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IJFLT: A free on-line, peer-reviewed quarterly journal dedicated to communicating research, articles and helpful information regarding language acquisition to support teachers as they endeavor to create fluent, multilingual students.
Does being an L2 native-speaking teacher influence L2 use?

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Abstract

In foreign language classrooms, teachers often encounter a dilemma when deciding which language to use in their teaching: should they use the students’ L1 to facilitate communication? Or should they use only the L2 to give students as much input as possible? These questions have been debated for several years, as communicativeness and authenticity have become strong principles in teaching. Yet, no concrete answers seem to have emerged: teachers are still confronted with the question of language choice in their classroom.

This study examines the factor of teachers’ nativeness, which could potentially influence classroom L1 use. The results are based on a questionnaire asking teachers to express their attitudes towards their language choice. No difference was found between native and non-native speakers of French, and both groups reported high levels of use of the target language.

Discussions on pedagogical matters show that teaching strategies are as individual as any personality trait; teachers are not only influenced by research and discoveries, but also by personal decisions and their own comfort towards a specific teaching method. One of the issues that generates different opinions is first (L1) and second (L2) language use by teachers and students in the foreign language classroom (Castellotti, 1997; Cook, 2005; Duff & Polio, 1990; Franklin, 1990; Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2001, 2005; Polio & Duff, 1994; Simon, 1997; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). Despite much discussion, no clear-cut answer has emerged as to whether or not the use of the L1 is detrimental in a foreign language classroom.

According to some research (Polio & Duff, 1994; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002), teachers who are native speakers of the L2 use the L1 more frequently, because of a desire to practice their own L2 (students’ L1). It is also thought that L2 native speakers use the classroom L2 more because of their proficiency level, and that non-native speakers, because of fear of facing challenging situations, will tend to revert to the L1. Teachers, needing to feel close to the students and wanting to be socially approachable, might choose to speak the L1 of learners, in order to relate better.

The goal of the present study is not to support or not support the use of the L1, but rather to understand if the factor of nativeness has an impact on the language choice made by teachers. With a large number of instructors who are native speakers of the L2 in American universities, the question is of interest, considering that we are not yet clear on the impact of L1 use in the classroom (Cook, 2005; Macaro, 2005; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002).

This investigation is carried out to investigate the possibility of an interaction between nativeness and the perceptions of 29 teachers’ own L1 and L2 use and attempts to answer the question: Does perceived use of the L1 and L2 differ between NS and NNS French instructors?

Methodology

The research question was investigated by means of a questionnaire distributed to all teaching assistants (TAs) and professors of the French department of a large university in the Midwest. Out of 45 questionnaires distributed, 29 were returned. The
participants were asked to give background information and answer a set of questions about their L1 and L2 practices in their classrooms.

Among the 29 participants, 11 were ranked as assistant, associate or full professors. They taught undergraduate upper-division (third and fourth year) and graduate courses. Their specializations were in French Literature, Culture, Linguistics, and Applied Linguistics. The remaining 18 teachers were graduate TAs teaching first and second-year French courses. Their areas of study included French Literature, Culture, Linguistics, and Applied Linguistics, as well as Advertising and Comparative Literature. All graduate TAs were required to take two graduate L2 methods courses during their first year in the department.

For the entire sample, 11 were native speakers of French, while the others were native speakers of English (14), Romanian (2), Hungarian (1), and Portuguese from Brazil (1). It is assumed that the teachers in the sample were comfortable using the L2. In universities, the proficiency level of TAs must be near-native in order to enter a graduate language program, and the professors held doctorates in the L2.

**Results and Interpretation**

Subjects perceived use of the L2 was very high: The mean was 91.5%, higher than that found in Duff and Polio (1990), who reported 68% use of the L2, but about the same as the figure reported in Macaro (2001), 95%.

According to previous studies, the nativeness of individuals was a determinant for language choice. This study, however, found no significant difference between native and non-native speakers in the use of the L2 in the classroom. There was no significant difference between NSs and NNSs: (NS = 93.35, sd = 7.24; NNS = 90.36; sd = 9.74; t= 1.025; df = 27 , p > .05, two-tails).

**Conclusions**

The results of this study indicate that being a NS of French does not have an effect on the linguistic choice teachers perceive making. Of course, this study reports the perceived use of the second language. It does not report on the actual use. Actual use can only be determined by independent observation.

Both groups of subjects reported a high amount of the use of the L2. There are several factors that could be responsible for this that deserve further investigation.

One possible factor is an increase in the use of the communicative language teaching methods and accompanying changes in textbooks. To test this hypothesis, we would have to compare older surveys with current ones.

Also, the age of the students and level of the classes could be a factor. Previous studies, however, (Franklin, 1990; Duff and Polio, 1990; Polio and Duff, 1994; Macaro, 2001; Levine, 2003) have either studied secondary school teachers or instructors who were teaching lower-level classes.

Finally, there might be variation in L2 use depending on the language being taught. Results might be different for other target languages.

Pedagogical implications can be drawn from this data. During L2 teaching training for pre- or in-service teachers at the K-12 level and TAs at the college level, it is important to observe teachers’ practices and behaviors in the classroom. Making teachers aware of their own practices might help them better apply the teaching principles they have learned and the ones they create.
Bibliography


Stephen Krashen  Professor Emeritus,  
University of Southern California

Ryoo (2007) carried out an informative study on the effects of error correction on 33 university level ESL students. The students were not corrected on their compositions for seven weeks. During the next seven weeks, errors in their writing were underlined and corrected. Ryoo then compared changes in accuracy (errors divided by number of words written) on compositions written after the first seven weeks with compositions written after the second seven weeks.

During the first seven weeks, students improved about .3%. During the second seven weeks, they improved 1.3%. This appears to show a slight advantage for the corrected group, but, as Ryoo notes, the difference was not statistically significant. Inspection of the paired samples t-test performed by Ryoo shows, in fact, that the difference did not come close to acceptable levels of significance (p = .376). (Ryoo used a two-tailed test. A one-tailed test would be more appropriate, as the direction of the difference was predicted. This decreases the p-value to .188, which is closer to acceptable levels, but still falls well short.) From the t-test results, I calculated an effect size of .26, considered to be small.

Ryoo also points out that 7 out the 33 students improved during the no correction period but did not improve during the correction period.

Inspection of Ryoo's data reveals the presence of an obvious outlier, subject 20, who declined 16% during the no correction period. As seen in table 1, no other subject comes close to this score.

### TABLE 1. Percentage changes in accuracy during the no-correction period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>interval</th>
<th>number of subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-10 to -5.01</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-5 to -0.01</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 4.9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9.9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 14.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minus = improvement in accuracy (decrease in error rate)  
Plus = decline in accuracy

This single subject accounts for nearly one-half (about 40%) of the difference between the correction and no-correction amounts of improvement (table 2). Recalculation of the paired samples t-test without subject 20 gives t = .63, df = 32, a two-tailed p of .53 and a one-tailed p of .27, quite distant from any acceptable level of significance, and a very small effect size of .13. Excluding subject 20 clearly weakens the already weak case for correction.

### TABLE 2: Comparison of improvement, with and without subject 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL SUBJECTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No correction</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correction</td>
<td>-1.31</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUTLIER REMOVED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No correction</td>
<td>-0.825</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correction</td>
<td>-1.23</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difference</td>
<td>0.415</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From: Ryoo (2007)  
Minus = improvement in accuracy (decrease in error rate)

Post-hoc analyses that eliminate outliers are, of course,
problematic. One can always be accused of discarding those subjects whose results are inconsistent with one’s favorite hypothesis. I have, in fact, argued against the efficacy of correction in several places, agreeing with Truscott’s conclusions (see Ryoo, 2007, for citations of Truscott’s work).

Nevertheless, subject 20 is an obvious outlier: No other subject lies beyond two standard deviations from the mean. This analysis supports Ryoo’s suggestion that studies be carried out with larger samples (as well as with delayed post-tests).

**REFERENCE**


Prediction: In the long run, the money fountain at the U. S. Department of Education will do more harm to our national well-being than the BP oil gusher. The Obama/Duncan ramping up of the discredited Reading First, their co-opting of state education policy through the bribery of Race to the Top and the other initiatives that travel under the name of reform will put a generation of children’s public school lives in shambles as national standards and tests are delivered by the truckload from corporate America, and test prep takes over any pretense of curriculum. --Susan Ohanian

ESL teachers in Puerto Rico have wondered how it is possible that the same students that have difficulty with texts assigned in class, who often struggle with composing a cohesive paragraph in English and would often prefer a failing grade to giving an oral presentation, are so readily – and easily – working around the language barriers they encounter in the social and recreational environments they find online. The answer is could be tied to what Krashen refers to as “Free Voluntary Surfing” (FVS), a variation of the term “Free Voluntary Reading” (FVR). In this case, Krashen refers to learners surfing pages on the Internet in their L2 in subjects that interest them (Rodriguez & Ramos, 2009).

For teachers in Puerto Rico, a potential problem with FVS is figuring out how to make the enormous selection of online texts comprehensible for ESL students. FVS suggests that the use of narrow reading (focusing on a single subject, author or genre, depending on the reader’s interest, and then expanding to other areas over time) is the best for optimal language and literacy development. When learners choose what to read and select a subject that interests them, comprehensibility is assured. Moreover, the vocabulary and syntax acquired through narrow reading is carried over to other topics (Krashen, 2007). Thus, Krashen, who is a strong advocate of FVR, suggests that those learners that apply narrow reading when surfing the Internet will benefit in the same way they would from applying it to reading books and other traditional texts. This is not something entirely confined to higher education either. The use of narrow reading as a means for students to acquire vocabulary and language structure through comprehensible input is widely believed to be beneficial from as early as elementary school (Hadaway, 2009).

Today’s PRESL learners are well prepared to apply these techniques to a digital medium and have acquired this knowledge on their own, with little regard to the use of language. The ability to use a computer and access the Internet is not entirely dependent on proficiency in English, and learners are bringing these computer skills to their reading. More importantly, these digital and language skills are already being carried over to other mediums, where learners are...
applying them regularly. Video games are one such area. PRESL learners of all levels avidly play video games regularly and with little difficulty, despite the fact that the games aren’t in their L1. There seems to be little correlation between the need for a game to be in a particular language and the ability of PRESL learners to play it through to completion. The appeal of video games seems to overpower the barrier of a foreign language, especially if the learners already have an educational background with said language.

It is estimated that around 73% of young adults in the U.S. between the ages of 18 and 29 make use of social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace, an increase of almost 20% from 2006 (Choney, 2010). With today’s young adults maintaining a constant online presence, the amount of time dedicated to digital entertainment has greatly increased, and now even the most unconventional of learners can access myriads of game titles of all genres, and most importantly, all in English. Our students are joining make believe mafias, attending to farms and cafes and solving all kinds of puzzles, right there on their computers – completely in English – and with little regard to the language difference that we, as teachers, so quickly and readily identify. For example, Farmville, a game where the player maintains and expands a farm with the help of online friends, has a base of over 80 million players worldwide (McElroy, 2010). Furthermore, it is estimated that a whopping 97% of children between the ages of 12 and 17 play video games, which means they are well established in this area by the time they reach university classrooms (Rich, 2008).

The use of video games for English teaching is not a new thing. Research, as well as actual implementation of games as a tool for ESL teaching, has been going on for most of the past decade. Studies have already been done that involve the use of video games such as Sony’s Everquest as tools for L2 teaching, and these have included such languages as Chinese and Spanish (Waters, 2007).

PRESL learners who have played video games, whether it be on a traditional game consoles such as the Nintendo Wii, Playstation 3 or Xbox 360, a portable system like the Nintendo DS or Sony PSP, or even casually on web sites like Facebook or Popcap.com, have been doing so out of their own interest, with no formal accountability (grades or other evaluation) and at their own pace.

Video games are more interactive than books and the Internet. Games provide visual and audio simultaneously at a consistent rate, and they engage the player in real-time decision making. All these skills must be used together persistently. PRESL gamers must make on-the-fly decisions based on their readings, and their choices can have lasting effects on the game they’re playing. Furthermore, many games don’t have a pause feature, which means that all reading and/or conversations must be done in real time.

Most PRESL gamers know enough English to be able to get started in the game of their choice with little trouble. By the time they turn to video games entirely in English, many PRESL gamers have already experienced video games that either require no specific knowledge of English, or more rarely, had a language option. This gives them the necessary background of skills and schema to apply in the SL (Gee, 2003). Thus they do not have to learn brand new skills just to be able to play games in English.

