AN EXAMINATION OF PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS ON READING INSTRUCTION METHODOLOGY

by

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A Master's Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
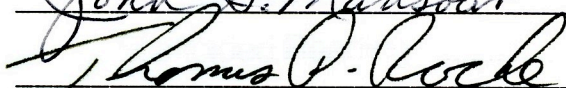
OTTAWA UNIVERSITY
May 1997

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has been approved
May 1997

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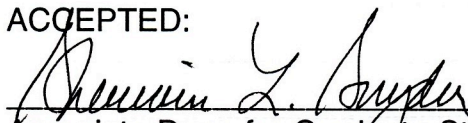_John G. Mansour_

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of ESL teachers in regards to reading instruction methods, specifically Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolded Reading. The need for this study is significant because there is a large discrepency between how ESL students and non-ESL students compare in reading scores. There is also a trend of rising multicultural students in our classrooms. To better serve these students one must examine what research says is effective and examine whether or not teachers are using the researched methods.

In examining the three methods, Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolding Reading, journals, articles, and books were researched. The findings were that Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning have all been researched and proven to be effective methods for teaching reading to second language learners. Krashen and Terrel's (1983) Natural Approach is an underlining theory for these three methods. Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning are sound in theory.

The preceptions of ESL teachers were examined in regards to the three reading methods and the effectiveness of the methods on reading improvement on the following indicators: comprehension, articulation, speed, vocabulary acquisition, confidence, reading on their own, and self-correcting. A survey of 57 ESL teachers was conducted to determine their perceptions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Ottawa University Staff for their assistance on my Master's Degree. I would especially like to thank Sylvia Babbitt and John Mansour for their help in conception and direction of this project. I must also thank my husband, Barry, for his patience and loving support in all my academic endeavors. Lastly, I would like to thank my mom who always believed I could do it.

CHAPTER 1
THE PROBLEM

Introduction

There is a dramatic change occurring in the public schools. The composition of the population is changing at an alarming rate. In 1990, African Americans, Latinos, Amerindians, and Asians made up 32 percent of the total public school enrollment in the nation (National Center for Education Statistics 1993). By the end of the century minority students will make up almost 42 percent of total public school enrollment (Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life 1988).

Language minority students come from homes where English is not the primary language spoken. The level of English proficiency ranges from none to fluent. This range of skill creates significant concern for educators. The increases in the cultural and linguistic diversity of school-age population presents a challenge. The results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (1990) show that the gap in performance between Hispanics and white high school students was 24 point in reading. There is a need for an examination of reading methods that will help the English as a Second Language (ESL) student make better progress.

This study examined the perceptions of ESL teachers in the Scottsdale School District in regard to reading instruction for ESL students. Three particular reading methods were examined: Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolded Reading.

Development of the Problem

Since the Supreme Court case of *Lau v. Nichols* in 1974, the public school systems have had to take positive action to help students who do not speak English. Students whose primary language is other than English must be identified and provided with learning experiences that are comprehensible and meaningful (Ovando and Collier 1985). The *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court ruling has forced the public school system to change to meet the needs of all its students.

Since the late 1970s, the public schools have experienced a major growth in the enrollment of ethnic and language minority students. Schools total enrollment overall declined by 2 percent between 1976 and 1988, yet, the proportion of minorities increased by 23 percent in the same time period. Recall that in 1990, African Americans, Latinos, Amerindians, and Asians made up 32 percent of the total public school enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993), and by the end of the century minority students will make up almost 42 percent of total public school enrollment (Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life, 1988).

When looking at reading skills of some of these students, one can see the need for an examination of methods that work. The results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1990) show that the gap in performance between Hispanics and white high school students was 24 points in reading. Performance between black and white high school students in reading showed a gap of 20 points. It is the intent of this researcher to examine methods that research has shown to work and teachers' perceptions of these methods. If research states a particular method is successful, yet teachers don't use it, the research is useless.

This researcher experienced a great need for this study while

teaching ESL students at Navajo Elementary school in the Scottsdale School District. The research was readily available and discussed, but the researcher wondered how many teachers were actually putting it into practice. That concern developed into this reseach project on examining the perceptions of ESL teachers on reading instruction.

Need for the Study

Results from the National Assessment of Education Progress (1990) show the gap between white high school students and Hispanic students. In reading there was a 24 point discrepancy between white students and Hispanic students scores (NAEP, 1990). Performance between black and white high school students in reading showed a gap of 20 points. With the number of incoming students from diverse language backgrounds and the discrepancy in test scores, there is a need for a curriculum that will improve progress in reading skills. Arizona's enrollment of Limited English Proficient students (LEP) has increased from 38,747 in the 1985-1986 school year to 67,395 in the 1991-1992 school year (U.S. Department of Education 1993). That is an increase of 74 percent in six years.

