening

and Self-Selected Reading are not extremist approaches. They use the most natural possible ways to acquire a language.

SK: How many languages do you speak? Has your experience with other languages been helpful to you as a researcher, theoretician and teacher?

BM: I understood right away what the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985, 2003) suggested, as I had firsthand experience in acquiring German and English from living in countries where these languages are spoken. But I do not believe that staying in Germany for ten months and living in the US for nine years are the reasons for my language ability in German and English.

I have seen many people who did not acquire the language of the country they stayed in for decades. Going to the country is helpful, but it is not necessary. The main ingredient is comprehensible input. Aural input certainly does help, but I must point out that I read a lot in these languages, especially English, after I came back to Japan. I think that reading is the most important ingredient for speaking and writing (Krashen, 2004, 2011b).

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Landmark

Self-Selected Voluntary Reading: The Missing Link

Stephen Krashen

Reading for pleasure, or "reading because you want to", is a very powerful tool for language acquisition, one that is strongly supported by research in both first and second language acquisition. Those who read more have better language development and more knowledge in a variety of areas, such as reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing style, and spelling. Research on self-selected reading confirms the Comprehension Hypothesis, the view that we acquire language and literacy through comprehensible input.

In this paper, I will discuss what I think has been a serious omission in language education programs. Ironically, it is something that is inexpensive to include. Besides, students find it very pleasant. In fact, it is so pleasant that students often want to continue doing it on their own. Moreover, there is massive research supporting its use in second language acquisition. The missing link is, course, reading for pleasure.

I will begin with the underlying theory:

Two Views of Language and Literacy Development

For the last few decades, we have been engaged in a major and important war. It is a good war, because whichever side wins, we will have learned a great deal.

On one side is the Comprehension Hypothesis, which claims that we acquire language and develop literacy in only one way—by understanding what we hear and read, or when

we get "comprehensible input". A crucial feature of the Comprehension Hypothesis is that the so-called "skills"—the individual components of language and literacy—are acquired as a result of getting comprehensible input. If we get comprehensible input, then competence in vocabulary, grammar, etc., emerges.

The Skill-Building Hypothesis reverses this causality. In classes based on Skill-Building, students first consciously learn about the language, then "practice" applying the rules they have learned in their spoken and written output. Their errors are corrected in order to help them arrive at the correct version of the rule. The Skill-Building Hypothesis assumes that if students do this long enough, the rule will eventually become "automatized" and production of language will become smooth and automatic. In other words, Skill-Building Hypothesis is a Delayed Gratification Hypothesis: work hard and someday you will have your reward.

In contrast, the Comprehension Hypothesis promises instant happiness. For input to be understood, the acquire must first pay attention to it, and the best way for this to happen is for it to be interesting.

The Comprehension Hypothesis is thus a win-win situation. It has been shown to be effective in the research, as we shall see in this paper, and it is pleasurable to implement.

The Reading Hypothesis is a special case of the Comprehension Hypothesis; it is a form of

comprehensible input. The Reading Hypothesis claims that reading for comprehension is the source of our reading ability, writing ability (writing style), vocabulary, spelling, and our ability to understand and use complex grammatical rules. Emerging research strongly supports the idea that the most effective form of reading is when we read what we want to read, i.e. free voluntary or self-selected reading (Krashen, 2004).

What the Research Says: Sustained silent reading

Three reviews of the impact of in-school self-selected reading on second language development have been published in the last ten years. In-school reading is also referred to as "sustained silent reading". In this, a few minutes is set aside from the language class and students read whatever they want to read. There are no book reports or any other form of accountability. (For a discussion on the elements of successful SSR, see Krashen, 2011). The reviews have been published in the form of "meta-analyses", a very useful and precise way of presenting the results of many individual experiments.

Table 1 presents the results of the three recent meta-analyses of studies involving second and foreign language acquisition. Nearly all of them are based on studies of English as a foreign language. In each study, time was allotted in the "experimental" group, for students to select their own reading material, and accountability was either minimal or there was no test or report of any kind. The comparison group was taught using traditional pedagogy.

