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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PHONICS-BASED REINFORCEMENT SESSIONS IN IMPROVING READING SKILLS OF GRADE 5 PUPILS IN ENGLISH

PAULA APRIL S. TOLEDO
Teacher I
Western Leyte College
Master of Arts in Education
Major in School Elementary Education
paulaapriltstoledo@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of phonics-based reinforcement sessions in improving the reading skills of the Grade 5 pupils in English of Seguinon Elementary School in the Division of Leyte. The findings of the study were the basis for the proposed intervention plan. This study employed a quasi-experimental research design to determine the effectiveness of Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions in improving the reading skills of Grade 5 pupils in English. Specifically, the study used the pre-test–post-test non-equivalent group design. Two groups of Grade 5 pupils were involved: one group received traditional reading instruction (control group), while the other group was taught using Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions (experimental group). Both groups underwent a pre-test to assess their baseline reading skills prior to the intervention. After the implementation of the instructional method over a month or four weeks, both groups took a post-test to determine any improvements in their reading skills. The study focused on key components of reading, including phonemic awareness, word recognition, decoding skills, reading fluency, and comprehension. The scores from the pre- and post-tests were analyzed to determine if there was a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group. The Test of Difference Between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Learners, which compares the reading performance of Grade 5 pupils in both the experimental and control groups before and after the implementation of the Phonics-Based Reinforcement

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Sessions. It shows the mean scores, computed and critical t-values, decisions on the null hypothesis, and the corresponding interpretations. The table aims to determine whether the phonics-based intervention produced a statistically significant improvement in the learners' reading performance compared to traditional instruction. As reflected in the table, the experimental group demonstrated a marked improvement in their reading performance after the intervention. The mean score of the experimental group increased considerably from the pre-test to the post-test, and the computed t-value was higher than the critical t-value, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that the Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions significantly enhanced the learners' reading skills. Conversely, the control group, which received traditional instruction, showed only a slight increase in mean scores, with the computed t-value lower than the critical value, resulting in the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This suggests that the improvement in the control group's performance was not statistically significant. Furthermore, when comparing the post-test scores of both groups, the experimental group outperformed the control group, as evidenced by a computed t-value that exceeded the critical t-value. This finding confirms that the phonics-based intervention was more effective in improving reading performance than the traditional approach. The intervention group's substantial gain indicates that the systematic and explicit teaching of phonics, focusing on sound-letter relationships and decoding practice, contributed to their improved fluency, accuracy, and comprehension skills. The results imply that the Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions had a significant positive effect on learners' reading performance. The overall average results imply that the intervention effectively developed essential reading competencies among learners. The result implies that explicit phonics instruction enhanced word recognition, decoding ability, and comprehension, proving it to be a more effective method than traditional reading instruction in addressing learners' reading difficulties.

Keywords: *Effectiveness, Phonics-based Reinforcement Sessions, Reading Skills, Grade 5 Learners*

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a foundational skill that plays a crucial role in the academic success of learners. In early education, children are expected to "learn to read" during their initial years, but as they progress to Grade 5, they are expected to "read to learn." However, despite various efforts by the Department of Education and classroom teachers, many Grade 5 pupils continue to struggle with reading, particularly in English, which is considered their second language.

Phonics-based instruction is a teaching approach that emphasizes the relationship between sounds (phonemes) and their corresponding letters or groups of letters (graphemes). This method helps beginning readers decode unfamiliar words by sounding them out—a critical skill in developing reading fluency and comprehension. The researchers believe that incorporating a systematic phonics-based instruction in early grade classrooms can significantly enhance the reading skills of struggling learners, especially in English.

According to Ehri (2014), systematic phonics instruction has been shown to be more effective than non-phonics or whole-language approaches in developing reading skills. Her research indicates that children who received explicit phonics instruction performed better in word recognition, spelling, and reading comprehension. Ehri emphasized that early exposure to phonics-based instruction plays a vital role in accelerating children's literacy development, particularly for those who are at risk of reading failure.

