



**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE INPUT FOR ENHANCING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL OF RECOUNT TEXT ON MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS**

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the effectiveness of Comprehensible Input and Incomprehensible Input for enhancing English speaking skill of recount text related to gender difference. This study is a quantitative in nature, using an experimental factorial design 2x2. The participants of this study were 129 students of the tenth graders of Computer-Networking Department at State Vocational School 1 Slawi. The students were divided into two groups, experimental group 1 and experimental group 2. Each group consisted of 2 classes. The students of experimental group 1 were given Comprehensible Input in learning speaking skill of recount text and the experimental group 2 were given Incomprehensible Input in learning speaking skill of recount text. This study used random sampling as its sampling technique. The findings of this study show that both comprehensible input and incomprehensible input have significant effect for enhancing speaking skill of recount text regardless of the gender. However, input given for enhancing the speaking skill and student's gender do not have any interactions.

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## INTRODUCTION

People communicate with others by speaking to others in order to get information. Sometimes, they have to communicate with others, who speak different languages. In order to convey their ideas and talk to others, who speak different languages, they must be able to speak an international language as a means of communication. English is one of the international languages, which is spoken globally. Therefore, people are supposed to have appropriate English skills at least in speaking, in order to communicate with others well.

According to Harmer (2001), there are three reasons why people communicate. The first reason is that people communicate because of the fact that they want to say something. It refers to intentional desire the speaker has in order to convey messages to other people. Simply stated, people speak due to the fact that they just do not want to keep silent. The second reason is that people communicate because of the fact that they have some communicative purposes. By having some communicative purposes, it means that the speakers want something to happen for the purpose of what they say. For example, they may express a request if they need a help from other people or they command if they want other people to do something. The third reason is the consequence of the desire to say something and the purpose in conducting communicative activities. There are two important things when people are communicating, namely the message they wish to convey and the effect they want it to have. When people communicate, they will select language expressions in their language storage. The language expressions, which are selected, are spoken in order to convey their messages.

Language learners, as an example of people mentioned before, need to be receptive both to those with whom they are communicating and to the language itself. Language learners also need to be responsive to people and to the context of communication, and willing to place a certain value on the communicative act of interpersonal exchange. The final goal of learning English is

that language learners can use English in a real communication (Brown, 2000).

Regarding the teaching of English in more formal institution, Richards and Rodgers (1999) add that teachers at school use a variety of approaches, namely direct approaches and indirect approaches. Direct approaches focus on specific features of oral interaction. Meanwhile, indirect approaches create conditions for oral interaction through group work, task work, and other strategies. The use of these different approaches also leads to the confusion of which one is the best approach to teach oral skills.

In addition, Krashen (2003: 162) states that a main problem of the second language teaching in the classroom is when the second language teaching is seen as an artificial linguistic environment instead of an attempt to promote real communication. Second language teaching in the classroom may prevent the students from focusing on the meaning of what is said. This condition makes many students will not get so interested in what is being said.

According to the input hypothesis, Krashen's theory of Comprehensible Input is a major causative factor in second language acquisition. It is also the most fundamental approach for the purpose of a learner to understand a language and acquire the language. Therefore, the comprehensibility of the teaching materials is the key. A suitable set of teaching materials for the learners is compulsory.

On the contrary, there are some theories against Krashen's theory in providing the necessary language input for second language acquisition. Those theories are Gass' Comprehended Input (1988), White's Incomprehensible Input (1987), and Swain's Comprehensible Output (1985). One of the theories is White's Incomprehensible Input hypothesis, which highlights the point that the input incomprehensibility or comprehension difficulty can provide important negative feedback to the learner. The input incomprehensibility or comprehension difficulty is necessary for the constitution of second language acquisition (Bahrani, 2013:39).

Learning to speak a second or foreign language is, indeed, not a simple process. As a matter of fact, the students are usually taught speaking by repeating or imitating a conversation model in the textbook as an input at school. This kind of activity, which only gives a conversation model in the textbook, tends to discourage the students in learning speaking.

In relation to gender, it has been claimed that gender differences are caused by a general difference in ability and preferences between male and female for a long time. Maccoby (1990) in van Bemmelen (2009: 4) summarizes the literature related to the factors that cause differences in interactional styles between genders. More specifically, it is argued that a variance in interactional styles among individuals is caused by gender difference. Maccoby concludes that there is no single answer to the question on how much variance is caused by gender.

