IN THIS ISSUE

CURRENT RESEARCH

Overcoming Fear of Reading in English: The Astonishing Impact of a Short SSR Experience
by Kyung-Sook Cho ........................................ 2

A Comparison of TPRS and Traditional Instruction, both with SSR.
by Joseph Dziedzic .......................................... 4

Developing Academic Language: Some Hypotheses
by Stephen Krashen ......................................... 8

The Affective Benefits of Extensive Reading in the Spanish Curriculum: A 5-week Case Study
by Teljer Liburd and Victoria Rodrigo ............ 16

Be sure and check out http://backseatlinguist.com/blog/
a blog by Jeff McQuillan

Embedded Reading: a Scaffolded Approach to Teaching Reading
by Laurie Clarcq ............................................ 21

The Backseat Linguist
by Jeff McQuillan ........................................... 25

Advertising Guidelines .................................... 28

Research Submission Guidelines .................... 30

IJFLT: A free on-line, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to communicating research, articles and helpful information regarding language acquisition to support teachers as they endeavor to create fluent, multilingual students.
The value of self-selected reading in a second language has been well established (Krashen, 2004). Nevertheless, few second language acquirers take advantage of this pleasurable means of improving, most likely because they have little access to truly interesting reading material that is comprehensible to them, or they fear that they will not understand the material that is available.

The results of a previous study suggest that it may not be difficult to overcome the second objection. In Cho (2004) and Cho and Krashen (2002), Korean teachers taking classes in teaching English as a foreign language, but who did not feel confident in their ability to read for pleasure in English, were presented with a collection of children’s books in English and simply asked to browse the collection for two hours. This simple treatment resulted in a sudden change of attitude when the teachers discovered they could understand and enjoy many of the books.

This study was another straightforward attempt to improve attitudes towards English reading for members of the same population, reluctant readers who were nevertheless eager to improve their English. Again, subjects were Korean teachers taking graduate classes for a master’s program in Korea to improve their competence in teaching English as a foreign language.

Three separate classes were used in the study, but results for all three were so similar that the three classes were combined into one group. Subjects had an average of a little under nine years of overall teaching experience (mean = 8.75 years, sd = 5.74, n = 46), but less than three years of English teaching experience (mean = 2.93, sd = 2.47, n = 44 respondents). The subjects were clearly not dedicated pleasure readers in English: When asked if they agreed with the statement “I read books in English for pleasure,” on a 1-5 where 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = moderately, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree, the mean response was about 2.5 (mean = 2.66, sd = 1.07, n = 44).

The teachers clearly participated enthusiastically in the treatment. They read an average of about ten books over the two week period, with a standard deviation of about five, which means that about two-thirds of the subjects read between five and 15 books (mean = 10.06, sd= 5.22). The rest of the class-time included discussion and reading about reading research, including the role of free voluntary reading.

Following the treatment, a questionnaire was administered in Korean, asking subjects whether they found the books interesting, whether they were interested in reading more in English, whether they would do SSR with their subjects, would recommend it to other teachers and whether SSR should be required in English as a foreign language in Korea. All questions were answered on a one to five scale, with 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = moderately, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.)

The results are presented in table one. The results can only be described as astonishing. All responses were either “4” or “5” with the exception of one subject who marked “3” for level of interest in the books, and responses for all the other questions were mostly “5”. In fact, all subjects except one marked “5” in response to the question of whether they would implement SSR.
Table one: Reactions to SSR program (n=46)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you find the books interesting?</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you interested in continuing to read in English?</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you interested in implementing SSR in your classes?</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you suggest doing SSR to other teachers?</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should SSR be required?</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale 1-5

Observations confirmed that the teachers were engaged in the reading: Cookies and drinks were made available during the reading time, but quite often teachers ignored the snacks, preferring to stay with their books. In addition, some teachers commented that the 15 minute reading time was too short and that it was difficult to stop reading when SSR time was over. One teacher recommended that the entire two hours be dedicated to self-selected reading. Also, several teachers started buying reading material on their own. One teacher was especially enthusiastic about Archie comic books, bought some, and hid them from her own children until she finished reading them.

Teachers were not only given time to read, but were also given information about the value of reading, including the research support. This orientation may have played a role in achieving the positive results (see Lee, 1998, for evidence supporting this hypothesis). A plausible hypothesis is that potential adult readers of a second language profit from both the knowledge about reading as well as actual pleasurable reading experience.

These very positive results need to be supplemented by studies of whether the enthusiasm seen here is long-lasting: Will these kinds of experiences result in a real reading habit and result in continuing improvement in English? A two-week self-selected reading experience resulted in an unexpected and strong enthusiasm for reading in English, but will it last?

References


“Reading helped me to realize that there was a world out there far vaster than the narrow confines of El Barrio.”
- Piri Thomas
A Comparison of TPRS and Traditional Instruction, both with SSR.

by Joseph Dziedzic

Spanish teacher
Denver, Colorado

Abstract
This study compares the effects of two different instructional methods in four secondary level 1 Spanish classes: comprehensible input-based teaching and traditional instruction. At the end of the year the comprehensible input-based classes outperformed the traditional classes in writing, and speaking and there was no significant difference in listening and reading.

Introduction
The relative effectiveness of two pedagogical approaches, comprehensible input-based methods and traditional instruction, are frequently debated by language teachers and researchers. Are both effective? Is one more effective than the other? Does one or do both depend on the talent of the teacher? Is it even possible to compare the results of TPRS teachers and traditional teachers when there are so many other factors that might influence effective teaching?

Traditional instruction here is defined as grammar-based instruction that focuses on student output through cognitive exercises by breaking down the language and reproducing it in a structured setting. Traditional instruction focuses on teaching grammar rules and teaching basic vocabulary in a particular order, based on a progression from simple to complex.

Instructors who adhere to the traditional view treat language as an object, or an “entity to be scrutinized, analyzed, and broken down into its smallest components” (Tedick & Walker, 1994, p. 305) in order to then be built back into accurate communication. Adherence to this philosophy often manifests itself in lessons that teach not with the language but about it (Tedick & Walker, 1994, p. 306).