Most single-player video games have no language option, requiring the PRESL player to read only in English to progress the story. Moreover, many games such as role-playing (RPGs) and first-person shooters have scripts that contain tens of thousands of words. Bioware’s Mass Effect for the PC and Xbox 360 is one example of a game that creates a high level of immersion for the single player. Bioware’s games average around 500,000 words, and the first Mass Effect game has over 20,000 lines of dialogue, compared to an entire season of The Simpsons, which averages around 8,000 (Zenko, 2007). Another RPG, Lionhead’s Fable II, has 370,000 recorded words (around 38 hours of dialogue), with over 45 actors playing almost 200 speaking roles (Ogden, 2008).
The effect is not confined to a single-player experience either. Multi-player games, such as World of Warcraft and the recently released Star Trek Online, offer PRESL gamers the opportunity to interact with other players in real-time, in either a cooperative or competitive setting. Players can form parties that require them to work together to complete objectives, and this constant interaction, combined with the English in-game text, provide simultaneous comprehensible input on several levels.

All these factors combine to create what is effectively the gaming equivalent of FVS. PRESL gamers find their activity interesting and compelling enough to not focus on the fact that the game they are playing is in English. They become so engrossed in the activity itself that they “forget” that the game is in English. This can be attributed to several factors, such as gamers’ familiarity with the language due to formal schooling, consistent exposure from television, the Internet, and movies, and prior experiences playing other games.

Video games for PRESL learners seemingly fit the guidelines of Krashen’s theory of Free Voluntary Surfing (FVS): video games are intermediate and authentic texts, video games are genuinely interesting to the gamer but not crucial, and PRESL gamers find the activity compelling enough to not be looking up words constantly, allowing real language acquisition to take place (Krashen, 2007).

This activity is also consistent with Krashen’s Comprehension Hypothesis because PRESL gamers choose which titles they wish to play. PRESL gamers tend to like specific genres and focus their gaming habits on those types. This specific context gives them the narrow focus that helps with language and literacy development. With a myriad of genres and styles, most tastes are satisfied, and players are able to choose the types of games they enjoy the most. Furthermore, since most PRESL gamers play different types of games, the syntax and vocabulary acquired in one genre will carry over to others. In fact, it has been suggested that the reading done by gamers with instruction manuals, strategy guides, and online message boards may serve as a sort of “gateway drug” for more complex reading later on (Rich 2008).

Though PRESL gamers usually like a diversity of genres, RPG games require more time for completion, taking usually from 40-100 hours. This usually means that the RPG being played is the only game on which the player is focused for days, if not weeks at a time. Let’s look again to Bioware’s Mass Effect, for instance. Though the actual main quest of the game can be completed in around 20 hours, there are tons of side quests available that can double that amount. Players are motivated to complete these extra quests because they flesh out the relationships between the main character and his party, and they also provide a deeper look into the game’s overall plot. Mass Effect’s incredibly rich storyline provides the gamers with a fascinating look at all the alien races, planets, and governments featured in the game, and it does this through a combination of text and voice work.

What makes games like Mass Effect so useful to ESL learners is that the entire plot is directly influenced by the player and the choices he or she makes. Players can be a paragon of virtue or a dastardly rogue, and virtually every other character in the game will react accordingly. Conversations are controlled by dialogue trees, which allow the player to choose how to answer a question or address a particular situation. The dialogue presented onscreen provides only the intent of the actual choice, so the player has to choose the option to learn the full answer, which is provided though actual voice (Nutt, 2007). Characters can gain or lose loyalty from particular responses, as well as fall in love with the protagonist or even die! This is especially beneficial to language learners, as the game must be completed twice for the player to see the results of the majority of the dialogue options AND see how the plot develops. Moreover, should players choose to import their characters into the sequel, all the decisions made in the first game carry over, providing them with continuity and allowing them to see the long-lasting effects of the conversations.

The use of video games as an effective means of ESL instruction is something that has only begun to be explored. The pedagogical foundation for its use is there, and the sheer amount of young language learners already engaged in gaming in English is something that should not be ignored. Students learn best when
we bring their own interests into the equation. Gaming, when done under the right conditions and in the right context, can provide an excellent means for them to acquire vocabulary and sentence structure from real-time interactions, either in a single-player environment or through online play with other learners.

Bibliography


“*If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.*”

-Nelson Mandela, activist, South African president, Nobel Laureate (b. 1918)
What Successful Language Learners’ Stories Can Tell Us:

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Abstract

This article reviews the language learning autobiographies contained in Tom Miller’s (2007) How I Learned English: 55 Accomplished Latinos Recall Lessons in Language and Life. More specifically, it discusses how learners’ stories support several aspects of Krashen’s Monitor Model (Krashen, 1982) such as the unpleasantness and futility of traditional second/foreign (L2) language instruction and the necessity of comprehensible input for L2 acquisition. It also notes that pleasure reading was a central source of comprehensible input for many contributors.

Introduction

Even though much advice on second/foreign language (L2) learning seems to come from uninform ed individuals, a significant amount has been put forth by credible language educators, such as Brown (1989), Rubin and Thompson (1999), and Stevick (1989). In addition, there is a wealth of information available from successful L2 learners, themselves. A notable example is Kato Lomb’s language learning autobiography, which is extensively discussed by Alkire (2005). Such publications are particularly common in Japan, where English is widely studied (Takeuchi, 2003). However, retrospective accounts have been criticized because learners may overgeneralize their use of certain strategies or report the strategies they think they should have carried out instead of the ones they actually implemented (Wenden, 1986). Nevertheless, these stories are valuable because they provide learners with ideas on how to improve their study of the target language (Stevick, 1989). In addition, they allow researchers to compare learners’ ideas about effective L2 development to second language acquisition (SLA) theory (Alkire, 2005).

One recent publication that is valuable for these two reasons is Tom Miller’s (2007) How I Learned English: 55 Accomplished Latinos Recall Lessons in Language and Life. The featured individuals fall into one of three categories: immigrants, the children of immigrants, or international students. Some learned English as adults, while others learned it during childhood. All are successful in their chosen field, whether that be entertainment, education, the arts, sports, government, or business.

While the text’s practical suggestions make it a must-read for L2 learners, linguists will find it intriguing because it validates many aspects of Krashen’s Monitor Model (Krashen, 1982). Specifically, traditional L2 pedagogical techniques such as error correction and memorization are rarely mentioned. When contributors refer to them, they do so either in a matter-of-fact manner or state that such practices were unpleasant or useless. Notably, Krashen (1982) has argued that they only foster learning. Learned language can only be utilized when users have time to consciously think about rules, and thus is unlikely to lead to L2 fluency.
Krashen (1994) has also noted that many students find traditional L2 instruction unpleasant.

**Evidence of the Unpleasantness and Futility of Traditional L2 Instruction**

One learner who recounts the unpleasantness of traditional L2 instruction is Ruth Behar, who fled Cuba with her family after the Castro regime took control of the island. Now a renowned anthropologist, Behar recalls being corrected to the point of exhaustion by her 2nd grade teacher: “The teacher acted as if we were not only dumb but deaf, and she repeated things and stood over us, watching as we wrote in our notebooks, ready to pounce on our mistakes” (Miller, 2007, p. 6).

Journalist Mayra Montero also was a victim of unpleasant error correction—and she was the victimizer. As a result of her own intolerance towards errors, her language learning anxiety, or affective filter (Krashen, 1982), was high, and thus her speech production was inhibited:

“When it came to put my knowledge to practice, I would start to stutter. I would forget the auxiliary verbs, mix up the past tenses, and the future would stick in my throat. Never was it better said: without fluency there is not future. I would torture myself thinking of everything I had said wrong, and of the greatest of ironies of the fact that, although my brain knew what I wanted to say, my tongue would freeze” (Miller, 2007, p. 222). This attitude towards errors was probably learned, at least in part, during her formal classes in Cuba and Puerto Rico, which seemed to teach her more about hopelessness than English. (She also is a typical Monitor over-user; Krashen, 1981).

A third example of the unpleasantness of traditional L2 study comes from Amherst College professor Ilan Stavans, who came to New York City from Mexico. His self-study method was a mixture of the grammar-translation approach and pure masochism. He would slowly read Moby Dick, write down all the words he didn’t recognize, switch off the light, guess the words’ meaning, and then “…turn the light on again, look in the dictionary for the right response, smiling at how off the target I had been, and finish by going over the list again, this time repeating to myself what each word really meant. The following night, I would read the segment again and repeat the list from memory. Obviously, this was a nightmarish approach; it taught me much but eliminated all possible pleasure from the act of reading itself” (Miller, 2007, p. 132).

Unfortunately, while this memorization method is certainly nightmarish, there is no evidence that it leads to a significant amount of L2 acquisition. Notably, he does not mention having done it with any other text.

While the cases of Behar, Montero, and Stavans represent the off-putting nature of many traditional language learning activities, most other discussions of traditional L2 pedagogy highlight its futility. Artist Enrique Martinez Celaya studied English using the audiolingual method during his childhood in Puerto Rico: “By the end of high school, I knew enough English to do well in standardized tests and to perform the rituals of the Language Lab taught by a woman whose teased hair, to this day, I associate with English” (Miller, 2007, p. 112). Likewise, educator and Paraguayan culture expert Teresa Mendez-Faith started studying English at age 13, yet the grammar-translation approach she was exposed to did little to prepare her for high school life in the United States. In fact, while her reading skills were strong, her oral skills were so poor that she had trouble understanding the immigration agent when she arrived in New York.

**Sources of Comprehensible Input: Reading, Television, Music, and Well, More Reading**

Although the contributors’ accounts lend credence to Krashen’s (1982, 1994) position on L2 learning, they also support his notion that L2 acquisition occurs by exposure to comprehensible input. His argument is simple for both scholars and learners to understand: The acquisition of grammar and vocabulary happen when learners comprehend written and audiovisual materials, such as books, magazines, comics, newspapers, radio programs, and television...
shows. Learners comprehend the messages in the new language because they are not far beyond their actual proficiency level, and contain information that is familiar and interesting, thereby minimizing frustration and maximizing motivation. There is no reason why students can’t access comprehensible input both inside and outside the classroom.

Miller’s (2007) text shows that students received comprehensible input inside the classroom from teachers who presented interesting literature to them. Poet and politician Daisy Zamora studied in a bilingual school in her native Nicaragua in which reading classic English literature “brightened my day” (p. 170). In addition, Mexican professional golfer Lorena Ochoa credits magazines for her success in acquiring English. She states that they were frequently used during her English classes at the University of Arizona: “The advice I would give about learning English is this: read a lot of magazines in English. That’s how I expanded my vocabulary and learned grammar. We always did homework assignments based on magazine articles…” (p. 154). Finally, literary translator Liliana Valenzuela studied in a private school in Mexico where her love for English was cultivated by her African-American teacher who exposed them to authors such as James Baldwin and Ernest Hemingway: “El teacher nurtured the love of literature without burdening us with unnecessary memorization of authors, eras, and major works, which were imposed on us in Spanish literature. Here, it was simply, literature. And we got to react to it in a more direct way” (p. 57).

Outside of the classroom, a remarkable number mention loving television and music. For example: Author and Journalist Gigi Anders “religiously” watched Capitan Kangaroo and The Lucy Show, while Peruvian-American physician Alejandro Nechoheca claims that MTV shows like Beavis & Butthead and The Real World helped him adapt to American culture. Computer scientist Franc Camara listened to Duran Duran, Van Halen, and U2, AM talk radio and Mystery Theatre when he arrived in Los Angeles as a teenager. Mexican academic Gabriel Trujillo Muñoz and his friends were such devotees of The Rolling Stones and The Beatles that they would sing songs like “She Loves You” and “Ruby Tuesday” during recess.

However, by far the thickest descriptions of self-study involve free voluntary reading (FVR) (Krashen, 2004), or pleasure reading. In fact, the 15 individuals who mentioned engaging in FVR all did so outside of class. Some mentioned one type of literature as particularly influential. For example: Honduran writer Roberto Quesada arrived in New York City with little English, yet soon became a daily reader of the New York Times, which he could comprehend without difficulty in two months. He was raised in a literary family that was politically aware, and thus was probably familiar with much of the newspaper’s content, making the language comprehensible. In addition, he received comprehensible input by reading English translations of Spanish novels he had already studied. Interestingly, Quesada reports never having taken English classes.

Instead of reading newspapers and novels, Uruguayan author and plane crash survivor Nando Parrado devoured magazines. Publications such as Car & Driver and National Geographic occupied him as a child and led him to longer works such as Twenty-Thousand Leagues under the Sea and The Voyages of Marco Polo. Psychic Walter Mercado, on the other hand, started with poetry as a child and then moved on to the novels of Charles Dickens and Walt Whitman, among others. Finally, Franc Camara read everything he could get his hands on, including fliers, graffiti, and signs.