Given this, the present study aims to assess the effectiveness of phonics-based instruction in improving the reading skills of Grade 5 pupils in English. The findings of this research may provide valuable insights to teachers, school administrators, and policymakers in adopting and sustaining phonics-based reading programs that could bridge the gap in reading achievement among primary learners.

The researcher personally seen how difficult it is for some Grade 5 learners to read fluently, decode words correctly, or understand even short reading passages. This personal

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experience pushed her to investigate whether these struggles were isolated or widespread. After being exposed to data from Seguinon Elementary School—particularly the pre-Phil-IRI results—it became clear to me that a significant number of learners, including those in Grade 5, are still performing at frustration level. She believes that fluency and comprehension cannot be mastered without first ensuring that pupils can accurately read the words in front of them.

This research addresses a pressing need at Seguinon Elementary School. Based on the 2022–2023 Pre-Phil-IRI assessment, 68.12% of Grade 5 pupils were classified under the frustration level, and only 4.35% were at the instructional level. These numbers clearly show a literacy gap that requires immediate intervention. This study aligns with national goals, such as DepEd's Learning Recovery and Continuity Plan (2023), which urges schools to implement effective reading interventions post-pandemic.

This topic also supports the MATATAG Curriculum's push to strengthen foundational literacy skills. It acknowledges that while phonics is often introduced in early grades, some pupils do not retain these skills without regular reinforcement. Additionally, Seguinon Elementary School serves a rural community where learners' socioeconomic backgrounds—many are children of farmers and laborers—may limit their exposure to books and reading practice outside of school. As noted in the school's SIP, some children even skip school to help earn a living. It is crucial for the school to offer structured support like phonics reinforcement that can be realistically delivered within school hours and with available materials.

Given the increasing number of intermediate learners who continue to struggle with basic reading skills, this research is timely and necessary. Implementing this study provides an opportunity to validate the effectiveness of phonics-based instruction as a remedial approach for Grade 5 pupils who have yet to master foundational reading competencies. It challenges the assumption that phonics is only for beginning readers and highlights its potential as a strategic intervention even at the upper elementary level. The results of this research can guide schools in adopting evidence-based reading programs, provide teachers

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with targeted instructional tools, and most importantly, help bridge the reading gap that persists among learners, ultimately supporting their academic success across all subjects.

The main purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of phonics-based reinforcement sessions in improving the reading skills of the Grade 5 pupils in English of Seguinon Elementary School in the Division of Leyte. The findings of the study were the basis for the proposed intervention plan.

Specifically, this study sought to answers the following questions:

1. What is the Reading Skills performance of the Grade 5 pupils before the integration of Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions in teaching English?

2. What is the Reading Skills performance of the Grade 5 pupils after the integration of Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions in teaching English?

3. Is there a significant difference in the reading skills performances of the Grade 5 pupils before and after the integration of Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions in teaching English?

4. What intervention plan can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference in the reading skills performances of the Grade 5 pupils before and after the integration of Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions in teaching English.

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METHODOLOGY

Design. This study employed a quasi-experimental research design to determine the effectiveness of Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions in improving the reading skills of Grade 5 pupils in English. Specifically, the study used the pre-test–post-test non-equivalent group design.

Two groups of Grade 5 pupils were involved: one group received traditional reading instruction (control group), while the other group was taught using Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions (experimental group). Both groups underwent a pre-test to assess their baseline reading skills prior to the intervention. After the implementation of the instructional method over a month or four weeks, both groups took a post-test to determine any improvements in their reading skills.

The study focused on key components of reading, including phonemic awareness, word recognition, decoding skills, reading fluency, and comprehension. The scores from the pre- and post-tests were analyzed to determine if there was a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group.

