

A Literature Review of the Effects of Reading on the Development of Skills in a Second Language

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1. Introduction

I attribute my success in second language learning to the reading of literature and am interested in attempting to inspire my students to create their own interest in reading in English. I did my undergraduate in Spanish language and studied for an academic year at the University of Barcelona. In Chicago, prior to that I had had four courses in structure and two at the conversational level in which we read and analyzed unmodified literature from Spain and Latin America. I believe it was reading that enhanced my ability to speak with more fluency, listen with more accuracy, and pronounce with more native-like speech than fellow classmates who did not engage in reading. In addition, the more I read, the easier it was to read and comprehend even complex classic literature. I was also able to learn more about the culture and history of the country in which I was living, as well as other Spanish speaking countries I was interested in traveling to.

Since then I have taken up a third language, Japanese. Although I have not studied Japanese in an institute of higher learning, I did study it with a private tutor for a year and a half upon arriving in Japan and am currently exposed to it aurally every day. I have become aware that the acquisition of reading skill in this language, being orthographically different from English, is a much slower process for me than was Spanish. As a result, I believe, my acquisition of the language as a whole is slower too.

Because these personal experiences have contributed to the formation of my understanding of the second language learning and acquisition process, I have begun to implement reading in my teaching methods. I am increasingly becoming aware, however, that there may be a number of factors involved in the process of language acquisition through reading. Among these are learner's L1, learner's preference for style and strategies for learning, learner's perception of relevance of material, type of text, and genre of text. I am interested in researching what effects, positive or negative, reading in an L2 can have on adult ESL/EFL learners' whole language acquisition and what the factors that contribute to optimal enhancement may be.

In addition, I hope to accumulate evidence that supports my understanding of the benefits of reading in order to convince, as it were, my students of its power. I have students who avidly read in their L1s but do not consider themselves 'fluent' enough to read in English. I am

empathetic, in a way, to those students whose language is orthographically different. However, I do believe practice relieves any initial strains this difference may bring after time.

In a study designed to investigate reasons why language learners do not take advantage of reading, Krashen and Kim (1997) interviewed 5 Korean women ESL learners, all dedicated readers in their native language but who had not considered reading as a means of developing their competence in English. According to the authors, the interviews revealed that because the learners had studied English as a foreign language in Korea where emphasis was on grammar rules and drills, they had not developed enough confidence in their English ability to attempt to read in the language. Reading in English meant a laborious, time-consuming task in grammar translation. More than likely, the unfortunate EFL teaching situation in Korea is paralleled in more countries of Asia than this one, thereby possibly resulting in larger numbers of EFL/ESL learners with the same reluctance to read in English. One participant said she did not think reading would help her ability to speak English and therefore gave it no regard. The authors concluded by suggesting ways to turn nonreaders into readers.

The authors cited Krashen's findings (Krashen, 1993) that those who read have larger vocabularies, do better on tests of grammar, write better, and spell better. This notion is cited in many of the articles I read that are reviewed in the following sections. However, I also review some articles on the effect reading has on some of these areas which show conflicting results to those of Krashen's.

2. Reading and Second Language Learning

To the best of my knowledge, Elley and Mangubhai's (1983) study is the only one that tries to focus on the effects reading has on the whole of language learning. The participants were 380 4th and 5th grade students in the rural areas of the Fiji Islands. The students were randomly assigned to one of three treatments for 8 1/2 months. The Shared Book Experience Method was one in which the teacher read a researcher-provided, high-interest, illustrated story book 2-3 times to the students, discussed it, and did follow-up activities. In the Silent Reading Method, the students were provided with the same story books that were attractively displayed in the room and dedicated 20-30 minutes a day to silently reading a book of their choice. There were no follow-up exercises, activities, or book reports. The third group was the control group. This group continued with the traditional audio-lingual style program in which graded readers were used to consolidate structures and vocabulary taught previously in an oral lesson. The participants were pre-tested and post-tested on reading comprehension, listening, structure,

composition, oral repetition, and word recognition.

