

## Language Acquisition: The Importance of Reading

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**Abstract:** The article aims to explore the significance of reading in language acquisition. Story-Reading and Free Voluntary Reading approaches are discussed in this article.

**Keywords:** Story-Listening, reading activities, comic books, comprehend, literacy development

### I. INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition is the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language (in other words, gain the ability to be aware of language and to understand it), as well as to produce and use words and sentences to communicate [1]. Language acquisition is a complex process that begins at an early age and continues throughout our lives. It involves the development of various skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading is an integral part of this process as it exposes individuals to new vocabulary, grammatical structures, and language patterns. By immersing themselves in written text, learners cultivate a deeper understanding of language and expand their linguistic abilities. By engaging in reading activities, individuals can enhance their language skills through exposure to new words, sentence structures, and concepts. This exposure serves as a valuable source of language input that can be effectively applied in various contexts. For example, reading aids in improving listening proficiency by expanding vocabulary, as a limited understanding of words often impedes comprehension of listening texts. Moreover, it facilitates comprehension of how words and grammar are used in actual situations. Additionally, as texts typically follow a structure, reading can also foster the development of writing abilities.

### II. METHODS

In introductory language courses, the approach of Story-Listening has shown significant success. In this method, teachers narrate engaging stories of widespread appeal, making them understandable through the use of drawings, gestures, and occasional translation. Students are not required to study new words from the stories; rather, they are encouraged to focus on understanding and enjoying the narrative. It seems that additional vocabulary exercises are not as beneficial as the simple act of hearing another story. Following one or two semesters of listening to stories, the next phase involves guided self-selected reading. Here, an abundance of captivating and understandable stories is provided, and students are assisted by teachers in choosing books. They start with the easiest level of graded readers, with the ultimate aim being to read "authentic books" intended for native speakers.

Another method is FVR (Free Voluntary Reading). FVR is far more pleasant than the usual kind of schoolwork: students don't have to memorize vocabulary nor do they have to carefully scrutinize notoriously complex grammatical points [2]. FVR allows individuals to choose and read materials of their choice without any external restrictions. This method emphasizes personal enjoyment and self-motivation, providing individuals with the freedom to explore a wide range of texts based on their interests. The obvious advantage of FVR is that it is motivating and

encourages learners to be autonomous language acquirers. Research has demonstrated that FVR has tremendous effects on language development and literacy development [3]. The examples of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) involving light reading materials are comic books, teen romances, teen novels, magazines, and bestsellers — materials commonly consumed by children and adolescents on a daily basis. There are two different ways of gaining knowledge of a language. One way is “acquisition,” a subconscious process. While it is happening, we are not aware it is happening. Also acquired knowledge is stored in our brains subconsciously; we may or may not be able to state “rules” describing what we have acquired. We are very good at acquiring languages. It is something the brain does well [4]. In FVR method, our brain acquires a new language rather than learns it.

### **III. RESULTS**

The research on acquiring a language through reading voluntarily has shown that it is the easiest way of learning a new language. Reading helps learners improve a number of skills. For example, Vocabulary Development: reading provides exposure to a wide range of vocabulary in context, which aids in the acquisition of new words and their proper usage. This exposure to diverse vocabulary enhances the learner's overall language proficiency. Grammar and Syntax: by encountering various sentence structures, grammatical forms, and syntactical patterns in written texts, language learners can internalize the rules and structures of the target language, thereby improving their grammatical competence. Cultural Insight and Context: reading offers insights into the cultural aspects and context of the language being learned. Understanding cultural nuances and conventions is essential for grasping idiomatic expressions and figurative language, contributing to a deeper understanding of the language. Enhanced Comprehension and Critical Thinking Skills: through reading, learners engage in the interpretation and analysis of written material, which fosters critical thinking and analytical skills. This active engagement with textual content enhances comprehension abilities and encourages learners to think critically about the information they encounter.

### **IV. DISCUSSION**

Studies conducted by Stephen Krashen, a prominent figure in the field of second language acquisition, have underlined the significance of FVR in language development. Krashen's "Input Hypothesis" emphasizes exposure to comprehensible input as crucial for language learning[4]. FVR provides learners with the opportunity to engage with a wide range of materials based on their interests, thus promoting a positive attitude towards reading and fostering language acquisition. FVR encourages individuals to explore a variety of materials, including comic books, teen romances, teen novels, and bestsellers.

### **V. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, reading is an essential element in the process of language acquisition. Through regular reading, individuals can enhance their overall language competence and become skilled communicators. Therefore, educators and parents should emphasize the importance of reading in language development and provide ample opportunities for individuals to engage with a variety of texts.

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