Regardless of the type of reading learners selected, the most compelling stories come from immigrant children’s stories of how books changed their lives. Puerto Rican writer Esmeralda Santiago was shocked when a friend told her that she could get books for free at the library. She initially drifted into the adult section, but soon discovered that its selections were too difficult for her; therefore, she went into the children’s section, although she felt she was too old for those books (she was presumably a pre-teen or in her early teen years, although she doesn’t state her age). Even so, she became a library addict: “I stopped at the library every day after school and at home memorized the words that went with the pictures in the oversized pages” (Miller, 2007, p. 198).
Gigi Anders received books like Pat the Bunny, Andersen's Fairy Tales, Tales from Grimm from a neighbor. She quickly became a fervent reader and loved to sit in her room and read. She became so engrossed in the world of books that her mother was concerned that she wasn’t playing enough with the other kids in the neighborhood.

Artist Quique Aviles even talks of his “home run” book, which is “a reading experience that readers claim stimulated their initial interest in reading” (Ujiie & Krashen, 2002, p. 36). When he arrived from El Salvador as a teenager, he knew little English. However, one day his best friend gave him Puerto Rican Obituary by Nuyorican poet Pedro Pietri, a book that not only encouraged him to read in English, but also to write in it:

“This book changed my life. It changed how I learned English, how I understood it, and what I could do with it. It introduced me to the possibility of words as a weapon” (Miller, 2007, pp. 178-179).

The Case for Libraries

At the beginning of this article, I mentioned that this book is valuable for L2 learners and linguists. L2 learners will benefit from its practical suggestions for efficient language study. Linguistics will recognize its support for Krashen’s theories regarding the centrality of pleasurable comprehensible input and the futility of traditional ‘drill and kill’ methods. However, a third group should read this book: lawmakers. After doing so, they will see that funding libraries leads to more L2 acquisition than any phonics drill or standardized test. Perhaps it will spark a new piece of legislation: No Library Left Behind (NLLB).

References


Incidental Acquisition of Spelling Competence: A Re-Analysis of Pérez Canado (2006)

Stephen Krashen  Professor Emeritus,  University of Southern California

Abstract

Pérez Cañado (2006) claims that her data supports the view that conscious attention is effective in spelling instruction and should be extended. Re-analysis of her data shows, however, that considerable incidental acquisition of spelling takes place, and that uninstructed students show signs of catching up to instructed students. Pérez Cañado’s conclusions may be premature.

Keywords: explicit/implicit instruction, English spelling.

Introduction

On the basis of a number of published studies, Krashen (1989, 2004) concluded that spelling instruction produces no gains over no instruction or that gains from instruction disappear over time as children read more.

Pérez Cañado (2006) provided supplementary spelling instruction to grade five EFL students in Spain for one academic year twice a week for an average of 15 to 20 minutes, (about 90 hours total). She reported that instructed students outperformed comparisons who had no special spelling instruction after one year on a variety of spelling tests, and were still better on a delayed test six months later.

A close look at her data, however, provides some evidence that the advantage of the instructed group started to disappear on the delayed post-test, and that the uninstructed students were catching up.

The English spelling test used had three components, dictation, free composition, and proofreading. Pérez Cañado presents the data in the form of the percentage of subjects who did not spell 75% or more of the words correctly on the combined test. This scoring system misses a lot of information. A child could score 74% correct and be considered as not meeting the threshold and another could score 75% and be considered as meeting the threshold. Nevertheless, as we will see, the pattern Krashen reports from previous studies is present in the data.

Tables 1-5 contain Pérez Cañado’s data, re-arranged from her tables to show the difference in scores at different times, presenting both percentage of students failing to reach 75% correct and the actual number of students who did not meet the criteria. (Only non-instructed comparison group 1 is included here.) Both the non-instructed and instructed groups had 24 children.
Table 1: Dimension 1 - Visual Auditory: Percent and Number of Students Not Spelling 75% or More Correct

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<td>91.7 (22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
<td>41.7 (10)</td>
<td>16.7 (4)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100 (24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
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<td>45.8 (11)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<td>45.8 (11)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>91.7 (22)</td>
<td>50 (12)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

blend: two consonants appearing together, each is heard, as in the “bl” in “blend.”
digraph: two consonants together representing one phoneme, eg. “sh” in “ship.”
diphthong: two vowels together, changing during pronunciation, as in “boy”
triphthong: three vowels together, changing during pronunciation, as in “shower.”
phonogram: vowel plus consonant, forming the end of a word, as in “at” in “cat” (also known as the rime).
Table 2: Dimension 2 – Morphological: Percent and Number of Students Not Spelling 75% or More Correct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>derivational relationships</th>
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<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
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<td>33.3 (8)</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>70.8 (17)</td>
<td>33.3 (8)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Dimension 3 - Spelling/Orthographic: Percent and Number of Students Not Spelling 75% or More Correct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ie/i</th>
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<th>instr</th>
<th>difference</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>pre</td>
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<td>87.5 (21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<td>95.8 (23)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
<td>91.7 (22)</td>
<td>8.3 (2)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>70.8 (17)</td>
<td>37.5 (9)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>qu</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>post</td>
<td>91.7 (22)</td>
<td>62.5 (15)</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hard/soft c/g</th>
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<th>difference</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>87.5 (21)</td>
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<tr>
<td>post</td>
<td>37.5 (9)</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>25 (6)</td>
<td>12.5 (3)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

qu: as in “quick,” “quite,” often spelled as “cu”
hard g: as in “get,” often spelled as “qu” or “k”
soft g: as in “giant,” often spelled as “ch”
hard c: as in “cut,” often spelled as “k”
soft c: as in “city,” often spelled as “s”
### Table 4: Dimension 4 - Semantic (homophones not included): Percent and Number of Students Not Spelling 75% or More Correct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word roots</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
<td>87.5 (21)</td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
<td>70.8 (17)</td>
<td>66.7 (16)</td>
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<table>
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<td>70.8 (17)</td>
<td>54.2 (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
<td>50 (12)</td>
<td>50 (12)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>post</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>95.8 (23)</td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
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<td>post</td>
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<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>75 (18)</td>
<td>62.5 (15)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clipping: multi-syllabic word reduced to shorter form, as in “exam” from “examination”
Saxon Genitive: rules for use of possessive ‘s.

### Table 5: Dimension 5 - Capitalization and Punctuation: Percent and Number of Students Not Spelling 75% or More Correct

<table>
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<td>100 (24)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Analysis 1: Did the instructed children do better on the delayed post-test?

Pérez Cañado did not apply statistical tests to her data. This was done here by examining only the post-test scores and applying Fisher Exact tests to each of the separate spelling patterns to determine if the non-instructed and instructed groups were significantly different (table 6). The Fisher Exact Test presents results in terms of p-values (two-tailed).

Table 6: Comparison of Non-Instructed and Instructed Groups on Delayed Post-test: Number of Children Not Scoring 75% or More Correct

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<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punctuation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Application of the Fisher Combined Test, which allows us to compute the combined p-values for several different results (Wolf, 1986), revealed that the instructed group was significantly better for each dimension, as well as for the total of all dimensions combined.

Analysis 2: Did the uninstructed children improve?

This analysis asks whether acquisition can take place without instruction. Most spelling curricula assume this is impossible. To answer this question, we see whether the non-instructed group showed significant gains between the pretest and the delayed posttest. P values were computed using the Fisher Test (two-tails).
Table 7: Dimension 1 - Gains Without Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Delayed</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>blends</strong></td>
<td>87.5 (21)</td>
<td>37.5 (9)</td>
<td>0.0008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>digraphs</strong></td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>70.8 (17)</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>double letters</strong></td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>95.8 (23)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>silent letters</strong></td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>vowels</strong></td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>83.3 (20)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>diphthongs</strong></td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>75 (18)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>triphthongs</strong></td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>91.7 (22)</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>phonograms</strong></td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>91.7 (22)</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 shows that the uninstructed group improved significantly in three out of eight cases, improved non-significantly one case (reaching the .11 level of significance) and made no or miniscule progress in four cases.

Table 8: Dimension 2 – Gains without Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>derivational relationships</th>
<th>pre</th>
<th>delayed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>95.8 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infl. Rel.</td>
<td>no instr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pre 83.3 (20)</td>
<td>delayed 70.8 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 8, dimension 2, uninstructed children made very little improvement in both cases.

Table 9: Dimension 3 – Gains without Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ie/ei</th>
<th>pre</th>
<th>delayed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>50 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plurals</td>
<td>pre</td>
<td>delayed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91.7 (22)</td>
<td>70.8 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qu</td>
<td>pre</td>
<td>delayed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83.3 (20)</td>
<td>37.5 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard/soft c/g</td>
<td>pre</td>
<td>delayed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87.5 (21)</td>
<td>25.6 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For dimension 3 (table 9), uninstructed children made significant gains in three out of four categories, improving but falling just short of statistical significance in the fourth category (plurals).
Table 10: Dimension 4 – Gains without Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word roots</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>91.7 (22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clipping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
<td>87.5 (21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>83.3 (20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
<td>70.8 (17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>41.7 (10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contractions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
<td>91.7 (22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>54.2 (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxon genitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
<td>95.8 (23)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>75 (18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a clear improvement in three out of five categories in dimension 4, but they fell just short of statistical significance (table 10).

Table 11: Dimension 5 – Gains without instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capitalization</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>95.8 (23)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In dimension 5 there were no real signs of development.

Overall, there was statistically significant improvement in five cases, improvement that did not reach the level of statistical significance in five cases, and no clear improvement in ten cases. In both cases of no difference, there was no progress at all in acquisition. If we relax the level required for statistical significance to .10, there was significant improvement in eight cases out of 21. There were no cases in which uninstructed children got worse.
Analysis 3: Do the uninstructed children show signs of catching up?

This analysis examines improvement in both groups from the post-test to the delayed test, the time during which neither group had direct instruction in spelling. Krashen’s prediction would be that both groups would improve, and that the non-instructed group would show signs of catching up to the instructed group, showing that instruction only provided only a temporary advantage.

Table 12 shows that the gap between the groups was reduced from the post-test in 11 cases (52%). In 13 cases (62%) the difference either got less or stayed the same. This latter difference did not reach statistical significance (sign test, \( p = .19, \) one-tail). What is clear, however, is that the instructed children do not consistently maintain their lead over the non-instructed children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>reduced</th>
<th>same</th>
<th>greater</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary and Conclusions

The instructed group did significantly better on the post-test, but the results of Analysis 2 show that the non-instructed group made significant progress in most aspects of spelling without special instruction. This confirms that language acquisition and literacy development are possible without conscious learning (Krashen, 1982, 2004). Some aspects of spelling, however, showed no or little development over the year and a half time span: These items, it can be hypothesized, are late-acquired, a suggestion consistent with views that spelling competence is acquired in a predictable developmental sequence (Beers, 1980; Wilde, 1997) for second as well as first language acquisition.

Analysis 3 showed that the uninstructed group showed signs of catching up. Pérez Cañado noticed this as well but was not impressed with this in her paper, pointing out that the instructed students were still ahead at the time of the delayed posttest. But an extra six months may not be enough to close the gap: In a study of English as a first language, Hammill, Larsen, and McNutt (1977) reported that students who had had no spelling instruction at all were behind those who had been instructed in grades three and four, but caught up by grades five and six. Second language acquirers may take a bit longer, especially if they don’t do much reading in the second language.

In a few cases, the instructed group was far better, and kept its advantage, while the non-instructed group showed no progress at all. In capitalization, for example, only 12.5% of the instructed group did not achieve the criteria on the post-test as well as on the delayed post-test, while no students in the no-instruction group achieved reached the 75% criteria on the delayed post-test.

What this analysis demonstrates, however, is that it is premature to conclude that deliberate instruction in spelling is worth-while, and definitely premature to conclude, as Pérez Cañado does, that instruction should be extended. It still may be the case that spelling instruction only helps children learn to spell words they would have learned to spell on their own anyway.
References


INTRODUCTION

The use of the proper teaching material is no less crucial than the use of the proper teaching methods in the field of language education. Only a few published writings, however, have discussed the problem caused by the textbooks used in public schools (Chan, 2000) and the lack of a standardized requirement for the amount of vocabulary students are expected to learn from school regulated textbooks (Yang, 2006). The goal of this paper is thus to consider the issue of materials for children learning EFL, an important means of providing comprehensible input for second language development.