Comprehensible input-based methods are based on the Comprehension Hypothesis, the hypothesis that we acquire language when we understand it (Krashen, 1981). The Comprehension Hypothesis is the basis for several language teaching methods for beginning language learners, such as Total Physical Response® (Asher, 1969) and TPR Storytelling® (Ray and Seely, 2002). Within Denver Public Schools, comprehension-based methods are referred to as Teaching with Comprehensible Input (TCI) and incorporate a variety of methods including TPR®, TPR Storytelling® and Sustained Silent Reading. TCI focuses on providing comprehensible input during 90% of class time.

Of particular interest in this study is TPRS, Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling. In the typical TPRS classroom, the focus is on storytelling, reading and the personalization of class topics to the members of the class. Grammar explanations are typically very short and content is narrowed to the most useful phrases and structures for real communication. The Affective Filter is low because the target language is consistently understandable.

The purpose of this study is to compare the effects of two types of instruction on secondary school level 1 Spanish classes.

Procedure
The author of this paper was the instructor in all classes involved in this study. I taught four secondary level 1 Spanish classes in the 2009/2010 school year. I taught periods 1 and 4 using comprehension-based methods (TPR, TPRS) and periods 2 and 7 using traditional instruction with a textbook. Using only one teacher eliminates all potential inconsistencies between different teachers.

In the traditional class we used the textbook, Buen Viaje, and covered chapters 1 through 8. The class also read chapters 1-4 in Pobre Ana, a level 1 reader by Blaine Ray. Some of the activities used on a daily basis
were: warm-ups, rehearsed conversation, grammar explanation, and vocabulary repetition. Sustained Silent Reading was done every day from January through March (the second semester) during the first 10 minutes of class. The students had 150 children’s books from which to choose that ranged from novice-low to intermediate-mid. The warm-ups were done from August through December and consisted of three to four questions, typically reviewing grammar and vocabulary from the previous day. The rehearsed conversations focused on a grammar point and the vocabulary from the chapter.

The comprehensible input-based classes were taught using TPRS. The class was taught using comprehensible input in reading and listening, during which time the target language was used 85-90% of the time. I taught chapters 1 through 7 in Blaine Ray’s book of stories, Look I Can Talk. The students also read two readers, Pobre Ana (Ray) and Piratas (Canion and Gaab). As was the case with the traditional class, Sustained Silent Reading was done every day from January through March during the first 10 minutes of class. The students had 150 children’s books from which to choose that ranged from novice-low to intermediate-mid.

Experienced instructors in TPRS and traditional instruction observed classes: Patricia Shikes, Spanish teacher for 30 years, traditional method; Karen Rowan, Diana Noonan, and Donna Tatum-Johns, all three experienced in teaching with comprehension-based methods, including TPR®, TPR Storytelling® and SSR (also called Free Voluntary Reading).

**Measures**

The Denver Public Schools Proficiency Assessment was administered at the end of the academic year. According to the Department of Accountability, Research and Evaluation of Denver Public Schools, the reliability of the Proficiency Assessment has been estimated to be .82 (fall, 2009) and .84 (spring, 2010), indicating that the test is “stable.” That is, a re-administration of the test with similar students would produce similar results. (Reliability measures vary from zero to 1.0: .9 is considered high reliability, .8 is considered modest, and .7 is considered low).

The test measures proficiency in the four skill areas: listening, reading, speaking, and writing:
- **Listening:** Students listened to short dialogues or narratives read by the teacher. Questions and answers were in English for some listening passages and in the target language for other passages.
- **Reading:** Students read short texts in the target language. Questions and answers were in English for some reading samples and in the target language for others.
- **Writing:** Students wrote 10 or more sentences based on a scene of pictures.
- **Speaking:** Students produced 4-6 sentences about a series of pictures.

**Subjects**

Only 65 students were tested because others in the class had been exposed to Spanish in middle school through an exploratory course or had taken a middle school class but did not score high enough to place into Spanish 2. 51.8% of students at this high school are on free or reduced lunch. It is located in an urban area in the southeast part of Denver, Colorado. It was not possible to determine if there were significant socio-economic differences between traditional and TPRS classes, but there was no reason to believe that there were any obvious differences among the classes.

**Results**

There was no pre-test given because the students tested were level one and had never studied Spanish in the past. The test scores of students who had had previous exposure to Spanish were not included in these results.

As shown in Table One, there was no significant difference between the groups on the Listening and Reading tests. TPRS students however, were significantly better than the Traditional students on Writing and Speaking, and the effect, as revealed by the effect sizes, was substantial.
Table One: Results after one academic year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TPRS</td>
<td>11.63</td>
<td>12.89</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>3.5 (.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.02)</td>
<td>(3.52)</td>
<td>(1.39)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>11.82</td>
<td>12.12</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>2.8 (.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.77)</td>
<td>(3.95)</td>
<td>(2.31)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>0.5889</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>.558 ns</td>
<td>.82 ns</td>
<td>0.0031</td>
<td>0.0003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect size</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.0064</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard deviations in parentheses
Sample size:
Listening: TPRS = 30; Traditional = 28
Reading: TPRS = 28; Traditional = 26
Writing: TPRS = 32; Traditional = 30
Speaking: TPRS = 32; Traditional = 30

Conclusion

Students in the comprehensible-input based classes scored significantly higher on tests of output, speaking and writing, and were equivalent to traditional students on tests of input, reading and listening.

The results of the output-oriented tests are consistent with results of previous studies comparing TPRS students and traditional students (Varguez, 2009; Watson, 2009) as well as studies of comprehensible input-based methods in general: Students in comprehensible-input based classes typically outperform comparison students on measures of communication (Krashen, 2003).

The finding of no difference on the input-oriented tests, listening and reading, is not a typical result, however. This anomaly underscores the need for continuing studies of the effect of comprehensible-input based methodology. It should be determined whether adding SSR to traditional methodology produces smaller differences between groups or a different pattern of test scores, as seen here.

It must, nevertheless, be emphasized that TPRS students still did as well or better than traditional students.

References:


DPS World Languages

Denver Public School World Language Department has recorded many of their teachers who use the method, "Teaching with Comprehensible Input" (TCI).

