A Case Study on Oral Corrective Feedback During Oral Reading: Potential for Improving High-Frequency Word Recognition

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This case study investigated the extent regular oral reading of reading comprehension passages with corrective oral feedback could improve an Australian-Japanese child's ability to read aloud high-frequency English words. The researcher specifically aimed to clarify the extent oral errors can decrease when they are corrected during the oral reading of 150 passages over a 30-week period. The results show that the researcher's daughter was able to read aloud an additional 151 high-frequency words over the final 15 weeks of the research period. This meant she was able to read aloud an additional ten new words each week during that period and increasingly succeeded in reading longer and more difficult high-frequency words. However, certain types of words remained difficult to read aloud from a list. According to the results, this type of partner reading with oral error correction can be recommended to parents capable of implementing this method.

本事例研究は、口頭訂正フィードバックを伴う読解テキストの定期的音読がオーストラリア−日本人幼児の高頻度英単語を声に出して読み上げる能力をどのくらい向上させたかを調査したものである。研究者は具体的に30週間以上にわたって研究者の娘に 150 のテキストを音読させながら単語の発音訂正を行い、オーラルエラーの減少の程度を明らかにしようとした。その結果、彼女は、後半の 15 週間で新たに計151 個の高頻度単語を読むことができるようになった。これが意味することは、その期間中に毎週10個の新しい英単語を読めるようになったということである。彼女は、より長くより難しい高頻度単語を正しく読むことができるようになったが、ある種類の英単語を高頻度英単語リスト上の読み上げることはまだ難しいままである。この研究結果は、このようなパートナーリーディング(partner reading)方法が口頭訂正フィードバックを行うことができる親に対して推奨できることを示唆している。

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Raising a child to read in a minority language in any country can be challenging, especially if the parents are unaware of the different components of reading development and are the sole teachers in the early stages. In Japan, many parents originally from English-speaking countries choose to teach their native language at home instead of relying only on compulsory English education. These parents often hope to raise their children with a high level of competence in all language skills and search for easily implementable and effective methods, especially for reading development. However, for many children, words with irregular spelling that are difficult to decode can impede further development of reading fluency, even if they have gained some degree of phonemic awareness and completed phonics workbooks. At such a stage, children need to focus on reading fluency, vocabulary building, and reading comprehension. These are all key components of reading development that have been recommended by the National Reading Panel (2000) in the US and subsequently advocated by the Australian National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005), and the British Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading (Rose, 2006). Currently, oral language development is also considered a key component in providing the foundation for reading development (Konza, 2014). Thus, choosing the best instruction method when teaching a minority language at home needs to be carefully considered by parents.

Minority-Language Reading Development

Children learning to read in English at home experience some unique challenges. One of the most important differences in reading development from majority-language learners relates to their different language experiences regarding not only oral interaction but also the extent to which they may experience having stories read to them (Bialystock, 2001). This in turn, may influence their phonological processing, vocabulary, grammar awareness, and so on, that are all components of reading development. Other factors that may also influence reading development in a minority-language include: type of writing system (alphabetic, non-alphabetic, syllabic), literacy skills in their majority language, exposure to printed materials, and reading fluency development.

Instruction Methods for Reading Development

There are a wide range of L1 reading instruction methods to choose from depending on which components of reading instruction need to be developed. For

example, for vocabulary development, word walls, sentence writing, word maps, and word sorts are described by Tompkins (2017) and flashcards, collocations, dictation, and focusing on word-parts are just a few activities recommended by Webb and Nation (2017). For developing reading comprehension, the directed reading thinking activity (DRTA) (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008), concept maps, story maps, summarizing, and tasks focusing on inference are often implemented. On the other hand, for fluency development, partner/paired reading, peer-assisted reading, shared reading, timed repeated readings, audio-assisted reading, Integrated Fluency instruction (FORI), independent silent reading, (Honig et al., 2018), and reading widely, otherwise known as Extensive Reading (ER) in L2 reading instruction, are considered effective and recommended for L1 learners.

Generally, many of these methods are frequently used in L2 reading instruction either in home schooling situations or L2 classes. One component of reading instruction that is gathering more interest is L2 oral reading fluency development which can be seen by the publishing of books, such as by Blachowicz and Lems (2012) which is based on research-based practices in fluency instruction. So far, oral reading fluency in L2 learners has been shown to improve confidence, motivation, chunking, prosody, reading rate, phonological decoding, reading comprehension and the development of implicit learning (Lems, 2012). A range of oral reading fluency methods are particularly easy to implement in the homes of minority-language learners or struggling readers, such as students with learning disabilities (Heubusch & Lloyd, 1998).

One assisted reading instruction method known as *partner reading* is frequently used with elementary school students in L1 settings (Honig, et al., 2018), but is ideal for L2 oral reading fluency development in home-schooling situations. According to Tompkins' (2017) definition of partner reading, this method requires a less competent reader to read aloud while a competent reader, either a child or adult, follows along and corrects errors made by the reader. With this method the re-reading of passages is not required, unlike with some other methods, such as *Reading Aloud* (RA), which is widely used in English classrooms in Japan. In the case of partner reading, corrective feedback is an important aspect of the method. So, what is corrective feedback during oral reading and how should it be implemented?

