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**The effectiveness of reading aloud on
vocabulary acquisition for young learners**

Effekten av att använda högläsning för att främja unga elevers ordförråd

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Abstract

This research study explores to what extent reading aloud is beneficial for vocabulary acquisition. Based on research statistics provided by Eurostat (2020) the majority of students in Sweden learn English as a foreign language. Therefore, the focus of the study is based on investigating the EFL classroom in Sweden. The research question this study is based on is to what extent reading aloud is beneficial for teaching English as a foreign language in the Swedish school from grade one to three in terms of children's ability to learn vocabulary. The method used for this research to collect scientific journals, dissertations and related research that can contribute to this discussion and result of this study is collected through different electronic databases. The access to studies conducted in an EFL classroom was rather restrictive and therefore the majority of the studies used were conducted on children who studied English as a first language in preschool and grade one to three in primary school. Whilst the selected studies target groups differed in age, findings indicate that the benefits of only reading aloud have little influence on children's vocabulary acquisition. However, findings also presented that using word explanation and repetition during read aloud is shown to be more beneficial for vocabulary acquisition.

Key terms:

“Vocabulary”, “Vocabulary acquisition”, “Reading aloud”, “EFL classroom”, “Language”.

Individual contributions

We certify that all aspects of this study are performed equally by both participants. The signatories of the involved participant are below.

The sections which we refer to are as follows:

- Planning and choosing the research area
- Creating and selecting a research question
- Article searching, reviewing and selecting
- Decisions relating to the outline of the study
- The presentation of the findings, discussion and conclusion.

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Table of contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Research questions	7
3. Methods	8
3.1 Search delimitations.....	8
3.2 Inclusions.....	9
3.3 Exclusions.....	9
Table 1.....	10
4. Results	11
4.1 Reading aloud in practice.....	11
4.2 Reading aloud and vocabulary acquisition.....	14
5. Discussion	18
6. Conclusion	21
References	23

1. Introduction

According to the Swedish curriculum, children need to be given the chance to develop their ability to use different language strategies for their understanding and to make themselves understood (Skolverket, 2020). Schröter and Molander Danielsson (2016) discuss in their study how these aims can be achieved from developing children's listening before speaking skills and how they benefit from using contextualized language and repetition that occurs naturally. Giving children plenty of listening practices such as reading aloud creates opportunities for them to listen to rich input which increases their language development. When children listen to a story through reading aloud, they can capture new words that enhance their vocabulary development and achieve the goals from the curriculum. (Pinter, 2017; Mason, 2013).

Skolverket's (2020) primary school timetable indicates the number of hours that are to be set aside for each subject. The time set aside to teach and learn English in Swedish schools is 60 hours in total for the grades one to three. The head principal decides how to distribute the hours between the grades in order to give the children 60 hours English lessons when they finish third grade. The hours set aside for the English subject are fewer in comparison with the subject P.E, which instead receives 140 hours in total from the grades one to three. Due to the limited teaching time and a multicultural society where people come from different cultural backgrounds, the level of knowledge in the English subject is very uneven in the Swedish classrooms in grades one to three. During our internship, we noticed that most of the children have little to no English knowledge at all, especially children's vocabulary which was very limited. In order to learn a new language that is unfamiliar to the children, we believe that it is important to introduce the children to the language by giving them a chance to listen to it first.

Pinter (2017) describes the importance of starting to teach English as a foreign language with a huge emphasis on listening. When children start to learn English, they may know little English or they do not know any English at all. Chou (2014) and Mason (2013) state in their research that young English learners' vocabulary improves and develops a lot when the lessons include reading stories aloud to children, where they can capture new words.