Access is free. Elementary through high school.

http://www.schooltube.com/channel/dpsworldlanguages/

Interesting finds for Beginning and Intermediate Spanish Language Learners:

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Developing Academic Language: Some Hypotheses

by Stephen Krashen

Presented at the KAPEE Conference (Korea Association of Primary English Development), Busan Korea, January, 2012

Abstract

This paper presents a simple hypothesis and some related sub-hypotheses. The simple hypothesis is this: We develop academic language by reading. Nearly all of the conventions of academic language, its special vocabulary, grammar and discourse style are subconsciously absorbed, or acquired, from reading texts written in the academic style that are relevant to us. If this hypothesis is true, it means a profound reorientation of the field of English for Academic Purposes.

Introduction

The field of language education today is dominated by concerns about the development of Academic Language Proficiency, the mastery of the vocabulary, grammar, and discourse style of academic, or professional language.

The usual approach is to teach these components directly, I argue here that this approach is not only incorrect, but presents students with an impossible task, and that there is a far better path: reading. I present first a brief description of the central hypothesis underlying this claim, the Comprehension Hypothesis, followed by a description of the rival “Skill-Building” hypothesis that underlies the view that academic language should be developed through direct instruction. I also present a brief summary of the arguments favoring the former.

Continuing arguments presented previously in Krashen and Brown (2007) and Krashen (2010), I then present evidence supporting two sub-hypothesis: (1) The foundation for the acquisition of academic language comes from extensive self-selected reading, and (2) The special language of academic language comes from largely from reading academic texts that the reader is deeply engaged in. I also present arguments that the direct teaching/skill-building approach has serious limitations when applied to the development of academic language.

The Comprehension Hypothesis

The hypothesis that we acquire academic language from reading is a special case of the more general Comprehension Hypothesis, which says that we acquire language when we understand what we hear or read. Comprehension of messages leads to “acquired” competence, or implicit knowledge of language, a “feel” for correctness.

The rival to the Comprehension Hypothesis is the Skill-Building hypothesis. The Skill-Building Hypothesis says that we first learn rules consciously and then practice them in output until they become “automatic”: In other words, consciously learned knowledge becomes subconsciously “acquired” knowledge. Skill-Building also holds that we can adjust our consciously learned rules when we are corrected. Thus, output plays several roles in skill-building.

I have argued that there is overwhelming support for the Comprehension Hypothesis. This support includes:
(1) Method comparison studies: Comprehensible Input-based methods have been shown to be superior to those based on Skill-Building for beginning language teaching, and for intermediate, or sheltered language teaching. In addition, students in language classes (first and second) that include time set aside for self-selected reading typically make better gains in literacy than students in regular classes (Krashen, 2003, 2004, 2007).

(2) Correlational studies: Studies show that those who receive more comprehensible input do better in language development. Most impressive among the correlational studies are those that use multivariate techniques, which allow us to evaluate competing
explanations in a single analysis. The results of these studies consistently support the Comprehension Hypothesis (see below).

A strong version of the Skill-Building Hypothesis, one that claims that Skill-Building is the only way we acquire language, cannot be correct, because it has been repeatedly documented that language can be acquired from comprehensible input alone, with no direct instruction or any other form of skill-building (Krashen, 1994). In addition, the scarcity of correction and even output (people don’t write that much) places Skill-Building in danger. Also, the complexity of the system to be consciously learned is a serious threat to all strong versions of the Skill-Building hypothesis (Krashen, 1994).

This is not to say that conscious learning is never useful. Rather, the evidence shows that the use of consciously learned items is highly limited (Krashen, 2003). Some aspects of language can obviously be learned, but they must be uncomplicated, and they are not available for use unless strict conditions are met, as outlined in Krashen (1982) and other publications: The person using conscious knowledge must know the rule, be thinking about correctness (focus on form) and have time to apply the rule.

Nor is output per se useless: Speaking can invite comprehensible input through conversation, and writing can make a tremendous contribution as a means of solving problems, which means greater cognitive development. In other words, writing can make you smarter (Krashen, 2003).

**Stage One: Self-Selected Reading**

A secondary hypothesis is that there are two stages in the development of academic language. The first is a pre-academic stage that consists of massive, but not necessarily wide, self-selected voluntary reading. The reading done in this stage provides the competence and knowledge that makes academic reading more comprehensible.

Self-selected reading forms a bridge between “conversational language” and “academic language” (Cummins, 1981). This idea is confirmed by data from Biber (1988), who analyzed texts in terms of linguistic complexity, and reported that fiction fell about midway between conversation and academic texts (abstracts of technical journal papers).

**SSR studies**

Experimental studies comparing the effect of self-selected reading in the form of sustained silent reading with traditional instruction confirm that self-selected reading results in better acquisition of academic language. Students in classes that include sustained silent reading do better than those in similar classes without sustained silent reading on tests of reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, and grammar. This is true of first and second language studies and holds for children, teenagers, and university students (Krashen, 2004, 2007).

**Multivariate analyses**

Multivariate analyses allows us to pit competing hypotheses against each other in one analysis. I illustrate the method by presenting an analysis of predictors of the ability to use the Spanish subjunctive in a “monitor-free” situation, a communicative situation in which subjects, English speakers who had studied Spanish, were not focused on form. The subjunctive is of interest to us because it is generally associated with more advanced competence, and a more “educated” style; in other words, academic language.

In table 1, the column labeled “beta” presents the strength of each predictor, uninfluenced by the others. It may be the case that two predictors might be related to each other: For example, “study” (years of formal study of Spanish”) could be correlated with “residence,” (years lived in a Spanish-speaker country) in that those who lived in a Spanish speaking country longer might have studied Spanish longer. Multiple
regression controls for this, and presents the impact of each predictor as if there were no relationship among
the predictors.

The strongest predictor, by far, was “reading,” the amount of free voluntary reading done in Spanish, stronger than all other predictors including “subjunctive study,” the amount of formal study specifically of the subjunctive. It was also the only predictor to be statistically significant, as shown in the column marked “p” (a value of .05 or lower indicates that the odds of such a result happening by chance are 1 in 20 or less).

Table 1: Competence in the subjunctive in Spanish as foreign language in the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>predictor</th>
<th>beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>study</td>
<td>0.0052</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residence</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subjunctive study</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spanish as foreign language in the US

Stokes, Krashen & Kartchner, 1998

Thus, comprehensible input in the form of self-selected reading defeated skill-building, as represented by “study” and “subjunctive study.” The analysis also suggests that for late-acquired aspects of language such as the subjunctive, the everyday input one gets simply by living in the country where the language is spoken, is not enough. You need to read.