Corrective Feedback (CF) in Oral Reading and its Implementation

Most research up until now involving corrective feedback (CF) has focused on L2 *speaking* fluency and not L2 *oral reading* fluency development. Regarding oral reading fluency, corrective feedback is used when a child reads aloud and makes an error, such as a substitution, omission, mispronunciation, and even hesitations or pausing over

three to five seconds (Heubusch & Lloyd, 1998). This feedback can specifically focus on grammatical, lexical, pragmatic, or phonological errors and, according to the meta-study by Heubusch & Lloyd (1998) regarding corrective feedback in the oral reading of L1 learners, it is effective for improving reading accuracy and word recognition, and does not interfere with reading comprehension. When a more competent reader provides corrective feedback, the novice reader is able to recognize the mistake and correct the inaccuracy (Kartchava, 2019). Thus, if the reader repeats the correction, he or she will notice the error and this type of input has the potential to lead to automatic word recognition, which implies the word will not need to be decoded or sounded out each time it is read aloud.

There are various types of oral corrective feedback and some may be considered better than others. Lyster (2004) outlined three types of corrective feedback, namely (1) recasts, (2) explicit correction, and (3) prompts. Honig et al. (2018) introduce explicit correction as an effective technique. An example of explicit correction would be *word supply*, which refers to directly stating the correct word and this type of feedback was used to maintain consistency.

Furthermore, the timing of the oral corrective feedback is vital. Heubusch and Lloyd (1998) produced several key recommendations for L1 teachers. Firstly, errors should be corrected immediately. Secondly, students must repeat the corrected word. Thirdly, the correction technique should match the instructional aims of the lesson. Lastly, teachers should not hesitate to interrupt oral reading to correct students. Thus, parents and teachers should be encouraged to know that research supports immediate correction and repetition of the correction by the child.

Most studies on L1 oral reading have focused on corrective feedback involving students with learning disabilities (Heubusch & Lloyd, 1998; Rose et al., 1982). On the other hand, according to Grabe (2009), L2 research on reading fluency has remained relatively unexplored, with most research in English speaking countries. Thus, the impact of using corrective feedback during the oral reading of a minority language for word recognition development is worth investigating. If oral corrective feedback is implemented and it lives up to its potential for improving the oral reading fluency of high frequency words, this would be beneficial for minority-language learners.

High-Frequency Words: What Are They and Why Is High-Frequency Word Recognition Important?

The automatic recognition of high-frequency words is essential for success in reading fluency. These words are often difficult to decode. Thus, accurate and instant recognition of high-frequency words is needed to enable readers to focus their

attention on comprehending what they are reading. If children can automatically decode these words, they will be able to read passages more fluently, especially if they have already received some phonics instruction.

Up until now, there are many high-frequency word lists that vary in length and are prepared for different purposes. One of the more recent lists, is the New General Service List (NGSL) of 2,801 words (Browne et al., 2013), which aimed to update the General Service List (West, 1953) of 2,000 headwords that was originally prepared for English as a Second Language learners. Generally, for children, the older Dolch (1948) word list of 220 words and Fry's (2004) Instant 1000 Word list are much easier to work with, since they are shorter lists and do not assume knowledge of derivational word relationships. Dolch (1948) and Fry (2004) created their word lists because they believed many words need to be memorized due to their irregular spelling patterns. However, some current high-frequency words are likely to be missing from these lists, especially words relating to changes in modern technology.

Dolch's (1948) list contains 220 common words without any nouns, and although Dolch himself did not sort his list, versions of his list categorized by grade or frequency levels are commonly available (Farrell et al., 2013), such as the ones on the K12 Reader website (2018). On the other hand, Fry's (1980) list contains 1000 words, and the words are divided up into groups of 100 words, from the most frequent words in English to the least frequent, and he recommends that L1 children should be explicitly taught a few words at one time from his list (Fry, 2004). His list is also available from the K12 Reader website.

There are two key reasons why the word lists from Dolch (1948) and Fry (1980) were used in this study. Firstly, they are often used as guidelines for early literacy development programs, workbook development, and for the creation of books. Below are two well-known books from such programs and the percentage of words identified as listed in the Dolch word list.

> 78% - *Go, Dog. Go!*, by P. D. Eastman (1961)
> 75% - *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*, by Dr. Seuss (1960)
> (Picturemereading, 2017)

There are also many workbooks referring to the Dolch Word List, such as *Sight Word Poetry Pages*, by Lanczak Williams (2005) and *Daily Reading Comprehension Grade 1*, by Liscinsky (2018). Most importantly, the lists are used by elementary school teachers, especially in the US, to develop reading fluency skills, which suggests these particular lists are considered reliable for developing beginner reading skills over a long period of

time and are likely to be suitable for homeschooled English learners in Japan.

There are important reasons for focusing on high-frequency words. To start with, according to Fry (2004), research has shown that 300 high-frequency words are used in 65% of written material. Furthermore, one study suggests that just 100 words make up approximately 50% of all words in L1 reading materials in schools and colleges (Zeno et al., 1995). Thus, such research strongly indicates that readers who struggle to read high-frequency words without automatic word recognition ability will have trouble with reading fluency at all levels of education and are likely to read more slowly than those who don't have trouble with them. Therefore, high-frequency words contribute to reading comprehension, and in turn influence literacy development and attitudes towards reading.

During the learning of high-frequency words, children are able to use lower-level processes of reading, such as letter identification and word recognition. Lower-level processes can be highly automatized through repeated practice and exposure to many passages with high-frequency words (Grabe, 2009). Thus, the ability to read high-frequency words effortlessly should be a key goal in learning to read in both majority and minority languages.

