ANALYSING READING SKILL IN NATIONAL PLUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM: PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS OF YOUNG LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyse reading skill of English for young learners in SES national plus school which teaches their classes using full Indonesian or full English. The researcher used phonological awareness test to determine the students' ability to switch between the two languages. 63 young learners from the selected school were tested to find out the nature of their awareness when it comes to the reading tasks. This study used central tendency measures of descriptive statistics to summarise and describe the data. The results indicate that the respondents displayed phonological awareness in some tasks and experienced difficulties in other tasks. Various deficits in phonological awareness of the bilingually educated young learners were observed and categorised as Initial Sound Identification, Final Sound Detection, Final Sound Detection and Letter Identification.

Keywords: Phonological Awareness, Young Learner, Reading Skill, Bilingual Education

1) INTRODUCTION

E ducational system, teaching and learning system, reading is a language skill that students are expected to master. The ability to read, thereby absorb, question, create and recreate all sorts of information they would be able to obtain, has become an indispensable skill in life (Derin et al., 2019). Regulation Government of Indonesia Number 17 in 2010 about the management and organisation of education determined that kindergarten is an early childhood education unit in formal education channel that organise tutelage for children aged from 4 to 6 years.

Nowadays, in Pekanbaru, many kindergarten schools consider English as a helpful medium instruction for their subject. Students also need to use English as a medium for teaching. Indonesian as most student's first language (L1) and English as a foreign language,

are used as communication and pedagogic resources in English lesson taught by an experienced teacher.

SES Play Group and Kindergarten Curriculum are based on the latest Indonesian National Curriculum from Indonesian Ministry of Education, combined with International Curriculum which is adopted from the Singapore Curriculum. The process of learning and class activities are a combination of the Classical and Area Methods, allowing the students to develop their social skills and adapt their learning habits to those of formal higher educations through Classical method, while enabling them to be creative through the Area method.

SES National plus Preschool brings different curricula which use 50% national curriculum and 50% international curricula. In SES school, the national curriculum is delivered with Indonesian in Berbahasa, Berhitung and Kreativitas classes, whereas for international curriculum is delivered with English in English, Maths, and Mandarin. Overall, SES school in Indonesia primarily teach using both Indonesian and English rather than prioritising one language over the other or only using one language for its titular class.

The students learn to read in English the teachers have to nurture the students' reading skills. The challenge comes when students could not produce the sounds of the words they learn correctly because they're foreign language pronunciation is affected by their first language. Higher education level students usually code-switch as compensatory strategy for their deficiency of skill in the language at the time (Marwa, 2014; Derin et al., 2020). However, as SES National Plus school familiarises the students with both languages since kindergarten and primary levels, they should have a considerable chance to avoid this typical language learning hurdle. Moreover, to teach the students learn to read we can start with early year's education, Early Years Education refers to the first years of non-compulsory schooling (Childcare centres, Kinder 1 and Kinder 2). A good reading skill at kindergarten level will predict future reading development.

Reading is an interaction process of communication, meaning that readers are actively engaged when they read instead of merely receiving visual input. It is a complex thought process that includes more than recognition of words on the printed page. An essential part of the reading skill is the skill of being able to recognise written forms and to connect them with their spoken forms and their meanings. For instance, phonemic awareness is the knowledge that spoken words are made up of sounds that can be separated, that is, that /kæt/

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(cat) is made up of the sounds /k æ t/. If the learner can already read in their first language, and the writing system of the first language is alphabetic, the learner will already have phonemic awareness. In essence, phonemic awareness is not awareness of particular sounds.

Furthermore, it is awareness of the general principle that words are made up of separable sounds. It is likely that learners who are not literate in their L1 but who are above the age of seven or eight will already have phonemic awareness in their L1 but this should be checked. Learners who are between four and six years old could be tested for phonemic awareness and, if necessary, could be given phonemic awareness activities. Phonemic awareness and letter knowledge are the two best predictors of how well first language children just entering school will do at learning to read during the first two years of school. Phonemic awareness training can have positive long-term effects on spelling (Cobb & Hinkel, 2017). Phonological Awareness has been identified as one of the most important predictors of reading success that should be addressed in preschool and kindergarten. Juel et al. (1986) found that 87% of first grade children who had difficulty with Phonological awareness tasks such as blending, segmenting, and manipulating sounds remained in the bottom quarter of their class in reading four years later. The influence of phonological awareness in teaching reading has been noted as making students read easily through most of their formal education if the teachers teach the students how to manipulate the letter or word start earlier (Pfost et al., 2020).

2) METHOD

This research purposed to known the influence of phonological awareness toward reading ability in English young learner. So, the researcher conducted to survey design to find out is how the members of a population distribute themselves on one on more variable (for example, age, ethnicity, religious preference, and attitudes toward school). This research is to analyse reading skill of English young learner by using phonological awareness test. This research consisted of two variables, one dependent variable and one independent variable. The independent variable is reading skill; meanwhile dependent variables are phonological awareness. The independent variable is as a variable which influences the dependent variable, and dependent variable is as a variable which is influenced by the independent variable.