The “power of (self-selected) reading” to simulate the development of academic language is confirmed in the next three multivariate analyses.

Table 2. Predictors of TOEFL scores: multiple regression (EFL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>predictor</th>
<th>beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>extracurricular reading</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>native speaker teacher</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total instruction</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extracurricular speaking</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From: Gradman & Hanania, 1991

The Skill-Building hypothesis did better in Constantino, Lee, Cho and Krashen (1997). Table 3 presents their multiple regression results for students who took the TOEFL in the United States. But once again, free reading did very well, as did length of
residence in the US.

Table 3. Predictors of TOEFL scores: multiple regression (ESL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>predictor</th>
<th>beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>free reading/books read</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English study in home country</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of residence in US</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From: Constantino, Lee, Cho & Krashen, 1997

S.Y. Lee (2005) used structural equation modeling, which allows the investigator to examine more complex relationships among variables. Lee reported that the amount of free voluntary reading reported was a significant predictor of English writing performance for university students in Taiwan, and the amount of free writing reported was not, evidence in favor of the Comprehension Hypothesis and evidence against the Skill-Building hypothesis. Her analysis also provided an additional result that can be interpreted as evidence against the Skill-Building hypothesis: Those with stronger beliefs in the efficacy of instruction did not write better.

Case histories

A number of descriptive studies provide evidence for the positive role of self-selected reading in developing academic language.

The TOEFL study

In Mason (2006), six second language acquirers in Japan agreed to engage in a recreational reading program to prepare for the TOEFL. All were former students of Mason’s who had studied English as a foreign language in classes that included self-selected reading of graded readers.

Each of the five chose somewhat different reading material, according to their own interests, with favorite authors including Sidney Sheldon, Paulo Coelho, Judy Blume, and Bertice Berry. In addition, several continued to read graded readers.

Subjects read for different lengths of time, between one to four months, did not take any EFL classes or “study” English on their own during this time, and took alternate forms of the TOEFL test before and after doing the reading. The average gain was 3.5 points per week on the overall test, and improvement was seen on all three components, listening (2.2 points), grammar (3.6 points), and reading (4.6 points). This gain is about the same as one sees with a full time TOEFL preparation class given in the United States and is consistent with the results of multivariate studies, presented earlier, that show that reading is an excellent predictor of TOEFL performance (Gradman and Hanania, 1991; Constantino, Lee, Cho and Krashen, 1997). (See also Mason, 2011, for an additional case history of an adult reader in English.)

Narrow reading

Narrow reading is the practice of reading texts by one author or about a single topic of interest, which helps ensure comprehension and natural repetition of vocabulary and grammar (Krashen, 2004). This strategy contrasts with the usual classroom approach of trying to do a “survey,” selecting texts of different genres, often written in different eras. Rather, the narrow reading strategy encourages early specialization, gradually broadening reading as interests and knowledge of what is available develop.

Evidence supporting the narrow reading idea includes Lamme (1976), who found that good readers in English as a first language tended to read more books by a single author and books from a series. The evidence also includes Cho and Krashen (1994, 1995a,b), who reported considerable enthusiasm for reading and substantial vocabulary development among adult second language acquirers who read books in the Sweet Valley series; readers rapidly moved from Sweet Valley Kids (second grade level) to Sweet Valley Twins (fourth grade level) to Sweet
Valley High (fifth and sixth grade level). Several readers in these studies had never read a book in English for pleasure before, but became fanatic Sweet Valley fans.

I suspect that many of those who have been successful in using self-selected reading to reach the point where academic texts were comprehensible have been narrow readers. I present here my case, not because it is different from others, but because I suspect it is very common among those who have acquired the academic style.

My early self-selected reading was nearly entirely comic books, which had a far deeper influence on me than anything I read at school. Nearly all were of the super-hero type, and my friends and I were well aware of the each character’s strengths and style. We debated the relative superiority of Superman versus Captain Marvel (who would win in a fight?) and we all knew that Batman deserved extra credit because he was a self-made super-hero, not born with super-powers and not given super-powers by some external agency.

From ages 9 to about 12, it was sports novels, especially baseball stories, and especially John R. Tunis, who chronicled the struggles of a mythical Brooklyn Dodgers team over a decade. The excitement was the game itself, of course, but also the personalities, the problems each player faced, and their ethical dilemmas. I reread the Kid from Tomkinsville when I was an adult, and it still had all the excitement and drama it did when I was 10.

After that, it was science-fiction, and here my reading remained narrow. I specialized in the work of Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, and my favorite, Arthur C. Clarke. These authors were very prolific, but I read nearly their complete works. As was the case in elementary school, school-assigned reading made very little impact on me in high school, whether fiction or non-fiction. My real curriculum was books such as Asimov’s I Robot, Heinlein’s Have Spacesuit-Will Travel, and Clarke’s Childhood’s End. It was this reading, I suggest, that prepared me for academic reading, and I predict that when other case histories are done, they will also show a great deal of self-selected narrow reading.

**Stage Two: Narrow Academic Reading**

Self-selected narrow reading does not fully provide academic linguistic competence (Krashen, 2010). My claim is that it provides the linguistic and knowledge background that helps make academic reading more comprehensible. The rest of academic competence, I hypothesize, comes from doing a great deal of narrow reading of academic texts, in an area of great personal interest to the reader.

There is evidence supporting the hypothesis that most of academic linguistic competence must come from reading and not from other sources. In his analysis of text complexity, Biber (2006) reports that classroom discourse is closer to conversational language than to academic language. Nor, I suggest, does it come from reading assigned academic texts.

Again, I present my own case. My history of academic reading is, as was the case with earlier pleasure reading, narrow. The first area of academics I read on my own, for my own interest, was the work on Noam Chomsky. I decided early on in graduate school that reading the complete works of Chomsky, in chronological order, was the best way to have a firm grasp of linguistics, my field of study at the time. Reading in chronological order, in the order in which the author wrote, made the texts far more comprehensible, and turned the reading into a kind of story, a narrative. I could see how grammatical theory had progressed, how Chomsky dealt with problems in the theory, and I absorbed not only much of his style but also his method of doing science.

