



RESEARCH PAPER

Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills in ESL Learners through Read-Aloud Strategies: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the effects of the read-aloud strategy on improving reading comprehension of Grade 2 ESL learners in Lahore, Pakistan. Reading comprehension is a significant aspect of academic achievement, yet Pakistani primary students suffer because of limited proficiency in English and traditional rote-based methods of teaching. A quasi-experimental design was utilized with 50 students placed into an experimental group who received interactive read-aloud sessions, and a control group utilizing traditional methods. Literacy, inferential, and evaluative levels of comprehension are measured using pre- and post-tests. Results reflect significant comprehension gain in the experimental group with large effect sizes for all stories. The study shows the read-aloud technique to be effective. Recommendations are that read-aloud sessions must be included in the ESL curriculum and that teachers are trained in expressive reading and interactive questioning. Read-aloud methods can help build critical thinking, engagement, and literacy in ESL settings.

KEYWORDS ESL Learners, Primary Education, Quasi-Experimental Study, Read-Aloud Technique, Reading Comprehension

Introduction

In primary school education, comprehension is an essential requirement both in developing literacy mastery and in basic preparation for lifelong learning skills. It is the comprehension of one's readings, most prominently at the primary levels, where students have the skills needed to interpret meaning in whatever text. Unlike merely looking at the words that makeup a written text, readers who have mastered the craft of reading comprehension know not only to make inferences but to connect them together with earlier knowledge as well. Reading, in the words of Durkin, 1993, "is an active process of meaning construction" where pupils synthesize information, make predictions about outcomes, and apply a critical approach to material. In countries like Pakistan, where English is the second language, the process is more challenging for early years learners who are meant to acquire literacy skills in the language with little or no previous experience (Hassan, 2009; Warsi, 2004).

Most of the Pakistani primary students have linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical difficulties in understanding. Students with little knowledge of English cannot engage properly in content and thus may lower their academic achievements as well as their confidence in using English as a medium of learning. Generally, traditional teaching methodologies, where the method of teaching happens to be more or less through rote and passivity, tend to fail when it comes to giving skills to engage and process text (Farooq et al., 2012). The conventional reliance on memorization fails to include aspects of interactivity and critique that are so important for reading comprehension, especially where such a task of understanding as is involved with ESL already adds complexity.

Such gaps see educators increasingly vocal in requiring evidence-based methodologies that would support interactive and student-centered learning. One such

methodology-the read-aloud methodology, which has some potential in developing reading comprehension skills among early learners-deals with text as an instructor reads to the students, showing them fluent reading and offering an interactive environment. With expressive reading, it would allow the teacher to bring attention to intonation, pronunciation, and pacing which is possible for the student to absorb the rhythm and subtleties of the language of English. Read-aloud activities are further enhanced by predictive questioning, discussion, and vocabulary building that enhances their ability for comprehension because it invokes critical thinking and active participation (Blackowicz & Fisher, 2011).

Research support that read-aloud sessions have cognitive and linguistic benefits. The technique, besides building new vocabulary, helps the learner associate the word when it is heard with the word when it is seen thus helping in enhancing language interpretation at different levels as well (Dunst, Simkus and Hamby, 2012). This will benefit ESL students because it allows them a structured, scaffolded setting in which they can use listening comprehension with exposure to vocabulary and sentence structure that is not generally a part of their daily conversation. Another dimension that this method fits under is social constructivist theory from Vygotsky (1978), with the idea of learning actually taking place in a zone of proximal development with a more knowledgeable guide-interactionally reaching higher level comprehension.

In the context of Pakistan, where educational resources are often limited, and teacher training does not always emphasize modern, interactive strategies, adopting the read-aloud technique could address several existing educational challenges. Trelease (2006) emphasizes that regular read-aloud sessions have a direct impact on literacy skills by enhancing vocabulary, fostering engagement, and building comprehension. Additionally, the structured yet flexible nature of the read-aloud method provides an ideal setting for ESL students to engage with English texts meaningfully. Studies by Beck and McKeown (2001) further reveal that students engaged in interactive read-aloud sessions demonstrate improved comprehension and critical thinking abilities, especially when sessions include discussion and vocabulary instruction.