Textbooks are currently the main materials used in the English curriculum in public schools. Most teachers use the texts, which consist mostly of dialogues and the exercises on phonics and grammar, as the central class activities for two 40 minutes sessions per week. An important goal is to reach the requirement for vocabulary acquisition set by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Yang (2006) has pointed out that the English requirement for elementary pupils set by the MOE is only 380 words. This is far less than what is needed to read most authentic texts: Studies show that the most frequently occurring 1000 word families cover about three fourths of the words in English texts and 2000 word families covers about 80% (Nation, 1990 & 2001). It is unlikely that our elementary school students will be able to actually use English in any way after six years with only 380 words. The situation becomes even more worrisome when we consider that junior high school students in Taiwan are required to know 2,000 words, about 1,200 word families (MOE, 2003).

This study thus intends to ask how and where our EFL children will get input of sufficient quantity and quality that will help them fill this gap. A related question is whether schools provide our children with the chance to apply what they have learned in independent reading. To answer this question, some scholars in Taiwan have recommended including a reading program that is independent of any language arts classes, with a focus on comprehension, instead of analyzing words and patterns (Chang, 2007). It has also been suggested that rich input, e.g. stories with complete contexts, should be provided (Li, 2007).

Interviews conducted by Lee and Wang (2008) provide some insight into the factors preventing teachers
from following these suggestions. In addition to the time
constraint, a lack of the knowledge of how to do read-
alouds, and the difficulty of book selection for pupils of
different language proficiency levels, two main reasons
were considered to be obstacles: (1) pressure on the
teachers to help students pass the language proficiency
test required by Taipei County (where the interview
was conducted) to meet the MOE requirement, and
(2) their unswerving belief that reading stories is fun
and therefore cannot be a serious and effective way of
teaching English.

These findings reveal a general misconception
about storytelling in the teaching of English as a foreign
language and a serious deficiency in knowledge of the
abundant research results on the impact of storytelling
on L1/L2 children’s language and literacy development.
A number of research studies support the multifaceted
effects of storytelling on children’s language development
in L1, including vocabulary, reading comprehension,
and expressive language (Krashen, 2004; Lee & Wang,
2007; Trelease, 2006; Also see Wang for an extensive
review). These studies all confirmed that telling stories
to children helps with pupils’ reading improvement and
vocabulary acquisition.

In Taiwan, research on storytelling is still in its
infancy, with few empirical studies on effectiveness,
but several studies have been done on how children’s
attitudes toward learning English changed and how they
developed more interest and confidence in learning
English and reading English (see Wang, 2007, for an
extensive review).

Wang and Lee (2007) may be, thus far, the first
longitudinal study done in Taiwan on storytelling, a
four-year ethnographic observational study with 10
EFL Taiwanese children in an after-school program. In
this study, sixty-five storybooks were read to children
who had had little to no English background. Chapter
books were introduced in the third year, and students
had progressed sufficiently in English so that they
were able to participate in sustained silent reading in
year four, using authentic English books. This is an
unusual and encouraging result, even when we take into
consideration that the storytelling experience was done
in an after-school class.

The present study therefore was an attempt to
further investigate the possible advantage of using
picture books for young children’s English acquisition.
By examining the vocabulary in the storybooks used in
Wang and Lee, and comparing them to the content of
textbooks used in school instruction, we hope to provide
an empirical foundation for the positive results seen
with the use of storybooks in class.

**METHOD**

In this study, we present a corpus analysis of two
types of input: The three most representative textbook
series designed for pupils from grades 1 to 6 in Taiwan,
and texts of authentic storybooks, investigating which
kind of input has a better chance of providing children
with the vocabulary they are expected to acquire.

**Materials**

Two sets of reading materials were included in the
corpus analysis: Storybooks and textbooks.

**Storybooks**

In Wang & Lee (2007), 65 storybooks were read
aloud to pupils in EFL classrooms during a four year
period. This took place in an after-school program
taught by one of us (Y.W.). The choice of books to be
read was based on the instructor’s experience with young
children in EFL classes, and was consistent with results
of research showing which kinds of books stimulate
children’s curiosity and capture their attention (Berlyne,
of the Three Little Pigs was read to the children. This
version takes the familiar Three Little Pigs text and
presents a different point of view, told from the point of
view of the wolf. Children were very interested in this
book.

Several stories in The Little Critter series use humor
to deal with the situations children frequently have to
deal with, e.g. problems with bullies in school, not being
invited to a party when most of their friends were, and
losing a ball game. The classic Frog and Toad series
vividly illustrates how good friends tolerate and take
care of each other.
According to our discussions with several elementary schools and text publishers, among the most widely used texts for children in EFL in Taiwan are Longman English, Hess Hi ABC, and Joy Starter/English. Each series contains 12 volumes and each volume contains five to six units. Nearly all schools base their English curriculum on the text series they select, and use the text’s activities and exercises, including dialogues, short stories, writing and grammar exercises, and phonics and pronunciation exercises. Frequent quizzes and tests are administered. There are more similarities than differences among the three text series. Table 1 shows the features common to all three series as well as aspects that are not shared by all three.

1 Please note that only the materials used in public schools were considered because private schools may have more instructional hours, better stocked libraries, and more teachers (native speakers and non-native speakers). These advantages tend only to be available to pupils from families with a socio-economic status higher than the average.

**Identifications of Words to be Analyzed**

**Word Count: Word, Headword, and Word Family**

Prior to our analysis, a clear definition of words to be counted is necessary. In analyzing the number of words that can be encountered in authentic storybooks and textbooks, it is important to distinguish “word,” “headword” and “word family.” The word “read” and its morphological inflections, such as “reading,” “reads,” “read” (the past tense) belong to a headword; while “reads,” “readable,” and “readability,” which are three words, belong to one word family (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000; Yang, 2006, pp. 35-36). In actuality, it has been difficult to reach an agreed-upon standard of counting words, and different corpus systems, e.g. the Brown corpus (1982, cited in Nation, 2001), the Carrol,
Davis, and Richman corpus (1971), and Michael West’s General Service List (1953), have different definitions for these terms, and certainly have different categorizations. However, according to Nation (2001), if the research is based on a well-designed corpus, about 80% agreement can be reached.

Eyckmans (2004, cited in Yang, 2006) has estimated that there are approximately 5,000 words in 3,000 word families in English; Yang thus used the ratio 5:3 when presenting her analysis and arguments, e.g. if one knows 2,000 words, then s/he may know 1,200 word families. This study followed the same ratio in presenting our results so that a broader comparison across studies can be made.

What to Include, What to Exclude, and Why

In our main analyses, high frequency words, such as the, a, an, and, it, in, on, you, I, etc., were not included. According to previous research results (Gardner, 2004 & 2008; Nation, 1990 & 2001), these words belong to the first 1,000 most frequent word families in English and cover nearly 74.1% of English texts. These words are also frequently taught in textbooks.

While high frequency words may be acquired or taught in nearly all materials, the words we are interested in are those that do not appear in textbooks and can probably only be encountered in authentic (not simplified) children’s books. We predict that it is the content words, e.g. adjectives, nouns, and verbs, appearing in the stories that can help meet the challenge of developing enough vocabulary to become an independent reader. Children acquire vocabulary when listening to stories from the context of the story itself, and often from adult readers making special efforts to make the story comprehensible (Elley, 1989).

In addition, it is claimed when children hear several stories that deal with a single theme or are written by the same author, vocabulary is naturally recycled, which enhances acquisition (Hwang & Nation, 1989; Krashen, 1985). These considerations led this study to focus on three aspects: parts of speech (with a focus on nouns, adjectives, and verbs), theme-related corpus, and frequency of word recurrence.

Rationale for the Three Aspects of Analysis and Comparison

Parts of speech. According to Elley (1989), nouns are much more easily acquired by young learners than verbs and adjectives. In Elley (1989), children made a 24.2 percent gain on nouns by reading without discussion and a 5.9 percent gain on adjectives and verbs. With some brief explanations of the word meanings, however, “an appealing 8- to 10-minute story, read three times…can produce 40% gains in vocabulary for typical children” (p. 186). Since nouns, adjectives, and verbs are words that are considered essentially important in the description associated with the messages or meanings in the story, this study focused the analysis on nouns, adjectives and verbs. Adverbs were not included in this analysis because of their relatively few appearances in the stories and textbooks.

Theme-related or single author corpus. Nation (2008) demonstrated that it is easier to learn words if they are presented in meaningful clusters, e.g. grouping “sunshine, the beach, going for a walk” may be more effective than learning the days of a week all together. “Narrow reading,” reading on one topic or several books by one author (Krashen, 1985), provides readers with “a familiar ground” to enter the reading mainstream. He contends that “each topic has its own vocabulary, and to some extent its own style…Narrow input provides many exposures to these new items in a comprehensible context and built-in review” (p. 73). Wang and Lee (2007) found that some stories of the 65 books used could be grouped in terms of their themes, such as relationships, emotions, disciplines, and fanaticism. It was reasoned that when the teacher presented stories on the same theme, the children would recall the words and stories they had previously heard, and would have a better chance of acquiring the new vocabulary.

Frequency of word recurrence. Following the claims of narrow reading, it is hypothesized that words that recycle in the stories, e.g. words having a higher recurrence rate, facilitate vocabulary acquisition. Also, as shown by Elley (1989), a story read aloud three times helped ESL children improve about 40% in the vocabulary measure. Gardner (2004) reported that there is a greater proportion of general high frequency
words in children’s narrative stories than in children’s expository materials, which places less of a lexical demand on the reader and thus provides more linguistic support for incidental vocabulary acquisition to happen.

**Data Analysis**

Five Measures Used in the Study:

1. Total number of word tokens, regardless of their frequency of occurrence in the texts. This was done to investigate how many words in total were in the 65 books read to the pupils over the four year period, compared with those in the three textbook series used in the six years of elementary school. This comparison examined the difference in the overall language context provided in the storybooks and in the textbooks.

2. Total number of different headwords (lexis) in the stories and the textbooks. This measure was intended to compare the quantity of vocabulary input between the storybooks and the textbooks. In this study, a headword includes its inflected forms, e.g. -s, -ing, -ed, -’s, -ied, but not the derived forms and irregular forms of verbs, which would be more likely to belong to a word family.

3. Numbers of adjectives, nouns, and verbs that appeared in the stories and the textbooks. This analysis measured the amount of content words, i.e. the quality of vocabulary input, encountered in the stories and the textbooks. If a noun and a verb share the same form, e.g. control, the computer program we used (see below) would place it into only one category of the parts of speech, regardless of our knowledge of its different uses in different linguistic contexts. The same rule would apply to, say original, a noun and an adjective as well. (See discussions in Nation, 2001 & Schmitt, 2000).

4. The number and frequency of content words in theme-related texts. We measured the frequency of the content words appearing in the storybooks with a similar theme in order to investigate the potential effectiveness and efficiency of vocabulary acquisition by telling a number of theme related stories. In the present study, we did not analyze words in single author texts because the instructor (Wang) had not intentionally chosen books written by the same author. Thus the frequency of words in single author texts was not sufficient for our analysis.

5. The total number of words that have 3+ repetitions and 6+ repetitions. In Elley’s study with storytelling (1989), words that appeared three or four times were considered to be helpful for acquisition. In Gardner’s study on the corpus of book collections for extensive reading (2008), six occurrences of the same word (6+) was considered to be the threshold at which vocabulary is acquired. To gain a more comprehensive picture of how words recycle in the material, the current study therefore included the two standards for presenting the results of our analysis.

**Procedure and the Software**

All texts and stories were first keyed in onto an EXCEL data page to create the corpus for our planned analyses. Each unit in the text series contains different kinds of exercises and activities besides the dialogue which is the main text of each unit; other parts are usually presented for pattern or phonics practice and have little linguistic context. It was therefore decided to exclude the phonics practice from our analyses, because words presented in this part were mostly decontextualized and were only included for pronunciation practice and practicing letter-sound-correspondences.

Following the establishment of the corpus was the use of the online software, Stanford Parser, designed by The Natural Language Processing Group at Stanford University, to classify the parts of speech of the vocabulary appearing in both types of materials. Double-checking was done in order to obtain a higher reliability. Another specially designed computer program was used (see below) would place it into only one category of the parts of speech, regardless of our knowledge of its different uses in different linguistic contexts. The same rule would apply to, say original, a noun and an adjective as well. (See discussions in Nation, 2001 & Schmitt, 2000).

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2 This was done due to the limited function of this designed program. And, our way of categorization seemed limited in defining one’s knowledge of a word that may have different meanings in different contexts, thus somewhat underestimating one’s word knowledge. However, this kind of word is not likely to occur too frequently in most children’s books.

