Teaching of Phonics and Fluency in Improving Reading Abilities at Primary Level: Multan Pakistan

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Abstract

The present study aimed to classify how different strategies of phonic teachings potentially influence the students' reading abilities and to explore how instructions regarding the sounds of letters aid pupils for pronouncing words more correctly in 5th grade at University Model School Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan Pakistan. The action research design was adopted for this study. (N=20) A pre-test was developed to study the current status of students' mind about identification of the current situation of phonics and fluency in reading. The pre-test and posttest were based on 15 difficult words from three chapters of their English textbook. Pre-test results identified that students were not good at reading. After getting the pre-test results, the researcher developed one-week-long teaching based activities to enhance their fluency in reading, through different teaching materials. After the session, the researcher conducted the posttest (same test) to check their improvements in reading. In findings, a clear difference in results was identified between pre and posttest. It was found that student's awareness and fluency in reading can be improved through different teaching strategies.

Keywords: Phonics, Fluency, Reading ability, English Language, Teaching techniques, Primary level

Introduction

Education is fundamental human prudence, a society need, the premise of the good life and indication of opportunity. Simply, Education is the vehicle of knowledge, achievements and security. It allows us to succeed, sense of pride, quality character and the knowledge of social lead. Education is a nonstop learning experience, gaining from individuals, gaining from progress and disappointments, gaining from pioneers and devotees and afterwards growing up to be the individual we are intended to be (H.-D. Meyer & Rowan, 2012). Communication is transmitted of starting with one individual then onto the next, regardless of whether it inspires certainty. In any case, the information moved must be reasonable to the collector (E. Brown, 2012).

Generally, languages are assessed and taught regarding the 'four aptitudes' reading, speaking, writing and listening. Reading and Listening are that skills which are well-known as 'receptive skills' whereas writing and speaking are that skills which are known as 'productive skills'. Though, there is a period when an individual is not listening, writing, speaking, reading but using a language is still there (Baker, 2001).

The phonic instructing strategy is utilized for showing English sounds that grow awareness of phonemic in the students to upgrade their ability to perceive the sounds that given word present, and to control the phonemes and to recognize among the phonemes which improve their understanding expertise and pronunciation. According to (Johnston, Watson, & Logan, 2009) contends that before acquainting books to students with this methodology (phonics), they ought to show the connec-

tion among letter and its sounds. According to (Blachman, 2000), it is advanced that there is an obvious connection between gaining reading accomplishments and awareness of phonics or phonemic, and pupils tend for getting low scores in state-sanctioned tests. The phonic instructing phenomenon is applied globally for the students at the initial level. In this way, their language abilities refine from the earliest starting point.

Fluency is the capacity to read so anyone might hear with articulation to show a comprehension of the creator's message (Department of Education and Training in Western Australia, 2004, p.30) As indicated by (McKenna) the three key parts of fluency in reading are: (1) exact word acknowledgement, (2) appropriate rhythm and intonation of speech automaticity, (3) automaticity. Fluency in reading is characterized as the capacity to translate and grasp message simultaneously (Samuels, 2006). Students come into school vulnerable, excited and eager regarding learning. But too early, most of the students discover themselves in struggling through reading. Since reading is vital to achievement in school, poor readers face a direction of disappointment and diminishing inspiration. Those students who do not have reading fluency from 5th grade are probably not going to move on from secondary school (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1994).

The English Language possesses a famous spot in Pakistan. The Pakistani students experienced numerous hardships in obtaining capability in the English Language, by which they come up short on the confidence to impart in the English language. One of the fundamental reasons that students can't impart appropriately in the language is less awareness of phonemic; the issue is because of the seemingly perpetual convention of in order system of instructing to students in beginning periods of their instructive vocation. Adams pronounces that phonics awareness is one of the most significant centres and powerful factor in isolate typical and handicap readers (Adams, 1990).

The instructions of orthographic demonstration become the main and basic reason regarding mistaken pronunciation at the professional stage. Consequently, this exploration study gets the importance of improving phonics pronunciation and abilities at the initial or junior stage of studies. And also it can help students in getting proficiency in reading and pronunciation abilities. In Pakistan, phonic strategies for teaching are used just in some particular instructive institutions. In this study, we present teaching phonics and fluency through various teaching strategies at 5th grade in Pakistan for enhancing the pupil's ability regarding the awareness of phonic among students.