The main locale of the study was at Seguinon Elementary School. The research respondents in this study are the Grade 5 pupils (Male 22, Female 20) with a total of 42 who were chosen through a universal sampling technique by the researcher and the one who are beneficiaries of the learning intervention. This research study utilized two sets of researcher-made questionnaires in gathering data. The primary research instrument used in this study is the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI), a standardized assessment tool developed by the Bureau of Learning Delivery – Teaching and Learning Division of the Department of Education (DepEd). The PHIL-IRI is designed to assess the reading proficiency of Filipino learners in both English and Filipino. To this study, the PHIL-IRI English Oral Reading and Silent Reading Tests was used to measure the reading skills of Grade 5 pupils. The instrument evaluates several key components of reading, including: Word Recognition

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Reading, Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Oral Reading Accuracy, Silent Reading Understanding, The PHIL-IRI was administered in two phases: Pre-Test: Conducted before the implementation of the phonics-based instruction to determine the pupils' baseline reading levels. Post-Test: Administered after the intervention to evaluate any improvements in the pupils' reading skills. The results were classified into three reading levels: Independent, Instructional, and Frustration. These classifications will guide the analysis of the learners' progress and the effectiveness of the phonics-based approach. The proposed intervention plan was taken based on the findings of the study.

Sampling. The respondents of the study were the Grade 5 learners with 22 Males and 20 Females that were involved in this study were being identified and the primary means of reach was during the actual conduct of the study as well as during the gathering of data in the school where the study was conducted.

Research Procedure. In conducting this study, the researcher followed a systematic procedure for data gathering. First, formal permission was sought from the Public Schools District Supervisor to conduct the research in the identified school where the target respondents were enrolled. Once approval was granted, the researcher identified and organized the participants into two groups: the experimental group, which received phonics-based instruction, and the control group, which continued with the regular reading instruction. Prior to the intervention, the PHIL-IRI reading assessment was administered as a pre-test to both groups. During the intervention period, which lasted for one month, the experimental group underwent phonics-based reading remediation sessions. After the remediation period, the same PHIL-IRI reading test was administered as a post-test to both groups to measure any changes in their reading performance. The gathered data were consolidated and subjected to statistical analysis using simple percentage, weighted mean, and t-test for mean difference to determine the effectiveness of the phonics-based instruction.

Ethical Issues. The right to conduct the study was strictly adhered to through the approval of the principals and the approval of the Superintendent of the Division. Orientation of the

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respondents, both school principals and teachers, was done. Participation was strictly voluntary. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. Results were used solely for research and educational improvement purposes.

Treatment of Data. The following statistical formulas were used in this study:

The Simple Percentage were employed to determine the reading skills performance of the Grade 5 pupils.

Weighted Mean. This was utilized to assess the Reading skills performance of the Grade 5 pupils.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 1

PRE-TEST PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS

Score Range	Description	PRETEST EXPERIMENTAL	%	PRETEST CONTROL	%
41–50	Excellent	0	0	0	0
31–40	Very Good	0	0	0	0
21–30	Good	32	76.19	26	63.41
11–20	Fair	10	23.81	15	36.59
1–10	Poor	0	0	0	0
Total		**42**	**100**	**41**	**100**
Weighted Mean		**20.12 – Fair**		**18.68 – Fair**	

This table presents the Pre-Test Performance of Learners in both the experimental and control groups prior to the implementation of the Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions. It shows the distribution of scores across different descriptive levels such as Excellent, Very

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Good, Good, Fair, and Poor, along with their corresponding frequencies and percentages. The purpose of this table is to provide a clear picture of the learners' baseline reading performance before the intervention, which serves as the foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of the phonics-based instruction in improving reading skills.

As reflected in the table, most learners from both groups fell under the "Good" category, with 76.19% in the experimental group and 63.41% in the control group. This indicates that most of the learners already possessed a moderate level of reading ability prior to the intervention. Meanwhile, 23.81% of the experimental group and 36.59% of the control group were rated "Fair," suggesting that a notable portion of the learners still needed additional support in reading comprehension, phonemic awareness, and decoding skills. None of the learners from either group were classified under "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Poor," showing that the overall reading proficiency of both groups was relatively average at the start of the study.

