

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF IMPORTANCE BETWEEN PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS AND PHONICS FOR READING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Mohammed Shamsul Hoque*

Abstract: Both Phonological awareness and Phonics contribute to developing the reading skill of a learner. But there are subtle differences between the technical forces of the two. The Paper attempts a comprehensive study of comparison between the potential of the foremost devices and reach the final point in order to establish the thesis that Phonics plays a more crucial role in developing the reading skill than Phonological awareness does. A conclusive decision has been drawn after a critical and analytical study of the two that place one over the other in importance, namely Phonics precedes the Phonological Awareness in developing the reading skill.

Keywords: Phonological awareness, reading skill, Dual Route Cascade model, decoding, skill-based approach, meaning based approach, lexical process, sub-lexical process.

Introduction

Both Phonological awareness and Phonics are inseparably related to the complex process of developing the Reading Skill of a learner. For, language is primarily and essentially the sound pattern that leads to meanings. And no doubt both the processes are significant in developing the Reading Skill. But certainly there are subtle differences between their strength and capacity in playing their roles. Hence the essential question comes up with regard to the study of relative importance between the two processes. The paper at hand attempts to evaluate the two modes and reach a scientific conclusion whether Phonological awareness or Phonics plays a more important role in developing the Reading Skill of a learner. In the first place the concept of Phonological awareness will be brought in and discussed in length so that its role as a device for developing a learner's Reading Skill can be assessed. In the same way the merits and deficiencies of Phonics will be taken up for full analysis in order to determine its importance in developing the Reading Skill of a learner. One thing is to be noted in this context that we shall consider the case

* Mohammad Shamsul Hoque, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Daffodil International University

of Reading Skill development especially of the early learners, not the learners of advanced level although cases of advanced level readers will also be mentioned at times.

In order to evaluate and assess whether ‘phonological awareness’ or ‘phonics’ is more important in developing reading skill, it is necessary first to obtain a fair view of all the three head-terms namely *reading, phonology and phonics*. It is also relevant that we should touch on reading as a process and its varieties of levels and discuss how reading process takes place in terms of phonological awareness and phonics.

Out of various methods and approaches, the Dual-Route Cascade (DRC) model has been taken up for the central focus since this is the most recent and most effective device in the discipline. While discussing reading development and its link with the theories of phonological awareness and teaching phonics and how they effectively operate in reading development of the readers, I shall bring in and analyze relevant studies and reviews to evaluate how phonological awareness and the teaching of phonics are reflected in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) at KS 1 (in the U.K.). It is to be mentioned in this context that the paper has been designed on the findings of a practical research in England, where I taught for a number of years.

What is reading?

It is quite relevant and necessary that we should have a consummate understanding about Reading as a specialized activity in literary fields. Reading is the most fundamental process that works in developing the literacy in an individual that gradually grows up and matures to facility. A great variety of definitions have been given by a variety of experts. In *Teaching and Researching Reading*, William Grabe and Fredericka L. Stoller quoted the definition as “Reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately.” As a matter of fact “reading” means this ability of acquiring the meaning both annotative and connotative out of the image in the printed text and then interpreting the acquired meaning in a proper dimension.

Again, according to Foertsch (1998), there are three basic definitions of reading. The first definition states that learning to read means learning to pronounce words. The second is learning to read means learning to identify words and get their meaning. And the third definition of reading is learning to read means learning to bring meaning to text in order to get meaning from it.

In brief reading is generally considered as a process of decoding written text for meaning and comprehension. We all know there are purposes of reading; if we simply look at some of them in a quick fashion, we can find the following, as mentioned by William Grabe and Fredericka L. Stoller (in *Teaching and Researching Reading*)

- (a) Reading to search for simple information
- (b) Reading to skim quickly
- (c) Reading to learn from texts
- (d) Reading to integrate information
- (e) Reading to write (to search for information needed for writing)
- (f) Reading to critique texts
- (g) Reading for general comprehension.

Whatever be the purpose or reason of Reading, it requires skills that a learner acquires gradually through constant and steady practice of reading printed texts or listening to spoken discourse. In developing the skill the reader needs the basic skill of recognizing the word/words that refer/s to certain specific image/s or idea/s. But the recognizing skill is not enough or the ultimate for reading; it also refers to other dimensions of skill mentioned above. For the higher level reading requires higher skills such as skill for assessing the connotative and denotative meaning of word/s in a written context. Thus we find that there are levels reading and reader. The non-readers or the beginning readers become good readers as a result of regular reading under the active instruction of a language teacher.

