

# Renovating the Traditional Reading Aloud Approach for ESL Autonomous Learning

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**Abstract** Reading, especially a good reading habit is not only an effective but also a helpful way of learning English. This paper looks into the importance and studies the ways of cultivating reading aloud habits so as to help students form a good reading habit. And this paper regards that new reading aloud approach crucial for China development. Research results show that renovating reading aloud approach in ESL can promote autonomous learning and improve study efficiency under the background of English teaching reforms.

**Key Words** Habit; Reading aloud approach; Autonomous learning

## 1 Introduction

With the development of electronic informationization and the popularization of computers and the internet, electronic texts and music are growing more and more wide spreading. Therefore, books, music and video documents have come into people's lives. As a result, people are reading less and less printed books, but more and more electronic books, which have greatly influenced their ability of reading aloud.

As a form of combining both phonetic language and words, reading aloud has been very helpful in understanding contents and strengthening memories. Therefore, we should cultivate good reading-aloud habits in the process of learning English. The following parts of this paper are going to make further discussion and analysis on the role of reading-aloud habit in helping learning English.

## 2 Renovating Reading Aloud Approach

### 2.1 Habit

Habit is a basic psychological unit of stable relations between stimulation and reaction. The habits we have formed so far are external manifestations of simple psychology attributed to our educational background, growing-up environment and genetic factors. One of the main characteristics of habits is repetition, which helps distinguish habits from other psychological and behavior factors. Judging from the definition, we may find that the formation of habits consists of two important factors that are, stimulation and reaction. They interact with each other and thus form a dialectical relationship.

Generally speaking, there are two categories of habits, namely, unplanned habits and planned habits. The former one refers to a long-term habit that is formed naturally, which may last for a long time or even through a whole life. For example, the formation of our dressing habits or shopping habits has no particular stimulation, nor individual thinking or planning, but related to sociological and genetic factors as well as other environmental factors, which possess strong interconnections and are not easy to change. Due to the above mentioned factors, many people misunderstand when they try to overcome some bad habits that once habits are formed they are not easy to change. The latter category refers to a short-term habit that is formed by certain motivations, which may not last for a long time, but can develop to long-term habit, such as the time schedule one week before the examination, or the preference to some computer games in a certain period, etc. These habits are formed due to certain strong stimulations or sudden releases of certain psychological emotions, which are mainly subjective. Therefore, we can turn them into long-term habits by using the characteristic of strong purpose so as to better develop ourselves.

### 2.2 Reading aloud approach

There is an old Chinese saying: "The meaning of a book will come clear if you read it for a hundred times." The word "read" hereby means "reading aloud". In the past time, students in old schools normally swayed their heads rhythmically when they were reading books in bright and loud sound. Furthermore, another idiom also tells us that "Those who can't write poems will at least be able to chant poetry if they read poems of Tang Dynasty for three hundred times." Therefore, reading aloud has proved to be a vital method for learning Chinese.

Reading aloud is a way of vocal reading as well as a process when people initiatively turn word symbols into phonetic symbols. In such a process, all the senses, including vision, touching, hearing, etc. are greatly exerted and they influence each other.

Therefore, reading aloud requires not only turning word symbols into phonetic symbols, but also conversion, that is, the mixture of understanding and emotion. Only through this can we achieve the re-creation psychological process of “better reading aloud, better clarification and understanding”.

### **2.3 Reading aloud in EFL Learning**

Throughout the two thousand years in China, scholars and educators have attached much importance to reading aloud in teaching young students to learn Chinese. Since English became a world language and EFL became a compulsory course in China, educators have experimented with various ways to teach the language. However, reading aloud has been neglected in learning English.

In history, verbal language came earlier than written words. Nowadays, there exist some nations with no written languages. As we know, language is transmitted by sound. Meanwhile, reading aloud is not only a process of absorbing and using language from external to internal environments, but also an important means of creating language environment by students themselves. In a non-English native speaking country, the most difficult factor for learning English is the absence of language environment. So, if we can create it through reading aloud, it will help benefit a lot in language acquisition.

