



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**READING COMPONENTS AND ORAL READING FLUENCY AMONG
ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

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**READING COMPONENTS AND ORAL READING FLUENCY AMONG ENGLISH
SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

LING HIE PING

This project is submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
Bachelor of Science with Honours (Cognitive Science)

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The project entitled 'Reading Components and Oral Reading Fluency among English Second Language Learners' was prepared by Ling Hie Ping and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Cognitive Science).

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ABSTRACT

Oral reading fluency is one of the six components of reading competency along with word reading accuracy (WRA), word reading efficiency (WRE), phonological awareness (PA), rapidly automatized naming (RAN), and phonological memory (PM). It is related to reading comprehension and it can be used to predict a reader's reading competency. However, this study was limited to English as a second language among primary school students. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between reading components and oral reading fluency and to determine if oral reading fluency predicts reading comprehension. The participant of this comprised 866 years Primary 1 students from different schools in Kuching. Difference kinds of measurements were used in this research to find out if reading comprehension has a correlation with oral reading fluency. Besides that, the final data obtained were analyzed using a correlation and multiple regression analysis. Pearson correlation test was used to determine the correlation between reading components and oral reading fluency and the relationship between oral reading fluency reading comprehension; the multiple linear regression was tested to determine if the reading components predict oral reading fluency and reading comprehension.

Keywords: reading components, reading, reading comprehension, oral reading fluency, word reading accuracy, word reading efficiency, phonological awareness, phonological memory, rapid automatized naming

ABSTRAK

Pembacaan lisan secara lisan adalah salah satu daripada enam komponen kecekapan bacaan bersama dengan ketepatan bacaan perkataan (*WRA*), kecekapan bacaan perkataan (*WRE*), kesedaran fonologi (*PA*), penamaan secara automatik automatik (*RAN*), dan memori fonologi (*PM*). Ia berkaitan dengan pemahaman membaca dan boleh digunakan untuk meramalkan kecekapan membaca . Walaubagaimanapun, kajian ini terhad kepada Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua di kalangan pelajar sekolah rendah. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara komponen bacaan dan bacaan lisan dengan lisan dan untuk menentukan sama ada bacaan secara lisan yang lazim meramalkan pemahaman bacaan. Kajian ini dijalankan dengan 866 tahun satu pelajar dari pelbagai sekolah di Kuching. Jenis perbezaan ukuran telah digunakan dalam kajian ini untuk mengetahui sama ada pemahaman bacaan mempunyai korelasi dengan bacaan lisan. Di samping itu, data akhir yang diperoleh dianalisis dengan menggunakan hubungan korelasi dan analisis regresi berganda untuk menentukan korelasi antara komponen bacaan dan bacaan fasih lisan dan hubungan antara bacaan lisan membaca kefahaman; regresi linear berganda akan diuji untuk menentukan sama ada komponen bacaan meramalkan kebolehpercayaan bacaan lisan dan pemahaman bacaan.

Kata kunci: komponen bacaan, bacaan, kefahaman bacaan, membaca secara lisan, ketepatan bacaan perkataan, kecekapan membaca perkataan, kesedaran fonologi, ingatan fonologi, penamaan automatik pantas

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Fluency refers to the ability to read with proper expression, accuracy, and rate (Rasinski, 2006). It is also the ability to examine the text while not having to stop while decoding each word. It is important for readers to improve their decoding skills and text fluidity. Research findings regarding reading fluency has shown that reading competence and the ability to examine associated textual content fluently is one of the most important competence for a successful reading understanding (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001). The National Reading Panel found that “reading fluency improved students’ abilities to recognize new words; read with greater speed, accuracy, and expression; and better understand what they read” (National, 2000). A fluent reader can concentrate on reading the content instead of decoding each word. If children are fluent readers, they can interact with the text at a higher level.

There are three basic sub-skills of oral reading fluency. There are accuracy, speed and prosody. Reading accuracy is the first sub-skill referring to the ability to decode and generate the phonological representation of written words (Penner-Wilger, 2008a). In order to decode, the reader must be able to master the basic alphabetical principles and then blend separate sounds into a word (Courbron, 2012; Torgeson & Hudson, 2006). Reading accuracy is in line with the theory of automaticity because when a reader can decode a word quickly and sounds it out correctly with little cognitive effort or attention, it makes comprehension much easier to achieve. In addition to reading accuracy, automaticity in reading is equally important. A second sub-skill, the speed of reading, is also known as reading rate. Reading rate refers to the reader’s speed and fluidity when reading a connected text (Hudson& Lane, 2000).

