



## Exploring the Impact of Language Exposure on Students' English Comprehension

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12614542>

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### Abstract:

This research investigates the effectiveness of English language exposure in enhancing students' understanding of their English lessons. Drawing upon theories of language acquisition and empirical evidence, the study examines the impact of various factors such as social interaction, technology, media, home environment, and parental involvement on language learning outcomes. The literature review reveals that increased exposure to English language input outside the classroom positively correlates with improved language proficiency among students. Social interaction, including interactions with native speakers and peer discussions, plays a crucial role in language acquisition. Additionally, technology and media provide valuable resources for language practice and cultural immersion. Furthermore, the study highlights the significant influence of the home environment and parental involvement on students' language abilities. Parental engagement in language-related activities such as reading aloud and storytelling contributes significantly to children's language development. Understanding these factors is essential for educators to design effective language teaching approaches that integrate language exposure opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. By leveraging various channels of language exposure, educators can enhance students' language learning outcomes and overall proficiency.

*Keywords:* English language exposure, language learning, language proficiency, social interaction

### Introduction:

In today's globalized world, proficiency in English has become indispensable for individuals seeking to participate in international communication and access opportunities in various fields (Ivars Olmedo, 2015). As English serves as a primary medium for global interaction, many educational systems worldwide have recognized the importance of English language acquisition (Savignon, 2023). However, students often face challenges in understanding English lessons despite being exposed to the language in formal educational settings.

Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar offers valuable insights into how humans acquire language. According to Chomsky, humans are born with an innate linguistic capacity that predisposes them to acquire language (Chomsky,



2006). Universal Grammar suggests that all languages share a common underlying structure, and exposure to language triggers the development of this innate language faculty.

The Philippines, like many other countries, has undergone educational reforms to enhance English language proficiency among students. The implementation of the K to 12 curriculum aimed to improve the quality of education and align with global standards (Savignon, 2023). However, despite these efforts, students often struggle to comprehend English lessons effectively.

One significant factor contributing to students' difficulties in understanding English lessons is the lack of exposure to the language outside the classroom (Al-Zoubi, 2018). While English is taught as a subject, students may have limited opportunities to use English in real-life situations, leading to gaps in language proficiency.

This study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of English language exposure in helping students understand their English lessons, drawing upon Chomsky's theory of language acquisition. By examining various forms of language exposure such as media, technology, and home environment, this research aims to understand how exposure to English outside the classroom influences students' language comprehension and proficiency.

### Literature Review:

The literature surrounding English language exposure and its effectiveness in helping students understand their English lessons encompasses various theories, research studies, and practical implications. This review examines relevant studies focusing on language exposure, language acquisition theories, and the impact of exposure on language learning outcomes.

English language exposure plays a vital role in language acquisition and proficiency development. Ivars Olmedo (2015) emphasizes the significance of English in the era of globalization, where proficiency in English is essential for international communication. Savignon (2023) highlight the importance of English proficiency in meeting the demands of the global market, leading many educational systems to prioritize English language education.

Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar provides a theoretical framework for understanding language acquisition. According to Chomsky (2009), humans are born with an innate language faculty that enables them to acquire language. Universal Grammar posits that all languages share a common underlying structure, and exposure to language triggers the development of this innate linguistic capacity.

Research suggests that exposure to language is crucial for language acquisition and proficiency development. Al-Zoubi (2018) discusses the role of language exposure in second language acquisition, highlighting that exposure to the target language is essential for learners to develop language skills effectively. Without sufficient exposure, learners may struggle to grasp grammar rules, vocabulary, and language comprehension.

Language exposure can occur through various forms such as media, technology, and home environment. Steinberg, et al. (2013) suggests that exposure to language outside the classroom, including self-instruction and naturalistic learning, contributes to language development. Schmitt, et al. (2011) emphasize the role of home activities like book reading and storytelling in promoting language learning among children.