With the increase in LEP students in Arizona, a shortage of ESL and Bilingual teachers has developed. Many schools offer pull-out programs, where the students report to a resource teacher for two hours a day and are then sent back to the regular classroom teacher. The classroom teachers are sometimes at a loss as to what to do with the ESL student. This study will help the classroom teacher by examining methods that are research based and proven to have results with ESL students. It will also include the perceptions of practicing ESL/Bilingual teachers on how the methods are used in the classroom and what the effects are on reading.

This study examined three methods that have been shown to give results in helping the ESL student in reading. The methods are

Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolded Reading Experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of ESL teachers on reading instruction methods: Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolded Reading. The study examined how often these methods were used and the effectiveness in reading improvement that resulted.

Research Question

What is the effectiveness of Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning in regard to reading improvement skills for ESL students according to ESL teachers?

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

In reviewing the literature, certain aspects of language acquisition needed to be researched. First, how is language acquired and secondly, how is reading acquired? Is there a corrolation? If ESL students read in their first language, will reading transfer to the second language? Transferability is an important aspect of working with ESL students. The reading strategies choral reading, cooperative learning and scaffolded reading have been researched and shown to be successful in teaching reading to ESL students. This chapter takes a closer look at these strategies, what they are and what the research says about them.

Language Acquisition

In examining Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading and Cooperative Learning methods to help English second language learners become more proficent readers, one must examine how second language learners acquire second language reading skills. To do this one must first examine how language is acquired.

In the first part of the twentieth century, linguists and psychologists thought children acquired language by imitating their parents. Noam Chomsky (1964) conducted a serious study of how children acquired language. As a result he hypothesized that children learned language too rapidly to learn it simply through imitation.

Chomsky believed that there must be some kind of language acquistion device that is activated when the child starts to hear language (1964).

Moskowitz (1960) followed Chomsky's claim and stated that rote memorization and imitation are not processes by which language is acquired. Extensive correction and rote drills may even slow up the process of language acquisition. The early stages of child language acquisition are the one-word stage, the two-word stage, telegraphic speech, function words, plurals, negative sentences, semantics, and phonology.

Bruner states that a child doesn't learn merely by imitation of caretaker's speech. He defines caretaker speech as the speech of the primary care giver to the infant. A child's language acquisition occurs through interactions that have a real purpose. Bruner explains there are four major communicative functions or purposes; indicating, requesting, affiliation, and generating possible worlds. Indicating is the naming or labeling of things. Requesting is asking for an item or expressing a need. Affiliation is the forming of a basis for social exchange. Generating possible worlds is the imaginary world of make believe. It is also about games. It is useful for both conceptual and communicative development.

When one strays from real purposeful language, the language acquisition is lost.

> The moment we teach language as an explicit set of rules for generating well-formed strings out of context, the enterprise seems to go badly wrong. The rule in natural language learning is that language is learned in order to interact with someone about something the two of you share (Bruner 1993, 66).

The Natural Approach (Krashen and Terrell 1983) emphasizes comprehensible input rather than practice and drill. Krashen and Terrel (1983) see communication as the primary function of

language. "It (the Natural Approach) is based on an empirically grounded theory of second language acquisition, which has been supported by a large number of scientific studies in a wide variety of language acquisition and learning contexts" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983, 1). Krashen and Terrell's theories on the Natural Approach are the following :

The Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis which states that *Acquisition* is the 'natural' way, paralleling first language development in children. Acquisition refers to an unconscious process that involves the naturalistic development to language proficiency through understanding language and through using language for meaningful communication. *Learning*, by contrast, refers to a process in which conscious rules about language are developed. Learning, according to the theory, cannot lead to acquisition (Richards and Rogers 1986).

According to Krashen and Terrel's Natural Order Approach, the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. The Natural Approach includes the Input Hypothesis and the Affective Filter.

The Input Hypothesis has four main points:

1. The hypothesis relates to acquisition and not to learning.

2. People acquire language best by understanding input that is slightly beyond their level of competence.

An acquirer can "move" from a stage I (where I is the acquirer's level of competence) to a stage I + 1 (where I + 1 is the stage immediately following I along some natural order) by understanding language containing I + 1 (Krashen and Terrell 1983, 32).

3. Fluency is not something thatcan be taught, instead it emerges after the acquirer has gain linguistic competence from understanding the input.

4. If there is a sufficient quantity of comprehensible input, I + 1 will

usually be provided automatically.

