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A SUGGESTED STRATEGY TO DEVELOP PRIMARY STAGE PUPILS' ORAL READING SKILLS IN LIGHT OF PHONICS INSTRUCTION

**A Thesis Submitted for Master's Degree in Education
Curriculum & instruction of English (TEFL)**

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Abstract

The current study aims to develop primary stage students oral reading skills through a suggested strategy based on phonics instruction. Thirty of four primary stage pupils were chosen. A pre – test was administrated to examine pupils oral reading actual performance before applying the suggested strategy. Data driven from the pre - test confirmed the weakness of the pupils, when they read orally. Aquasi experimental study was conducted on one experimental group (the same group) .The results of the post – test confirmed our hypotheses that a strong linear correlation exists between developing oral reading skills and applying the suggested strategy based on phonics instruction . Pupils used phonics to develop their oral reading positively.

Key words: Strategy – Oral reading – Phonics Instruction

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Chapter One

Chapter One

Introduction and Background of The Problem

Introduction

Reading is essential for a pupil's success. All too often , the barriers faced by pupils with difficulty reading outweigh their desire to read and ,without proper guidance ,they never overcome them – learning to read is a sequential process, each new skill builds on the mastery of previously learned skills . Early on, for example, pupils learn to break down words into their most basic sounds in a process called decoding. Later, they begin to comprehend the meaning of words, sentences and, ultimately, entire passage of text (Elizabeth, 2005, p.76).

There is good evidence that in order to build oral reading skills, pupils need to engage in reading large amounts of meaningful text. Many young pupils enjoy reading a loud and can practice with a partner or in small groups to achieve oral reading skills.

As pupils begin reading stories, it may be time – consuming for them to read whole selections orally. With primary stage pupils, the essential function of oral reading should be to defend positions that they take in discussions about the selections they have read. Oral reading serves as a very valuable source of assessing information for teachers and for pupils. It helps them become aware of any word identification problems and look for ways to correct them. By listening to pupil's oral reading, a teacher can gain valuable insights into the pupil's oral reading strategies (Krashen, 2010, p.42).

The functions of the spoken language are international and transactional. The primary intention of the former is to maintain social relationships, while that of the later is to convey information and ideas. In fact, much of the daily communication and being able to interact in a language is essential. Therefore, teachers should provide learners with opportunities for meaningful communicative oral interactions.

It is necessary to create suitable atmosphere that would allow pupils to express themselves freely and make them feel eager to communicate. Ghaith (2003, p.452) indicates that interaction among learners let them expand ideas and information. It develops not only linguistic and paralinguistic elements but also the ideas and meaning involved in communicative activities that promote pupils oral interaction. Oral interaction is a vital element in developing oral communication skills.

As pupils engage in these early interactions, they unconsciously come to understand various aspects of language that will ultimately support their reading development. As pupils produce sounds and combine them into words and sentences, they literally tune in the phonological system (Dickinson et al., 2003; Goswami, 2001; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Pupils' awareness of separating sounds and words then forms the basis for learning the written symbols that match those sounds. Therefore, they began to understand the alphabetic principle.

Pronunciation is one of the most important aspects for EFL learners. When we communicate with other people, we should not only have good vocabulary or grammar but also good pronunciation. Therefore, it is important to teach pronunciation for all people. Being aware of pronunciation issues will be of

immense benefit not only to pupils' own production but also to their own understanding of spoken English.

English learners at all levels face pronunciation problems while speaking, reading, or even listening. Therefore, it is the teachers' duty to use different interesting strategies to improve pupils' capability in pronunciation and stress recognition. Pronunciation is the basis of communication and language skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing Tench (2003, p. 14).

Ehri et al. (2001, p.4) stated that phonics plays an important role in learning to read and in the act of reading. When pupils learn to read, they learn to associate the sounds or oral language with the written combination of letters that make a phoneme. When they have mastered all the individual phonemes, pupils have the ability to sound out any given letter combination. They eventually move from piecing individual phonemes together as they read a word to eventually blending the letter combinations such as (Cra in crackle). This progression in the steps of learning to read allows pupils to apply their knowledge of sounds from their previous experience in oral language. According to Albert (1995, p. 53), phonics is action and process. As with learning any skill, it needs practice with feedback. Since phonics is always done out loud, there are immediate feedbacks when the learner reading aloud hears familiar speech.

Reading is an essential part of life and a major focus of elementary school teaching. The use of phonics to aid in teaching pupils to read is an important component of successful reading programs. However, there are no set of requirements for elementary school teachers in how they should teach phonics. Integrating phonics into reading programs is a successful way to teach phonics;

however, there are still teachers who teach phonics and reading separately and therefore their pupils are not a successful (Ellis, Hachter & Hulme, 1994, p. 50). When reading is connected to phonics, pupils learn the important skills that are not learned through phonics instruction in isolation. In addition, the integration of phonics into reading programs has shown to be more effective in teaching pupils to decode words (Lapp, Flood, 1997, p53). It is important to teaching our pupils phonics instruction in elementary school because pupils who have phonics instruction earlier have a higher reading ability than those pupils who do not have a strong foundation in their early education (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl & Willows, 2001).

Context of the problem

In Egypt, there is a scarcity in the studies that tackle the problems, which face primary stage pupils with their oral reading. The studies of Saif Eddin, 1991, and El-Enany, (2002) stressed that there are some problems that face primary stage pupils when they read orally; these problems include: word-by word reading, mispronunciation, omissions, insertions, repetitions and substitution.

The pilot study

The researcher applied a diagnostic test on (22) primary stage pupils, randomly selected to measure their oral reading errors. While pupils read orally, the researcher found that the pupils made the following errors: word-by word reading, miss-pronunciation, omissions, insertions repetitions, and substitution.

Table (1) shows the results of the diagnostic test.

Table (1) Results of the diagnostic test

Skill	Means
Consonant	0.86
Long vowel	0.76