

# Loud Reading Onsets Language Learning

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**Abstract:-** Language teaching generally follows the sequences of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The sequence is the same for both teaching of first language and second language. There might be rare questions about the sequence of the language skills. There are different sub-skills in each language skill. Loud reading is one of them in teaching reading skills. This paper claims that loud reading can initiate language learning, especially for teaching English as a second language. This paper aimed to find out the effectiveness of using loud reading as the first skill for learning a language. This paper used the ethnographic method. The researcher experimented with loud reading skills for the improvement of language learning for secondary-level students in Nepal. Two classes of the schools -classes nine and ten were the participants of the study. The result is interpreted based on board exam results. The research found out that loud reading can be the beginning skill for language learning because it integrates listening, speaking, and reading at a time. It is a skill that includes linguistic, suprasegmental, and paralinguistic features.

**Keywords:-** Language Skills, Loud Reading, Language Learning, Integrated Skills.

## I. INTRODUCTION

I got my appointment in a community school 15 years ago. I had already spent five years teaching English to secondary-level students at an institutional school. I was pretty sure that I could teach well at the secondary level. My duty was to teach class nine and ten students. There were four sections. Each section had at least 70 students. One section of the class ten had 110 students. The number was high but the school had no option to break further sections. But the striking problem was the students' competency level rather than the size of the class. I administered a small sampling test asking the students to read the textbook. Those whom I asked none could read the text. Then I tried with roll numbers one to five. They read about 15 to 20 percent of the text. I tried in all four sections (class nine-2, class ten -2), and the result was the same. The situation was the opposite of what I expected when I entered the class. I returned home and thought the whole night and the next morning. I decided to talk to the headteacher and assistant headteacher.

Their answer was more frightful. The school had received a warning letter from the District Education Office because they had not met the minimum result in SLC (at least 15% in each of the three academic years). The school result was below 10%. The main problem was English. Previously there was no secondary-level English teacher. No teacher in the school had a bachelor's degree in English. Thus, the Nepal government had given a 'Rahat' quota for Secondary Level English Teacher, and they appointed me. They had hope in me to save the face of school. It was the first week of Bhadra and the SLC was coming in the second week of Chaitra. I felt my mind was restless. I promised the school administration to give a hopeful result.

I threw my chalk and duster, started reading the textbook, and made the students follow me. I continue it for 30 classes without any other activities. I even made them read the same text with me 10-15 times. After 30 classes I took the test that was reading text aloud from the book. I found 20% of students read them appropriately, and 30 percent read nearly 60-70% of the text appropriately, the rest read the text nearly 30-40 % appropriately. I got excited. I repeated the same techniques in classes for 30 more classes. That time, 20% of students were able to read the text after twice or thrice reading with me. I made them co-teachers. At the end of the 60-reading classes, about 50 % of the students read the text appropriately and 20 % of them read the text 70-80 % appropriately and the rest about 50%. Then I taught them reading comprehension, writing skills, and grammar. I found; the students happy in the class. Some parents came to the school and said their children read the English text at home.

The board exam came and over. My concern was the result. As the last week of *Jestha* came. The headteacher said, 'Sir, the result will be published this week'. I said, 'I am hopeful'. Finally, the result came. The school was not on black list. The result in English was 53%. Then, I continued the tradition of at least 30 reading-aloud classes next academic year. The result crossed 60%. I discovered the reason why students in community schools fail in English subjects and what I should do. I am following the reading text-aloud technique even today but I have used it with ICT and multimedia. Students' results in English subjects are 87%-97% for the last five academic years in my school.

## II. READING ALOUD

Each skill of language learning and teaching goes pre-, while-, and post-stages. It means reading skills have pre-reading while reading and post-reading stages. My particular focus is on how different language skills can be integrated with loud reading. Reading aloud involves the oral presentation of a text by a teacher or student to an audience, promoting auditory processing and multisensory engagement with the content (Rasinski & Padak, 2008). If prereading is reading aloud, it might support learners in better language learning. 'Pre-reading activities during reading class can build their word identification simultaneously fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills' (Jimenez & Velasco, 2023, p. 9). The teacher can also use the prereading stage with reading aloud because 'teachers need to pre-teach unfamiliar words and/or brainstorm topics in the new text since they are effective pre-reading pedagogic strategies' (Mutalini et al., 2023). While the teacher implements loud reading, they may take advantage of listening and reading as well as speaking at once. 'Listening and reading processing converge at the word level, and that words processed aurally and visually share the same lexicon' (Sinatra, 1990, p. 115). Linguistic stimuli are required for the successful learning of the language. 'Linguistic stimuli were used to activate processing at the phonemic, lexical, and syntactic levels' (p. 119). Reading aloud may help the learners to identify and utter the phonemes, recognize the lexemes, get the structure of the syntax, and comprehend the meaning.