The third sub-skill (i.e., reading prosody), refers to the “naturality of reading” (Penner-Wilger, 2008b, p. 3).It also refers to a reader's ability to read correct phrases and

engage the text with appropriate volume, stress, tone, and intonation (Penner-Wilger, 2008b).

The reader must be able to divide the text into meaningful pieces and actively construct the meaning of the passage that he or she is reading with the appropriate expressions in terms of reading. The use of prosody in reading shows that a reader can decode and construct meaning by connecting prosody features inherent in the text (Hook & Jones, 2002). As a result, the correct use of prosody is another indicator the reader understands what he or she has read.

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) and Word Reading Accuracy (WRA)

Readers who can read accurately may be able to recognize or understand information accurately. According to Ehri and McCormick (1998), in terms of letters or symbols study understanding, a person will be able to recognize and able to read it well. Inferior readings precision will lead to a decrease in reading comprehension and fluency. Hence, it is key to teach word identification such as decoding and pronunciation fluency to enable readers to understand the words in the context of a passage (Ehri, 2002).

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) and Word Reading Efficiency (WRE)

Efficient readers possess reading skills. They have mastery of the alphabetic principle and concept of print. Paris, Wasik, and Turner (1991), agree that efficient readers set goals and an effective short note on the systematic structure and the well-organized reading of text. Efficient readers can form mental records, summarize information, and make, review, and check predictions while reading. The efficient reader will also make inferences and use mental imagery.

Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) and Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)

Naming speed is commonly defined as the ability to quickly name a number of highly familiar visual stimuli such as digits, letters, objects, and colors on one page (Wolf & Bowers, 1999). The naming speed assessment is comprised a highly familiar stimuli that are presented in array by rows and columns. Rapid automatized naming is usually examined in

areas of reading and reading disabilities because rapid automatized naming helps the readers to understand the reading skill. RAN tasks and reading require many processes in this regard, from eye saccades to working memory to connecting orthographic and phonological representations. RAN is one of the universal processes that predicts the later ability of children to connect and automate whole sequences of letters and words with their linguistic information, regardless of the writing system.

Relationship between Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension

Oral reading fluency(ORF) may be described as the quick and accurate translation of written textual content in oral output (Speece & Ritchey, 2005). The previous studies have shown a strong relationship between ORF and Reading Comprehension. However, a few of researches suggest a dissociation between fluency and comprehension when fluency is described as accuracy or speedy in reading character words or pseudowords. Fluency is seen as a vital and important predictor of reading comprehension and it has been identified as an important component for establishing the basis for a higher understanding of language and cognitive practices (Bashir & Hook, 2009; Wise et al.,2010).

The correlation between fluency and reading with understanding has been well recognized, but it is still unclear how exactly fluency is linked to understanding (Strecker et al., 1998). Some educators argue that fluency is a prerequisite for understanding, while others believe that understanding fosters fluency. For example, Gough (1972) regarded the fluidity of oral reading as a result of decoding and understanding. Breznitz (1987) claimed that fluent oral reading contributes to both decoding and understanding.

Bashir and Hook (2009) also emphasize that even though we often see a fantastic relationship among fluency and comprehension, showing profits in both regions, sluggish phrase repetition and non-fluent reading, interferes with powerful comprehension.

Studies by Fuchs and colleagues found that oral reading fluency correlates with standard reading comprehension measures at very high levels (Fuchs et al., 2001; Jenkins et al., 2003a, 2003b). For example, Fuchs et al. (2001) report high correlations between ORF and various kinds of reading comprehension measure such as high stakes to state-mandated comprehension tests, as well as a variety of other comprehension tests using different formats (e.g. multiple choice or open questions, cloze procedures or story recall protocols). Oral reading fluency is regularly utilized in younger readers as a predictor of information, as fluent readers will likely have greater cognitive sources to understand the text (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Miller & Schwanenflugel, 2006).

