

Indigenous Literature-based CBI for SLA: Decolonizing ELT in Postcolonial Nations

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English serves as a crucial language of communication in numerous postcolonial nations, including India and Sri Lanka. However, traditional English Language Teaching (ELT) in these contexts often prioritizes Standard English, perpetuating linguistic hierarchies and neglecting the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of local communities. This paper proposes a novel curriculum for English Second Language Acquisition (SLA) at the college level, centered around translated indigenous and local literature, aiming to both enhance language acquisition and decolonize ELT. This study addresses the following research questions: How does the use of translated indigenous literature in a Content-Based Instruction (CBI) classroom impact learners' English vocabulary acquisition? What measurable effects does incorporating translated indigenous literature into English SLA have on first-year college student's vocabulary acquisition rates, cultural identity affirmation, and attitudes toward English language learning in Indian postcolonial contexts? The objective of this research is to explore the effects of translated indigenous literature-based CBI on English vocabulary acquisition and the decolonization of ELT for first-year college students in India and Sri Lanka. A mixed-method approach, incorporating quasi-experimental design, was employed. The study employed a quasi-experimental design with a non-randomized, pre-test/post-test design with two intact first-year college classes in Bangalore N=60 students (30 per group). The experimental group (one class) received a 6-week CBI intervention using translated indigenous literature, while the control group (parallel class) followed standard ELT curriculum. Pre- and post-tests measured vocabulary gains, supplemented by surveys on cultural identity and language attitudes. Translated indigenous literature formed the core material, and corresponding CBI lesson plans were developed. Quantitative results confirmed vocabulary gains of the students, while qualitative data revealed three key outcomes: (1) stronger cultural identity, (2) decolonized English as an indigenous tool, and (3) increased motivation through local knowledge connections. The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of this new curriculum compared to traditional Standard English-focused instruction, highlighting its potential for both vocabulary acquisition and decolonizing language teaching. The lesson plans and this paper are theoretically framed by Krashen's Input Hypothesis, a foundational SLA theory, and explore its

application within a CBI framework using translated indigenous literature. Key stages of the theoretical framework include: Comprehensible Input (i+1), subconscious Language Acquisition through Indigenous Literature, the role of the Affective Filter, and the principles of Decolonizing ELT. The analysis reveals the surprising effectiveness of this new curriculum and syllabus, utilizing translated indigenous literature in SLA, which holds significant promise for both Sri Lankan and Indian decolonial contexts. This study presents a potentially revolutionary concept for postcolonial nations seeking to decolonize their ELT practices and promote linguistic and cultural inclusivity.

Keywords: Content-based instruction, Second language acquisition, Decolonizing, Indigenous literature, Input hypothesis