

**Challenges and Opportunities for Teaching and Research in
English Language and Literature**
VIT, Chennai

**Comprehensive Learning Input in English Language
Acquisition through Short Stories**

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Abstract

Language is the medium of comprehending ideas. English is the global language. Learning English increases the chance of getting job easily around the world. Several innovative methods have been attempted for language teaching. The input hypothesis, also known as the monitor model, is a group of five hypotheses of second-language acquisition developed by the linguist Stephen Krashen. Krashen primarily devised the input hypothesis as just one of the five hypotheses, but over time the term has come to refer to five hypotheses as a group. The hypotheses are the input hypothesis, the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. This paper discusses the use of Stephen Krashen's hypotheses for the acquisition of language with the help of Short Stories. This paper makes use of the story "Mr. Know All" to acquire English language.

Introduction

Stephen Krashen was widely known for his The Theory of Second Language Acquisition. Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory consists of five main hypotheses: The Acquisition - learning hypothesis, The Natural order hypothesis, The Monitor hypothesis, The Input hypothesis and The Affective - filter hypothesis.

Input Hypothesis

The input hypothesis is the most wanted conception in second language acquisition. The Input hypothesis is designed to encourage language acquisition. The Input must be slightly above the current level capacity of the learners.

Krashen suggests we acquire language when we perceive what the individuals tell us, we perceive what we receive. The Input axiom is related to subconscious acquisition, not learning. We acquire language through understanding the input that contains structure on the far side of our exceeding current level of competency. The language proficiency is not merely the understanding of the wholesome words and the structures of the input.

Generally, literature speaks through the heart similar to the mind. Reading stories will greatly improve the second language acquisition. Literature franchise people to understand and question their identities by raising the conscious awareness. The literature will increase the performance of grammatical and lexical usages and enriches

the cultural context eventually as the language development. The literature is convenient to receive, interpret and forthright to recollect linguistic usages, adore the points of synchronic linguistics, syntax, style, and selection of words (Collie and Slater 1987). Reading should not be a task, rather a pleasurable pass time (Krashen 1993).

Reading has been historically divided into 2 types: Extensive reading and Intensive reading.

Extensive Reading

In extensive reading, language learners gather an oversized quantity of text for enjoyment, habitually jump from one topic to another topic, encircle completely different styles of articles, genres, and authors. It will develop reading and also writing competency.

Intensive Reading

Intensive reading is, reading one genre, one subject material or the work of one specific author (Cho, Ahn and Krashen 2005, 58). This emphasizes language proficiency effectively rather than the previous process.

Using the story as a comprehensive input in the intermediate level of ESL learning is to assist the learners to develop the four fundamental skills. Reading short stories builds us to feel that we are a part of the story too. Alan Poe defines the Short story “as a narrative it can be read at one sitting from one-half hour to two hours, and that is limited to a certain unique or single effect, to which every detail is subordinate” (Poe 1864).

Short story has usually one single plot and a few characters. There is no detailed description of settings. Besides the length of the text, Hill (1994: 15) points out three other basic criteria for choosing the text: (1) the needs and capacity of the students. (2) The linguistic and stylistic level of the text. (3) The amount of background information required for true appreciation of the material.

Novel is enormous and took a long time to complete whereas the story is more easily readable and consumes less time and it contains emotional variables renowned for its psychological features skill, ethical values and soothing to eyes. In every story, we can notice more than twenty new vocabularies. Reading text can result in incidental language acquisition (Gardner 2008). The acquirer can notice the bunches of vocabulary within the single story, with the various level of structure complexes. The short story enriches artistic skills. In this study, the short story titled “Mr. Know-All” written by Somerset Maugham (1874) is chosen to analyze the input.

Task 1 - Reading Skill

The students were allowed reading the text, after reading the text, some activities were conducted by the teacher to help the students to acquire more vocabulary. These activities help the ESL learners to defend them from lethargy and forge them to recollect the contention without stress.