Fluent Readers and Non-Fluent Readers

Fluent readers able read fluently and from reading the text they can understand the word. Usually, a fluent reader is recognized as the master of decoding skills. He or she can decode to the point of instant word recognition. Rasinski et al., (2011), stated that fluent readers can simultaneously understand the text content accurately. Besides that, they also able to understand and respond to the syntactic and semantic features of the text.

On the contrary, the non-fluent readers have a low ability in decoding the sound units. Thus, non-fluent readers encounter more difficulty in paying attention and comprehending the text. Besides that, non-fluent readers whose decoding processes are not automatic require conscious attention to decode the sound unit, making it easier for them to decode the meaning.

Components of Reading

Researchers have examined the components associated with reading instruction in greater detail: phonological awareness(PA), rapid automated naming(RAN), phonological memory, and reading comprehension.

Phonological Awareness. Phonological awareness is the ability to reflect expressly on the sound shape of the spoken language (Schneider, Roth, & Ennemoser, 2000).

Phonological attention is the field of oral language, which pertains to the ability to think about sounds in a single word (the phonological shape of the phrase) as opposed to simply that meaning of the phrase. Phonemic attention refers to the ability of the reader to recognize and manage phonemes in spoken syllables and words. According to Pullen and Justice (2003), "phonemic awareness is one aspect (and the most difficult) of phonological awareness. It is the ability to attend to and manipulate phonemes, the smallest sounds in speech". Separating the spoken "cat" into three distinct phonemes, and, requires phonemic awareness. It is also essential to learning to read in alphabetic writing system, because letters represent sounds or phonemes. Without phonemic awareness, phonics make little sense.

Phonological Memory. Phonological memory includes storing phoneme information in a temporary, brief-time period storage facility (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987). Phonological memory has the potential to hold sound-based data in immediate memory. Better phonological memory may increase the likelihood that phonemes related to letters of a phrase can be stored in memory while interpreting, freeing greater cognitive sources for decoding and understanding.

Rapid Automatized Naming. Rapid automatized naming (RAN), is defined as the capacity to call tremendously familiar visible stimuli, along with digits, letters, gadgets, and coloring supplied on one web page quickly (Wolf & Bowers, 1999). However, naming and reading the text is not similar. For instance, the reading process does not involve the articulation of words, but it involves the extraction of the meaning of the text read.

Reading Comprehension. Pressley (2000) and Birsch (2011) defined reading comprehension meaning from what is read. Reading comprehension can be a complicated relationship among automaticity and strategic psychological functional processes that enable

readers to understand the text content (Van den Broek & Espin, 2012). Reading with understanding needs completely different reading skills, such as recognition of words, fluency, lexical knowledge, and pre-existent knowledge, so the reader will quickly learn from the text. Reading understanding is a process in which readers play an important role by applying existing textual skills (Block, 2004).

Context and purpose of the present study

In Malaysia, the components of reading have been studied. As English is the second language in Malaysia, few researchers have studied ORF among English as Second Language (ESL) learners. Furthermore, most of them focus on primary school children and beyond. Our study to figure out how the reading components related with reading comprehension. This because most reading component can help the student to comprehend the text very well.

Previous studies have shown that reading components related to predicts reading comprehension through simple regression analysis. The National Reading Panel calls reading fluency a "neglected" aspect of reading in a critical way (NICHD, 2000). Since the National Reading Panel report has been published, fluency evaluation, instruction, and intervention have been extensively investigated. Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins (2001) recognized a correlation between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension, supported by theoretical frameworks on the potential for oral reading fluency as an indicator of reading success.

The study conducted by Wise, et al showed that oral reading fluency was the strongest predictor of understanding reading performance in the real world. The present study is found out the between reading components and reading comprehension among English second language students. This study will also be provided information on the importance of reading components in help students to enhance reading comprehension.

The primary research question addressed in this research are:

Research question 1: What is the correlation between reading components and oral reading fluency?

Research question 2: What are the reading components that predict oral reading fluency?

Research question 3: What is the correlation between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension?

Research question 4: How well do reading components predict reading comprehension?

CHAPTER TWO

METHODS

Participant

This present study used existing data from a larger study funded by the Ministry of Higher Education. The participants were selected from 6 primary schools located in Kuching. The target population used for the current study of 866 students in Primary 1.