Skolverket (2019) and Wright (2015) describe that the meaning of reading aloud is when someone gets a book read to them and they get a chance to listen to the content of the book. We believe that when teachers, parents or other skilled readers read aloud to children, children get the opportunity to focus on processing the content better with the help of fantasies. Pinter

(2017) and Lundberg (2011) point out that the read-aloud stories that include repetition make it easier for children to notice the linguistic effort. Repetition in stories gives children opportunities to memorize phrases by heart, which in this way leads to children becoming more confident and active during lessons. The fact that children are first exposed to the English language through reading aloud helps them to gather knowledge to move on to the next step in learning, which is to practice their speaking skills. Based on our work and internship experiences within the school, the importance of repetition, reading the same text several times, has become clear for the development of children's vocabulary. Therefore, we believe that when children can listen to stories that include repetition and listen to the same words several times, the children become more familiar with the words so that they can later use them themselves.

One of the goals included in the Swedish curriculum according to Skolverket (2020) is that children should be offered a stimulating environment so that they can develop their language by reading aloud. Therefore, reading aloud in Swedish is a common activity in the teaching from preschool to year 3. On the other hand, reading aloud in the English language is not as common in the Swedish schools. During our internship, we noticed the absence of the reading aloud method during English lessons in the classroom. Based on our experiences as both teacher students and substitute teachers, we have noticed that reading aloud in English is not something that often occurs in today's school. Schröter and Molander Danielsson's (2016) study shows that reading aloud in English in the Swedish classrooms is something that rarely occurs, even when the study shows that it is not only an effective but also an efficient way to learn a foreign language. Even with the limited hours dedicated to English lessons, reading aloud should not be neglected. When we searched for whether reading aloud benefits EFL students' vocabulary acquisition, we quickly noticed a lack of research in the field. Our interest increased after that discovery and we therefore chose to delve into the subject.

According to Eurostat (2020) it is mandatory for EU member states to learn English in school, including in Sweden. Data provided by Eurostat (2020) indicates that 77% of the students in EU countries learned English as a foreign language in 2013. However, recent statistics from Eurostat (2020) show that 90% of the children in Sweden learned English as a foreign language in 2018. During our internship in a Swedish classroom we noticed that the majority of the students study English as a foreign language, which is consistent with the statistics provided by Eurostat (2020). Based on that discovery, we have chosen to focus this study on how teachers can increase children's vocabulary through using reading aloud as a method in an EFL classroom.

Stahl (2005) points out that one can never fully master vocabulary knowledge, a person is constantly developing their vocabulary. Vocabulary is according to Stahl (2005) all the words that a person knows or uses in a certain language. In order to increase your own vocabulary, it is important to be exposed to the language. Using read aloud as a teaching method is a way to expose children to the language and create an unconscious vocabulary development. The more they are exposed to the language the more words they will recognize and thus absorb and eventually use themselves.

Vocabulary training is also seen as an important part of children's development to build language skills. In order to give students the best opportunities for this, it is necessary that the teacher is aware of which teaching methods are most favorable. Kindle (2010) writes in her study that there are many different resources that teachers can use for their practice in teaching reading aloud and vocabulary development. There are both books, articles and other online materials that are available for teachers to take part in.

According to Fisher (2004) research supports reading aloud as an important part of teaching but does not yet have an agreed-upon exercise to perform reading aloud. Current research focuses on comparing different forms of work in the subject, according to Kindle (2010). However, Kindle (2010) claims that there is a lack of research on how to use reading aloud in teaching the English language for vocabulary acquisition. Kirkup (2006) also notes that there have been few studies conducted on the topic of how stories can contribute to primary school children learning English. In order to know which learning methods are favorable for the development of children's vocabulary it is necessary to examine the information reported in the experimental literature about the efficacy of reading aloud as a way of developing children's language and vocabulary.

2. Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to explore to what extent reading aloud is beneficial for vocabulary acquisitions. The focus will be on how teachers can increase children's vocabulary learning in an EFL classroom by reading aloud in the grades one to three in Swedish primary school.

We chose this subject because we have in our search for information found that there is not a lot of research done in this area when it comes to reading aloud in an EFL classroom to teach children vocabulary. The purpose of this study is to hopefully fill in where research is more needed in this area and contribute to the subject.