To find out the reading skill of English young learner, the researcher used phonological awareness test by the indicators (Wei, 2005). There are: identify initial sound, final sound detection, phoneme deletion and letter identification. Each indicator has the possibility to test

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students reading skill and phonological awareness. There were 60 words that had been read by students for all indicators. The highlights 4 questions being asked to the students. First, in identify initial sound the researcher asked about the first sound of the word. Secondly, in final sound detection, the researcher asked the students to identify final sound of the words. Thirdly, phoneme deletion, the researcher asked the students to delete the first sound and the last sound of the words. And last, letter identification, the researcher asked the students to read the letters.

Time and Place

This research on bilingual education was conducted from November 2018 until January 2019. There were some national plus school across Pekanbaru. SES National Plus School was selected because it is located in the middle of Pekanbaru and uses a different curriculum than the standard Indonesian curriculum, which is 50% national and 50% international curricula. Students are taught in Indonesian for their national curriculum classes of Berbahasa, Berhitung and Kreativitas and in English for their international curriculum classes of English, Maths, and Mandarin.

Based on the observation, the researcher was observed every class in the school, in each class half students can follow the English instruction while half student still not. And sometimes, when the teacher taught in Berbahasa and Berhitung classes, the teacher use Indonesian and the students respond in English language. In learning process, the students also learn to read in English the teachers have to provide reading skill to the student who wants to enter the primary level. The problem has come when students try to produce the sound of the system of word, students could not produce the sound correctly, it because the system sound from their first language effect when students acquire the second language.

Based on the conversation above, it can be said that the students in SES school has a problem about how to blending the sound of the word and manipulate the sound of the word given. Example: some children said the word "green" as /green/ and some student said /griːn/.

Population and Sample

The population of this research was English young learner in academic year 2018/2019. The total of population was 63 English young learners. Regarding to the number of the population, Purposive sampling is used to determine the sample of this research; all samples

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selected are regarded as having the potential to contribute to attaining the answers of the research questions (Cohen et al..2000; Johnson & Christensen, 2000). The researchers had chosen the sample of the research that has potential to answer the research question. From the number of the population only 27 students were having the potential to answer the research question. 27 students were the students that under the maintained of elaboration and developing reading skill and also want to enter the primary level.

Technique of Data collection

The technique of collecting data in this research is to call the samples one by one and invite to do the reading test. There were 27 samples in this research and treated in the same way.

Technique of Data Analysing

There are some steps in analysing the data of descriptive statistics. Firstly, the researcher analysed the central tendency. This is about the contribution of the score based on their character of statistic such as mean, median, and mode. A mean is the total of the scores are divides by the numbers of scores. To calculate the mean, the researcher will sum all of scores and then divide the sum by the number of students. A median is a middle score that will be gotten by seeing the middle score. A mode is the number of score that appears most frequently in a list of scores.

Secondly, it is variability. Variability shows the spread of the score in distribution of score in a distribution. Range, variance and standard deviation all indicate the amount of variability in a distribution of score. A range of score is the difference between the highest and the lowest score to items on an instrument. A variance indicates the dispersion of scores around the mean. And a standard deviation is useful information. The last step, the researcher calculated relative standing. Relative standing is statistics that describe one score relatives to a group score. Two frequently use statistic are percentile rank and Z score. A percentile rank of a particular score is the percentage of participants in the distribution with scores at or below a particular. A Z score is a popular form of the standard score, and it will show a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. In addition, to determine the level of competence was very good, good, fair, less, or bad the researcher used interval categories designed by Novitasari et al. (2010, p. 16).

No	Scale	Level
1	81 - 100	Excellent
2	61 - 80	Good
3	41- 60	Average
4	21 - 40	Poor
5	0 - 20	Very poor

Figure 1. Score Categories

3) RESULTS

To get the data dealing with the phonological awareness test, the writer provided and gave the students a test which consisted of 60 questions with the different indicators; identifying initial sounds, final sound detection, phoneme deletion and letter identification.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Total Score	Mean
Phonological Awareness	27	18	100	1664	61.7

Based on the table above, it can be show that from the total of the students score is 1664 while the minimum score of their phonological awareness test is 18 and the maximum score is 100. Therefore, the mean score is 61.7. This data was further analysed by using SPSS 20. Then, the result is shown in the table below:

