

Promoting Intensive Reading Outside Classroom And Long After School To Enhance Fluency In Communication

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Abstract: Learning English as a foreign language implies developing the ability to speak and read it effectively in practice. However, DRC's EFL learners witness a remarkable weakness to speak English fluently and efficiently in real life situations.

The present article highlights the advantage of promoting reading through intensive personal practice by EFL learners outside classroom. The reading ability is a strategy of an utmost importance as it enhances an efficient acquisition of English as a foreign language on one's own.

Practicing reading intensively extracts of English texts or books, novels, newspapers, etc. on one's own is a particularly suitable and convenient exercise worth encouraging after leaving school i.e. on completion of one's educational curriculum or study cycle.

Yet, the National ELT Syllabus of the Secondary Education Level recommends extensive reading practice for Secondary school graduating pupils or EFL learners outside classroom and, furthermore after school (DEPS: 28 – 32).

Keywords: promoting, intensive reading practice, outside classroom and after school, enhance, developing fluency in communication, English as a foreign language.

1. Introductory note:

It is a general remark that DRC's ELT instruction curriculum is still staggering to ensure efficient learning for effective communication due, of course, to misbalance of course contents, lack of appropriate and adapted teaching textbooks and aids, late starting or inception level, insufficient time allocations, etc. as main flaws of the ELT instruction curriculum.

Thus, promoting intensive reading practice outside classroom and well after leaving school is no doubt very beneficial as an intellectual leisure activity and an efficient means to sharpen learners' taste of English Language and reinforce their communicative abilities or skills personal blooming and much rewarding professional life, with regard to the overgrowing importance, supremacy and high flexibility and dynamism of English in the present globalized modern world.

This article is highlights a pressing recommendation intended to junior and senior EFL learners to commit to practicing intensive reading on their own, outside classroom or the school context and even long after leaving school.

This article includes seven sections starting from this introductory note. The second section elucidates some key concepts. The third section sets some aims or purposes of reading and specifies its advantages for EFL learners. The fourth section elaborates views about reading materials. The fifth section concentrates on the teaching of reading as a school subject. The sixth section underlines some educational implications of reading. Whereas, the seventh and last section relates to final remarks worth recommendations.

2. Elucidating some key concepts:

2.1. 'Promoting':

In the present context, '*promoting intensive reading*' refers to the effort '*to encourage actively the practice of intensive reading and raise it to a higher level or give it an especially great importance*' (1990: 1095).

2.2. 'Intensive Reading Practice':

For the sake of consistency and to avoid redundancy, section 5 below provides a more documented development of the concept '*reading*' as the focus of this article.

2.3. 'Outside classroom' and 'after school':

These two are life moments believed to be very favourable for free personal intensive reading activities to manage more English language items and structures and acquire fluency in communication, devoid of any outside constraining or stressing influence.

2.4. To enhance:

In connection with this topic, the verb '*to enhance*' conveys the idea of heightening or intensifying the power, quality or value of intensive reading practice for improvement in English (1990: 648).

2.5. 'Developing fluency in communication':

In language learning, both concepts '*fluency*' and '*efficiency*' generally interact with one another to incite interaction among learners with reference to the abilities to *listen, speak, write and read* i.e. '*effective communication in English*'. It is learned only as a school major language subject in overcrowded and less equipped classroom situations.

2.6. 'English as a foreign language':

In the precise context of this article, '*foreign*' refers to non-native English-speakers outside the British Isles, with the 'United Kingdom - UK, and the USA English-speaking motherlands who happen to speak English as the outcome of a school learning process.

For these people, English constitutes either a second or foreign language in addition to their first languages or mother tongues.

3. Aim:

The aim of the present article is to highlight the importance of reading and to encourage DRC's EFL learners to practice it outside classroom and even long after leaving school, as much freely and intensively as possible. It is a safe way to compensate the flaws and deficiency of ELT curriculum instruction, with the main advantage of reinforcing the development of overall English language skills.

4. What can or do EFL learners need to read?

Four answers are available to this question, though they look very simple at a first glance: *EFL learners can and need to read (1) 'language', (2) 'sounds of the English language', (3) 'materials written or printed in using 'intelligible sound symbols of English', and (4) messages or texts written in English using the French alphabet.*

In general, language is a natural aptitude and innate ability specific to human species which is learned either explicitly or implicitly by '*imitation*', depending on the contexts. It enables to communicate about things distant in time and space (Doty, G. G. & Boos, J., 1968: 1-3).

In this regard, free personal practice of reading English enables EFL learners to get acquainted with the *ordinary* and *special* sound system of English and its *melody* plus *intonation* for fluency and ease in speaking. It helps avoid communication mistakes and troubles due to confusion and ambiguity caused by mother tongue or first language interference.

The 'ordinary sounds' of English are just the 26 sound symbols commonly known as the 'alphabet', that are subdivided into: 'vowel sounds' (5), 'consonant sounds' (19), and 'semi-vowel or semi-consonant sounds' (2).

