

# WHOLE LANGUAGE AND PHONICS APPROACHES: EFFECT ON READING FLUENCY AND SPELLING ACCURACY OF EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of whole language instruction and phonics instruction for improving reading fluency and spelling accuracy of the eighth grade students whose English is as their foreign language (L2). The research is conducted at SMP Insan Rabbany BSD South Tangerang Banten. The students were assigned to read the whole language before and after given the phonics instruction in order to see if there was a significant difference. In February 2017, after six weeks of treatment, there was a significant improvement in both reading fluency and spelling accuracy for the students were used to the words given. Phonics instruction had a great influence in helping the students collect and get use to using the vocabularies which then used in the reading passage.

**Keywords:** Whole Language, Phonics, Reading Fluency, Spelling Accuracy, L2

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

#### 1.1.1 Introduction

Even though English is a second language or even a foreign language for Indonesian students, it takes important role in the learning process. English is one of four main subjects examined in the National Examination held by the government beside Bahasa Indonesia, Science, and Mathematics. Students may get the English lesson from school, course, movies, or even songs. To master English means to learn four skills: Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing.

As the basic skill, reading may take the most important for a student's success. Reading helps the students decode sentences. Since L2 students must enrich their vocabulary, reading the vocabulary can be more comprehended easily. Through this paper, I want to show that the L2 students may be encouraged to enrich their vocabulary through understanding the phonics which may lead to the effectiveness of the whole language which impact to the reading fluency and spelling accuracy.

#### 1.1.2 Problem Statement

How is the students' reading fluency and spelling accuracy before given Whole Language and Phonics approaches?

How is the students' reading fluency and spelling accuracy after given Whole Language and Phonics approaches?

#### 1.1.3 Objective

To comprehend how the whole language and phonics approaches impact on the students' reading fluency.

To comprehend how the whole language and phonics approaches impact on the students' spelling accuracy.

### **1.1.4 Significance**

Before 1975, reading was taught at the school using essentially a visual, whole word approach. Most children read well. However, there was always a group of children who had problems remembering words and who could not cope with reading or writing satisfactorily. These children did not pick up letter sounds or relate them to words. It was therefore decided to teach the letter sounds first, to see if early letter knowledge would help them. This proved to be much more successful for the children as a whole, and the group who had problems became much smaller. (Lloyd: 2007)

## **1.2 Literature review**

### **1.2.1 Whole Language Instruction**

One prominent supporter and framer of the whole language approach is Kenneth Goodman, a professor of education at the University of Arizona. In his book *Whole in Whole Language*, Goodman (2005) argues that phonics instruction actually hinders language acquisition, primarily by breaking whole (natural) language up into bite-size, but abstract little pieces. “We took apart the language and turned it into words, syllables, and isolated sounds. Unfortunately, we also postponed its natural purpose — the communication of meaning — and turned it into a set of abstractions, unrelated to the needs and experiences of the children we sought to help.” (Goodman, 2005).

### **1.2.2 Phonics**

A good way to teach phonics is to teach the individual sound-symbol units, consonants before the vowel and the vowel plus what comes after the vowel and the whole word. The principle of good phonics program allows children to find meaning in print in an efficient manner. Phonics also leads to knowledge about language that generalizes to language activities such as differentiating similar vocabulary items (Moats, Furry and Brownell, 1998).

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **2.1 Description of Participants**

Based on convenience sampling for this action research, the participants in this study are the students in the eighth grade class that this researcher teaches at a secondary school. The school is located in a sub-urban area with a population of about 300 students. 100 % students are Indonesians; around 75% students have ever learned and are learning. The participants in this study included ten boys and ten girls.

### **2.2 Place and Time**

The research was conducted at SMP Insan Rabbany BSD South Tangerang Banten from the second week of January to the third week of February.

### **2.3` Technique collecting data**

The students will be given some probes comprising words and short passages. For the first week the students were assigned to read the words and short passage without given any whole language and phonics instructions. The next two weeks they were given the instruction but without timer and the last three weeks, they were given the instructions, and timer.

## **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Regardless the thinkers disagreement over the whole language and phonics integrated, the researcher considers the integration between both instructions are helpful in the English learning process especially for the L2 students.

Based on these results, the whole language approach would be most effective with explicit phonics integrated and emphasized into the language arts curriculum. A literacy approach should combine phonics and whole language into one cohesive curriculum. Educators are encouraged to build a whole language environment with authentic and meaningful text, but also integrate explicit phonics lessons into daily reading instruction. Students need to learn specific phonics patterns that will help them decode more efficiently. When readers come to an unfamiliar word, they need to know how to begin decoding and deciphering that word. They need to identify different phonetic word patterns and apply them as they read. (Maddox and Feng: 19)

### 3.1 Pre-given instruction

The students were given passage 4 on the first week for it was the longest passage. Besides, the researcher wanted to compare this with that of on the last week of research.

#### Passage 4

/Oʊ/

Alone            Boat            Home            Phone            Slowly            Woke

/I/

Kitchen            Live            River

/ai/

Beside            Quiet            Realized            Sigh

When I was 10, I lived at a river bank – in a medium-sized tree house with my parents. I had a funny story back then. It was so cold and quiet in my room when I woke up. I got up then slowly went to the kitchen where my parents usually gathered. But not that day. I wonder where they were. So I went to the living room. When I was about to open the front door, I heard something fell with a thud. I ran to my parents' room, but they weren't there. I searched all around the house until I realized that I was alone. I felt scared. So I grabbed the phone beside the TV set which then I put back for I didn't remember my parents' numbers. I was like a boy in the Home Alone movie. When I was so desperate for not having company at home, there was boat machine sound approached. It made me aware. I peeked out the window to see who was out there. I let out a sigh of relief for it was my parents who were just home from the floating market.

