

Phonics Teaching Method Analysis on the Kindergarten Students' English Pronunciation Fluency

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Abstract. Language is a tool which is required to learn. English is one of the languages which is required to be learnt, due to its status as considered international language for communication among cultures and systems. Young learners at age of three to six years old are considered to be the most potential language learners. Phonics is a teaching method in speaking which teaches based on how the alphabets sound in English sentences. This method commonly is implemented on adult learners to examine the English pronunciation fluency, while there are still less studies regarding phonics implementation on young to prove whether the phonics method works for young learners at the age of three to six considering the learning stage is still remembering at those range of age. This study is conducted to see how effective the phonics method increases the progress of English speaking in young learners. The method which is used for this research is direct experimental on classroom research, with causal comparative research design. The subjects are kindergarten students in one private school with the number of 30 at the age of six as samples to be taken for given reading and pronunciation tests in both pre-phonics and post-phonics implementation. The result shows that there is an increase of 30% in term of pronunciation accuracy and an increase of 21 seconds at average for students to recognize the unfamiliar English words pronunciation.

Keywords: phonics, pronunciation, English, analysis, fluency

1 Research Background

Education is the most important thing in human life. It brings the knowledge which is required for living. Education can be defined as a learning process which includes teaching and learning process [3]. A learning process is considered effective if all the components in learning and teaching are supportive that they all contribute toward achievement of learning in students. Education is an activity of guiding and teaching people of certain fields of expertise. That is why education requires both knowledge and experience to be executed [4]. Nowadays, the education system has changed from time to time [4]. It changes according to the current situation, development, and trend which change and affect the type and number of necessities of human life [1].

One of essential education is language learning [3]. Languages are a kind of communication tools which allow every individual to convey information from one another. The information which are conveyed in a language take many forms in the communication such as spoken language, written language and many others. Thus, making languages somewhat unique and important to learn [2]. One of many languages which is commonly used for conveying information is English. English is a language which is considered important to the daily living in many situations across the world. Many countries have considered English as another or secondary language for conducting daily activities besides the main language [3]. Because of it, it is officially recognized one of most effective communication tools for many activities and also as global language for communication. Being the most used or effective means English is a compulsory subject and language to be learnt by all people in their both formal education and informal education. Communication takes form in both verbal and non-verbal [6]. Therefore, everyone must at least learn one of global foreign languages in order to achieve such understanding to optimize communication between two different cultures and systems usually from English teaching and learning [2].

Learning is an activity of acquiring information from every different point of view which are seen and heard. The information are the output of how the mind and brain perceive and analyze everything into information [4]. The information itself is the key of adding knowledge in learning. That is why learning is important to understand differences among systems in every society and community. English learning itself may be one of most common things that happens around the world especially in the field of education [4]. English learning can be held in both formal and informal ways. There are some issues where learners somehow encounter difficulties in learning English language, especially the speaking aspect of English language. Many errors are made within the English speaking from the spoken grammar, mispronunciation of words, inability to comprehend and guess unfamiliar words and sentences, and others [2]. The most committed error in English language speaking is word mispronunciation, which indirectly leads to misunderstandings among English speakers across the globe [1]. This is mostly because of English language teachings do not exactly teach the way words in English are pronounced based on the basic letter spelling. Learners tend to learn to read and spell English words from how each alphabet sounds and it causes misspelling in English words and incorrect pronunciation and inaccurate guessing in facing new and unfamiliar English words and sentences [3]. Error in communications may be simple and tend to be ignored, but for reasons errors in communications indirectly lead to misunderstandings. Misunderstandings is fatal considering even in the slightest amount. This is why corrections are and preparations are essential. There should not be any fault to be tolerated in real implementations of English language communication [5].

There is a method which can be used to solve this speaking problem. The method is called phonics. Phonics is a method of teaching and learning by how the implementing the way

each letter or alphabet exactly sounds in sentences and words in a language. In case of spoken English language learning, phonics guides learners by giving the imitation or exact sound of each alphabet in English sounds instead of the formally known English alphabet pronunciation. This gives the learners ability to imitate and predict the how unfamiliar words sound without needing much knowledge and analysis of how to pronounce words and sentences correctly. Young learners especially at the age of 3 to 6 are known to be effective in learning. It is a phase of golden age where learning builds personality and characters of learners which makes learners learn and remember things easier compared to adults.

This research emphasizes on the how effective the phonics learning and teaching method on the English pronunciation fluency of kindergarten students. The reason behind the selection of this topic is that commonly phonics implementation is studied and implemented on the adult learners and there are not many studies in this topic which were conducted on the young learners, especially on pre-elementary school students or kindergarten students. Therefore, a research question is made which is “How effective the Phonics teaching and learning method toward English speaking and pronunciation fluency on kindergarten students?”. The result of this study will show the effectiveness of phonics teaching and learning method in improving the English-speaking pronunciation fluency on the kindergarten students.

2 Method

A qualitative study, which is descriptive research was used in this research with the method of direct testing as data collection method, in which 30 kindergarten students at the age of 6 from a private school in Kubu Raya regency named Bina Bhakti School are selected as samples for this study. Kindergarten students are asked to read five short sentences to collect the data of pre-phonics implementation. Some parameters that are used for the data collection are reading rate and pronunciation accuracy by using tape recorder and timer to record all speeches by students to identify error rate of pronunciation and measure the reading-rate of each sample. After that those 30 kindergarten students are given English lesson in classroom with the phonics as teaching and learning method. The teaching took place in a classroom in Sekolah Bina Bhakti for a week.