Regarding to gender differences in performing spoken language, Jong (1977) (in Haas, 1979: 616) states that aspects of form, topic, content, and use of spoken language have been identified as gender associated. Either men or women are more likely to produce specific utterances.

However, Bodine (1975) (in Haas, 1979: 624) argues that there is no evidence that any linguistic features are used exclusively by one gender in our society. Variations have been found only in frequency of production, gender is not the only variable to influence speech style.

In teaching English, there are four important skills. Those are reading, listening, writing and speaking. Among those four skills, there are two differentiations of those skills. There are receptive and productive skills. Speaking, based on Nunan's definition, is considered as one of the productive skills. Nunan (1991: 40) defines that speaking is the same as oral interaction, which are conventional ways of giving information, expressing our ideas, thoughts, or feelings in our mind.

Speaking is regarded as one of the productive skills, besides writing. Some experts define speaking as a process of building and

sharing meaning through the use of verbal or oral form. Furthermore, Brown (2000) defines speaking as the skill in which a person produces utterances, which are observable.

Speaking in a second or foreign language teaching and learning process has been considered as the most challenging of the four skills given the fact that it involves a complex process of constructing meaning (Celce-Murcia, 2001). A requirement for the purpose of the speaker to decide about why, how, and when to communicate depends on the cultural and social context in which the speaking act occurs.

People need to be receptive both to those with whom they are communicating and to the language itself, responsive to persons and to the context of communication, and willing to place a certain value on the communicative act of interpersonal exchange. The final goal of learning English is that language learners can use English in a real communication (Brown, 2000).

In language learning, input is the language data, which the learner is exposed to. It is commonly acknowledged that for the purpose of second language acquisition to take place there must be two prerequisites, namely thesecond language input available to the learners and a set of internal mechanism to account for how second language data are processed (Ellis, 2003).

There are many internal, as well as, external factors, which influence second language acquisition. Among them, the language input that learners receive in second language acquisition is one of the external factors, which plays a fundamental role. Language input refers to what is available to be utilized by language learners for second language acquisition (Corder, 1967 in Bahrani 2013: 34).

Input available to second language learners is the raw data from which they derive both meaning and awareness of the rules and structures of the target language (Chaudron, 1985 in Van Loi and Franken 2010: 63).

Interaction refers to exchanges in which there is some indication that an utterance has not been entirely understood and participants need to interrupt the flow of the conversation in order for both parties to understand what the conversation

is about (Nunan, 2008). Interaction is said to be an attention-drawing device, which means that interaction serves to draw attention to an unknown part of language. Learning may take place during the interaction.

Furthermore, Nunan (2008) adds that negotiation of meaning, which triggers interaction adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition due to the fact that it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways. Through negotiation, a learner's intentional resources may be oriented to a particular discrepancy between what he or she knows with regard to the second language and what the second language really is and an area of the second language about which the learner has little or no information.

The best input is comprehensible, which sometimes means that it needs to be slower and more carefully articulated, using common vocabulary, less slang, and shorter sentences. Optimal input is interesting and/ or relevant and allows the acquirer to focus on the meaning of the message and not on the form of the message. Optimal input is not grammatically sequenced, and a grammatical syllabus should not be used in the language classroom, in part because all students will not be at exactly the same level and because each structure is often only introduced once before moving on to something else.

Krashen (1982) identifies Comprehensible Input as the only causative variable in second language acquisition and argues that in order for second language acquisition to take place, learners must be exposed to Comprehensible Input. Furthermore, Krashen (2003: 6-7) states that language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require any drills of speaking. The input hypothesis says that we acquire by understanding the meaning first, and as a result, we acquire the structure (Krashen 2003: 21).

The input hypothesis is central to all of acquisition, which means that second language acquisition depends on Comprehensible Input. In the classroom, the teacher's main role is to ensure that the learners receive Comprehensible Input by

providing them with listening and reading materials (Krashen, 1985: 2 in Zhang 2009: 92). The input hypothesis makes a claim that may seem quite remarkable to some people to acquire spoken and written fluency not by practicing speaking and writing, but by understanding input by listening and reading (Krashen, 2003: 60). Krashen (2003) adds that real language acquisition develops slowly, while speaking and writing skills emerge significantly later than listening and reading skills, even when conditions are perfect.

Therefore, the best method is that, which supplies Comprehensible Input in low anxiety situations, contains messages that students really want to hear/ read. The method does not force early production in the second language, but allows students to produce when they are ready. It recognizes that enhancement comes from supplying communicative and Comprehensible Input, and not from forcing and correcting production (Krashen 2003: 7).

