

INPUT TYPE EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' WRITTEN NARRATIVE RESPONSES

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Abstract

This pilot study examines the differences of second language learners' written responses when they are given two different input types with similar content. One input was through written narrative or visual only input, where the learners need to read, and the other was a performed narrative or audio-visual input, where learners need to watch. Learners were then required to respond to the input by completing the narratives. Results showed that there were no major discrepancies in terms of complete/incomplete storylines, length, and number of dialogues, but revealed that the audio-visual input influenced learners more as their responses have a stronger correspondence to the traits in the performance rather than the written narrative.

Keywords: input, written narrative, drama performance, second language learner

Introduction

There are undoubtedly many methods to teach a language. These methods can vary in the forms of input type, which in turn may affect learner response. For instance, Morrow (1988) found that young children who often listen to story readings are better in responding and asking questions compared with those who do not. Narratives is one type of input for language teaching. Narratives can be in written form (reading text), audio form (stories that are listened to), or audio-visual form (e.g., drama, play).

Drama has been extensively used in classroom teaching. Belliveau's (2007) study on a drama-based approach to teaching showed that learners found drama to be a fun way of learning. Students were also found to be more motivated to learn. Belliveau, however, only examined student and teacher responses when performing a drama and not their responses whilst watching a drama. Still, it gives the idea that the insertion of drama into language teaching and learning can be beneficial to both teachers and students. One teacher was quoted as saying, "My teaching style was ... greatly affected ... from talents that I never knew I had" (p. 58). Belliveau's (2007) study showed a similar result with Bernal's (2007) study. Bernal (2007) also used drama to teach English to second language learners with positive results.