

ARTICLE

To Read Aloud or Not: A Comparative Study of the Two Reading Methods

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ABSTRACT

Silent reading is the most favoured practice in general ELT methodology, particularly the communicative approach, to teach a foreign language, such as English. However, research studies have documented the benefits, such as phonemic awareness, morphological awareness, enhanced comprehension, and so on, of reading aloud to children. Research also documents the benefits of children themselves reading aloud in the early years of language development. Research investigating whether there are any potential benefits of adult EFL learners following the reading aloud approach to develop their reading skills is scant since silent reading is accepted as the ELT norm. Nevertheless, in many ways, adult EFL learners are like early childhood native-language learners and may have ill-developed phonemic awareness, lack morphological awareness, and lack reading/listening comprehension. An empirical study employing a quasi-experimental design was conducted with undergraduate students in Saudi Arabia to examine whether the reading aloud approach can improve their pronunciation, lexical awareness, and reading/listening comprehension. The findings of the study indicate a positive impact of the reading aloud approach on the selected research constructs. The study and its findings are significant in Saudi Arabian contexts as EFL undergraduates often need intervention to improve their pronunciation, lexical repertoire, and reading/listening comprehension. The findings also induce rethinking on silent reading as the only approach to teach reading.

Keywords: Reading Aloud; Silent Reading; Reading Comprehension; Phonemic Awareness; Morphological Awareness

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1. Introduction

Reading is one of the most important skills for literacy, and reading plays a crucial role in the development of other language skills. This is specifically true of the foreign language (FL) learning process. Reading instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class commonly follows two methods – oral reading (or read aloud) and silent reading. However, the oral reading method is no longer encouraged in English Language Teaching (ELT) methodology, though once it was the fundamental, and predominant, method of teaching reading. The silent reading approach to teach reading has replaced the read-aloud methodology everywhere^[1]. Educationists argue that it is silent reading that develops learners' thinking faster as the read-aloud method hinders the pace of reading^[2, 3]. Nevertheless, there are still many adherents of the read-aloud method in academia who support the method strongly and argue for its inclusion as a teaching method in educational institutions^[4, 5]. Ash and Kuhn^[4], for instance, argue that the read-aloud technique is still popular among some reading instructors since the technique is found to be effective in enhancing the confidence of younger, struggling readers and the method improves student learning as well. Similarly, Rasinski observes that lexical items are recorded faster in readers' memory and are retained longer if learnt through oral reading method^[6]. The issue concerning what may be the most suitable method to teach reading, particularly to EFL learners, once thought to be settled once and for all, has become a heated academic debate again as both oral reading and silent reading technique camps present convincing arguments in support of their theory explicating the benefits of their preferred method.

EFL learners usually converse in their mother tongue. In class too they spend only a few hours learning English, in which speaking may get sidelined. The result is that, in general, they learn the language without having a sound knowledge of the basic components of the spoken language, i.e. the phonemic and phonetic aspect, and a deeper knowledge of lexical structures. In the communicative approach to teaching English, oral reading (or read aloud) is scoffed at as silent reading is accepted as the only reading method to attain good reading fluency. This complicates the issue for adult EFL learners who grow up with ill-developed phonemic proficiency in English since speech phonology is largely connected to word recognition on page^[7]. Silent reading

serves a good purpose, but there is a possibility that the practice lacks some features of language learning that may be complemented only by oral reading practice, particularly for EFL learners.

Research Problem

A cursory look at the contemporary ELT methodology literature shows that reading aloud (RA) is not a preferred reading instruction practice^[8–11]. However, the relative merits of one reading technique over the other are as unsettled an issue as ever^[12–14]. For example, a few current research studies have come up with the view that using RA is beneficial (especially for EFL learners) for learners' overall language development, not just reading fluency^[1, 4, 5, 15–17]. The argument is that RA affects various aspects of language development, such as phonemic awareness, phonetic knowledge, and reading comprehension, positively. Nevertheless, their research findings are either inconclusive or confined to young learners being read to by their parents at home or teachers in class. Research literature exploring the effects of RA on the reading fluency and other aspects of language development of adult EFL learners, if they read the text aloud, is still scant.

2. Literature Review

Oral reading is the most ancient method of reading written texts. The method was followed in language teaching all over the world and continued dominating the reading pedagogy through the nineteenth century. Only when "reading for meaning" became the norm as "an explicit theoretical and pedagogical goal" in the beginning of twentieth century, did silent reading emerge on the reading pedagogy scene predominantly^[18]. Since then, the debate on the relative effectiveness, virtues, efficacy, and cognitive aspects of oral reading and silent reading has been going on among the supporters of two pedagogical propositions^[18].