The research question on which this study is based on is:

- To what extent is reading aloud beneficial for teaching English as a foreign language in the Swedish school from grade one to three in terms of children's ability to learn vocabulary?

3. Method

In this research we have opted to search and collect scientific journals, dissertations and related research for our research interest through different electronic databases. Electronic resources are going to be the primary choice of method to collect important information for this study.

3.1 Search delimitations

Our research search began by generally searching through the MAU Library database EBSCO and ERIC database. We also searched in Google scholar's database and found some studies that we found relevant to our study. When we searched the Google Scholar database, we tried to be as specific as possible about the terms used in the search. One search done on Google Scholar database included the words "Effects of reading aloud vocabulary EFL" and the result was 40 900 articles. We found a great number of articles through that search and therefore decided to add another restriction which was to limit the date-range to merely year 2000-2020. That resulted in 9830 articles which were updated articles and journals. The next step was to organize the articles and journals and focus more precisely on our research goal. Through sorting, we found 5 articles related to our areas of interest and applied them to our research.

The search through MAU Library database Eric was limited to only scientific articles that were full text and peer-reviewed texts which resulted in 1456 articles. In order to find articles that were related to our study we limited the date range to merely 2000-2020 and we selected the terms "vocabulary" and "English as a foreign language" as subject thesaurus terms which narrowed down the result to 90 articles. Out of 90 articles, we opted to use 2 articles that were relevant to the study. Lastly, we used EBSCO which also was accessed through the MAU library database. In the search for relevant studies the terms "Effects of reading aloud vocabulary" were used and the search was limited to peer-reviewed text and the date- range was from 2000 - 2020. The result was 2 articles where one of them was more suitable for our study.

The search terms used in the search process through all databases were used in various combinations. These are the search terms:

"Vocabulary learning", "Vocabulary acquisition", "Reading aloud", "Aloud reading", "Children", "EFL classroom", "Elementary school", "Develop", "Language".

3.2 Inclusion criteria

The articles that were included in this study were carried out on primary school students specifically from the grade 1-3. The decision was made to also include some articles of young learners where they do not mention a specific grade or age group. Since those articles are about young children, we thought that they still can be applied for young learners in primary school from grade 1-3. Those studies were performed on children who did not know how to read or were not yet fully independent readers, which places them in the same position as children in grade 1-3 who are learning English as a foreign language.

Since we had difficulties finding relevant studies with EFL students, we chose to include studies about students with English as a first language and English as a second language. The reasoning is that these children are not yet fully independent readers and are still developing their language skills. This in turn makes these studies relevant and applicable for our study.

The articles included in the search were only from the date range 2000-2020. That is because it is fundamental for the study to be based on current and updated research that is relevant to the research area.

3.3 Exclusion criteria

In order to be able to focus on answering the main question with this study, which is if *reading aloud is beneficial for children's vocabulary*, some of the studies and references found were excluded. We have chosen to exclude studies that are about acquiring vocabulary through general or silent reading. When it comes to foreign language learning, it is difficult for a student to know how words are pronounced in the new language if it has not been introduced to them before. Therefore, we believe that silent reading is the step that comes after reading aloud in terms of increasing children's vocabulary.

We have also chosen to exclude reading aloud at home with parents because our study's focus is on how reading aloud increases vocabulary in the classroom and how the teacher can use this method with children in their early stages of the English language development.

