



## Effective Reading Techniques for English for Young Learners

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### Abstract

Reading is an important skill to be mastered by the learners. How and when a child learns to read is one of the key educational milestones. Positive communication between the teacher and the student facilitates the easy acquisition of reading comprehension abilities (Ramsa & Rawian, 2021). Reading calls for specialized training as well as deliberate effort (Ericsson, 2008). It is not a simple undertaking to teach English to young learners. In order to keep students interested and motivated in the teaching and learning process, teachers must employ effective teaching strategies (Ayua, 2017). Therefore, a study on the theme of how effective reading strategies for young learners are employed in this research is conducted. Library research was done as a method to enrich the insight and answer the question. Some reading strategies are advised to be applied in teaching reading, such as emergent literacy, the Mnemonic Technique, Read-Aloud techniques, Deciphering techniques, and the Language Experience Method.

**Keywords:** *Reading; Technique; English for Young Learner.*

### INTRODUCTION

Reading becomes a crucial ability that pupils should have since they are still young. One of the most crucial English language skills that has to be taught and performed successfully is reading, and reading is one of the most crucial language acquisition abilities to be mastered. For those studying English as a foreign language, it is an essential ability. The major objective of language learning is to increase students' communicative speaking skills, which can be achieved through reading and writing. How and when a child learns to read is one of the key educational milestones. Positive communication between the teacher and the student facilitates the easy acquisition of reading comprehension abilities (Ramsa & Rawian, 2021). Millions of EFL students are studying reading as a component of their English language education, and millions of EFL teachers are looking for the most efficient way to teach reading. Reading is a difficult skill to teach and develop.

Reading calls for specialized training as well as deliberate effort (Ericsson, 2008). It is not a simple undertaking to teach English to young learners. In order to keep students interested and motivated in the teaching and learning process, teachers must employ effective teaching strategies (Ayua, 2017). It is possible that kids will not love learning if teachers cannot instruct them properly. As a result, the process of teaching and learning could not be successful. It is strongly advised that teachers design engaging, entertaining, and pleasurable lessons for young students. This is due to the fact that young students are easily bored and have a short attention span (Xie, 2021).



Younger children are not always better learners than older learners, but they are more likely than adult learners to acquire native-like English competency (Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2019). The primary distinction between teaching adult learners and teaching younger ones is what the pupils bring to the classroom. While young learners provide zeal, vigour, and vitality, adults offer life experience. While adults have a lifetime of experiences and unique viewpoints, young learners are still forming their understanding of the world. Adults come to learn English with a definite purpose in mind, usually to advance in their employment, unlike younger pupils who lack direction.

The different reasons that every age group has for going to class affects the motivation levels. As was mentioned in the previous session, teaching English to young learners differs from teaching English to adult learners. The traits and learning preferences of young learners vary. English teachers need to choose the right teaching techniques for their younger students in order to accommodate these variances. It is thought that an effective teaching technique can inspire students to participate in the teaching and learning process and support them in reaching their learning objectives.

This study tried to analyze teaching reading strategies for young learners, taking into account the method of teaching English to young learners and the significance of implementing the strategies. This study aimed to elucidate reading instruction strategies that teachers might use with younger students. As the study What are some effective teaching tactics for young learners that teachers can use?

### **Reading Proficiency**

Reading is an action used to assimilate concepts or details from written materials. Readers will acquire knowledge that is useful in day-to-day activities through reading. Reading is an activity that can inspire pupils to actively contribute to their knowledge and stimulate their thought processes in the classroom. The reason for this is that kids learn a great deal about whatever they read about when they read. Students who read widely will acquire a wealth of knowledge, particularly in areas linked to their studies. As a result, teachers urge their pupils to complete the reading assignment and do it well. The purpose of doing this is to provide the pupils with comprehensive information about everything.

Additionally, proficient readers can gain more background information and experience from the text (Smith et al., 2021). It can be argued that students who read more will learn more and gain more insight, but students who read less will not gain as much knowledge.

The process of deriving meaning from text is called reading. Creating and meaning are the two essential terms. There can be no reading if no meaning is being constructed. Thus, the reader's interpretation of the text involves a combination of visual and non-visual information (Budiharso, 2014).

The act of reading involves the reader's effort to comprehend the content of the text. Put differently, it can be described as a conversation between the reader and the text. Thus, readers who are able to decipher a passage's meaning will also understand the text's meaning.

Reading is a strategic process because it requires the reader to anticipate text information, pick important information, mentally organize and summarize information, track comprehension, fix comprehension breakdowns, and align comprehension output with reading objectives (Banditvilai, 2020).