Table 3.2 The Score

		Score		
Valid	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
18	1	3.7	3.7	3.7
20	1	3.7	3.7	7.4
27	2	7.4	7.4	14.8
37	1	3.7	3.7	18.5
53	2	7.4	7.4	25.9
54	2	7.4	7.4	33.3
57	4	14.8	14.8	48.1
67	5	18.5	18.5	66.7
68	2	7.4	7.4	74.1
77	2	7.4	7.4	81.5
88	2	7.4	7.4	88.9
92	1	3.7	3.7	92.6
100	2	7.4	7.4	100
Total	27	100	100	

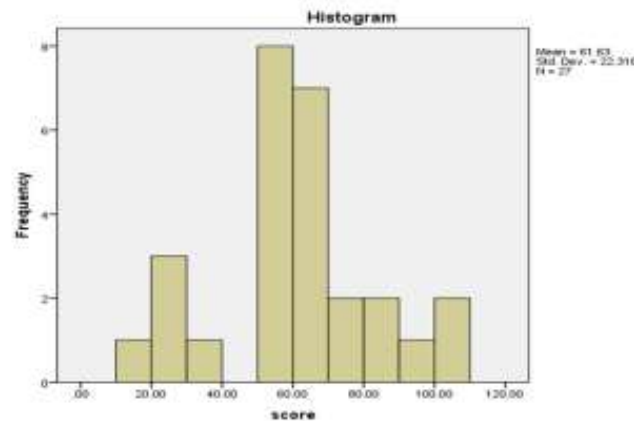This frequency table is depicted in the histogram in figure 3.1.

Figure 2. The Histogram of Frequency Distribution of Phonological awareness

Then the researcher simply explains. There were two students categorised in very poor level, three students in poor level, eight students in average level, 9 students in good level and five students in excellent level. In line above, it can be concluded that the ability of reading tested by using phonological awareness categorised as good.

4) DISCUSSION

The presentation and analysis of the data, the finding of the 27 students led the researcher to infer that the phonological awareness has positive influence on students' reading skill at SES school, Pekanbaru.

Phonological awareness is concerned with the ability to manipulate and to attend the whole unit of speech such as syllables, onset, rimes and phonemes. Phonological awareness skills are usually distinguished by the tasks that are used to measure them (e.g., an odd-man-out task and a sound blending task) and unit(s) of sound measured in the task (e.g., onset, rime, and phonemes). The units of sound typically measured in phonological awareness tasks are the syllable, onset and rime, and phoneme. Onset refers to the initial consonant or consonant cluster in a word, whereas rime contains the remaining vowel and consonants. For example, in the word clam, cl is the onset; am the rime; and /k/, /l/, /æ/, and /m/ are the phonemes. There are a variety of tasks that have been used to measure phonological awareness, such as blending (e.g., "What does /k/ /ɑ/ /r/ say?"), deletion (e.g., "Say Sunday without sun"), and oddity tasks (e.g., "Which word starts with a different sound: rug, rope, can, red?") (Anthony & Francis, 2005).

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In other words, if the students understand about the phonological awareness, students could easily predict what the word students are reading. But if the students do not understand how to manipulate the word, students will not be able to read the word in proper pronunciation.

The findings of the research are aimed to give information to the teacher in teaching reading, speaking and writing at kindergarten students. The teacher can easily explain about phonological awareness to the students. Learning how to read in that school starting from play group level, in that level the students learn how to identify the sound. After finish in Play group level, the students continue to the Kindergarten 1 level, in that level the students learn about short vowel sound and before entering primary school students go to kindergarten 2 level which had more lesson to be learnt. In that level, the students start to develop their reading skill by learning double consonant letter. And also students practiced to read short text.

However, the teacher was not highly concerned about phonological awareness. Researcher needed to press its importance to the teacher so that phonological awareness is emphasised as early as possible. The urgency is due to how phonological awareness starts to emerge as early as age two. It increases with age, becoming finer-grained depending on the combination of school and parental educational influence. Independent of those two factors, a child's knowledge of nursery rhymes also significantly contributes to their literacy development of phonological awareness (Andrews & Baker, 2019).

No phonological awareness curricula specifically designed for English young leaners was located by this author. No researchers suggest that these skills emerge suddenly in kindergarten; rather, phonological awareness is a group of related skills that emerges slowly throughout early childhood. The shortage of curricula may be due to low awareness of the need for phonological awareness education for pre-schoolers.

5) CONCLUSION

This research was done at SES school Pekanbaru on phonological awareness for variabel x and questionnaire to get bilingual education data for variabel y. The purpose of the research was to identify the influence of phonological awareness on bilingual education at SES Pekanbaru.

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Based on the presentation and analysis of the data, the finding of the 27 students led the researcher to infer that the phonological awareness has significant influence on students' bilingual education at SES school Pekanbaru. It can be seen that the influence of phonological awareness on their bilingual education was 52,2%. In other word, if the students understand about the phonological awareness, students could easily predict what the word students are reading. But if the students do not understand how to manipulate the word, students will not be able to read the word in proper pronunciation.

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