The type of 'special sounds of English' result from the pronunciation of ordinary sounds as combined into syllables within words. They include 'special English vowel sounds', and 'special English consonant sounds'.

a) Special English vowel sounds: are subdivided, in turn, into:

-short pure vowel sounds, namely: /a/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /e/, /ə/, /i/, /ɪ/, /o/, /ʊ/;

-long pure vowel sounds, namely: /ɑ:/, /ɛə/, /ɜ:/, /i:/, /o:/, /U:/;

-diphthongs, namely: /ai/, /au/, /ei/, /eu/, /iə/, /iu/, /oi/, /ɒu/, /uə/, /ui/;

-trip thongs, as: /aɪə/, /aʊə/, /eɪə/, /eʊə/, /ɪə/, /ɪʊə/, /uə/, /uɪə/.

b) Special English consonant sounds: the most known are:

** the combination 'th' pronounced as:

-/θ/: in words like 'Thames', 'theme', 'thing/anything, etc.', 'think/thought', 'three/third', etc. 'thirst/thirsty' 'threw/throw', 'throat', 'threat/thread', 'forth/fourth', etc.;

-/ð/: in some other words like 'than', 'that', 'then', 'these/this', 'those', 'though/although', 'their/theirs', 'them/themselves', 'they', etc.;

**the combinations: 'ang', 'ing', 'ong', and 'ung' pronounced /ŋ/ in words like 'language', 'wangler', 'dancing', 'ping-pong', 'ring/ringing', 'ring finger', 'wrong/wrongdoer', 'clung, hung, rung, etc.

**the combination '-sure' and '-sury' pronounced /ʒ/ as in words like 'exposure', 'enclosure', 'leisure', 'measure/measurement', 'pleasure', 'treasure/treasurer/treasury', etc.;

**the sounds 'g' and 'j' in combinations as 'ge', 'geo', 'gi', 'gy', 'ja', 'je', 'jo', 'ju' pronounced /dʒ/ in words like 'algebra', 'gene'/general', 'geography/geometry', 'gin/ginger', 'gymnastics'/biology', 'jail'/jam', 'jelly'/jealous/jealousy', 'jewel/jewelry', 'join/jot', 'judge/justice/June/July', etc.;

**the combination 'sh' pronounced /ʃ/ in words like 'shall/shake/shame/shark', 'fish/selfish', 'she/shelf/shelter', 'brush/crash/dish', 'shine/shirt/show', 'marsh' etc.;

**the combinations 'ch' and 'ch' pronounced /tʃ/ in words like 'chat/charcoal/chart', 'cheat/check/chest/child/children/chin', 'choose/chose/chosen', 'match/watch', 'sketch/stich', 'teach/teacher/teaching', etc.;

**the combinations 'ch', 'ck', 'ck', 'cq', and 'qu' pronounced /k/ in words as 'call/camp/case/cat/cattle', 'cause/because', 'coin/come', etc., 'arch/architect/archbishop', 'chaos/chaotic', 'character/characteristics', 'chemical/chemistry/chemis', 'scheme/school', 'chronic/chronicle', 'black/block/brick', 'kick/mock/pick', 'acknowledge', 'acquire', 'acquisition', 'acquaint/acquaintance', etc. 'equal/equality/equalizer', 'equinox', 'equip/equipment', 'equity', 'equator/equatorial', 'quarrel/question/squirrel', 'squeeze', etc.

**the single 'f' sound in 'of' pronounced /əv/ to differentiate from the two 'ff' sounds in 'off' pronounced /ɒf/.

c) 'Melody' and 'intonation': are other elements characteristic of English 'language, as the effect of pronunciation dictated by the length of words in syllables, known as 'pitch' and 'stresses'.

*Pitch: is the degree of 'high tone' or 'high pitch' and 'low tone' or 'low pitch' when pronouncing words (1990: 1041).

*Stress: is the emphasis of accentuation laid on the syllables of a word, which may be:

- 'principal', 'main' or 'primary stress' generally laid on 1st or initial syllables of short words, with one syllable or two syllables, and on 2nd or middle syllables of long words, with more than two syllables;

- or 'secondary stress': most often laid on the 1st or initial syllable of long words with more than two syllables, and on the last syllable of such words (1990: 1378).

As the world's millenary old, richest, most expanded and still flourishing literacy system, English language offers an abundant literary heritage with plenty of *prose, poetry, plays, narratives, fictional novels, stories, autobiographies, etc.* literary works or genres produced by various authors or writers in world English-speaking or Anglophone communities worldwide.