The notion that reading is an active brain process is strengthened by that definition. To sum up, reading is the process of interpreting word meaning and comprehending textual information. Reading is a complicated process; thus, it is not an easy task. In order to comprehend and assimilate the material presented by the writer, the reader must be able to make the mental connection between themselves and the writer's ideas, as well as draw on prior knowledge.

The following are the reading phases: (1). stage before reading. Teachers should assist students in activating their prior knowledge and cognitive schemata during the pre-reading process so they are prepared to tackle the new content (Ari, 2017). (2). stage of reading. At this point, readers understand why they are reading, how the text is organized, how to find the key concepts, and how to connect the text to their prior knowledge. They skim the text to get a general comprehension of it after scanning it for a word or piece of information. (3). stage after reading. Retelling the text's meaning, acting out a role-play based on the plot and characters, summarizing the text, adding textual data to charts and tables, writing a paragraph, and participating in a class discussion are some examples of post-reading activities (Ari, 2017). Every single one of them plays a vital role. They are all essential components of a reading exercise. These stages must be taken into account in language classrooms in order to improve pupils' reading abilities.

### Young Learners

Individuals who are not yet at puberty are considered young language learners (Royani Meisani, 2022). Young learners can be classified as those between the ages of 7 and 11 or as being in the concrete operational stage when they learn best from the physical objects in their environment (Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2019). Children go through distinct stages of development, which are:

During the Sensory-Motor stage (ages 0 to 2), children appeared to acquire knowledge through hands-on experiences with their surroundings. The pre-operational stage, which lasts from 2 to 7 years old, is when kids need real-world context to understand concepts.

Young learners generally have the following traits: (1) Children between the ages of five and seven are able to converse about what they are doing, what they have done, and what they have heard. They are able to organize activities, present arguments for positions they take, and explain their thinking. They can put their creative juices to use. In addition, they are able to comprehend face-to-face communication and employ a variety of intonation patterns in their mother tongue. (2) Eight- to ten-year-olds have developed the fundamental ideas. They are always asking inquiries and are able to distinguish between reality and fantasy. To express and comprehend meaning, they rely on both the spoken word and the tangible environment. (3) The Concrete Operational Stage, which lasts from 7 to 11 years old, is when kids start to think abstractly and solve some problems, but they still learn best by doing. And (4). Children can employ abstract thought during the Formal Operational Stage (ages 1 to 15) (Duchesne, 2020).

They possess the ability to make choices regarding their own education and are clear about what they enjoy and dislike doing. They now feel that everything that occurs in the classroom is fair, and they can collaborate with others and pick up knowledge from others (Trester, 2019). They can also start to challenge the teacher's questions.

Younger children, particularly those under the ages of nine or ten, learn in the following ways differently from older kids, teens, and adults:

1. Despite not understanding specific words, they react to meaning.

2. They frequently pick up knowledge indirectly rather than directly, absorbing knowledge from all around them rather than concentrating just on the specific subject being taught.
3. In addition to explanations, toddlers also learn from seeing, hearing, and—most importantly—interacting with objects that they can touch and interact with.
4. They typically exhibit a love of learning and an inquisitiveness about the world around them.
5. They require the teacher's permission and undivided attention.
6. They enjoy talking about themselves and react favourably to lessons that centre on them and their personal experiences in the classroom.
7. They have short attention spans; unless an activity holds their interest for more than ten minutes, they are likely to become bored and lose interest (Bradbury, 2016).

### Teaching Young Learners to Read

Primary school students are young learners with unique learning styles that set them apart from adult learners. Playing their games is incredibly pleasant for young learners. They fantasize and imagine a great deal. The requirements for aspiring elementary school teachers are to comprehend their surroundings and become proficient in spoken and written English. Using English as the primary language of instruction during the teaching and learning process in the classroom is another need for teachers. In addition, primary school English teachers must possess the ability to teach English well and be able to use the language in communication (**Krulat, 2023**).

A teacher might choose from a variety of teaching strategies while working with young students. What we teach, how to set up the classroom efficiently, and how to assist students develop their talents. Teachers can successfully teach English to students in the classroom by being aware of the teaching approach used in the class. Additionally, it may help teachers choose resources that best suit the ways in which their pupils learn the topic. Nonetheless, teachers will encounter numerous challenges when instructing young students in language skills. The fact that the language is foreign makes it difficult. The teacher uses a variety of strategies to complete the lesson. They are employed to raise the self-esteem of the pupils.