3 http://nlp.stanford.edu:8080/parser/index.jsp
program, Action Script 2.0 Flash, was then used to perform the counting task (e.g. word frequency).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Total Number of Word Tokens, Headwords, and Word Families in Each Type of Text

Table 2 shows the total words (tokens) and total number of headwords for the storybooks and the three textbook series used in school. The 65 storybooks contain a total of 24,689 words (tokens) and 2,117 headwords (different lexis). Using Yang’s (2006) ratio of 5:3, the 2,117 headwords contain about 1,270 word families. In contrast, the three textbook series possess fewer total words and headwords: Hess has 7,337 total words and 895 headwords, Joy 8,398 and 1,034, and Longman 5,951 and 811. Note that the textbooks cover all six years of EFL in elementary school, while the storybooks were used over a four-year period.

Table 2. Numbers of Word Tokens, Headwords, and Word Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Total Words (tokens)</th>
<th>Headwords</th>
<th>Possible word families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storybooks</td>
<td>24,698</td>
<td>2,117</td>
<td>1,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hess</td>
<td>7,337</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>8,398</td>
<td>1,034</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longman</td>
<td>5,951</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results reveal that storybooks contained far more total words (five times as many as one series) and far more headwords (more than twice as many as the textbook series). In contrast, the three textbook series possess fewer total words and headwords: Hess has 7,337 total words and 895 headwords, Joy 8,398 and 1,034, and Longman 5,951 and 811. Note that the textbooks cover all six years of EFL in elementary school, while the storybooks were used over a four-year period.

Table 3. Nouns, Verbs, and Adjectives Appeared in the Stories and Textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Total Number of Different Content Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storybooks</td>
<td>1073</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>1709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hess</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longman</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results on Parts of Speech

As seen in Table 3, storybooks contain nearly two and a half times as many content words as the textbook series, 1,709 versus 700, 800, and 614.

The stories contained far more nouns than verbs and adjectives, which provides context that makes nouns easier to acquire (Elley, 1989). The 65 stories analyzed here contain about twice as many as nouns as the textbooks, and also contain about three times as many verbs and adjectives.
The ratio of nouns to verbs in the storybooks is 2.9 (1073/364), that is, for every verb there are three nouns. In textbooks, the ratios range from 3.6 to 4.3 nouns per verb. The ratio of nouns to adjectives in the storybooks is 3.9 (1073/272). The ratio of nouns to adjectives in the texts ranged from 6.2 to 7.2 nouns per adjective. A plausible assumption is that the textbooks focus more on building children’s ability to recognize and name objects and far less on the ability to describe and express, which requires more use of adjectives and verbs.

**Results of Theme-Related Words**

The numbers shown in Table 4 confirm that storybooks can provide ample input for young EFL children's vocabulary acquisition. Table 4 is organized by theme; books on similar themes are efficient for vocabulary acquisition because the same words tend to be recycled in a given theme, providing built-in review and raising the chances for successful acquisition.

**Table 4. High Frequency Theme-Related Content Words**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (#of books): #of total different content words</th>
<th>Frequency of Occurrence</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>ADJ</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendship (10 books): 698</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family (7 Books): 381</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving (4 books): 325</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays (7 Books): 368</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion (5 Books): 312</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witchery (3 Books): 247</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanaticism (8 Books): 500</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Friendship is one of the seven themes included in the 65 storybooks, and there were ten storybooks on this theme, containing a total of 698 different content words (about the same number that the typical textbook series contain for all six years). As expected, the Friendship-themed books contained more nouns than verbs and adjectives, with a considerable number in each category appearing more than three times and more than six times. A total of 250 content words appeared at least three times, and 108 appeared at least six times, providing a good chance for their acquisition.

Also, as noted earlier, content words recycle across different themes, which helps build children's background knowledge when encountering new stories and new words. In addition, many words that appear three times in texts actually appear more frequently, because teachers (storytellers) often take extra time explaining new vocabulary and helping children recall words that have appeared in other stories.

**Word Frequency in Storybooks and Textbooks**

In this analysis, our interest was to determine how many content words were included in the headwords of each type of material. Table 5 presents the number of content words occurring at least three times and six times in all texts examined here, including storybooks and textbooks, and their percentage of occurrence among the total number of headwords for each kind of text. For example, storybooks contained 466 nouns that appeared at least three times. They made up 22% of the total of 2117 headwords contained in all storybooks.

The percentage of
content words appearing 3+ and 6+ times among the total number of headwords was similar for all types of texts, but storybooks contained far more words with 3+ and 6+ repetitions than any of the textbook series in all parts of speech.

**Table 5. Frequency of Content Word Recurrence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials/ # of headwords</th>
<th>Frequency of Occurrence</th>
<th>N (%)*</th>
<th>V (%)*</th>
<th>ADJ (%)*</th>
<th>Total repeated content words (%)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storybooks</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>466 (22%)</td>
<td>214(10.1%)</td>
<td>129 (6%)</td>
<td>809 (38.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>267 (12.6%)</td>
<td>130 (6%)</td>
<td>84 (4%)</td>
<td>481 (22.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hess</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>219 (24.5%)</td>
<td>60 (7%)</td>
<td>44 (5%)</td>
<td>323 (36.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>107 (12%)</td>
<td>39 (4%)</td>
<td>33 (4%)</td>
<td>179 (17.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>260 (25.1%)</td>
<td>68 (7%)</td>
<td>44 (4%)</td>
<td>372 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>131 (12.7%)</td>
<td>39 (4%)</td>
<td>31 (3%)</td>
<td>201 (19.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longman</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>224 (27.6%)</td>
<td>54 (7%)</td>
<td>42 (5%)</td>
<td>320 (39.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>99 (12.2%)</td>
<td>30 (4%)</td>
<td>16 (2%)</td>
<td>145 (17.9%)</td>
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<td>99 (12.2%)</td>
<td>30 (4%)</td>
<td>16 (2%)</td>
<td>145 (17.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*% shows the percentage of the content words among the total number of headwords for each type of material.

These results confirm that storybooks do a much better job of providing EFL children with richer and more comprehensible input than textbooks do. Our findings also confirm Elley’s assertion (Elley, 1989) about the distribution of parts of speech, with nouns the most frequent type of words, verbs the next and adjectives the least likely met in any text.

**CONCLUSION**

This study employed a corpus-based analysis to illustrate the power of storybooks in providing input of sufficient quantity and quality for building young EFL learners’ vocabulary repertoire, which in turn contributes to the children’s ability and confidence to read independently. The findings obtained from the data revealed that textbooks are seriously deficient as teaching materials.

The 65 storybooks provided far more exposure to vocabulary, nearly 25,000 total words and over 2000 tokens, or individual word-types. The storybooks also contained twice as many nouns and about three times as many verbs and adjectives as the textbooks and had a higher ratio of nouns to verbs and adjectives, which may also contribute to comprehensibility and hence language acquisition.

The 65 storybooks analyzed here were read during a four-year period, bringing children from nearly zero English to the independent reading stage, an outcome rarely found among most Taiwanese children. This suggests that the EFL curriculum should at least include storytelling and independent reading. It may be the case that the textbook has, at best, a small role to play in English instruction.

Of course, gaps remain in the research. It will be of interest to determine what the impact of storybooks is on measures of reading, writing, vocabulary, listening and speaking. It is quite plausible that hearing stories also has a positive impact on aural ability in English (Huang, 2006). In addition, it is of course of interest to investigate additional texts, including storybooks intended for older children.

Compared to its counterparts, the three representative textbook series, storybooks offer acquirers a substantial amount of vocabulary in the text, which helped pave the way for the children in Wang and Lee (2007) to reach the stage where they were able to do and enjoy independent reading. These results strongly suggest that if we can provide extensive, coherent, and interesting input in the form of interesting stories, EFL children will be much better prepared to proceed to the next stage of English learning, the junior high school.
REFERENCES


A New Note About TPR
Presented to several hundred language instructors at the International Forum on Language Teaching sponsored by Project Coach
July 27-31, 2010
Los Alamitos, California

by James J. Asher, PhD, Originator of the Total Physical Response, known worldwide as TPR
tprworld@aol.com, web: www.tpr-world.com

I am pleased that a group of teachers is assisting other teachers in the successful application of tools for implementing the comprehensive-first principle of language learning. I would like to share with you eight laws to consider for the 21st century.

Asher’s Law #1 (Multiple Languages)
The noble goal of the 20th century was to acquire a second language. The effort was not a stunning success since less than five percent of students actually achieved fluency in another language. Given the explosion of valuable information in the last decade or two about the right hemisphere of the brain, a realistic goal in the 21st century is fluency in multiple languages. For example, one discovery is that language instruction was “dragged underwater” in the 20th century by the myth that fluency begins with speaking. Actually, the reverse is true: When speaking appears, language learning has already taken place.

Asher’s Law #2 (Start before puberty)
All of the evidence suggests that high school is too late for students to enjoy a native pronunciation of any target language. Children have the unique, perhaps biological, advantage of acquiring a native pronunciation of any target language.

Asher’s Law #3 (Get it in the first exposure)
There is no way students of all ages can acquire multiple languages if we continue playing to the left hemisphere of the brain with exercises such as “Listen and repeat after me!” or “Memorize this dialog” or “Conjugate this verb.”

Each repetition indicates that the left brain is resisting the intake of the information. The left brain is erasing the information as fast as it comes in. You may have experienced this in “cramming for a test.” This is a “sledge-hammer” strategy with repetition, repetition, repetition until your brain says, “OK. I give up! I can’t take it anymore. I’m tired. I’ll retain the information until this test is over and then I will erase it.”

Asher’s Law #4 (You only have a grace period of five minutes)
I often tell language educators that they only have five minutes to convince students that they can actually learn the target language—only five minutes. If you cannot do it in five minutes, you will not convince them if they stay with you for a year. That’s why my tool, the Total Physical Response, should be the primary tool in every instructor’s linguistic toolbox. Within five minutes, your students should be excited as they say to themselves, “Wow. I understand everything she is saying in Chinese! You know what? - - - I think I can actually learn this language.”

Now, it is important to realize that the Total Physical Response, known worldwide as TPR, is not the only tool in your toolbox. You have a batch of secondary tools such as storytelling, games, and other techniques you have acquired over the years. Knowing which tool to use and when to use it is the art of teaching which depends upon the talent of the individual instructor.

Asher’s Law #5 (Words to delete from your vocabulary)
The first word to delete is “methods.” The reason: Method implies a formula and formula implies
Teaching is an art—the highest art form, not a science. Science can provide some valuable tool for your linguistic toolbox, but how you apply each tool depends upon your talent and skill as an instructor.

Another word to delete is “memorize.” When you ask them to memorize vocabulary or dialogues or verb conjugations, you switched them into slow-motion learning of the left brain.

Asher’s Law #6 (Organize around student goals)

Teacher goals are of keen interest to instructors, but not necessarily students. Examples of teacher goals: Cover Chapter 1, then cover Chapter 2 until I get to the end of the book. A different grammar point will be features in each lesson. The students’ reward: They get to start a new textbook next year when I cover Chapter 1, then Chapter 2, etc.

I find the word “cover” interesting. An alternate meaning is “hide.” Certainly the target language is hidden somewhere in those chapters. And why should covering chapters in one book followed by covering chapters in another book be fascinating to students? Why should grammar be fascinating to students? Grammar is like one’s body; it works best when we are unaware it is working.

Student goals come from your students. Keep the goals simple and something that your students can achieve in a short time; for examples, how to have a conversation with the opposite sex.

Asher’s Law #7 (Encourage doodling with the language)

Doodling means to mess around or to play with the target language. Students should be encouraged to experiment outside of class with novel sentences. Encourage them to talk to each other, to joke with each other, and to make up crazy conversations in the target language. There is nothing sacred about the target language. Use it to laugh and have fun.

Asher’s Law #8 (Wrap it up in a few sentences)

Start with a short-term student goal (understanding and speaking). Use TPR, the primary tool in your linguistic toolbox, for convincing your students in less than five minutes that they can acquire any language on earth. Then use the primary tool of TPR to introduce any new vocabulary or new grammatical feature in the target language. Follow up with secondary tools in your toolbox.

That’s it! That is my blueprint for success. Keep it simple! Have fun yourself! If you have fun, so will your students.

Best wishes for continued success,

James J. Asher, Ph.D

References

Filling each morning and afternoon of The International Forum on Language Teaching were in-depth sessions, including:

- peer teaching and coaching;
- Total Physical Response training with Berty Segal Cook;
- combo of CI skills and subject-specific material (i.e. art history or culture) with Spanish and French teachers;
- beginning or intermediate-advanced Comprehensible Input teaching skills in German, Spanish, French, and Mandarin;
- Readers’ Theater with various experts: Jason Fritze, Carol Gaab, and Gayle Trager.