Krashen (1985) in Van Loi and Franken (2010: 64) sums up three useful features of Comprehensible Input, namely salience, frequency of occurrence, and relevancy to the learner. Furthermore, exposure to an extensive amount of input through extensive listening and reading conceivably promotes second language learning, especially general language proficiency in speaking and writing.

The input hypothesis has also been challenged by many researchers particularly because it has made a large number of claims about the type and the qualitative aspect of the necessary language input in second language acquisition phenomena without providing solid empirical evidence. Furthermore, Krashen's input hypothesis only limits second language acquisition to merely exposure to Comprehensible Input. In fact, although second language researchers and the critics of Krashen's input hypothesis highlight the important role of input in second language acquisition and agree on the fact that language input is a necessary ingredient in second language acquisition, they claim that second language acquisition is not achieved merely through Comprehensible Input.

Other types of language input such as Incomprehensible Input, Comprehended Input, and Comprehensible Output are also considered to enhance the process of second language acquisition through providing the necessary input.

Lydia White (1987) defines the point that it is the input incomprehensibility or comprehension difficulty, which can provide important negative feedback to the learner, which is necessary for the constitution of second language acquisition. When language learners encounter language input that is incomprehensible because, for example, their inter-language rules cannot analyze a particular second language structure, they have to modify those inter-language rules to understand the structure (White, 1987 in Bahrani 2013: 39).

White (1987) in Bahrani (2013: 39) considers the necessity of language input, which is related to second language acquisition. She illustrates that Krashen's theory highlights an importance, which language input has and how acquisition is dependent on the learner. However, there is a need for a hypothesis of a more precise kind. She argues that besides Comprehensible Input, Incomprehensible Input is also vital to second language acquisition. Furthermore, she states that Comprehensible Input cannot cover all aspects of grammar and that at some stage grammatical instruction is necessary.

White (1987) in Kavanagh (2006: 247) emphasizes that Incomprehensible Input is the key as it encourages learners to make hypotheses on the language they are learning. She adds that the point of incomprehensibility or comprehension difficulty in language input, which can provide important negative feedback to the learner, is necessary for second language acquisition. The importance of feedback, particularly as a source of negative evidence, is as a way of elucidating the inadequacy of learners' own rule systems. By this, she means that modifications to language, which is triggered by something incomprehensible, become the impetus for learners to recognize the inadequacy of their own rule system.

In brief, White (1987) in Bahrani (2013: 39) argues that when language learners encounter language input that is incomprehensible because their inter-language rules cannot analyze a particular second language structure, they have to modify those inter-language rules to understand the structure. Thus, comprehension difficulty can provide important negative feedback to the learner. In this way, the Incomprehensible Input enhances the process of second language acquisition.

It can be concluded from what White (1987) in Bahrani (2013: 39) has put forth in relation to Comprehensible Input and Incomprehensible Input that when an aspect of the language input is comprehensible, the acquisition of the missing structures would not occur. In fact, the incomprehensibility of some aspects of the given language input to the language learners draws their attention to specific features to be acquired.

"Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus" is one of famous proverbs to distinguish genders. The metaphor suggests that the differences between genders are so enormous that men and women seem to be from different planets.

Gender is usually differentiated as male and female. For a long time, it has been claimed that gender differences were caused by a general difference in some abilities possessed by both genders. Many researches have done trying to answer the question whether those abilities vary between both genders. The differences of men and women are based on a stereotype found in the society. However, many academic studies have yielded little or no evidence of statistically significant differences between the speaking style of men and women. Other studies that have found gender-related differences have been countered by other studies with opposing results.

With regard to gender, some experts believe that there are many significant differences among individuals' speaking skills based on their gender. Some studies reveal that oral production of males is consistently below that of females. In fact, males and females tend to view interaction differently because of their point of view that they

might have. It is critical to address this perception, because of the fact that they contribute to expectations and behaviours that flow from these assumptions. Jong (1977) in Haas (1979: 616) states that aspects of form, topic, content, and use of spoken language have been identified as gender associated. Either men or women are more likely to produce specific utterances.

However, the evidence for inherent gender differences in speaking is not convincing. Bodine (1975) in Haas (1979: 624) argues that there is no evidence that any linguistic features are used exclusively by one gender in our society. Variations have been found only in frequency of production, gender is not the only variable to influence speech style.