This research attempts to evaluate the read-aloud technique based on its ability to improve reading comprehension skills of Grade 2 ESL learners in a primary school setting in Lahore, Pakistan. A quasi-experimental approach was used in this study in which students who received regular read-aloud sessions were compared with students receiving traditional, non-interactive reading instruction. The study's results will contribute to the ever-growing body of research on literacy interventions in ESL settings with immediate practical knowledge for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers at different levels from Pakistan to across the globe.

This study will throw light on the potential benefits of interactive reading practices in the primary ESL curriculum by investigating read-aloud techniques and their outcomes. This will help educators understand instructional strategies for developing comprehension while encouraging language confidence and motivation among young learners. For curriculum developers, it underlines the value that dynamic, engaging practices could be added to literacy education. For policymakers, this study provides evidence for wise allocation of resource and training for interactive pedagogies in ESL instruction. At the end, this research produces effective, research-based literacy instruction to ESL learners to support their academic success and meaningful language development.

Literature Review

Reading comprehension is one of the most important skills in academics, especially in the early years of school. It is this very skill that allows students to decode words and, eventually, interpret, analyze, and engage with text for knowledge in any field of study

(Durkin, 1993). Pakistan is one place where, in most cases, English is introduced as a second language from primary school; therefore, the obstacles in comprehension faced by students differ. This means that most students have minimal exposure to the language beyond the classroom, and vocabulary, syntax, and cultural references that are part of the texts, which prevent them from understanding course material (Hassan, 2009; Warsi, 2004). Poor comprehension skills cause setbacks in academics because reading proficiency is integral to learning across disciplines.

Research has shown that in the act of reading, the understanding encompasses such highly complex mental operations as inferences, prediction, synthesis, and retention (Blackowicz & Fisher, 2011). Traditional classroom teaching in Pakistan often overemphasizes rote memorization, which, most times, does not require building of these essential skills for critical comprehension. These approaches also impede the involvement of the students with the texts. Farooq, Uzair-Ul-Hassan, and Wahid (2012) recommend interactive learner-centered methods that account for the specific linguistic and cognitive needs of ESL learners. The shift towards more potent, research-based methods has sparked interest in methods like read-aloud, which appears to create a friendlier and more exciting climate for young ESL students.

Some specific difficulties primary-level ESL students face when reading for meaning that might have an adverse impact on academic achievement. Among these challenges are a learner's exposure to the desired language, use of vocabulary, unfamiliar grammatical constructions, and culture differences all of which will make the meaning comprehension somewhat difficult for ESL students (Gulzar & Qadir, 2010). Especially in Pakistan, such constraints are exacerbated by a relatively limited exposure to English in everyday life. Further, instructional and learning approaches may not provide scope for the involvement of the learner. Hassan, in his study of 2009, concludes that comprehension is affected in the majority of ESL learners in Pakistan, given inadequate vocabulary and lack of a sound basis of English syntax. Additionally, Warsi (2004) argues that cultural differences can further hinder comprehension, as students may not understand idioms, literary devices, or cultural references specific to English-speaking contexts.

The traditional teaching approach used in Pakistan, which remains heavily reliant on memorization and passive learning, typically does not foster deep exploration of texts. Farooq et al. (2012) highlight that Pakistani teachers are not adequately prepared with modern, interactive approaches to pedagogy; therefore, there is very little scope for student participation or critical thinking. This has caused a concurrence on the need for more dynamic and interactive approaches like the read-aloud technique to help meet ESL students' needs and to foster a more supportive learning environment (Gulzar & Qadir, 2010).

One read-aloud approach is that of the teacher reading aloud to the students, showing fluent reading and use of expressive language. Such an approach works particularly well for young and ESL learners because they hear and process the language patterns, pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary in context (Blackowicz & Fisher, 2011). During read-aloud sessions, teachers can stop to ask questions, elicit predictions, discuss vocabulary, and explain complex concepts, thus making reading an interactive experience. According to Dunst, Simkus, and Hamby (2012), read-aloud sessions enhance language development since students are exposed to rich linguistic input and vocabulary and sentence structures that may not be found in their everyday life.

The reading aloud method has additional advantages in ESL contexts. While listening to fluent reading, students can assimilate vocabulary that is complex, idiomatic expressions, and even grammatical structures that are so subtle they lie between oral and literacy uses of the English language (Elley, 1989). Read aloud sessions can be treated as a form of dialogue session where, for instance, students would ask questions, make

prediction, and connect what they heard to their personal lives. According to Blackowicz and Fisher (2011), this interaction is what makes ESL learners think and understand material better. Interacting during discussion and reflection in class means that the students have participated actively in learning content, therefore, improving critical thinking skills and understanding which is largely neglected in mechanical learning processes.