A second aspect of the Natural Approach is the Affective Filter. The Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen and Terrell 1983) states that with a low affective filter the acquirer will have high motivation, interact with self-confidence, and are more receptive to input. With a high affective filter the acquirer is anxious which prevents acquisition from taking place. Affective Filter refers to the stress level of the student.

The Input Hypothesis and Affective Filter theories are the basis of Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach. Second language acquisition follows first language acquisition. Comprehensible input, I + 1, and a low affective filter lead to the acquisition, not learning, of a language.

The methods chosen for examination, Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading and Cooperative Learning, support Krashen and Terrell's (1983) Natural Approach. Choral Reading and Cooperative Learning strongly support the Affective Filter Hypothesis because students work together. When students work cooperatively, no one student is put on the spot. In Choral Reading, poems or stories are read aloud together. This relieves any anxiety that a student may feel about being singled out to read.

Scaffolded Reading supports Krashen and Terrell's (1983) Natural Approach as well. Scaffolded Reading follows the Input Hypothesis, in that comprehensible input must be used and that gaps in knowledge must be filled for the student to comprehend.

Reading Acquisition

Thonis (1981) states that it is helpful to think of reading as a multifaceted developmental process in which the successful student learns to make connections that link language, print, and thought. A second language learner needs comprehensible input to acquire the language (Krashen 1983). A successful reader needs to comprehend

that which they have read (Thonis 1989). For native speakers of English, comprehension occurs when they are able to recognize the words as written, when they are able to make sense of the sequential arrangement of those words (Johnston 1982) and when they are able to relate the author's words to their own real or vicarious experiences. "One reads only when one comprehends. The meaning of what is written is not in the print, rather it is in the mind and heart of the reader" (Thonis 1989 66).

Students bring their schemata (background knowledge) to the task of reading (Carrell, 1983, 1984). English students can interpret literary meanings by drawing from their schemata. The students can discuss, infer and see relationships. They can think and comprehend (Thonis 1989). In comparison the second language learner is unfamiliar with the words or the syntactical arrangement, and may not have enough English to make any kind of meaning. The second language learner may not have the schemata to help them decode the meaning of a passage.

Language for all students is an organizer. Through language the world in which they are growing and learning is made more comprehensible and predictable. When students listen, speak, read, and think with the same language which has served them well as an organizer, their abilities in oral and written language are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Language, both oral and written, enhances intellectual growth (Thonis 1989).

For second language learners, oral language acquisition comes through the use of language in context (Krashen, 1982; Krashen and Terrell, 1983). Focusing on contextualized language is important in reading development. (Hudelson, 1984; Krashen, 1981; Thonis 1981). In the process of acquiring a second language, children develop competence by using the language for real communication (Krashen 1982). Involving students in interactive communication and

experiential learning promotes purposeful language use that leads to language acquisition (Sutton 1989).

Literacy

Hudelson (1994) defines literacy as the ability to derive meaning from reading. Reading is a language process in which an individual constructs meaning through a transaction with written text that has been created by symbols that represent language. The transaction involves the reader's acting upon or interpreting the text, and the interpretation is influenced by the reader's past experiences, language background, and cultural framework, as well as the reader's purpose for reading . Hudelson's definition of literacy parallels language acquisition in that reading and language must have a purpose and be meaningful. She goes on to state that the construction of meaning is central whether literacy is occurring in a first or second language; in fact, she argues that it is absolutely imperative for teachers of second language learners to be concerned, above all with meaning.

Transferability

"The principles of transfer of learning are highly relevant to reading instruction for language minority students" (Thonis 1989, 61). Thonis (1989) states that language fluency and literacy in any language are mental activities which are general and applicable across languages. "The rule of transfer states that knowledge and skill acquired and used in one task may be applied to a new, unfamiliar task under certain conditions" (Thonis 1989, 61). All people draw on previous learning and experiences when face with a new situation. Thonis believes that

> For language minority students, their own background has potential for transfer to English *if* their language is well

developed and *if* they have become fluent and literate.
Research substantiates the viewpoint that the best predictor of
success in English is success in the native language. For
language is thinking, reading is thinking, and thinking is thinking
in any language! (Thonis 1989, 61).

Reading Strategies

The purpose of this study is to examine how effective
Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolded Reading are
in reading instruction for ESL students according to ESL teachers.
Each method will be discussed.