There are many different theories of how non-readers become readers and beginner readers become better readers. Reading has always been at the heart of every child's learning. It has been a principal educational focus for more than a century. Researches on Reading date as far back as 1879, when a paper was published on eye movements in reading (Samuels & Kamil, 1984). In the mid-1960s, discussion of appropriate reading instruction gained prominence as a result of published research on models of reading instruction and comparative studies of the US Office of Education's Cooperative Research Program in First Grade Reading Instruction (Venezky, 1984; Samuels & Kamil, 1984). Two basic views of reading instruction grew out of this activity: the skills-based approach (which emphasizes the use of phonics) and

the meaning-based approach (which emphasizes reading comprehension and enrichment).

Skills-Based Approach

The skills-based approach to reading was highly influenced by the work of Chall (1967, cited in Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). In 1967, Chall discussed to identify effective practices in beginning reading instruction and concluded that there are “consistent and substantial advantages to programs that included systematic phonics”. Phonics is an instructional strategy used to teach letter-sound relationships by having readers “sound out” words. In 1990, Adams in a further review also emphasized that effective reading instruction is based on “*direct instruction in phonics, focusing on the orthographic regularities of English*” as well as lots of exposure to reading materials and time to practice reading (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

In skills-based learning, phonics skills are taught in isolation with the expectation that once sound-letter relationships are learned, meaning will follow.

Meaning-Based Approach

The meaning-based approach to reading was highly influenced by the work of Goodman (Samuels & Kamil, 1984). Goodman was a leader in the development of the psycholinguistic perspective, which asserts that readers rely more on the structure and meaning of language rather than on the graphic information from text. He proposed that literacy development parallels language development. Goodman’s work in miscue analysis and reading processes had a tremendous impact on reading instruction, especially with early readers. Goodman also developed a reading model that became known as the whole-language approach. This approach became popular in the 1980s and has continued through the 1990s.

Whatever the differing views are, all researchers agree on one point that a set of internal processes are directly involved in acquiring reading skills. One of the most recent theories is the dual-route cascade model of reading.

The Dual-Route Cascade (DRC) Model

This new theoretical framework explains how word recognition processes in Reading take place. It also provides a useful framework to analyze the relative importance of phonological awareness and phonics in

teaching/learning Reading. According to this framework there are two qualitatively different processes ---- lexical and sub lexical---- by which skilled readers recognize, understand and pronounce printed words:

- 1) Lexical processes access stored word meanings directly from stored orthographic representations. Pronunciations are derived from meaning. Orthographic, semantic and phonological representations symbolize the whole word. The lexical route enables to read “*Familiar real words, regardless of regularity of spelling, because these words are stored in a lexicon.*” (Stuart, 2002, p.46).
- 2) Sub-lexical processes operate by parsing printed words into graphemes, mapping graphemes to phonemes, and blending phonemes to pronunciation. The phonological representations so activated then access stored word meanings. Symbolic representations of the whole word are thus not accessed until a blended pronunciation is achieved. The sub-lexical route helps read unfamiliar words and the process it applies is “each word is broken down into small segments of matching print and sound before it can be recognized and understood as a whole”(Stuart, 1999,p.2).

According to this model, both lexical and sub-lexical processes enable a skilled reader to read every printed word automatically. These two processes operate unconsciously in a skilled reader’s mind every time s/he comes across a printed word. There is an element of time difference in reading regular and irregular words. When reading a regular word, lexical and sub-lexical processes converge on the same phonological representation. When a reader reads an exceptional word, two different pronunciations are achieved. Then the system takes a while to decide which the correct one is.

This framework implies that children learning to read must develop both lexical and sub lexical processes.

Reading development and its link with the theories of phonological awareness and phonics can be followed in the manner below:

Phonics

Phonics is a system of teaching reading and spelling that stresses basic symbol- sound (grapheme-phoneme) relationships and their applications in decoding words; a system used specially in beginning instruction.

Referring to the studies, e.g., Adams,19 Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson,1985; Chall,1983; Perfetti, 1985; Stanovich,1986; Stanovich,1994, supports the importance of phonics in early reading acquisition; it vindicates

“That direct instruction in alphabetic coding facilitates early reading acquisition is one of the most well established conclusions in all of behavioral science.” (p286).

Reading through processes of the sub lexical route has thus been upheld by Stanovich, 1994.

Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is a concept which “represents a skill specific to spoken language that precedes and directly influences the process of reading acquisition” (Castle et al, 2003). It essentially refers to the learner’s innate awareness of sound patterns and sonic attributes of word/words. A word is basically an image-building tool, an idea generating device. The learner’s mind functions basically on the basis of the sound he/she listens and instantly builds up the image of the object or idea the sound refers to, although sometimes it is arbitrary by nature as we learn from Ferdinand de Saussure. However, the recognition and image building process stems out of the sound. According to Goswami and Bryant, 1990, “*phonological awareness refers to the ability to perceive and manipulate the sounds of spoken words.*” It is about understanding spoken words as patterns of sounds. So the basic perception of language starts with the faculty of recognition of sound pattern or phonic system. We know that there are three levels of phonological awareness:

Onset-rime: It is awareness at the intrasyllabic level, such as, the word ‘cup’, the ‘c’ being the onset of the syllable and ‘up’ being the rime;

Phoneme awareness: this shows sensitivity to the smallest unit of sound in a word that causes a significant change in the meaning in the word, such as, “if the first phoneme of tree is changed from /t/to/f/, the word *free* would be heard” (Gillon, 2004, p.7).

Syllable awareness: This requires an understanding of the syllable division of a word

such as ‘random’ has two syllables, ‘ran’ and ‘dom’ or “father” has “fa” and “ther”.

According to Stanovich (1994), “*In the last 10 years, researchers have come to a strong consensus about the cognitive processes that best predict the reading progress in the earliest stages. These cognitive processes have been called phonological awareness and they are measured by some of the tasks.*”(p.283)

These tasks can be summarized as follows:

Phoneme deletion (What word would left if the /k/ sound were taken away from cat/);

Word to word matching (Do pen and pipe begin with the same sound?);

Blending (What word would we have if you put these sounds together:/s/, /a/,/t/?); sound isolation (What is the first sound in rose ?);

Phoneme segmentation (What sound do you hear in the word hot?);

Phoneme counting (How many sounds do you hear in the word cake?);

Delete phoneme (What sound do you hear in meat that is missing in eat?);

Odd word out (What word stars with a different sound: bag, nine, beach, bike?); sound to word matching (Is there a /k/ in bike?)

Stanovich (1994) also refers to previous studies, e.g., Ball & Blachman, 1991; Bradley& Bryant, 1985; Cunningham, 1990; Lie, 1991; Lunberg, Frost & Peterson, 1998 and writes:

“Numerous training studies have demonstrated that preschool and kindergarten children exposed to programs designed to facilitate phonological awareness, become better readers.” (p.284). But Professor Bus, A.G. and Professor van Ijzendoorn, M.H. (1999) in their study (published in Reading Research Quarterly, No 30, pp 998-1015), argue that a compromise between Phonological awareness and Phonics can be effective in teaching reading at early stage. They write, *“Children may be better able to pronounce a novel printed word if the training is not purely phonetic but also includes letter-sound relations. If the acquisition of the alphabetic principle rests on the twin foundations of phonological awareness and the letter knowledge, supplementing phonological instruction with letter training may more effective in learning to read.”*

It has been found that phonological awareness and phonics jointly work in smooth collaboration and produce fantastic results. Now let us have a look how phonological awareness and phonics improve reading— the following enlists some expert views of some researchers:

Phonics is direct learning of sound/s that each letter/combination of letters produces and uses them effectively in reading at early stage. Phonological awareness is linked directly with sounds of spoken language and makes learners to be consciously or subconsciously aware of those speech sounds

and enables them in decoding effectively and meaningfully. Thus a great service is obtained from phonics.

Phonics deals with the smallest units of language (letter and letter-sound); phonological awareness, as Castle et al, 2003, claims. It is a skill specific to spoken language that precedes and directly influences the process of acquisition.

Stahl and Duffy-Hester (1998) explain the concept of phonics in details and also demonstrated how this had been used to teach reading over many years. They argue that good phonics instruction should develop phonological awareness. So, phonics first automatically results in phonological awareness. Hence, the importance of the argument in favour of phonics teaching comes up. From this view it can be concluded that expert phonics is the root of phonological perception that grounds the foundation of reading skill of a learner.