An "effect size" was calculated for each study, in this case, for each comparison between test scores achieved by students doing in-school free reading and traditional instruction. A positive effect size meant the reading group did better than the comparison group. Effect sizes of around .2 meant that the advantage of the reading group was small, .5 medium, and .8 or greater was considered a large effect size. The average effect size for reading comprehension ranged from .54 to .87, and for vocabulary from .18 to .47, both confirming that SSR is effective. Several individual studies were included in more than one meta-analysis, but the overlap is not extensive.

Table 1.
Effect Sizes for Three Recent SSR Meta-Analyses: English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

	Vocabulary	Reading Comprehension
Krashen (2007)		.87 (15)
Nakanishi (2014)	.18 (9)	.68 (15)
Jeon and Day (2016)	.47 (17)	.54 (46)

Note. Number of studies analyzed has been given in parentheses. Table originally presented in Krashen and Mason (2017).

Multivariate Analyses

Using multiple regression, a researcher can determine the impact of one variable, while holding the effect of other variables constant. Multiple regression allows us to assume that the predictors are not correlated to each other.

Table 2 presents the results of a multiple regression comparing the impact of different predictors of competence in the subjunctive, among speakers of Spanish as a second language. The subjects' "acquired" knowledge of the subjunctive was tested, not their conscious

knowledge of the rules for the use of the subjunctive. Comparison of the "betas" shows that the only successful predictor was the amount of reading in Spanish subjects reported doing. Study of Spanish, even study dedicated to the subjunctive, did not count, nor did time spent in Spanish-speaking countries.

Table 2
Spanish as a Foreign Language: Monitor-Free
Test of Subjunctive

Predictor	beta	p
Study	0.52	0.72
Residence	0.051	0.073
Reading	0.32	0.034
Study of Subjunctive	0.044	0.76

(Notes. From Stokes, Krashen & Kartchner (1998).

Mason and Krashen (2017) performed a multivariate analysis on data from a series of case studies done by Mason. All of Mason's subjects had done an EFL class with her as an instructor in Japan, and had requested that Mason help them establish a reading program they could follow on their own. Mason agreed, but asked the former students to take alternate forms of the TOEIC examination and keep a record of what and how much they read. Krashen and Mason came to the surprising conclusion that the readers gained an average of a little more than one-half point on the TOEIC for each hour they read (mean = .06 points). There was little variation among the subjects, even though different subjects read very different kinds of books, for different amounts of time. All of them read nearly entirely fiction.

One more multivariate study deserves mention here, that of Sullivan and Brown (2013), who administered an English vocabulary test to native speakers of English and analyzed a number of predictors. They reported that reading "middlebrow" and "highbrow" fiction were good predictors of vocabulary test scores, and both were better than reading non-fiction. Sullivan and Brown also reported that how much the subjects reported reading at this stage in their life (age 42) could be used to predict their vocabulary scores, independent of how much they read when they were younger, and independent of their scores on previous tests, administered when they were age 5 and again at age 16. Sullivan and Brown's report indicates that we can improve and become more literate at any age and the way to do it is to read, and to produce comprehensible written input.

Case Histories

Case histories constitute valuable research material if we collect enough to them to determine consistent patterns. Although I am presenting only one case history here, it is one out of many that support the Reading Hypotheses, in this case for first language literacy development.

Murray (2010) grew up in extreme poverty in New York, but was a highly successful student. She eventually went to Harvard and made a career in writing and public speaking. Her dad had an unusual habit. When Murray was growing up, different branches of public library in New York were not connected by computer. Her dad took advantage of this lack of connectivity and got a library card from each branch. He borrowed all the books that he could from each branch and never returned them.

Murray tells us that she only attended school in the final weeks before the end-of-year examinations, but managed to get promoted thanks to last-minute test prep and because of the knowledge she absorbed from readings the books her father took from local libraries.

Reading and Knowledge

Murray's case suggests that reading is not only a major source of literacy, it is also a major source of knowledge. Stanovich and colleagues (Stanovich and Cunningham, 1993; West, Stanovich, and Mitchell, 1993) have confirmed this in a series of studies in which they assert that those who read more, know more about literature, history and science. They have more "cultural literacy" and even "practical knowledge".

The literacy development and wide knowledge that are the outcomes of reading may be the reason for Simonton's (1988) conclusion "… omnivorous reading in childhood and adolescence correlates positively with ultimate adult success" (Simonton, 1988).