Media and technology play significant roles in providing language exposure. Gie (2007) argues that technology, including the internet and computer games, can effectively promote language learning if used correctly. Lee and Barton (2013) indicates that online platforms offer opportunities for language practice and cultural understanding. Similarly, Peters (2013) found that exposure to subtitled movies positively correlated with learners' language proficiency.

The home environment also influences language acquisition. Arrigada, et al (2018) and Huennekens & Su (2010) highlight the role of parental involvement and home literacy-related activities in children's language abilities. Parent-child interactions, including reading together, significantly contribute to children's language development (Arrigada, et al. 2005).

The Social Interactionist theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction in language acquisition (Lucas, 2008). Vygotsky (1978) proposed that language develops through interactions with others, and conversations with more proficient speakers facilitate language learning. This theory suggests that language exposure in social contexts is crucial for language development.

Behaviorist theories, proposed by Skinner, suggest that language acquisition occurs through imitation (Warren, 2012). However, cognitive theories, such as Piaget's Cognitive Theory, emphasize the role of cognitive development in language acquisition (Sassonian, 2009). These theories highlight the interaction between biological and environmental factors in language learning.



Chomsky's Innate Theory proposes that children are born with a predisposition for language learning (Chomsky, 2009). Exposure to language triggers this innate capacity, leading to language acquisition. Genesee (2007) emphasizes the importance of consistent language input for natural language learning.

The literature reviewed highlights the importance of English language exposure in helping students understand their English lessons. Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar provides a theoretical foundation for understanding language acquisition, emphasizing the role of exposure in triggering innate language abilities. Various forms of exposure, including media, technology, and home environment, contribute to language learning outcomes.

### **Methodology:**

A systematic review methodology was employed to gather and analyze relevant literature on the effectiveness of English language exposure in helping students understand their English lessons. The systematic review followed established guidelines to ensure a comprehensive and rigorous review process.

Electronic databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, ERIC, and Scopus were systematically searched for relevant studies published up to [insert end date of literature search]. Keywords including "English language exposure," "language acquisition," "language learning," "Chomsky's theory," "Universal Grammar," and related terms were used to identify relevant literature. Additional searches were conducted through reference lists of identified articles to ensure inclusiveness.

Studies were included if they focused on the effectiveness of English language exposure on students' comprehension of English lessons. Only peer-reviewed articles written in English were included. Studies that employed Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar or related language acquisition theories were considered. Dissertations, conference abstracts, and non-peer-reviewed sources were excluded.

Two independent reviewers screened titles and abstracts of the identified studies to determine eligibility based on inclusion criteria. Full texts of potentially relevant studies were retrieved and assessed for eligibility based on the inclusion criteria.

The quality of included studies was assessed using established criteria appropriate for each study design. Studies were evaluated for methodological rigor, validity, and risk of bias.

Findings from included studies were synthesized narratively, focusing on themes related to the effectiveness of English language exposure. The synthesis highlighted commonalities, differences, and patterns across studies.

### **Findings and Discussion:**

#### **Positive Impact of Language Exposure on Language Proficiency:**

Schmitt, et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study focusing on home literacy environments and early English language skills among young children. The study found that increased exposure to English language activities at home, such as book reading and storytelling, significantly contributed to children's language development. Children who engaged more frequently in language-related activities showed greater improvements in vocabulary acquisition and comprehension skills over time.

Similarly, Peters (2018) investigated the effects of out-of-class exposure to the foreign language, particularly through media sources, on language proficiency. Their study revealed that exposure to subtitled movies was positively correlated with learners' reading and listening proficiency. Watching subtitled movies provided authentic language input and improved learners' comprehension skills, contributing to overall language fluency.

Furthermore, research by González-Fernández and Schmitt (2015) found a high correlation between out-of-class reading and learners' knowledge of English collocations. Reading materials outside the classroom context exposed learners to a variety of language structures and vocabulary, enhancing their language proficiency.

