

## **Readings on L2 reading: Publications in other venues 2007–2008**

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This feature offers an archive of articles and books published in other venues during the past year and serves as a valuable tool to readers of *Reading in a Foreign Language (RFL)*. The Articles section treats any topic within the scope of *RFL* and second language reading. Articles are organized by topic and are listed in alphabetical order. This section includes titles of the articles as well as brief summaries. One additional section includes a list of dissertations that treat second language reading. The editors of this feature attempted to include all related articles that appear in other venues. However, undoubtedly, this list is not exhaustive.

### **Articles**

#### ***Course Design***

Rivas de White, E., & Payne, M. (2008). Using sustained silent reading in the language classroom. *The Language Educator*, 3(3), 54–56.

This article describes one high school Spanish teacher's program of including *sustained silent reading* (SSR) in the classroom. The authors contend that the program has been a success by creating more excitement about reading and the language itself, and leading to authentic improvement. Students involved in the program use more vocabulary and advanced grammar structures in their writing, and 90% of them affirm that the tests and exams were easier for them after participating in the SSR program.

#### ***Individual Reader Differences***

Brady, E. C., & Kritsonis, W. A. (2008). Targeting reading fluency for ESL students: A research based and practical application. *The Lamar University Electronic Journal of Student Research*, 7, 1–6.

In this article the authors correlate research in ESL reading and adult education reading instruction to practical strategies used to teach fluency in a second-grade ESL reading class. The exercises for each story or play begin with learning vocabulary and emphasize repeated reading over the next 4 days. The 5<sup>th</sup> day focuses entirely on extending the story through writing exercises. The authors conclude that the strategies used in the class effectively employ research-

based principles.

Harrison, G., & Krol, L. (2007). Relationship between L1 and L2 word-level reading and phonological processing in adults. *Journal of Research in Reading, 30*, 379–393.

This investigation examines associations among word-level and phonological processing skills of 32 adults learning ESL who are L1 speakers of Mandarin Chinese. The authors also explored the identification of potential students who may have English reading difficulties. Findings indicated that phonological processing skills can be assessed in students' L2 to predict L2 reading performance and that it may be possible for ESL instructors in adult language centers to predict and attend to L2 reading difficulties. The authors cite prior literature on explicit and intensive instruction on the phonological aspects of reading into ESL instruction.

### ***Lexis***

Golkar, M., & Yamini, M. (2007). Vocabulary, proficiency and reading comprehension. *The Reading Matrix, 7*(3), 88–112.

In an attempt to empirically prove the reliability and viability of the Vocabulary Levels Tests, Golkar and Yamini administered the Vocabulary Levels Test, the Productive Version of the Vocabulary Levels Test, and the TOEFL test to 76 Iranian students. Their conclusion is that these tests are, indeed, dependable and can be useful resources for language teachers as well as second language acquisition teachers. The results for one research question (“What is the relationship between learners’ passive and active vocabularies and their reading comprehension ability?”) indicate that active vocabulary is more highly correlated with reading comprehension than passive vocabulary.

Hamada, M., & Koda, K. (2008). Influence of first language orthographic experience on second language decoding and word learning. *Language Learning, 58*, 1–31.

With native Korean and Chinese speakers learning English, the authors conducted two experiments to examine the influence of L1 orthographic experience on both L2 decoding and word learning. The findings of the first experiment demonstrated that L1 orthographic background does affect L2 decoding efficiency, and consequently the second experiment examined whether L2 decoding efficiency positively impacts learning and retention of newly introduced L2 words. The authors offer a detailed and highly exhaustive literature review. Overall results suggested that print processing experiences in both L1 and L2 jointly form decoding skills and that decoding efficiency enhances intentional word learning in the L2 (p. 24). In conclusion, the authors offer connections between findings and practical implications for decoding and word learning.

Min, H.-T. (2008). EFL vocabulary acquisition and retention: Reading plus vocabulary enhancement activities and narrow reading. *Language Learning, 58*, 73–115.

The aim of this study was to determine the effects of *reading plus vocabulary-enhancement (RV)* activities on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners’ vocabulary acquisition and long-term

retention. The participants, 50 male Chinese EFL speakers at a senior high school in Taiwan, were divided into two groups: One received instruction using RV methodology, and the other was instructed using *narrow reading* (NR). The researcher concludes that the more effective and efficient approach for the EFL teacher who wants to enhance students' receptive and productive vocabulary acquisition and long-term retention is to teach reading plus focused vocabulary exercises.