A few random selected illustrative prominent figures worth quoting for providing literary works as interesting reading materials are:

a) In England:

'Geoffrey Chaucer' (N.D.), remembered as the father or forerunner of 'English literature', and 'William Shakespeare' (April 23, 1564 – April 23, 1616). They have respectively written '*The Canterbury Tales*' in ±1380 – 1400, and many famous plays, tragedies and drama broadcast as films on television namely '*Romeo and Juliet*' in 1597, '*Hamlet*' in 1623, *etc.*

b) In the USA:

'Ernest Hemingway' (Jul. 21, 1899 – Jul. 2, 1961) and 'Mark Twain', born *Samuel Langhorne Clemens* (Nov. 30, 1835 – Apr. 21, 1910), wrote respectively '*The Old Man and the Sea*' in 1952, and '*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*' in 1876 (*fr.wikipedia.org*).

c) In former British colonies of Eastern, Southern and Western Africa:

Chinua Achebe (Nov. 16, 1930 – March 21, 2013), born *Albert Chinualumogu Achebe* (forerunner of modern African English Literature) and *Wole Soyinka* (1934) still the alive Literature Nobel Prize (1986) both in Nigeria, followed by *James Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (Jan. 5, 1938 - May 28, 2025) in Kenya, *Peter Abrahams* (March 3, 1919 – Jan. 18, 2017) in South Africa, to quote only these few.

These authors have respectively written '*Tings Fall Apart*' in 1958, '*The Interpreters*' in 1965, '*The River Between*' in 1965 and '*The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*' in 1976, '*Mine Boy*' in 1948, '*This Time Tomorrow*' in 1970. (*en.wikipedia.org*), (*fr.wikipedia.org*), (*fr.wikipedia.org*), (www.numilog.com), (*Wikipedia*).

5. Reading:

5.1. Definition:

'Reading' refers to: '*the mental, silent or vocal reproduction of printed words of a book or of an author by following the symbol sequences with the eyes or by feeling embossed symbols with the fingers*', '*the act or instance of reading, the matter or version of a text to be read, to a particular wording conjectured or given by an editor*', *etc.* (Op. cit., 1990: 1142; Brown, 2004).

From a personal point of view, '*intensive reading*' refers to '*the pertinent effort of plunging thoughtfully and deeply into a well-organized set of intelligible printed or written symbols with the purpose of extracting meaning or getting a message or a piece of information*.

5.2. Teaching reading in EFL classroom:

Reading is a most useful skill that truly overleaps all other skills in any language learning in English, as a foreign language, and is very important for its effective international use and other practical purposes, and it reveals a great deal of objectives, purposes and benefits as specified here after (YABA, 1980: 87).

a) Objectives:

Intensive reading is a good and profitable way to get additional knowledge from written materials, to get messages intended to a large audience on a specific matter, to develop fluency, to spend time for leisure, etc. (NUNAN, 1999)

b) Benefits:

Intensive reading reduces stress, fights anxieties and worries caused by the learning of English as a foreign language in the school context. It enhances to improve writing skills, increases vocabulary and improves sentence structure, boosts analytical thinking and motivation by helping become better readers, keep reading on and on, learn more. In short, intensive reading improves overall language competence.

c) Purposes:

Intensive reading enables to get information about a writer's intention, to provide pleasure, organize study or learn content and procedure, etc. and, ultimately, to develop the ability of appropriate language use (Williams, 1984; Op. cit., 2023: 4).

5.3. Types of reading:

Most known types of reading in English language learning are intensive reading, extensive reading, reading aloud, silent reading, scanning and skimming. However, types of reading practice suitable for ELT classroom activities include *reading aloud*, *reading vocabulary*, and *reading comprehension*.

'*Reading aloud*' or also '*read aloud*' is equivalent to intensive reading. It is a powerful source of instruction and inspiration for successful language learning, literacy foundation and development in ELT classrooms, by providing a phrased and fluent reading exercise to develop interest in books, pride, and ability for correct pronunciation, etc. (Nunan, 2000; Fountain & Pinnelli, 1996; Mooney, 1998; The Reading Teacher, 2009:368; DUMA K., 2012; Op. cit., 2023: 4-12; Hornby, 2006: 1645; Brown, 1995: 1; Op. cit., 2023: 11).

5.5. Strategies for teaching reading in EFL classroom:

The most effective strategies or techniques to teach reading for different end goals and to engage and keep learners active include *visualization*, *cooperative learning*, *inquiry-based instruction*, *differentiation*, *modelling*, and *game-based learning* (Op. cit., 2023: 12).

6. Recommendations:

Intensive reading is the greatest, essential and most convenient ability to mainly use English on individual basis, outside classroom and long after school study stay than other skills. It is beneficial to foster proficiency in English by turning the pages of our imagination very positively and by providing, in reward, an intrinsically objective perception of the world, for a happy connected life in this Globalization era.

CONCLUSION:

This article focused on the English language and demonstrated the necessity of its intensive reading practice as the best way to learn and expand knowledge, and enable an efficient acquisition of English. '*Practice makes perfect*', and '*He who wants can.*'

In particular, practicing intensive reading is advantageous to reduce stress, anxieties, worries and other troubles relating to learning English as a foreign language, to improve language competence, increase vocabulary, boost analytical thinking, and reinforce motivation.

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