Selected Words:

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 18:6 June 2018

Dr. V. Rajasekaran, Editor: *Challenges and Opportunities for Teaching and Research in English Language and Literature*

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Comprehensive Learning Input in English Language Acquisition through Short Stories

Rigid, portholes, dismay, Wardrobe, tactless, gestures, exuberant, prohibition, drapery, exasperating, snub, suspicion, loquacious, overweening, chap, frigid, dogmatic, acrimonious, vanity, interminable, demeanor, inevitably, diminish, vehement, loquacity, triumphantly, deprecating, flush, clasp, desperate, trembling.

1. Mixed letters
2. Meaning of the words/Synonyms - a different use of words or phrase with the same context.
3. Cross Word
4. Rearrange the words to make the complete sentence
5. Word Search
6. Gap fill sentence

Task 2 - Writing Skill

Literature develops the Creative thinking skill of the students. The Creativity of the students can be stimulated through an activity like

1. Give two reasons, why the Narrator dislikes Mr. Kelada before he meets him.
2. Write the Dialogue between Mr. Kelada and the Narrator when they are in the cabin.
3. Describe the characterization of Mr. Kelada.
4. Paraphrase the dinner conversations in this given story.
5. If you had been on the ship with Mr. Kelada, what would you think about him?
6. What is the moral of the story?
7. Differentiate the personalities of Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Kelada.

Task 3 - Listening and Speaking

Short story is a powerful motivating source for listening and Speaking. Asking students to read a story aloud can develop their speaking skills as well as listening skills. Reading aloud improves pronunciation and fluency.

Activity:

Beginner level - Active Chain reading - the students will read the story aloud followed by one by one. The first student reads the first sentence, the second student read the second sentence and so on.

Intermediate level - The students are divided into small groups. The students retell the story. Each student will have multiple opportunities to practice the discourse.

Advanced level - The students are divided into two groups and they discourse an argument using the story.

To make the students more involved in the story we may use role play. This activity can be carried out by asking the students to play the role of several characters (it moreover acts as a situational method).

To develop listening skill using a short story, the teacher can do the following: Read the story out loud, Listen to the native speaker if it's possible, Play the story if a recording is available.

THE STUDY

Participants

The subjects were 15 undergraduate students from Bishop Heber College, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India. Subjects were all ESL learners of different level, had trouble with grammar and vocabulary. Language knowledge was sufficient only for few subjects. There were two tests conducted in this experiment. First, to check their knowledge of thirty words before and after reading a story. Second to check their development in their skill. The aim was to work out Krashen's theory of comprehensive input as 'Reading' 'short story' to improve language proficiency.

Procedure

First there was a pre-test on thirty words picked out from the selected story. Then, the students were allowed to read the text, after reading the text, activities were given to check the students' acquiring ability of new lexical. And then post-test on the same thirty words was done.