The Pleasure of Self-Selected Reading

When we read books that we choose ourselves, It is usually a very pleasant experience. This has been confirmed through empirical studies (Krashen, 2004), but the following reports provide even more compelling evidence.

One dedicated reader, interviewed by Victor Nell (1988), reports "Reading removes me ... from the irritations of living ... for the few hours a day I read 'trash' I escape the cares of those around me, as well as escaping my own cares and dissatisfactions." Author Somerset Maugham, also in Nell (1988) states:

> Conversation, after a time, bores me, games tire me, and my thoughts, which we are told are the unfailing resources of a sensible man have a tendency to run dry. Then I fly to my book as the opium-smoker to his pipe ... (p. 232).

Nell (1988) includes an entire chapter on reading in bed, before going to sleep. He reports that bedtime reading was nearly universal among dedicated readers. Of the 26 pleasure readers he interviewed, 24 said that they read in bed "nearly every night" or "most nights".

Some of the bedtime readers volunteered that bedtime reading was an addiction, stating bedtime reading is

> … a habit which I certainly do not wish to break. Even if I read for only five minutes, I must do it—a compulsion like that of a drug addict! … My addiction to reading is such that I almost can't sleep without a minimum of ten minutes (usually 30-60 minutes) of reading" (p. 250).

Jim Trelease (Trelease, 2013) understands the pleasure of bedtime reading. He advises parents wanting to encourage a reading habit to make sure their children have a lamp at their bedside.

The Missing Link

A diet consisting only of enjoyable fiction will not, I hypothesize, bring readers to the highest levels of literacy. It will, however, bring readers to the point where specialized reading in areas of importance and interest are comprehensible. It is the link between basic conversational language and truly advanced levels.

An Obstacle

An obstacle to fully implementing SSR and encouraging self-selected reading is the lack of access to interesting, comprehensible and affordable books, and other reading material. This is nearly universally the case for those living in high-poverty areas (Neuman and Celano, 2001). My hope is that we will invest more in libraries, and at the same time find cheaper ways to produce readers and take more advantage of inexpensive applications of technology to solve this problem (Krashen, Wang, and Lee, 2016).

In addition, comprehensible and enjoyable reading is rarely available for beginning and even low intermediate second and foreign

language acquirers in any language except English. There are three paths to solving this problem, and I suggest we take all three at once:

1 Build up interest and competence in reading with a preliminary stage of Story Listening: beginning and intermediate students hear stories in classes, supplemented in a number of ways to make them more comprehensible (Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch, & Krashen, 2009).

2 Build upcompetence and interest in reading using another approach; Beniko Mason suggests guided self-selected reading consisting of very easy reading suggested by the teacher.

3 Create more texts for students in all languages.

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Book Reviews

Language matters.

Bhubaneshwar: Dhauli Books.(133 pages)

Patnaik, B. N. (2018)**.**

Reviewed by: **Shreesh Choudhary**
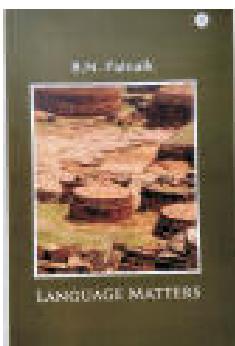
This is an expert's book for lay people. Following the title of the first piece in this collection of 32 relatively short but thought-provoking notes on language, linguistics and communication, the book is, inter-alia, also an argument against the "Power of the Expert".

Professor Bibhudhendra Narayan Patnaik retired from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Kanpur in the early years of the new millennium. Before this, he studied first in Odisha, and then at CIFL, Hyderabad. Patnaik has occupied a number of important professional positions. He is a member of the Government of India's Committee for Classical Languages. He was a member of UGC's Committee for Indigenous Languages and of the IT Ministry's Working Committee for Technical Development of Indian Languages. He has been a member of the Board of Governors of IIT Kanpur, and he has taught English for over half a century. However, Patnaik is basically a researcher, who is interested in The Mahabharata, football, ghosts, computers and mind-brain, and in life and letters generally.