Table 1. Used studies

Author	Year of publication	The country which the study was conducted in
Beck I. L. McKeown, G. M.	2007	USA
Biemiller, A. Boote, C	2006	Canada
Greene Brabham, E., Lynch-Brown, C.	2002	USA
Kindle, K. J.	2015	USA
Moore, W., Hammond, L., and Fetherston, T.	2014	Australia
Omar, A., Saufi, A.	2015	Malaysia
Penno, J. F., Wilkinson, I. A. G., Moore, D. W.	2002	New Zealand
Suggate, S. P., Lenhard, W., Neudecker, E., Schneider, W.	2013	Germany

4. Results

In this part of our study, we will present various viewpoints concerning different studies and their perspectives within our area of interest. Each title will include an overview of the problem, followed by the results and discussion. There will be an analysis of the question of how effective reading aloud is to develop vocabulary based on the chosen research in the study. The question of how favorable reading aloud is for children in grades 1-3 in Sweden will also be analyzed and introduced based on relevant research. During the search for studies, many studies were found on how reading aloud is implemented in classrooms. Since research on reading aloud is relevant to this study, the first part of the results is going to be about reading aloud in practice. Since the purpose of this study is to investigate whether reading aloud is beneficial for vocabulary, the choice was made to focus the second part of the results on reading aloud and vocabulary acquisition.

4.1 Reading aloud in practice

Moore, Hammond and Fetherston (2014) conducted a study in which they tested how three different reading aloud methods affected children's vocabulary development. There were a total of 127 students who participated in the study they conducted. The tests were performed on children who were in their first year in primary school. The first method was about how the teacher reads the same book on 4 different occasions within a week. There was an opportunity for the children to discuss the book before reading it, during the reading session and after the reading. The second method was about how the teacher had chosen certain difficult words in advance that would be explained while reading the book. The last method was about how the teacher read a book to the children once, and for the next three days the children studied the content of the book in depth. Words that needed explanation were explained by putting them in context. The meaning of the words was dramatized by the teacher and the children and the connection between the different words was also checked. The results of their study showed that children need to hear a word several times and in different contexts to understand the word and to be able to use it themselves. They also concluded that one needs to read and discuss the same text many times for it to benefit the children's vocabulary.

Biemiller and Boote (2006) had also presented a similar study on how vocabulary is affected by different reading aloud methods in primary school. In their study they had a total of 112 children

who participated from kindergarten up to second grade in primary school, which was only a couple of students less than what Moore *et al.* (2014) had in their study. However, both researchers shared the same perspective as Moore *et al.* (2014) on how reading aloud is an important part in the development of children's vocabulary. In Biemiller and Boote (2006) study, two of the investigated methods had a better effect on children's vocabulary. The first one was about repeated reading aloud with explanations of words and the second one was about only repeated reading aloud. Both methods were similar to what Moore *et al.* (2014) investigated in their first method. Biemiller and Boote (2006) came to the same conclusion as Moore *et al.* (2014) did, that the vocabulary develops by reading a text repeatedly using glossaries. Biemiller and Boote (2006) also believe that when reading the same text four times, development takes place in the children's vocabulary. However, they provided in their conclusion further evidence that gave new perspective on how there might be some obstacles of repeated reading in first and second grade.

According to their study, the children in grades 1 and 2 developed their vocabulary already after the first and second reading session of the book. It did not matter much if the book was read more than twice to the students in those grades, they still did not develop vocabulary after the second reading session. According to them, this may be because preschool children can listen to a book several times without getting tired, while children of older ages get tired of listening to the same book more often and are therefore not as active in listening after the second reading time.

Another similar study was conducted by Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002), which showed that the method of reading aloud was the most effective in children's vocabulary acquisition. Their study agrees with both Moore *et al.* (2014) and Biemiller and Boote (2006). All of them shared the same perspective on reading aloud and the methods used in their study are very similar. However, Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) had a much larger group of children that participated in their study than the other researchers. There were 117 students from first grade and 129 students from the third grade that participated in the study. The test that was performed consisted of reading two different books on two occasions. Each book would be read using three different reading aloud methods. During the first method, the teacher would read aloud to the children, the children then had to work independently with questions related to the text. This method is different from what the other researchers presented in study one and study

two. The second method was for the teacher to read aloud to the children again, but this time the children had the opportunity to ask questions about the text before and after the reading. This shows similarities to Moore *et al.* (2014) first method they investigated. In their study the children also had the opportunity for discussion before, during and after the reading time. However, Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) experimented further with the second method and even encouraged the children to discuss the text with each other and try to connect it to other texts they had read before. The third method was also about how the teacher reads aloud to the children, but this time the children had the opportunity to interrupt the teacher during the reading to ask questions and discuss the words and the content of the text.

Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) came to a result that showed that the second and third methods were most favorable for children's vocabulary acquisition. They also concluded that the third method, which gave the children opportunities to interrupt the teacher's reading for questions and other things, did not affect the children's listening comprehension of the text, but some children experienced the interruptions as disturbing when the book was read aloud for the first time. The children then experienced that the book's content and story disappeared when they instead focused on explaining single words. But when the book is read aloud for the second time to the children, the interruptions were not experienced as disturbing. Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) recommend that the teacher prepare the children by explaining meaningful concepts in the book before reading it aloud to the children. According to them, it is advantageous to provide the opportunity to interrupt the reading during the second reading, because then the children have already had an uninterrupted reading of the text once.

The study's conducted by the researchers Moore *et al.* (2014) and Biemiller and Boote (2006) and Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) all shared different approaches to how reading aloud can develop vocabulary, but their results were similar. Moore *et al.* (2014) like Biemiller and Boote (2006) agreed that children need to hear a word several times and the reason is that it contributes to a development taking place in the children's vocabulary. Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) result showed that being able to discuss the book and the meaning of the words in it before, during and after the reading session was a favorable method that the children enjoyed. This was something that even Moore *et al.* (2014) touched on in their result.

4.2 Reading aloud and vocabulary acquisition

Omar and Saufi (2015) conducted a study on reading aloud in an EFL classroom. The participants were 3 teachers and the children were third graders in primary school. The teachers used 5 different strategies during the read aloud session to assess children's comprehension and vocabulary skills. The first strategy was called drilling, where the children during the read aloud session were made to pronounce difficult words several times. The second strategy was repeated reading sentences, in the whole class and individually. The third strategy was called promptings, where the children are encouraged to evaluate their understanding of the stories after they heard them a few times. The Fourth strategy was vocabulary building, where difficult words get explained. The fifth strategy was called translation, translating the stories to children's native language. The result showed that only one teacher translated the story and difficult words using children's native language. The strategy was liked by the students because it met their needs. Repeated reading gave children the opportunity to use the English language. Children's vocabulary expanded through reading aloud sessions due to explanations that were provided during the session. This gave the children a chance to understand the meaning of difficult words and use them.

Penno, Wilkinson and Moore (2002) also conducted a study on the effect of listening to stories read aloud on children's vocabulary development, which was similar to Omar and Saufi's (2015) study. In the study of Penno *et al.* (2002), 47 children participated in the conducted study. However, unlike Omar and Saufi's (2015) study which studied children in third grade in primary school, Penno *et al.* (2002) studied children in the younger ages, between 5 and 8 years old. The chosen participants were all at the beginning stages of reading, to guarantee that the increase in vocabulary knowledge is related to listening to the stories rather than reading the text as a result. Two stories that were above the children's present reading levels were read to the children. Unlike Omar and Saufi's (2015) that used 5 different methods for their study, Penno *et al.* (2002) chose to use only 2 different treatment methods. The first method included an explanation of 10 target vocabulary items that were read in the text, which was similar to Omar and Saufi's (2015) fourth method in their study. The teacher explained the definition and context of these words to the children. In the second method the children did not receive any explanation of the vocabulary items. In order to assess if the children were familiar with the target words and to notice if vocabulary improvements occurred. Penno *et al.* (2002) also did a vocabulary test pre and post the hearing sessions.