### ***Metacognition***

Lawrence, L. J. (2007). Cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies revisited: Implications for instruction. *The Reading Matrix*, 7(3), 55–63.

This article reviews research on cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies. The author includes a table that outlines prior research on reading strategies of bilingual students and describes the populations studied as well as results. The synthesis of studies includes elementary grade students as well as university level students. A detailed discussion of each reviewed investigation is offered. The author's examination of prior research emphasizes the differences between cognitive and metacognitive strategies with investigations that utilized both monolingual and bilingual participants. Finally, specific approaches to strategy instruction are detailed.

### ***Practical Implications (Methods and Materials)***

Avalos, M. A., Plasencia A., Chavez, C., & Rascón, J. (2007). Modified guided reading: Gateway to English as a second language and literacy learning. *The Reading Teacher*, 61, 318–329.

The authors assert that by modifying the guided-reading instructional model, teachers can provide additional language-learning opportunities for English-language learners (ELLs). They outline the theoretical framework for *modified guided reading* (MGR), describe its components, present a sample lesson, and reveal the results of a small sample study. The modifications focus on clarifying features of the text, such as difficult vocabulary, figurative language, complex syntax, and culturally specific information, which native speakers may implicitly understand but could cause difficulty for ELLs. The authors maintain that each time they have implemented MGR in their classrooms, their students have achieved reading gains.

Gibson, S. (2008). Reading aloud: A useful learning tool? *ELT Journal*, 62, 29–36.

The author challenges prior assertions that *reading aloud* (RA) is not an effective practice. She begins the article with a review of arguments that oppose reading aloud in classrooms, and then balances the assertions with benefits of using RA. She includes details of how to effectively use RA for diagnostic purposes, pronunciation, prosody, anxiety, and writing. She then offers a detailed description of RA as it is effectively used with ESL students from various countries. The author concludes with a strong statement about how instructors should reconsider the negative perceptions of RA in the classroom.

Kalia, V. (2007). Assessing the role of book reading practices in Indian bilingual children's English language and literacy development. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 35, 149–153.

With 24 bilingual children from schools in Bangalore, India, the study examines the roles of Indian bilingual parents' book reading practices and associates these practices to the development of oral language and literacy skills in English. Findings revealed correlational links among oral language skills (complex syntax and narrative complexity) and exposure to book reading. Findings also indicated positive associations between concepts about print and exposure to book reading. This investigation holds important practical implications for both preschool teachers and parents in India.

Memom, R., & Badger, R. (2007). Purposeful change? Changing the teaching of reading in a regional university in Pakistan. *System*, 35, 551–565.

This article details the changes and outcomes for a new way of teaching reading in a regional university of Pakistan. The article explains what happens in the traditional classroom, and also what takes place in the classroom according to the innovative strategies approach (Bamford & Day, 1998). Results show that, with the strategies approach, the reading courses are more sophisticated in their structure as they allow students to approach and interact with the reading materials in different ways. Also, in this new approach, the instructor serves as a facilitator of activities, which contrast the traditional, teacher-centered approach to reading. In the end, the new style supports reading, but the authors discuss the limitation—a lack of evidence for improved reading skills. Future research could address this issue.

Ranker, J. (2007). Using comic books as read-alouds: Insights on reading instruction from an English as a second language classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, 61, 296–305.

In this article Ranker details three lessons in which a teacher uses comic books as read-aloud texts in her first-grade ESL classroom. In the first lesson, the teacher uses a Spider-Man comic to teach students to recognize a central problem and resolution in narrative structure. In the second, *Hulk and Wild Girl* help the students become aware of the gendered representations of the characters and help the teacher incorporate critical media literacy into her reading curriculum. In the final lesson, the teacher creates her own comic and instructs the students in distinguishing between narration and dialogue.

Tilfarlioglu, F. Y., & Basaran, S. (2007). Enhancing reading comprehension through task-based writing activities: An experimental study. *The Reading Matrix*, 7(3), 134–152.

In this experimental study, the authors' goal was to provide evidence that task-based writing activities positively affect reading comprehension for students of English as a foreign language. The study included two groups of 28 students in their 1<sup>st</sup> year at a university in Turkey. The control group was taught using only traditional methods while the experimental group received additional task-based instruction. The results show significant gains in reading comprehension for the experimental group, thus providing a theoretical validation for those who advocate the use of task-based learning in the foreign language classroom.