Focus of the Study

For this study, the potential of using partner reading with corrective feedback to develop a child's ability to read aloud accurately high-frequency words was investigated.

This study was guided by three research questions:

1. To what extent did the number of oral reading errors of high-frequency words decrease after partner reading was implemented?
2. What specific high-frequency words continued to be challenging to read aloud at the end of the study?
3. What benefits and challenges were observed when using partner reading?

Method

Subject of the Study

The subject of this study is a convenience sample subject, and she is my daughter. She was five years and 5 months (5;5) at the start of the study and the study was completed after her sixth birthday (6;0). During the period of this study, she was enrolled in a Japanese preschool. There were several advantages to having my own child as the subject of this study. Firstly, the topic of the study was suitable for single-subject research By involving a single-subject in a regular oral reading routine, a clear, specific example for parents could be provided. Also, by analyzing the progress of one bilingual

child's abilities, a longer study with more individual analysis was could be conducted. Thirdly, in order to carry out this study, I needed an English-speaking parent who was willing to implement the routine, five days a week for 30 weeks. Although it was not considered challenging to train other mothers to follow the method, I did have concerns about finding suitable subjects at a similar language level. Thus, I decided to conduct a single-subject case study of my daughter, and, for this paper, the pseudonym *Kay* will be used for her.

Language Learning Background of the Subject

Kay is being raised by her Australian mother and Japanese father in Japan and lives in a home where her parents consistently apply the *one-parent one-language approach (OPOL),* which Dopke (1992) recommends as the best way to raise a child bilingually. This means Kay was simultaneously exposed to both Japanese and English from birth, so she should be referred to as a bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) child (de Houwer, 2009). Throughout the study, I used English with Kay, even though I had passed the highest level of the Japanese language proficiency test long before she was born. Also, my experience working at an international preschool made me very aware of the need to consistently provide English input in her early years and the importance of developing early biliteracy skills. On the other hand, Kay's father seldom used English at home, spoke to her and read stories to her in Japanese during the research period but was, and continues to be. supportive of her English development.

Before the start of this study, Kay had completed both *Scholastic Phonics A* and *B* workbooks (Scholastic, 1989) by 4;8. She had also completed a workbook called *Scholastic 100 Words Kids Need to Read by 1st Grade* (Shuman, 2003) and had read 20 graded readers from Levels 1-5 from the Oxford Reading Tree (Oxford University Press, 2011) and many picture books before the study commenced. For more information on Kay's initial vocabulary development refer to my previous article (Tada, 2020). Some routines have been in place to develop her English skills since she was about 2:0: in particular, regular, interactive, shared reading for 10-20 minutes before bedtime and listening routines involving watching English cartoons on the Disney Channel and everyday communication in English. Also, irregular routines, such as independent reading aloud and watching movies in English were strongly encouraged. Regarding her Japanese literacy skills, she was able to read and write *hiragana* and *katakana* relatively confidently before the study started and, several months after the study finished, she entered a public Japanese elementary school where reading was taught.

Reading Level

The choice of reading materials was determined by judging Kay's reading level according to Chall's (1983) model of the *Stages of Reading Development*. This model indicated that she was between Stages 1 and 2 when preparation for this study began in May 2017, when she was 4;5. Stage 1 is the "Initial Reading and Decoding" level and is usually reached in Grade 1 or the beginning of Grade 2 in an L1 setting. At Stage 1, children are usually able to read simple passages with many high-frequency and phonologically regular words. They also try to sound out new words. Children can usually understand a lot more than they can read at this stage, so parents or teachers are usually recommended to read books that are more challenging than the child's current reading level. On the other hand, Stage 2 involves increasingly automatic recognition of words and the ability to read simple passages but requires decoding instruction and wide reading for further development. This study was carried out at a time when I was helping Kay to further her skills from Stage 1 (the Initial Reading and Decoding Level) and develop her reading skills for Stage 2 (the Confirmation and Fluency Level). Typical activities at Stage 2 involve reading narratives on known topics using basal readers, age-appropriate books from regular publishers, and workbooks.

Reading Materials

A reading comprehension workbook was determined to be the suitable material for this study after considering the four (out of seven) recommendations for maximizing vocabulary learning by Nation and Macalister (2021, p. 18) that were relevant to this study. Those recommendations were: (1) control the vocabulary input to match the learner's needs and ensure sufficient repetition of limited vocabulary; (2) include meaning-focused-input; (3) incorporate extensive reading; and (4) focus on fluency development. These particular recommendations were directly applied to this study. In addition to these points, I also considered Kay's interests and language level.

Daily Reading Comprehension, Grade 1 (Liscinsky, 2018) was selected for the study. This workbook was considered suitable for several reasons. First, the author states that the workbook focuses on 50 high-frequency words (see Appendix), and the workbook has been designed to repeatedly expose children to many high-frequency words, using a diverse range of topics. Secondly, the workbook consists of 150 passages, ensuring exposure to many interesting and meaningful topics with appealing pictures. The topics, vocabulary level, and passage length appeared to be ideal for Kay before starting this study. Readers are also required to read increasingly longer passages as they progress through the workbook, which is different from some other workbooks; and, although not necessary for this study, three comprehension questions and one

language-focused question (word meanings, spelling, word usage, vowel sounds, or phonemic awareness) were included after each passage. Finally, the main reason for selecting this workbook relates to the ease with which it could be used. Using this workbook involves reading one passage and answering the questions within 10 to 15 minutes each day, five days a week, for exactly 30 weeks, and this schedule was judged to be ideal to implement before preschool each day.