The results showed that the students of the book flood groups improved greatly in all areas of L2 acquisition where the students of the control group did not. In addition, they found no significant difference between the two book flood groups, contrary to their hypothesis. Their general reading comprehension skill, listening comprehension, and English structure improved at over twice the normal rate. Word recognition and oral sentence tests showed higher but insignificant gains. Overall, receptive skills were more affected than productive skills. However, in a one-year follow-up study, productive skills had also improved.

This study is quite dated and appears to be in opposition to the then widely used audio-lingual approaches. In spite of this, many subsequent articles on the effects of reading on second language acquisition refer to Elley and Mangubhai's monumental study. However, I think the field could benefit from a similar study conducted in the present time and circumstances in which a control group without additional high-interest illustrated story books would not be subjected to reading merely for the purpose of presentation of target structure, as was done in the days of audio-lingual methods. How would the results change if different reading treatments were compared with a control group being taught in a more communicative way? My speculation is that students presented with reading material to be read for pleasure would approach it in a more holistic way, thereby garnering benefits from reading similar to those gained by their counterparts in the book flood groups.

The study appears to be fairly methodologically sound, given its magnitude. There were areas, however, that were rather loosely controlled. The teachers were trained in the book flood methods at the onset by the researchers. There was no follow-up training or monitoring of the classes after the study began, however. The authors mentioned that in a couple of the classes, the teachers actually chose not to teach in the way instructed, and at least one of the teachers in the control group taught in a way similar to the book flood groups by bringing in her own books and reading them to her students. In addition, teachers quit and new teachers were brought into at least five classes during the period of the study, a common occurrence in the rural areas of such a poor country. The authors mentioned the possible impact this change could have had on the study and the progress of the students themselves. However, the rural areas of Fiji were chosen for the ease of controlling for out-of-classroom influence of English on these ESL learners' progress in acquisition. I believe conducting a study in this way is becoming increasingly more difficult in this globalized world.

3. Reading and Listening

Lund (1991), noting the paradox connecting reading and listening as being one in which listening is present in almost all approaches to language teaching while reading has attracted all the research efforts, conducted a study comparing listening and reading recall among 60 beginning and intermediate college German students at Brigham Young University. Half the participants listened to a tape once and the others read the text once. They were allowed to do the recall in their native language (English) in order to be able to report their comprehension more easily. They were given five minutes to write as many main ideas and details as possible. Then they were given the same treatment one more time to test the effects of repetition. Scoring was done by matching the propositions and lexical items in the recall protocols with a hierarchical model of logical organization adapted from Meyer.

The results showed that the readers of both beginning and intermediate groups recalled more in quantity than the listeners. Repetition helped the readers more than the listeners, except in the more proficient students where readers and listeners improved equally. As far as quality, readers recalled more proportions and details at every level of the hierarchy, but listeners recalled more main ideas while at the same time producing more erroneous, idiosyncratic, and creative constructs for the text. Lund attributed this to the listeners' reliance on top-down processing. Lund concludes by saying that this evidence supports a flexible model of comprehension which states that learners will approach the comprehension task differently depending on the modality in which the text is received. Therefore, he says, differentiated instructional techniques are required for each separate modality that develops on different schedules.

Lund presented this study in a very coherent way. He thoroughly explained the procedures and protocol in a way that was easy to understand, and his methodology appeared to be quite sound. He set out to determine if reading research should automatically transfer to listening or if listening is a set of skills in its own right. I believe he met his goal.

He suggests that teachers use reading to help students improve on listening skills by doing a listening-reading-listening order technique. Written script in between can boost the students to a higher level of listening practice. A follow-up listening chance should be given to help learners recognize acoustically what they already comprehend in print.