Tran, A. (2007). A learning-center vocabulary-reading activity for English-language learners. *The Clearing House*, 81(2), 61–62.

In this brief article, Tran suggests a reading activity for English-language learners that proposes to maximize the use of class time and encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. The activity combines vocabulary learning, cooperative learning, and extensive reading.

### ***Reading and Technology***

Absalom, M., & Rizzi, A. (2008). Comparing the outcomes of online listening versus online text-based tasks in university level Italian L2 study. *ReCall*, 20(1), 55–66.

In this exploratory study, the authors compare the results of online listening and online text-based tasks and conclude that the former encourage an integrative and deep approach to learning, while the latter promote a surface approach to learning. Fourteen students of Italian were divided into two groups with different tasks: a listening group and a text-based group. The listening group became engaged with the topics and language and applied a variety of learning strategies to the task; however, the text-based group tended to treat the text superficially, skimming for answers and often misunderstanding the text. The authors readily admit that the small sample is a major limitation of their study and make a case for additional research to further scrutinize the cross-modality effects of online listening.

Cobb, T. (2007). Computing the vocabulary demands of L2 reading. *Language Learning & Technology*, 11, 38–63.

The author provides a strong case for the contributions of linguistic computing to L2 reading instruction. He makes the following claim grounded in data-driven evidence: Free or wide reading alone is not a sufficient source of lexical knowledge for L2 reading. The author offers solutions to this issue with suggestions for computer processing that links and increases the supply of vocabulary input that is available to the learner. Cobb offers detailed descriptions of instructional implications for the use of both books and computers in the teaching of L2 reading. He provides detailed examples of how to link texts to speech, use a group lexical database, and incorporate postreading vocabulary activities.

Cobb, T. (2008). Commentary: Response to McQuillan and Krashen (2008). *Language Learning & Technology*, 12, 109–114.

In this article Cobb responds to the critique by McQuillan and Krashen of his 2007 article cited above. His primary disagreement with his critics is that the reading rate research they cite in their article is inappropriately applied to the circumstances described by Cobb. His original statements relate to ESL and EFL students, in their 1<sup>st</sup> years at an English-speaking university, who need to reach a 3,000-level vocabulary in order to facilitate their education. Dissimilarly, the numbers provided by McQuillan and Krashen are taken from studies of participant groups with significant prior experience in Canada or the United States, or from studies whose texts are considerably below the 3,000 word level.

Huang, H. -T., & Liou, H. -C. (2007). Vocabulary learning in an automated graded reading program. *Language Learning & Technology*, 11(3), 64–82.

With the intent of building vocabulary, the authors created a 12-week online English extensive reading program for a group of 38 Chinese-speaking EFL college students. They began with a corpus of 5,008 authentic texts dealing with issues in Taiwan and eventually limited the corpus to 16 texts, each with a minimum of 95% known word coverage. They developed a syllabus called *Textgrader*, which they used to sequence the texts from easiest to most difficult based on a series of research-based criteria and four word lists. The study shows measurable vocabulary learning for all 38 participants; however, the authors found a high level of reliance on reading habits and strategies learned in high school and associated with intensive reading. The authors determine that for constructive vocabulary acquisition the online extensive reading syllabus can effectively function as a link between explicit teaching and implicit learning.

Lan, Y. -J., Sung, Y. -T., & Chang, K. -E. (2007). A mobile-device-supported peer-assisted learning system for collaborative early EFL reading. *Language Learning & Technology*, 11, 130–151.

With 26 third-grade students of EFL in Taiwan, the present investigation included two different studies. The first study examined collaborative learning for EFL reading in a classroom. Results indicated serious flaws and weaknesses in this technique. The second study examined how a mobile-device-supported peer-assisted learning (MPAL) system was created and utilized in order to address the issues involved with collaborative learning. A very descriptive and detailed analysis revealed that MPAL does indeed enhance collaboration in elementary school level EFL readers, and MPAL also improves issues concerning motivation of the learners.

Lin, H., & Chen, T. (2007). Reading authentic EFL text using visualization and advance organizers in a multimedia learning environment. *Language Learning & Technology*, 11, 83–106.

