

# English Enlightenment Education Strategies for 3-6-year-olds Based on Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory

Aiwa Bai <sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Shaanxi Pre-school Normal University, Xi'an 710100, Shaanxi Province, China

\* Corresponding Author.

**Abstract.** For the sake of economic development and two-way cultural exchange, China has vigorously trained English talents. The age of 3-6 is the golden age of human language development. In this period, if we use good English enlightenment strategies, it will promote the development of children's English language ability and lay a good foundation for their later English learning. Accordingly, we use Krashen's second language acquisition theory to construct children's English enlightenment strategies, including the choice and utilization of resources and practical communication.

**Keywords:** Krashen; Second Language Acquisition; Young Children; English Enlightenment.

## I. THE PRESENT SITUATION OF ENGLISH ENLIGHTENMENT FOR CHILDREN

The present situation of English Enlightenment for Chinese children is not optimistic. First, parents rely too much on English training institutions. Most parents entrust the task of enlightening children's English to English training institutions. During the period of 3-6 years of age, parents feel secure in sending their children to training institutions for specialized English learning. However, over the past two years, children have mastered a little English vocabulary, and their English language expression ability has not improved much. It is still difficult for them to communicate in daily life. Not to mention the high cost, the most painful thing is to let children lose interest in English, hate English classes, and reject learning English. Secondly, kindergarten English teachers lack the enlightenment concept. Preschool English teachers are the guiders, organizers and resource providers of preschool English learning. The concept, thinking and professional competence of preschool English teachers directly affect children's English competence. The reality is that most kindergarten teachers' English teaching is monotonous in form and content, practicing words and sentences, still staying in the traditional English teaching mode, and children have little interest in English learning.

## II. SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY

The second language acquisition theory includes five hypotheses: acquisition/acquisition hypothesis, natural order hypothesis, monitoring hypothesis, input hypothesis and affective filtering hypothesis. Input Hypothesis is the core of Krashen's Language Acquisition Theory. He believes that acquisition can only occur when the learner is exposed to "comprehensible language input", that is, a second language input slightly higher than his current language skill level, and he can concentrate on the understanding of meaning or information rather than on the understanding of form. This is his famous  $i+1$  formula,  $I$  represents the current level of the learner, and  $I+1$  represents language materials slightly higher than the current level of the learner. This input of  $I+1$  must be comprehensible in meaning. If the input of language is comprehensible and enough input is guaranteed, then  $I+1$  will be provided to the learner automatically, and the language structure will be acquired naturally. The Input Hypothesis also emphasizes that language competence is not taught, but naturally formed over time through exposure to a large number of comprehensible inputs. Krashen believes that the ideal input has the following characteristics: (1) comprehensibility, and understanding the input language material is

comprehensible to the learner. (2) It is both interesting and relevant. The more interesting and relevant the input materials are, the learners will acquire the language unconsciously. (3) Non-grammatical procedural arrangements, if the purpose is "acquisition" rather than "acquisition", are not only unnecessary, but also undesirable. (4) It is not enough to have enough input and acquire new language structures only by taking a few lessons a week. It requires continuous extensive reading and a large number of conversations to be effective.

### **III. ENLIGHTENMENT EDUCATION STRATEGIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN'S ENGLISH**

Krashen's second language acquisition theory has important theoretical guiding significance for children's English enlightenment education. In children's English enlightenment, the language materials provided to children should be understandable, not too easy, nor too difficult; at the same time, the language materials should be interesting and relevant, in line with the characteristics of children's physical and mental development. More importantly, there must be enough input. Language output can only be achieved through continuous practice and internalization on the basis of strengthening the input of corpus. Parents and teachers should try their best to create a relaxed and natural English context for young children and cultivate their interest in English.

#### **3.1 Selection of Enlightenment Resources**

Early childhood is the key period for the development of image thinking. Therefore, parents and teachers must select the enlightenment resources for children visually and intuitively. English original picture books and animation are undoubtedly the best choice. The choice of picture books and animations should be based on children's cognitive level and interests. In the primary stage of enlightenment, children need more pictures and fewer words. If the content and text are too difficult, they will be excluded if they exceed their cognitive level. If they are not interested in the English resources they come into contact with, it will also affect the validity of input, because interest is the guarantee of intrinsic motivation. Parents and children's English teachers pay attention to observing their children's interests and help them choose the materials they are interested in. For example, if children like trains, they can find the original version of "Chuggington" and the original picture book with trains appearing. If they like airplanes, they can find "Super Wings" and the original picture book with airplanes appearing. If they like cars, they can find "Robocar Poli". If they like popular science, they can find "Let's Read and Find Out Science". Interest is the external expression of internal development stage. Interesting books and videos are very important to stimulate children's interest. The choice of English enlightenment resources should consider children's emotional factors, capture the internal driving force of children's interest, and help children form internal construction.