However, a few factors must be taken into account before choosing a teaching strategy. These include the content to be taught and how it can be adapted to fit into various learning methods, the students to be taught and their specifics, including age and educational background, and lastly, the environment in which the instruction is to take place (van Geel et al., 2023).

### RESEARCH METHODS

Library research was the research methodology employed in this study. According to George (2008), library research involves the collection and analysis of data using sources found in libraries. In order to determine the study's outcome, researchers conducting library research must combine their own theories with relevant sources.

In an effort to gather adequate information pertaining to the study's questions, a number of data sources were consulted, including books and journal articles. Creswell (2015) states that a researcher must possess a profound understanding of how to interpret text and visuals in order to ensure that the research questions are answered in a way that is understandable. The researcher thus develops a few steps. In order to create categories that are relevant to the research issue, the researchers first gathered some more data from journal articles and summarized the important

points. Unnecessary information was removed by the researcher. Subsequently, the information was categorized into a paragraph to address the query. Drawing the conclusions from the data analysis was the last step.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following are some tactics that an English teacher can employ when training young students to read:

### 1) Emerging Literacy

"Emergent literacy" refers to the phenomenon where kids appear to pick up reading skills on their own, gradually, through exposure to text and reading (Ngabut, 2015). This happens without any formal education. Some children will start to figure out the patterns and regularities that connect spoken and written text on their own if they are read from engaging and age-appropriate books for extended periods of time.

The aspects of emergent literacy that are most pertinent to teaching foreign languages. They are as follows:

- 1) Children select the books they wish to read and hear;
- 2) Children are inspired by the calibre of the work they come across and by their own choices;
- 3) kids frequently decide to reread the same book, which is a worthwhile educational experience;
- 4) meaning comes first since the young reader comprehends the narrative in its entirety;
- 5) Focus shifts from this general meaning to entire words and letters, starting with initial consonants, followed by final consonants, and then middle vowels;
- 6) Reading aloud to youngsters fosters their adoption and playfulness with the language of the narrative
- 7) Parents can participate in their children's language development by reading aloud to them (Duursma et al., 2008).

Probably the most crucial daily action parents can do to help their children learn to read is to read aloud to them. Children who are read grow in their vocabulary, world knowledge, comfort level with written language, and enthusiasm for reading.

### 2) The Mnemonic Technique

A mnemonic is a method for learning and internalizing data (Kurniarahman, 2023). To make it easier for the students to understand the information from those presentations, the instructor can utilize the mnemonic to direct their presentation regarding providing materials.

In addition, the instructor can impart strategies that help students better understand and analyze information in both solo and group settings. This methodology has undergone extensive testing with students of diverse ages and characteristics in a variety of curriculum fields. Memorization exercises can appear tedious at times because they require a lot of repetitions, the memorization of obscure terminology or irrelevant, old information, and the perception that mnemonic learning only applies to the most basic knowledge. It's not entirely accurate. The reason for this is that mnemonics can be used to aid students in learning engaging subjects. In order for this model to be joyfully learned as well. Furthermore, a mnemonic can be a highly powerful tool for motivating students and bringing excitement to the classroom (Putnam, 2015).

For these reasons, it can be said that a mnemonic is a method or particular approach that helps in the memorization and assimilation of knowledge by acting as a "mental linking tool" or

"memory aid." To make it easier for the students to understand the information from those presentations, the instructor can utilize the mnemonic to direct their presentation regarding providing materials. Mnemonics have been extensively tested with students of all ages and characteristics in a variety of curriculum fields.

Though it is not often the case, memorization exercises do not have to be dull. The reason for this is that mnemonics may be used to aid pupils in learning engaging topics, which makes learning mnemonics enjoyable.

The mnemonic approach is a great tool for teaching young students to read. Mnemonic devices aid students in making connections between new and familiar objects. These tools can be used in a variety of ways to help memorize information in an orderly string, such as by using bodily movement (TPR), sounds (rhyming), or the locus technique (finding a point on a paper or blackboard) (Putnam, 2015). A mnemonic is a teaching technique intended to assist pupils become more adept at remembering significant details.

Using visual and/or auditory clues, this method establishes a connection between newly learned material and previously acquired knowledge. When using mnemonic tactics in the classroom, the following instructional techniques are advised:

- 1) The instructor presents the subject matter to be covered in class,
- 2) To help the students understand the story, the teacher enlarges a copy of it.
- 3) The instructor points at each word while reading using a pointer.
- 4) The instructor requests that the pupils read the passages aloud.
- 5) The instructor requests that the pupils interpret the term in Indonesian.
- 6) The teacher instructs the class to commit the words to memory.
- 7) The teacher asks the students to construct sentences using the vocabulary they have learned at the conclusion of each lesson and each learning process (Fasih et al., 2018).