## METHOD

This study was an experimental research with factorial design study. This study aimed to investigate the cause and effect between independent and dependent variables by giving certain treatment to the Experimental Group 1 and giving different treatment to the Experimental Group 2 as the comparison. Furthermore, Gay (2011: 272) states that experimental research with factorial design study is an elaboration of single-variable experimental design to permit investigation of two or more variables, at least one of which is manipulated by the researcher.

A population is any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common, which are interesting (Best, 1998). Population in this study was the whole population of the tenth graders of Computer-Networking Department, which was nearly homogenous in speaking skill. The population was X Computer-Networking 1, which consisted of 32 students, X Computer-Networking 2, which consisted of 32 students, X Computer-Networking 3, which consisted of 32 students, and X Computer-Networking 4, consisted of 33 students.

This study used random sampling technique in determining the sample. Some male and female students from each class were selected

randomly as its sample. The sample was not taken equally for each class. It was taken randomly in order to be able to be calculated statistically.

The data was in the form of students' scores. The scores were obtained after pre-test and post-test being conducted. The data was in the form of oral presentation score of the students.

Before implementing the treatments, the pre-test for the students was conducted. It was in the form of oral presentation of recount text. The assessment for the pre-test was based on a speaking rubric of oral presentation.

After implementing the treatments, the post-test for the students was conducted. It was in the form of oral presentation of recount text. The assessment for the post-test was based on a speaking rubric of oral presentation.

The data collected was the students' pre-test and post-test scores. The assessment was done by the researcher and one of speaking club tutor of State Vocational School 1 Slawi. The tutor was appointed by the English teacher. It was done to get inter-rater reliability in assessing the students' speaking skill.

Data analysis is the process of analysing data, which has been collected. The data, here, is related to the research conducted, namely the data of pre-test and post-test. Both tests were in the form of oral presentation, which were measured by a speaking rubric. The data was analysed to see how significant was the difference of students' achievement taught by using Comprehensible Input and Incomprehensible Input.

In this study, the step of analysing the data started from selecting the sample randomly from each class. After that, the sample was divided into two groups based on the inputs given and the genders. The groups were Comprehensible Input – male and female and Incomprehensible Input – male and female. Then the pre-test and the post-test score of each sample were processed by Univariate analysis to find out mean, median, minimum and maximum score, and also standard deviation.

The next step was the normality test of the data. It was calculated by one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to see whether the data has normal distribution or not. The test was done twice. The first was to calculate the pre-test for both inputs given and also both genders to see whether the pre-test data has normal distribution or not. The second was to calculate the post-test for both inputs given and also both genders to see whether the post-test data has normal distribution or not. After being calculated, the P value of both pre-test and post-test then was compared to the  $\alpha$  0.05. If the P value is higher than  $\alpha$ , it indicates that, the data has normal distribution. Meanwhile, if the P value is lower than  $\alpha$ , it indicates that the data does not have normal distribution.

The third step was the homogeneity test of the data. It was used Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variance to see whether the data is homogeneous or not. The test was done twice. The first was for the pre-test. The second was for the post-test. Both tests were done to both groups. After being calculated, the P value of both pre-test and post-test then was compared to  $\alpha$  0.05. If the P value is higher than  $\alpha$ , it indicates that, the data is homogeneous. Meanwhile, if the P value is lower than  $\alpha$ , it indicates that the data is not homogeneous.

The last step was the calculation to answer the statements of the problem and to see which hypothesis is accepted or rejected. The first four statements of the problem ask whether a certain input is effective to a certain gender or not. It was calculated by paired t-test, which compared t-count to t-table. If the t-count is higher than the t-table, it means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Meanwhile, if the t-count is lower than the t-table, it means that the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

The next two statements of the problem ask whether a certain input is effective to both genders or not. It was calculated by independent t-test, which also compared t-count to t-table. If the t-count is higher than the t-table, it means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Meanwhile, if the t-count is lower than the t-table, it means that the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

The last statement of the problem asks whether there is an interaction among input, speaking skill, and gender or not. It was calculated by factorial design 2x2 with ANOVA analysis. Null hypothesis is rejected if F- count is lower than F- table, which means that the alternative hypothesis is accepted and vice versa.

The table for summarizing factorial design 2x2 with ANOVA analysis is as follows.

After the result is known, it can be seen whether there is significant difference between the Experimental Group 1 and the Experimental Group 2 taught by using Comprehensible Input and Incomprehensible Input for enhancing their speaking skill or not and their correlation with the students' gender.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study is to find out the effectiveness of Comprehensible Input and Incomprehensible Input in teaching speaking of recount text for male and female students at Vocational School 1 Slawi.

