Phonics Strategies to Help English Language Learners

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Abstract

Phonics involves one of the five pillars of reading. Along with phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension; phonics plays a crucial role in the development and improvement of the reading skills of any individual. Phonics refers to the ability to correlate sounds with letters or groups of letters in an alphabetic composing framework. Phonics can also be used as an approach to teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) how to read, write, pronounce, and compose in the English language. In this paper, the authors analyzed 15 phonics strategies that can be used in a classroom to improve the literacy skills of ELLs. The strategies were categorized as independent, instructional, or frustrational level based on the level of efficiency and effectiveness to assist bilingual and ELL students.

Keywords: Phonics, Literacy Strategies, Bilingual Students, English Language Learners (ELLs)

Introduction

Phonics is a method of instruction to improve literacy skills by correlating sounds with letters or groups of letters in an alphabetic composing framework. Phonics is an approach to showing English Language Learners (ELLs) how to read, write, pronounce, and compose in the English language. It helps ELLs hear, recognize and utilize various sounds that recognize a single word from another in the English language. Coding letters and words in the written language are essential to develop literacy skills in the 21st century, so knowing the sounds of individual letters and how those letters make up words when they are joined together will assist

ELLs to decode words as they read. Understanding phonics will also assist ELLs with realizing which letters to utilize when they are composing words. Phonics can be taught to English Language Learners with the assistance of books and literacy strategies.

Phonics instruction can be used employing different strategies since ELLs possess different learning styles. Some of these styles include visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning. Fifteen strategies were analyzed in this study to help ELLs improve their phonic understanding and codification of words. The strategies were labeled in three different ranks to measure the level of difficulty. The first level is the independent level where ELLs use simple phonics techniques by themselves and do not need assistance from their teachers, parents, or tutors. The second level is an instructional rank where the English Language Learners can complete the activities with the assistance or instruction of a teacher, parent, or tutor. The third classification is frustrational level, where the strategy can be perceived as challenging or difficult by the ELLs that generally would need complete support from a more experienced individual.

Purpose of the Study and Research Question

The purpose of this study was to investigate phonics strategies to help English Language Learners. The following question guided this study:

1. What phonics strategies are most accommodating to help and improve English Language Learners their second language?

Significance

The foundation of this research is compelling for the reason that many English Language Learners struggle with the apprehension and understanding of a new language. Phonics has shown that numerous beginner learners section words into establishing sounds and blend these to frame new words. Most ELLs utilized the comprehension of their first language to categorize new words learned in the second language. With the help of phonics techniques, ELLs could work on their pronunciation, reading, composing, listening, speaking, and thinking abilities.

Additionally, utilizing an assortment of strategies for the distinctive learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) could help address the necessities of the different student populations.

Literature Review

Phonics guidance shows the connections between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language. English Language Learner's reading advancement is subject to their comprehension of the alphabetic standard, the possibility that letters and letter designs address the implications of expressed language. Decoding is the demonstration of sounding out words utilizing phonics. An article published by Dussling (2020), emphasized there is developing proof that early understanding interventions, which have been successful with native English speakers, can as well be effective with ELLs. The method chosen was to gather people into small groups, which was intended to build up phoneme awareness abilities and assist ELLs with understanding the connections between spoken sounds and written letters. All English Language Learners showed development in their comprehension of letter-sound correspondences.

Additionally, Myers (2012) created a research-based software program intended for autonomous use by striving ELLs to assist them to enhance their literacy skills. Reading Horizons utilizes the Discover Intensive Phonics system to deal with instructing reading, which is pointed toward educating ELLs on how to decode and comprehend words quickly and naturally. The exercises are intended to inspire learners to turn out to be more compelling readers and communicators while accomplishing fundamental reading techniques needed for long-term learning.

Furthermore, Damianou (2016) indicated that the study proposes a flexible early reading model that includes components from the two most compelling ways to deal with teaching reading, in particular phonics. The effect of the model on the Ell's advancement in early reading is studied in project research that joins instructor's journals, class statements, a battery of understanding tests, and a students' poll. The analysis focuses on pinpointing evidence that can inform and add to the improvement regarding the training rehearses utilized in elementary schools regarding the teaching of early reading in English.