The study showed that when children listened to stories vocabulary learning occurred incidentally. The result obtained in this study was similar to Omar and Saufi's (2015) result, which was that the children's vocabulary was expanded by explaining words and concepts during the reading aloud. Penno *et al.* (2002) concluded that when the teacher provided a clarification of the targeted vocabulary items, children's vocabulary gains were higher. Even the vocabulary pre- and post-test showed that children had the similar scores in the pretest, but the post-test showed that children who received explanations of words during reading did better in the test. The effect of listening to stories and explanation of words' meaning was shown to contribute significantly to vocabulary growth.

Kindle (2015) conducted a study to investigate how teachers selected words for instruction during reading aloud and to explore teachers' rationales for word selection. Just as the earlier study from Penno *et al.* (2002) that was focused on children in the younger ages from 5 to 8 years old, this study was also focused on young children in kindergarten, first grade and second grade. Four primary year teachers in kindergarten, first grade and second grade participated in the study. The teachers were observed during read-aloud with their students four times over a six-week period. Kindle (2015) did not choose different methods to conduct the study as Penno *et al.* (2002) and Omar and Saufi (2015) did but chose instead to give the teachers free rein with the choice of book and the teaching method. Kindle (2015) came to a result that showed that the number of words that the teachers chose for instructions before reading aloud and the number of words in individual readings varied greatly. Kindle (2015) highlights the importance of word explanations during the reading aloud for the development of vocabulary, which is also highlighted by Penno *et al.* (2002) and Omar and Saufi (2015) results. The four teachers who participated in the study mentioned how they could notice if the students had questions or if they did not understand what was being read. One of the four participating teachers describes how she handled such occasions by interrupting the reading aloud and explaining difficult and unknown words that children did not understand. Kindle (2015) results agree well with Penno *et al.* (2002) and Omar and Saufi's (2015) results that explaining the meaning of words is favorable for reading aloud. Kindle (2015) study showed how teachers who chose to interrupt their reading aloud to explain difficult words gave students a greater chance of developing their word repository. Glossary reading aloud contributed to a positive effect on children's vocabulary.

Beck and McKeown (2017), like Omar and Saufi (2015), Penno *et al.* (2002) and Kindle (2015), also highlight the importance of word explanations in connection with reading aloud for the

development of vocabulary. In their first study, there were 119 students who participated from Preschool and first grade. Compared to the other researchers studying above, Beck and McKeown (2017) had the most participant children from the younger school grades. There were two groups, experimental and comparison groups. The experimental classes were given a daily reading aloud that contained difficult words. However, the students were given an explanation of the text. This method is similar to Penno *et al.* (2002) first method that was conducted and Omar and Saufi's (2015) forth method. There is, however, more similarity to Omar and Saufi (2015) forth strategy as it was focused on explaining words that were difficult to interpret in comparison to Penno *et al.* (2002) approach which was about explaining 10 vocabulary items that were chosen. The comparison group in Beck and McKeown (2017) study had their read aloud session but not with advanced words and the teacher did not offer a glossary in connection with the reading. The results show that vocabulary learning took place through reading aloud. On the other hand, the experimental group had significantly more vocabulary learning as a result of reading aloud with a glossary compared to the comparison group which had no glossary.

Suggate *et al.* (2013) conducted a study on the effect independent reading, story hearing has on vocabulary acquisition. Similar to the previous studies in our results, the study was performed on children at a young age, but this study focuses on children who are between 8 and 10 years old. Unlike the other previous studies that did not focus on specific target words, this study focuses on two target words that the children should learn which they had no previous knowledge of. There were tests done to measure children receptive vocabulary and target vocabulary acquisition from the told stories among other tests. The results showed that fourth grade children had a better performance on the vocabulary acquisitions test. The study also presented that children learned less words from independent stories reading and learned more words from storytelling conditions such as adult read aloud and free story telling. This was also something that Penno *et al.* (2002) and Beck and McKeown (2017) included in their result, how reading aloud in particular still contributed to vocabulary development.