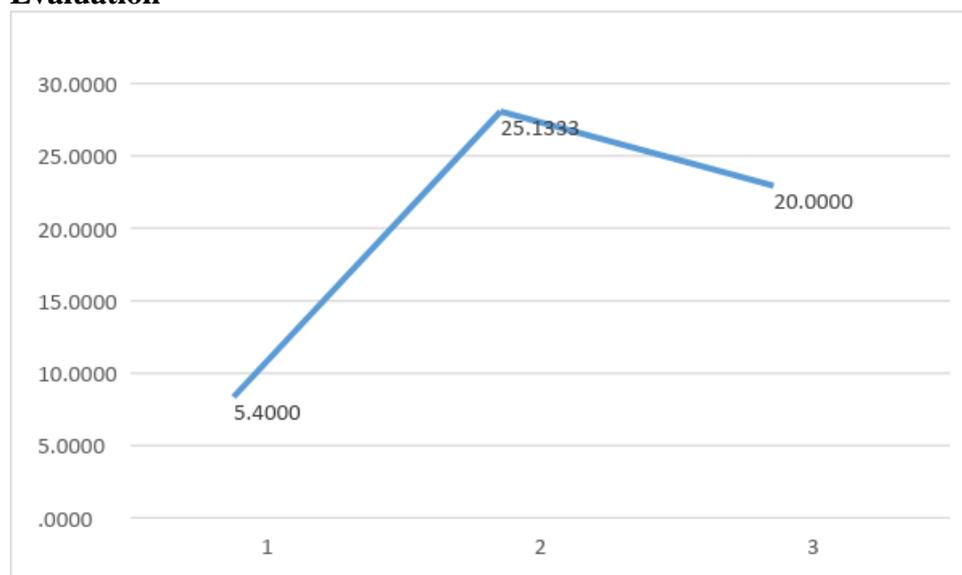
Result

Table below shows the mean value of the students.

Statistics

	Pre Test	Post-Test	Delayed-post
Valid	15	15	15
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	5.4000	25.1333	20.0000

Evaluation



Discussion

The short story helped the students to acquire vocabulary and it helped them to attain effective discourse skills. Reading a short story gives confidence to the students due to the enhancement of knowledge. At the beginning some of them were interested in reading and most of them were not, Changes in environment and motivational strategies influenced them in the learning process. The average score of the test was 5.4000 points before the students reading the short story and 25.1333 points after the reading of a story. The average score of the 30 words increased by 20 points after the students had read the story.

Conclusion

The Short story creates meaningful context. Every teaching situation varies from classroom to classroom. Time spent on reading improves language acquiring proficiency. If the learners practice reading, listening, writing, and speaking simultaneously, it strengthens the language proficiency. Since one comes across new words or phrase unconsciously they begin to use them in their daily use of language. The students will show interest because of the stories. Stories capture their attention from beginning to the end. The acquisition of vocabulary and expressions strengthen the student's communication and self-confidence, especially during the oral interventions.

Name:

Date:

Class:

10x2=20

Choose the correct answer.

1. Portholes
a) bull's eyes b) Egress c) a small window d) entrance
2. Rigid
a) firmly b) fragile c) movable d) weakly
3. Dismay
a) distress b) confident c) fear d) surprise
4. Wardrobe
a) dry goods b) locker c) cabinet d) array
5. Gesture
a) splendid b) speak c) radiant d) mime
6. Ebony
a) shade b) black c) raven d) white
7. Tactless
a) Thought less b) careful c) politely d) sincere
8. Exuberant
a) high-spirited b) weak c) depressed d) lifeless
9. Prohibition
a) negation b) allowance c) permission d) clearance
10. Drapery
a) Attire b) covering c) hanging d) shroud
11. Exasperating

- a) please b) upset c) ease d) peaceful
12. Snub
a) Be friendly b) intro-vent c) socialize d) pass up
13. Suspicion
a) Bad vibes b) trust c) loyalty d) information
14. Loquacious
a) Quiet b) silent c) talk active d) snubbed
15. Overweening
a) humble b) modest c) unassuming d) insolent
16. Vanity
a) gentle b) selfless c) egotism d) meekness
17. Chap
a) Gay b) feminine c) skate d) gentle man
18. Dogmatic
a) Indecisive b) obedient c) flexible d) arrogant
19. Acrimonious
a) Diffident b) confident c) bitter d) modest
20. Loquacity
a) Sarcastic b) kind c) wrathful d) talkative
21. Interminable
a) Finite b) immeasurable c) ending d) everlasting
22. Demeanor
a) Attitude b) temper c) tinge d) manner
23. Inevitable
a) Doubtful b) fixed c) escapable d) avoidable
24. Diminish
a) Wake up b) prolong c) shrink d) grow
25. Vehement
a) Indifferent b) passionate c) apathetic d) bore
26. Triumphantly
a) Unfortunately b) graciously c) badly d) felicitously
27. Desperate
a) Confident b) outrageous c) satisfied d) disfavor
28. Flush
a) Pale b) flat c) glowing d) true
29. Trembling
a) Be calm b) flutter c) steady d) jitter
30. Clasp
a) Hug b) embrace c) clinch d) buckle
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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 18:6 June 2018

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