Solon's (2017) article investigated the second language (L2) obtaining of a piece that exists in ELLs and their L2, yet that contrasts in its phonetic acknowledgment and allophonic designing in the two languages. In particular, this examination tracked improvement in one part of the creation of the alveolar lateral/l/in the L2 Spanish of 85 native English speakers from different degrees of study and compared at L2 creations to those of native Spanish speakers along with ELLs. Results showed improvement toward nativelike standards in the phonetic subtleties of Spanish/l/and in allophonic designing. These discoveries had suggestions for existing theoretical records of L2 discourse realization, which can not satisfactorily represent the learning situation analyzed. In a similar study Giannakopoulou et al. (2013), demonstrated speech sounds that contain numerous phonetic prompts that are frequently hard for ELLs, particularly if certain signs are weighted distinctively in the foreign and native languages. Two types of stimuli were utilized: usual (unedited) stimuli and 'adjusted' vowel span improvements which were altered to guarantee that term could not be utilized as a cue in the assignments.

Results showed the other language speakers performed ineffectively when they couldn't utilize the length signal as contrasted with ELLs. However, the level of progress was generally articulated for children (developmental stage). Melnik & Peperkamp (2021), proposed a High-Variability Phonetic Training (HVPT) which has been demonstrated to be efficacious in improving the insight of the hardest non-native sounds. The current report evaluated whether HVPT also developed word acknowledgment with ELLS and French language learners as well.

Results exhibited that after preparing the learners precision was achieved in the two assignments. Moreover, these upgrades were held four months after the posttest. This is the primary evidence that short preparation can upgrade prelexical insight, yet in addition word recognition for ELLs and French language learners too.

In the same way, Saito's (2015) research analyzed thoroughly how two types of form-focused instruction (FFI), which are FFI with and without corrective feedback (CF), can facilitate second language discourse insight and production of 49 Japanese students in the English Language Learners settings. FFI adequacy was surveyed via three result measures (perception, controlled production, and spontaneous production) and lexical contexts. Two experimental groups got 4 hours of FFI treatment to notice and practice the objective element of consonantal sound, with no guidance, insignificant discourse. A benchmark group (n = 14) got similar guidance without FFI. The outcomes recommended that the amateur learners without a lot of phonetic understanding on repairing their mispronunciation of consonantal sounds should be stimulated to become familiar with the objective sound through FFI in a responsive mode.

Comparatively, Lacabex & del Puerto (2014) supported this analysis that explored the impact of two distinct computer-based phonetic training methodologies for English Language Learners. A training impact was shown by the critical improvement in the insight capacities of the two experimental groups only. Furthermore, both experimental groups showed proportional improvement in every one of the factors investigated. Training effects were likewise found for the word-familiarity variable, which was moderated after treatment. Results proposed a positive reaction of both aural and imitation computer-based phonetic training concerning the English sound perceptual awareness for ELLs in any type of setting concerning.

Olsen's (2012) article explained a fine-grained examination of how first-language (L1) phonetics including English rhotics influence Spanish rhotic creation by second-language (L2) ELLs. Tap and trill precision rates, just as English rhotic articulation, were determined from accounts of 48 starting level college Spanish understudies perusing texts in Spanish and English. Rhotic articulation refers to rhotic consonants, or "R-like" sounds, that are traditionally represented orthographically by symbols derived from the Greek letter rho, including /R/ and /r/.

Results from various direct relapses showed that English rhotic articulation is a huge indicator of trill precision and is a predictor of tap accuracy while controlling for the measure of Spanish openness. These outcomes recommended that LI articulatory schedules influence the precision of tap and quaver creation to ELLs. Similarly, Khansir & Pakdel's (2016) study analyzed the job of phonetics in the educating of English language poetry for English language learners. The most ideal method of showing English poetry can be utilized through phonetics. Good apprehension on phonetics is extremely helpful for ELLs. All in all, the teaching of poetry alongside phonetics rules in the classroom gives the ELLs the chance to see the value in language. The phonetics of a language can be seen as a sound structure of this language. In this examination, the use of phonetics to the ELLs through poetry and the impact of phonetics on English writing are researched with few conceptions of phonetics.

Research Design

The study was descriptive in nature. A literature review and an examination of current phonic approaches utilized in bilingual classrooms were created to illustrate the best procedures accessible for ELLs. A qualitative descriptive research study concentrates on addressing the qualities of the population or circumstance being considered, as opposed to responding to inquiries regarding how/when/why the attributes happened. A board of bilingual experts inspected and coordinated the strategies based on the level of difficulty or independent/instructional/frustrational level. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, there were no dependent or independent factors. Due to the non-experimental nature of the study, no causal deductions were drawn.