2.1. Reading: The Silent Way

In scholarly literature, oral reading (also Read Aloud [RA]) is often defined as the act of reading text aloud with fluency, accuracy, and expression^[19, 20]. On the other hand, in research parlance, silent reading is defined as the process of reading without vocalizing the words, internally com-

prehending the meaning and cognitively engaging with the text^[21, 22]. A common point of emphasis in both oral and silent reading methods is reading fluency. The indicators of reading fluency, as listed in the literature, are automaticity, accuracy, and speed^[23–28]. Reading fluency is a very significant component of linguistic competence, especially for EFL learners. Research indicates that silent reading allows learners to process information at their own pace, leading to better comprehension and cognitive engagement^[3, 29]. Scholars argue that silent reading fosters critical thinking and reading autonomy, making it a preferred method for advanced learners^[3, 9, 30]. Stephen Krashen, one of the most vocal proponents of the silent reading approach, for example, argues that to poor students, who lack silent reading opportunities at home like rich students, silent reading in schools provides a good opportunity to read more^[29]. Krashen and Mason call the in-school reading practice “sustained silent reading” (SSR) and observe that SSR improves students’ reading ability and vocabulary acquisition. In his opinion, SSR is more effective than traditional instruction in reading^[3].

Literature on silent reading pedagogy endorses the common view that the practice enhances learners’ reading fluency, that is, automaticity, accuracy, and reading speed. Ghaith and Harkous^[9], for instance, note that silent reading enhances EFL learners’ reading proficiency and overall reading motivation, which are directly linked to their academic achievement. Mahmood’s study investigates whether silent reading is correlated to learners’ communicative competence and found that the reading approach plays a significant role in developing the students’ writing skill, listening skill, lexical and syntactic knowledge^[11]. Similarly, Yen notes that silent reading is more effective in enhancing reading speed^[30]. Reading speed is understood as the speed of word recognition with accurate comprehension. Reading speed tends to differ in one’s native tongue and in a foreign language like English^[31–33]. A normal skilled reader reads a running text in L1 at a rate of roughly 250–300 words per minute (wpm), while in L2 the normal speed is 200 wpm^[34, 35]. The ideal goal for EFL learners to read a text with familiar vocabulary is 250 wpm^[35]. As noted by Pham et al.^[36], EFL learners often read at rates below recommended reading speeds needed for reading fluency.

However, studies also show that silent reading alone may not significantly improve oral reading fluency.

2.2. Oral Reading and EFL Learning

Oral reading has conventionally been used in language classrooms to enhance pronunciation, intonation, and engagement with the text. Research suggests that reading aloud can improve phonological awareness and word recognition, making it particularly beneficial for younger learners. According to Rasinski^[6], oral reading helps words become more “memorable” as they get deeply etched into learners’ memory. Additionally, interactive read-aloud strategies have been found to be more effective than sustained silent reading in improving comprehension among EFL learners. Nirwana et al. observe that teachers are encouraged to use the read-aloud method to their specific classroom contexts to maximize students’ reading comprehension and other learning objectives^[37].

2.3. Literature on Oral Reading

Literature on oral reading puts emphasis on the speaking and listening aspects of language learning enhanced by the approach, especially concerning young children. For instance, Duursma et al. observe that reading aloud to children improves their listening skills^[38]. Proverbio et al. endorse the view adding that reading aloud helps learners recognize the highly familiar words as meaningful units like visual objects, enhancing their reading speed^[39]. According to Seidenberg^[17], English has a deep alphabetic orthography, so, reading aloud helps learners develop many language skills, such as listening and speaking. Reading aloud develops a positive attitude among EFL learners towards books and improves reading comprehension^[40]. According to the researcher, even the use of audiobooks is equivalent to reading aloud to children. Reading aloud improves language acquisition and language development in early childhood^[15, 41]. In Isozaki’s study^[41], the participant learners listened to audiobooks while reading. The findings showed that this method significantly enhanced their fluency and comprehension. Another study, conducted on Iranian EFL learners by Zamanian^[42], found that interactive read-aloud strategies were more effective in improving reading comprehension compared to sustained silent reading propounded by Krashen and Mason^[3]. A similar study by Zolfagharkhani and Kowsary in Iranian EFL contexts finds that learners displayed positive effects of the RA technique on their reading

comprehension^[43]. The participants also showed high interest in the teachers' reading aloud strategy. Similarly, Milliner conducted a 12-week reading fluency training program at a Japanese university using the variables extensive reading, timed reading, and repeated oral reading^[44]. The findings of the study showed that learners who engaged in repeated oral reading alongside extensive reading achieved greater reading rate. They also improved their listening and reading scores in standardized tests.