Toward the end of my graduate career, my interests changed to brain and language. Once again, I read narrowly and chronologically, working through every study available dealing with left-right brain differences, reading the research on dichotic listening (a method of determining which side of the brain
is in use in listening to stimuli), and brain damage and aphasia, each time starting with earlier studies and working toward the present, and focusing on the work of a few researchers. For dichotic listening, it was Doreen Kimura who, without knowing it, taught me the essentials of experimental design, the careful and steady progress one can make through carrying out study after study, as well as the academic style of writing experimental reports. When I read textbooks on these topics, they simply confirmed what I had absorbed through reading the research.

When I moved to language acquisition and language education, acquiring the specific academic style of that field was a simple matter. I already had acquired a great deal of a related academic style from reading hundreds, maybe thousands, of articles in experimental psychology and medicine.

Gaining academic linguistic proficiency was thus not the result of studying “English for academic purposes”: It was the result of reading articles for my purposes. (I thank Syying Lee for making this observation.)

My case is a case of developing academic proficiency in a first language. I suspect that the sequence will be similar for second language acquirers. One other factor will, however, be present: The positive influence of the first language. Aspects of academic language are similar across languages (Cummins, 1981). Also, the knowledge gained through reading in any language will make input more comprehensible in any other (Crawford and Krashen, 2007).

Can academic language proficiency be “learned”?

Current approaches to developing academic language proficiency assume the correctness of the Skill-Building hypothesis: Scholars describe academic language, and these descriptions are then presented to students in textbooks and other teaching materials, and students are expected to consciously learn them.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, there are several reasons why a strong version of the Skill-Building Hypothesis cannot be correct. One that obviously applies to the development of academic language is the complexity argument.

Hyland (1996) presents an excellent example of the complexity of academic vocabulary in his thorough discussion of the complexity of “quite,” e.g. it is both a “booster” (e.g. “the results were quite phenomenal”) and a “hedge” or slight attenuation (e.g. “he couldn’t quite do it”), but after this simple generalization, things get “fuzzy,” as Hyland points out. “Quite” varies in meaning according to stress (e.g. “I QUITE like the idea of walking” (but I’d prefer not), versus “I quite LIKE the idea of walking” (and maybe I will), and whether it comes before or after the article, e.g. “a quite beautiful garden” versus “quite a beautiful garden,” the former expressing “greater commitment.” He also notes that pedagogical grammars as well as professional linguists differ in their rules for “quite” and notes the inadequacies in their presentations.

Hyland presents data showing that second year business students at a Hong Kong university have not fully acquired the subtleties of “quite.” He acknowledges, however, that the “pragmatic complexity” of “quite” means that it cannot be taught in the usual way: “… the fact that linguists differ in their preferred accounts of its meanings and implications means that classroom activities based on textbook exercises or intuition-based grammars are unlikely to lead to a clear understanding” (p. 103).

A reasonable prediction is that those second language acquirers who have better “quite-competence” are those who have read more, especially in self-selected academic texts of personal interest.

It is easy to find other examples. Other scholars have contributed equally complex descriptions of grammar, vocabulary and text structure, recommending that we teach these descriptions to students (see, for example, Swales, 1990; Schleppegrell, Achugar, and Oteiza, 2004).
Acquisition without learning

I propose that all instances of successful acquisition of academic language are cases of acquisition without learning. I doubt that any member of the human race has ever consciously learned more than modest amounts of academic language through the study of English for Academic Purposes.

This is of course not to deny that people can consciously learn some aspects of academic language. As noted earlier, however, because of the complexity of academic language, it is likely that only a small percentage of academic competence can be consciously learned, and this knowledge is not always easy to access. A useful plan is to determine just what parts of academic language are “learnable” and can be studied with profit.

The assumption has been, however, that all of academic language can be described and then taught. This has been an axiom, not a hypothesis, and has been assumed to be true since the field of English for Academic Purposes began. Even the possibility that academic language can be acquired by reading or by other forms of comprehensible input has not been considered or mentioned in the literature. At a minimum, the hypothesis that reading can contribute should be considered, and, of course, tested empirically.

References


The Affective Benefits of Extensive Reading in the Spanish Curriculum: A 5-week Case Study

by Teljer Liburd and Victoria Rodrigo

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Dr. Victoria Rodrigo (Associate Professor of Spanish Applied Linguistics in the Dept. of Modern and Classical Languages at Georgia State University) is an active researcher in the field of second language acquisition. Her area of research is receptive skills --reading and listening-- as means to enhance language acquisition. Rodrigo has published numerous articles in prestigious national and international journals in the States, Spain, Mexico, and Argentina. She has also authored teaching material --Infórmate con CNN and Spanish Audio Library-- and is a co-author of an intermediate Spanish textbook --Opiniones-- based on her research on Narrow Listening, an alternative approach to developing listening skills.

Abstract

Previous research has indicated that Extensive Reading (ER) is one of the best ways to learn a language. Unfortunately, the implementation of ER programs in the Spanish FL curriculum is scarce or even non-existent. This study seeks to evaluate whether a short-term ER program implemented in the second semester of Spanish at the college level can a) make students realize of the value of ER and its implementation in the curriculum, and b) affect students reading attitude and confidence in their language skills. Participants in the experimental group read 5 books during 5 weeks (one book per week) as a supplement to their regular Spanish class. Results show that ER is viewed as a liked activity, and when compared to a control group, the experimental group showed positive gains in attitude towards reading and more confidence in their reading abilities. Pedagogical implications are discussed.

The research concerning the linguistic benefits of extensive reading (ER) has consistently demonstrated its efficacy as an approach to reading (e.g. Day & Bamford 1998, Krashen 2004). There is evidence that shows that the more students read and understand, the more they will acquire (Krashen 1985). But ER is not only an excellent means to acquisition; it is also an exceptional tool to develop the habit of reading and to foster pleasure and enjoyment in the reading experience (Day & Bamford 1998). Having a successful reading experience entails more than just giving students books to read. Practitioners should keep in mind that a lack of confidence in ones’ reading ability and a negative attitude towards reading, may pose strong impediments to becoming an independent reader in the L2. On the other hand, having a positive reading experience will be crucial to developing reading habits (Cho & Krashen 2001, Kim & Krashen 1997). Therefore, when teaching reading in the foreign language (FL) classroom, it is important to consider the affective benefits, reading attitude, and confidence that ER affords, as these can be key to creating independent readers, and to making the reading experience a successful one.