In examining the methods of teaching second language
learners reading skills in the second language there are a few
principles of literacy development that one must keep in mind:

1. Literacy in a second language develops as in the first-
globally, not linearly, and in a variety of contexts (Rigg & Allen, 1989);

2. Second-language learning takes place best in risk free
environments where students' experiences and contributions are
validated (Law & Eckes, 1990);

3. Language is best learned when it is whole -- that is when it is
used for real and meaningful purposes (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores,
1991);

4. Reading and writing are literacy processes through which
children construct meaning, using prior knowledge and a variety of
strategies that promote and regulate comprehension (Peregoy &
Boyle, 1993).

These four principles are the underlining rational in several
methods examined in this paper, including Choral Reading Approach,
Cooperative Learning Approach and Scaffolded Reading Experience.

Choral Reading

Traditionally, choral reading is defined as the oral reading of
poetry that makes use of various voice combinations and contrasts to

create meaning or to highlight the tonal qualities of the passage (Arbuthonot 1961). McCauley and McCauley (1992) extended the definition to include sound effects, exclamatory words, crowd noises, asides, and movement. "These extra features help with construction of meaning; written words become more comprehensible" (McCauley & McCauley 1992, 527). Also, movement (from a simple raising of the eyebrows to an exaggerated pratfall) helps children feel the text (Fennimore, 1971; Stassen, 1996).

The benefits of utilizing choral reading reach well beyond the positive experience of performing or the delight that comes from having fun with language (McCauley & McCauley 1992). It is also more than a frivolous experience (Weiss 1983). Many educators point to gains in appreciation for literature (Stewig 1981), improved diction (Hall 1987), increased interest in and enjoyment of reading (Miccinati 1985; Woodbury 1979), improved self-confidence (Harste, Short & Burke 1988), increased fluency (Bradley & Thalgott 1987), and expanded vocabulary (Sampson, Allen & Sampson 1991; Templeton, 1991).

Choral reading requires repeated readings of a text, a practice which has been shown to increase readers' enjoyment of the text (Carbo 1978), to improve reading rate and prosodic reading (Chomsky 1976; Dowhower 1987; Samuels 1979; Schreider 1980), to improve understanding (Laffey, Kelly & Perry 1979), and to decrease the number of oral reading miscues (Herman 1985).

There are many factors that effect children's acquisition of a second language. Choral reading emphasizes four: a low- anxiety environment, repeated practice, comprehensible input, and drama.

A low-anxiety environment is essential for second language learning and is central to many theories of language acquisition (Gardner & Lambert 1972; Krashen 1983; Ovando & Collier 1985; Terrell 1977). Good communicative language teaching requires "an

environment of trust and mutual confidence wherein learners may interact without fear or threat of failure" (Savignon 1983, 122). Terrell (1983) states that creating this low anxiety situation "must be the overriding concern in classroom activities of acquisition is to be achieved" (273). McCauley & McCauley's article goes on to state that this type of classroom environment encourages risk-taking, which is a necessary part of second language learning (Beebe 1983).

Repeated practice improves fluency. This is based in the theory of automatic information processing (LaBerge & Samuels; 1976). Automatic information processing is not, however, a new idea, Huey (1908) states, "Repetition progressively frees the mind from attention to details, makes facile the total act, shortens the time, and reduces the extent to which consciousness must concern itself with the process" (104). Repetition is especially necessary for second language learners to acquire their new language (Krashen 1982). Repetion helps children to grasp the rhythm, pitch, volume, and tone of English (Petty, Petty & Becking 1985). Repeated hearing of the same story reinforces language patterns for limited English speaking children (Hough, Nurss & Enright 1986).

Comprehensible Input is when the acquisition of a second language is brought about when learners understand the message that is being spoken and when this input contains some language that is a little beyond them (Krashen 1983). Children receive input on their acquired level plus additional comprehensible input beyond it. Hernandez (1989) states that "instruction for second language learner should be accompanied by contextual support that provides additional clues to convey meaning" (99). He suggests demonstrations, gestures, manipulatives, facial expression, and paraliquistic clues to help make the input comprehensible.

Drama is a standard classroom technique in ESL classes for developing communicative competence (Hernandez 1989) and one

that has proved to be most valuable in improving language ability (Nomura 1985). Drama allows the second language learner to "try things out-- like moods, gestures, postures, and words. Drama is a natural component of ESL learning (Savignon 1983, 206). In Vygotsky's writings on language learning (1962, 1978) he stated that development is determined by language, language learning is a social act, play is important for language learning, and speech and action are vital in learning. Vygotsky (1978) thought the best way for children to learn writing and reading is through play. Choral Reading and Cooperative Learning are two play methods that assist in language learning.