Patnaik is also interested in language and machine. In the 1970s and 1980s, when computers were still new in India, Patnaik, along with some colleagues from the field of Computer Science, wrote a series of articles outlining issues in machine understanding and processing of languages, and in the form and extent of collaboration between experts looking at the same issues from different perspectives. Language after all is in, of and for the mind; and, grammar, or syntax, is the best view of how well-organized a "machine" mind may be. The notes under review in this book, therefore, are like mantras created through a lifetime of meditation.

The present collection of essays brings highly theoretical issues to lay people in a non-technical language, without using any jargon. A book of this kind has been long-awaited in the field of language education.

In the note on language and communication, the second in the volume, Patnaik claims that there may be moments when "Even Silence can be a mode of communication" (p.5). One can do many things with language besides communication. For instance, "…one could hurt with language and heal with language". One can use language to talk about past, present and the future, about health and happiness, about anything practically. A Greek Philosopher once said that anything that is human is not without language, but language can often be ambiguous. It can cause blocks in communication. Examples cited in support of this theory are new and interesting. But many of these notes could have been accompanied by illustrations from the writer's own experience. Personal touch would have gone so naturally with a book of this kind, but Patnaik has rarely done so. As a result, the book stops short of becoming as interesting as indicated.

Another well-written note entitled "Our Reliance on English", looks at how in the recent times, many English words have been added to Indian

languages and are now part of the local vocabulary. They are no longer seen as foreign words. Patnaik cites examples of words such as "decision, training, result, final, plot, powercut, information, etc.", which are now part of the Odia vocabulary. According to him, there is no point in trying to replace "result" with "phala" or "phalaaphal". There are many other instances where English words have been "nativized". However, Patnaik is worried about why people use words of a different language, when idiomatic alternatives in their own language are available (p.51).

There is another interesting article on "English Medium schools"(p.53). Mr. P. V. Narsimha Rao, former Prime Minister of India and an educationist, believed that it would take "not more than four hundred hours of good instruction and practice for one to have a reasonable command of English". Patnaik asserts that "This is not an unrealistic assessment (p.54)." He feels that people do not only want to know the English language, they also want their children to have good knowledge of subjects such as science, mathematics, social studies, etc., and develop alertness and self-confidence. Parents began looking for alternatives when they found that not just English, even these other subjects were not being taught properly in Odia medium schools. They moved their children to English medium schools, which "were the best alternatives available". Patnaik claims, "These schools were far better administered.…" The syllabi were more modern, classes were generally held regularly, homework was given and checked, etc. The government schools were inadequately staffed, but the English medium schools had, on the whole, a good teacher student ratio. These schools also had better academic and recreational facilities. Furthermore, compulsory use of uniform generated self confidence among students. English language schools have thrived because people have given up on the Odia medium

government schools, which is quite true, says Patnaik.

Today there is legislation for many things which would earlier have been obvious. Today Indian children have a right to education. But that would be meaningful, Patnaik says, only "if there are schools in the true sense of the term.…"(p. 55)

Similarly, Patnaik raises questions about education through the mother tongue. Is it possible for all, are regional languages of states in India mother tongue of all children there, how do we ensure the mother tongue education of children living outside "their" states?

For many children, 3-language formula can become the 4-language formula. Think of a Maithili-speaking child at school in Bhubaneswar. She will have to learn Oriya, Hindi and English, besides her mother tongue. So there are problems, but these are not insurmountable. There is no point blaming English, says Patnaik. It is not that English is responsible for the decline of output in Indian languages. English of course is no longer a foreign language in India, it is there on the Sahitya Akademy list of Indian languages. It is India's official language and, currently, it has a greater variety of books in knowledge generated in and through this language. We must, therefore, teach English to every child (P.79).

There are similar notes on cultural and linguistic issues. For instance, Patnaik asserts that a number of people criticize Chomsky without reading him. According to him, no other researcher brought as much philosophical attention to the study of language as Chomsky.

As mentioned earlier, the book could have been more interesting had the writer chosen to illustrate the points he makes with examples, events, anecdotes, etc., from his experience. Yet, on the whole, this collection has the potential to be every language teacher's handbook in India, and they could seek personal guidance from it

in times of doubt and confusion. Language Matters is a landmark book. It deserves a spectacular reception.

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'There are many aspects of human emotions and knowledge which cannot find expression in words and must therefore get spaces in 'lines and colours, sounds and movements'.

Tagore