Literature Review
Status of English language education in Pakistan
In Pakistan, the recent status of English language Education portrays the spread of English utilizing three models which are known as concentric circles model, the Outer Circle, the Inner Circle and the growing Circle (Kachru, 1985). As indicated by him, 'The Outer Circle speaks to the regulated non-local assortments (ESL) in the areas that have gone through expanded times of colonization' like India. The inner Circle describes the native English nations, for example, The USA, UK, Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia. The growing Circle incorporates the nations, for example, China where English is utilized as Foreign Language (EFL).

As per this definition, Pakistan is one of the nations in the external Circle where English is one of the official dialects alongside Urdu, and it is educated as a solitary mandatory language in the school. The economic, cultural and political needs just as social significance given for English from the decision of the country's elite make it a significant language and also it achieves a distinguish position considerably more than native language especially in social and economic spheres. It states that the elites' ruling has upheld Urdu as a result of its emblematic integrative incentive to the belief

system of Pakistan to win the help of the urban white-collar class and this strategy empowers them to keep up their standing in the provinces.

Thus regular masses' kids concentrate in Urdu medium government subsidized schools while elites send their kids to costly English medium schools (Rahman & Knight, 1996). Because of this, the kids of regular masses are not able to handle the situation of the real world. The fluent and productive speaker of the language is viewed as the one, who is capable enough to utilize language structure precisely, alone with focusing considerably more on the substance rather more on the structure (J. D. Brown, 1996). Language is viewed as a blessing to society. The more individual is presented to a language the more language student may learn, along these lines if a student at their school's beginning times is presented to the phonemic awareness the more proficiently they will procure capability in their reading capacity.

Instructions for Reading

All new learning comes through readings because learning for reading is a consecutive procedure; each new expertise and ability expands on the dominance of recently learned abilities. Early on, for instance, the student learns to break down words into their most basic sounds in a process called decoding. Afterwards, they start to understand the importance of words, sentences and, eventually, whole available text and passage. So our effort suggests that awareness about phonic and fluency at the initial level can enhance the abilities to understand the words as well as fluency in reading regarding the English language.

Cognitive Psychologists describes in their research that children learn new techniques or process of thinking most viably when they are deliberately aware with what they are doing or what they want to do (A. L. Brown, Armbruster, & Baker, 1986). When students are aware of the procedures, they can screen their appreciation and apply various techniques varying for grasping content (A. L. Brown, 1978). Talking and interacting regarding text in special ways is necessary (Casanave, 1988). According to (Vygotsky, 1962a) it is also found that students improve their abilities when teachers boost them to talk regarding written Language, when students have more chance to talk with each other about how they make sense of a text as well as when teachers model comprehension techniques for them (Hoffman & Heath, 1986).

Studies also affirm that children must read quicker with fluency if they wish to read viably (Mikulecky, 2008). Quicker reading endorses reading in thought units rather than each word in turn, and that prompts improved understanding. (Kachru, 1985) says that reading by reading is the ideal approach to improve reading. Lately, research and practice have approved that thought (Day, Bamford, Renandya, Jacobs, & Yu, 1998). The advantages of broad reading incorporate fluency, awareness of grammar, acquisition of vocabulary, writing model and an immersion in the culture of (ESL).

Phonemic Teaching

Phonics teaching means of helping students to comprehend the alphabetic marvels of the composting system in the English language, and also to know the relationship which keeps existence between phonics teachings, and spellings design as well as speech design and those every word spelling presents. (Lloyd, Wernham, Jolly, & Stephen, 1998) puts that, phonics is sub consecutive, normalized or scientific program intended to direct and impart information in pupils to read, it trains the instructing of letter-sounds, and a while later it goes to mix letter-sounds, on the whole, to pronounce as well as read a word.

Similarly, it is stated that the concept of phonemic awareness is unacceptable in learning to read and spell for kids (Masonheimer, Drum, & Ehri, 1984). Phonics training and phonics teaching are like a strong tool for the creation of good readers when phonics systematically is taught to students. The previous studies determine that the instructions of phonics enhance the capacity in the

earliest grade for decoding words means that 90 to 80 per cent comprehension capacity in grade third (R. J. Meyer, 2001). Scholars believe that unknown or new words might be taught to pupils through phonemic instructions (Ehri & Robbins, 1992). There are numerous ways of reading like accuracy, identification of words, fluency in reading orally, comprehension and silent reading. All the above factors are well proficient teachings in phonics. Weakness in the identification of words and Weakness in fluency leads to readers on the way to slow and low fluent habits regarding reading. The different teaching methods regarding reading and the useful results remain the question of concern and debate between the professionals for introducing the pupils how learn read and it seems that phonics would be the best method (Soler & Openshaw, 2006).