Research Instruments

Word Lists for Evaluating Oral Word Recognition

This study aimed to determine word-reading fluency by checking if isolated high- frequency words could be automatically read aloud or sounded out from word lists. Word lists have been used by other researchers, such as by Kim (2015) to judge word-reading fluency and such materials ensure that the child does not guess the word from the surrounding text. To judge Kay's word-reading fluency, two high-frequency word lists were selected to evaluate changes in her ability to read aloud isolated words. First, the Dolch 220 Word List (1948), was downloaded from K12 Reader (2018) to assess Kay's ability to rapidly read aloud high-frequency words and to create a baseline score to help choose a suitable reading comprehension workbook. Kay successfully read aloud 169 words out of 220 words on the Dolch list, which indicated a Grade 1 workbook for L1 learners would be feasible. The second evaluation instrument was Fry's 1000 Instant Words list (2004), which was used to assess progress in Week 15 and Week 30. This list was used as more accurate assessment was required in later stages of the study as her ability to recognize high-frequency words improved.

Procedures to Collect and Analyze Oral Errors

The study started after Kay had completed the *Scholastic Phonics B* workbook (1989) at 5;4. To gather baseline data, a preliminary test using the Dolch 220 Word List (1948) had been given at 5;2, which required Kay to try to read aloud the whole list of words. When the study commenced, in May 2018, when Kay was 5;5, every morning before preschool, she completed a session with the workbook in about 10~15 minutes. Each session started with a brief talk about the picture and then Kay would read aloud the new passage and complete the reading comprehension section, which involved several questions.

As Kay read the passages, I listened and corrected all reading errors. The following types of mistakes were judged as reading errors: (a) a word substituted with another, (b) an omission of a word, (c) a mispronounced word, and (d) a hesitation or pause longer than 3 to 5 seconds. However, if Kay corrected herself immediately after

making an error, the error was not counted. After each error, Kay was immediately supplied with the correct pronunciation of the word or the word was sounded out for her, and she was encouraged to repeat it. After she had repeated the corrected word, I underlined it in the workbook. It should be noted that underlining errors in the child's workbook was not recommended by Honig et al. (2018). Instead, they suggest errors should be recorded separately. At the start of this study, this was not considered to be essential, and errors were underlined in her workbook throughout the study. After Kay read aloud and answered the comprehension questions and the example answers, she then circled her own answers.

In September 2018, there was a two-week break in the study. After that, the regular routine recommenced with an additional task that required her to re-read the previous passage aloud before starting a new passage. However, this was discontinued after two weeks since Kay could not understand the purpose of re-reading the previous passage. Therefore, only ten of the 150 passages were re-read during this study.

At the end of Week 15 and Week 30, progress tests using the Dolch 220 Word List (1948) and Fry's 1000 Instant Word List (2004) were carried out. The first round of progress tests was initiated in the third week of September, 2019, and the final round of progress tests was initiated in the first week of January, 2019. To ensure that such a young child was motivated to read lists of words, testing was incorporated into regular playtime. While Kay was playing with toys, I took the role of a witch who had cast a spell on a squirrel and the only way to save the squirrel was if the rabbit (Kay) read 100 words so her puppet squirrel could play again. This way of testing worked quite effectively. To complete the tests took two sessions of such playtime. Also, regarding the assessment of oral reading fluency, Stahl and McKenna (2008) suggest that assessment of high-frequency word knowledge should involve both accuracy and speed and they recommend that high-frequency words should be recognized automatically, "in roughly half a second—that is, without hesitation" (p. 13) and this was consciously considered during testing.

The number of oral errors when reading the high-frequency word lists in Week 15 and Week 30 was calculated and represented as line and bar graphs for this paper. Also, the total number of errors in the reading comprehension workbook for the first 15 weeks and last 15 weeks were calculated to determine if the number of oral errors decreased over time. Furthermore, errors from the Fry Instant 1000 Word Lists (1948) were sorted by word-length and coded according to frequent spelling patterns, like *th* and *ou*, word types, such as *verb tense, compound words*, *modal words*, and key subject areas. They were analyzed in reference to their position in regards to Fry's high-frequency word list. This information was then analyzed to identify reasons for the errors. The

workbook was also checked for any distinct patterns in the oral errors.

Oral Reading Fluency

To judge oral reading fluency, reading rate and accuracy needed to be assessed. However, oral reading fluency scores from L1 learners are available only from Grade 1 of elementary school and not available regarding L2 learners, so it was judged to be unnecessary to assess oral reading fluency in the early stages of this study. Oral reading fluency was checked during Weeks 26-27. The fluency assessment guidelines recommended by Honig et al. (2018) were followed with one small exception. This procedure requires a child to stop reading a grade appropriate passage of 250 words after exactly one minute. To determine the oral reading fluency (ORF) score, the number of oral errors is subtracted from the total number of words read during that time. This produces a word count per minute of words correctly read aloud. The longest texts in the reading comprehension workbook (Liscinsky, 2018) did not reach the recommended length of 250 words per passage, but three passages were randomly chosen to be utilized from the workbook ranging between 75-92 words each. Shorter passages were not expected to negatively affect the calculation of the ORF score if Kay did not complete reading any of the passages. Oral reading fluency results were then compared with the ORF scores of L1 children (Kuhn & Rasinski, 2007; Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2017) since suitable examples of L2 children's score were not available.