Lund's assumptions going into the study were that these would be, in effect, two different modalities. He quoted Walker (1976) as saying that "the listener may know what the speaker meant; but the reader better knows what the author wrote.", which led him to the flexible model of comprehension. This model differs from the conflicting unitary and dual models of old. The

following review, however, tends toward a more unitary explanation.

Hirai (1999) also tested the relationship between listening and reading. However, she was more interested in studying the rates at which 56 Japanese EFL learners of varying proficiencies performed in these skills. She measured the listening and reading rates (LR and RR) based on Carver's (1981, 1990) "rauding theory", which basically states that the most efficient reading will be done when a reader reads a passage that is below their proficiency level at their normal speed. Accuracy of comprehension, more than 75% of ideas, declines as the rate of reading increases. Comprehension was measured by means of a cloze test and multiple-choice question test.

Only half of the participants could be used in the results because the other half could not comprehend the listening passage with greater than 75% accuracy. Hirai found that there was a close relationship between proficiency, LR, and RR of the more proficient students (those whose results could be used) but not of those of less proficiency. More proficient learners could read faster and listen at a faster rate than less proficient learners. Learners who could read faster could comprehend a faster speech rate than slower learners. Hirai concluded from these results that the cognitive processes involved in listening and reading share the same route at some point and/or that they are highly interactive.

I believe Hirai, however, already had this assumption going into the study and that her claim may be a bit circular. She cited much literature supporting the claim that the cognitive processes involved in both were quite similar. Her literature review was, on the other hand, quite extensive. She included articles, all very thorough in their presentation and from many areas of the field; speech processing, eye movement, phonological recoding hypothesis. Her methodology was also quite technical and presented thoroughly. She did note one limitation the measuring of comprehension with a set of only eight multiple choice questions might have on the use of the study. I find it interesting, however, that the results were similar to those of Lund's study in terms of less proficient students having much more difficulty comprehending listening than reading, but that they both used two different theories of the relationship between the two modalities to explain their results.

On the other hand, both attributed the difficulties of the less proficient students in listening to their lack of phonological knowledge of the L2. Lund commented that, in listening, cognates have a much greater chance of not being recognized because of any phonological deviation. Birch (2007) also asserts that EFL/ESL learners, in order to develop an ability to aurally discriminate sounds with automaticity, need a thorough understanding of English phonemes. Hirai acknowledged this incomplete phonological knowledge as evidenced from the results in which the students graphically recognized a word they failed to recognize phonologically. She explains that

subvocalization, even with an inaccurate phonological system, is a secondary source of information about the word. She cited Hardyck (1968) as saying that it is an involuntary stimulus input which all learners use as the difficulty level of the information to be processed increases.

Hirai goes on to suggest that once a certain level of proficiency has been reached, learners' comprehension in both listening and reading may improve to the same degree regardless of which modality is most frequented. However, listening appears to be a skill that is more difficult to acquire than reading for beginners. The question I am left with is, given this, could reading at the beginning level hinder the development of listening fluency if there is a possibility that phonological recoding becomes, in a sense, fossilized? If true, could findings in this area support the inclusion of more direct, native-like phonological instruction in reading and speaking in the EFL setting? According to Birch, it is important to clarify that what is needed to enhance listening acquisition is an awareness of phonemes rather than an ability to perfectly pronounce their allophones.

4. Reading and Writing

Tsang (1996) compared the effects of reading and writing on writing performance in a study conducted on 144 Cantonese-speaking students from grades 7-10 in Hong Kong. Tsang's rationale for the study was that if an input-based extensive program yielded better or equivalent effects on writing performance than output-based frequent writing assignments, the former may be preferred by teachers since it is an activity that can be carried out independently of the teacher and requires no teacher editorial time. Tsang noted in the research he cited that, although most would agree to the positive contributions of input and output in second language acquisition, there was still an on-going debate whether academic language abilities could best be enhanced by additional writing or wide reading.