Loud reading in the class creates the environment for subconscious listening and speaking without caring that they are using multiple language skills at once. It integrates extra skills without a great effort from the teacher in the class. Another interesting fact about teaching reading is it starts with reading aloud in the preliminary class. Thus, it can be implemented in lower secondary and secondary levels as well. Reading aloud includes the component of expressive reading where teachers model prosody, intonation, and pacing to emphasize the emotional and structural aspects of the text (Dowhower, 1991). Another component of it is interactive discussions which encourage students to share initial thoughts, predictions, and questions before delving into independent reading (Fisher & Frey, 2021). It means, before reading aloud, the teacher and the students can interact about the text, share experiences, brainstorm the title, visualize the picture, or even watch the video clips which facilitates reading comprehension. If we follow the tradition of giving signpost questions before reading comprehension, the students look for the keyword in the questions and try to find out the answer skipping the rest text but they don't read the text because they might have reading problems due to pronunciation and the meaning. Our students show disinterest in class because they simply can't read the text. It further affects them on their examination because they even can't read the question. Let's not talk about what answer they write in that condition.

### ➤ *Benefits*

The textbook has selected texts. It includes varied vocabularies for the particular level of the students. Our students are also varied in competence levels. Some of them are good at reading but it is not surprising to get the students who can't read the text. The second category is dominant in the class. Due to liberal types of examination, some students are problematic concerning reading skills. It is common to teach vocabulary in many schools. Their techniques might vary. But teaching vocabulary with loud reading is useful for pronunciation, reading, and understanding of the meaning too. Reading aloud exposes students to a rich and varied vocabulary in context, aiding in the acquisition of new words and phrases (National Reading Panel, 2000). Further, it helps to foster an appreciation for language nuances and tone, contributing to a deeper understanding of the text (Hirsch, 2003). It is rather beneficial for students to grant opportunities to listen, speak, visualize the text, and understand the meaning.

### ➤ *Comprehension Enhancement*

Reading with comprehension is the target of including reading skills in the curriculum of a particular course. Reading aloud is one of the techniques that support it. Independence reading might be the demand for reading comprehension which is enhanced by reading aloud providing a chance to see the text, allowing students to grasp the overall structure and purpose before independent reading. It supports struggling learners with aural support, reinforcing the link between spoken and written language (Gunning, 2016). At the time of the loud reading, the teacher can project the text to them or simply ask them to look at their textbooks if the projection facilities are lacking. The teacher can also use related pictures and other visual materials to visualize the concept.

### ➤ *Cultivation of Active Listening Skills*

Linguists, language experts, and teachers claim that listening skills as the first skill in the language development of a learner. The claim is also fulfilled by loud reading as it integrates listening. The class facilitator need not make any extra effort if they allow students to read aloud. It's like a bonus for language development in learners. It assesses students' engagement during reading-aloud sessions, considering their verbal and non-verbal responses (Allington, 2012). Further, it provides motivation, confidence, and self-reflexivity to the students. It encourages self-reflection on the effectiveness of their reading strategies (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Therefore, reading aloud cultivates an environment for active listening with reading aloud.

### ➤ *Implement Loud Reading in the Classroom*

A particular class has a designed curriculum and prescribed textbook. The textbook includes different genres of literature. The teacher can give the model reading to the students with different pitches, tones, intonations, tempos, and rhythms which make the classroom varied, motivating, and

lively. It breaks the monotonous of the class. It is more interesting when the students follow the patterns the teacher provides to them. The teacher can consider incorporating a mix of genres and formats to cater to varied interests and learning styles. The teacher is free to choose the text beyond the textbook which might be useful as per the objectives of the curriculum.

The reading-aloud technique might express the intent of the author while emphasizing tone pitch, and rhythm (Routman, 2003) encouraging learners in expressive reading styles and fostering personal interpretation. The learners can have their criticality for the text. They can feel and bring emotions in the text which motivates learners for future learning and understanding the intention of the text. The teacher can set pre-reading tasks setting the purpose of the reading to activate prior knowledge and to generate interest. They can use open-ended questions to stimulate curiosity and prompt predictions (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007). Open-ended questions make students think in different ways and they might relate their experience or prior knowledge to get the meaning of the text.

Reading aloud can also be used for the assessment process. It not only includes verbal responses but also non-verbal responses in the class. It makes the students understand the contexts, emotions, and meaning of the text through the linguistic and paralinguistic features of the language that the teacher uses while reading the text. On the other hand, the teacher can also observe both verbal and nonverbal activities during reading. It assesses students' engagement during reading-aloud sessions, considering their verbal and non-verbal responses (Allington, 2012). Additionally, the learners can have self-evaluation of their reading either recording it or asking their friends as well. School curriculums include reading aloud as one of the assessment tools for reading skills, particularly at the basic level. It can be taken as one of the common tools for the evaluation of reading skills which automatically includes speaking as well. Listening can only be listening, speaking can only be speaking and writing can only be writing but reading aloud has both visualizing graphemes, speaking out them, and listening. In junior classes, the speaking skill also includes reading aloud. The teacher can also evaluate post-reading activities and written assignments asking students to read aloud. It breaks the monotonousness of the shy students as well. Thus, it is one of the effective techniques for testing language skills.