To implement choral reading one must first find a poem. One should choose poems that are short, simple, and entertaining (Woodbury 1979). Children of all ages prefer humorous poems that rhyme and have rhythm (Fisher & Natarella 1982; Terry 1974). Poems that deal with topics that are familiar to the students or relate to subjects introduced in the content areas would also make a good choice (McCauley & McCauley 1992). McCauley and McCauley state that for second language learners it is most important to "choose poems in which actions and even added lines can be inserted to help clarify vocabulary and emphasize meaning" (530).

McCauley and McCauley (1992) give these ideas as a general procedure after a poem has been chosen.

1. Read the poem again slowly while the children follow with their eyes.

2. Give a quick , interesting introduction. Engage the children in a lively conversation about the poem.

3. Read poem aloud while the children listen. Read with expression, sound effects, or movement that the poem evokes.

4. Hand out copies of the poem or write it on chart paper or an overhead projector.

5. Read the poem with the children slowly at first, and then gradually increase the speed and add movements and sound effects.

6. Assign lines when children feel comfortable with the words and movements. Solos are only given to those who volunteer. If no one is ready to read alone, allow the line to be read by two children or a group.

7. Practice reading the poem with assigned parts, especially if it will be performed for others.

8. Applaud for a job well done.

Chomsky (1976) states that it is important that children gain an attitude that reading is accessible, that it is an activity worthy of effort, and that success is expected. Choral reading promotes accessibility, encourages the child's efforts, and assures success (McCauley & McCauley 1992).

Cooperative Learning

Uttero defines cooperative learning as students working in small groups to accomplish a common goal. She states that reading comprehension is an active process (Orasanu and Penney 1986; Pearson 1985). Readers use their prior knowledge as a blueprint to aid in the construction of meaning (Spiro, Bruce and Brewer 1980). The extent of their prior knowledge determines how efficiently they formulate meaning (Chapman 1984; Pearson 1984). If background is substantial, comprehension will occur with relative ease. However, if prior knowledge is weak, more processing must take place for the author's message to be understood (Johnson and Pearson 1982). Scaffolded Reading supports this explanation.

Cooperative learning is particularly conducive to activating children's prior knowledge (Flood 1986). Children discuss and share

ideas with others, which encourages them to actively participate in their learning (Uttero 1988). Working with students of different ethnic backgrounds, they extend their knowledge base and cultural awareness (Slavin 1983).

Cooperative learning also fosters the development of high level reasoning and problem solving skills (Sharan 1980). Through investigation, students acquire and interpret knowledge and assume responsibility for planning and carrying out their assignments (Sharan er al., 1980). Children also present issues, others challenge their responses, and all clarify their thinking (Parker 1985). The verbalization of ideas and information to fellow group members contributes to the successful comprehension of difficult learning tasks, including divergent thinking, decision making, and conceptual attainment (Johnson and Johnson 1985).

There are three phases in Uttero's cooperative learning model: Connection, Guided Independent Reading, and Follow Up. The Connection phase is prior to reading the text. It involves brainstorming, categorization -- using semantic maps (Johnson, Pittelman and Heimlich 1986, Stahl and Vancil 1986, Vaughn and Estes 1986.) which visually presents the relationship between ideas, and comparing and contrasting.

In Guided Independent Reading phase, students work together to interpret the text based on the prior knowledge activated in the Connection stage (Uttero 1988). Some activities suggested by Debbra Uttero are answering questions, outlining, and paraphrasing. In Follow Up phase of the model, students summarize the main content from the text and apply it to new contexts (Uttero 1988). Follow Up strategies are summarization, mnemonic devices, test making, and inferences.

Student benefits from cooperative learning are that students take responsibility for their learning and develop confidence in their

ability to plan and execute a task. Students develop comprehension and learning strategies which the students can internalize and apply to information on other contexts. Low achieving students welcome the opportunity to help in a group decision, which in turn contributes to a positive attitude toward school and an improved self perception (Uttero 1988).

Scaffolded Reading Experience

Scaffolding is defined as providing support to help learners bridge the gap between what they know and can do and the intended goal (Graves and Graves 1996) and is frequently singled out as one of the most effective instructional techniques available (Cazden 1992, Rosenshine and Meister 1992, Sweet 1993). David Pearson (1996) states, "Scaffolding allows us , as teacher, to intervene in an environment and provide the cueing, questioning, coaching, corroboration, and plain old information needed to allow students to complete a task before they are able to complete it independently" (14).

Donald Wood and his colleagues (1976), who were the first to use the term in its educational sense, define scaffolding as "a process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which would be beyond his [or her] unassisted efforts" (90).