Based on that conclusion, it could be stated that children acquired a larger part of adult vocabulary without depending on their reading skills. On the other hand, in contrast with independent reading, the oral methods demonstrated significant word learning even in children who were capable and had strong reading capacity. Telling stories for children's language development is important and should not be neglected even with fourth grade children who are

competent readers. They learned more vocabulary items which developed their vocabulary from hearing stories rather than reading it alone.

The researcher Beck and McKeown (2017), Kindle (2015), Omar and Saufi (2015) and Penno *et al.* (2002) all shared the same point of view on how reading aloud can contribute to vocabulary growth. However, it needs to be complemented with word explanations when it is needed during the reading session. Even translating the word and explaining them in children's native languages resulted in vocabulary growth as Omar and Saufi (2015) study showed. The study showed that the method of using native language in teaching was appreciated by the children and beneficial for their vocabulary acquisition. It gave them a deeper understanding of the word which led to better vocabulary acquisition.

Even just reading aloud without clarification of terms was a great way to introduce children to new words, thereby expanding their vocabulary. Penno *et al.* (2002), Beck and McKeown (2017), Suggate *et al.* (2013) all touched on how vocabulary development still occurred incidentally without word explanations, but in comparison to word explanation the results were lower but still there.

5. Discussion

Beck and McKeown (2017), Kindle (2015), Omar and Saufi (2015) and Penno *et al.* (2002) all emphasize the importance of reading aloud for vocabulary development. It has been shown in these studies that using read aloud is beneficial to develop children's vocabulary. Pinter (2017), Mason (2013) also point out that it is extremely important that when teaching English as a foreign language, children should get the opportunity to listen to the language first. This exposes children to the language where they learn new words which leads to vocabulary acquisition. In this discussion section, the results will be summarized from the studies that have been analyzed on reading aloud and vocabulary. Then they will be compared with previous findings that were introduced in the introduction part.

The previously mentioned studies all came to the same conclusion that reading aloud is beneficial for the development of children's vocabulary. One of the results that Kindle (2015), Penno *et al.* (2002) and Omar and Saufi (2015) have come to agree on is that reading aloud in combination with word explanation gives the children a significantly higher chance of understanding the spoken English and difficult encountered words. They all agree that children need to hear a word several times for it to become familiar and to adapt it to their own vocabulary. The findings of the studies also support the recommendations made in the Swedish curriculum, how the concept of word explanations makes the content of spoken English easier to understand and interpret for children.

In the finding of the researchers Moore *et al.* (2014) and Biemiller and Boote (2006) and Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) result on their studies, they all shared different approaches to how reading aloud can be implemented in practice. The outcome of the researchers' results showed that being able to engage in meaningful discussions about the book and terms before, during and after the reading sessions, was a favorable approach enjoyed by the children. The reason is that after children hear the words several times a development takes place in their vocabulary, which makes participation in discussion enjoyable since they could understand and use the new learned vocabulary. Even Pinter (2017) and Lundberg (2011) discussed how after being exposed to the English language through listening, the children start to move on to the next step in learning, which is to practice their speaking skills. As previously mentioned in our background, this is something that the Skolverket (2020) also emphasizes and agrees on, the importance of giving the children the chance to use different language strategies to increase their

understanding in the subject. In order to give children the best conditions for development, it is also important to adapt to their experiences and already existing knowledge.

One of the claims that several researchers agree with is that reading aloud that contains repetition facilitates children's language development (Pinter, 2017; Lundberg, 2011; Schröter and Molander Danielsson, 2016). In comparison with the results of the study, it agrees well with the conclusions of the analyzed studies. Biemiller and Boote (2006) and Moore *et al.* (2014) studies achieved a result that showed that it is beneficial for children's language and vocabulary development to read the same text several times. The conclusion that we draw from this is that reading the same texts several times is considered necessary and appreciated in the teaching according to the researchers in the analyzed studies. This agrees well with the previous perception we had of repetition texts during our work and internship experiences within the school, where we clearly noticed the importance of repeating the same texts for vocabulary development in English teaching classrooms.

