

Reading Interventions for Second Language learners – a systematic review

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Between 50% and 70% of the world's population are bilingual. To master both spoken and written language is crucial for students' development in school and is essential for academic achievement. Earlier research and international evolutions show that many young students with Swedish as L2 struggle with reading. Therefore, finding effective methods for L2 reading-teaching are important. In the present systematic review, findings from intervention studies of learning to read in a second language are identified. The study aims to focus on the research gaps in the field of reading interventions for L2 students from kindergarten to the end of compulsory school, focusing on different first and second language pairings and transfer effects. The study addresses two questions as follows: What evidence may be found concerning reading interventions for L2 students at school age in different second languages, and what evidence is available about the relevance of different first languages? What evidence may be found about the impact of reading interventions in one language on outcomes in another? PICO'S and PRISMA Flow Diagram was used to select and summarize results systematically. The studies reviewed support the view that explicit and systematic interventions that combine vocabulary instruction with phonological- and decoding skills training are effective for L2 students. Most studies concern interventions in Kindergarten or the first years of elementary school. Most of the research evidence comes from studies with participants whose first language is Spanish who are learning English as a second language and are identified as being at risk for reading difficulties. It is concluded that there is a need for further research in the field that focuses on other first and second languages than Spanish and English and addresses the varying needs of students of different ages.

Key Words: Second language learning, word decoding, reading comprehension, intervention, education