



# Effortless English

## Validation

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<http://www.effortlessenglish.libsyn.com>

**stacked:** piled, on top of each other

**glance over:** look at quickly

**scores:** results, numbers

**pre-test:** a test given before a class (or other experience)

**post-test:** a test given after a class (or other experience)

**the course of:** the time of; the length of

**drawn to:** attracted to

**dramatically more:** much more

**a big jump:** a large improvement

**traditional:** usual; normal; old

**approach:** way of doing something

**harangued:** tried to convince; tried to persuade; repeatedly talked about something

**took my advice:** did what I suggested

**The Linguist:** [www.thelinguist.com](http://www.thelinguist.com)

**faithfully:** with belief and confidence

**adolescent novels:** books for children aged 12-14

**jargon:** special vocabulary for a specific job or field

**exceptional:** amazing, great

**input:** information that comes in (ie. reading and listening)

**the bulk of:** most of

**analysis:** carefully looking at the details of something

**analyzing:** studying the pieces of the language.

**drills:** repeated practice actions

I'm sitting at the table in my apartment, looking out the window. I turn back to the papers **stacked** in front of me. "Interesting", I say, "very interesting".

I **glance over** the test **scores** again-- the **pre-test** numbers, the **post-test** numbers, and the amount each student improved.

"Good, good", I say as I notice that all of the students improved over **the course of** the semester. All the post-test scores are higher than the pre-test scores. Most students improved by a couple of points... but my eyes are **drawn to** two sets of numbers.. two names: Kyoung and Jin. These two students improved **dramatically more** than all of the others. Their post-test scores show **a big jump**.

"What did they do differently?", I ask myself.

At the final class, I ask them. Since all of the students had the same in-class experience, I focus on what they did outside of class. Most students followed **traditional** study methods. They studied textbooks. They used vocabulary books. They went to traditional English (ESL) classes.

But Kyoung and Jin followed a different **approach**. In fact, they actually followed the method I continually **harangued** the class about. They focused on repeated listening and reading for fun. Both students said they **took my advice** seriously and therefore listened to English podcasts and audio articles 1-2 hours every day. Kyoung joined **The Linguist** and **faithfully** uses their system. Both students also read for fun-- mostly "easy" materials such as "National Geographic For Kids", **adolescent novels**, etc.

In TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) **jargon**, these two **exceptional** students followed an "**input**-based approach". **The bulk of** their study time was spent reading and listening to understandable and interesting English materials.

Most students and schools follow an "**analysis**-based approach". The bulk of their time is spent **analyzing** the language, breaking it apart, memorizing grammar "rules", and doing **drills**.

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**research:** formal investigation, formal study, academic study

**nag:** to ask someone to do something many many times

**cajole:** to beg or try to persuade

**comprehensible:** understandable; can be understood

**thrilling:** exciting

**illustrated:** shown

**quantitatively:** with numbers

**in dramatic fashion:** in a powerful way; in a noticeable way

**section:** part

**remaining:** the rest

**specifically studied:** focused on (studying) one subject

**an isolated incident:** an experience that is not (usually) repeated; a special experience/happening

**replicate:** repeat, copy

**findings:** results; conclusions

**phenomenon:** happening; experience

**starkly:** in a strong and obvious way

**in person:** experienced directly and personally

**quantitative:** numeric, with numbers

**validation:** proof or evidence (that something is right)

**exhort:** try to persuade; try to convince; plea for

**plea:** request

**rely on:** depend on

Plenty of **research** shows that input-based methods are faster and more effective than analysis-based methods. I knew this- which is why I always **nag** and **cajole** my students to focus on **comprehensible** input. But it was still **thrilling** to see this knowledge **illustrated quantitatively**, in such **dramatic fashion**, by my own students.

The truly interesting part is that the pre and post-test I gave them (The Michigan Test) measures listening, vocabulary, and grammar. I'm not surprised that Kyoung and Jin improved their listening skill. But that **section** was only 20% of the test. The **remaining** 80% tested both vocabulary and grammar. In other words, their vocabulary improved dramatically faster than the students who **specifically studied** vocabulary books and lists. Their grammar improved dramatically faster than the students who specifically studied grammar textbooks.

This is not **an isolated incident**. Many research studies **replicate** these **findings** (see [www.sdkrashen.com](http://www.sdkrashen.com) for the most thorough summary of these). In study after study, input-based approaches beat analysis-based approaches- as measured by general English tests, such as the TOEFL, TOEIC, or Michigan Test. These tests measure vocabulary, grammar, listening, and in some cases, speaking and writing.

Though I'm aware of this research, I've never seen this **phenomenon** so **starkly** illustrated **in person** in a **quantitative** way-- mostly because I've never had the opportunity to pre and post-test my students.

These results are a small but powerful **validation** of my own teaching approach- and the methods I continually **exhort** my students to follow.

I will now carry this **plea** to you: Do not analyze English. Do not use analysis-based methods. Do not **rely on** textbooks. Do not focus on grammar rules.

Use an input-based method. Listen to understandable English. Listen repeatedly. Listen one hour every day and listen every day. And read. Read a lot. But don't read textbooks. Read easy materials that are fun and interesting to you.

Many students, for some reason, don't follow my advice. But those that do, such as Kyoung and Jin, improve much more quickly than those who don't

Follow this method, and you too will improve faster, just like Kyoung and Jin.

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