In the Swedish curriculum it is mentioned in core content how children should develop their listening skills by listening to clear spoken English, different from dialogues, stories etc., where the content of spoken English is understood and interpreted (Skolverket, 2020). The researcher's result agrees with the statement from the Swedish curriculum that children should be given the opportunity to listen to the English language for language development. Even Schröter and Molander Danielsson (2016), Pinter, (2017) and Mason, (2013) all agreed on in their study how reading aloud is a great listening exercise that provides children with the opportunity to listen to rich input. This will in turn facilitate the understanding of the spoken language with more listening input that increases the language development and prepares the children to move on and use the language themselves.

In analysis of the different studies, we noticed that the researchers used different methods to perform the studies. Some studies used several limited methods to test their studies, while others had a more open study where the participating teachers had the opportunity to adapt the method based on their own preferences. However, all the researchers in the analyzed studies still agreed on how reading aloud benefits the vocabulary of the English language. The researchers in the studies highlight different methods that they believe give the best results (word description, repetition and different learning methods, etc.), but in general they agree that reading aloud benefits the vocabulary and should be incorporated in children's learning. Therefore, it is

essential to include it as a teaching method to children who are learning a foreign language. By using reading aloud in the teaching children get a chance to absorb the foreign language which benefits their vocabulary acquisition. Reading aloud has according to previously mentioned researchers also been an entertaining and favorable method to use with young children.

Based on our experiences during our internship in the Swedish school, we have noticed the lack of reading aloud in the English subject, even though reading aloud seems to be a popular method used in the Swedish subject. According to a study by Greene Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002), reading aloud along with explanations of words and discussion about the book is very popular among students. The reason for this is that it creates a better understanding in the children who in turn become curious about learning. Since reading aloud is used so much in the Swedish subject, the working method itself is familiar to the children. Therefore, reading aloud creates a safe and comfortable feeling during the English lesson that allows children to focus on developing their English language.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine to what extent reading aloud is beneficial for teaching English in terms of vocabulary development. To answer our research question, we have concluded that reading aloud can be beneficial to the extent that it promotes vocabulary learning which leads to language development. However, it has been shown according to our research that there is little benefit to only reading aloud for vocabulary development. Including word explanation during the reading aloud has been shown to have a better outcome than only reading aloud when it comes to vocabulary acquisition. Even repetition showed to have a beneficial outcome when combined with reading aloud for vocabulary acquisitions. Repetition makes it easier for children to notice the linguistic input which increases children's vocabulary acquisitions. Therefore, it is important that when using read aloud as a method for vocabulary development to combine it with word explanation and repetition to maximize the benefits of reading aloud.

The limitations we encountered during this research were the selection of studies. Not many studies were conducted in an EFL classroom, which meant that access to such studies was rather restrictive. We decided instead to use studies conducted on children who studied English as a first and second language in preschool and grade one to three in primary school. The idea is that these can still be applied to children who are learning English, but as a foreign language.

The studies used for our research had different numbers of participants in the tests and had also chosen different methods to perform their studies on. The age difference of the children who participated in the analyzed studies varied between 5 and 8 years which also impacted the results. This causes difficulties to draw similarities between the studies since the age groups are not the same. Which means that the experiences and difficulties children encounter during the studies differ.

Skolverket (2020) writes that children should be offered a stimulating environment where they are given the opportunity to develop their language by listening to reading aloud. Since reading aloud is an important part of Swedish teaching, we became interested in investigating how much reading aloud is used in English teaching. The result we achieved was consistent with our own discoveries during the internship course, that reading aloud benefits students' vocabulary. This

has made us even more interested in how reading aloud is used in different schools in Sweden. We would like to study this area even more in the future. It would be interesting to delve deeper in to investigate why teachers do not use reading aloud as much in English teaching as they do in Swedish teaching. It is important that we as future teachers understand why the teaching is practiced in a certain way in order to understand and develop it further in the future.

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