

PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPING READING LITERACY AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

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Abstract. *This article provides a systematic analysis of perspectives and practical approaches to developing reading literacy among primary school students in the education systems of foreign countries. The study aims to examine international experience using a comparative approach. The findings identify six key areas as core foundational blocks: teaching reading, meaningful reading and text-based work, reading motivation and enjoyment, school–library cooperation, intensive interventions for struggling readers, and monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Using the examples of Finland, England, and Singapore, the article demonstrates how state policy, educational programs, and school-level practices are aligned. The paper concludes with a system of practical recommendations that can be adapted to primary education in Uzbekistan.*

Keywords: *reading literacy, reading, primary education, international experience, reading motivation, school–library cooperation.*

Introduction

Reading literacy in primary education is the key to success across all subjects. A student who has not developed reading literacy cannot effectively master mathematical problems, natural science texts, or social studies materials. Therefore, in the education systems of developed countries, reading is not considered merely a component of the mother tongue subject, but rather a strategic priority that defines the entire school culture. The study of foreign experience reveals an important fact:

developing reading literacy is not limited to encouraging students to read more books.

Instead, it operates on at least four interconnected levels:

1. Technical reading (letter–sound correspondence, word recognition, fluency)
2. Comprehension (understanding meaning, drawing conclusions, integration of ideas)
3. Motivation (reading enjoyment, positive attitudes toward reading)
4. Ecosystem (school–family–library cooperation, resources, monitoring)

For example, in Finland, particular emphasis is placed on strengthening reading motivation and school–library cooperation in shaping reading culture. The Lukuinto (Joy of Reading) programme places collaboration and enjoyment of reading at the center of its approach.

In England, early-stage requirements for systematic phonics and quality criteria for instructional programmes are regarded as the core mechanisms of reading instruction.

In Singapore, national-level approaches integrate teacher preparation, learning materials, and methodological support to ensure a balanced development of reading and language learning.

Research Methodology

The study is based on comparative-analytical methods and systematic literature review. The goal is not to mechanically transfer best practices, but to identify the underlying logic of each system and adapt mechanisms that may function effectively in the context of Uzbekistan. The sources include reports and studies on reading culture in Finland and the Joy of Reading/Lukuinto initiative; regulatory approaches and inspection requirements for systematic phonics in England; national programmes and school-level research on reading culture in Singapore; and, additionally, meta-analyses and debated findings on Reading Recovery as an intensive intervention for

struggling readers. The analysis was conducted in three stages. First, the objectives, tools, and monitoring mechanisms of each country's "reading literacy model" were identified. Second, similarities and differences were grouped into six core areas. Finally, adaptation strategies suitable for the Uzbek context were developed, taking into account resource availability, teacher preparation, linguistic features, family reading culture, and library infrastructure.

Results

Foreign experience clearly distinguishes between "being able to read" (decoding) and "understanding what is read" (comprehension). Through children's stories, students systematically develop strategies such as dialogue, question–answer interaction, retelling, role-based reading, and vocabulary enrichment.

In the Finnish context, working with texts in various formats—including digital and visual texts—broadens comprehension skills, enabling students to understand not only literary texts but also diverse informational texts. In foreign systems, skills such as formulating questions, finding evidence, making inferences, identifying author's intent, and integrating information across texts are taught step by step as distinct didactic objectives.

The Finnish Lukuinto (Joy of Reading) programme stands out for its focus on reading motivation and new literacies, strong school–library collaboration, and support mechanisms such as practical idea banks. The aim is to transform students into readers who read not merely to complete tasks, but out of personal interest.

Research from Singapore highlights factors such as student communities, school-wide events, teacher mentoring, and active library engagement in building reading culture at the school level. Motivation is thus viewed not as a decorative addition, but as a powerful factor ensuring the sustainability of literacy development.

A key idea of the Lukuinto programme is enriching reading practices through school–library cooperation and close collaboration between teachers and librarians. This perspective suggests that reading literacy cannot be developed solely within the

classroom; resources and the social environment must continuously attract students to reading. In many foreign systems, libraries are not merely book storage spaces, but reading laboratories—venues for choice, recommendations, clubs, discussions, author meetings, and projects.

In the United States and other English-speaking systems, intensive individualized support programmes such as Reading Recovery are implemented. Meta-analyses provide evidence of short-term positive effects, though scientific debates continue regarding long-term effectiveness and sustainability. Experience shows that three conditions are essential for success:

- early identification (diagnosis),
- clearly targeted skills,
- intensity combined with continuous monitoring.

Without these conditions, interventions may lead to temporary improvement followed by decline, which is the main source of controversy. In England, monitoring and accountability in reading are particularly strong. At the same time, public debates exist concerning the risk of excessive testing and pressure on children. Monitoring is necessary, but it should not turn into “teaching to the test” that undermines reading motivation.

Discussion

Rather than a single-country model, a balanced model is crucial. The analysis shows that successful systems avoid overemphasizing one dimension. If instruction relies solely on phonics, students may develop technical skills but lack deep comprehension and enjoyment. If only reading enjoyment is emphasized, motivation may be high, but weak technical foundations can hinder understanding of complex texts. If monitoring dominates, the system may be orderly, but creativity and student agency may be reduced. Maintaining balance is therefore the most important factor in developing reading literacy competence. For Uzbekistan, five adaptation criteria are proposed when drawing on foreign experience:

1. Linguistic criterion: texts should correspond to the phonetic and morphological features of the Uzbek language and students' age characteristics.
2. Teacher preparation criterion: no programme can function without teachers' methodological competence; a "methodological package" approach, as in Singapore, may be effective.
3. Resource and library criterion: gradual establishment of school–library cooperation in the Finnish style; transforming school libraries into active reading spaces.
4. Motivation criterion: strengthening reading enjoyment through extracurricular activities, clubs, and student choice.
5. Monitoring criterion: monitoring is necessary, as in England, but it should be diagnostic and supportive rather than demotivating.

The Proposed "6+6" Model

A) In-class activities

- 10–15 minutes daily for reading technique (phonics/word recognition/fluency): short but regular.
- 15–20 minutes daily for meaningful reading: questioning, evidence-finding, summarizing.
- Weekly strategy lesson: inference, idea integration, author's intent.
- Student choice: multiple text options (prepared by the teacher, selected by the student).
- Vocabulary and word work within text context.
- Short reflection: "What did I learn today?" "Which part was interesting?"

B) Out-of-class activities

- "Reading enjoyment" weeks and reading marathons;
- School–library cooperative projects;

- Family reading initiatives: weekly “family reading sheet” focused on recommendations and exchange of ideas rather than reporting;
- 6–8 week “mini-interventions” for struggling readers (intensive and diagnostic), with regular evaluation considering debates around Reading Recovery;
- Creation of classroom book corners;
- Creative activities based on books read: drawing, dramatization, audio stories.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that foreign approaches to developing reading literacy among primary school students are not centered on a single method, but on building a comprehensive reading ecosystem. Finland emphasizes reading motivation and school–library cooperation; England highlights methodological precision in reading instruction and robust monitoring; Singapore showcases comprehensive national support for teachers through materials and training.

In the Uzbek context, these experiences should not be copied directly, but adapted by considering language, resources, teacher preparation, and motivational environments. The key conclusion is that reading literacy development begins with early literacy instruction, but without reading enjoyment, meaningful comprehension, and a cooperative ecosystem, sustainable results cannot be achieved.

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