Other sessions included:

- how to write a comprehensible novel with Karen Rowan;
- multi-level teaching with Meredith Richmond and Diana Noonan;
- how to weave technology into the CI classroom with Noah Geisel
- personalization with Karen Rowan;
- Sheltered Subject Matter teaching on subjects such as Frida Kahlo

In addition to the set hours of the conference, I witnessed several groups of teachers peer-coaching and acting out stories late into the night.

Four language masters stand out in my memory of iFLT 2010 as a true gift in having seen them speak or teach, and it was a true honor to meet them. I had read much on The Natural Approach, Comprehensible Input, and the Monitor Hypothesis, but to hear Dr. Stephen Krashen speak in person on language acquisition and his theories was remarkable.

I had also used Total Physical Response (TPR) in my Spanish classes, but to have the exuberant Berty Segal Cook speak on the necessity of TPR and lead the attendees through a TPR lesson, complete with jumping on chairs and dancing and touching our toes, was extraordinary and memorable.

Thirdly, I attended a two-day Comprehensible Input-based Mandarin class, taught by Linda Li during the pre-conference Fluency Fast class. Not only is she known by many to be one of the best language teachers, but she showed me how to skillfully, powerfully yet delicately, and passionately take a confusing and difficult language and make it not only comprehensible, but also, non-intimidating, usable, and memorable.

The fourth teacher who exceeded his incredible reputation in my mind is Jason Fritze. I observed him dramatically and clearly teach Fluency Fast Advanced Spanish to a group of teachers in Denver two weeks before iFLT, and then saw him explain and model, with contagious enthusiasm, the CI skills throughout the week in California.

I was honored that the whole myriad of presenters so generously shared their gifts of knowledge from either their years of enthusiastic teaching and honing of skills or from their lifetime of study, experimentation, and refinement of theories and practices. It was this combination of shared knowledge and styles which gave the attendees of iFLT 2010 such a rich experience.

In closing, I would like to share some of the anonymous comments that the directors received as part of the evaluation of iFLT, 2010. I hope these comments give you an even broader sense of what was taught, envisioned, and coached at this year’s iFLT.
As part of iFLT’s “Pay it Forward” charge, this document is being shared by the teachers in the program with IJFLT subscribers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of FF Technique with Short Description of Procedure and/or examples</th>
<th>How does it provide comprehensible input or otherwise promote learning?</th>
<th>Other Comments about Implementation—Tips, ideas, Extensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lowering the affective filter:**  
• “Are you nervous? I’m nervous!”  
• “Did I make it easy? Do I deserve an applause?”  
• Smile at the students and make personal contact with each one. Learn their names quickly and use their names in the questioning and stories.)  
• “You can do that better/louder/more enthusiastically.”  
• “You have to be more excited than that!” [Fluency Fast Techniques, Li] | It doesn’t provide comprehensible input but neither learning nor language acquisition can happen effectively in an environment of fear or anxiety. So, it creates the proper classroom ambiance to maximize the learning experience. [Affective Filter, Krashen] | Teach to the eyes! Find something to love about each student (fake it if you have to…until you discover the loveable part of a challenging student). |
| **Classroom Management:**  
• Start class with rules  
  o My job is to teach  
  o Your job is to slow me down or stop me when you’re not understanding 100%  
  o Listen only; do not repeat after me. | Makes student’s and teacher’s role explicit, creates bond of positive interdependence, provides platform for success (“all I have to do is listen and pay attention, and let the teacher know when I don’t understand”). | Review the rules at the beginning of each class session until it’s clear they’ve internalized the rules. |
**Comprehensible input:**
- Write vocabulary on board in target language and English or primary language (use two different colors) if students are literate in primary language. Write cognates on board and point out their similarities with English or primary language.
- Use realia, visuals or icons for pre-literate students.
- Teacher modeling or dramatization.  
  - Model / delay / remove modeling
- Use English or primary language only when needed to make input transparent.

For literate students, a direct translation of the new vocabulary into their primary language is comprehensible, even transparent.

Realia, visuals, icons and teacher modeling or dramatization all help students understand new vocabulary (mainly nouns and verbs).

Watch out for multiple meanings words because students may be thinking of an alternate meaning not the one you intend. Check for understanding but beware of asking “Do you understand?” They may say they understand but may be thinking something other than what you intend them to think!

Put hands behind back if you automatically use hands when you remove the modeling.

**Personalization:**
- Have students complete a personal interest inventory form so their favorite things, places, and people can be incorporated into the TPR stories.
- Use student interest inventories to bring personalization into TPR stories, pick out 2-3 interesting facts a day to use in stories.
- Start day with prepared written story that is similar to story from previous class with slight changes and a few new vocabulary structures.
- Use one student as a word expert: for example, if they know the definition of “también” use them and point to that student every time también comes up in a story. (The también expert!)
- Use photos of their favorite things, places, and people in class slides or as visuals, such as celebrities, athletes.

Personalization contributes to language acquisition because it makes the input more engaging thereby focusing and motivating the student. Language acquisition occurs when students receive messages in the target language and understand them because the input from the teacher and instructional materials is compelling, contextualized and comprehensible.  
[Affective Filter, Personalization Hypothesis, Krashen]

Ask students questions after each class on a feedback form:
- If you had 24 hours to spend with a celebrity who would it be?
- If you had 24 hours to do anything you wanted and not be accountable to anything or anyone with no restrictions what would you do?
- Write down the 3 words from class today that you still don’t know very well.  
[Fluency Fast Techniques, Rowan]
**Developing meta-cognition:**
Students are actively engaged in their learning, thinking about their thinking, and responsible for showing the teacher when they need him/her to:
- Stop = fist in hand [Gale Mackey]
- Slow down = open hand palm toward self, dragging down in the air (like Wayne’s World magical “going back in time” signal)

Teacher asks questions that develop metacognition, such as:
- Is that a cognate? How do you know? Can you hear it?
- Are you right? How did you figure that out?
- Do you have a strategy for remembering that? What helps you remember?
- What helps you learn? What are your learning styles or preferences?

Developing meta-cognition contributes to language acquisition by promoting active engagement and conscious involvement by the student in his/her own learning.

Students need to develop meta-cognitive strategies to improve their learning, and teachers help them with this by weaving meta-cognitive practices into their teaching.

Train yourself to say pretty regularly, “tell me how you figured that out!” or “What clues did you use to figure that out?” “What helped you understand?”

---

**Explicit expectations:**
- Answer my question with a word, gesture or English, to show me you understand.
- I will speak slowly, you just listen and pay attention.
- Explain the silent period of language acquisition: “I need to know you understand. Just listen; don’t repeat after me! Some teachers learning Thai in Thailand don’t say anything in Thai for 400 hours because Thai has even more tones than Mandarin. After 400 hours they can hear the tones. What you can hear you are more likely to be able pronounce.” [Krashen and Li]
- My job is to make it understandable. I will be a repeating machine but you have to show me with the hand signals when I need to slow down or stop and explain. I will do my 50% and you have to do your 50%. [Ben Slavic]

Lowers the affective filter of students who are worried they won’t succeed.

Students should understand clearly that they listened for years before speaking when acquiring their first language.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Color coding written charts/board work:</strong></th>
<th>Gives a visual organizing principle and helps students find the supporting words quickly as they glance from chart to chart to teacher and back again.</th>
<th>Be consistent with the color-coding, and consider that 10% of your students are likely color blind—use the colors that contrast most (i.e., light blue not dark blue with purple).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Chart stories using different colors:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Green: connecting words, extra words</td>
<td></td>
<td>Write clearly and in large print using the beveled edge of the market, not a fine point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Red: cognates</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tips: keep open pens in a can on the chalk ledge or in an apron pocket; use duct tape to tape two colors of markers facing front to back so you can switch colors quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Blue: verbs, target structures,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>important top 100 most frequent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words [Mark Davies, a Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of Spanish]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Black: first language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Write vocabulary on board using one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>color for the target language, another</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>color for English (or the group’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>primary language)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
### Story strip or storyboard:
- Students fold paper into 6 boxes, number 1-6
- (Simultaneously, one volunteer student illustrates the six boxes on large butcher or chart paper for whole class.)
- Teacher dictates while students illustrate.
- When all six boxes are done, teacher describes one box at a time out of order “When I say the phrase, you show me with your fingers the number of the box that corresponds with what I’m saying.”
- Repeat dictation, students have eyes closed, students gesture the verbs all the way through. Teacher can make deliberate mistakes to see if the students are listening and comprehending.
- Post large butcher paper version, retell the story while pointing at key elements of the illustration.
- Retell at a natural speed.
- Teacher asks: What do you know about Person 1, 2, 3? About Item 1, 2, 3?
- Break: Teacher writes story on butcher or chart paper, very large font, color coded, and displays for reading (by teacher) with questions and pop-up grammar. Students read along and may copy the story.

### Provides an opportunity
- Provides an opportunity for students to extend their understanding with non-linguistic representations and then use the illustrations as a guide to practice their new vocabulary structures.

### For young students, four boxes may be optimal. For older student 6-8 are usually best.
- For young students, four boxes may be optimal. For older student 6-8 are usually best.
**Reading of class story:**
- Post on butcher paper or transparency
- Teacher reads aloud a phrase or chunk in target language
- Teacher puts up hand to tell class to wait and think, not translate out loud yet, waits 5-10 seconds, puts hand down, then class chorally “reads” that chunk in primary language.
- Comprehension checks:
  - Find the part that means X…
  - How do you say XYZ in English?
  - Who says XYZ?
  - What does XYZ mean?
- Provides more repetitions of new vocabulary structures with instant feedback of class translations by teacher.
- Class reading feels “safe” for reluctant students or students who lack confidence (lowers affective filter).
- Opportunities may arise for pop-up grammar – ten second maximum for grammatical explanations.

**Props:**
- Muscle arms
- Pizza box
- Chocolate kisses
- Gauze wings
- Stuffed animals, puppets
- Balls
- Globe, maps
- Hats
- Use Beanie Babies, stuffed animals, and puppets.
- Stools, TV trays, and chairs are useful.
- Adds context clues and supports comprehension. Also adds fun and pizzazz, making the experience memorable and tying the vocabulary structures to an emotion. Emotion drives memory (brain research) so vocabulary that is connected to strong, positive emotions is more likely to be retained and to be recalled more easily.
- Beanie Babies and puppets are useful because “mirror neurons” are activated when we watch others doing actions. Provides more reps.
- Go shopping at Halloween costume shops on November 1st and 2nd to pick up great items for a deep discount.
- Students can bring props and stuffed animals from home.
- Use if kids are tired, switch actors in the middle of the story to mix it up.
- Large cardboard from Costco, have kids take home and create what you need.
- Dollar bin at Target, thrift stores, garage sales.
**Gestures:**
Teacher has students make kinesthetic movement or gesture to connect the aural input to a physical change of state, such as these verbs:
- Live = hands at a point over the head like a roof
- Says = Quotation marks with two fingers in the air (air quotes)
- Give = Open hand palm toward teacher
- Expression cards: Have: ¡Qué lástima! ¡Qué pena! and ¿Será posible? on tongue depressors; expressions read for students to use and exclaim. Keep in a coffee can, ready and available for the “expression” student.

**Brain research indicates** that tying new language structures with physical movements and gestures adds muscle memory as an additional pathway for retrieval of a word or concept.

New research published in the July 2007 issue of *Cognition* indicates that using gestures while studying can dramatically improve learning and memory. One study, done by Susan Wagner Cook at the University of Rochester, showed that kids asked to physically gesture at math problems were almost three times more likely than non-gesturers to remember what they learned. Cook suggests that gestures represent “an additional and potent avenue for taking in information”. In the study, students were asked to learn algebraic concepts. When using speech only to learn, 33% of students remembered the lesson. When using gestures, however, 90% of students retained the lesson.

Teacher may provide gestures to begin with but after modeling a few times it is effective to elicit ideas and suggestions from the students. “How can we represent ______ with a motion?” “How did you come up with that idea? What’s your rationale?”
Checking for understanding/comprehension check:

- “Close your eyes, hold up your fingers to show me how much you understood... 10 fingers equals 100%, 9 fingers equals 90%, etc.”
- “What does X mean?”
- “Who can translate this sentence?”
- “Close your eyes, put fist on hand for 'got it' if you know the meaning of the word, put flat hand on top of your other hand if you don’t know it.”
- Triads retell story in primary language
- Each person in a dyad or triad has a role to act out/gesture/do TPR as teacher retells the story
- Teacher designates one student to jump up and say the meaning of a key word in primary language when it comes up in the target language (___ means ___!)
- Retell, catching up to where you left off story:
  - Teacher makes statements about story that are T/F; students demonstrate comprehension with yes/no or thumbs up/thumbs down.
  - Pairs of students: one retells the story for one minute, teacher says STOP in target language, the other student takes it from there until teacher says STOP again. Teacher is wandering the room listening in for comprehension.
  - Whole group retells the story while teacher writes it out on chart/butcher paper or on a transparency. One student gives a full sentence, next student adds details or makes new statement.
  - Asking “what did I just say”?
  - Having student illustrate the story

Checking for understanding is a formative assessment that serves to improve instruction and provide student feedback. Students use the results to monitor their own learning; teachers use the results to plan their next instructional moves—whether to re-teach, recycle, or move on.