A number of studies have evaluated the impact of ER on affective variables. By implementing ER as a component in a lower-level Japanese class, Hitosugi and Day (2004) demonstrated that ER fostered gains in positive attitude towards reading in the participants, more so than for a control group that was not exposed to ER. In a meta-analysis review, Yoon (2002) concludes that the nature of ER is what makes it an influential factor in improving reading attitude. That is, ER offers the reader autonomy in selecting reading materials, non-accountability (in that reading itself is the goal, and not passing a test), and teacher support through role modeling.

Confidence in one’s reading ability is also an important affective variable. Diary reports from a one-subject case study by Hong (2007) indicate that increased exposure to ER fostered a sense of achievement in the participant and boosted confidence in reading ability. This in turn positively impacted his attitude towards learning the L2. In two studies,
Rodrigo (2011) looked at affective variables related to ER in lower-level Spanish classes. Study one (N=41) showed that after reading two stories using an ER approach, reading attitude was positively modified when students’ felt a sense of accomplishment in their reading. This reported positive reading experience translated into greater confidence in their reading ability. Based on results of study two (N=94), it was concluded that extensive reading can be successfully done beginning in the first semester when teachers prepare students with ER strategies, and when the reading material is at the appropriate linguistic level.

Despite the potential affective and linguistic benefits that ER can offer, many FL curricula do not implement ER programs due to challenges such as cost of reading material, administrative red tape, and the lack of room in the curriculum. The current study explores the effects of implementing a short-term (5-week) ER program as a supplemental component to a traditional Spanish course. Specifically, this study aims to evaluate the impact of ER on attitude and confidence towards reading in Spanish, as well as students’ perception of the value and impact of implementing ER in the FL curriculum. By comparing an ER group with a control group, we seek to address the following research questions:

1. By reading 5 books extensively, can students improve their reading attitude and gain more confidence in their reading ability than those who do not?

2. Can a short-term (5-week) ER program foster a positive perception of the value and utility of ER?

THE STUDY

SAMPLE

The participants were 6 undergraduate students that were enrolled in a second semester Spanish class at a university in the southeastern United States. These students volunteered to participate in the study without knowing the reading task involved. During an initial meeting with the researcher, students were given details regarding the nature of the study (e.g. what to do, amount of reading to be done, and when to do it). Those who were still interested and agreed to read extensively were assigned to the experimental group (N=3) and those who chose not to read were assigned to the control group (N=3).

PROCEDURES

Before beginning the study, the experimental group was informed about what extensive reading entails, how to do it, what strategies to apply, and the benefits that research has shown. Participants in the experimental group agreed to read one graded reader per week (for a total of 5 weeks) and met with the researcher (first author) once a week to select and check out books. During these weekly meetings participants filled out a short book evaluation sheet to track reading progress. Also, readers were informally asked to answer two main questions: 1) How was the book? and 2) What was it about? This was done to verify whether the participant had read the book, how much they understood, but most importantly to give them an opportunity to articulate the story in their own words (in English). The control group did not meet weekly with the researcher after the initial meeting, but only once more at the end of the 5 weeks to complete an affective questionnaire.

MATERIALS

A library of 100 graded Spanish readers, ranging from reading levels 1 through 6, was provided plus 48 pre-level 1 books. Based on their proficiency levels, students were asked to focus on books from levels 1 and 2, but were allowed to start with a pre-level 1 book or move to level 3 books if it did not pose a challenge to their understanding. By the end of the program, each student had read a total of 5 books for an average of 169 pages each. Of the 15 books students selected to read, 13.33% (n=2) of the books read were from pre-level 1, 73.33% (n=11) from level 1 and 13.33% (n=2) were from level 2.

1 These books are part of a Developmental Reading Assessment (Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura or EDL2), an authentic series intended for native Spanish children. Pearson publishes the collection.
INSTRUMENT

At the end of the 5 weeks both the experimental and control groups completed an affective questionnaire about their reading attitude before and after the program, confidence in their reading ability, their perception of the value of ER, and their opinion regarding whether ER should be incorporated into the Spanish curriculum.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents pre-post attitude scores towards reading in Spanish, and attitude towards reading in L1. Table 2 presents the level of confidence in their reading ability at the end of the program. Higher scores represent a better attitude and more confidence: 3= Quite a lot, and 0= Not at all.

Table 1. Attitude towards reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>L2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>2.67 (0.58)</td>
<td>1.33 (1.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>2.67 (0.58)</td>
<td>1.33 (0.58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=3 for the experimental group and N=3 for the control group.
3=“Quite a lot,” 2= “Somewhat,” 1= “Very Little,” 0=“Not at all”

Descriptive data in Table 1 shows that both groups reported identical positive L1 reading attitudes (2.67), that is, it seems they like reading in their first language. In their L2, both groups shared the same attitude towards reading at the beginning of the program (1.33), which meant that they liked to read very little. At the end of the program, the reading attitude of the experimental group improved by 1.33, reaching the same reading attitude score that they have in their L1 (2.67). However, the control group showed no change on their attitude scores.

Average confidence scores reported in Table 2 show that at the end of the 5-weeks, the experimental group had higher levels of confidence in their L2 reading ability (3.00) while the control group had a lower mean of 1.33, meaning that they had very little confidence in their reading ability. Although there was no pretest on the confidence measure, it is assumed that ER played a role in boosting confidence in reading ability for the experimental group, supporting the hypothesis that those who read extensively will have more confidence in reading ability.

Table 2
Table 3 shows the results of four questions that were posed to the experimental group to evaluate participant perception of the value and usefulness of ER. These questions related to how they felt ER had helped them improve in reading fluency, vocabulary recognition ability, grammar and performance in the course in which they were currently enrolled. Overall, results indicate that the students felt that ER was at least somewhat helpful in improving language skills. Mean perception scores demonstrate that participants felt that ER helped them improve most in grammar skills (M=3, SD=0), followed by vocabulary recognition and course work (M=2.76; SD= 0.48), and finally reading fluency (M=2.00, SD=1.00).

Table 3. Student perception of value and usefulness of Extensive Reading, in ranking order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>3.00 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>2.67 (0.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>2.67 (0.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>2.00 (1.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=3 for the experimental group
3=“Quite a lot,” 2= “Somewhat,” 1= “Very Little,” 0=“Not at all”

The most remarkable results were those relating to the question of whether participants felt...
that ER should be incorporated into the curriculum. Both the experimental and control group somewhat agreed that reading should be incorporated into the language curriculum (see Table 4). Most of the experimental participants (67%) reported that ER should definitely be implemented, while only one person from the control group felt the same way (33%). None of the participants felt that reading should not be incorporated. Interestingly, even those who did not want to read at the beginning of the study, acknowledged the value of reading.