The participants were randomly assigned, within their own grade levels, to one of three treatment groups in which they stayed for a period of 24 weeks: a reading program in which the students were required to read 8 books of any genre and complete 8 review forms graded on details and persuasiveness, a writing program in which the students were given 8 essay-writing tasks graded impressionistically, and a control group in which students attended their regular English program plus unrelated enrichment (mathematics).

The results showed that the reading program exhibited significant gains in content and language use and an overall improvement of the quality of descriptive writing than either of the other two programs. In fact, the writing program with minimal feedback did not show any

significant gain in descriptive writing.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis highly motivated Tsang's study. He cited Krashen on several occasions using Krashen's notions to refute findings from other studies. This made me leery at first that too much emphasis on the importance of Krashen's words might somehow bias the interpretation of the results of this study. However, Tsang cited Krashen's review (Krashen, 1989) as indicating that learners acquire vocabulary and spelling from reading, and then noted that his own study showed a contradiction to this since the reading group showed no gain in organization, vocabulary or mechanics. Tsang pointed out that lack of improvement in vocabulary might be attributable to book selection, to the need for multiple exposures to the new words, or to the L2 proficiency of the participants.

The study was methodologically quite sound I believe, and Tsang seems fair and honest in discussing his findings and shortcomings of the study, one of which stated that it was constrained by its focus on intralingual input without investigating interlingual transfer, which also influences L2 literacy. As for the generalizability of this study to second language acquisition research, these participants were described by Tsang as Cantonese speakers and learners of English as an auxiliary language since it was during the period when English was a co-official language of Hong Kong and used as a medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary institutions, thus preventing the use of the term foreign language. Tsang admits that this factor may render the study too specific to the Hong Kong situation to be of great use elsewhere. Also specific to the Hong Kong area are the teaching styles. If we are to compare the programs implemented in this study to other programs, I think we would have to compare it only to those writing programs that give minimal feedback (every 3 weeks). How would more teacher feedback in all 3 programs have affected the results or have affected the all-round improvement in writing, not just in content and language use? In addition, the writing program tested only for quality of descriptive writing. How would a change in target writing style, i.e. expository, narrative, persuasive, have differed? The following 2 studies focus a little more on the effects of difference of genre.

This study resulted in findings that are in contrast to Tsang's. Hedgcock and Atkinson (1993) compared two studies designed to measure the effects of overall and genre-specific extensive reading habits on the results of a school-based expository writing test. The first study was done with 157 university students who were native English speakers. The second one involved 115 intermediate and advanced level ESL students of a writing course in the same university. The participants completed a questionnaire about their English language reading habits. From this, 14 potential predictors of English expository writing performance were perceived. They varied in

genre, age (of participants in past reading history), and frequency of time spent reading each kind of genre at each age.

The results of the L1 study indicated that expository writing proficiency is significantly related to the 14 reading habits and related, but not strongly, to 3 genre-specific reading habits: frequency of elementary fiction and textbook reading and frequency of university fiction reading. The authors concluded that writing proficiency can be partly accounted for by reading experience, even in the early school years.

The L2 study yielded no significant results. Since this study was closely related to the L1 study, the researchers called for a need for theoretical explanation of the results. They conclude by saying that the contrasting results suggest that exposure to written texts may have little impact on nonnative expository writing proficiency.

The authors noted that the findings of their two studies cannot be accounted for by any construct that assumes that L1 and L2 literacy acquisition involve the same basic processes. They named Cummins' (1981) CALP, Heath's (1986) transferable generic literacies, and Krashen's (1984, 1988) reading hypothesis. The authors noted the complexity of L2 literacy acquisition, and contrasted it from L1 in that L2 learners have well-developed L1 literacy skills and may not have yet fully mastered oral L2 competence.

The authors admit that the results might also indicate that the methodology they used is not sufficient to measure such an impact. I agree that the use of a questionnaire, however extensive, is always susceptible to participant dishonesty or inaccuracy in self-perception, among other areas. The authors end by suggesting that further research in the area of native and nonnative literacy development comparisons is needed to more accurately understand the complexity of the relationship.

