

The Application Of Krashen's Hypothesis In Teaching Speaking In Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the application of Krashen's Input Hypothesis ($i + 1$) in enhancing elementary school students' speaking skills through verb-based learning. The focus is to examine how comprehensible input supports the acquisition of English verbs and their use in simple sentences. The research employed a descriptive qualitative design involving 27 third grade students at SD Manggala Palembang. Data were gathered through observation, interviews, and speaking performance tasks. Findings indicate that when students were first introduced to verbs through songs and actions (e.g., run, jump, sing) and later guided to use them in sentences (e.g., "We are running", "My teacher is teaching English"), their confidence and fluency improved significantly. The study concludes that Krashen's Input Hypothesis effectively promotes natural speaking development by offering meaningful, understandable, and enjoyable language exposure.

Kata Kunci: *Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Speaking, Verb Learning, Elementary School, Comprehensible Input*

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching English to young learners is a challenging yet rewarding process that requires patience, creativity, and the ability to make learning meaningful. In many Indonesian elementary schools, English is introduced as a foreign language, where students often face difficulty speaking due to limited exposure and a focus on rote memorization rather than real communication (Hermansyah, Jaya, & Rosmiyati, 2021). Young learners do not learn languages effectively through grammar drills but rather through experiences that are fun, contextual, and emotionally engaging (Cameron, 2001; Shin & Crandall, 2020).

Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how children acquire language naturally. Krashen argues that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to input that is comprehensible but slightly beyond their current level of competence, referred to as $i + 1$. In this way, students understand most of what they hear while simultaneously being challenged by new linguistic elements.

In Indonesia, many English teachers still focus heavily on repetition, translation, and memorization, which often demotivates students and limits their speaking opportunities (Jaya & Mortini, 2023). By contrast, applying the $i + 1$ approach encourages teachers to use visual aids, gestures, real-life context, and games to make learning both comprehensible and enjoyable.

Previous studies have shown that interactive learning activities such as songs, storytelling, and Total Physical Response allow children to absorb new vocabulary naturally (Miao, 2022; Zulfa et al., 2023). However, few studies have examined how Krashen's hypothesis can be effectively applied in Indonesian elementary school speaking lessons focused on verbs and sentence formation. Therefore, this study aims to bridge that gap by applying Krashen's Input Hypothesis in speaking classes to improve students' confidence and fluency through a two-stage learning process: (1) verb learning and (2) sentence construction.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design that aimed to describe the implementation of Krashen's Input Hypothesis in speaking instruction and to examine its effects on students' oral performance and learning motivation. The research was conducted at SD Manggala Palembang, specifically in class 3b, which consisted of 27 students aged between eight and nine years old. The class included both male and female students who were learning English as a foreign language. English lessons in this school were scheduled twice a week, with each meeting lasting approximately seventy minutes. The participants were selected purposively based on their consistent attendance and active engagement during the English learning process.

The teaching process was carried out in two stages over a period of six meetings. In the first stage, the students were introduced to a set of ten common action verbs such as *run, jump, sing, play, eat, read, write, dance, swim, and walk*. These verbs were taught through engaging and interactive activities involving Total Physical Response (TPR), visual aids, songs, and gestures. The purpose of this stage was to provide comprehensible input that allowed students to associate words with real-life actions and contexts. Through repetition and meaningful exposure, students began to understand the meaning of each verb without direct translation.

In the second stage, students were guided to construct short sentences using the verbs they had learned. The teacher modeled simple sentences such as "*We are learning English,*" "*My teacher is teaching,*" and "*I am running.*" Students practiced forming and saying these sentences through fun and communicative classroom activities, including role-plays, storytelling, and group games. The teacher's role was to facilitate understanding, provide feedback, and ensure that the language input remained at the students' $i + 1$ level slightly beyond what they could already comprehend thus promoting natural language acquisition.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi structured interviews, and students' speaking performance tests. Observations were used to record students' participation, comprehension, and reactions toward each activity. Interviews were conducted with both the students and the classroom teacher to explore their perceptions of the teaching approach. The speaking test assessed pronunciation, fluency, and grammatical accuracy after the intervention. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively following the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Emerging themes related to motivation, understanding, and speaking improvement were identified and interpreted according to Krashen's theoretical framework on comprehensible input.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results show that the application of Krashen's Input Hypothesis significantly improved students' speaking confidence and vocabulary mastery. In the first stage, students were initially hesitant and often used L1 (Bahasa Indonesia). However, after exposure to comprehensible input through actions and songs, they began to respond naturally in English. By the third meeting, students could pronounce most verbs correctly and demonstrate understanding through physical response.

In the second stage, students' speaking production increased dramatically. Before the intervention, only 9 students (33%) could form grammatically correct sentences. After the six sessions, 24 students (89%) produced correct and fluent sentences. Pronunciation and sentence structure accuracy improved, and students began initiating speech voluntarily during games.

Observation notes also indicated higher motivation levels. Students frequently asked for repetition of songs and activities, showing intrinsic enjoyment of learning. These results align with Krashen's theory that acquisition happens when input is understandable, engaging, and emotionally safe (Krashen, 1982).

The findings correspond with Miao (2022) and Shin & Crandall (2020), who emphasized that children acquire speaking skills best through fun, contextual exposure rather than formal instruction. Moreover, the study supports Jaya and Mortini (2023), who found that student-centered learning fosters autonomy and language fluency.

These results demonstrate that $i + 1$ is not only theoretical but also practical for elementary classrooms in Indonesia. By gradually increasing language complexity, teachers can ensure progress

without overwhelming students. This approach also complements the national curriculum's communicative goals, which encourage meaningful learning and active student participation.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that applying Krashen's Input Hypothesis ($i + 1$) in elementary speaking instruction effectively enhances students' ability to understand and produce English naturally. The gradual transition from verb recognition to sentence construction fosters fluency, confidence, and motivation. Lessons designed with comprehensible input help children acquire language unconsciously and enjoyably.

Teachers are encouraged to create environments where input is understandable and meaningful using gestures, visuals, storytelling, and songs. This study reinforces that effective English learning should prioritize natural acquisition over grammatical memorization. Future research may extend this work by integrating digital media or AI-based tools with Krashen's hypothesis to further enhance young learners' speaking proficiency.

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