### **3) Read-Aloud Techniques**

An organized approach to reading aloud from a book is called a read-aloud. Learning literacy is greatly benefited by its method (Sofyan et al., 2021). Read-alouds are a teaching strategy in which educators, parents, and other caregivers read aloud to students from literature. To create a fluid and engaging delivery, the reader uses a variety of delivery techniques, including changes in pitch, tone, tempo, volume, pauses, eye contact, questions, and remarks. The instructor not only teaches vocabulary but also gives instances of comprehension strategies.

One of the most effective ways to get kids interested in literacy is to read aloud to them. Numerous earlier research has shown how important read-aloud practice is for developing reading skills in a variety of domains. It enhances kids' growth in comprehension and vocabulary development. They also mentioned that it has the potential to boost reading motivation while accumulating the knowledge required for successful reading acquisition.

It is a really good practice to read aloud to young students who are still working on their reading abilities. Reading aloud to youngsters has several benefits, including stretching their attention span and capacity to focus, engaging and encouraging imagination, modelling positive reading behaviour, and demonstrating that books are worthy of interest and attention. They may find it enjoyable as well.

Teachers can use the following stages of read-aloud techniques in their reading classes:

- a) Prior to reading, make sure every student is positioned in a way that allows them to see the text well. Take into account each student's individual needs. For example, pupils with attention-related should sit near the teacher, or they could be invited to assist with turning the pages of the book.
- b) List words that most kids would not be familiar with, in addition to those that are crucial to understanding the story's content.
- c) Choose a few engaging pre-reading exercises to aid in getting the students ready to comprehend the narrative: Ask kids to name the author and title; talk about the cover image and title. Students should be asked to predict possible outcomes for the story. Have them list any words they think the story might contain on chart paper. Introduce potentially challenging or novel text features. Before they begin to read, let them ask questions regarding the text.
- d) While reading aloud to the class, read the narrative at a comfortable tempo while utilizing a variety of expressions. To highlight key concepts and give pupils the opportunity to make in-story predictions, pause at certain intervals.
- e) Involve students in reading activities that will keep them interested at this point in the process; understanding and enjoyment of the tale are key components.
- f) Use open-ended WHAT questions to foster understanding, such as "What do you think "X" might do?" or "What do you see in the picture?" or "What is going on?" or "What do you think will happen next?"

#### **4) Following the Reading**

- a) Request that students recount the tale using their own language. Students may contribute to the summary one at a time, beginning with themselves.
- b) Review the predictions from stages 1 and 2 as soon as the story is told again. Examine the forecasts against the actual results.
- c) Examine the cover photo and title. Students should be asked if they believe it is appropriate for the story and asked to explain why.
- d) Pose open-ended WHY queries and provide pertinent encouragement and support.
- e) Talk about the text structures and terminology that were emphasized in Stage 1. Urge your students to respond using the new vocabulary.
- f) Inquire the pupils about how the text relates to their experiences or past knowledge.

#### **5). Deciphering Techniques**

"The act of deciphering a new word by sounding it out" is the definition of decoding (Bougebs, 2022). Stated differently, it refers to the process of deciphering letters and the words they produce. A new reader must first be able to distinguish each letter and its sound before they can pronounce and recognize a word. At first, decoding requires effort, but as kids gain proficiency, it flows naturally, leading to fluency in reading.

One of the most important aspects of teaching kids how to decode words is teaching them phonological awareness and phonics skills. Learning to read and spell is predicated on developing phonological awareness. If students are not aware of the sounds that different graphemes produce, they will not be able to sound out words. Using their understanding of morphology, students will also be able to decode words by dissecting them into smaller components. They can identify those parts and start there if they know what prefixes, suffixes, roots, and bases are.

Students should also be conversant with phonemic awareness, word components, syllable division, and common spelling patterns.

An experimental research study on an additional beginning reading intervention that complements phonics education was carried out by Dilgard (2022). Significant results were found on all measures of word reading, spelling, reading fluency, and reading comprehension, indicating that the kindergarten students who had received the early reading intervention experimental condition continued to outperform comparison students by the end of the first grade. Teaching phonics and decoding skills has also been supported by a number of prior studies. For instance, the National Reading Panel's meta-analysis came to the conclusion that "phonics instruction that is systematic helps all children learn to read with greater success than instruction that is nonsystemic or not provided at all". Studies have indicated that utilizing various decoding techniques eventually aids pupils in transitioning from word decoding to comprehension. Additionally, it boosts the fluency rate when reading text at a rapid pace from a slow one, which helps struggling readers read more automatically and with less anxiety.