Carrell and Connor's study (1991) was designed to determine the relationship between the reading and writing of both persuasive and descriptive texts of intermediate-level ESL students, while controlling for both proficiency and educational levels. The participants were 23 undergraduate and 10 graduate students in Purdue's ESL program. Their proficiency levels were determined by their TOEFL scores and Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency which were required for admission. Each participant, on 4 different occasions, wrote first a descriptive essay, then read a descriptive reading, then wrote a persuasive essay, and finally read a persuasive reading. The researchers controlled for effects of reading a genre on writing in that genre.

The results showed that reading in either genre as measured by free written recalls is related to writing in the genre as measured by holistic scales, with significant correlation occurring in the persuasive genre. Participants with higher language proficiency performed significantly

better on persuasive texts than those of lower, but not on descriptive texts. In addition, educational level did not directly correspond to proficiency level.

The idea of the importance of educational level on the results may have been taken from Shanahan (1984, 1987), who did studies on the reading-writing relationship in L1. His results showed that the relationship changes with reading development in elementary school children. Carrell's previous studies (1985, 1987, 1988) were cited as having showed that explicitly teaching rhetorical structure and organization in ESL reading facilitates writing. However, they added that no studies to date had attempted to address the influence of specific aims of reading texts and writing tasks. They quoted Carlson and Bridgeman (1986) as emphasizing the importance of considering the writing task in order to judge the quality of writing. Then they included Carlson and Bridgeman's survey of faculty members that intended to find out the writing task demands in postsecondary academic settings, which is how Carrel and Connor chose descriptive and persuasive for their study.

The authors caution against generalizing some results of this study since it is a first one of its kind. I commend, however, their pioneering inclusion of genre as a factor in discussing the relationship of reading and writing. On a similar note, some of the following studies look at types of text and manipulation of them.

5. Effects of types of text

Yano, Long, and Ross (1994) studied the relative effectiveness of pure simplification and pure elaboration of written passages on second language learners' reading comprehension. There were 483 Japanese EFL learners of varied proficiency. They used 13 passages of varying lengths and thematic areas. In the simplified versions, length of sentences, multi-syllabic words, and embedded clauses were kept to a minimum. Paranthetic paraphrasing or definitions of low-frequency words were included in the elaborated versions. A third unmodified version was also disseminated to the randomly assigned participants. Reading comprehension was tested with 1-4 comprehension questions for each passage asking for replication, synthesis, or inference.

The results showed that the readers of the simplified version scored higher than those of the elaborated version, with the unmodified group doing worst. Interestingly, readers of the simplified version did best on the replicative items, but those who read the elaborated version scored highest on inference items. Results of the synthesis items differed insignificantly.

The authors concluded that as an accidental by-product of the elaboration process, the passage turned out to be one grade level higher in readability, 16% more dense in words, and 60% longer than unmodified passages. This resulted highly disadvantageous to these readers as they were

given the same amount of time to complete the reading. On the other hand, readers of this version still did better on every comprehension question item than those of the unmodified version.

In the introduction to the study, the authors advocated the use of elaborated texts as opposed to the more typical and commercially produced simplified versions as the latter make use of more controlled vocabularies and simple structure which may aid in comprehension of text but not in acquisition of language. In contrast, elaborated versions more closely parallel what goes on in foreigner speech of native speakers to non-natives. It appears that foreigner talk, like elaborated texts, employs the use of more conversational adjustments than linguistic adjustments, affecting both the content and interactional structure.

This study, however, tested the comprehensibility of the differing texts, not their effect on language acquisition, making the orientation of the research confusing. The methodology is questionable in the area of comprehensibility in that only a maximum of four multiple-choice comprehension questions probably do not adequately measure comprehension of text. As far as the generalizability, I do not believe that testing only Japanese speakers in an EFL context deems the findings of this study indicative of all foreign language learners as the authors indicated.