#### **3.2 Utilization of Audiovisual and Reading Resources**

After choosing the resources, parents or kindergarten teachers should read the original picture book together with children, and listen to the original audio, which plays a very important role in children's mastery of English rhythm, rhythm and language sense. According to children's acceptance, the number of picture books to read is determined. Watching animated cartoons should choose the appropriate length according to the age of children. It is not recommended to watch animated cartoons under the age of three. It will hurt children's eyes greatly. In the age of 3-4, animated cartoons can be selected for 5 minutes per episode, one episode per day, one episode per day at the age of 4-5, and one episode per day at the age of 5-6. 0-20 minutes animation, one episode a day. Whether it is picture books or animation, children will naturally carry out scene correspondence, need to adhere to every day, strengthen children's understanding of language, accumulate listening reserves. The original animation can immerse children in a natural language environment. There are many authentic and authentic expressions in the animation. The pictures and audio are carried out at the same time. Children are easy to correspond to situations and acquire these languages naturally. Audio English picture books can provide children with the most authentic language environment, children through pictures and words, sentences for situational correspondence. Krashen emphasized that only by inputting enough quantity can we learn a language successfully. Language learning is based on the rules of perceiving language, understanding language and using language. Therefore, the

foundation of English enlightenment is to accumulate listening comprehension by perceiving a large number of English speech signals.

The basic rules of listening development are: the ability to distinguish sounds, understand and remember. Based on this, we can repeat the audio of picture books and animations that have been read and watched to children, so that those understandable language materials can be absorbed and memorized by children. Nursery rhymes and children's songs are also the best training materials. Children's songs are the language art that children first perceive. Children's songs contain beautiful rhythm and rhythm. They are unconscious activities and children's mental games. They are often listened to repeatedly. They play an important role in improving children's English phonetic discrimination ability and cultivating good language sense. Children in the Enlightenment period need to go through a period of silence. Krashen believes that the period of silence is a very necessary period for learners to build up their language competence. During the period of silence, children improve their language ability by "listening" comprehensible language input. After a certain accumulation of "listening", to a certain stage, children will break the silence, say a word, and have a qualitative leap.

Krashen believes that learners' emotional factors have an impact on the absorption of input information. The barrier to language appears in the human brain, which makes learners often unable to understand the accepted input information. If a learner learns a second language in an anxious state, the higher his emotional barrier, the less language input he receives, and vice versa. At the age of two and a half, the author intervened in the original English nursery rhyme, the original English animation and the original English picture book at the age of three. Audio, video and picture book reading were carried out at the same time. When choosing resources, the author respected the characteristics of the children, when using resources, he respected the wishes of the children, and the whole process was relaxed and happy for the children. The emotional barrier is low and the acquisition efficiency is high. After two years of listening, at the age of four and a half, children can blurt out stories improvised in English, rich language expression, pronunciation, intonation, rhythm processing is very good. Secondly, in the process of interactive learning with young children, we should encourage them with affirmative words to enhance their language self-confidence. Parents and kindergarten teachers should patiently insist on input and wait for flowers to blossom.

### 3.3 Necessity of Communication

Language is a tool of communication. If there is no communication, only passive listening, reading and reading, children's English ability will not be greatly improved. If reading picture books, listening to audio and watching video are input of listening, then communication is output. When a child expresses and communicates, he will actively mobilize the organization of language and make natural output. While communicating, children not only exercise language expression and thought transmission, but also listen to the thoughts of the interlocutors. Therefore, in the two-way process of output and input in communication, children's language ability will be greatly developed in this process. The author and the children communicate in English every day. The children express strong willingness, double self-confidence and make faster progress.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Like any language, there are rules to follow in English acquisition and learning. If we master the rules of English acquisition and learning well, we can get twice the result with half the effort, otherwise, we can get twice the result with half the effort. Like any adult, children also have their physical and mental development characteristics and cognitive characteristics. If we make good use of these characteristics, we can master English as well. Half the effort. Due to the limitations of cognitive and psychological development, children will not actively access resources. In addition, English learning needs long-term persistence. Enlightenment education of children's English is not only in school, but also in the family, which needs the combination of home and school. Home and school should follow the law of children's growth and development, use appropriate methods to ignite children's interest in English language and its culture, so that children can learn and learn in a relaxed and happy way, improve their English ability, and lay a good foundation for the cultivation of Chinese English talents.

## References

1. Chen Xiao. Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition [J]. Time Literature, 2014, (07). (In Chinese)
2. Wang Pan. The Enlightenment of Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory on English Teaching [J]. Chongqing and the World, 2012, (12). (In Chinese)
3. Jin Ying. A Brief Analysis of Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Cognitive Research on Second Language Acquisition [J]. Journal of Northeast Agricultural University, 2017, (04). (In Chinese)

---

*This paper is the research result of the project "New Path of English Enlightenment Education for Preschool Children Aged 3-6" funded by the Research Center for Preschool Education Development of Shaanxi Pre-school Normal University from 2017 to 2018. The project number is JD2017S1.*