

The Effect of Reading Aloud on Improving Students' Reading Proficiency in ELT

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Abstract: The current study aims to reveal the impact of reading aloud (RA) classroom practice on improving the ELT reading comprehension among the students. The sample consists of 60; 30 male and 30 female 10th grade students at Al-Taiba Primary school in Jordan. The students are divided into an experimental group who are taught by using RA classroom practice and a control group who are taught by using traditional teaching method. To achieve the objective of the study, both pre and post-tests are used to measure the effectiveness of reading aloud classroom practice on improving the 10th grade students' reading comprehension. Such tests are taken from Key English Test (KET) and (ESL) websites (<https://www.englishrevealed.co.uk/ket.php> and <https://www.excellentesl4u.com/esl-reading-comprehension.html>). Each test encompasses 15 questions and in 3 passages that highlight reading comprehension, grammar knowledge, and vocabulary knowledge. The students are required to choose the correct answer out of four options. T-test and One Way ANOVA test are used to calculate students' scores in both pre and post-tests. The findings reveal that there are statically significant differences in both tests; the students performed better in the post-test as opposed to the pre-test. Also, the study found that RA has a positive impact on reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary achievements of the 10th grade students. The study recommends teachers to use reading aloud classroom practice in the classroom as an important supplementary exercise to the traditional instructional methods.

Keywords: reading aloud (RA), reading comprehension, reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, grammar knowledge.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental tool utilized in communication among individuals separated from utilizing gestures. For a hundred years, English has been a mechanism of communication in spoken and written languages worldwide (PimanmasNinsuwan 2015). These days, learning a second or foreign language is progressively turning into a necessity for everyone, and learning a language as EFL/ESL requires proficiency in four skills (Jafari, 2013). English is considered the most important international language in the world and numerous endeavors have been made in the past decades to improve EFL students' English proficiency from various perspectives (Katsumasa Shinozuka, 2017).

Regarding language teaching and language learning, reading is one of the essential skills assuming an undeniably important part in learning a language. The skill of reading has its own modes two of which are reading aloud (RA) and reading silently. The reading aloud technique is effectively characterized by the clear articulation of words, flexibility in rate, volume, and tone, adequate phrasing, and effective use of pauses (Pimanmas Ninsuwan, 2015). Nasser Saleh Al-Mansour (2011) demonstrates that reading aloud to students has numerous benefits. A portion of these advantages is as follows:

- (1) reading aloud grows the students' vocabulary;
- (2) the students' attention range builds;
- (3) through the RA, students are absorbing appropriate grammar and word use (Nasser Saleh Al-Mansour, 2011).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a review of theoretical background and a set of related studies to the topic under discussion. It also provides a brief account of the major approaches and theories of the impact of reading aloud on improving students on improving students' reading comprehension.

2.1 Reading Comprehension

One of the most important language skills is reading. It is an essential aspect of learning a language. Reading is not solely a single skill but a combination of many skills and processes in which the readers interact with printed words and texts for content and pleasure. Such skill enables its users to learn speaking, syntax, pronunciation, writing, vocabulary items, and other aspects of language. The primary objectives of reading lie in enabling students to gain understanding of themselves and the world around them in order to improve interests, appreciation, and to find solutions to their problems. Reading is a collection of linguistic and cognitive skills that are embedded and hierarchical in nature. Reading comprehension, for everyone who faces with a text in every type, can be as a highly complex cognitive process, involving intentional interaction between the reader and the text to create meaning (Tovani, 2000).

2.2 Students' Reading Proficiency

According to Hellekjaer (2009: 202) "reading proficiency can be described as more than simply the ability to decode the written words in the text; it is also the active creation of meaning in an interactive process between information in a text and the reader's knowledge". Reading aloud in classroom practice has positive impacts on developing students' reading proficiency (Morrison and Włodarczyk, 2009). It enriches students' vocabulary knowledge, clarifies the meaning of the words (Ziegler et al., 2010). It's critical to use the right reading technique to help students improve their reading proficiency and to a "certain degree of the text material comprehension" (Sajid and Kassim, 2019, p. 87).