6. Reading and Vocabulary

Another way to manipulate reading material is by adding vocabulary glosses in the margin. Hulstijn, Hollander and Greidanus (1996) looked at the influence of such an addition on incidental vocabulary learning compared to dictionary use when both treatments were combined with reoccurrence of unknown words. The participants were 78 Dutch speakers learning French in a university, all with 6 years of previous instruction in French. The text was an adapted narrative short story by de Maupassant containing many low frequency words. There were 16 target words; 8 appearing three times and 8 appearing once. Participants were unaware of the purpose of the study so as to promote conditions conducive to incidental learning. They were randomly assigned to a text with glosses, the dictionary use group, or the control group, and tested in 3 post-tests on word recognition, pre-knowledge of word, and knowledge of the definition of a target word when given in context.

The results of the word recognition test showed that all three groups recognized more of the target words that appeared three times than those that appeared once. For incidental vocabulary learning, the group provided with marginal glosses performed higher than the other two groups, which did not vary significantly between them. The main reason for this was the low incidence of

dictionary use in the dictionary group (12%). However, when the dictionary was referred to, retention scores for those items were higher than in the marginal gloss group.

The authors cited research that suggests that meaning inferred yields higher retention than meaning given. In spite of this, they claim the results of their study are consistent with previous research because these participants were not forced to make inferences and participants in previous studies were forced to. In this study, participants simply ignored words if they did not deem them essential to the understanding of the text. The authors concluded that students will only look up or infer meaning of unknown words when they perceive the word to be relevant, are intrigued by it, or when the word keeps turning up in the text, all of which are consistent with previous research on the given areas.

I think the authors met their goal of exploring how incidental vocabulary learning can be improved. Their presentation was coherent and thorough. They found that, although there is no doubt that reading is conducive to vocabulary building, learners must pay attention to form-meaning relationships while reading in order for incidental as well as intentional vocabulary acquisition to take place. Motivation to learn new vocabulary words is key to higher dictionary use, which is in turn connected to retention of word meanings.

Birch (2007) concludes the same when she states that readers who skip over words they do not know do not acquire them and often times do not fully comprehend the texts in which they were found. She confirms the strong connection between short-term reading comprehension strategy and long-term vocabulary building. Interestingly, she also asserts that the better able readers are to approach an unknown word using analogy to known spelling patterns that exist in the storage of words in their mental lexicon, the better they have shown to retain the new word. Although cyclical, the finding that a larger mental lexicon may facilitate better word retention seems to explain my feeling that the more I read in my L2, the easier reading became.

One question I had while reading this article is in the possible effects change in genre of the text read might have on the results. In the discussion, in fact, the authors mentioned that this would be a good area for future exploration. They acknowledged that the structure of propositions often varies among genre. They suggested that this difference may elicit more shallow and deep ways of word processing by the reader, thereby affecting retention. Similarly, it would be interesting to see what different effects dialogue-laden fiction versus expository texts have on the acquisition and retention of not only certain lexical items but pragmatics and discourse competence as well.

In another study on second language vocabulary learning, Wesche and Paribakht (2000) had interest in examining how reading practice interacts with vocabulary development. They wanted

to find out how different tasks promote different kinds of lexical learning and how learners deal with unfamiliar words while reading. They tested 10 intermediate ESL students of mixed L1s using the concurrent think-aloud method, immediate retrospective and delayed retrospective techniques. The participants read an article on acid rain and did 8 vocabulary exercises that varied in the kind of activity required, ranging from selective attention to guided production.

The results showed that acquisition of lexical knowledge was evidenced in their statements and correct usage of the target words. Seven types of word knowledge could be retained by them at least temporarily. Participant behavior with unfamiliar words was primarily determined by the requirements of the given task. Most participants worked from the principle of minimal effort rather than follow the specific directions of the task, which occasionally asked them to reread the passage.