Since most of the students are influenced by their own dialects, they have shown many problems in pronunciations and tunes. For example, they read English sentences in a Chinese dialect way. It seems that they are speaking Chinese, which greatly influences their abilities to express in English. Thus, in order to overcome the communication problem, they need to imitate and read aloud time and time again, because reading aloud can reveal their weakness in pronunciation. Therefore, through reading aloud, especially imitating correct and native pronunciations and tunes, the students can remedy themselves. In a word, the process of learning a language is actually the process of imitating. Meanwhile, language imitation is achieved through reading aloud.

As a tool of communication, the ultimate goal of language learning is to communicate with others. When reading the materials aloud, the students actually consider them as language materials, which help to practice their speaking abilities. Once they are familiar with the materials, they will store the sentences that they already read in their minds, so that when they express themselves they can blurt out naturally. Listening is a process of input, while reading aloud is not only a process of input but also a process of output. Therefore, reading aloud is actually a potential practice process for listening.

Meanwhile, the sense of language indicates the direct feeling toward language, consisting of systemic and comprehensive language sensing ability, which is considered as the direct and sharp comprehension toward language. What's more, the stronger sense toward language, the better creation of learning and mastery of language. When reading aloud, the students are actually using their mouths, eyes and ears at the same time, which can get them involved in the atmosphere for English language. The reason why some students make lots of mistakes during speaking practice and use a large number of Chinglish sentences is that they read aloud less and lack a good sense of English. Through reading aloud, the students can store substantial English phrases and sentences in their minds. So when they are using English, these phrases and sentences will pop out and turn into the language for their own use.

Furthermore, the students can also better understand and express their feelings through reading aloud. Since their eyes, mouths, ears and brains all cooperate at the same time, thus there exists a direct connection between sounds and words. Meanwhile, the ups and downs of the tunes as well as the unstressed and stressed syllables of words can stimulate the brains and push the learners to react. As a result, richer imaginations are generated and better understandings together with memories are strengthened.

It is said that “You can't make anything out of nothing.” Therefore, if there is no language input, there will be no source for language output. One of the most important means of input is to read aloud. Since reading aloud not only provides beneficial conditions for the accuracy and fluency of language input for the students, but also arouse their initiation for self-practice, self-control and self-adjustment. As a result, reading aloud helps to promote overall development of language ability through its unique characteristics. Furthermore, it also helps to enrich English learning, horizon broadening, interest expanding and quality cultivating. Reading aloud itself is an effective way to learn language and it is irreplaceable. Hence, we can never overlook the importance of reading aloud during the process of language learning. On the contrary, we should strengthen the training of reading aloud, exert its advantage and make use of it scientifically so as to improve our comprehensive abilities of listening, speaking, reading and writing and thus turn ourselves into language talents with overall qualities.

As we know, our brain gets frequently active when we are reading aloud. In fact, almost every part of the brain involves into the whole reading-aloud process. Meanwhile, the activities as well as information exchange of the left and right parts of the brain are also frequent. Therefore, it helps to

promote reading and memory. That's why a one-time reading aloud is better than a ten-time silent reading. Reading aloud not only requires vocalization, but also understanding, which results in a three-dimensional acquisition of memorizing information rather than a simple way through using eyes to read a book or a computer. Since we all have experience that when we sense some smell we can quickly recall every information related to the smell, even including the details. This is the benefit of the three-dimensional way of memorizing. Listening and speaking are two vital parts of English. Through the above mentioned three-dimensional way, we can combine listening and speaking and thus promote our writing so as to form a positive circle. Therefore, forming the habit of reading aloud plays a significantly practical role in English learning.

### 3 Investigation and Analysis

In order to find out students understanding and application of reading aloud approach in EFL learning, we designed a questionnaire and assigned 60 copies to different grades and majors of undergraduate students in Wuhan University of Technology. We will investigate students' awareness of the role of reading aloud and find out ways for the establishment of good reading-aloud habits. Finally, we have gotten back 60 questionnaires and among them 67% are male students, while 33% are female students. Meanwhile, there are 19 freshmen, 29 sophomores and 12 junior and seniors. Among all of them, 23 are art majors, 27 are science majors and 10 are other categories. Among these, there are 20 English major students.