2.3 Reading Aloud

Reading aloud means an activity that entails reading loudly. It is considered an essential classroom practice to be learned. According to Huang (2010) reading aloud is of a paramount condition in education for general development that has many functions in teaching English. Huang (2010), moreover, adds that reading aloud plays a pivotal role in improving students oral English. Not to mention that reading aloud might improve pronunciation skill (Subyakto-Nababan, 1993).

In addition, reading aloud have several functions in learning a foreign language that are summarized into: practicing pronunciation, having an in-depth understanding, improving oral language, improving the classroom atmosphere, and strengthening the knowledge (Huang, 2010).

2.4 Theoretical Background

Many scholars studied the impact of reading aloud in various contexts. However, the current study addresses the impact of reading on improving the ELT reading of 10th grade students at Al-Taiba Primary school. Therefore, the current study adopts Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis.

According to Krashen (2003), the comprehensible input indicates that the learners acquire language when they grasp messages, when they comprehend both what people tell them and what they read. It suggests that the language is acquired and literacy is developed when people comprehend the messages, particularly when they understand what they hear and read i.e. when they receive a "comprehensible input". The acquisition of a language is considered as a subconscious process. Therefore, people are not aware of its happening. As a result, the developed competence is maintained in the brain subconsciously.

2.5 Studies on the Effect of Reading Aloud on Improving Students' Reading Comprehension

Sajid (2021) carried out a study on the impact of reading aloud classroom practice on improving low comprehension female students at the secondary school level from teachers' perspectives. The study took place in Multan city in Pakistan. The sample consisted of twenty students from humanities group and five teachers from English department. A questionnaire was collected from first-year students. The study had an experimental research design. The data were analyzed by using two instruments, namely, pre-test and post-test. The findings demonstrated the effectiveness of applying reading aloud classroom practice on improving the reading proficiency and comprehension among low students.

Islam and Eltilib (2020) carried out a study on the impact of reading aloud on improving the cognitive learning process of the students. Moreover, the study aimed at analyzing various reading aloud techniques and their impacts on students' motivation and learning attitudes in the classroom. The sample encompassed low grade students from Saudi Arabia. The study used mixed methods to elicit data from the respondents, namely, survey and observation. To clarify, the survey was divided into two sections; the first section touched upon students' desire to learn English and the number of English books they have at home, whereas the second section addressed students' enjoyment and reactions of the sessions. As for observation, it focused on observing the students' attitudes, reactions, body language, attentiveness, and their concentration in the classroom. The participants were divided into two groups, namely, experimental and control groups. The experimental group was taught by using reading aloud classroom practice, while the control group was taught by using traditional teaching methods. To measure the participants' engagement and listening skills, they were requested to the lexical items they have been pre-taught by employing a certain action and sound. The findings revealed that the experimental group achieved better as opposed to the control group in terms of acquiring vocabulary items, improving their listening skills, and having high lexical analysis.

2.6 Studies on Sustained Silent Reading and Reading Aloud

Olagbaju and Babalola (2020) carried out a contrastive study on the impact of sustained silent reading (SSR) and reading aloud (RA) classroom practice on students' achievement and interest in reading. Moreover, the study investigated the moderating role of reading on improving students' vocabulary knowledge. To this end, a quasi-experimental study with pre and posttests was used. The participants were divided into experimental and control groups. Two treatments were used in this study SSR and RA. The first experimental group was taught by using SSR, while the second experimental group was taught by using RA. On the other hand, the control group was taught by using conventional teaching method. The data were analyzed by employing inferential statistics of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) with the pretest scores as covariates. Moreover, to identify the performance of the groups the study computed the Estimated Marginal Mean (EMM). Also, to detect the source of significant difference among the three groups, the study used Bonferroni Post-hoc analysis. The results showed that the most effective strategy for improving students' interests and achievements in reading was RA, subsequent by SSR. However, the worst performance was for the control group who was exposed to conventional teaching method.

III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this section is to present the tools used in collecting the data and the data analysis for this study. This study reveals the impact of reading aloud on improving the ELT reading proficiency among 10th grade students at Al-Taiba Primary school in Jordan. This study adds new insights to the literature for scholars and researchers because there are few studies conducted on the impact of reading aloud strategies in Jordanian context.