A key reason this matters is that if the students are not comprehending 85-100% of the input, then they are not acquiring the language and will likely become frustrated.

Choose 1-3 “barometer” students, students who seem to be slow auditory processors. If they’re with you and comprehending 100%, you’re on track. If not, slow down, add more context clues or translate into primary language.

Student response = formative assessment!

If the class is not responding, you don’t need to do a comp check, you already know...
| **Story asking:** | **Asking questions requires a response and for the beginning language learner that response may be a gesture, a phrase in their primary language, a word or phrase in the target language, or a sketch.**  
*The repetitive questions with added details such as adjectives or adverbs to twist the meaning keeps it interesting in spite of the multiple repetitions of the target vocabulary. Hearing the vocabulary over and over in slightly different structures leads to receptive vocabulary and eventually to productive vocabulary.* | **Don’t say “Es mi cuento.” Instead “Es otro cuento” or “Casi.” The use of “casi” is to stretch out an answer, expanding possibilities and inviting students to offer ideas.**  
*Pay attention to the students’ reactions, watch for lagging interest to add new details, change the pace, or change it up by adding a prop or some physical movement for the whole class (everyone flies to Italy to see George Clooney, for example).* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| • Compare and contrast oral story vs. written story  
• Involve students in the creation of the story  
• Ask questions using the circling technique so the students hear the key vocabulary 50+ times in ten minutes.  
• Students provide portions of the content but teacher maintains control of the story  
• Use vertical questioning to get more specific details from the students  
• Make students the stars of the story  
• Dramatize the stories with students playing themselves  
• Ask students their opinions, preferences, and life experiences to work them into the story.  
• Use unexpected, even bizarre, plot twists and details to increase student engagement and fun. |  |  |
| **Coaching the actors:** | **This helps build confidence in the actors who may otherwise be hesitant to display emotions and actions in front of the class. The teacher may have suggestions for behaviors or facial expressions that will make the input more comprehensible for the class.** | **Keep the momentum going, even if you need to use a little English to direct the actors.** |
| • Coach students to be good actors not distracters.  
• Coach students to know body placement, voice level and melodrama.  
• Teacher = Coach = Director  
• Have them replay sections with greater and greater degrees of detail or emotion to reinforce the concepts and/or allow the student to shine in his/her moment of “fame.” |  |  |
## All the world is a stage:
- 3 characters max
- 1 person character 1. 1 person character 2. Third person is all the props.
- Groups of 3. If you’re not in a group of 3, come to the front
- T retells the story, students act out
- T moves toward groups not acting with drama
- Praise people who are hamming it up
- Create melodrama – overacting, how far can I go
- T models whacky, over the top, at first, then challenge them to outdo you
- Everyone has a role, including audience – boo, cheer
- Audience can blurt out/speak the target language
- Large classes act out silently so that T can be heard
- Story re-told should have action, movement, emotion and dialogue

According to TESOL article “Using Drama to Teacher English as a Foreign Language, “drama is a powerful classroom tool. It works through our ‘experiential’ senses. It sees, hears, says and does. The student is not a passive recipient but an active meaning maker. The student engages on a much deeper and personal level then simply being given information. In drama the student demonstrates his understanding by acting out or being what Boal refers to as the ‘spect-actor’. This ‘acting out’ is not prescribed but comes through personal internalisation, context and group dynamic.”

## Students use no words, just act out words teacher says.
Teacher may pose actors to freeze in a tableau.

Have fun, be entertaining, engage the students, love your students!

## Story in present tense, retell in past tense:
[Joe Neilson]
- Recurrent action grammar (Kuizenga)

## Pacing:
Pacing is very important for your beginning students. You almost cannot speak too slowly as you make sure you are 100% comprehensible.

Beginners need the instructional input to be not just comprehensible but transparently comprehensible, 100%!

Ideas: mentally wait 2 seconds; tap your hand to your side to a slow beat; or count 1-2 seconds after you say each word. [Mary Holmes]
**Graduated questions, levels of questions, circling:**

- Levels of questions refers to yes/no, either/or, wh-word interrogatories.
- Ask more questions than statements (Statement – Question – Question – Question – Question)
- Circling refers to the pattern “positive statement, question with yes answer, question with no answer, either/or question, question using interrogatory word (wh-word), back to positive statement.
  - First circle based on subject of statement.
  - Second circle based on verb.
  - Third circle base on object/complement.
- 3rd person singular = default verb as if narrating in advance, as they're doing it

This process involves students in the creation of a TPR story, which is then used and modified and recycled and repeated so that the students will hear, with 100% comprehension, the target vocabulary 60-80 times in a short time. This allows the student to acquire the words and put them in his/her receptive vocabulary for the long term. In a seasoned “Story-asking” teacher’s hands, this process of questions and circling can result in students hearing 180 questions in 25 minutes.

Use Personalized Questions to pull students into the conversation. “Who knows how to swim?” A student raises her hand and then a new story begins about a girl who swam across the English Channel when she was 20 years old.
**Picture file cards:**
- Big pictures, colorful preferred.
- Compelling photographs
- Charts, diagrams
- Take your own photos of things you need in your picture file.
- Have students’ families star in the picture file card collection.
- Hang several pictures on the wall and have students “vote” for their favorite, then ask questions based on their preferences.
- Place four pictures on a simple grid on the floor (using tape to make a plus sign, for example) and have students stand in the quadrant that represents their preference; teacher can then leveled questions related to various students and their preferences.

**Adds visual contextualization, non-linguistic representation. Adds context.**

Extensive use of visual aids is also known as *visual scaffolding*. When students can see an image of what the teacher is describing or see the key words that the teacher is explaining, this not only serves to make the input considerably more comprehensible, but serves to lower the affective filter which results from the fear or boredom that comes from understanding very little in class.

**Have colleagues give you last year’s calendars in December.**

Divide into categories, have student aides organize them for you in file folders or gallon-size baggies. Laminate.

Download images from the Internet (beware of copyrights) use Wikimedia for open source, public domain.

If you use pictures with students in them, get parent’s permission.

The Smartboard and its software are excellent tools for the production and viewing of content that is both interesting and comprehensible.

**Novelty/variety:**
- Mix commands = Novel commands
  - “Sit on the chair.”
  - “Sit on the chair slowly.”
  - “Run”
  - “Run slowly”
  - “Is Linda running slowly?”
    - Novel command: The chair runs. The chair runs slowly.
  - “Novel!” means new.

**The brain craves novelty. It is always looking for patterns, making meaning, and detecting purposes! Make opportunities for the brains in the room to rev up to full speed! Mixed commands all sound different to language learners.**

Keep your eyes open for signs of boredom or fatigue…that’s when you need to get the kids on their feet and pump the blood to the brain. “When the bum is numb, the brain is the same!”
**Repetition:**
- Chant/sing part of the story
- Circling/graduated questions/levels of questioning
- Remote control for fast forward, slow motion, freeze, rewind.
- Asking whole group, individual, and partial group questions (people wearing red, people in the NW corner of the room, etc.)

Repetition, when comprehensible, accelerates the number of hearings of a particular word making the best use of the limited classroom time for acquisition of language.

According to Ray and Seely, “We circle to help slow processors become fast processors. If they’re already processing fast, we don’t need to circle. We also circle when we practice more advanced structures.” [“Circling” is a variation on Berty Segal Cook’s “Levels of Questioning” that is described in “Fluency Through TPR Storytelling.”]
**Wait time:**
Wait time is defined as the pause between asking the question and soliciting a response. Give students time to process:
- Pause and point
- Teacher raises his/her hand, asks a question; tells them to think while the hand is raised, answer when the hand goes down.
- Point to question word posters
- Point to vocabulary words

<p>| Providing additional wait time after a student response allows all students to reflect on the response prior to further discussion. Increased wait time results in longer student responses, more appropriate unsolicited responses, more student questions, and increased higher order responses. | The concept of “wait time” as an instructional variable was invented by Mary Budd Rowe (1972). The “wait-time” periods she found—periods of silence that followed teacher questions and students’ completed responses—rarely lasted more than 1.5 seconds in typical classrooms. She discovered, however, that when these periods of silence lasted at least 3 seconds, many positive things happened to students’ and teachers’ behaviors and attitudes. To attain these benefits, teachers were urged to “wait” in silence for 3 or more seconds after their questions, and after students completed their responses (Casteel and Stahl, 1973; Rowe 1972; Stahl 1990; Tobin 1987). |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TPR: [Total Physical Response, Asher]</th>
<th>TPR offers long-term retention that helps students to remember phrases or words. Asher (1966) studied the outcome of TPR under a variety of conditions using Japanese and Russian with adults and children. The results indicate that TPR facilitates learners’ memory retention. Moreover, TPR is a lot of fun, stress-free, and effective with teachers and students, especially teenagers and young learners. Brown (2007) points out that with their short attention spans children differ from adult learners. Excessive grammatical explanations and mechanical drills easily bore children and shorten their attention span. Animated and lively TPR activities keep their interest and attention alive. Lastly, TPR is ideal for kinesthetic learners who need to be active in class.</th>
<th>Take it outside sometimes! TPR words can be easily demonstrated, but they’re not always in the top 200 most-frequently used words.</th>
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<td>- Give out beanie babies to act out TPR when students tire of doing it themselves or allow students to use hand gestures.</td>
<td>- Count on fingers to ask questions like “¿cuántos?” (how many?)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Rephrase one-word student responses in full sentences.</td>
<td>- Include students that are not acting by having them be the “trees in the forest,” chant along, or do sound effects like dum, de-dum-dum, dah! (Dragnet), for “hay un problema.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Incorporate reading on Day One either with a story or a song.</td>
<td>- Hold up written words during TPR to support literacy development and/or transfer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Count on fingers to ask questions like “¿cuántos?” (how many?)</td>
<td>- Anticipation: drum roll on desks.</td>
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**Games:**
- Pencil game with 2 students after a story: Teacher has prepared or makes up on-the-spot statements about a story; pairs of students race to pick up one pencil placed on the desk between them (if students pick up the pencil and the statement is true =1pt; false statements = minus 2 pts)
- Pescar game - teacher has prepared commands on cut-out fish with paper clip to attract magnet. They use a pencil as a fishing pole with magnet on a string. Students sing vamos a pescar, a pescar, en el mar. Students “fish out” a cut-out fish and act out the command related to it.
- Pancho Carrancho [Ramiro Garcia]
- Rice Bowl – teacher prepare slips of paper with sketches/icons representing vocabulary words in sets for pairs of students; each student has a large “rice bowl” on a piece of paper; teacher calls out vocabulary words and students compete to pick up the appropriate slip of paper with their chopsticks and place it in their rice bowl.

**Limiting English:**
- Hand raising = “May I speak English”
- Automatic default language = L2
- Blurting out in L1 not acceptable
- Blurting out in L2 is accepted

**Games are often a fun way for students to practice with the target language and socialize with peers using the language. Games should be used sparingly as they are not necessarily an effective form of comprehensible input, but they may increase motivation and satisfaction for the students.**

**Check in on each pair or team as they play, interacting with them or at least “kidwatching” to see what evidence there is of learning.**
**Reading:**
- Reading is the central piece of language instruction. Wide reading, free reading, independent reading are the most effective ways to develop vocabulary.
- Reader’s Theater: use a whole language approach & use student experiences (language experience, group frames).
  - Make a Reader’s Theater script from non-fiction (like Marie Antoinette)
  - Strategies: Newscaster (use a microphone as a prop)
  - “Missing scene” or Missing chapter (have student fill in missing bits)

**Books are rich compendia of vocabulary in interesting contexts, often with beautiful illustrations to make the stories more comprehensible.**

According to Kenneth Goodman’s psycholinguistic reading theory, there are four language cueing systems that readers activate in order to read text:
- the grapho-phonics cueing system (the relationship between letters and their sounds);
- the syntax cueing system (readers use the grammar and sentence structure of the text's language in order to predict what words will appear next);
- the pragmatic cueing system, (readers use their knowledge of how certain words are used in familiar situations and apply that knowledge to a similar situation described in a text);
- and the semantic cueing system (using context clues).

