

Hot Topics-Reading

Young EFL Learners Reading in English
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Why do children in some countries read better than children in other countries?

What can be done at the local level to improve reading ability?


What can be done at a national level to improve reading ability?



Monolinguals from different countries have different patterns of reading development.

<p>❑ Best readers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Finland ❖ France ❖ Sweden ❖ Singapore ❖ Hong Kong ❖ New Zealand ❖ Hungary ❖ United States 	<p>❑ Poorest readers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Botswana ❖ Zimbabwe ❖ Nigeria ❖ Venezuela ❖ Philippines ❖ Thailand ❖ Trinidad/Tobago ❖ Belgium
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PIRLS 2001



What Factors are Significant?

- ❑ Pre-school and beginning to read around 6.3 years.
- ❑ Some countries with larger classes actually fared better.
- ❑ Large school libraries and books in the classroom (Book Flood).
- ❑ Results depend on the writing systems and scripts of the languages: phonetic regularity.
- ❑ Examine FINNISH AND SWAHILI

From "How in the World do pupils read?" 1992.

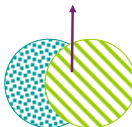
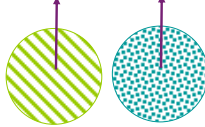



The Effect of Learning to Read Simultaneously in 2 Languages

- ❑ "Central Processing Hypothesis"
 - ❖ General linguistic ability contributes to reading in both languages
 - Finding: Phonological Awareness is centrally processed.
- ❑ "Script Dependent Hypothesis"
 - ❖ Reading develops independently in each language
 - Finding: Reading is script dependent.

Gigi Luk & Ellen Bialystok (2003) Exploring the latent factor behind cross-linguistic transfer: Cognitive abilities


Two Cross-linguistic Hypotheses

<p><u>Central Processing</u></p> <p>General linguistic ability contributes to reading in both languages</p>  <p>L1 L2</p> <p>Transfer occurs Learning one language affects the learning of another language</p>	<p><u>Script Dependent</u></p> <p>Reading develops independently in each language</p>  <p>L1 L2</p> <p>No Transfer Learning one language <u>does not</u> affect the learning of another language</p>
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Study Conclusions *Luk and Bialystok*

- ❑ Reading and phonological awareness are based on different cognitive processes in a comparison of Mandarin and English (2003)
- ❑ Evidence from reading → *script dependent*
- ❑ Evidence from phonological awareness → *central processing*



Assumptions about Learning to Read English in an EFL Context

- ❑ Oral proficiency is a significant predictor of L2 reading success
- ❑ If a pupil LOOKS at a word, the teacher SAYS it, then the pupil will be able to read it
- ❑ If a pupil can sing the alphabet song then he can identify letters in the alphabet
- ❑ If a pupil can read in his home language then he can read in any language
- ❑ Reading is a passive activity



Preparing pupils to read in English?

Before young learners read English, they should -


- ❖ be able to use English to **communicate** with some ease
- ❖ develop some **visual-motor skills** – eye/hand coordination, visual scanning, visual tracking, alternating and dividing attention, and fine motor control
- ❖ have some experience with **metacognitive and mathematical tasks**
- ❖ **read and write in their home language**



What EFL middle school kids say about reading!

- ❑ They mostly do it at school.
- ❑ Generally, it's a required activity.
- ❑ Little access to literacy activities or technology after school.
- ❑ They use what they know about L1 reading to read in English, but sometimes these skills are weak.


RRO (2005). *International Reports on Literacy Research*. 40:1, p. 112-114.



Characteristics of Good Readers What the best young readers said:

- ❑ They like to read and have lots of time to do it.
- ❑ They concentrate well.
- ❑ They have lots of books around them at home.
- ❑ They know how to sound out words.
- ❑ They learn many new words.
- ❑ They do many written exercises and homework.
- ❑ They regularly practice the hard things.

From Elley, Warwick, 1992. *How in the world do pupils read?*



WHAT I CONCLUDED!

- ❑ Phonological awareness utilizes transfer skills from L1
- ❑ Instructional methods and cultural differences may be factors in learning to read.
- ❑ Home literacy environment has an affect on literacy in L1 but not in English (Luk & Bialystok)
- ❑ OPPORTUNITIES TO READ REGULARLY
- ❑ VALUING WHAT READING HAS TO OFFER EACH PERSON AND THE COUNTRY!