The read-aloud technique is consistent with Piaget and Vygotsky's constructivist learning theories; this method of teaching makes emphasis on active participation as well as social interaction. Constructivism, according to Piaget, states that children acquire knowledge through first-hand experience and reflection. Throughout read-aloud time, the students are in an encounter with the text so new information is put within already existing cognitive structures of students. The expressive reading and questioning by the teacher enables the integration process such that the new content finds relationships with prior knowledge of students (Durkin, 1993).

Vygotsky's social constructivism also supports the read-aloud approach since it emphasizes guided interaction as a crucial role in learning. Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) is a suggestion that learners will learn most effectively if assisted by an expert who is more informed than the learner, often the teacher, in order to facilitate movement across complex concepts (Vygotsky, 1978). The teacher's role during the read-aloud is the role of such an expert as she scaffolds comprehension by posing interactive questions and facilitating discussion. This kind of collaborative learning will be internalized by the students; it is particularly helpful for ESL learners, who might require extra support through unfamiliar language structures.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory is also a good foundation for the read-aloud approach because a person learns by observing others and imitating them. ESL students in the read-aloud sessions observe fluent reading, imitating pronunciation, intonation, and expression, thus learned in the read-aloud sessions. This kind of observational learning is particularly beneficial to ESL students who rarely hear fluent English use outside the classroom. It is within this interactive, social atmosphere that the child gains confidence and ability for proper reading comprehension.

Literature underlines the read-aloud technique as a potential powerful instructional strategy for developing reading comprehension, especially for ESL learners at the primary level. Read-aloud, which provides students with fluent reading, new vocabulary, and interactive discussions, is designed to address specific ESL student challenges and to enhance essential comprehension skills. According to constructivist and social learning theories, the technique promotes effectiveness through interactive, student-centered approaches to meaningful learning. This study is an extension of the work done so far in other contexts by probing the read-aloud approach in a Pakistani ESL setting and shedding light on avenues for improvement for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers interested in improving literacy outcomes for ESL learners.

Material and Methodology

The approach to research is quantitative. A quantitative approach aids in measuring the accuracy of comprehension improvements, allowing for an objective comparison of the effectiveness of the read-aloud technique with traditional reading instruction. The study employed the positivist paradigm based on empirical, observable, and measurable evidence. The quasi-experimental design was a non-equivalent control group design. The study made use of two groups of students: the experimental and control groups, where both were pre-tested and post-tested. The students of the experimental group underwent read-aloud sessions, whereas the other group continued reading through conventional methods. Comparisons between and within the groups measured the effects of the intervention. The population of the research is a group of Grade 2 ESL students from a private primary school

in Lahore, Pakistan. The two Grade 2 complete classes selected and recruited from the school would total 50 students, with 25 students in each group: experimental and control. A sample size of this nature was selected for two apparent reasons: first, to have sufficient statistical power yet manageable in scope within this study.

This study used multiple tools to assess the effect of the read-aloud technique on reading comprehension among primary ESL learners. The tools were an adapted reading comprehension test and self-developed comprehension worksheets that were meant to measure comprehension at literal, inferential, and evaluative levels.

Reading comprehension test, which was adopted from Beck, McKeown, and Kucan's (2002) comprehension strategies, and all changes were made that were pedagogically sound for the ESL context. The test had a vast selection of question types: Multiple-choice questions involving literal comprehension, where specific points from the text would be recalled. Short answer questions that rely on inference, wherein one requires students to predict or conclude. Open-ended questions tested evaluative comprehension in that students were challenged to either judge or evaluate the characters and the narrative events that occurred. And the comprehension worksheet was a self-developed tool for the control condition. Self-developed comprehension worksheets based on Fountas & Pinnell's (2018) interactive Read-Aloud Model. This ensured that the comprehension worksheets would be aligned with best practices in maximizing one's literacy skills through interaction in an ESL context.

These were worksheets applied for every story read aloud during the experiment. They were created in order to promote comprehension abilities but at the same time require participants to engage themselves with the read-aloud treatment. Each one of them was built to revolve around the cognitive and linguistic abilities of elementary ESL students.