Online read-aloud and text-to-speech tools have also been successfully used to help learners develop fluency and comprehension and deal with reading anxiety, and classroom anxiety among EFL learners^[45, 46]. Digital RA protocols have shown significant improvements in reading speed for beginner and upper-intermediate students^[47]. Extensive reading programs in EFL contexts are noted to enhance student motivation, improving their reading skills and language proficiency development^[31, 48]. Baker and Santoro strongly support read-aloud practice as they say that how one teaches is just as important as what one teaches^[49]. An important point brought forward by Gibson is that reading aloud helps improve the reading skill by reinforcing the relationship between graphemes and phonemes^[10]. Reading aloud helps learners acquire the prosodic features of English. It also brings about a positive change in children's attitude towards books^[50]. Other studies on the effectiveness of the read-aloud approach to develop EFL fluency have also come up with encouraging results, especially showing positive effects on children's language, phonological awareness, print concepts, comprehension, and vocabulary outcomes^[51, 52]. RA holds potential benefits for EFL/ESL learners facing challenges in reading, and the theoretical incorporated into practical strategies can bring good results to improve learners' reading ability and metacognitive development^[53, 54].

To sum up, there is high praise for the read-aloud method applied to reading pedagogy in the literature reviewed above. However, it is also obvious that the reviewed literature can only vouch for the benefits of reading aloud for young learners. Research literature endorsing the significance of reading aloud for adult EFL learners is still scanty. Moreover, the literature is mostly concerned with the situation where the texts were read aloud to learners. Research on the benefits of reading aloud to EFL learners when they themselves read the texts is still lacking. There exists a gap

in the literature, and that justifies the current study.

3. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the current study was to investigate whether there exists a difference between reading aloud and aspects of foreign language development among adult EFL learners. This involved comparing the effects of the two methods of reading – silent reading and reading aloud – on various aspects of language development among EFL learners. The secondary objective of the study was a corollary to the primary objective, that is, if a difference was found, it was to be investigated what aspects/elements of foreign language development, such as pronunciation, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, etc., did the read-aloud method affect in the learners' English.

3.1. Research Questions

RQ 1: Is there a difference between reading aloud as a method and development of certain aspects of English among adult EFL learners?

RQ 2: What elements of English language development do read aloud as a reading approach affect among adult EFL learners?

3.2. Theoretical Framework

To explore potential differences between reading and development of aspects of English, the present study relied on language development theories that establish a connection between the two. To that end, Seidenberg's idea that English relies on a deeply alphabetic orthography and Ehri's hypothesis that phonemic proficiency develops via orthographic mapping have been quite useful^[16, 17]. The reliance of English on alphabetic orthography means that learners need to recognize the significance of the relationship between graphemes and phonemes, morphemes, syllables, and even lexemes, in making meaning. Reading aloud helps them recognize this relationship as it opens the path to mental lexicon formation and thus to greater word recognition. Whereas 'orthographic mapping,' a term coined by Ehri is the process readers use to store familiar words for automatic word recognition^[16]. Orthographic mapping is the bonding of a word's pronunciation, spelling and meaning in long-term memory.

For that reason, unskilled readers read slowly and effortfully, while skilled readers are fast in activating the link between a word's phonological representation (i.e., pronunciation) with its semantic representation (i.e., meaning). Thus, a process

takes place as unskilled readers become skilled, in which orthographic representation, phonological representation and semantic representation are bonded for each word to become familiar. **Figure 1**, below, represents it graphically^[8].

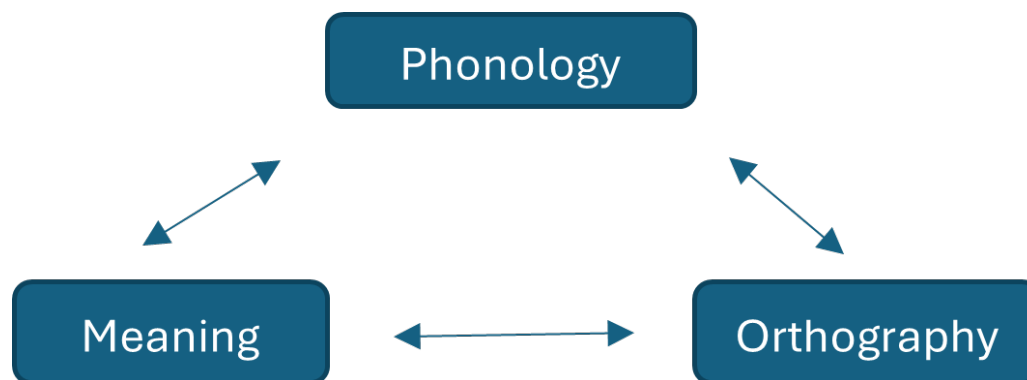


Figure 1. Interrelatedness of Phonology, Meaning and Orthography (Adapted from the Work of Bell, 2023)^[8].