**Table 4. Student interest in having reading incorporated into curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not really</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>--</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

This descriptive and case study set out to evaluate whether a short-term ER program could foster in language learners positive attitudes towards reading and confidence in their reading abilities. Also, the study explores student perception of the value of this kind of program, and their opinion on whether ER programs should become part of the FL curriculum. Results show that in just 5 weeks and after reading 5 books, ER can have a positive impact on affect, since the experimental group had a better attitude towards reading in Spanish, higher confidence in their reading ability, and a strong perspective on the need to implement ER in the language curriculum. These results corroborate previous studies that maintain that those who read extensively and enjoy the reading experience, improve their attitude towards reading in the L2 and show more confidence in their reading ability (Hitosugi & Day 2004; Hong 2007; Rodrigo 2011).

This study demonstrates the feasibility of incorporating ER as a supplement to a Spanish language course. Reading a book per week is a task that can be done along with the regular course curriculum. If students are asked to do most of their reading at home and evaluations are kept to a minimum, students can read extensively without disrupting regular coursework. Moreover, two of the three participants in the experimental group, despite not receiving extra-credit for the readings, expressed a desire to continue reading even when the study had concluded. This proves the positive impact that ER made in the participants in only five weeks.

Although the current study shows some interesting outcomes, it should be viewed as an exploratory study due to the small sample size, which prevented the researchers from applying inferential statistics to see if the differences between the experimental and the control group were statistically significant. The fact that the experimental group was composed only of students who chose to read could also be seen as a limitation of the study. The fact that the experimental group was composed only of students who chose to read could also be seen as a limitation of the study. It could be argued that the experimental group showed higher scores because they volunteered to do it --even without credit--., which shows that they were highly interested, and because they were told in advance how beneficial free reading was for language development. These two factors could bias attitudes upwards. However, we should note that these subjects had to fill out an evaluation sheet and answer short questions on what they read, which could have biased their attitudes downward as well. Consequently, to further investigate this issue, future studies should focus on implementing short-term ER programs with a larger sample that includes reluctant students to examine whether change in affect can still be evident in the short-run.

Due to the affective benefits that ER has been shown to promote, and because it helped our sample to become independent readers (that is, they are capable of reading by themselves), it is worth implementing. The only thing that remains to be done is to actively take the steps toward its integration into the curriculum. In our study a small number of books
was enough to show students that reading in a FL is not only possible, but also fun and could help them develop a sense of accomplishment in their reading ability. Five books encouraged them to want to read more, and to do it independently. Language programs should be encouraged to have at least a small library for those students that choose to read. If cost is a concern, the ER program could rotate among different class sections every 5 weeks during the semester, allowing all students the chance to experience the benefits of ER.

Most of the Spanish FL programs around the nation are full of students that have hardly ever read in the L2. As a result, they constantly miss out on the opportunity to engage in a positive reading experience that may change their reading attitude, boost their confidence in their reading ability, and help them to become independent readers. This case study suggests that this current situation can be changed.

Bibliography


An embedded reading is three or more scaffolded versions of a text. It is designed to prepare students to comprehend text that the students perceive to be beyond their capability.

Embedded readings provide information in the target language in a way that actually develops the students’ reading skills. Using embedded readings not only allows students to acquire language, it provides a framework for improving reading abilities.

The first version of the text, or the baseline version, is at a basic level, easy for any student in the class to understand. It is a summary or an outline that provides a strong foundation for success. Each succeeding version of the text contains additional words, phrases or sentences that provide new information and/or details. The final version of the text is the most challenging. However, each and every version of the Embedded Reading contains the baseline version, and each subsequent version created, within it. The scaffolding of the versions builds success, confidence and interest.

What kind of text can be used as an Embedded Reading?

Embedded Readings can be created with fiction or non-fiction, poetry or prose. An Embedded Reading can be created from nearly any kind of material that we want our students to read, to comprehend, and to enjoy. Consider the list below:

- Stories
- Articles
- Notes/messages
- Conversations
- Essays
- Shopping lists
- Novels
- Poems
- Song lyrics
- Letters
- Instructions
- Advertisements/Billboards
- Children’s books

Scaffolding the text serves several purposes:

a) Students are given the time and opportunity to develop a clear picture of the information provided in the reading, one step at a time.

b) Scaffolding provides opportunities for review and repetition.

c) Scaffolding provides opportunities for summary and prediction.

d) Scaffolding provides opportunities for the reader to interact intellectually and emotionally with the reading material.

The key to the scaffolding of the material is that each and every version of the reading contains the basic reading...and each subsequent level of the reading...within it.
The success of an Embedded Reading is dependent upon the quality of the base reading.

The shortest reading, or base reading, is the first of the scaffolded levels. It is designed to be written at a level that any student in the class could read independently and understand. Because this base reading will be included in each and every subsequent reading, the higher the quality of the base reading, the more successful students will be with all of the scaffolded versions. For example:

**An ant went to the ocean.**
He saw many fish.
The fish swam away.

The lower the level of the reader, the shorter the base reading will be. A base reading for beginning readers may be one short sentence. A base reading for more advanced readers might be 5-15 sentences in length. Regardless of the ability of the reader, the base reading must be concise and completely comprehensible. The second reading will be built directly from the base reading by inserting new information into the base reading:

**An ant went to the ocean to find a friend.**
He saw many fish swimming in the ocean.
He said, “Hello fish!”
The fish swam away.
The poor ant!
Who will be his friend?

Everything added to the base reading adds more information or more detail to the picture created by the base reading. The third reading is made by repeating the process using the second level reading.

**One day a lonely ant went to the ocean to find a friend.**
He saw many fish swimming around in the deep blue waters of the ocean.
The ant thought, “Great! New friends!”
He said “Hello fish!” but, unfortunately, the fish swam away.
The poor lonely ant was alone again!

He walked down the beach thinking, “Why did they swim away?”

Every subsequent level includes the previous level within it. The number of levels used will depend upon the reading abilities of the students and the goals of the teacher.