The Ball & Blachman (1991) study was to evaluate the effects of training in phonemic segmentation and of instruction in letter names and letter sounds on kindergarten children's reading and spelling skills. The experiment was carried on ninety pupils randomly selected from three urban public schools in the U.S. The first group received training in segmenting words into phonemes, as well as training in correspondences between letter names and letter sounds (phoneme awareness group). The second group received only the training in letter names and letter sounds (language activity group). The third group received no intervention (control group). Results indicated that the first group significantly improved the early reading and spelling skills. The second group did not significantly improve the reading and spelling skills as compared with the third group (control group). So, they argue in favour of teaching phonological awareness along with phonics for success in reading. They write: "*Phoneme awareness has been shown consistently to be related to success in early reading.*" They go on to criticize those who ignore teaching phoneme awareness because this might cause "a causal chain of escalating negative side effects" if educators fail to provide early phoneme awareness training to children with poor segmentation skills.

The Stuart study (1999) also provides evidence to support that "*early concentration on teaching phoneme awareness and phonics can radically improve reading and spelling standards in inner city second language learners*"

Similarly, the Hatcher et al. (2004) study reinforces the findings of both the Ball & Blachman study and the Stuart Study.

Castle and Coltheart, (2004) write:

“Importantly the proposal in both cases is not that the awareness of phonological units will cause children to be able to read but that it will cause them to be better at learning to read at some later date; it is a distal, not a proximal cause of reading ability.”(p.79)

Brief review of some studies

Bradley and Bryant (1983) carried on a two year longitudinal study to test whether phonemic training help improve reading. Their experiment on four/five year old children claimed to have proved that phonological awareness training indeed improved reading and spelling. Their study was based on four different training conditions over a period of two years. Those conditions are: (a) Group one with training in sound segments in the spoken word; (b) Group two with training in phonological awareness plus letter-sound knowledge; (c) Group three (control group!) with training to classify pictures into semantic categories; (d) Group four (the second control group) without any intervention.

So the conclusion was drawn that children in group One became better readers and spellers than the children in the two control groups. Group Two with training in phonological awareness plus letter-sound knowledge experienced the highest improvement in reading and spelling.

In another case, Savage et al. (2003) conducted an investigation with 414 One-year children to assess if three different word level training programs (rime-based, phoneme-based and a mixed and phoneme-based) influenced their reading ability. These 414 children were selected because all of them were poor readers. In order to deliver these programs Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) were trained. The results were “equally successful in improving children’s ability to read non-words” (Stuart, 2005, p44). Only one difference was found in the outcome of the rime-based approach which “led to significantly more improvement in phoneme blending skills” (Stuart, 2005, p.44). The three intervention programs involved letter-sound training as well (Savage et al., 2003, p.228). So, no conclusive decision can be reached as to which of the two components-- phonological awareness training, or instruction in letter-sound correspondences—influenced improvement of children’s ability to read non-words. Also, the experience length of these LSAs was not taken into consideration, which might have influenced the findings.

From another case we see that Castle and Coltheart (2004) argue that the kind of longitudinal study Bradley and Bryant carried on tended to lack credibility because it is difficult to control all external variables which Castle and Coltheart describe as “third variable problem” (2004, p. 83). In the Bradley and Bryant study the third factor that might have influenced the results might have been the effect of the socio-economic backgrounds of the parents, their home environment etc. which have not been taken into account in this particular study. So, Castle and Coltheart carried on a study to evaluate whether phonemic awareness contributed to reading development. They focused their examination on training studies. They reviewed 18 training studies. Phonological awareness was one of the conditions for experiment in each of these studies. Their findings include, “*if phonological awareness indeed plays a casual role in reading and spelling acquisition, the nature of that awareness is most likely to be the ability to perceive and manipulate phonemes*”(2004,p.91). But the review of training studies and the analyses of the Lundeberg et al. (1988) and Schneider et al. (1997: Study2) led Castle and Coltheart to conclude that “*no single study has conclusively established that phonemic awareness training assists reading or spelling acquisition*”. (2004, p.101)

Thus, from the research evidence to date, one might deduce that there is a causal relationship between phonological awareness and reading acquisition. One might draw a fair conclude that phonological awareness is more important than phonics to reading development.

However, a number of studies to date have been carried on to establish the causal relationship between teaching phonics and reading development and there is a growing body of educators and researchers, who have been trying to prove that phonics is more important in reading development for the non /early readers.

Now at this turn I will discuss how teaching of phonological awareness and phonics is reflected in the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 1.

How are teaching of Phonological awareness and that of phonics reflected in NLS KS 1?