Data Collection

For the data collection process, certain distributions, websites, and research journals were investigated to recognize diverse phonics techniques. Some of the searches included sites like National Literacy Trust, A World Of Language Learners, Phonics and Decoding, and Reading Horizons. A portion of the distinguished phonics methods came from research studies and peer-reviewed articles distributed in journals like Bilingualism, Language Acquisition, Psycholinguistics, Perceptual Awareness, International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies, and Language Teaching and Learning. The research of distinct phonics techniques came from the look at both EBSCO and ProQuest information bases.

The study wording included: phonics guidance, intervention, and strategies. The outcomes of researching phonics methods to help English Language Learners, although by no means exhaustive, delivered 208 results. Attempting to limit the results by being more precise, the authors incorporated a second inquiry bar, by looking at "English Language Learners" and reducing the distribution years somewhere in the range of 2012 and 2021; decreasing the outcomes to simply ten. In selecting material for this literature review, no restrictions were incorporated. Nonetheless, just ten articles are the focal point of our examination. The reference page gives the citations of the ten articles applied for this research.

Data Analysis

For the data analysis process, two boards of specialists investigated and endorsed the recognized phonics approaches. One board identified four specialists for the field of literacy and the other board was composed of four specialists in the field of bilingual/ESL training. All board individuals were university educators with teaching experience at HSIs and knowledge in the field in which they gave input to the methods. It took the specialists almost 40 hours to create, refine, and classify the procedures. The strategies were adjusted based on the level of difficulty or independent/instructional/frustrational level.

Results

Table 1 below shows the phonics strategies to help English Language Learners understand phonics. It also shows the independent, instructional, and frustrational levels of each strategy:

Strategy	Independent	Instructional	Frustrational
Build Words	x		
Read & Find		x	
Word Sorts		x	
Puzzles			x
Color Sounds	x		
Digraphs Wheels		x	
Slap Sounds	x		
Play Swap			x
Toss & Blend			x
Pool Noodles	x		
Paint Stirrers			x
Pocket Chart	x		
Locks & Keys		x	
Water Balloons			x
Blends & Digraphs		x	

Discussion

The first phonic strategy identified in this paper is to build the word. This technique is an important phonic activity that is done for ELLs to have a better understanding of words. In this case, we can use magnetic letters, letter tiles, or simply pieces of paper with letters composed on them. The objective is for the students to work on building words that have the phonics design that they are rehearsing. In a certain way, this type of procedure can be considered to be done independently, yet if someone is finding the game hard students can always ask for help. Read then find is another strategy used in a world of language learners. For this phonics action, have students read a word or straightforward sentence with words that have the phonics design they are learning. They, at that point, must discover the image that coordinates with the image. This methodology has students center around unraveling first and afterward contemplate the meaning. The photos additionally assist ELLs with jargon. Researchers have found this technique instructional because students might need the help of others to follow directions.

Another approach for students is word sorts, this can be done with the teacher's help if needed, which is why it is considered instructional. Word sorts assist students with zeroing in on a few phonics abilities all at once. Sorts are considerably more impressive for ELLs when they incorporate pictures to fabricate an understudy's jargon. Pictures are additionally useful to set up solid sorts. These aides fabricate phonemic mindfulness abilities. Important to realize there's a similar technique used for ELLs as well called puzzles. These phonic puzzles are a great way for students to work on perusing and spelling words. For ELLs, it is useful when the riddle incorporates an image. This specific tactic can be frustrational for many because it is a hard mental exercise that requires greater attention to detail and reasoning. In this scenario, students may get defeated by it, which means that they may need to collaborate with others. In addition, color in the beginning sounds is accommodating by many when they are learning the alphabets.

Most children begin learning phonics by dominating the starting hints of words. Have children tone in the words that begin with the coordinating sound on these charming free worksheets. This tool is beneficial because you combine the student's listening, memory, and reading skills. They should be able to do this scheme on their own, which is why it is considered independent. The next procedure used is to learn digraphs with clip wheels, which is an easy way to focus on phonics sounds specifically for ELLs. Teachers should join fine engine abilities practice with phonics work with these free starting digraph wheels. They can add little spots on the back to check the right answers so children can self-right their work. This is a fun activity where they can learn easily and rapidly by not getting bored. Hence, since the teachers might need to check the correct answer of the students, this plan is contemplated as instructional.