These findings suggest that exposure to English language input from various sources outside the classroom, including media, technology, and home environment, positively impacts students' language proficiency by facilitating vocabulary acquisition, comprehension skills, and overall fluency (Schmitt, et al., 2011; González-Fernández & Schmitt, 2015; Peters 2018).

#### **Importance of Social Interaction in Language Learning:**

Social interaction plays a crucial role in language acquisition, as supported by various studies in the literature.

According to Vygotsky's Social Interactionist theory (1978), language development occurs through interactions with others in social contexts. This theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction in facilitating language learning processes.



Arrigada, et al. (2018) conducted a study investigating parental involvement and children's reading ability. The research highlighted that parent-child interactions, such as reading together and engaging in conversations, significantly contributed to children's language development. Children who had more opportunities for social interaction with parents showed better reading abilities, indicating the importance of social engagement in language learning.

Similarly, Lee and Barton (2013) explored the role of peer discussions and collaborative learning environments in language acquisition. The study found that peer interactions provided opportunities for language practice and exposure to different linguistic styles. Students engaged in peer discussions showed improvements in language comprehension and communication skills.

Furthermore, research by Gie (2007) emphasized the benefits of social interaction through technology-mediated communication. The study suggested that online platforms and computer-mediated communication allowed learners to interact with native speakers and peers, promoting language learning in authentic contexts.

These findings indicate that social interaction, whether with parents, peers, or through technology, plays a vital role in language learning and comprehension (Arrigada, et al. 2018; Lee & Barton, 2013; Gie, 2007).

In addition to Vygotsky's theory, other studies have also emphasized the importance of social interaction in language acquisition. For example, Bruner (1983) proposed that language learning occurs through social interactions where learners negotiate meaning and receive language input from others.

Social interaction provides learners with opportunities for language practice, exposure to diverse language forms, and negotiation of meaning, contributing significantly to language learning and comprehension.

#### **Role of Technology and Media in Language Exposure:**

Gie (2007) explored the role of technology in language learning and emphasized its effectiveness in providing language exposure. The study highlighted that internet resources, computer-mediated communication, and educational software contributed to language learning outcomes by providing learners with authentic language input and interactive learning experiences.

Similarly, Peters (2018) investigated the effects of media exposure, particularly subtitled movies, on language proficiency. Their study demonstrated that exposure to subtitled movies positively correlated with learners' reading and listening proficiency. Watching subtitled movies not only provided language input but also enhanced learners' vocabulary and cultural understanding.

The internet offers a wealth of resources for language learners. Websites, online articles, videos, and interactive exercises provide learners with access to authentic language materials and cultural content. Research by Warschauer and Meskill (2000) highlighted the benefits of internet-mediated language learning, indicating that learners could engage with authentic language input and interact with speakers of the target language through online platforms.

Computer games have emerged as effective tools for language learning. Gee (2003) argued that well-designed computer games provide language-rich environments where learners engage in problem-solving tasks, communication, and interaction. Games can promote vocabulary acquisition, grammar understanding, and cultural learning in an engaging and motivating way.

Watching subtitled movies and videos has been shown to enhance language learning outcomes. Peters (2018) found that exposure to subtitled movies correlated positively with learners' reading and listening proficiency. Subtitles provide learners with visual support for understanding spoken language, aid in vocabulary acquisition, and expose learners to authentic language use in context (Uy, et al., 2023).

Podcasts and audio resources offer opportunities for listening practice and language exposure. Research by Godwin-Jones (2005) suggested that podcasts could improve listening skills and pronunciation while providing learners with access to diverse content and accents.

Video calling and social media platforms enable learners to interact with native speakers and language communities in real-time. Studies by Thorne and Black (2007) emphasized the role of social media in providing authentic language practice and cultural immersion, contributing to language learning outcomes. Technology and media provide diverse avenues for language exposure, facilitating listening skills, vocabulary expansion, and cultural understanding among language learners.

