The Effects of Phonemic Awareness on Developing Pupils' Reading Performance: A Case Study

A Thesis submitted to Department of English, College of Languages in fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of M.A. in English

Submitted by: Mohamed Khalil Mohamed.
Supervised by: Dr. Abdalla Yassin Abdalla.

May – 2005
Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to a number of people for their support comments and suggestions during the preparation of this study. First I would like to express my deep indebtedness and true thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Abdalla Yassin Abdalla for his continuous guidance, support, patience and invaluable advice that have been behind the work of this research. Without his patience, guidance and support I could not have accomplished this study. I respectfully thank him not only for his thoughtful insights, clarity and coherence but also for his valuable comments and his sincere advice during every stage in this study which has had its effects in establishing confidence in me and the whole work.

I also wish to express my appreciation for the support given by the English language department at Mozoon College, Oman.

Finally, the continuing support provided by my colleagues has been invaluable and has factored enormously into the strengths of this research, I alone am responsible for its shortcomings. With profound thanks for all the help I have received, I hope that its strengths outweigh its weaknesses.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this simple work.

To my Father

To my mother

To my Colleagues

To all my fellow teachers in Saudi Arabia
ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the effectiveness of phonemic awareness (i.e. the ability to hear, identify and manipulate sounds in both spoken and written words) on developing the elementary school pupils' level in reading words and short texts.

The researcher selected 40 pupils, from AL Aqsa School, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and they were arranged into two groups, an experimental group and a control group.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the phonemic awareness program, the pre-test and post test were assessed prior to conducting the experiment.

From the previous collected data and by comparing the performance of the pupils in the pre-test and post-test this study has concluded that there is a statistical difference in favor of the experimental group in the post-test.

According to what the results of pupils have shown in the post-test, the researcher has arrived at the following conclusions:

- The phonemic awareness training helped the pupils learn the phonemic values in a better way.
- Training on letters-sounds correspondences developed phonemic awareness skills of the pupils.
- Teaching phonemic awareness has remarkably helped in developing the pupils' ability to read words and short texts.
- Teaching phonemic awareness has helped in increasing the pupils' motivation towards learning to read through the easy and playful presentation of the lessons that suited the age range.
- The experiment has proved that phonemic awareness does not come naturally without direct training and instructions.

The findings of the analysis and comparison of the pre-test and post-test data have come to confirm the three hypotheses of the
study. The results have shown that there is a close relation between a pupil's control over sounds and his reading ability. These findings have indicated clearly that phonemic awareness training forms the foundation for learning to read words. By confirming the first hypothesis and the second one, the study has come to confirm the third hypothesis that children who receive training in PA can outperform children who do not receive such training in the ability to read words and short texts.
ABSTRACT
(Arabic Version)

The abstract

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the language learning process (the ability to understand and interact with spoken and written words) in developing a reading level for elementary students. It then focuses on the development of classroom reading and writing.

The study used a pre-test and post-test to measure the effectiveness of the program before implementing it.

According to the data collected, it was found that there were statistically significant differences between the two groups in their ability to read short texts and write.

The results indicated:

- The training helped develop the language learning skills of the students.
- It helped develop the relationship between the letters and their sounds.
- It helped develop the writing skills of the students.
- It helped develop the relationship between the letters and their sounds.
- It helped develop the relationship between the letters and their sounds.
اكتساب مهارات القراءة عبر العرض السهل والممتع الذـذي يتتاسب بالمرحلة السنية.

- أثبتت التجربة أن المعرفة الصوتية لا تتأتي تلقائياً بعزل عن التدريب والتوجيه المباشرين.

جاءت نتائج تحليل ومقارنة بيانات الاختبار القبلي واللاحق مؤكدةً على صحة الافتراضات الثلاثة للدراسة، حيث أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة وثيقة بين تمكّن التلميذ من معرفة الأصوات ومقدرته على القراءة. كذلك إشارة النتائج بصورة واضحة إلى أن التدريب على المعرفة الفونمائية يمثل الأساس لتعليم قراءة الكلمات. وبتحقيق الافتراض الأول والثاني أثبتت الدراسة تحقيق افتراض تفوق التلاميذ الذين يتلقون تدريباً على المعرفة الفونمائية على الذين لا يتلقون ذات التدريب في القدرة على قراءة الكلمات والنصوص القصيرة.
# Table of contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................... i.
Dedication ....................................................................................................................... ii.
Abstract (English Version) ............................................................................................... iii.
Abstract (Arabic Version) ............................................................................................... iv.

**Chapter One: Introduction** ........................................................................................ 1
1.1. Context of the problem ......................................................................................... 1
1.2. Statement of the problem ..................................................................................... 6
1.3. Objectives of the study ......................................................................................... 7
1.4. Definitions ............................................................................................................. 8
1.5. Research Hypotheses ........................................................................................... 10
1.6. Significant of the study ....................................................................................... 14
1.7. Scope of the study ............................................................................................... 15
1.8. Methodology, Data and Materials ................................................................. 15

**Chapter Two: Literature Review** ............................................................................. 17
2.1. Introduction .......................................................................................................... 17
2.2. The prevailing theories ....................................................................................... 25
2.3. The main controversies about phonemic awareness ...................................... 44
2.3.1. Rhyme ............................................................................................................. 49
2.3.2. Onsets and Rimes ........................................................................................... 52
2.3.3. Phoneme Awareness ....................................................................................... 57
2.4. The major findings in PA in the previous studies ........................................... 59
2.4.1. Teaching phonemic awareness development ............................................. 61
2.4.2. Methods of assessing phonemic awareness .............................................. 72
2.4.3. Phonemic awareness and early reading acquisition .................................. 82
2.5. The relation between phonological awareness and reading ....................... 94
2.6. Summary of the chapter ..................................................................................... 109

**Chapter Three: Methodology** ................................................................................ 112
3.1. Subjects ............................................................................................................... 112
3.2. Methods of data collection ................................................................................ 113
3.3. The treatment ..................................................................................................... 114
3.3.1. **The control group** ...................................................................................... 114
3.3.1.1. Teaching the alphabet ............................................................................ 115
Chapter Five: Summary, Implications, Recommendations and Suggestions for further studies .................................202
5.1. Summary of the findings .................................................................................................................202
5.2. Implications and Conclusion ........................................................................................................206
5.3. Recommendations .......................................................................................................................208
5.4. Suggestions for further studies ...................................................................................................210

Bibliography .................................................................................................................................212

Appendixes .................................................................................................................................224
Appendix A ......................................................................................................................................224
Appendix B ......................................................................................................................................229
Appendix C ......................................................................................................................................230
Appendix D ......................................................................................................................................234