Graves, Graves and Braaten write "by bridging the gap between youngsters' reading levels and the reading goals .. Scaffolded Reading Experiences help all students get the most out of what they read" (14). Scaffolded Reading Experience is a flexible framework designed to help students get the most out of each and every literacy experience (Graves and Graves 1994). The framework is used by the teacher to design specific activities for each phase of the reading experience -- prereading, during-reading, and post-

reading. Graves and Graves (1996) outline the framework.

Prereading Activities
-relating the reading to students' lives
- motivating students
- activating background knowledge
-teaching - vocabulary and concepts
-pre-questioning, predicting, and setting direction
- suggesting strategies

During-reading Activities
-silent reading
-reading to students
-guided reading
-oral reading by students
-modifying the text

Post-reading Activities
-questions
-discussion
-writing
-drama
-artistic endeavors
-application and out reach activities
-reteaching (14)

By using these activities teachers build on the students knowledge. Scaffolded Reading Experience is a practical way to guide youngsters to the goal of reading for information and for enjoyment (Graves and Graves 1996).

Summary

Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning have all been researched and proven to be effective methods for teaching reading to second language learners. Krashen and Terrel's (1983) Natural Approach is an underlining theory for these three methods. Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning are sound in theory.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study examine the perceptions of ESL teachers on reading instruction methods; Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolded Reading. The study will examine how often these methods are used and the effectiveness in reading improvement. The reseach question is

What is the effectiveness of Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning in regards to reading improvement skills for ESL students according to ESL teachers?

Research Design

The research design used in this study is descriptive. The main focus of descriptive research is to look at facts about people. In descriptive research one examines people's opinions and attitudes (Kerlinger 1986 as cited in Merream and Simpson 1995). "The purpose is to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of a given phenomenon, population, or area of interest" (61). The descriptive design was choosen because the researcher gathered facts from primary ESL teachers in the Scottsdale School District and incorporated the teachers opinions on methodology they found to be successful. This researcher also collected data from texts, journals, and conferences.

Sample and Population

Fifty-seven ESL/Biligual teachers from the Scottsdale School District were surveyed for this study. Teachers ranged from kindergarten teachers to high school teachers to resource teachers. Teachers were asked to volunteer to take the survey during a monthly ESL meeting at the Scottsdale School District's Professional Development Center, Scottsdale, Arizona.

Assumptions and Limitations

The assumption was made that all respondents were honest with their answers and that their interpertation of the methods was the same as the definition provided. The assumption was made that the sample of students evaluated was a representative sample of the ESL/bilingual student population. It was assumed that the three methods Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning could be separated from other methodologies. It would probably be more of a collaboration of methods. Limitations were in the number of responses, 57, and that all respondents were from the Scottsdale School District.

Procedure

The researcher reviewed articles, books, and journals (which are listed in the reference list of this paper) and accumulated a wealth of knowledge from researchers in the fields of language acquisition and reading methods for ESL students. The information reviewed was sorted and summarized for Chapter 2, The Literature Review. The next step was to get the expertise of ESL Scottsdale School District teachers. Fifty-seven ESL teacher were asked to complete a survey regarding reading methods they used with ESL students and how these methods help students improvement in comprehension, articulation, speed, vocabulary acquisition, confidence, reading on their own, and self correcting. The surveys were handed out at a

Scottdale School District ESL meeting. The results were tabulated for Chaper 4. The survey consisted of a continuum on how often each method was used -- never to everyday and a continuum asking the teacher to rate their agreement on how each method improved seven indicators; comprehension, articulation, speed, vocabulary, confidence, reading on their own, and self correcting -- strongly disagree to strongly agree. The complete instrument is located in Appendix A.

Method of Analysis

The results of the surveys were compiled to show how often each method was used; never, 2 or 3 times per month, and once a week to everyday. The teachers then agreed or disagreed with how each method improved reading skills. This information was put into charts, one for each method. Other methods of teaching reading that teachers wrote on surveys were compiled in a chart showing the method and how many teachers used them.

CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Fifty-seven English as a Second Language teachers from the Scottsdale School District were asked to complete a survey on how often they used Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolded Reading with their ESL students. They were also asked how these methods helped students improvement with the following indicators; comprehension, articulation, speed, vocabulary acquisition, confidence, reading on their own, and self correcting. See appendix for survey.

The teachers surveyed all teach in the Unified Scottsdale School District. The years of teaching experience ranged from one year to thirty years. The mean of years of teaching experience was 8 years. Twenty-six of the respondents were elementary teachers, 5 were middle school or high school teachers, 16 were resource teachers, and 10 did not specify a grade level.