3.1 Participants of the Study

Participants of the study consists of 60 students, 30 male, and 30 female tenth grade students at Al-Taiba Primary school in Jordan. The participants spoke Arabic as their first language and English as their second language. Their language level is intermediate. The students have been given a reading test as a pretest that focuses on reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge to determine their reading proficiency. They are divided into two groups: the first group is assigned as an experimental, while the second is assigned as a control group. The experimental group consists of 30 male and female students, whereas the control group consists of 30 male and female students. The participants are chosen randomly to be assigned in each group i.e. the researcher has used random assignment to place participants in groups.

3.2 Instruments of the Study

The study employs a pre-test to make sure that there are no significant differences in the reading proficiency between the experimental and control groups. Then a post-test was administered to the experimental group and the control group to check the differences between them, while the control group is taught by using traditional reading methods. The purpose of employing a pre-test lies in measuring the students' level and to know their existing score of reading, whereas the purpose of employing a post-test lies in examining the efficiency of reading aloud classroom practice and its role in improving students' reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar knowledge. The study found significant differences in the post-test scores between experimental group and control group in favor of the experimental group.

3.3 Reliability of the Instrument

The study has employed KET test in which the reliability of such exam ranges from 100 to 150. According to Cohen et al. (2007), a reliability analysis is calculated by using the test/retest approach. The score more than 120 is considered a “pass”, while the score less than that is considered a “fail”. Moreover, ESL reading test was used in which the reliability of such exam ranges from 100 to 130. According to Carmines and Zeller (1979) reliability is concerned with the extent in which a measurement of a phenomenon presents consistent and stable finding. One of the methods that can be used to find out test reliability is the test- retest technique to establish the reliability of the test. Scores were calculated after testing and retesting with two weeks between them. The researcher calculated the reliability coefficient of the results of the test. The reliability score for both KET is 150, while the reliability score of ESL is 130. The study used similar tests in both pre and post-tests.

3.4 Design of the Study

The samples of the study were given a pre-test in order to assure that both groups have a similar level of reading comprehension. The participants were divided into two groups; the experimental group taught by using reading aloud classroom practice, while the second group taught by using traditional reading methods. The researcher used RA classroom practice four hours per week. The kinds of texts revolve around social stories and articles. To check the students' comprehension, the teacher asked them questions by using a comprehension check. The students were exposed to RA practice for 4 hours per week. The study lasted for 11 weeks. Totally, the experimental group students were exposed to 44 hours of Reading Aloud practice in their classes.

Then, the post –test is administrated to control and experimental groups, and finally the students' scores are analyzed. The students were given 15 multiple choice items for both tests, one mark is given for each correct answer. After scoring and comparing the students' marks in the pre-test and post-test, the study measured the effectiveness of using RA classroom practice in improving students' reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary knowledge.

3.5 Data Collection

The researcher explained both the pre and post-tests to the students. The researcher distributed a pre-test and post-test to both experimental and control groups in order to measure the effectiveness of reading aloud classroom practice on improving their reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar knowledge.

3.6 Data Analysis

The statistical package for social science (SPSS) software was used to analyze and evaluate whether there were any statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the pre and post-tests. Therefore, a T-test and One-Way ANOVA test were used to find out the differences that might arise after applying the reading aloud classroom practice and regular communicative method. The study seeks to measure the effectiveness of the use of RA classroom practice in improving students' reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary knowledge.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was designed to determine the effect of reading aloud on improving the reading comprehension of tenth-grade students in ELT. To answer this question, we use the mean differences for reading comprehension in the post-test after the treatment for control and experimental groups.

Table (1) shows the mean differences for reading comprehension in the post-test after the treatment for control and experimental groups.