**One day a lonely ant decided to make some new friends.**
He was tired of the anthill.
He was tired of the anthill and tired of being just like everyone else.
He decided to leave the anthill to find a new life.
So, he moved to Hawaii.
The first day, he went to the beach to find a friend.
He saw many fish swimming around in the deep blue waters of the ocean.
The ant thought, “Great! New friends!”
He said “Hello fish!” but, unfortunately, the fish swam away.
The poor lonely ant was alone again!
He walked down the beach thinking, “Why did they swim away?”

He was discouraged, but he wanted to try again. Many students in their first years of reading a language find reading in a list format, with surrounding white space like the example above, much easier to comprehend. Another way to scaffold a reading is to change it from a list format into paragraph form. Simply changing the format will make the reading more challenging. For example:

**One day a lonely ant decided to make some new friends.**
He was tired of the anthill. He was tired of the anthill and tired of being just like everyone else.
He decided to leave the anthill to find a new life.
So, he moved to Hawaii. The first day, he went to the beach to find a friend. He saw many fish swimming around in the deep blue waters of the ocean. The ant thought, “Great! New friends!”
He said “Hello fish!” but, unfortunately, the fish swam away.
The poor lonely ant was alone again!
He walked down the beach thinking, “Why did they swim away? Maybe they don’t speak “ant.” He was discouraged, but wanted to try again.
How are Embedded Readings Created?

**Bottom Up**

There are two ways to create an Embedded Reading. The first is a Bottom Up reading. The Ant Story is a Bottom Up reading. The base reading was created first, and additional details and information were injected into each level.

Once a clear base reading is created, use the list below for language to add to each additional level of the reading. Remember to keep the reading comprehensible to, successful for, and connected to your students.

- One complete sentence.
- A complete sentence in more than one location.
- Two adverbs that use the same ending (i.e., "ly").
- The phrase “because, but, when, before, during, with etc.” and a new clause.
- A common interjection.
- A line from a song that students are familiar with.
- The phrases “again, once more, or one more time.”
- Chronological markers: 1st, yesterday, later.
- A familiar verb in a challenging tense or format.
- Increasingly specific details about a noun.
- Increasingly specific details about an action.
- A preposition of location and a new clause.
- A dialogue or thought line.
- Language that is introduced early and acquired late.
- Something students love.
- Something students hate.

It is also critical to “inject” language into the next level of the story rather than just “add on” to the base reading. This encourages students to read the entire new level in order to find new details or information. By doing so, students will re-read the previous level several times.

It is also helpful to vary the difficulty of the language that is injected. By offering a variety of new information, in unexpected places, at various difficulties, all students will remain engaged in reading the text.

**Student-Generated Readings**

Base readings can originate from a number of sources. Subsequent levels can be created by teachers or collected from ideas that students create from a base reading. Some of the most powerful embedded readings come from student-generated materials. By giving a group of students a specific topic to write about (i.e., a movie, a book, an event or a specific individual) the teacher can cull from the students’ own work to create the Bottom Up reading. Not only will students be reading for new information and details, they will be delighted to find their own ideas and words as part of the text!

**Top Down**

The second way to create an Embedded Reading is from the Top Down. (Also called Backward Planning.) This approach provides a way for teachers to make literature or other text that students perceive to be beyond their capabilities, accessible to students. (Please be sure to credit the original author.)

Begin with the original version of a text that would be considered advanced, but not impossible for the students in the class. Copy and paste this version in order to have a new copy to revise. Read through the text and eliminate approximately one-fourth of the text. Choose sentences, phrases or words that can be removed without significantly altering the “picture-in-the-mind” created by the text. Eliminate throughout the text, not simply at the beginning or end. Eliminate challenging pieces and more easily recognized words and phrases.
Now repeat the process. It may be necessary to make alterations in capitalization and punctuation. Continue to repeat the process until the reading becomes a clear and comprehensible base reading. As the versions get closer and closer to a base reading, it is important to be very aware of the language that remains. Is it still comprehensible? Does it still create a picture in the mind of the reader?

Now you have created a series of texts that scaffold back up to the original.

**How is an Embedded Reading Used?**

Because the reading exists in several forms, the teacher has numerous opportunities, and numerous ways, to use it with students.

**The most important place to begin with an Embedded Reading is to make sure that every student clearly understands the base reading. In a second-language classroom this can be accomplished through any of the following:**

- Illustrations
- Identification of photographs or illustrations
- Acting out the reading
- Questions about the text itself
- Questions about students’ reactions to the text
- Direct translation

**When the teacher is sure that the language is totally comprehensible, it is appropriate to move on to the next reading, where any of the following activities could be used:**

- Identify new information
- Consider how new information adds to or changes the reading
- Discuss why events occurred
- Predict what will happen or be added next
- Compare/Contrast base reading with more detailed versions
- Compare/Contrast the reading with other texts
- Add details to illustrations
- Use context clues to understand more complex language
- Identify language which adds suspense, humor or irony
- Change a detail, sentence or paragraph
- Add a detail, sentence, or paragraph
- Discuss the thoughts, feelings, words and actions of the characters (in fiction or non-fiction)
- Discuss the thoughts, feelings and reactions of the students in regards to the text
- Recreate the text as a script
- Rewrite a piece of the text from the perspective of a different character

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Thanks to Karen Rowan, I (finally) saw my first Senor Wooly video, today. AMAZING. This is great stuff, the right way to use technology!

Sr. Wooly is especially good for teachers of other languages with intermediate or limited Spanish. A chance for others to experience comprehensible/compelling input and really feel the impact and pleasure of language acquisition. I have subscribed to his website. The fact that a couple of samples are available on YouTube is very convenient. I hope they go viral, like “Annoying Orange”. I’ve shown them to civilian friends – universal enthusiasm.

--Dr. Stephen Krashen

PS: Yo soy demasiado guapo.
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6. Submission should be attached to email. No cover page. Text in 14 pt. font, Times New Roman. Title in 16 pt. font, Times New Roman. Biographical information must be included within the article and include name and degrees, current position, relevant previous positions, if desired, and previous research and articles or books, if desired. Contact information is optional. Sample: Dr. Smith is a professor of Language Acquisition Research at the University of Hawaii. He holds a PhD in Swahili. He is the author of Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Swahili and previously taught at the University of California. drsmith@email.com

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