

Effect of a reading aloud program on reading rate and reading prosody in a group of sixth-grade low achievement language minority readers with low SES



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INTRODUCTION

Language minority (LM) students' reading comprehension is less proficient than that of their native peers in upper elementary grades^a.

Reading rate (accuracy and speed) and reading prosody (expression, phrasing and pace) are related to reading comprehension^{b,c}.

Reading interventions can improve reading rate and reading prosody in native students.

Few studies assessed reading interventions in reading rate, reading prosody and reading comprehension in LM upper elementary grade students.

AIM

To determine the impact of a reading-aloud training program on:

- **reading rate**
 - **reading prosody**
 - **reading comprehension**
- in a group of low-achievement language minority sixth-grade readers

METHODS

Participants

54 sixth-grade LM students were randomly assigned to an intervention group (n = 27) or a control group (n = 27). The two groups were matched on different reading and control measures.

Tasks (pre and post intervention)

1. Reading rate

- *Reading rate task* (Jacquier-Roux et al., 2010).
Score = Number of words correctly read per minute

2. Reading prosody

- *Induced prosody task*: the student is asked to read with prosody
 - *Spontaneous prosody task*: prosody is assessed on a reading where the student is not asked to read with prosody
- Prosody scores are calculated using the MFS (Rasinski, 2004)

	1	2	3	4
Expression	Little expression	Some expression	Often good expression	Good expression
Phrasing	Little sense of phrasing	Frequent two- and three-word phrases	Mixture of run-ons and mid-sentence pauses	Generally well phrased
Smoothness	Frequent pauses, hesitations, ...	Several "rough spots" in text	Occasional breaks in smoothness	Generally smooth reading
Pace	Slow	Moderately slow	Fast and slow	Conversational

Multidimensional Fluency Scale (MFS) - summary from Rasinski (2004)^d

3. Reading comprehension

- *Sentence reading comprehension "L3"* (Lobrot, 1980). Score = number of sentences correctly completed

Intervention: The reading aloud program

One-to-one intervention. With a reading book. Three 30- to 40-min sessions per week for a period of 7 weeks. Each session includes 3 stages:

- 1) Assisted wide reading**: from one chapter to the next, the student reads aloud the book. The focus is on word reading accuracy and on reading comprehension.
- 2) Repeated reading**: the student reads a passage of about a hundred words until a predetermined reading rate is reached.
- 3) Modeling prosody**: the student reads the previously trained passage in stage 2 with expression, phrasing and pace with the support of the tutor modeling.

RESULTS

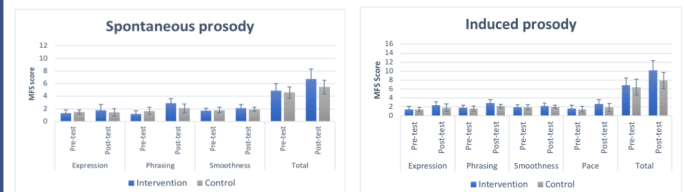
Bayesian repeated measures ANOVAs (time x condition)

Decisive evidence:

- Induced prosody: Expression, Phrasing, Pace and Total
- Spontaneous prosody: Phrasing and Total

No evidence:

- Reading rate
- Sentence reading comprehension



CONCLUSIONS

Low-achievement sixth-grade LM readers trained with the reading aloud program:

- Put spontaneously a better phrasing in reading a new text
- Put more adequate reading expression when asked to do so
- Developed better prosody skills

However, the reading aloud program did not have an impact on reading comprehension. This could be due to a lack of sensitivity of the task.

^a Geva, E., & Farnia, F. (2012). Developmental changes in the nature of language proficiency and reading fluency paint a more complex view of reading comprehension in ELL and ELL1. *Reading and Writing*, 25(8), 1819–1845.

^b Klaua, S. L., & Guthrie, J. T. (2008). Relationships of three components of reading fluency to reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(2), 310–321.

^c Veenendaal, N. J., Groen, M. A., & Verhoeven, L. (2014). The role of speech prosody and text reading prosody in children's reading comprehension. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84(4), 521–536.

^d Rasinski, T. V. (2004). Assessing Reading Fluency. *Pacific resources for Education and Learning*.