Table (1) The mean differences for reading comprehension in the post-test after the treatment for control and experimental groups

Reading comprehension	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig
	Control	30	1.73	.785	-16.20	29	.000
	Experimental	30	4.50	.509			

As shown in Table (1) above, the mean scores of reading proficiency for control group is (1.73), whereas the mean scores for experimental group is (4.50). The analysis of a paired-samples t-test show that the confidence level for this analysis was kept at 94% for a 5% margin of errors. The standard deviation of the control group is (.785) and (.509) for the experimental group. The findings reveal that there is a statistical significant difference in the students' scores. This difference mean that RA makes a difference in reading comprehension. The study shows the positive effect of reading aloud strategy on improving the reading comprehension of tenth -grade students in ELT ($t = -16.20, P.<0.05$). The negative value means that the differences between the results of the two groups were negative, i.e. the means of the experimental group is higher than the control group. The findings show that the students of the controlled group did not perform very well in reading comprehension test. On the contrary, the students of experimental group excelled in such test. Accordingly, the experimental group performed better than the control group in the first passage of the test that addresses reading comprehension.

Table (2) Findings of Paired Sample T Test for vocabulary knowledge mean differences before and after treatment both for control and experimental groups

Vocabulary Knowledge	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	DF	Sig
	Control	30	1.80	1.031			
	Experimental	30	4.80	.407			

As can be seen from the Table (2) above, the mean scores of vocabulary knowledge for the control group is (1.80), while the mean score for the experimental group is (4.80). The analysis of Paired Sample T Test was used to see if there is a statistically significant differences in vocabulary knowledge between the control and experimental groups. The results show that there is a statistically significant difference between the scores of the experimental group in the post-test after the treatment. This finding indicates the positive effect of reading aloud strategy on improving the vocabulary knowledge of tenth-grade students in ELT, ($t = -13.65, P.<0.05$). The findings show that the students of the control group did not perform very well in the vocabulary test. On the contrary, the students of the experimental group excelled in such a test.

Table (3) Findings of Paired Sample T Test for grammar knowledge mean differences before and after treatment both for control and experimental groups

Grammar Knowledge	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	DF	Sig
	Control	30	1.50	.861			
	Experimental	30	4.87	.346			

As shown in Table (3) above, that the mean score of the control group is (1.50) and (4.87) for the experimental group. The analysis of Paired Sample t-test for grammar knowledge of 10th grade students show that the standard deviation of the control group is (.861) and (.346) for the experimental group. The findings reveal that there is a statistically significant difference in grammar knowledge between control and experimental groups. Such findings indicate that reading aloud classroom practice improves the grammar knowledge of tenth-grade students in ELT, ($t = -20.72, P.<0.05$). The findings show that the students of the control group did not perform very well in the grammar test. On the contrary, the students of experimental group excelled in such test.

Table (4) The mean values for the experimental group after applying the treatment.

Test	Proficiency	N	Means	SD
Passage one	Reading Comprehension	30	4.50	.51
Passage two	Grammar Knowledge	30	4.87	.35
Passage three	Vocabulary Knowledge	30	4.80	.41

Table (4) shows the mean values for the experimental group after the treatment. The means for the first passage 'reading comprehension' in the post test for the experimental group show that the mean score of the reading comprehension is (4.50), whereas the means for the second passage 'grammar' in the post test for the experimental group account for (4.87), and the means for the third passage 'vocabulary knowledge' in the post test for the experimental group amount to (4.80). The findings indicate significant differences between the means. The analysis illustrates the means and standard

deviations of the reading comprehension of tenth grade students in the post-test. The findings show that the standard deviation for the reading comprehension is (.51), (.35) for the grammar, and (.41) for vocabulary knowledge.

Table (5) One- Way ANOVA mean differences before and after treatment both for control and experimental group

Group	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between prosodic aspects	2.289	2	1.144	6.32	.003
Within prosodic aspects	15.767	87	.181		
Total	18.056	89			

* The results are significant at the $p. \leq .05$ level.

Table (5) above shows One- Way ANOVA for tenth grade students' reading comprehension mean differences before and after treatment both for control and experimental group. The Table reveals a statistically significant difference between tenth-grade students' reading Proficiencies in ELT because of the value ($F(2,87) = 6.32, P. < 0.05$). The findings reveal that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of tenth-grade students reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, and grammar knowledge.