Video Recording and Observation Notes

To determine the hidden benefits and challenges of *partner reading*, video recording and observation notes were made during the reading of the passages and word testing. Three reading sessions for the study were randomly recorded and the content was used to confirm Kay's reading rate.

Results

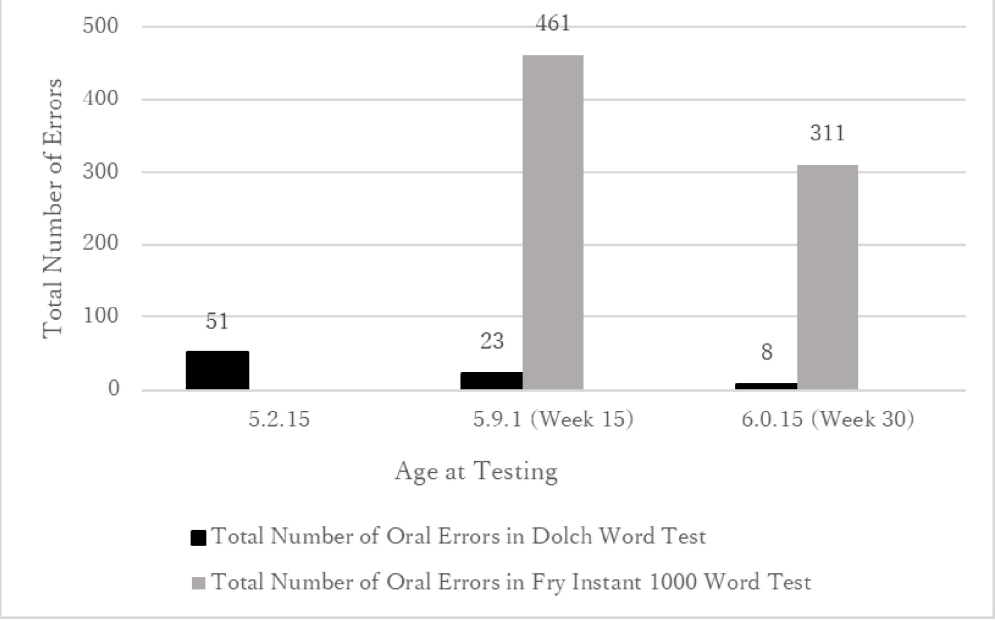
The results presented below show that there was a substantial decrease in oral reading errors over the period of the study. However, some words continued to be read incorrectly for a range of reasons that will be outlined in this section. Also, there were improvements in the accuracy of reading compound words and five-letter words and due to her increasingly automatic word recognition her reading rate was good at the end of the study. However, as the length of the passages in the workbook increased, the number of errors nearly doubled even though this was expected.

Overall Decrease in Oral Reading Errors

Figure 1 shows the baseline data, the number of errors that were recorded at age 5;2, before the partner reading method commenced, as well as the number of errors recorded in Weeks 15 and 30. The results reveal that the number of errors dropped considerably for both high-frequency word lists. Kay's oral errors while reading aloud the Fry 1000 Instant Word List (2003) decreased by 151 words over 15 weeks, between Week 15 and Week 30. This meant that by Week 30 she was able to successfully read aloud 689 words out of 1000 from Fry's word list. Therefore, over the second half of the study, her ability to read aloud high-frequency words improved by an average of about ten words per week. Regarding the Dolch word test, Kay (5;2) had 51 errors in the initial baseline test before the study commenced. Between (5;2) and (6.0), she showed a steady reduction in her number of oral errors. By Week 30, only eight errors were recorded out of 220 high frequency words from the Dolch Word List downloaded from K12 Reader (2018). She continued to incorrectly pronounce *her, these, which, would, eight, far, own*, and *shall.* Furthermore, only two words included in the key 50 high-frequency words focused on in the workbook, *her* and *eight* continued to be inaccurately pronounced in the final Week 30 tests. This indicates these two words were particularly difficult to read aloud.