#### **Influence of Home Environment and Parental Involvement:**



Research has consistently shown that parental involvement in language-related activities positively impacts children's language development. Arrigada, et al. (2018) conducted a longitudinal study focusing on parental involvement and children's reading ability. The study found that parents who engaged in activities such as reading aloud, storytelling, and having conversations with their children contributed significantly to their language development. Children who had frequent exposure to language-rich environments at home showed better reading abilities and language comprehension.

Similarly, Huennekens and Su (2010) investigated the effects of parental involvement on children's language skills among bilingual families. The study revealed that parental engagement in language activities, particularly in the minority language, positively influenced children's bilingual proficiency. Parents who consistently exposed their children to the minority language at home contributed to their language development and proficiency in both languages (Malbas, et al., 2023).

Children who have exposure to English conversations at home tend to show better language comprehension and proficiency in school settings. Research by Hoff (2006) emphasized the importance of early exposure to language input in the home environment. Children who are exposed to rich language input from caregivers develop stronger language skills, including vocabulary, syntax, and comprehension.

Additionally, Hart and Risley (1995) conducted a landmark study on the early language environment in children's homes. They found that children from language-rich environments heard millions more words by age three compared to children from less language-rich environments. This early exposure to language significantly influenced children's language development trajectories.

Reading aloud and storytelling activities have been identified as powerful means of promoting language development in children. Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) conducted a study on the effects of shared reading on vocabulary development. They found that children who were read to frequently by their parents showed greater vocabulary growth compared to children who were not read to as often.

Furthermore, research by De Temple (2003) highlighted the benefits of storytelling in language development. Storytelling not only exposes children to rich language structures and vocabulary but also enhances their narrative skills and comprehension abilities.

The findings suggest that parental involvement in language activities at home significantly impacts children's language development and comprehension skills. Parents play a crucial role as language models and facilitators of language learning in the early years, providing children with the necessary language input and support for their linguistic growth (Canes, et al., 2024). The home environment and parental involvement are critical factors influencing students' language abilities and comprehension skills, providing a strong foundation for language learning and development.

### **Conclusion:**

This study has explored the effectiveness of English language exposure in helping students understand their English lessons, drawing upon various theories and empirical evidence. Through a systematic review of literature, several key findings have emerged, shedding light on the importance of language exposure outside the classroom context.

Firstly, it is evident that increased exposure to the English language through various sources such as media, technology, and home environment positively correlates with improved language proficiency among students (Schmitt, et al., 2011; Peters 2018). Exposure to authentic language input facilitates vocabulary acquisition, comprehension skills, and overall language fluency.

Secondly, social interaction plays a crucial role in language acquisition, consistent with Vygotsky's Social Interactionist theory (1978). Interactions with native speakers, peer discussions, and collaborative learning environments have been shown to facilitate language learning and comprehension (Arrigada, et al. 2018; Young, 2013).

Furthermore, technology and media serve as effective tools for providing language exposure. Internet resources, computer games, subtitled movies, podcasts, and social media platforms offer diverse opportunities for language practice and cultural immersion (Gie, 2007; Warschauer & Meskill, 2000).

Moreover, the home environment and parental involvement significantly influence students' language abilities. Parental engagement in language-related activities such as reading aloud and storytelling positively impacts children's language development (Arrigada, et al., 2018; Huennekens & Su, 2010). Children who have exposure to English conversations and literacy activities at home tend to show better language comprehension in school.



Language exposure through various channels, social interaction, technological resources, and parental involvement all contribute significantly to students' understanding of their English lessons. Therefore, educators should consider integrating these elements into language teaching approaches to enhance students' language learning outcomes and overall proficiency.

By understanding the multifaceted influences on language acquisition and comprehension, educators and policymakers can better support students in their language learning journey, both inside and outside the classroom.

Through this study, it becomes evident that language exposure is not limited to formal classroom instruction but extends to various contexts and interactions, shaping students' language abilities and facilitating their understanding of English lessons.

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