Theoretically, sight and sound make a combined impression in the brain to register words for further use. And that is exactly why reading aloud is important.

4. Methodology

The research was conducted using mixed-methods research methodology. The quantitative method was used to collect the numerical data obtained from tests given to participants, whereas qualitative methodology was used to interpret the results obtained and to make sense of the numerical data, as well as presenting the findings in qualitative, narrative format. At some crucial points in analysis and interpretation, the two methods were mixed to get a better, clearer perspective emerging from data analysis. Pre-test/post-test research design was employed to conduct the present research.

4.1. Research Design

The basic research design was to introduce 'Read Aloud' as a reading method to adult EFL learners' reading pedagogy and then test if there were any perceptible changes in 6 linguistic domains- phonemic awareness, pronunciation accuracy, reading comprehension, reading speed, reading fluency, and semantic recognition, compared to the effects of Silent Reading pedagogy. Any improvement in the Read-Aloud participants' test scores in comparison to their scores in the pre-test as well as to the post-test scores of

Silent Reading group participants was taken to be a positive change. A comparative study of participants' scores in pre- and post-tests indicated the effect of Read-Aloud technique intervention. The reasons for choosing the 6 linguistic domains as dependent variables were that the reading aloud technique (independent variable) was hypothesised to inculcate the selected linguistic skills, especially in adult EFL learners.

4.2. Participants

A sample of 68 undergraduate EFL learners was selected from the ELIS 120 [majoring in the discipline of sciences] enrolled in the first trimester of a year-long mandatory English course at a Saudi university. For university education in Saudi Arabia, learning English and earning a benchmark standard in the language is a prerequisite. The selected participants' proficiency level in English was intermediate (B1) as they had studied English as a subject of study for 6 years. The selected students were all males, ranging in age between 20 and 22. They belonged to two sections of 34 students each, a homogenous mix of low, medium, and high performers in each section. These students were never given lessons in phonetics before, and they were taught to read English texts silently. Also, they had no occasion to listen to English texts being read to them in childhood by their parents, and if there arose an occasion to read English in schools, they read the texts painfully slowly. Their active English vocabulary size

was very limited and reading pace was slower than expected of them.

Table 1, given below, presents the demographic data on research participants.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Data.

Data Collection Instrument	Group	Gender	N	Average Age	English Proficiency Level
Pre-Test		M	68	20–22	B1
Post-Test	Reading Aloud	M	34	20–22	B1
	Silent Reading	M	34	20–22	B1

4.3. Data Collection and Analysis

4.3.1. Research Instruments

The data were collected using pre-test and post-tests as instruments. These tests were conducted to assess the impact of reading aloud versus silent reading across six variables/linguistic domains, as follows:

1. Phonemic awareness: Minimal-pair discrimination tests were administered.
2. Pronunciation accuracy: Phonetic transcription exercises were used to assess this variable.
3. Reading comprehension: Reading comprehension was measured through passages from their prescribed books, with multiple-choice questions.
4. Reading speed: It was recorded in words per minute (wpm) using calibrated digital reading assessments.
5. Reading fluency: This variable was analysed using prosody assessments, including intonation, stress, pitch, and rhythm measurements.
6. Semantic recognition: Vocabulary retention exercises were used to measure the variable.

The reading tests consisted of reading passages followed by a set of test questions focused on reading comprehension, reading speed, reading fluency, and semantic recognition (vocabulary and decoding complex information). Phonemic awareness and pronunciation accuracy were tested through separate tests meant for this purpose. Five of the six test variables were assigned 5 marks each. For ease of understanding, the scores were converted into percentage figures, while reading speed was measured as Words Per Minute (WPM).