**Table 1.** Factorial Design 2x2 with ANOVA Analysis

Source of Variance	Sum Square	df	Mean Square	F-count	F-table
Between Columns					
Between Rows					
Columns by Rows					
Between Groups					
Within Groups					
Total					

The study was conducted in two groups, namely Experimental Group 1 using Comprehensible Input and Experimental Group 2 using Incomprehensible Input in teaching speaking of recount text. Each group had two classes, namely X Computer-Networking 3 and 4 as the Experimental Group 1 and X Computer-Networking 1 and 2 as the Experimental Group 2.

The main difference between Krashen's Comprehensible Input and White's Incomprehensible Input reflects in the treatments of the two groups. Krashen's Comprehensible Input focuses on the statement, which states that production ability emerges, not taught directly (Krashen, 1985: 2 in Zhang 2009: 92). Meanwhile, White's Incomprehensible Input focuses on the statement, which states that the incomprehensibility of some aspects of the given language input to the language learners draws their attention to specific features to be acquired (White 1987 in Bahrani 2013: 39).

The result in the post-test was better than the pre-test. The pre-test and post-test were similar, meaning that Comprehensible Input and Incomprehensible Input had enhanced students speaking skill. Therefore, it can be concluded that both inputs had significant effect for enhancing the students' speaking skill on recount text.

The result of both pre-test and post-test show that all the data has normal distribution. The data analysis is done by using One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test.

From both tests using Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variance, it can be seen that each variance of the data is homogeneous because the P values of the pre-test and post-test are higher than  $\alpha$ .

To summarize the first four statements of the problem, it can be stated that both input, i.e. Comprehensible Input and Incomprehensible Input, had effect for enhancing English speaking skill of recount text. However, because of the similar result range, the cause of the students' English speaking skill of recount text enhancement is not easily found out.

To summarize the fifth and the sixth statements of the problem, it can be stated that both input, i.e. Comprehensible Input and Incomprehensible Input, had similar effect statistically on both genders. It meant that the enhancement could not be significantly differentiated for a certain gender, because both genders were affected similarly by the inputs.

To summarize the last statement of the problem, it can be stated by considering the first six statements of the problem. The first four statements of the problem state that both inputs had effect for enhancing the students' English speaking skill of recount text. The fifth and the sixth statements of the problem state that the effect of both inputs was not significantly different statistically on both genders. It can be concluded that there was no significant interaction among the three variables by looking at the cause and effect in the first six statements of the problem. There was interaction between inputs and students' speaking skill. However, the gender variable did not interact with inputs and students' speaking skill.

From the whole result, it can be stated that actually there is enhancement of students' speaking skill of recount text. As we could see that actually Comprehensible Input had effect on male, as well as, female students. Incomprehensible Input also had effect on male, as well as, female students. However, the enhancement of the students' speaking skill of recount text cannot be concluded as the result of gender's difference since both genders enhance their speaking skill. Therefore, it is still questioned whether gender influences the speaking skill or not. Furthermore, the speaking skill enhancement is not significant statistically since the range is not high enough. It is related to the nature of speaking skill that it is one of productive skills, which a learner has to acquire. In reference to Krashen (1982), speaking is an acquisition, which means that it is influenced by some other factors to be acquired. It means that the enhancement of speaking skill cannot be seen directly and instantly. It needs time to acquire speaking skill.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are as follows.

(1)The first finding indicates that teaching speaking skill of recount text on male students treated using Comprehensible Input is effective. (2)The second finding indicates that teaching speaking skill of recount text on female students treated using Comprehensible Input is effective. (3)The third finding indicates that teaching speaking skill of recount text on male students treated using Incomprehensible Input is effective. (4) The fourth finding indicates that teaching speaking skill of recount text on female students treated using Incomprehensible Input is effective. (5)The fifth finding indicates that teaching speaking skill of recount text on male and female students treated using Comprehensible Input is not effective. (6) The sixth finding indicates that teaching speaking skill of recount text on male and female students treated using Incomprehensible Input is not effective. (7) The seventh finding indicates that there is no interaction among input, speaking, and students' gender.

It can be concluded that different inputs actually have different effect for enhancing students' speaking skill of recount text. Meanwhile, gender difference cannot be considered to have effect in students' speaking skill. Generally, speaking skill should be acquired by a learner, which means that it needs time and continuous practice.

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