

## **THE ROLE OF READING ALOUD IN IMPROVING FLUENCY**

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**Abstract.** Reading is a fundamental component of language development and plays a crucial role in building both receptive and productive skills. This article examines the role of reading aloud in improving reading fluency, particularly among primary-level learners of English as a foreign language. Drawing on established theories of reading and language acquisition, it highlights how reading aloud supports the development of phonological awareness, vocabulary acquisition, and confidence in oral communication. The paper also discusses interactive read-aloud practices, emphasizing the importance of teacher guidance, scaffolding, and student engagement in meaning-making processes. Furthermore, it explores the differences between first language (L1) and second language (L2) reading, underlining the cognitive and linguistic challenges faced by learners.

**Keywords:** reading aloud, reading fluency, pronunciation, EFL learners, interactive read-aloud, literacy development, language skills, primary education.

Generally, language consists of four main skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. These are the essential elements that enable people to communicate with one another. Listening and reading are considered receptive skills, and they typically develop before productive skills like writing and speaking. In the 1970s, many researchers and educators emphasized the significance of reading. For instance, Goodman<sup>1</sup> and Smith<sup>2</sup> argued that reading is not simply a process of decoding letters and words one by one to extract meaning.

Reading plays a vital role in life, as a society cannot progress without education. Through reading, individuals can gain knowledge about a wide range of topics. It involves understanding a text by using various strategies such as predicting meaning, defining unfamiliar words, skimming, scanning, and drawing inferences. According to Coady, the reading process includes three key elements: strategic processing, prior knowledge, and cognitive abilities. In other words, comprehension occurs when a reader's thinking skills and strategies interact with their background knowledge to

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<sup>1</sup> K. Goodman, "The reading process," in *Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading*, P. L. Carrell, J. Devine, and D. E. Eskey, Eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> F. Smith, *Understanding reading*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1971.

make sense of the text. Furthermore, Reading aloud can be implemented as the major and magic way to improve students' oral-English due to in reading aloud the students can practice pronunciation directly so at the same time they can improve and develop their speaking.

The concept of reading involves using particular techniques and strategies that help readers understand texts effectively. According to Halliday, teachers have an essential role in guiding children to use language appropriately, which can be achieved through regular reading activities or conversations. Reading aloud is especially valuable because it helps students gain confidence in their knowledge and provides opportunities to share ideas and discuss personal experiences in the classroom.

Also, we should take into consideration of the distinct nature of L1 and L2 reading. According to Bernhardt, there are the distinct nature of L1 reading and L2 reading for two reasons. First, readers store different types of memory related to languages, and this affects the cognitive processing when they read a certain text.<sup>3</sup>

Wood Salvetti suggested that reading aloud strategies support the development of literacy skills. Students who do not practice reading aloud often struggle with pronunciation and may lack familiarity with the sound system of the English language. Through reading aloud, children become more familiar with language patterns found in books and can expand their vocabulary. Effective reading aloud includes clear pronunciation, appropriate pacing, variation in tone and volume, proper phrasing, and meaningful pauses.

For young learners in particular, reading aloud supports early literacy and language development. It also encourages a love for reading and enjoyment, which can be even more important than focusing only on technical skills. This study aims to examine how reading aloud can improve reading fluency and enhance pronunciation among primary-level students.

Students at the basic level often face challenges in reading, which led to an exploration of the factors affecting their performance. Among various helpful approaches, reading aloud stands out as an effective method for improving both fluency and pronunciation. Without sufficient practice in reading aloud, students may experience difficulties in these areas.

Focusing on improving students' reading fluency and pronunciation through the use of reading aloud as a practical tool. It also highlights different reading aloud strategies and their benefits. Reading aloud motivates students, encourages a positive attitude toward reading, and helps them enjoy books, stories, and poems they might not

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<sup>3</sup> E. B. Bernhardt, "Challenges to reading research from a multilingual world," *Reading Research Quarterly*, vol. 38, pp. 112-117, 2003.

otherwise encounter. Additionally, it supports learners of English as a foreign language by strengthening essential skills. It also promotes independent reading habits and guides teachers to recognize the importance of incorporating reading aloud into their teaching practices.

Reading aloud can be described as an activity that creates a shared focus between adults and children, allowing them to engage in meaningful conversations that go beyond simple observation to include deeper, concept-based discussions. Expanding on this idea, Strachan explains that interactive read-aloud sessions involve teachers supporting students' understanding by guiding them through the text, introducing new ideas, and asking questions before, during, and after reading.

In an interactive read-aloud, the teacher reads a text to the class while encouraging active participation. Both the teacher and students ask questions, listen carefully, make predictions, and discuss the content together in order to better understand the material. One key benefit of reading aloud is that it helps students develop the ability to make connections. According to Strachan, consistent interaction during read-aloud sessions enables students to relate the text to their own experiences and to the wider world. When learners make these connections, they tend to understand the text more deeply because they actively construct meaning. This connection becomes even stronger when students can relate emotionally to the characters or settings in the text.

Reading aloud is particularly beneficial for younger elementary students. Wiseman<sup>4</sup> notes that interactive read-alouds provide valuable learning opportunities for early readers, as teachers and peers can model comprehension strategies, actively involve students, and build a supportive learning environment. Teachers can demonstrate fluent reading and use read-alouds to make challenging texts more accessible. Pentimonti and Justice<sup>5</sup> describe scaffolding as providing temporary support to learners and gradually removing it as they become more independent. Strachan also highlights that discussions during read-aloud sessions help young learners better understand the content, as shown in her research with kindergarten students.

However, there is less research on how reading aloud affects older students. Clark and Andreasen<sup>6</sup> studied sixth-grade students and found that while their attitudes toward being read to were mixed, all participants recognized its instructional value. Another study by Wolf, Crosson, and Resnick examined comprehension and higher-order

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<sup>4</sup> Wiseman, A. (2011). Interactive read alouds: Teachers and students constructing knowledge and literacy together. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 38(6), 431–438.

<sup>5</sup> Pentimonti, J., & Justice, L. (2010). Teachers' use of scaffolding strategies during read alouds in the preschool classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37(4), 241–248.

<sup>6</sup> Clark, S., & Andreasen. (2014). Examining Sixth Grade Students' Reading Attitudes and Perceptions of Teacher Read-Aloud: Are All Students on the Same Page? *Literacy Research and Instruction* 53 (4) 162-182..

thinking skills in elementary and middle school students, concluding that discussions during read-aloud sessions improved understanding.

To conclude, reading aloud not only does improve vocabulary, but also effectively enhances the reading comprehension of learners.

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