4.3.2. Research Procedure

The pre-test was conducted just as the two sections of students were designated as participants for the experiment. After the pre-test, one of the sections was called “Reading Aloud group” while the other section was called “Silent Reading group.” The two sections were homogenous mixes of low, medium, and high performers, and their pre-test results did not show any significant differences in the calibres of participants in each group (see **Table 2**, given below). Passages selected for the experimental reading sessions were from the book prescribed for the regular reading course of these students. The Reading Aloud group participants were instructed to read the passages aloud, whether at home or in class. In a 40-minute class every day, first the teacher (the researcher, who was the instructor for both sections) read 2 paragraphs (approx. 200 words) aloud to present the accent and reading speed model. Then all participants were given a chance, one by one, to read the same passage aloud, with strict instructions not to take more than 1 minute to finish the reading. The reading session was followed by comprehension questions. Participants in the Silent Reading group also read the same passages, albeit silently. The teacher didn't read the passages; so, no accent and speed model was presented to the class. The Silent Reading sessions were also followed by comprehension questions. After 12 weeks of training, participants in the two groups were given a post-test. The test battery consisted of elements assessing the values of 6 study variables. The obtained test results were analyzed statistically.

The information can be graphically represented as follows (**Figure 2**).

Table 2. Mean Pre-test Scores of Participants for Each Domain/Variable.

Linguistic Domain	Reading Aloud	Silent Reading
Phonemic Awareness	65.2	66.1
Pronunciation Accuracy	61.5	62.4
Reading Comprehension	60.2	61.4
Reading Speed (WPM)	120.4	119.5
Reading Fluency	55.8	56.3
Semantic Recognition	58.1	59.3

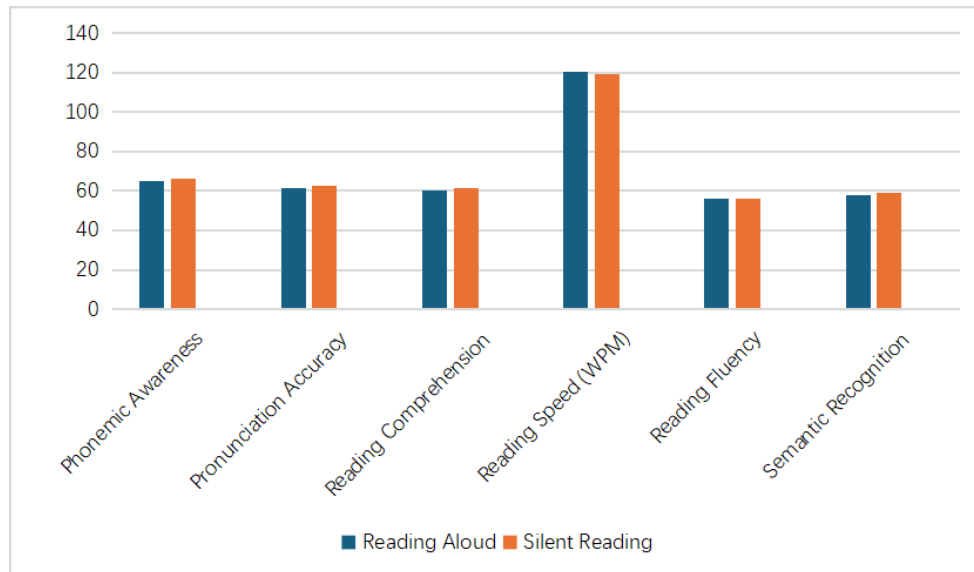


Figure 2. Graphical Representation of Participants' Pre-test Scores.

4.3.3. Statistical Analysis

The raw scores obtained from the collected data were tabulated and subjected to further statistical analysis. Mean, median, and standard deviation values were calculated to get a clearer picture of participants' overall performance before and after intervention. Paired t-tests were employed within each group to determine the significance of differences in the numerical figures obtained (any improvements before and after the intervention). ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was conducted to compare the differences between the two groups: Reading Aloud and Silent Reading. Effect size (Cohen's d) was also calculated to find out the magnitude of

improvements, if any. Effect Size is used to determine the magnitude of the differences between pre-test and post-test results. The interpretation guidelines are small effect ($d = 0.2$), medium effect ($d = 0.5$), large effect ($d = 0.8+$).

5. Results

The mean pre-test and post-test scores for each domain/variable for the two groups are presented in **Table 3**, given below.

The information can be graphically represented as follows (**Figure 3**).

Table 3. Mean Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Scores for Each Domain/Variable.