V. DISCUSSION

Reading aloud is considered one of the teaching classroom practices in which the teacher reads a selected text with a loud voice. Possibly, when the teacher reads a text loudly, the learners are expected to comprehend the reading passage, improve their grammar, acquire more vocabulary items, and learn the correct pronunciation of the word. This finding is consistent with several other studies (Oueini et al., 2008; Subyakto-Nababan, 1993; Haung, 2010).

The present study underscored the importance of using reading-aloud classroom practice for improving students' reading comprehension because it plays a pivotal role on improving students' reading comprehension, enhances their grammar skills, and promotes their vocabulary knowledge. On the other hand, the study found that using regular communicative method is ineffective in improving students' reading comprehension because the students might make mistakes in grammar, pronunciation, and in the comprehension of the text in general and the vocabulary in particular. All of these factors have a negative impact on improving students' reading comprehension. These findings are in good agreement with (Sajid & Kassim, 2019; Wood & Salvetti, 2001; Terblanche, 2002; Rog, 2001; Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman, 2011; Winfield, 2009; Amer, 1997; Sajid, 2021) that reading aloud strategy had a significant impact on facilitating the comprehension of the text, eliciting the meaning of the vocabulary items and understanding the text in general, and improving the reading comprehension.

Moreover, the findings of the current study indicate that RA facilitates the second language acquisition, which are consistent with (Nurlaelawati & Dzulqodah, 2014) that applying read aloud practices is considered beneficial in terms of facilitating the language acquisition and making the students happy and relaxed.

Furthermore, the findings support the study indicating that RA improves students' vocabulary and that reading aloud enables the students to be engaged in classroom activity by both reading and pronouncing the text thus, the students are able to concentrate on the text's content, ask questions, and stimulate discussions (Junaid, 2017).

Similarly, the findings of the present study pointed out that RA improves students' vocabulary and these findings commensurate with the study of Islam & Eltilib (2020) in that RA was found to have a positive impact on improving students' vocabulary items, improving their listening skills, and having a high lexical analysis. Moreover, such finding lends support to Gehlot's et al. (2020) study that both RA and SSR classroom practices play a pivotal role in improving students' reading comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study seeks to examine the use of RA classroom practice among tenth grade students at Al-Taiba school. It is hoped that the present study will add significant and sufficient information on the impact of using RA classroom practice on improving the reading comprehension of tenth-grade students at Al-Taiba primary school in ELT.

The study is an attempt to answer three major queries. The first one is to identify the effect of reading aloud on improving the reading comprehension of the tenth-grade students in ELT. Second, it addresses the impact of a reading aloud strategy on improving the vocabulary knowledge of the tenth-grade students in ELT. Third, it seeks to unravel the impact of a reading aloud strategy on improving the grammar knowledge of the tenth-grade students in ELT.

As far as methodology is concerned, the study employs a quantitative approach to achieve the purpose of the study. The study distributed both pre and post-tests to 60 tenth grade students, who were divided into experimental and control groups. After scoring the students' tests, the participants' reading comprehension level was identified. The study may help teachers in realizing the appropriate techniques for improving students' reading comprehension.

The results of study reveal that the reading comprehension of the experimental group students, who are taught by using RA classroom practice, has improved. On the other hand, the reading comprehension of the control group students, who are taught by using traditional reading method, has not improved. Another interesting finding is that the students in the experimental groups were motivated and payed attention, therefore, they performed better than the students in the control group.

Interestingly, the study found a significant achievement in reading comprehension, grammar knowledge and vocabulary knowledge of the tenth grade students of Al-Taiba school in Jordan. It can be seen from the progress of the result of the study. The score of means of post-test is (4.5). It means that students improved their scores in the post test significantly.

The researcher suggests a number of recommendations for teachers, students, and other researchers who are interested in conducting further research in the field of reading aloud. The following points are recommended:

1. The study recommends teachers to use reading aloud classroom practice in the classroom as a positive supporting element along with traditional instructional methods.
- 2- The study suggests that teachers should support, motivate, and encourage students to participate in reading aloud classroom practice.
- 3- It is useful for students to read extensively not only at school, but also at home in order to build up their reading speed and reading fluency.
- 4- It is advisable for other researchers, who seek to use reading aloud classroom practice, to focus on other language skills, such as listening, speaking, and writing.

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