I believe the researchers found ways in which different vocabulary exercises might promote passive acquisition of target words, but none of the exercises asked the participants to actually produce the words actively from nothing but memory. Another weak point is the use of only 10 participants. No mention of any effect the difference of participant L1 might have had on the results was made, and some of the participants came from orthographically different languages.

The literature cited in the beginning of the article coincides with the comments made by the authors of the previously reviewed article above. Reading may lead to the ability to recognize a large number of words in context but not to the ability to use them correctly or productively. However, no mention of the effects type of text might have on comprehension or vocabulary acquisition was made, unlike in the previous article. Actually, comprehension of text was not even tested for in this study.

Overall, I found this study of little significance to the study of lexical acquisition through reading. The methodology failed to give substantial evidence of word learning gains. This is something addressed in the following article.

Horst and Meara (1999) came up with a model for predicting second language lexical growth through reading and tested it in this study. The authors criticized previous research in this area for producing findings that are too small to analyze in detail and for failing to relate performance to any predictive or explanatory model. As a result, very little can be said about the characteristics of texts that facilitate incidental learning, the kinds of learners who succeed at it, or the quality of their word knowledge. The authors recommended that these problems be addressed by increasing the length of text and using more sophisticated testing.

They did so in an experiment of a single learner of Dutch who they had read an extended illustrated text once a week for eight weeks. A Matrix Model, developed by Meara was outlined

in the article and used in the study. The model is based on the idea that acquisition of a lexical item moves on a continuum of states of absolute knowledge to absolute lack of knowledge. The method consists of five steps; testing the learner's knowledge before the treatment, after the treatment, calculating a matrix, predicting the distribution of words through the states as calculated by the matrix and knowledge after the treatment. The participant was tested on knowledge of 300 words by ranking them on a scale from definitely don't know, not really sure, think I know, definitely know. A subsequent check requiring the participant to translate to English the words that he claimed to definitely know showed that he did in fact know over 90% of them.

The results showed that the overall word knowledge gained by the eighth reading was almost three times that of his pretest results. The profile suggested that if the participant were continuously exposed, gains would continue but would become smaller. The long-term prediction produced results that showed that an equilibrium state, in which acquisition and attrition balance out stable gains, would be reached after 16 repetitions of text. The prediction made for the eighth reading results was 236 definitely known and the participant assigned 223 to this category.

The design of model was interesting and well founded as can be seen from the critique of the previous review. However, the study is quite impractical as it cannot be applicable to typical classroom procedures and restraints. It is probably safe to say that there exists no student who has or even is willing to read a text eight times. The authors address this by saying, however, that the students are expected to encounter the same words repeatedly. I would argue that encountering the words in different contexts is pertinent and important to acquisition. My question is that, given that students typically encounter the same words in different contexts, which is assumed to facilitate comprehension and thus retention, and not eight times in the same text, how might the results of the study have differed if different texts were used that included the same target words?

The authors suggest that teachers find ways to motivate students to read a text at least two times since the participant in this study had more words move into the definitely known category after the second reading than any other reading. They did not, however, give the attrition rate after the second reading. Nor did they test the long-term effects of reading a text a second time.

Finally the limitations of the study are quite large. The participant is only one and he is 52 years old, self-defined as having high aptitude for language learning. (He knows several European languages.) The text is also unique in that it is illustrated. The participant acknowledged that on very many occasions, the pictures were what helped him understand

meaning more than context of sentence. These factors are not common enough to make this study applicable to ESL learners or SLA on the whole.

7. Conclusion

I have learned here that many important factors surround the area of reading. Reading high-interest, illustrated storybooks was an effective way for elementary school ESL students to improve their reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and English structure in a non-English speaking country. The consensus is still out on the nature of the relationship between listening and reading, but it is pretty much accepted that listening is more difficult than reading for beginners, possibly due to their phonological recoding dependencies coupled with inadequate understanding of the English phoneme system. In terms of the effect reading has on writing, reading seems to improve on writing but this may depend on the genre read and the genre in which writing is to be conducted. Manipulation of text may be effective depending on the area one wishes to improve on: i.e. reading for comprehension only as opposed to reading for linguistic gains in all areas. On the same token, vocabulary acquisition may not necessarily occur as a simple by-product of reading. Students may have to put actual effort into the learning of lexical items while reading in order to retain them. In which case, dictionary consultation might prove more effective than marginal glosses, and illustrations, even for adults, could garner the best results.