The worksheets included: Comprehension Questions: Multiple-choice and short-answer questions over the major ideas, characters, and incidents of the stories. Vocabulary Exercises: Matching words with their definitions or using them in sentences; in other words, exercises that matched directly with new vocabulary from each story. Sequencing Activities: The process of placing events in order by students also enables them to better understand the flow of a story. Discussion Questions: A variety of open-ended questions to encourage thoughtful examination of the issues surrounding the story and characters.

Table 1
Reliability Analysis

Tool	α
Reading Comprehension Test	0.85
Comprehension Worksheets	0.82

This table provides an overview of the reliability measures for the reading comprehension test and worksheets used in the study. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of ($\alpha=0.85$) for the reading comprehension test indicates high internal consistency, while inter-rater reliability of ($\alpha=0.82$) for comprehension worksheets ensures consistent scoring.

Content validation of the reading comprehension test and the comprehension worksheets was done by a panel of three ESL experts. The experts reviewed each item for clarity, cultural appropriateness, and appropriateness to comprehension levels suitable for Grade 2 ESL learners. Adjustments were based on expert feedback to increase the relevance and accuracy of the tools.

A pre-and post-test for all groups was administered while the treatment groups were engaged with reading comprehension worksheets. All the testing was done at the school in similar environments for both groups.

Table 2
Overview of Data Collection Procedures

Phase	Activity	Description
Pre-Test	Initial comprehension test	Baseline scores for both groups
Intervention	Read-aloud sessions	Experimental group received read-aloud sessions (3 times/week), while control group followed traditional methods
Post-Test	Final comprehension test	Measurement of any improvement in comprehension skills

Results and Discussion

This study measured the ESL readers' reading comprehension as a basic impact of read-aloud technique. To do that, this research analysed the pre-test and post-test scores from the different comprehension tasks with story-based effects of the intervention. Another detailed statistical analysis that was calculated for paired sample t-test, in addition to computing the effect size, determined the effectiveness of the intervention by read-aloud technique.

Pre-Test and Post-Test Comparison

The study utilized various stories to measure reading comprehension improvements across both experimental and control groups. Each story's pre-test and post-test scores were compared to determine comprehension gains facilitated by the read-aloud sessions.

Table 3
Reading Comprehension Scores for Various Stories in Experimental and Control Groups

Story Title	Group	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)	Mean Difference	T-value	P-value
Puss in Boots	Experimental	3.67 (1.63)	5.93 (0.96)	2.26	4.515	<0.000*
	Control	3.13 (1.50)	4.07 (1.16)	0.94	1.93	0.074
Rapunzel	Experimental	4.20 (0.775)	5.33 (0.617)	1.13	5.906	<0.000*
	Control	3.66 (0.97)	3.80 (1.08)	0.14	-0.43	0.670
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs	Experimental	4.27 (0.458)	5.60 (0.507)	1.33	7.135	<0.000*
	Control	3.73 (1.16)	3.80 (0.94)	0.07	-0.43	0.869
The Jungle Book	Experimental	3.27 (0.704)	4.87 (0.352)	1.60	8.411	<0.000*
	Control	2.86 (1.50)	3.46 (1.06)	0.60	1.71	0.108
Jack and the Beanstalk	Experimental	3.87 (0.85)	5.67 (0.61)	1.80	7.258	<0.000*
	Control	3.33 (1.25)	3.67 (1.30)	0.34	0.86	0.389

*Significance level: $p < 0.05$

The above table shows a significant improvement in comprehension scores across all stories for the experimental group, as indicated by large mean differences and p-values below 0.05. For example, in the "Puss in Boots" story, the experimental group's scores improved from a mean of 3.67 (SD = 1.63) in the pre-test to 5.93 (SD = 0.96) in the post-test ($p < 0.000$), whereas the control group's mean difference of 0.94 was not statistically significant ($p = 0.074$).

Effect Size Analysis

The practical significance of the read-aloud intervention was examined using Cohen's d effect size calculations, revealing substantial effect sizes across all stories for the experimental group, further validating the positive impact of the technique.