Figure 1

Total Number of Errors in Testing of Two High-Frequency Word Lists

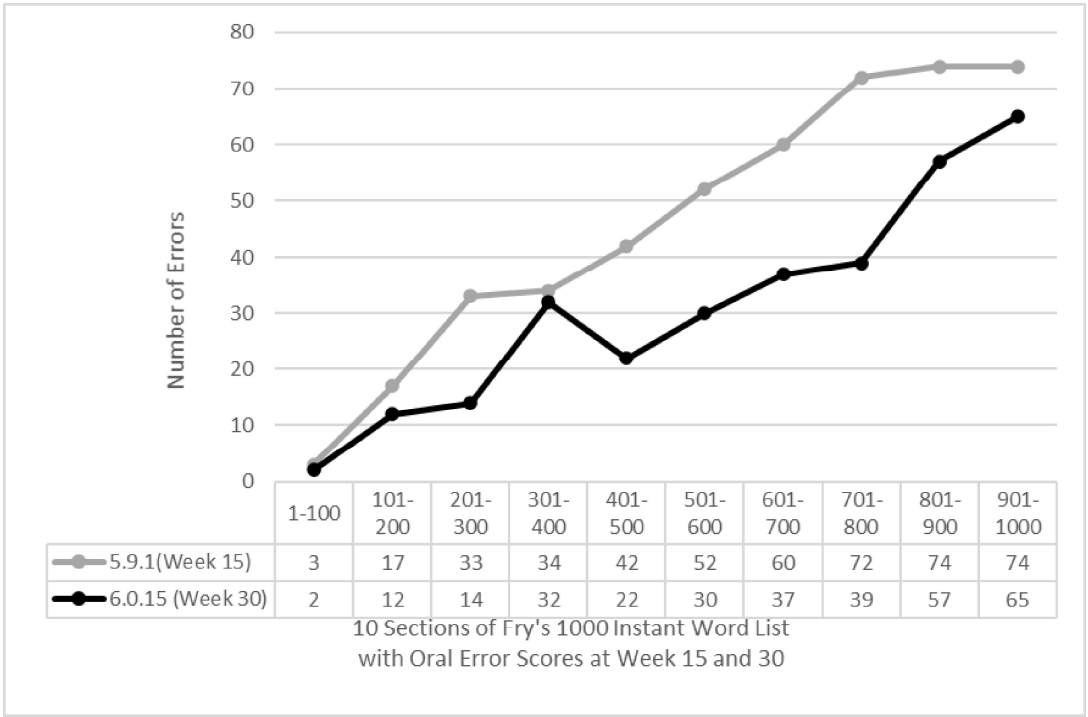


Steady Reduction in Oral Errors in Most Sections of the Fry 1000 Instant Word List

By looking at the change in the errors across the ten sections of Fry's 1000 Instant Words List (2003), it becomes clear that the number of oral errors quite consistently decreased in most of the 100-word sections between Week 15 and 30, as can be seen in Figure 2. The words in 1-100 showed little change with both tests reaching high scores. On the other hand, words between 101-200 and 901-1000 showed only a slight improvement. Words between 301-400 could be considered as an anomaly. Overall, words listed between 1-300 were read more automatically, decoded more confidently and faster than words between 301-1000 which were often decoded as they were read aloud. Between 1-300, the following 28 words were still difficult to read in Week 30: *water, would, air, another, answer, because, even, follow, form, here, means, sentence, should, through, being, earth, enough, eyes, father, group, hard, head, Indian, leave, mile, those, thought,* and *without*. Also, at Week 30, the number of oral errors between 401-900 was considerably lower than in Week 15, but there was clearly less improvement in errors between 901-1000.

Figure 2

Change in Number of Oral Errors at Week 15 and 30 in Different Sections of Fry's 1000 Instant Word List



	1-100	101-200	201-300	301-400	401-500	501-600	601-700	701-800	801-900	901-1000
5.9.1(Week 15)	3	17	33	34	42	52	60	72	74	74
6.0.15 (Week 30)	2	12	14	32	22	30	37	39	57	65

Words that Remained Incorrect

Overall, some words continued to be incorrectly read aloud. These can be seen as "difficult to decode" words. After analyzing the errors, certain types of words seemed to be difficult to decode, as outlined below.

(1) contracted words - *won't, wasn't, isn't, we'll, wouldn't*

(2) modal words - *could, would, should*

(3) past tense verbs - *reached, passed, divided, raised, climbed, shouted, joined, received, arrived, located, printed, caught, bought*

(4) 6-letter words - *travel, during, listen, person*

(5) 4 to 10-letter words with voiced and voiceless *th* - *themselves, another, earth, clothes*

(6) the middle part of words with more than four letters - *action, afraid, smell*

(7) words that appeared similar – *her/here*, *child/children, though/thought*

(8) words with the spelling *ou* – *cloud, count, amount, south, thousands, group, through*

(9) words ending with *e* – *because, leave, since, simple, cause, edge, care, age, compare, chance*

(10) words used with specific topics:

scientific terms - *molecules, substances, solution, oxygen, compound, elements, science, planets, electric, gas, water, iron, natural, temperature, method, result, energy*

language-related terms - *suffix, adjective, plural, consonant, syllables, language, verb, noun, phrase, paragraph*

math-related terms – *distance, amount, million, fraction, angle, count, total, measure, numeral, figure, equation*

Overall, as for word length, 196 words consisting of 5-7 letters from the Fry Instant 1000 Word list (2004) continued to be incorrectly pronounced in Week 30, which was a drop from 284 words in Week 15. The number of mispronounced words of between 8-11 letters decreased from 90 to 61 by Week 30.

By analyzing Kay's reading of the different sections of the Fry Instant 1000 Word List (2004), it was noted that some quite long words were correctly read between 501-800, such as *difference, interest, suddenly, weather, discovered, increase,* and *students*. Conversely, some short words were not correctly read aloud at Week 30. Between 501-1000 3-4 letter words like *edge, kept, main, past, sign, sky, age, per, care, iron, soil, else, flow, rise, gas, lie, mine, poem, pole, thus, tied, tone, tube, won't, gun, led, sir, corn, dead, huge, isn't, rope, rose,* and *we'll* remained difficult to decode. Also, according to my notes from the partner reading practice, *wait, eyes, air,* and *dead* were incorrectly read even with the

context of a passage to assist decoding. Furthermore, the following 3-4 letter words that appeared in the first 500 words of the list, *air, eyes, head, hard, mile, area, plan, unit, upon, done, fact, less, noun, verb, war,* and *wait* continued to be incorrectly read aloud in Week 30.