Findings and Results

The analyses of the responses (Table 1) to how often each method was used by ESL teachers are of the ESL teachers surveyed, 90% used Choral Reading. 66% of those teachers used it at least once a week. 99% of teachers used Cooperative Learning and 96% of teachers used Scaffolded Reading.

Table I
How often is each method used

	Never	2 or 3 times per month	once a week to everyday
Choral Reading	6	13	38
Cooperative Learning	1	5	50
Scaffolded Reading	3	1	53

Table 2 shows that 92% of ESL teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that Choral Reading improves confidence. 74 % agreed that articulation was improved with Choral Reading. The greatest disagreement with improvement was in comprehension. 19% of teachers surveyed disagreed the Choral Reading improved comprehension.

Table 2
Choral Reading improves reading skills in second language for ESL students.

	disagree or strongly disagree	Neutral	agree or strongly agree
Comprehension	11	13	33
Articulation	7	4	46
Speed	0	13	37
Vocabulary Acquisition	4	12	35
Confidence	0	4	47
Reading on their own	4	10	37
Self Correcting	7	14	20

Table 3 shows of the teachers surveyed 92% saw an improvement in reading comprehension when they used Cooperative

Learning. 96% of teachers agreed that vocabulary acquistion also improved. Improvement in student confidence was marked by 89%of the teachers who used Cooperative Learning.

Table 3

Cooperative Learning improves reading skills in second language for ESL students.

	disagree or strongly disagree	Neutral	agree or strongly agree
Comprehension	o	4	50
Articulation	1	12	41
Speed	4	17	33
Vocabulary Acquisition	0	2	52
Confidence	0	6	48
Reading on their own	1	10	43
Self Correcting	1	11	42

Table 4 demonstrates that most teachers agreed or strongly agreed that Scaffolded Reading improved comprehension, 96%. 86% thought that vocabulary acquisition was improved by using Scaffolded Reading. About 80% of the teachers agreed there was an improvement in the student's confidence and in their ability to read on their own.

Table 4

Scaffolded Reading improves reading skills in the second language for ESL students.

	disagree or strongly disagree	Neutral	agree or strongly agree
Comprehension	0	2	50
Articulation	2	16	34
Speed	5	17	30
Vocabulary Acquisition	2	5	45
Confidence	1	9	41
Reading on their own	0	10	42
Self Correcting	0	13	39

Other Methods Used for Teaching Reading Skills

Some teachers wrote on the surveys other methods that they used to teach reading skills to ESL students. Out of the fifty-seven teachers surveyed eleven used a different method.

Table 5

Method	Number of teachers who wrote in method
phonics	5
computer programs	3
writing response/word study	2
listening centers	1

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of ESL teachers in regards to reading instruction methods, specifically Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolded Reading. The need for this study is significant because there is a large discrepency between how ESL students and non-ESL students compare in reading scores. There is also a trend of rising multicultural students in our classrooms. To better serve these students one must examine what research says is effective and examine whether or not teachers are using the researched methods.

In examining the three methods, Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolding Reading, journals, articles, and books were researched. The findings were that Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning have all been researched and proven to be effective methods for teaching reading to second language learners. Krashen and Terrel's (1983) Natural Approach is an underlining theory for these three methods. Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning are sound in theory.

The next step was to examine the preceptions of ESL teachers regarding the three reading methods and the effectiveness of the methods on reading improvement on the following indicators: comprehension, articulation, speed, vocabulary acquisition, confidence, reading on their own, and self-correcting. A survey of 57

ESL teachers was conducted to determine their perceptions.

Conclusions

     Research found that Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolded Reading are successful methods for teaching reading to ESL students. Choral reading promotes improved diction (Hall 1987), increased interest in and enjoyment of reading (Miccinati 1985; Woodbury 1979), improved self-confidence (Harste, Short & Burke 1988), increased fluency (Bradley & Thalgott 1987), and expanded vocabulary (Sampson, Allen & Sampson 1991; Templeton 1991). Cooperative Learning activates children's prior knowledge (Flood 1986). Children discuss and share ideas with others, which encourages them to actively participate in their learning (Uttero 1988). When students from different backgrounds work together, they extend their knowledge base and cultural awareness (Slavin 1983).

     Cooperative learning fosters the development of high level reasoning and problem solving skills (Sharan 1980). Through investigation, students acquire and interpret knowledge and assume responsibility for planning and carrying out their assignments (Sharan er al., 1980). In Cooperative Learning children present issues, challenge each others responses, and all clarify their thinking (Parker 1985). Scaffolded Reading provides support to help learners bridge the gap between what they know and can do and the intended goal (Graves and Graves 1996) and is frequently singled out as one of the most effective instructional techniques available (Cazden 1992, Rosenshine and Meister 1992, Sweet 1993).