According to the data analysis, we find that most of the subjects can express clearly what they prefer in ESL learning (45% out of all the subjects), understand their own preference better (46%) and know something about English reading aloud (38%). At the same time, the subjects have common feelings toward the benefits of reading aloud, such as it can help regulate pronunciation, train the sense for English, improve speaking, stimulate interest for English learning and promote thinking in English, etc. Furthermore, they also realize their weaknesses in some aspects like listening (33% out of all the subjects), reading (17%) and speaking (35%), which all help to lay a solid theoretical and psychological foundation for forming a good reading-aloud habit.

However, we also find that the subjects have problems in finding good methods and skills for forming a good reading-aloud habit as well as cultivating a long-term habit.

Firstly, 70% of them don't have the habit of reading English aloud every day, which means it is actually a totally new habit for them, so it's not easy to achieve it. What's more, through the analysis of the data, we have noticed that most of the subjects can't tell what kind of materials are better for reading aloud, nor do they know skills for reading aloud. Therefore, 55% of them care more about syllables stress and 40% of them pay more attention to tunes.

Secondly, most of the subjects deem that it will take about one and a half months to form a new habit (72% out of all), which is reasonable according to psychology. However, the percentage of those who withdraw in the half way is 46%, which poses an obstacle for forming the habit of reading aloud. Hence, the most important for this is persistence. The reason why many of them can't achieve their goal is that they can't stick to it.

Finally, we have found that the percentage of those who consider insisting in a certain habit as boring, lonely and uninterested is between 46% and 72%. Meanwhile, 87% of the subjects wish to have companies during the process of forming such a habit. Choosing to read aloud with others demonstrates that other people have influence on the decision of reading aloud. However, only 13% of the subjects choose to read aloud with their teachers. Such an interesting phenomenon suggests that we let the students organize some collective activities so as to promote the formation of the habit and then invite the teachers to participate in at some proper times. It will be much better than making teachers as the companions all the time.

### 4 Conclusion and Suggestions

Our research indicates that a good habit of reading aloud can promote the initiation of autonomous learning and thus improve the efficiency of learning English. At first, we should make clear schedules for reading aloud during the implementation. Furthermore, once we finish each task, we should mark it and thus help to build our self-confidence, which is beneficial for the persistence in reading aloud. Secondly, we should also clearly understand the goal for reading aloud which maybe lie in being familiar with text books, strengthening our knowledge, practicing speaking or even improving senses for language, depending on different individuals. The reason why we should do this is that the clearer our goal is, the

more concrete our behavior will be and the longer we can keep up. After that, we will choose our own materials for reading aloud according to the goal already set.

Additionally, students should pay attention to the following aspects:

First of all, the place for reading aloud is very important. We should make sure not to be interrupted by anything, not even a mosquito, nor should we distract ourselves during the whole reading-aloud process. It is also important to set up feasible goals so learning can be conducted in a progressive way.

Secondly, the materials for reading aloud should not be too long, because long articles can easily get readers tired, which is not good for the building of self-confidence. At the same time, we should also master the pronunciation before reading aloud so as to ensure our fluency and comfort in the process. In addition, the materials for reading aloud should be selected. Not every English article is proper for reading aloud. Thus, we should be careful when choosing the materials. Generally speaking, the materials with comparatively more sophisticated sentence structures and larger amount of vocabulary are not good for reading aloud. What's more, the sci-tech articles, expositions and argumentations which are not easy for understanding are not good for reading aloud, either. Basically, the materials should be diverse and easy to read. There is need for too many words, but it is necessary to cover information. Some extracurricular materials are suitable for reading aloud, such as delicate essays. They have fewer vocabularies but more fluency. What's more, the sentences in essays are not only particular but also rigorous. Although the sentences are simple, yet they carry deep meanings. And famous speeches are also an ideal choice for reading aloud.