After the implementation of phonics teaching and learning method. Those 30 students who were chosen or taken as samples are given some test with the same five short sentences and with additional 2 short sentences with some unfamiliar words given to the test to measure the effectiveness of phonics teaching and learning method towards English pronunciation fluency. Then, after all data have been collected, a data analysis is conducted by comparing both the pre-phonics implementation result and post-phonics implementation result to achieve some comparisons that will show the effectiveness of phonics teaching and learning method implementation in kindergarten English lesson in classroom, especially in

English pronunciation fluency in term of pronunciation accuracy and English word identification.

3 Findings

There are five short sentences which are used to give the pre-phonics implementation test to find out the pronunciation and fluency rate of 30 kindergarten students at the age of 6. Those five short sentences are shown in table below.

Table 1. Pre-Phonics Implementation Test Questions

Number	Sentence
1	This is rabbit.
2	This is corn
3	Birds in the sky.
4	Mother and father.
5	Cat eats fish.

After that, there are seven questions which are given to students as post-phonics implementation test. The questions consist of five original question and two new additional questions to measure the speaking-rate fluency and pronunciation accuracy that will signify the effective of phonics learning and teaching methods. Those seven questions are shown in the table below.

Table 2. Post-Phonics Implementation Test Questions

Number	Sentence
1	This is rabbit.
2	This is corn
3	Birds in the sky.
4	Mother and father.
5	Cat eats fish.
6	That is a koala.
7	I play drumstick.

Those questions from both tables are used for pre-phonics and post-phonics implementation for data collection. All collected data are then analyzed with the quantitative descriptive analysis by making comparison of both pre-implementation of phonic teaching and learning method and post-implementation of phonic teaching and learning method on 30 kindergarten students. The comparison results of both tests are shown in the table below.

Table 3. Comparison Results Between Pre-Phonics and Post-Phonics Implementation

Students Number Row	Pre-Phonics		Post-Phonics	
	Speaking Rate (s)	Pronunciation Error (%)	Speaking Rate (s)	Pronunciation Error (%)
1	38	54	15	24
2	45	59	17	15
3	31	35	14	27
4	44	58	15	23
5	32	67	16	30
6	21	43	12	15
7	26	65	15	10
8	28	34	16	7
9	35	38	14	6
10	37	34	18	15
11	49	48	23	8
12	44	41	15	12
13	31	39	19	14
14	32	60	13	20
15	29	32	20	13
16	25	22	15	10
17	50	35	18	10
18	64	37	27	10
19	38	36	16	10
20	45	48	15	10
21	42	51	23	10
22	39	35	13	10
23	24	67	10	10
24	27	59	14	10
25	55	32	15	3
26	43	45	16	4
27	32	32	18	12
28	21	80	19	23
29	68	73	28	16
30	32	46	17	18
AVERAGE	37.56666667	46.83%	16.86666667	13.50%

The table above shows the results between both tests. The error rate shows how many errors in pronunciation are made during the speaking test in both pre-implementation and post-implementation of phonics. The duration when each students finishes all the sentences in speaking are measured completely by using the timer. It can be said that phonics

increases the accuracy of pronunciation fluency by 29.96% (rounded to 30%) and speaking rate by 20.7 seconds (rounded to 21 seconds).

4 Discussion

From the findings which have been made, the phonics learning and teaching method gives positive feedback toward the spoken English fluency. Due to the nature of English alphabet spelling which does not correspond or match the actual pronunciation in sentences and words, students tend to find it difficult to read and speak the short sentences, especially the words which build the sentences. Phonics give the perception where every alphabet in English should be pronounced or spelt based on how they sound in actual sentences. This gives more meaning and more impression for kindergarten students to exactly guess how the unfamiliar words are supposed to be pronounced. Thus, avoiding the misspelling in words in sentences, which may indirectly lead to misunderstanding in many topics of conversation.

The accuracy increase of 30% and speaking rate increase of 21 seconds truly defines the effectiveness of phonics method implementation in young learners, as they are in the process of remembering and this also gives the better opportunity for kindergarten students to master the basic pronunciation in speaking compared to adult learners.

5 Conclusion

From the analysis shown in the discussion part above, it is concluded that phonics teaching and learning method are effective in helping the kindergarten students to identify the word within sentences and to guess and identify the way unfamiliar words are supposed to be pronounced. The method of phonics gives the impression of what each alphabet or letter in English exactly sounds in sentences, which enables young learners to even guess and predict the sound or the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar words within short sentences. Because the students are able to make identifications on both familiar and unfamiliar words within the sentences, the speaking-rate is also affected, which causes kindergarten students to speak faster due to the faster identification or guess on how the words within sentences are pronounced. Thus, increasing the English-speaking fluency and accuracy.

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7 Suggestion

From the results of the study, there are a suggestion can be given.

1. This study is far from perfect. Therefore, there is a need for more development in this topic in term of age gap to analyze the age difference within the golden age of children's growth toward the studying rate.

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