Driven by theories from cognitive psychology in support of the use of multimedia to facilitate L2 learners' reading comprehension, the investigation examines the effects of advance organizers and visualizations on comprehension. With 115 intermediate EFL learners in Taiwan, findings indicated that animations are more effective than static visuals in only one of four tests. However, animation that included a question with an advance organizer had a marginal effect with four treatments for reading comprehension. The authors include a very detailed and useful description of how to include static visuals and dynamic visuals as represented via animation in order to improve L2 reading comprehension.

McQuillan, J., & Krashen, S. D. (2008). Commentary: Can free reading take you all the way? A response to Cobb (2007). *Language Learning & Technology*, 12, 104–108.

The authors examine and critique Cobb's (2007) assertion that free reading does not provide sufficient opportunities for L2 readers to achieve high levels of lexical acquisition, and they point out the following two problems with this claim: (a) The amount of reading that Cobb

proposes as optimistic is the opposite, that is, it is “pessimistic” in the extreme; (b) free reading across different genres can give a reader the necessary vocabulary for adult-level fluency. The authors contend that Cobb’s data indeed show how powerful free reading can be, even at minimal levels.

Murphy, P. (2007). Reading comprehension exercises online: The effects of feedback, proficiency and interaction. *Language Learning & Technology, 11*, 107–129.

With Japanese students from upper and lower levels of English proficiency, the author describes an online version of a reading program that embraces an interactionist view of second language acquisition. Quantitative analysis revealed that interaction between type of feedback and manner of study (either individual or pair work) was significant for comprehension as assessed via multiple choice questions. Learners achieved higher scores on a comprehension task when in pairs and when provided with elaborative feedback. Additionally, findings showed that elaborative feedback positively effected quality interaction. The author provides detailed descriptions of elaborate feedback and manners of study.

### ***The Reading Process***

Erten, I. H., & Karakas, M. (2007). Understanding the divergent influences of reading activities on the comprehension of short stories. *The Reading Matrix, 7*(3), 113–133.

This study reaffirms the necessity of using a variety of reading activities to promote the comprehension of a text by students of a foreign language. The researchers examined two types of reading comprehension, literal comprehension and evaluation, with two groups of 3<sup>rd</sup>-year university students in Turkey. One group made use of activities such as previewing, scanning, skimming, clarifying, and drawing conclusions, which led to a greater literal comprehension of the short story. The second group used activities such as brainstorming, reciprocal teaching, inferring, thinking aloud, and discussion, and scored significantly higher on evaluative comprehension. The authors state that the study should be considered tentative and limited in scope because it did not monitor variables that might have biased the results, yet they conclude that reading teachers must carefully and purposefully select reading activities according to their desired outcome.

### ***Testing and Assessment***

Fraser, C. A. (2007). Reading rate in L1 Mandarin Chinese and L2 English across five reading tasks. *The Modern Language Journal, 91*, 372–394.

With native Chinese speakers learning English, this investigation examined a phenomenon not yet widely examined in L2 reading: L1 and L2 reading rates and task performance across five tasks (scanning, skimming, normal reading, learning, memorizing). Through a thorough and detailed literature review, the author offers compelling support from past L1 and L2 research as motivation for the current study. Findings indicate some decrease in L2 scores on three tasks (scanning, skimming, memorizing) and on all L1 tasks. Additionally, results showed that L2 proficiency was not a predictor of L2 reading rate but was a predictor of L2 performance on two

tasks (learning, memorizing). The author provides strong support for future studies of this nature.

### **Dissertations Treating L2 Reading**

Ballard, T. Y. (2007). The effect of audio self-modeling on the reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and reading level of first and second grade students who are at-risk in reading. *Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences*. 68, 929.

Goodman, N. E. (2007). Word-reading strategies: English-speaking first graders learning Hebrew as a second language. *Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences*. 68, 931.

Lee, C. N. (2007). Supporting English learning in the family: An ethnographic case study of a young Korean-English learner. *Dissertation Abstracts International, Section C: Worldwide*. 68, 20–21.

Lowdermilk, C. (2007). The impact of language acquisition on second language reading fluency. *Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences*. 68, 1386.

Yoshida, M. (2007). The effects of task, text, and proficiency on second language reading. *Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences*. 68, 869.

### **About the Editors**

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*RFL* readers are encouraged to send to Dr. Brantmeier titles of appropriate articles. Please include all relevant information (e.g., author[s], journal, date of publication) and, if possible, a brief summary. Send to: [cbrantme@wustl.edu](mailto:cbrantme@wustl.edu)