Phonemic Awareness

Johnston and Watson state that the awareness of phonic which express that sounds of letters is a comprehensive direction to the way of words' pronunciation and it also has a vast history, that developing in the 19th century. And also claim in their examinations that 5-years of age kids who were procuring beneficial phonic information ends up being a superior, fluent and proficient word's readers, they would be advised to word reading, spelling and awareness regarding phonemic (Johnston & Watson, 2005). According to (Cassar, Treiman, Moats, Pollo, & Kessler, 2005) the showing of poor students nearly of 80 per cent are evaluated to delineate absence of phonological awareness and the poor students with the absence of phonemic mindfulness and shortcoming in phonological preparing also much plausible to be the more unfortunate spellers.

According to (Adams, 1990) elaborates that phonemic awareness and alphabet recognition is the two earliest reading witch of success Similarly, (Bradley & Bryant, 1985) claim that the more students are shown the capacities of hearing and perceiving words' sounds, the better they exhibit over capable capacities in spelling, reading and word acknowledgement. (Frith, 1985) declares that in deciding the relationship between print-word and its sounds, the student-run over numerous sufferings, which inclines towards poorer spellers and readers. According to the description of (Haskell, Foorman, & Swank, 1992) that pupils improve on word acknowledgement tests that are shown phonic teaching unambiguously. It is transcendently perceived that to get one of person, who can effectively read precisely should have strong basic abilities in word acknowledgement that inclines to give as the fundamental strides to great reading abilities (Phonic learn to read program: 25, November, 2012).

Studies tend to reveal that insufficient word recognition is the reason regarding poor understanding at initial stages (Lyons & John, 1995). It declares that readers with lack of phonics awareness might be slower than students with strong and clear segmentation abilities in elaborating the unfamiliar and unknown words. And also it declares that phonemic awareness in children must be taught particularly to help the children for pronouncing the words at first glimpse (Goswami & Bryant, 2016). Scholars emphasis on student greatest difficulties regarding reading because of their low capacities to understand words, low awareness of phonemic and low abilities to arrange words (Torgesen, 2000).

There are many studies which have been conducted to elaborate that awareness of phonemic is a necessary prerequisite required in the reading process (Mitchell & Fox, 2001). According to Dolores Durkin, phonics instructional methodology assists and helps students to speak unfamiliar words as speedily as possible (Durkin, 1989). The extensively valued letter-sound teaching aids decoding words which are written and unknown visually (Adams, 1990).

By and large, without knowing the goals of any undertaking, its ideal outcome can't be accomplished. A lot of viable and orderly, educators ought to be clear about the drawn-out objectives and explicit goals of English teaching. The goals of educating English at primary level are mani-

folds, for example, to equip students with the four language abilities; reading, writing, listening and speaking (James, 2001). However, studies on different skills regarding language indicate that language isn't the integration of information and knowledge rather than it is the energetic achievements of communicative capabilities. This language purpose has given such an approach which is known as a communicative approach. It might help to the students that how to utilize with target language to convey properly, effectively and fluently by being much concerned with the learners' creativity and collaboration than teachers' directions. Though, to acquire language via the communicative approach, educators' capability and the confidence as well as the motivation of learner play vital role (Demirezen, 2011).

As literature recommended, reading is significant regarding English as a Foreign Language. Various studies also indicated that students have to face challenges through the learning of the English Language, particularly when their local language isn't English. This research aims to figure out whether different strategies in phonics teaching can be effective to the pupils regarding the awareness of phonics.

Hypothesis

For enhancing pupils reading abilities, the awareness of phonic among students through different teaching strategies is effective and significant.

Objectives of the Study

1.   To classify how different strategies of phonics teaching have a potential influence on students' reading abilities.

2.   To explore how instructions regarding the sounds of letters aid pupils for pronouncing as well as reading words more correctly.