Slapping the letter sounds is another great phonic strategy that is done for energetic learners. In this activity, students use a flyswatter to learn the words enjoyably and effortlessly. Sounding out words letter by letter is significantly more fun when you hit each letter with a flyswatter while retaining information. This activity can be done not only in school but in a household as well, as not many accessories are needed. The idea is for ELLs to absorb the phonics while doing it themselves, which is why it can be done independently.

Additionally, playing just swap one is a tough activity that students can do to correlate the sounds of the words. The objective is for the students to move from one box to another, by changing one letter to make the new word addressed by the image. They may have to change the main, center, or last letter, so it's a demanding task! Because of the switching of words in a short period students might get stressed undoubtedly. Since in this entertainment action students may require more thinking skills, it is examined as frustrational. Similarly, tossing and blending with plastic cups is an interesting technique to correlate the alphabetic writing system. The game starts by getting a heap of plastic cups and some ping pong balls for this great phonics game! Name the cups with various letter mixes and set them out (tape them down if they tend to fall over). Students throw a ball into a cup, then, at that point, think of a word that utilizes that letter mix to procure a point. Given that explanation, this activity can be frustational for some students because they might need to think for words right away.

Hack pool noodles into phonic tools are quite an easy and fast way to combine words. This must be one of our number one phonics exercises. Cut a pool noodle into pieces and mark it with letters. Then, at that point, stack and twist for learning fun! It is a simple game where students can enjoy their time while learning new words. Also, it is a straightforward activity that students should be able to do by themselves, which is why it is considered independent. Indeed, using paint stirrers to make word pull-outs is an activity used by many teachers for students' refreshment of words. These cunning phonics instruments are not difficult to make utilizing paint stirrer sticks and paper towel tubes.

Essentially slide the stick in and out to make new words! The strategy to learn can be satisfying for the students but also stressful in many ways. This is why this game is considered to be frustational because they can need others' help to form different words that they have not learned yet. In the same way, using a pocket chart for phonics activities is used by many teachers inside their class for students to visualize the words. Here is another explanation: instructors love pocket outlines: they're incredible for phonics focuses. Sort and match cards to work on starting sounds, mixes, short and long vowels, thus substantially more. This is a perfect game because you can match up the words with pictures and by hearing how the words sound. It is a simple activity, which is why it's categorized at the independent level.

Trying locks and keys to learning phonics is a difficult activity with a mixture of many skills but are helpful for students. This self-amending phonics movement is likewise a decent method to rehearse fine engine abilities … and loads of amusing for sure! Name keys with starting sounds and locks with word endings. At that point, match them up and attempt the way to check whether you're correct or not. The game can be hard to follow, which is why teachers can help students guide them through, in this context, it is reviewed as instructional. Another activity that can be exciting for students is tossing some phonics water balloons. This one nearly appears to be too enjoyable to even think about considering learning! Tape up starting sounds, then, at that point, throw water inflatables to finish the words. Many students love this game because they are concentrating on throwing and learning the words as well. Yet, students can get furious if they are not hitting any balloon or forming any word, which is why it is considered frustrational. The last selected technique for phonic learning is the race to the top with blends and digraphs. Students play this free printable game to rehearse consonant mixes. They throw a chip onto the board and say that word for all to hear. Then, at that point, move the counter for the right mix-up in one space. First to the top successes! Students show gratification while playing the game but they might get confused with words while trying to make connections, which is why this is at the instructional level.

Conclusion

Phonics is a significant marker to comprehend the reading abilities of a student and later predict reading achievement or struggle. It could also assist ELLs with comprehension and appreciate a new language. Educators ought to emphasize the application of phonics strategies in the classroom as it tends to be very advantageous for bilingual students and English Language Learners (ELLs). The techniques acknowledged and depicted in this paper could be incorporated in K-12 and adult learning classrooms to aid people from all levels segment words into composing sounds and combine these sounds to build new words. The more people exposed to new literacy approaches and skills, the more effective and useful they would be in an educational and professional atmosphere. If students are presented with more words and sounds in the classroom, they will be able to create a stronger literate foundation. "If a child memorizes 10 words, the child can only read 10 words. But if a child learns 10 sounds the child will be able to read 350 three-sound words, 4,320 four sound words and 21, 650 five-sound words" – Martin Kozloff.

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