The demographics of the participants including age, gender, race, mother tongue and school. The mean age of the participant is $M=7.13$ years, $SD = 0.294$. The gender of the participants are 53.3% male and 46.7% female. Participant race are divided into 68.3% Malay, 3.2% Chinese, 0.8% Indian, 13.9% Iban, 0.3% Bajau, 8.2% Bidayuh, 0.4% Kadazan, 0.6% Kayan, 0.1% Kelabit, 0.1% Sikh, 1. % Melanau, 0.2% Murut, 0.1% Penan and 1.6% others.

We have 3 different categories of mother tongue, mother tongue first, second and third. For the first mother tongue, there 8% that use Malay language at home, 65.9% Sarawak Malay, 0.9% English, 2.1% Chinese, 0.5% Tamil, 14.3% Iban, 6.1% Bidayuh, 0.2% Kadazan, 0.2% Kayan, 0.7% Melanau. 0.1% Lun Bawang, 0.6%, and others. For second language, 88.0% use Malay language, 1.8% Sarawak Malay, 9.4% English, 0.2% Chinese, 0.1% Tamil, 0.2% Iban, and 0.2% Bidayuh. The third language only has 4.0% participants of Malay language, 1.7% Sarawak Malay and 87.6% English.

The participants were from 6.4% combined school, 14.1% SK MJ DI, 10.7% SJ, 3.8% SK K, 2.4% SK SKH, 11.3% SK G, 5.5% SK MJ 7.7% SK T, 6.1% SK TJ, 15.0% SK TH, and 16.9% SK GR.

Context of the larger study

Within the larger study, the participants were from all the Primary 1 classroom from the randomly selected schools. The students were administered several tests in both English and Malay. All the tests used in the present study were individually administered except the reading comprehension measure, which was group administered.

Measures

Oral Reading Fluency. Two ORF passages were administered to the children to determine their ability to read words. The correct word read in per minute was recorded by the test administrator and is known as the reading rate (see Appendix A). Form A have 138 words that student must read correctly.

Word Reading Accuracy. One WRA test was administered to each individual student to examine the student's accuracy in reading each word (see Appendix B). For each correctly read word, the student was awarded 1 point. There were 10 items altogether.

Non-Word Reading.. Non-word reading measure was administered to measure the student's ability to read words they have not come across before. For example, students required to pronounce non-word "loat" to \lōt\|. There were 10 word altogether. For each correctly read non-word, the student was awarded 1 point. The range of non-word reading was from 0.90 to 0 .99. The Cronbach Alpha value was 0.915.

Word Reading Efficiency. Two alternate forms for the Word Reading Efficiency test was administered to determine the speed and accuracy of reading words. The test provided 60 words for student to read accurately. This test takes 30 seconds to complete it (see Appendix C).

Reading Comprehension. The Reading Comprehension measure was administered to assess the child's ability to understand the passage that was read. The text read is the same as the one used to assess ORF (see Appendix D). After that, the student needs to answer the 5 questions that have been prepared Lee et al (in review).

Phonological Awareness. Two measures of phonological awareness (see Appendix E) developed by the Read Well Diagnostic Group (Lee et al, in review) were administered. These two phonological awareness subtests were:

(a) *Elision*. This subtest assesses the children's ability in deleting words. There were 15 items that must deleted. For instance, the student was required to say "today" without saying /to/. The correct answer would be /day/. 15

(b) *Blending*. This subtest assesses the children's ability in orally blending words ranging from larger to smaller units of words such as compound, syllables, onset rhymes and phonemes. The test provided 12 words to blend it correctly. For example, students are required to blend /tooth/ and /brush/, say "toothbrush" in feedback.

Phonological Memory. The Phonological Memory assesses the student's ability to listen to the number that the instructor has read for the student (see Appendix F). The student must then recall back and read the numbers again in the correct sequence for the test administrator. This test has 18 question of number to recall it.

Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN). Two forms of digit tests were administered to each student to determine his/her RAN ability (see Appendix G). The student must read aloud a series of numbers quickly. The time taken to complete the task was recorded using a stopwatch. 5 columns and rows

Procedures

The data in the present study was from the larger study. Preceding the larger study consents to conduct the research had been obtained from the Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD) of Ministry of Education (MoE) and the state Education Department. Informed consent was given to respective parents and primary school.