In spite of all this knowledge gained, I still feel there are gaps in the connection between reading and second language acquisition as a whole. I sense there is a strong connection between reading, listening, pronunciation, and speaking. The insights into phonological recoding I gained here have furthered my intrigue about the effects reading can have on pronunciation. I can distinctly remember the moment in which I decidedly changed my subvocalization to be more native-like in Spanish and the improvements in output that were to bear as a result. If reading could possibly have any negative effects on acquisition, I believe it is in the area of phonological recoding that it emerges. The studies here, while touching on the subject, do not shed enough light on it.

Continuing in the area of speech, I would like to note that none of the literature reviewed here discussed anything about the role reading may play in the acquisition of discourse rules and pragmatics. In the study by Lund comparing L2 listening and reading comprehension, the inclusion of two voices on the listening was the factor that most confused the participants of the listening treatment. They invented all kinds of idiosyncracies to explain their relationship when it was actually a male narrator and a female monologue. The readers had no problem with this

since they had the advantage of quotation marks. This is what led Lund to recommend the listening-reading-listening model for teaching. But, it also shows how reading facilitated in the understanding of the relationship and narration, where listening alone did not.

On that note, listening in this review was approached in terms of comprehension in comparison to reading. I still do not have empirical evidence that shows me that reading facilitates listening. I assume that it does, as long as phonological recoding does not enter as an interference and/or the proficiency level of the student is intermediate or beyond, as was indicated in Hirai's study.

In terms of vocabulary acquisition, I believe too many of the studies that test vocabulary acquisition through reading test only passive vocabulary acquisition and not active. Barring assigning a passage to be read eight times, what are the conditions under which vocabulary items learned incidentally or intentionally from reading pass from being receptively comprehended to productively used?

Therefore, I still see a need in the field to conduct a study along the same lines as Elley and Mangubhai's, in a theoretically, methodologically current and expanded way. I would like to see the results when tested in both an ESL and EFL setting, with adults, and with texts of varying genres and in varying degrees of manipulation. Perhaps the use of a Matrix model like the one developed by Meara could be beneficial. In any case, some kind of sound model is needed to accurately measure gains in listening comprehension, writing, speech (pronunciation, discourse strategy/pragmatics, syntax), vocabulary (receptive and productive), and reading comprehension in a way that would make the findings harmoniously interpretable and relevant to other studies in a wide array of fields.

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A Literature Review of the Effects of Reading on the Development of Skills in a Second Language

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Abstract

Participants of a study designed to investigate reasons why language learners do not take advantage of reading revealed that because too much emphasis was placed on grammar rules and drills in their EFL classes, they had not developed enough confidence in their English ability to attempt to read in the language (Krashen and Kim, 1997). Yet, other research indicates that reading can greatly enhance a learner's vocabulary growth, grammar comprehension, spelling and composition (Krashen, 1993) as well as receptive skills (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983) at a rate twice that which results from a curriculum which does not include reading.

Because it has become apparent that L2 learners need more evidence to be convinced of the benefits of reading, a literature review was done on the effects, positive or negative, reading in an L2 can have on adult ESL/EFL learners' whole language acquisition. Factors which contribute to optimal enhancement of all skills are outlined in order to determine the best pedagogical choices for implementing a reading program in an English language curriculum. A number of factors involved in the process of language acquisition through reading are examined, among these are learner's L1, learner's preference for style and strategies for learning, learner's perception of relevance of material, type of text, and genre of text. Areas where research is needed are suggested.