Methodology

This study aimed to improve the reading (fluency and phonics) of English language in 5th-grade students by using multiple teaching strategies in a public school. This part presents the research design, procedure, sampling, and research strategies.

Design

The action research method was adopted for this research. Action research helps teachers to reflect their practices. Moreover, teachers may not help but improve the proficiency of the art and science of teaching. During the research process, two phases of research were planned systematically;

Phase 1, based on the pre-test where researcher identified the problems of students in their reading of English fluently.

In Phase 2, identified problems were addressed systematically by using multiple strategies and teaching aids. Finally, the percentages of the responses were calculated to present the results.

Sample

Convenient sampling was adopted to select 20 students enrolled in class five in University Model School, Bahauddin Zakariya University.

Instruments

A test was prepared to collect the data from the students. The pre-test was conducted to identify the reading problems of the students. At the same time, posttest was conducted to analyze the improvements in their reading. The test was based on the first, three chapters of their English textbook. Next, an observation sheet was designed to measure the reading (fluency and phonic) ability.

The observation sheet was based on 15 items (based on the words selected from three chapters of their English textbook) with three options (Poor, medium, and good).

Pre-test

In the pre-test, 20 students were selected randomly from the class to take part in the test. Students were asked to read some of the paragraphs from their English book. Used the observation sheet, the researcher was noted down their reading ability by marking the three options on the observation sheet (Poor, medium, and good). Each response was count against (poor, good, and medium).

Action phase

Based on the results of the pre-test, the researcher planned some teaching strategies to improve their reading ability (fluency and phonics). Following strategies were planned to teach the students to improve their reading ability:

1. Selecting difficult words from their English textbook.
2. Planned teaching strategies according to the selected words by using different aids, e.g., (flashcards, charts, pop-stick, sticker, pictures, audios, and syllables)
3. Before teaching, students were engaged through brainstorming and asking different questions from their textbook.
4. During the teaching, students were encouraged when they responded/participate in classroom activities. Different pop sticks, charts and flashcards were used to maintain their interest and to train them to identify and memorize the words from the selected content.

Post-test

The same test was conducted again to study the effects of the action phase. Same respondents were asked again to read the paragraphs from their textbook. Used the observation sheet, the researcher was noted down their reading ability by pointing out on the three options (Poor, medium, and good).

Data analysis

The action research design was adopted to conduct this study. An observation sheet was designed to collect the data. A pre and posttest design was adopted to identify the difference before and after the action phase. The observation sheet was designed to analyze the student's performance on the three-level scales "poor, medium, and good." To data analysis, percentages (%) of the total scores of students' received in "poor, medium, and good" is calculated. Pre and posttest results sheets are available in (Appendix B).

Results

Table 1. Pre-test

	Poor	Medium	Good
Pre-test	46.33%	34%	19.66%

N=20

Table 1: Explains the pre-test results, where maximum responses were recorded in the 'poor' scale (46.33%). It shows their ability in the reading of the English language. Next, (34%) students recorded their responses in a 'medium' scale. The minimum scores (19.66%) of the students recorded in the scale' good.'

Table 2. Post-test

	Poor	Medium	Good
Post-test	1.33%	8%	90.66%

N=20

Table 2: Explains the posttest results, where maximum responses were recorded in the 'good' scale (90.66%). It shows clear improvements in their reading ability. In contrast, now (8%) students recorded their responses in 'medium' scale and (1.33%) in 'poor' respectively.

Discussion

Pupils with phonics and fluency problem in reading may be a colossal disablement to ability in good command and inclusive competency in reading. Though, most of the pupils have faced trouble in moving to a degree of fluency in their reading which empowers them to take part ineffective practice. Because practice enhances reading ability, and lack of practice inhibits their reading proficiency. It is well established for all the pupils that their reading ability grows if they progress in reading at the initial academic level. Continued practices regarding reading have been demonstrated to be a ground-breaking approach to improve these significant phonics and fluency capabilities (Rasinski, Rupley, Pagie, & Nichols, 2016).

Viable teachers give fluctuated, significant practice to guarantee students authority and move of ability to other important reading circumstances (Villaume & Brabham, 2003). This practice is considered by changing steps regarding student-teacher interaction and controlled by the teacher directly. In this procedure, the teacher performances like a mediator (Rupley & Blair, 1987). According to the theory of (Vygotsky, 1962b) mediated training includes giving direction for a student in specific learning expertise. During training, the amount of attention and guidance is extraordinary toward the start; but with the time it decays to nearly nothing or none. Like to meditate, training is coaching student. The previous studies determine that the instructions of phonics enhances the capacity in earliest grade for decoding words means that eighty to ninety percent comprehension capacity in grade third (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992).