Besides that, through the consent, the primary school will also be notified about the importance of this study and the emphasis of the agreement that there are no activities that will be interrupted. Data and results that were obtained will be kept confidential and exclusively for a scholarly reason. This research of the larger study was conducted with careful consideration related to ethics.

The test duration was took approximately 30 minutes per child. During the test, the child was instructed by the instructor. Besides that, any form of psychological distress during the research on the children was prevented and the children information were made confidential. All responses shall were voluntary by the children. The children were rewarded lightly. The examination was completed during school hours which are 8 a.m. and 12 p.m.

Data analysis

This research is an exploratory study that focuses on correlational quantitative research. Consequently, the final data obtained will be analyzed using a correlation relationship and multiple regression analysis in the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) version 22.0. The tests done are frequencies in descriptive statistics to determine the mean scores, Pearson correlation test was used to determine what is the correlation between reading components and oral reading fluency and the correlation between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension; multiple linear regression was be used to find out what were the

reading components that predict oral reading fluency and how well do reading components predict reading comprehension.

CHAPTER 3

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Table 1

Descriptive of Student score on the reading components

	M	SD	Range	Max	Min
English RAN Digits Form A Digits Per Second	.9343	.52578	2.71	2.71	0.00
English Word Reading Efficiency Form A	11.5538	14.48154	60.00	60.00	0.00
English Word Reading Accuracy	3.6936	3.68364	10.00	10.00	0.00
English Non-Word Reading Accuracy	4.7572	3.64022	10.00	10.00	0.00
English Blending Words	5.9168	3.21851	20.00	20.00	0.00
English Elision	8.4116	3.93693	15.00	15.00	0.00
English Phonological Memory	9.1665	2.41619	16.00	16.00	0.00

The first task is to pronounce a series of digits in a given time (English RAN digit per second). Based on the mean, it tells that most students took 0.93 seconds ($SD=0.53$) to complete the task. For the word reading efficiency, the mean score to pronounce the word is 12.6474 ($SD=14.48$) in 30 seconds which quite a low score for average 866 students. The student also has a bad mean score for word reading accuracy which is 3.69 ($SD=3.68$) from 10 words given. Meanwhile, for the non-word reading accuracy, their mean score 4.76 ($SD=3.64$) over 10 non-words given. The task word blending shows that most students could only score 5.92 ($SD=3.22$). For the English Elision task, their man score is 8.4 ($SD=3.93$) from the 15-word question. It is quite good compared to the other task. The last one is the English phonological memory task where their mean score is 9.17 ($SD=2.42$). This task has 18 questions and most of them do quite well in this task.

Table 2
The score for total reading components

Reading Components		
N	Valid	866
	Missing	0
Mean		6.7403
Std. Deviation		5.06933

From table 2, the mean score for the total variable is 6.74 (SD=5.07). The reading components compose from English Digit per Second, English Word Reading Efficiency, English World Reading Accuracy, English Non-word Reading Accuracy, English Blending Words, and English Elision, English Phonological Memory.

Table 3

Correlation between Reading Components and Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)

English Oral Reading Fluency Form A	
English RAN Digits Form A Digits Per Second	1
English Word Reading Accuracy	.653** .000
English Word Reading Efficiency Form A	.681** .000
English Non-Word Reading Accuracy	.581** .000
English Blending Words	.509** .000
English Elision	.562** .000
English Phonological Memory	.457** .000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the student's score between English RAN Digits, English Word Reading Accuracy, English Non-Word Reading Accuracy, English Word Reading Efficiency, English Blending Words, English Elision, English Phonological Memory and English Oral Reading Fluency (ORF). From the test, the result correlation between English Oral Reading Fluency has the highest correlation with English Word Reading Efficiency where $r(865) = 0.950$, $n = 865$, $p < 0.01$.

Among all variables, the correlation between English RAN Digit and English Phonological Memory has the weakest correlation, where $r(797) = 0.457$, $n = 797$, $p < 0.01$. This show that, if English RAN Digit increase, English Phonological Memory might change a little.