Improvements in Compound Words and 5-Letter Words

On the other hand, according to the results from the Fry Instant 1000 Word list (2004), two types of words showed improvements. Firstly, 5-letter words showed the most improvement with 108 errors in Week 15 dropping to 60 errors in Week 30. Secondly, there were only four errors (*within, without, themselves, another*) related to compound words in the results from Week 30. At Week 15, words like *outside, underline, sometimes, understand, itself, yourself, however, within, without, themselves,* were unable to be decoded. Several compound words were correctly read aloud during both tests, such as *someone, everyone, something, anything*, and *everything*.

Reading Rate and Increasingly Automatic Word Recognition Skills

Reading rate was tested three times during Weeks 26-27, towards the end of the study, and the results are shown in Table 1. Kay read an average of 25.0 words per minute in the ORF testing. Kuhn and Rasinski (2007) suggest that an oral reading rate of between 30-60 wcpm is suitable for children at the end of Grade 1 of elementary school. This indicates she would be expected to reach this level in Grade 1, if we consider that she was entering Grade 1 three months after the ORF testing in this study. Overall, my immediate impression was that the tempo of her reading of listed words during Week 30 compared to Week 15 was more automatic which was mentioned in my notes during the test. Also, this difference was clearly noticeable as she progressed through the workbook.

Table 1

Oral Fluency Assessment (ORF) During Weeks 26-27

Session	Title of Passage	Correct Words Per Minute[a]
Week 26 Day 4	Second grade students	22 wcpm
Week 26 Day 5	Grasshopper life cycle	26 wcpm
Week 27 Day 1	How to make a road	27 wcpm

[a]wcpm = word count per minute.

Oral Errors Nearly Doubled During the Oral Reading of the Workbook

As shown in Table 2, the total number of errors while reading the workbook did increase in the final 15 weeks of the study. Kay averaged 2.46 oral errors per passage up until Week 15 and this increased to 4.29 errors after Week 30. Not only did the vocabulary in the textbook became slightly more difficult to decode, the length of the passages also increased. The passage length that was about 28 words in Week 1, increased to 68 words in the first passage of Week 15, and reached 80 words in the first passage of Week 30. This may have influenced the number of errors during partner reading practice. Another factor was that many errors related to difficulties pronouncing the names of characters, such as *Jud, Liam, Ava, Ali, Seth Jose, Hector, Popeye, Daniel, Eric, Jonah, Travis, BooBoo, Lamar, Hose, Hank, Chuck, Chuckie, Alice, Lila, Suri, Carla*, and *Bosco,* or animal words like *rooster, nymphs, caterpillar, honeybee, polar bears, penguins, elephants, firefly, giraffe*, and *sheep*. Such words are not included in the high-frequency word lists. Out of the 150 passages, her average number of errors per passage was 3.38. Throughout the study she did not like to have errors underlined in her workbook. However, her motivation remained high during partner reading throughout the study, according to my notes.

Table 2

Oral Errors from Reading Comprehension Passages

		Total Number of Errors from 75 Passages	Total Number of Errors from 150 Passages	Average Number of Errors Per Passage
Stage 1	Week 1-15	185	-	2.46
Stage 2	Week 16-30	322	-	4.29
Whole Duration	Week 1-30	-	507	3.38

Discussion

The main goal of this study was to determine the impact of partner reading with corrective feedback on Kay's ability to read aloud high-frequency words. The results provide some encouraging findings. Regarding the first research question, oral errors did steadily decrease after implementing the partner reading method. The initial 300 words of the Fry's list (2004) were read aloud more accurately than less frequent words

between 301-1000. Words between 401-900 showed a similar level of improvement. Basically, there was a reduction in oral errors across most sections of the Fry's 1000 Instant Words List, which suggests that decoding skills and the ability to identify ways to read aloud irregular words may have improved from the partner reading practice and corrective feedback, since an additional 151 high-frequency words were correctly read aloud in Week 30 without any of the words on the list being directly taught. Five-letter words showed the greatest improvement. However, even though the workbook focused on including 50 high-frequency words, two specific words, *her* and *eight* remained difficult to read aloud, which indicates some words may need to be separately taught for automatic word recognition to develop or that even more exposure to those words was required.

Next, regarding the second research question, some high-frequency words continued to be challenging to read aloud at the end of the study. Firstly, only three types of spelling *th*, *ou,* and *silent e* words were clearly difficult to read. The small number of these indicates that Kay's phonemic awareness and ability to decode were relatively stable at the time of this study. Secondly, word length did influence her ability to decode high-frequency words. Although her reading of five-letter words clearly improved, five- to seven-letter words were particularly difficult, especially six-letter words. Generally, words over four letters were more difficult to decode in the middle section of those words which was expected at this level. Thirdly, certain types of words were difficult to decode. In particular, contracted words, modal words, simple past tense verbs ending in *-ed* or irregular in form, words that looked similar to each other, and words from specific subject areas like Science, Math, and Language. Words from specific subject areas were less likely to appear in the Grade 1 reading comprehension workbook which means Kay may have seen some of those words only as isolated words in the testing. In contrast, contracted words, modal words, and past tense verbs were included throughout the workbook. This result also might indicate that direct instruction is more useful for certain types of words to be reliably decoded or effortlessly read aloud. Honig et al. (2018) suggests instruction on specific words may involve selecting words from the passage to talk about and they recommend using the context of the passage to support vocabulary learning.