Table 4
Effect Size (Cohen's d) for Each Story in Experimental Group

Story Title	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
Puss in Boots	1.40
Rapunzel	1.15
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs	1.33
The Jungle Book	1.60
Jack and the Beanstalk	1.80

The large effect sizes observed for the experimental group, ranging from 1.15 for "Rapunzel" to 1.80 for "Jack and the Beanstalk," underscore the substantial impact of the read-aloud technique on enhancing comprehension. This magnitude indicates that the read-aloud intervention was not only statistically significant but also practically meaningful for improving students' reading skills.

Comprehension Skills

The comprehension tasks focused on three levels of comprehension: literal, inferential, and evaluative. The read-aloud sessions were designed to enhance all three levels by incorporating predictive questioning, expressive reading, and post-reading discussions. **Literal Comprehension:** The experimental group showed marked improvement in recalling facts and details. Activities during the read-aloud sessions, such as asking students to summarize or sequence events, reinforced these skills, as reflected in post-test scores. **Inferential Comprehension:** Inferential skills, such as making predictions and drawing conclusions, improved significantly due to the interactive nature of the read-aloud sessions. Questions posed during reading encouraged students to think critically, enhancing their ability to interpret and make inferences. **Evaluative Comprehension:** The experimental group displayed gains in evaluative comprehension, evident from their responses to questions that required judgment or assessment of the text. This level of comprehension was nurtured by prompting students to express opinions on characters' actions or narrative outcomes during post-reading discussions.

Observational Findings and Student Engagement

Qualitative observations during the study revealed that students in the experimental group were more engaged and motivated. Teachers noted increased participation in discussions, with students eagerly answering questions, making predictions, and connecting story events to their personal experiences. This increased engagement is consistent with social constructivist theories, particularly Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, where learning is most effective when scaffolded by a more knowledgeable individual(hum).

The read-aloud technique produced statistically significant improvements in comprehension skills across all three comprehension levels—literal, inferential, and evaluative. Effect sizes for the experimental group ranged from 1.15 to 1.80, confirming the read-aloud technique's effectiveness in enhancing comprehension. Qualitative observations indicated that the interactive elements of the read-aloud sessions fostered higher engagement and motivation among students in the experimental group, potentially contributing to their improved comprehension scores. In contrast to the traditional reading instruction received by the control group, the read-aloud technique demonstrated a clear advantage in facilitating comprehension, as evidenced by the limited progress seen in the control group's scores and small effect sizes.

Discussion

This study's findings directly support the suggestion that the read-aloud technique enhances reading comprehension among primary ESL learners. Clearly, data from the interactive read-aloud sessions stood higher in terms of the gain than that offered by

traditional reading instruction. As a consequence, scores in the treatment group of "Puss in Boots" rose by means of a large effect size from a mean score of 3.67 to 5.93. This reflects a considerable practical impact of the read-aloud approach on students' comprehension skills. However, the control group indicated only minimal gains with a mean difference that was not statistically significant, $p = 0.074$. The traditional instruction was weak in imparting deeper understanding skills to ESL students. This is based on what Trelease (2006) and Blackowicz & Fisher (2011) argued.

This sizeable increase in understanding at the literal, inferential, and evaluative levels aligns with social and cognitive constructivist theories that recommend interactive and active instruction. According to Vygotsky's theory of the "zone of proximal development," learning is optimal when a learner is being assisted by an experienced peer or teacher within an interactive environment. This kind of environment was created by read-aloud sessions involving questioning, predictive discussion, and collaborative reflection, and students meaningfully discussed the text. Such interactive engagement probably helped support students in filling in gaps in comprehension, particularly for tasks that require making an inference and evaluation by co-constructing meaning in a social context (Dunst, Simkus, & Hamby, 2012; Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002).

Findings also validate Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory where students learn from others through modeling. Teachers in the read-aloud sessions modeled fluent, expressive reading for ESL students in a critical language input different from their linguistic environment. The ESL student internalizes accurate pronunciation, intonation, and expression, important aspects of comprehension. Once students observe an experienced reader, they benefit from this exposure to enhance vocabulary and syntax understanding but also feel confident to read independently, an effect which is less similar to Bandura's self-efficacy end.

These results have significant implications for classroom practices in ESL settings; it is suggested that repeated implementation of read-aloud sessions could be a potent tool for literacy development. In contrast to traditional methods that tend to favour rote memorization, the read-aloud technique actively engages the student, fostering critical thinking and interaction with the text. Teachers can maximize the usage of this method by implementing open-ended questions, inducing predictions, and encouraging discussions in read-aloud sessions that would further enhance the higher-order comprehension of students. This shift away from passive instruction in the method will offer the educator a vibrant and student-centered learning environment that is actively promoting comprehension and engagement (Farooq, Uzair-Ul-Hassan, & Wahid, 2012).