(Rhodes & Shanklin, 1993, p. 150).
Homework:
• Write own personalized reading, illustrate.
• Read to friends and family
• READ and RE-READ
• Re-read the day’s story & illustrate it
• Make dialog bubbles in the story and have students compose unique dialog
• Read to their parents and get a signature
**marketing strategy**
• Play an audio-tape of a story. Students read along
• Make a story with empty picture boxes on a page and they put in new characters
• Create a parallel story they can tell to a partner in the class: stick-figure illustrate it!

Compiled by Sally Fox, SDCOE, 7-31-10, for Fluency Fast Teacher Group  www.fluencyfast.com

Benjamin, Ben and Ben.
By Karen Rowan

Paul Frommer’s keynote address to iFLT
July, 2010

If after seeing the James Cameron movie Avatar you found yourself wondering who created the Na’vi Language of Pandora, you wouldn’t be alone. Several hundred language teachers gathered to hear Na’vi creator Dr. Paul Frommer, keynote speaker in Los Alamitos, California at the International Forum on Language Teaching last July. As he flashed the first slide with the phonetics and grammar explanation of the language, there was an audible “Oh” that escaped the audience. They visibly leaned forward in their chairs.

Dr. Paul Frommer is an American communications professor at the University of Southern California (USC) and a linguistics consultant. James Cameron hired him to create a new language from scratch and then teach it to the cast. Na’vi is a “conlang” (constructed language), not a “natlang” (natural language).

“I didn’t start from absolute zero,” he says. James Cameron already had a few words he wanted to use.

What happened next surprised everyone, especially Dr. Frommer.

The language caught on. There are now Na’vi discussion boards on-line, including one forum on which only Na’vi is allowed. Frommer refers to one case he is familiar with in which two people from two different countries with no common language use Na’vi as their sole mode of communication.

Interested in learning the Na’vi language? Join the Learn the Na’vi Language Facebook group. The site has links to www.learnnavi.org, which has dictionaries and other downloads. Frommer did not create the website. It was created by fans. He has, though, contributed reference materials in an effort to correct misinformation available on-line. The forum (http://forum.learnnavi.org/) has discussion boards for Na’vi in Chinese, Czech, Danish, German, Dutch, Esperanto, Spanish, French, Hungarian, Italian, Latin, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Finnish, Swedish, Turkish and Klingon.

Frommer says that he deliberately did not refer to Marc Okrand’s Klingon Star Trek language at all in the creation of Na’vi because he did not want any unintentional overlap. On the Klingon board, the profound thought is posted, though:

“Perhaps Na’vi and Klingon are more related than we could imagine... I mean, how can we know how much they’ve interacted...”

True. One never knows.

If you’re intrigued by the grammar of the language, one contributor to the site has created a “grammar cheat sheet.” If a little bit of Na’vi fever isn’t enough, though, there is literally... “an app for that” available for the iPhone.
“Na’vi is not a written language on Pandora,” Frommer explains, so its creation as a written language by fans requires some speculation.

“If there’s something in our culture that doesn’t exist on Pandora, we don’t want the word. So, if they don’t have tables, then don’t give us a word for tables.” But users want to be able to use it in everyday conversation, so they want words for table, computer and blog.

Language teachers naturally incline, widen their eyes and emit involuntary gasps of joy when in the presence of obscure grammar explanations, but language teachers are rarities. They are so different from the general public, in fact, one wonders if they don’t suffer from a collective form of brain malformation. In general, precious few students pour over grammar books as though they were pleasure reading.

While Frommer is surprised at the interest the Na’vi language has sparked, he wonders, does this Na’vi fever have implications for languages we are on the brink of losing? What if this feverish pitch of interest in languages could be generated for near extinct languages?

Indeed, what if students of all ages across the world were as excited about English, Spanish, French, German and Chinese as those on the forums now are about Na’vi?

Now that would be ‘o’.

[exciting, bringing fun: [PoP] PF adj. ‘o’]
Letter from the Editor:  
An Endorsement of iFLT: 
the International Forum on Language Teaching  
reprinted from volume 5, number 2

The birth of the International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching

In 2004, The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching was born during a conversation between Dr. Krashen and myself over a glass of wine. In our first year there was an on-line subscription charge of $25.00. The following year, in response to a concern that IJFLT was prohibitively expensive for some in our international community, it became a free on-line journal. It is dedicated to communicating research, articles and helpful information regarding language acquisition to support teachers as they endeavor to create fluent, multilingual students. Our editorial board expanded, as did our membership, which now exceeds 11,000 subscribers.

An IJFLT Conference?

In the past two years those of us who started the Journal along with many presenters in the TPR Storytelling® community began to brainstorm about the possibility of creating our own conference. After a decade of meeting annually at the National TPRS Conference, state conferences, regional conferences and workshops, our collaboration had manifested in projects, books, new workshops and new teaching ideas. As a result, we began to see that the strength of a conference is as much in the people who attend as in the caliber of the presentations. What we have learned over the years is that we have been most inspired to create, write, brainstorm, envision and implement when we were in one another’s company. The power of the interaction and the networking at conferences inspired us as much or more towards innovation as did the actual content of the conference.

We imagined uniting our international readers under an umbrella of comprehension-based methods, including TPR, TPRS®, Story-asking and Sheltered-Subject Matter Instruction. What if teachers of English as a Foreign Language and as a Second Language, bilingual teachers and second language teachers could come together to share ideas, strategies and research? What if the conference could welcome both first and second language teachers? What if all people with similar views of language acquisition could interact? The more people who participated in brainstorming sessions, the bigger the ideas became.

We discussed an inexpensive, non-profit conference run by a board of directors, that would be accessible to anyone who wished to attend. What if a conference could be run like a forum or a Farmer’s Market?

The Forum was the public space in the middle of a Roman city that was the center of judicial and business affairs and a place of assembly for the people and gathering place of great social significance.

A Krashen quote from an early discussion:

“Let me share my fantasy: A no-dues, wide open organization. The only real expense is the conference. And all we need for a conference is a place to hold it. Charge admission to the conference, that’s all, just enough to pay for the space and presenters, but no big shot expensive keynotes.

We have already made history with the free journal. Maybe we can make history with the new organization.

The other alternative is to have a huge Tupperware party.”

Armed with an idealistic vision of creating a non-profit conference, we began seeking an organization that could provide us with a non-profit umbrella and a location.

COACH: From Fantasy to Reality

COACH Foreign Language Project  www.coachflproject.org is a community of professional language teacher leaders founded by Dr. Suzanne Charlton, 1983 California State Teacher of the Year. COACH is committed to improving foreign language teaching and learning. Their collaboration provides teachers with creative, standards-based lessons.
and classroom resources for a variety of World Languages, and promotes teachers’ professional growth through hands-on workshops, institutes and travel study programs.

The group is based in California and agreed to sponsor the 1st Annual International Forum on Language Teaching, host the conference at Los Alamitos High School and be our local resource in Southern California.

First iFLT meeting, San Diego, California. Top: Kristy Placido, Contee Seely, Karen Rowan, Carmen Andrews-Sanchez, Jason Fritze, Darcy Pippin Seated: Diana Noonan (Conference Director), Leslie Davison, Dr. Stephen Krashen, Linda Li, Carol Gaab

Our first official meetings took place in San Diego in November, 2009 and coincided with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). COACH’s booth at ACTFL was surrounded by teachers hungry for ideas, packets, strategies and support from other teachers. COACH is a powerful presence in California and an alliance with COACH was clearly one with great potential. Real teachers helping other teachers is precisely our goal.

The First Meetings: Honoring Our Roots, Planting New Trees
At our first meeting, we began to brainstorm the perfect conference. There would be coaching, so that teachers could leave with new skills instead of just new information.

In addition, we wanted to honor our past and our roots:
Dr. James Asher, the inventor of Total Physical
Our November meeting started with a short introduction by Dr. Krashen on some of his newest ideas. These new ideas and their implications will, of course, be discussed at the International Forum on Language Teaching. The collaborative spirit at iFLT will expand these ideas and energize all of us.

Dr. Krashen continues to broaden our view, expanding our conference planning beyond current comprehension-based methods and into the creation of a conference that is both inclusive and “internationalized”. IJFLT has provided a broad base of research indicating the power of comprehension-based methods in language education, and iFLT will give teachers a place to share their ideas on how best to implement that research.

On behalf of the entire editorial board, thank you for your support of IJFLT over the past 6 years. We enthusiastically recommend that IJFTL subscribers and contributors attend iFLT in Southern California in late July.

Karen Rowan
Editor, IJFLT

Response®, Berty Segal, long-time TPR expert, Blaine Ray, the inventor of TPR Storytelling® and Dr. Steven Krashen and Dr. Tracy Terrell, creators of the Natural Approach. So many teachers who owe their methodologies to them say that they use techniques from each one to build strong programs that accelerate the language acquisition process.

New Ideas and Directions

iFLT will take place 10 minutes from Seal Beach. Hotels on the beach are providing group discounts. Information is on the web site. To find a roommate to split expenses, join the Facebook group iFLT 2010.
Seal Beach, California

Jason Fritze and Diana Noonan, co-directors of iFLT, 2010

iFLT participants are students in Berty Segal Cook's TPR demonstration

Rebecca Borden responds to Berty Segal Cook’s commands
Participants demonstrating 100% comprehension by holding up 10 fingers during a Mandarin demonstration by Linda Li

Panel discussion with Carol Gaab, Elizabeth Romjin, Contee Seely, Jeanne Egasse and Berty Segal Cook

Carol Gaab leads the group in a spontaneous game of Simon Says, which they all lose.

Practicing basic TPR with a partner and coaches

Even her fellow panelists lose.
In the Advanced workshop, a small group tackles a new personalization exercise that debuted at iFLT.

Ben Slavic in an impromptu discussion

Ice cream social and exhibitor opening

Bonfire on Seal Beach with kids and families and hot dogs and marshmallows

“Disneyland” earned her nickname when she took the Mandarin class with her grandmother and was excited about her weekend trip.
Enjoying ice cream at the end of a long day.

Crowded exhibitor opening

Workshop for Experienced teachers with Carmen Andrews, Jason Fritz and Karen Rowan and actors “Molly la perfecta” and “Enrique Iglesias.”

26 Denver Public Schools World Language teachers came to iFLT from Colorado. 11 pose for a picture at the bonfire.

Christy Lao, Karen Rowan, Grace Cho, Kyung Sook, Steve Krashen and Diana Noonan

Leslie Davison, Colorado teacher and iFLT presenter at the bonfire
Participants in the Experienced workshop act out a story in small groups using the “Elaine Carey” or “All the World’s a Stage” technique.

Christy Lao, Diana Noonan, iFLT Director, Karen Rowan, IJFLT editor, Steve Krashen, Ken Smith, Beniko Mason, Kyung Sook Cho, Fay Shin

Each of these speakers was invited to iFLT to present papers. They have all been previously published in IJFLT.

Donna Tatum-Johns presenting the French workshop while talking about Denver Public Schools French teacher Paul Kirschling
Berty Segal Cook gives Rebecca Borden commands in the TPR Workshop, modeling flawless Total Physical Response. (34 sec.)

Ken Smith was one of the speakers invited to iFLT to present papers. He has been published in IJFLT. Here, he speaks on creating your own classroom libraries. (20 min.)

Diana Noonan, iFLT director, telling conference participants not to keep this to themselves and to “pay it forward.” 43 seconds

Linda Li, who Steven Krashen referred to as the best teacher he had ever seen, teaches Beginning Mandarin to a room of nearly 300 adults. Follow along and see if it is comprehensible to you. (5:24)

Jason Fritze teaches Sevillanas in Spanish using commands, subjunctive, non-stop comprehensible input and physical response. Berty Segal Cook and Contee Seely are in the class. This is a demonstration of sheltered subject matter teaching or contextualized instruction. (7:50, .40 and 1:03)

Karen Rowan demos acting out a story in the Advanced Skills workshop as Jason Fritze comments. As this clip ends, a teacher from the workshop is invited to pick up at this point and is coached teaching the story. 6:58

Berty Segal Cook was one of the speakers invited to iFLT to present papers. He has been published in IJFLT. Here, he speaks on creating your own classroom libraries. (20 min.)

Linda Li, who Steven Krashen referred to as the best teacher he had ever seen, teaches Beginning Mandarin to a room of nearly 300 adults. Follow along and see if it is comprehensible to you.
The end of conference slide show, featuring all of the participants and presenters. Can you FeeL iT? 4 minutes

Additional videos from iFLT will be available at
http://www.Tprstories.com/ijflt/videos

Jason Fritze
Paul Frommer
Steve Krashen
Karen Rowan
Linda Li
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