Students	Passage 4	
	Reading Fluency	Spell Accuracy
Student 1		V
Student 2	V	
Student 3		V
Student 4	V	
Student 5		
Student 6	V	V
Student 7	V	
Student 8		V
Student 9		V
Student 10	V	

Student 11		
Student 12	V	
Student 13	V	
Student 14		
Student 15	V	V
Student 16	V	V
Student 17		V
Student 18	V	
Student 19		V
Student 20		

On the first week, the students were assigned a passage to read without given any instructions. From the table it can be seen that there are 10 students are able to read fluently and there are nine who are able to spell accurately.

### Post-Given Instruction

#### Without timer

#### Passage 1

ε

Birthday      First      Girl      Thursday      Word      Work

It was Thursday morning. A girl named Charlotte who used to get off early from work only to celebrate her birthday with her family should go abroad for a work. In a word, it was her first time not to do her ritual. She was sad but that's life.

#### Passage 2

ff

Charitable      Fortunately

aŪ

Allowed      Clown      Down      House      Loud      Out      Thou-  
sand

Mr. Andrew, the most charitable man in Gorgoyle Village, invited a clown to entertain a thousand people who came to his birthday. Actually it was out of plan for he apparently only invited a hundred people. However he accepted them anyway. Fortunately his house had a very large yard that allowed his guests to enjoy themselves during the party. As a result no one sat down the street, but it was so loud inside.

Students	Passage 1		Passage 2	
	Reading Fluency	Spell Accuracy	Reading Fluency	Spell Accuracy
Student 1	V	V	V	V
Student 2	V	V	V	V
Student 3	V	V	V	
Student 4	V	V	V	V
Student 5	V	V	V	V

Student 6	V	V	V	V
Student 7	V		V	V
Student 8	V	V	V	V
Student 9	V	V	V	V
Student 10	V	V	V	
Student 11	V	V	V	V
Student 12	V	V	V	V
Student 13	V		V	V
Student 14	V	V	V	V
Student 15	V	V		V
Student 16	V	V	V	V
Student 17	V	V	V	V
Student 18	V	V		V
Student 19	V	V	V	V
Student 20	V	V	V	V

On the second and third weeks, the students were assigned two passages to read, were given the instructions but without timer. From the passage 1 table, it can be seen that there are 20 students are able to read fluently and there are 18 who are able to spell accurately. And from passage 2 table from which there are 18 students who are able to read fluently and there are 18 students who are able to spell accurately.

#### With timer

##### Passage 3

ð

Another      Brother      Sunbathing      That      The      Them      With-  
out

θ

Mothly      Thing      Think      Three

The eldest brother of mine, Jack, has another thing to do in order to stay away from his friend, Ken and Jim, during the school holiday. It made them so curious that, without Jack knowing it, they followed him. Apparently Jack thought his skin was so white that he needed to do sunbathing at the beach nearby to get his skin tanned. Knowing the truth, his friend joined him and there three of them decided to camp as well. They even think it could be thing to do monthly.

##### Passage 4

/Oʊ/

Alone      Boat      Home      Phone      Slowly      Woke

/I/

Kitchen      Live      River

/ai/

Beside Quiet Realized Sigh

When I was 10, I lived at a river bank – in a medium-sized tree house with my parents. I had a funny story back then. It was so cold and quiet in my room when I woke up. I got up then slowly went to the kitchen where my parents usually gathered. But not that day. I wonder where they were. So I went to the living room. When I was about to open the front door, I heard something fell with a thud. I ran to my parents' room, but they weren't there. I searched all around the house until I realized that I was alone. I felt scared. So I grabbed the phone beside the TV set which then I put back for I didn't remember my parents' numbers. I was like a boy in the Home Alone movie. When I was so desperate for not having company at home, there was boat machine sound approached. It made me aware. I peeked out the window to see who was out there. I let out a sigh of relief for it was my parents who were just home from the floating market.

Students	Passage 3		Passage 4	
	Reading Fluency	Spell Accuracy	Reading Fluency	Spell Accuracy
Student 1	V	V	V	V
Student 2	V	V	V	V
Student 3	V	V	V	V
Student 4	V	V	V	V
Student 5	V	V	V	V
Student 6	V	V		V
Student 7	V	V	V	V
Student 8	V	V	V	V
Student 9	V	V	V	V
Student 10	V	V		V
Student 11	V	V	V	V
Student 12	V	V	V	V
Student 13	V	V	V	V
Student 14	V	V	V	V
Student 15		V		
Student 16	V	V	V	V
Student 17	V	V	V	V
Student 18	V	V	V	V
Student 19	V	V	V	V
Student 20	V	V	V	V

On the fourth and fifth weeks, the students were assigned two passages to read, were given the instructions, and were given 30 seconds. From the passage 1 table, it can be seen that there are 19 students are able to read fluently and there are 20 who are able to spell accurately. And from the passage 2 table from which there are 19 students who are able to read fluently and there are 17 students who are able to spell accurately. Most of which were due to the time limit.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

After doing a six-week research at SMP Insan Rabbany Secondary School in BSD Tangerang Selatan Banten, the researcher found out the efficacy of teaching phonics prior to the whole language due to the lack vocab of the L2 students. The result stated that the the reading passages given were no longer a horror for the students. They do not need to stop only to think how to read the words. However, six-week treatment is insufficient. They need to practice it more often yet the lesson plan at the school shows that there are some other skills needed to learn. Hence, the time matters for the English teacher to smoothly insert the phonics and whole language instructions as importants part of learning English actively and effectively.

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