The third research question sought to identify any benefits and challenges of using a partner reading method. There were several benefits. Firstly, my notes indicated that Kay's reading rate had clearly improved around the middle of the study as her ability to automatically read aloud words increased. At the end of the study, she read an average of 25.0 correct words per minute. A study of American elementary school students by Hasbrouck and Tindal (2017) showed that students in the 50th percentile

scored 29 wcpm (words correct per minute) in the winter season of Grade One and 60 wcpm in the spring season (p.331). This means 50 percent of students gained a score equal to or lower than those scores. Kay's rate was not assessed earlier in the study since reading rate is generally tested after entering Grade 1 of elementary school which means no comparable data is available for preschool level. Kay's reading rate was progressing well with partner reading, especially for a child who was going to enter a Japanese elementary school several months after the test was held in Week 30.

Secondly, an additional benefit of partner reading was maintaining Kay's motivation to do the reading comprehension workbook throughout the 30 weeks. Even though her oral errors did slightly increase as the passages became longer, she did not lose interest because of the error corrections. Clearly, some easy or funny topics were more interesting and less challenging than others, but she had a positive attitude towards reading all the passages aloud and her positive attitude may have been linked to her ability to successfully complete 95% of the comprehension questions in the workbook. Honig et al. (2018) suggest that success in answering reading comprehension questions is due to word-recognition skills reaching a level that enables the reader to focus their attention on reading comprehension. Thus, her reading comprehension was likely to be linked with her improvement in reading high-frequency words aloud.

However, there were also some challenges regarding partner reading. There were two main concerns. Firstly, although Kay's awareness of mistakes increased because of underlining the oral errors in her workbook, she strongly disliked observing errors being underlined on the page she was reading, regardless of averaging only three to four errors per passage. Also, the attempt to introduce re-reading practice in the middle of the study was unsuccessful, which meant that, after a very short period, passages were again only read one time with corrective feedback. According to Menon and Hiebert (2011), one key benefit of re-reading is that it requires the child to practice reading more, but Kuhn (2011) suggests that *wide reading,* referring to the amount of reading done, can be equally effective in giving children reading practice and can be more effective in developing reading comprehension skills by giving the child a chance to understand words in different contexts. During the period when re-reading was initiated, Kay became less willing to read aloud the comprehension questions and example answers, despite always being enthusiastic to answer the questions and read the passage. The clear benefit of re-reading the passages was that they were read faster and more smoothly the second time and Kay had no questions or comments about the content.

Overall, although underlining oral errors and re-reading passages did result in

some resistance, the unanticipated benefits of using partner reading included Kay's high motivation to read aloud the passages even though she was being corrected every day she practiced partner reading. Also, her word-reading skills became increasingly automatic during the final test. Automatic word recognition that is rapid and accurate is known to positively impact oral reading rate and reading comprehension, which suggests that her reading benefited from partner reading.

Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations. Firstly, the decision to focus on one subject affects the ability to generalize the results. Secondly, as the researcher was the mother of the subject of this study, there are likely to be some conflicts in objectivity. Thirdly, although this study mainly focused on the oral aspect of word recognition, the measurement instruments used do not reveal partial phonological knowledge of words or other knowledge related to knowing words, such as spelling, individual word meaning, word usage, etc. For a more comprehensive study on word recognition ability, a more detailed analysis of the types of decoding problems experienced by a subject would be recommended. Finally, the issue of neglecting to include another observer to ensure the consistency of this study is probably the most serious limitation of this study and is recommended for similar studies in the future.

Conclusion

According to the results of this study, Kay's ability to read aloud high-frequency words improved over the 30 weeks by reading aloud short passages, completing comprehension questions, and receiving corrective feedback on oral errors. By the end of the study, she was able to read aloud 151 high-frequency words that she had not been able to read aloud at the start of the study. These words were likely to be learned randomly since the high-frequency words within the lists were not deliberately taught, and improvement was either due to improvements in her decoding knowledge or knowledge gained from repeating oral corrections during the reading aloud of the passages and tasks from the workbook. According to Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007) "gains of up to more than 1.5 words a week, over several weeks" (p. 65) are considered good progress for an English as a Second Language learner who is at the beginner level in elementary school. Thus, Kay as a *bilingual first language acquisition* (BFLA) child (de Houwer, 2009) did progress very well during the final 15 weeks, according to the results of the tests using Fry's 1000 Instant word list (2004). During the study, Kay attended a Japanese preschool and regularly spent time after preschool with her Japanese grandparents, which meant that she was exposed to Japanese more

than English at that time. However, Kay made extremely good progress in her oral word-reading by averaging ten high-frequency words per week in the final 15 weeks of the study and was able to read aloud increasingly longer and more difficult high-frequency words. Researchers (Grabe, 2009; Honig et al., 2018) often state that the ability to automatically and accurately read high-frequency words is extremely important for developing reading comprehension and reading rate, but more research is needed to determine how corrective feedback on oral errors during oral reading practice over a long period can affect reading development in a child's minority language.

Overall, the results of this study reveal that the partner reading method should be considered by parents who hope to improve their child's ability to read aloud high-frequency words in the family's minority language. Also, this study indicates that even without re-reading the passages, steady progress can be made, but some high-frequency words may require direct instruction or more exposure to increase effectiveness.

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Appendix

High-frequency words included in *Daily Reading Comprehension, Grade 1* (Liscinsky, 2018)

after, again, are, ask, could, eat, eight, every, eight, every, from, good, has, have, her, his, just, know, let, like, live, must, not, of, old, one, out, over, please, put, ride, said, saw, soon, take, that, then, there, they, this, through, two, under, use, walk, was, went, were, when, where, white, with