Linguistic Domain	Reading Aloud	Silent Reading
Phonemic Awareness	65.2 → 84.5	66.1 → 74.2
Pronunciation Accuracy	61.5 → 80.3	62.4 → 70.1
Reading Comprehension	60.2 → 75.5	61.4 → 79.8
Reading Speed (WPM)	120.4 → 135.8	119.5 → 150.2
Reading Fluency	55.8 → 82.7	56.3 → 68.5
Semantic Recognition	58.1 → 80.2	59.3 → 72.4

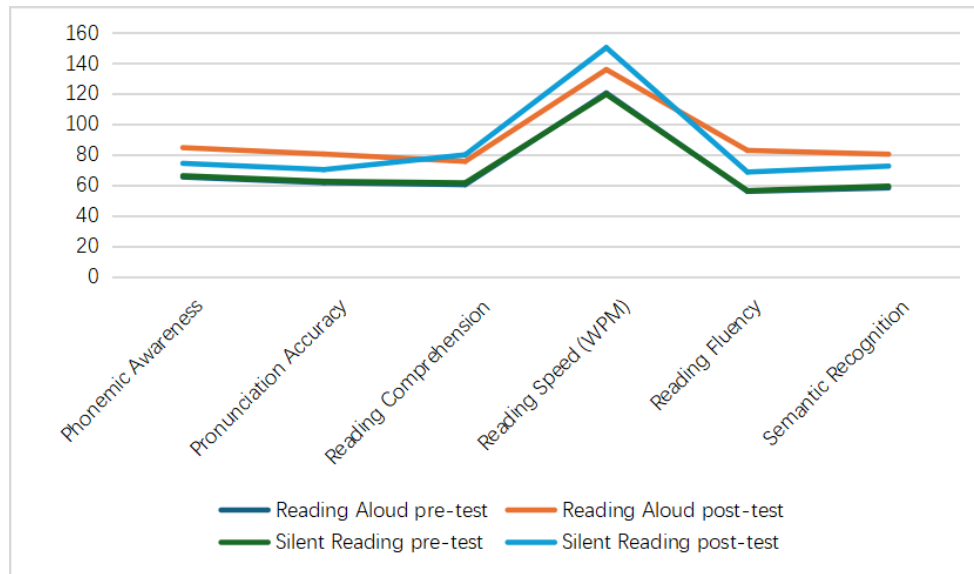


Figure 3. Graphic Representation of Pre-test/Post-test Scores for Each Domain.

Table 4, given below, presents a comparative study of reading speed (wpm) improvements in the two groups over time.

The information can be graphically represented as fol-

lows (**Figure 4**).

The Silent Reading group shows greater acceleration in reading speed as compared to the Reading Aloud group over time.

Table 4. Reading Speed Improvements Over Time (wpm).

Group	Week 1	Week 4	Week 8	Week 12
Reading Aloud	120 wpm →	126 wpm →	130 wpm →	135 wpm
Silent Reading	119 wpm →	132 wpm →	140 wpm →	150 wpm

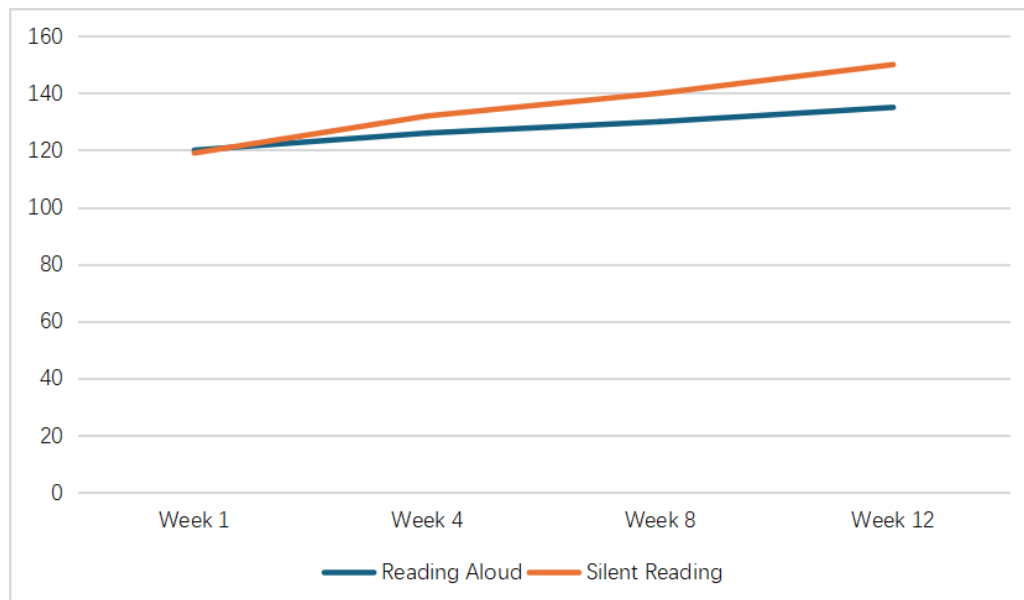


Figure 4. Graphic Representation of Reading Speed Improvement Over Time.

Similarly, **Table 5**, given below, presents Cohen's d effect sizes for each linguistic domain/variable, indicating the magnitude of improvement.