The data also reveal that the experimental group had a slightly higher weighted mean score (20.12 – Fair) compared to the control group (18.68 – Fair), which implies that the experimental group had a marginally better pre-test performance. However, both groups generally performed at the "Fair" level, which indicates comparable reading abilities prior to the intervention. This similarity in performance levels between the two groups established a balanced baseline for measuring the impact of the Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions after their implementation.

The results imply that before the phonics-based intervention, both groups had average reading proficiency and required structured reading support to enhance their skills. The overall average ratings of 20.12 (Fair) for the experimental group and 18.68 (Fair) for the control group imply that learners needed explicit phonics instruction to strengthen their decoding, word recognition, and comprehension skills. The result implies that the learners were at a

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suitable starting point for the intervention, as both groups demonstrated comparable reading abilities before the treatment phase.

TABLE 2

POST-TEST PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS

Score Range	Description	POSTTEST EXPERIMENTAL	%	POSTTEST CONTROL	%
41–50	Excellent	7	16.67	0	0
31–40	Very Good	33	78.57	4	9.76
21–30	Good	2	4.76	25	60.98
11–20	Fair	0	0	12	29.26
1–10	Poor	0	0	0	0
Total		**42**	**100**	**41**	**100**
Weighted Mean		**31.62 – Very Good**		**19.95 – Fair**	

This table presents the Post-Test Performance of Learners in both the experimental and control groups after the implementation of the Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions. It displays the frequency and percentage distribution of learners according to different performance descriptions—Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor. The purpose of this table is to compare the learners' reading achievement after the intervention and to determine whether the use of phonics-based learning strategies resulted in improved reading performance compared to traditional instruction.

As reflected in the table, there is a clear improvement in the performance of learners from the experimental group, where the majority (78.57%) achieved a "Very Good" rating, and 16.67% even reached the "Excellent" category. Only a small percentage (4.76%) remained at the "Good" level, and none fell below that range. This indicates that the phonics-based intervention effectively enhanced the learners' reading skills, particularly in decoding, phonemic awareness, and comprehension. In contrast, the control group's performance

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remained moderate, with most learners (60.98%) rated as "Good" and 29.26% as "Fair." Only 9.76% reached the "Very Good" level, and none attained "Excellent," showing limited improvement through traditional instruction.

The comparison between the two groups demonstrates that the experimental group benefited more from the phonics-based instruction. The weighted mean of the experimental group was 31.62 (Very Good), while the control group only obtained 19.95 (Fair). This considerable gap suggests that phonics-based reinforcement sessions provided more effective and structured learning experiences, enabling students to grasp word-sound relationships and apply them in reading tasks. The intervention encouraged active participation, repetitive practice, and systematic decoding, which contributed to significant gains in reading fluency and comprehension.

The results imply that learners exposed to phonics-based reinforcement sessions achieved greater improvement in reading performance compared to those who received traditional instruction. The overall average ratings—31.62 (Very Good) for the experimental group and 19.95 (Fair) for the control group—imply that the intervention successfully strengthened learners' reading foundations, leading to enhanced fluency and comprehension. The result implies that systematic and explicit phonics instruction is instrumental in addressing learners' reading challenges and promoting sustained literacy development.

TABLE III

TEST OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST SCORES OF LEARNERS

Aspects	Test Scores (Mean)	Computed T	Critical T	Decision	Interpretation
Experimental (Pre vs Post)	Pre = 20.12 Post = 31.62	15.38	2.02	Reject Ho	Significant

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Aspects	Test Scores (Mean)	Computed T	Critical T	Decision	Interpretation
Control (Pre vs Post)	Pre = 18.68 Post = 19.95	1.21	2.02	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Experimental vs Control (Post)	Exp Post = 31.62 Ctrl Post = 19.95	12.47	2.02	Reject Ho	Significant

This table presents the Test of Difference Between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Learners, which compares the reading performance of Grade 5 pupils in both the experimental and control groups before and after the implementation of the Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions. It shows the mean scores, computed and critical t-values, decisions on the null hypothesis, and the corresponding interpretations. The table aims to determine whether the phonics-based intervention produced a statistically significant improvement in the learners' reading performance compared to traditional instruction.