In his research, (Guenin, 2018) presents the use of decoding techniques. One simple method for educators to impart decoding abilities is to employ words while introducing new concept words to families, such as the short /a/ sound. The instructor asks the class to pronounce a word like /at/. After that, the teacher will instruct the class to start it with a consonant. As an illustration, consider making the word "rat" by beginning it with the consonant letter "/r/." The instructor may also choose to chunk the word and teach the students how to sound it out. Saying the consonant sound followed by the term "family ending" does this.

As an illustration, consider the consonant letter /m/ sound in the word "mail," which becomes the word "family of /ail/." Students should be able to put letters together to form words and comprehend the relationship between a letter and its sound. After that, teachers will want their pupils to string words together to form entire sentences.

## **6) The Language Experience Method**

Allan created the Language Experience Approach (LEA) in 1963 (Harker, 2013) as a technique of teaching languages. The method uses the students' prior knowledge and experiences as reading material. (Rahayu, 2013) asserts that the reason LEA is an effective method of language learning is that it integrates and combines the four skills that go into language acquisition.

A few justifications for using the Language Experience Approach instead of traditional reading instruction for young learners are provided by Stauffer (1970) in Wurr (2002). It first supports teaching kids in a way that is appropriate for their developmental stage. Secondly, it promotes balanced instruction, which blends the teaching of specific strategies with the reading and composition of authentic texts. Moreover, it promotes integrated learning. All of the teaching and learning components are integrated in the final stage. These factors make the application of LEA essential to achieving the objectives of the educational process and improving the efficacy of reading instruction.

There are steps involved in putting LEA into practice as a teaching strategy. Five cycles are presented by Dixon and Nessel (1983) in Wurr (2002) for implementing LEA in the classroom:

1) Getting dictation ready. The teacher should choose a well-known and significant topic for the material in this cycle and invite the students to contribute any stories they may have about it.

- 2) Taking orders. During this cycle, the instructor invites a few students to speak up in front of the class about their experiences, and the teacher records the details of their stories on the board.
- 3) Examining the narrative. The teacher asks the class to read the story aloud as a group throughout this cycle. After that, let them have some alone time to read the story to make sure they comprehend it.
- 4) Carrying out follow-up tasks. Throughout this cycle, teachers can facilitate learning by using a variety of topic-related activities.
- 5) Acquiring fundamental abilities. The teacher can adapt the material in this cycle to meet the needs of the students.

Elena et al. (2022) put the aforementioned strategies into practice to raise reading comprehension and motivation among her students. The study's findings demonstrate how successfully LEA was included in the teaching and learning process. Raqqad et al. (2019) carried out a second study using LEA to instruct EFL students on reading fluency. The results demonstrated the effectiveness of the LEA strategy in teaching Indonesian EFL students to read fluently.

A key component of learning is reading. Students will need to be very proficient readers of difficult content in order to retrieve vital information from massive data banks (Rupley et al., 2009). One can start learning to read at any level: from a text, sentence, word, or letter. Every beginning point has yielded reading instruction methods that are applicable to classrooms teaching foreign languages (Wolf, 2023).

Early learners can be taught to read in a variety of ways. The most effective approach is the one that fits the needs of the students, the classroom environment, and the course material. Selecting the right tactics to help students meet learning objectives requires teachers to be deliberate.

The aforementioned six tactics were chosen because they are useful in EFL classrooms. English, which is taught here as a foreign language, should be taught to students at the proper age because young learners from Indonesia have distinct cultures and languages, and speaking their own local tongue helps them communicate more easily. Since not every student is prepared to acquire a foreign language, those who have sufficiently mastered their home tongue should be able to pick up other languages more quickly.

## CONCLUSION

The age of the students is a crucial factor to take into account when deciding how and what to teach. There are variations in demands, skills, and cognitive capacities based on age. As teachers, we may assign elementary school pupils to participate in interesting and fun activities that will help them learn a foreign language more thoroughly. It suggests that different learning tactics are needed for students at different levels. To understand the world around them, children still need adult guidance and aid. Therefore, teachers must analyze classroom activities from their perspective to assess whether pupils will comprehend what to do or be able to comprehend a new language. The techniques covered in this study should serve as a valuable resource for educators, particularly those working with young Indonesian students.

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