The information can be represented as follows (**Figure 5**).

The Reading Aloud group demonstrates a stronger effect on fluency and phonemic awareness. The Silent Reading group, on the other hand, demonstrates a greater effect on their reading speed.

A summary of the results obtained from statistical anal-

ysis of the collected data is presented in **Table 6**, given below.

Table 5. Cohen's d Effect Sizes for Each Linguistic Domain/Variable.

Linguistic Domain	Effect Size (d)
Phonemic Awareness	0.82 (large)
Pronunciation Accuracy	0.76 (large)
Reading Comprehension	0.58 (medium)
Reading Speed	0.71 (large)
Reading Fluency	0.89 (large)
Semantic Recognition	0.68 (large)

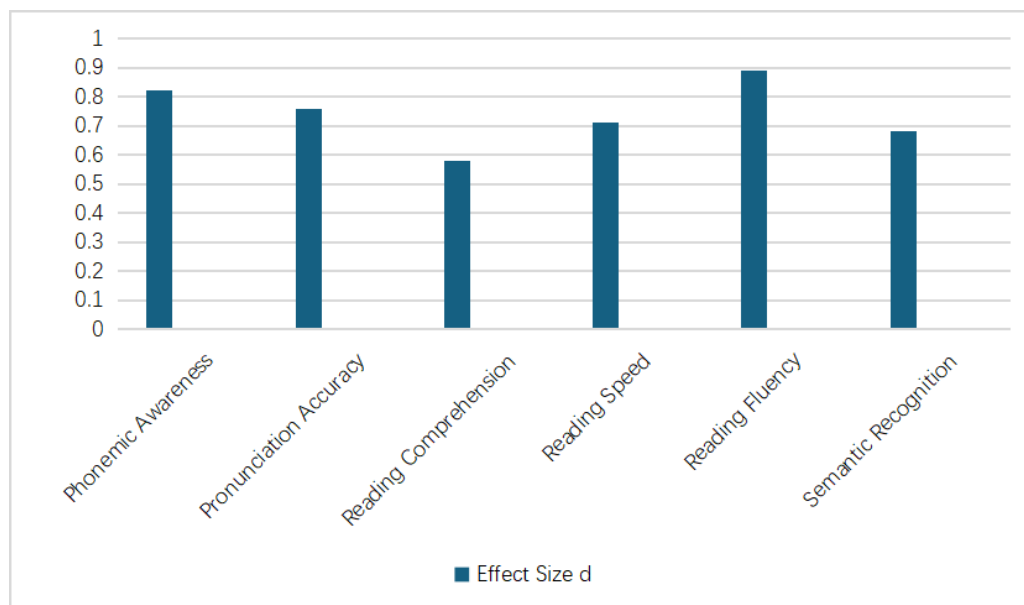


Figure 5. Cohen's d Effect Size.

Table 6. Summary of Results Obtained from Statistical Analysis of Data.

Domain	Reading Aloud (Mean \pm SD)	Silent Reading (Mean \pm SD)	Paired t-Test (p-Value)	ANOVA (p-Value)	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
Phonemic Awareness	Pre: 65.2 \pm 7.4 \rightarrow Post: 84.5 \pm 6.9	Pre: 66.1 \pm 6.8 \rightarrow Post: 74.2 \pm 7.1	<0.001 (significant)	<0.01	0.82 (large)
Pronunciation Accuracy	Pre: 61.5 \pm 8.1 \rightarrow Post: 80.3 \pm 7.4	Pre: 62.4 \pm 7.9 \rightarrow Post: 70.1 \pm 6.5	<0.001 (significant)	<0.05	0.76 (large)
Reading Comprehension	Pre: 60.2 \pm 9.3 \rightarrow Post: 75.5 \pm 8.6	Pre: 61.4 \pm 8.9 \rightarrow Post: 79.8 \pm 7.4	<0.05 (significant)	<0.01	0.58 (medium)
Reading Speed (WPM)	Pre: 120.4 \pm 12.1 \rightarrow Post: 135.8 \pm 10.7	Pre: 119.5 \pm 11.9 \rightarrow Post: 150.2 \pm 9.8	<0.01 (significant)	<0.001	0.71 (large)
Reading Fluency	Pre: 55.8 \pm 8.6 \rightarrow Post: 82.7 \pm 7.1	Pre: 56.3 \pm 8.3 \rightarrow Post: 68.5 \pm 6.9	<0.001 (significant)	<0.001	0.89 (large)
Semantic Recognition	Pre: 58.1 \pm 7.5 \rightarrow Post: 80.2 \pm 6.8	Pre: 59.3 \pm 7.8 \rightarrow Post: 72.4 \pm 6.2	<0.01 (significant)	<0.05	0.68 (large)