As reflected in the table, the experimental group demonstrated a marked improvement in their reading performance after the intervention. The mean score of the experimental group increased considerably from the pre-test to the post-test, and the computed t-value was higher than the critical t-value, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that the Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions significantly enhanced the learners' reading skills. Conversely, the control group, which received traditional instruction, showed only a slight increase in mean scores, with the computed t-value lower than the critical value, resulting in the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This suggests that the improvement in the control group's performance was not statistically significant.

Furthermore, when comparing the post-test scores of both groups, the experimental group outperformed the control group, as evidenced by a computed t-value that exceeded

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the critical t-value. This finding confirms that the phonics-based intervention was more effective in improving reading performance than the traditional approach. The intervention group's substantial gain indicates that the systematic and explicit teaching of phonics, focusing on sound-letter relationships and decoding practice, contributed to their improved fluency, accuracy, and comprehension skills.

The results imply that the Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions had a significant positive effect on learners' reading performance. The overall average results—showing a significant difference in the experimental group's pre- and post-test means and between the experimental and control post-test scores—imply that the intervention effectively developed essential reading competencies among learners. The result implies that explicit phonics instruction enhanced word recognition, decoding ability, and comprehension, proving it to be a more effective method than traditional reading instruction in addressing learners' reading difficulties.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the Phonics-Based Reinforcement Sessions effectively improved the reading performance of Grade 5 pupils compared to traditional instruction. Learners who participated in the intervention showed greater progress in reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension, highlighting the benefits of systematic and explicit phonics instruction. The findings affirm that the use of phonics-based strategies strengthens foundational reading skills, enhances word recognition and decoding ability, and supports overall literacy development, making it a highly effective approach for addressing learners' reading challenges

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Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

The teacher should integrate phonics-based reinforcement sessions into regular reading instruction to strengthen pupils' decoding, word recognition, and comprehension skills. They should also employ varied and engaging phonics activities that cater to learners' diverse needs and continuously assess progress to provide targeted interventions.

The school head should support the implementation of phonics-based reading programs by providing necessary instructional materials, training opportunities, and regular monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of the intervention. They should also encourage collaboration among teachers to share best practices in reading instruction.

For the Public Schools District Supervisor: The Public Schools District Supervisor should advocate for the inclusion of phonics-based instruction as a key component of literacy development programs across schools in the district. They should also provide continuous professional development and supervision to sustain teachers' competence in implementing evidence-based reading interventions.

The parents should actively participate in their children's reading development by reinforcing phonics skills at home through reading activities, word games, and providing a supportive learning environment that fosters a love for reading.

The researcher should continue monitoring the progress of learners who underwent phonics-based reinforcement sessions to determine the long-term impact of the intervention on their reading proficiency. They should also share the findings with other educators to promote the adoption of effective literacy strategies.

Future researchers should explore the effectiveness of phonics-based interventions in other grade levels and subjects or compare them with other reading approaches to further

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validate the findings. They should also consider using a larger sample size or a longer intervention period to strengthen the generalizability of results.

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AUTHOR'S PROFILE

PAULA APRIL SOTTO TOLEDO

The author was born on April 25, 2001, in Ormoc City, Leyte, Philippines. She graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, major in General Education, at Visayas State University – Main Campus, Baybay City, Leyte, in 2023. During her high school and college years, she actively participated in various academic and extracurricular activities that developed her passion for teaching and leadership. She is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Arts in Education major in Administration and Supervision at Western Leyte College of Ormoc City.

She is presently a Teacher I in the Department of Education and a Grade V Teacher at Seguinon Elementary School, Barangay Seguinon, Albuera, Leyte, Philippines. Aside from teaching, she is also passionate about integrating arts and sports into learning to promote creativity, discipline, and teamwork among her students. She believes that nurturing young learners with patience, empathy, and enthusiasm builds a strong foundation for lifelong learning and character development.