Thirdly, we can't read aloud for too long. The best duration is 30 minutes. Otherwise, we will feel tired and hence influence the effect of reading aloud. Meanwhile, make sure that our eyes, mouths and hearts are cooperating together when we are reading, which requires correct pronunciation and tunes. Additionally, quick reactions in listening, good mastery of phrases, terms, sentences and passages are also needed. We should pay attention to the valuable parts of the materials, like new-type sentences and the application of certain words or phrases in some particular contexts. More importantly, we need to read aloud these valuable materials time and time again so that we can recite them. At the same time, we should pay attention to the pronunciations, phonetics and tunes. We can also imitate and practice with the help of recorded materials.

Finally, we can read aloud along with those who know us well, such as teachers, classmates, good friends, lovers, etc., so that we can supervise each other and achieve our goals together. Since good materials for reading aloud are those we use quite often or we prefer much, so it's not wise to choose new books or even unfamiliar materials. Although they can give us fresh feelings, they are not good for fluent reading aloud. Meanwhile, we can also discuss with teachers or experienced classmates about possible plans or goals for reading aloud. Finally, when we read aloud, we should try to understand well. Although notes are necessary, yet understanding are more important, which contributes to better reading aloud.

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# Discussion on the Objective of Cultural Construction in Private Enterprise

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**Abstract** Based upon explanation regarding positioning of construction objective of private enterprise culture, the author suggests imperative dialectic reconciliation of two relations, namely, relation between individuality and commonness, and relation between publicity and observation. Finally the author proposes model framework of construction objective of private enterprise culture. The paper regards that the basic framework of construction objective of private enterprise culture should include the spirit of solidarity with collectivism, the spirit of enterprising with the tradition of hardship and strife, the spirit of innovation with consciousness of reform and exploitation, the spirit of service with the conception of "all for customer", and the spirit of excellence with modern timeliness conception

**Key Words** Private enterprise culture; Construction objective; Spirit of enterprise

## 1 Introduction

Essentially, private enterprise is a sort of civilian oriented economy. The so-called civilian oriented economy refers to the economy based on people, by the people and for the nation and the people. The civilian oriented economy is characterized by private investment, independent business, self profit-making and responsibility for risk, and private investment is relative to state-owned and collective enterprises; as to investors, founders of private enterprises are individuals; some private enterprises have only one founder, while others have several investment partners.

In China, private enterprises grew hard with great efforts and opportunity from the very beginning and are becoming an all important component of national economy; however, private enterprises can only develop and expand by construction of corporate culture and management level in the scenario of economic globalization in modern era. To build excellent and effective private enterprise culture, it's ultimately significant to intensify research of building objective of private enterprise culture. In this article, the author intends to expound personal perspective on three aspects, i.e. positioning regarding construction objective of private enterprise culture, two relations to properly reconcile in realizing construction objective of private enterprise culture, as well as model framework of construction objective of private enterprise culture, so as to share constructive opinions with researchers in this field.

## 2 Positioning of Construction Objective of Private Enterprise Culture

Core competition strength of private enterprise comes from corporate culture. Since private enterprises play important role in overall construction of better-off society in Chinese economic growth and realization of national modernization, we should not only pay attention to past history of private enterprises, namely, growth of private enterprises, including their advantages and disadvantages, but more importantly concern with present situation and future development of private enterprises, namely, survival and revival of private enterprises. Practically and realistically, private enterprises took advantage of flexible management mechanism and ever enterprising business spirit, adopted operation pattern suitable for market economy law in the past, so that experienced all-time prosperity and development, and became the most competitive part of China national economy. On the other hand, however, we have to admit the fact that most of private enterprises are prosperous for short span of time. For instance, the bankruptcy of "Giant" Group in Zhuhai, "Feilong" in Shenyang and "Sanzhu Oral Syrup" in Hunan that were lucrative and influential in the past are examples of "transient blossoming." As for the phenomenon of "short-lived" private enterprises, some think it's the result of outdated management, while other think it's the result of misled marketing strategy, unrestricted financial control and etc, in fact, these are superficial causes, and real cause is private enterprise culture drops behind internal development demand, which is represented by short-lived private enterprises that dismiss construction of corporate culture. Yu Guangyuan, a famous Chinese economist, has said that "national strength depends upon economy, economic prosperity upon enterprises, and enterprise development upon corporate culture<sup>[1]</sup>." the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not only an era of knowledge-based economy and network