6. Discussion

A cursory glance at the summary results in **Table 6**, above, shows statistically significant improvements across

all six measured linguistic areas (for most variables $p < 0.01$) investigated in the present study. The results can be broken down into percentage figures to arrive at a clearer picture, as follows:

- **Phonemic Awareness & Pronunciation:** The Reading Aloud Group recorded a difference of 19.3 marks (approx. 30% enhancement) in phonemic differentiation and improved articulation in complex phonemes. The Silent Reading Group, on the other hand, recorded a difference of only 8.1 marks (approx. 10% improvement). The results indicate that the read-aloud method of reading pedagogy enhances learners' phonological awareness and improved articulation of English sounds.
- **Reading Comprehension & Reading Speed:** The Silent Reading Group shows a difference of 18.4 marks (approx. 30% enhancement) in reading comprehension accuracy compared to a difference of 15.3 marks (25% improvement) shown by Reading Aloud Group participants. Moreover, participants in the Silent Reading group improved their reading speed by 30 words per minute on average, while participants in the Reading Aloud group gained 15 wpm. The indication is that the silent reading strategy is suitable to improve reading speed.
- **Reading Fluency & Semantic Recognition:** Reading Aloud participants display a difference of 26.9 marks (48% enhancement) in pre-test/post-test reading fluency. They surpassed the Silent Reading Group participants who gained only a difference of 12.2 mean marks (21% enhancement) from the pre-test fluency. Similarly, as regards semantic recognition, the Reading Aloud group clocked a difference of 22.1 marks from their pre-test mean marks (38% increase) compared to the Silent Reading group who showed a difference of only 13.1 marks (22% enhancement).

The ANOVA analysis displays that reading aloud strategy is more beneficial for lower-proficiency learners than higher-proficiency learners. Findings of the study suggest that reading aloud is particularly effective for phonemic awareness, pronunciation, and fluency, while silent reading is more helpful to improve reading comprehension and speed. Thus, the research findings clearly support the integration of reading aloud strategy into EFL reading pedagogy since EFL learners are commonly less proficient in the language. The reading aloud method supports a deeper phonological awareness and enhances learners' overall linguistic proficiency. This also underscores the cognitive benefits of reading aloud, reinforcing both pronunciation and comprehension.

7. Conclusions

The present research was undertaken to investigate if there exists a difference between reading aloud as a method to read and the development of certain aspects of English language in adult EFL learners. Also, if there is a difference, what elements of English language read aloud as a reading approach affect the most in adult EFL learners. The data analysis shows that there are differences between the selected variables. Reading aloud as a reading method is positively correlated to the development of certain aspects of English language in adult EFL learners. The reading approach helps learners develop phonemic awareness resulting in better pronunciation, reading fluency and semantic recognition. The method also helps learners enhance their vocabulary retention rate. And that answers the second research question. Findings of this research are significant since the research was specifically focused on the benefits of reading aloud by adult learners themselves as opposed to studies focused on teachers reading in class or parents reading to their wards at home. The findings of the present research are also supported by findings from previous studies on the topic. For instance, Rasinski found that reading aloud helps words become more deeply etched into learners' memory. Reading aloud improves comprehension among EFL learners^[6]. Nirwana et al. emphasize that teachers are encouraged to use the read-aloud method to maximize students' reading comprehension^[37]. Duursma et al. observe that reading aloud to children improves their listening skills^[38]. Milliner's findings showed that learners who engaged in repeated oral reading alongside extensive reading achieved greater reading rate^[44]. Gibson says that reading aloud helps reading by reinforcing the relationship between graphemes and phonemes^[10]. To conclude, reading aloud and silent reading both enhance EFL learners' linguistic skills, but their impact varies across different domains. Therefore, a judicious mix of the two strategies should be followed as reading pedagogy in adult EFL classrooms.

7.1. Limitations of the Study

Enough care was taken to conduct the present study to perfection, yet, owing to certain unavoidable circumstances, the study faced certain limitations. The first limitation is that only male students were recruited as participants for the

study. This was a restraining factor for lack of coeducation in Saudi Arabia. Second, the scope of the findings of the study is limited, and therefore, cannot be generalized. For generalization of results, further research under similar research conditions is required.

7.2. Further Recommendations

Future research studies may consider recruiting participants from both genders and observing the results. Also, future researchers should explore longitudinal effects of the read-aloud method and mixed-method interventions for optimized language acquisition by adult EFL learners.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

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Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

Data may be available with the permission of the Deanship of Scientific Research, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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