     In examining ESL teachers perceptions on these methods, most teachers use Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning methods on a regular basis and see improvement in their students reading skills. There was a slight correlation between how often the respondent said they used the

method and how they found it improved the reading skills. The higher the frequency of use of the method, the higher it was agreed that there was improvement.

Teachers agreed that Choral Reading improved comprehension, articulation, speed, vocabulary acquisition, confidence, reading on their own, and self-correcting. The highest level of agreement was on articulation, confidence, and reading on their own. Cooperative Learning was shown to improve reading in all the indicators, but was especially high on comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and confidence. Scaffolded Reading was shown to improve reading skills in all the indicators and was especially highly scored in comprehension and articulation.

Recommendations

This information is beneficial because one can gather that the research not only says that Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Scaffolded Reading are successful methods of teaching reading, but so do the teachers. This is important to know because it moves these methods from being educational theories that experts discuss to teaching tools for the everyday teacher. With this information other teachers can examine the methods, see how other teachers have used them and found improvement, and then use the methods themselves with success.

It is particularly significant to note which indicators scored highly for each method. The most highly scored indicators for Choral Reading were articulation, reading on their own, and confidence. In Cooperative Learning the highly scored indicators were comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and confidence. Scaffolded Reading indicators that scored high were comprehension and articulation. With this information one could assess the ESL student's needs and pick the appropriate method or combination of methods

that would best serve the student's needs.

Future research on this topic may included a curriculum that would combine these methods so that each method's strength would be utilized for the optimum improvement of reading skills.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY FORM FOR ESL TEACHERS

March 12, 1997

Dear Participant,

My name is Alicia Majercin. I am an ESL teacher at Navajo Elementary School and am working on my Master's degree in ESL Biligual Education at Ottawa University. I am currently working on my thesis and would like your help.

I am conducting a survey on different methods of reading instruction used in ESL classrooms. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. The survey is two sided.

The survey begins by asking you to rate how often you use Choral Reading, Scaffolded Reading, and Cooperative Learning. Then you are asked to circle your level of agreement with how the method effects certain reading skills.

Thank-you for your time!

Sincerely,

Name (optional):
School:
Grade:
Years of teaching:

Rate the following methods based on how often you use them in your classroom in teaching reading to ESL students.

	never	2 or 3 times a month	once a week	2 or 3 times a week	everyday
	1	2	3	4	5

CHORAL READING
Choral Reading is a method of
teaching oral reading, often with poems,
that makes use of voice
inflection to create meaning.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SCAFFOLDED READING
Scaffolded Reading is a method
of teaching reading where
reading goals are reached by the teacher,
helping the student comprehend by
cuing, questioning, and coaching.
Scaffolded Reading uses various activities
during prereading, reading, and post-reading.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

COOPERATIVE LEARNING
Cooperative Learning is a method of
teaching reading where students are working
in small groups to accomplish a common goal.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Other methods used to teach reading to ESL students at your grade level (be specific)

_____

_____

CHORAL READING improves reading skills in second language for ESL students. If you use CHORAL READING, please circle your level of agreement as it pertains to each of the following skills.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
articulation	1	2	3	4	5
speed	1	2	3	4	5
vocabulary acquisition	1	2	3	4	5
confidence	1	2	3	4	5
reading on their own	1	2	3	4	5
self correcting	1	2	3	4	5

SCAFFOLDED READING improves reading skills in second language for ESL students. If you use SCAFFOLDED READING, please circle your level of agreement as it pertains to each of the following skills.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
articulation	1	2	3	4	5
speed	1	2	3	4	5
vocabulary acquisition	1	2	3	4	5
confidence	1	2	3	4	5
reading on their own	1	2	3	4	5
self correcting	1	2	3	4	5

COOPERATIVE LEARNING improves reading skills in second language for ESL students. If you use COOPERATIVE LEARNING, please circle your level of agreement as it pertains to each of the following skills.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
articulation	1	2	3	4	5
speed	1	2	3	4	5
vocabulary acquisition	1	2	3	4	5
confidence	1	2	3	4	5
reading on their own	1	2	3	4	5
self correcting	1	2	3	4	5

If you included a different methodof teaching reading to ESL students, please write the name of the method in the blank and rate it. If you did not, leave this blank.

_____ improves reading skills in second language for ESL students.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
articulation	1	2	3	4	5
speed	1	2	3	4	5
vocabulary acquisition	1	2	3	4	5
confidence	1	2	3	4	5
reading on their own	1	2	3	4	5
self correcting	1	2	3	4	5

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