### III. READING ALOUD AS MY SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY

During two decades of English teaching what I have experienced is different sections of language teaching require different techniques for teaching language skills and aspects. The techniques used in the class do not fit to all students. Then what can be done? Is there any special technique that fits the

students of different learning levels? Venturing over the issue, I came across that reading aloud is the minimal requirement for comprehension, speaking, writing, and listening. Reading comprehension can be a foundational skill that forms the basis of academic success and lifelong learning. Some scholars consider teaching methods to have a great significance and some consider methods to be dead and techniques to be survival. A teacher faces so much confusion and queries about teaching by such notions. What I know is students have to learn. What I know is teaching has survived yet and perhaps goes many decades. What techniques should I follow in my teaching with the emerging view that unless the learners learn the teacher has taught nothing? Or like that several questions might rumble in the mind of a teacher. But these questions do not mean a teacher must give up the profession. Then, what is the solution? Perhaps, the answer is the teacher's autonomy. Perhaps the term signature pedagogy is closer to it. It means the teacher needs to develop their signature for their uniqueness in teaching to establish themselves in the academic field. My signature for teaching English includes the following techniques:

- At the onset of the academic year for classes -9 and 10, I read the texts of the textbook and made them follow me (3-4 times). Then I ask the leading students to repeat the task. The reading-aloud task goes for 30-35 classes. (yearly the classes are approximately 205 as per the curriculum of CDC, Nepal.)
- Before teaching the reading text, I collect pictures related to the text and show them.
- I make them watch the video by other teachers on YouTube, then the video by CDC without any signpost questions.
- I project the text and make the computer read the text and make them listen and watch but no sign post question for that too.
- Finally, I give them signpost questions, they read the text and discuss
- Activities such as question-answer, True/false/ fill the gaps, etc. are given as homework/projects.
- Students must put the homework/projects in their class group on WhatsApp or Messenger. They can even use their friend's account for that in case they have a problem or they may come with a hard copy. It is mandatory.
- I project their assignments in the class and give feedback after they read out their assignments.

My signature is different because the traditional notion about language learning is listening and speaking are primary and reading and writing are secondary. In my signature reading, listening, and speaking are integrated. They are primary. Traditionally, it is believed that listening helps speaking and reading helps writing. The claim of my signature is loud reading can help with listening, speaking, and writing as well. It collaborates listening and speaking. Academically, the attainment of the learning outcomes is a must. For the target goal of the curriculum, at least the students need reading

abilities. Out of different kinds of reading abilities, reading aloud abilities are supreme for reading itself, listening, speaking, writing, and comprehension of the text. It helps learners with multiple skills at once- pronunciation, speaking, verbal and nonverbal features of the language, writing, learning of the vocabulary, self-assessment, confidence, motivation, self-reflection, and active participation in the class. Conventionally, reading is more associated with linguistic features and suprasegmental and paralinguistic features are rarely concerned in reading. This signature advocates for the conscious use of linguistic, suprasegmental, and paralinguistic features in reading texts to make reading more meaningful.

This signature can be used beyond English because all of the languages have four skills. Teaching reading is almost used with loud reading. Reading the text aloud is mandatory at a basic level in any language teaching. This signature is applicable in teaching both first and second language teaching. Either the first or second language that includes reading skills in the teaching-learning process. It is a multipurpose, economic, and integrated technique that assists both teachers and students. It supports the teacher to teach at least three skills – listening, speaking, and reading at once with a single effort. It helps students by allowing opportunities to receive three skills with a single effort. It involves them in active participation. It is easy to administer. It does not require many materials in the class. The reading text is sufficient for it. It can be used in the condition where the textbooks are not available with the texts created by the teacher. It gives the teacher a kind of autonomy to choose the best texts suitable for his students. Even the shy and lazy students are active in it. It does not require even group work and pair work. It can be easily conducted in large-size classes as well. Technically ill-facilitated classrooms and institutions can easily implement this signature. It can solve many difficulties faced by second or foreign-language learners and teachers. Even an untrained teacher can easily use this technique.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Students feel language learning is difficult because they have reading difficulties. Loud reading gives students three skills at a time- listening, speaking, and reading. Loud reading is a technique that includes linguistic, suprasegmental, and paralinguistic features. It can be used as the initiation of teaching language in the academic sector. It is a multipurpose, integrated, and economic technique of language teaching. It can be used in both L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> teaching/ learning. Reading skills are mandatory for other skills of language well but loud reading is one of the best out of many types of reading skills. It serves as an opportunity to combat the difficulties of reading, speaking, and listening with a single effort.

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