In addition, this research has highlighted the importance of teacher training on proper read-aloud strategies. Most of the traditional teaching practices of Pakistan do not allow students to engage and express themselves while reading. Thus, the teaching training should focus on the interaction and expression in reading strategy, text selection, and how to make the discussion more interactive among ESL students. With these skills, teachers will be better placed to facilitate students' comprehension development especially where students' exposure to the use of English outside the classroom is minimal (Gulzar & Qadir, 2010; Hassan, 2009).

This study adds value to the growing body of literature that supports read-aloud as an effective pedagogical tool for developing reading comprehension in ESL students. The technique's emphasis on interactive, expressive reading makes it consistent with constructivist principles, where students explore text in a deep fashion and construct meaning in cooperation. Fostering comprehension, engagement, and linguistic confidence, read-aloud holds great promise for the ESL classroom and its relevance and application in a Pakistan-oriented educational context. In brief, the outcomes of the study point toward read-aloud as a vehicle that holds potential to reform literacy instructional approaches for

ESL students ultimately toward more inclusive and impactful educational practices aimed at aiding the linguistic and academic growth and development of these students.

Conclusion

This study investigates the influence of the read-aloud technique on the reading comprehension of primary ESL students. It reveals a very impressive improvement increase across the literal, inferential, and evaluative levels. The students had significant gains after receiving structured and interactive read-aloud sessions with minimal changes from the control group compared to no changes. This outcome supports the constructivist learning theory since read-aloud activities are the premises behind ESL students' acquisition of literacy, through their involvement and socialization.

Such findings have significant implications for ESL instruction, especially in Pakistan where reading is often very mechanical and lacking in meaningful interaction. The only time this can happen is with the integration of read-aloud techniques in the school day. With such approaches, educators would be offering a more stimulating and helpful learning environment in which thinking is encouraged as well as language use. It emphasizes, too, the importance of professional development programs to make teachers capable of performing tasks and activities in read-aloud, such as using expressiveness in reading, raising interactive questions, and providing culturally relevant texts.

The limitation from this study is its low sample size and one-site nature, which necessitates another research study to ensure generalized outcomes. Future studies on this technique could analyze effects at a long-run sequence over various educational contexts for comparative effectiveness with guided/independent reading.

The read-aloud technique is one of the most valuable tools in supporting reading comprehension among ESL learners while stimulating cognitive and linguistic development. The evidence the current study brings to bear argues for incorporating interactive read-aloud sessions as a ready, engaging, and powerful tool for ESL classrooms to develop comprehension in young learners. Accepting these interactive methodologies in ESL education would help bridge language gaps and enable the students with foundational literacy skills necessary for academic and lifelong success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed to improve the reading comprehension of ESL learners through the systematic application of the read-aloud technique. First, structured read-aloud sessions should be part of the ESL curriculum as a standard practice and not a supplementary activity as it is often treated nowadays. Read-aloud sessions should be an integral component of literacy instruction that should help in the development of vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. Regular and scheduled read-aloud sessions would expose students to fluent reading, diverse language patterns, and new vocabulary, hence cumulatively enhancing comprehension with time. To ensure the smooth execution of this process, teachers ought to be targetedly trained on the read-aloud technique, including the appropriateness of texts used, expressive reading, and interactive questioning with students. Such programs ought to guide teachers through the cognitive benefits of read-aloud and empower them with strategies to maximize student participation during and after a session.

Besides, connecting with culturally relevant and at the correct level of texts is important for students. Meaning texts which reflect on students' backgrounds and are interesting for them can have students engaging more fully and thus connect with better understanding with the stories read. Curriculum developers and policymakers are urged to include resources and guidelines for appropriate material selection in ESL programs so that

students are exposed to the language and content that is relevant to their experiences. Finally, further research is recommended to explore the long-term effects of read-aloud on comprehension and academic performance and the impact of digital read-aloud formats in resource-limited settings. It may help ESL teaching by developing a more encouraging and interactive learning environment, hence promoting key literacy skills among young learners.

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