The NLS was introduced by the UK government in a period of growing concerns over the falling standards of literacy in England in comparison to other countries. In 1997, only 63% of children left primary schools at 11 years of age at the expected level of attainment. In their report, the HMI's* expressed concern at the lack of focus and poor quality of teaching. This

report also suggested that too few schools used a balanced approach to the teaching of reading which included the systematic teaching of phonics (OFSTED, 1996)*.

The prescriptions of the NLS* in KS* 1 right from the first half-term of Yr. R to the end of the summer term highlights their one learning objective in this way:

“Pupils to be taught: Phonological awareness, phonics and spelling.”

The question is: How does NLS consider phonological awareness and phonics in teaching reading in the early years?

It is true that there is no clear answer to this question but recent studies including Solity, J. (2003) and OFSTED reports (1996, 2002)) have already presented criticisms of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching of phonics and phonological awareness in NLS at KS1.

Solity (2003) in his paper presented to DIES* seminar claims, “*the word level work caused the teachers the greatest difficulty*” because they were not properly trained. Also “*teaching phonics within the NLS is not underpinned by psychological theories of teaching and learning, experimental research or instructional principles*” (p. 19.). Whereas phonics instruction is considered beneficial to children with reading problems “because poor readers have exceptional difficulty decoding words” (Rack, Snowling & Olson, 1992)

The OFSTED evaluation (2002) is fairly critical of the NLS and points out a number of weaknesses in its design and implementation, in particular:

“The ‘searchlights’ model of reading places too much emphasis on a broad range of decoding strategies and not enough on phonic decoding..... Teachers are not teaching phonic knowledge and skills systematically and speedily from YR.”

On the other hand, while finding the “strengths” of good teaching at KS1, OFSTED writes: “Skilful guided writing with an appropriate focus on segmenting phonemes for spelling, leading to good development of pupils’ phonological knowledge to help them write independently.”

Now does it mean that the NLS at KS 1 give more importance to teaching phonological awareness than phonics?

Well, that is a matter for the researchers, who have produced results of their strenuous study in this field. Victoria Robinson (2005), in her article in RRF(Journal) informs that DIES is recommending schools to adopt an

explicit phonics programme, such as, the DIES's own Progression in Phonics, or a commercial program such as Jolly Phonics, POPAT (language activity program) or Phono-Graphics. In doing this, the DIES is trying to save face, and so has not made any changes to their main NLS to reflect what actually amounts to a very substantial change in the recommended approach to teaching literacy. Instead, the DIES is trying to implement changes slowly by issuing more guidance to LEAs*, more supplementary teaching materials, and by stating that it intends to develop a scheme for teaching spelling. Unfortunately, this means that many schools will not be aware of the changes and will carry on using less effective approaches and inferior teaching materials. (Robinson, V., 2005)

Solity (2003) in his paper presented in the DIES seminar on "Teaching Phonics in the National Literacy Strategy" also reflects the criticism of Robinson (2005). He writes that "*word level should be taught before the text level work; that the literacy hour should be split into shorter period*". He also criticizes that the structure of the NLS makes it very difficult for children to apply their phonic knowledge to the text.

As a result, the attainments of the pupils in Key Stage 2 SATs* have not improved from 2000 to 2002. Although during the years from 2000 to 2002 teachers must have been more experienced in teaching and so more experienced in preparing pupils in participating in SATs, children must have been more aware of what was expected of them in SATs, yet the percentage of Level 4 in 2002 SATs remained the same. Solity, 2003 opines, "If standards have remained the same or declined it cannot be asserted with confidence that the content of the NLS 'is broadly correct'".

A common but mistaken view is that the whole language and the skills-based instruction are dichotomous. Many educators believed that the whole-language approach would enable children to learn to read and write naturally without direct instruction if they were immersed in an environment rich in literacy (Manzo, 1999; Sherman, 1998; Routman, 1996). Some teachers erroneously interpreted this idea to mean that no phonics is necessary. However, whole language was never intended to exclude phonics (Sherman, 1998; Routman, 1996). In fact, the teaching of skills in context is one of the key characteristics of whole-language education (Weaver, 1995). So 'the whole language' approach may fail if phonics is totally excluded and avoided.

According to Smith, (1971, 1973) there are "12 ways to make it hard for children to learn to read." One of them is to teach them phonics. This implies that teaching phonics alone may make it hard for children to master reading;

this requires other factors alongside to succeed in reading improvement. Instead of being taught in isolation, skills such as grammar and spelling are embedded in whole-language reading and writing activities and are based on the words that children encounter. In this framework, skills teaching arises as a result of children's needs; meaning and comprehension are emphasized (Strickland, 1998).