In an ongoing study which concentrated on struggling students at an Urban Equity Plus School, it was observed by the researchers that during the multi-week study utilizing chosen readers theatre contents following a continued reading model that the students on a normal expanded their words right every moment by 37.3 (Mraz et al., 2013). The biggest addition on the posttest measure was an expansion of 69 Words read accurately per minutes while the littlest increment was 21 Words read accurately per minutes. Notwithstanding, the students who had the littlest supreme addition in (WCPM) had a huge relative increment (289%) in (WCPM) from the pre-to posttest. The consequences of this examination demonstrated that the students expanded their words acknowledgement automaticity as estimated by (WCPM) more in about a month and a half than they had done in their past two years of training.

The basic objective of the present study was to examine pupil's readings abilities the awareness of phonic among students through different teaching strategies. In posttest results show a clear improvement in their reading ability. In contrast, now (8%) students recorded their responses in 'medium' scale and (1.33%) in 'poor' respectively. The calculated result in this study supported not only the theory of (Vygotsky, 1962b) but also previously studied in this manner. It was found that the overall performance of the students was much better in posttest rather than the pre-test. It is presented that phonics training and phonics teaching is like a strong tool for the creation of good readers when phonics systematically is taught to students. Results clearly show that if the teacher will change their teaching methodologies, organize some activities in the class, plan their lessons by fol-

lowing the lesson plan rules, use of audio-visual aids can help to foster students' learning and develop their interest, then students' learning in reading must be improved.

Conclusion

The study is based on a small group of students, and the benefit of minor group instruction methodologies for phonemic awareness skills and reading is remarkable for both the student and the teacher. It allows for individual instruction and attainable instruction. It also provides for the teacher to understand every student in a real sense. The teacher can understand what area of reading each student is successful in and what extent of reading the students need more instruction and guidance. It also allows teachers to determine what strategies work for each student because not every plan is beneficial for every student. Education should enable every pupil to be successful, and instruction should be attainable. Small group instruction allows this to happen. Reading is an ability that is necessary for the lifelong success of the students.

Recommendations

1.   For increasing reading English proficiency of primary school students, it is highly suggested that teachers should be qualified and trained for English language teaching.

2.   It is highly recommended to the school for organizing various workshops/projects in school to teach the students to read (fluency and phonics) of the English language by using multiple teaching strategies in a public school.

3.   Parents should also be involved in the English learning process with their children. And it should be the responsibility of school administration to call the parents once in a month and teach them how they can enhance the reading abilities of their children.

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Appendix A

Class: 5ᵗʰ, No. of Students: 20
Table A1. Observation sheet

No#	Words	Poor	Medium	Good
1.	Worshipped			
2.	Rubbish			
3.	Confidence			
4.	Embraced			
5.	President			
6.	Professional			
7.	Politely			
8.	Certificate			
9.	Sure			
10	Shiny			
11.	Achievements			
12.	Attached			
13.	Session			
14.	Enough			
15.	Sought			

Appendix B

Table B1. Phonics and Fluency in Reading, Pre-test

N0. of students	Poor	Medium	Good	Total
1	7	6	2	15
2	8	5	2	15
3	9	4	2	15
4	10	4	1	15
5	8	4	3	15
6	7	5	3	15
7	4	6	5	15
8	3	5	7	15
9	5	5	5	15
10	6	8	1	15
11	10	2	3	15
12	12	2	1	15
13	11	2	2	15
14	6	6	3	15
15	5	5	5	15
16	1	7	7	15
17	6	8	1	15
18	7	6	2	15
19	4	8	3	15
20	10	4	1	15

Table B2. Phonics and Fluency in Reading, Post-test

No. of students	Poor	Medium	Good	Total
1			15	15
2			15	15
3			15	15
4		2	13	15
5		1	14	15
6			15	15
7			15	15
8			15	15
9			15	15
10			15	15
11			15	15
12	2	5	8	15
13			15	15
14			15	15
15		3	12	15
16		4	11	15
17		1	14	15
18		2	13	15
19	2	6	7	15
20			15	15