Although there are opposing views among the Psychologists and Psycholinguists with regard to how reading takes place among the non-readers and beginner readers, reading skills at KS1, perhaps, require proximal skills, i.e., phonics skills, for the learners to be able to read and get interested in exploring reading. Once they are able to master the basics of reading skills, they are more equipped to use their already acquired phonological skills in reading at a higher level. So, the paper, Teaching Phonics in the National Literacy Strategy, presented to the OFSTED phonics seminar in 1999 prescribed for the full commitment to the early, systematic and focused teaching of phonics to all children from the start of the schooling in Reception. The paper states:

“The NLS is clear that all children should be taught as quickly as possible to identify, segment and blend phonemes in speech and writing and that this should be taught to them directly, not left to inference or invention.”

Understanding the importance of teaching phonics, Stuart (2003) makes some important suggestions in her paper, Fine Tuning the National Literacy Strategy to Ensure Continuing Progress in improving Standards of Reading in the UK: Some Suggestions for Change. She suggests that teachers should be provided with training and a model of reading that does not confound word recognition process involved in comprehension. She clearly advocates for teaching phonics through properly trained teachers. She further emphasizes: “We need to ensure that all teachers are properly trained to teach phonics quickly and effectively in Key Stage 1” (Stuart, 2003).

We now need to pay attention to what Stuart (2003) suggests above with regard to the ways and means of improving standards of reading in the UK, particularly, with regard to improving the standards of reading at Key Stage 1. In order to be able to appreciate what Stuart propagates, we should consider the impact of the two concepts---- phonics and phonological awareness-- and their effectiveness in learning to read at Key Stage 1. It has already been mentioned that phonics is proximal and phonological awareness is distal. Phonics is teaching letters and letter-sounds first then words but

phonological awareness is teaching understanding spoken words as patterns of sounds. Most educators are of the opinion that phonics is the foundation on which phonological awareness develops, at least at the early stages of reading acquisition.

Considering the importance of the skill of phonics, Routman (1996), for example, advocates with emphasis: “It would be irresponsible and inexcusable not to teach phonics.” (p.91).

There are other cases where the importance of teaching phonics was observed and underlined.

R.S. Johnston and J.E. Watson (1999.), for instance carried out a study in Clackmannanshire schools and their findings back the advocates of phonics teaching at the early stages of learning to read. Johnston S. and Watson W. summarize their findings in this way:

“It can be seen in this comparison of 193 children that with analytic phonics tuition the advantaged children read and spelt significantly better than the disadvantaged children. However, with synthetic phonics teaching there was no difference in word reading or spelling according to social backgrounds.” (p.7)

In the last event they conclude, “. . . that the synthetic phonics programme led to children from lower socio-economic backgrounds performing at the same level as children from advantaged backgrounds for most of their time in primary school. It also led to boys performing better than or as well as girls.”(p.8)

Conclusion

To round up our arguments about the importance of phonics in teaching reading at KS 1, I would like to conclude, in the light of what Stahl, A. & Duffy-Hester M. et al, 1998; observed that teaching phonics at early stage of learning to read is a good practice because this enables the learners to master the sub-lexical route to reading which ultimately reinforces the lexical route ensuring the process of reading to be successful. It is also to be added that phonological awareness is the development and further growth of a learner who has already acquired at least the basics of phonics which is the foundation of language learning. But the importance of phonological awareness is of great importance because it is the ultimate growth on which the full-full-fledged make-up of a learner’s reading skill depends; that is by virtue of which he/she can get into the vast universe of reading and adventure

through the unbounded cosmos of knowledge for the rest part of life. So it can safely concluded that phonological awareness and phonics play constructive role mutually that are indispensable for developing the reading skill of a learner both in the early stage and in the later mature stage: one is coefficient and catalyst for the other.

* Abbreviations

DfES: Department for Education and Science

HMI= Her Majesty's Inspector

KS= Key Stage

LEA= Local Education Authority

LSA= Learning Support Assistants

NLS = National Literacy Strategy

OFSTED = Office for Standard in Education

References

- Adams, M.J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bryant P. (2002). Doesn't matter whether onset and rime predicts reading better than Phoneme awareness does or vice versa. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, May 82(1): 41-6.
- Bryant P.E., McLean M., Bradley L.L. & Cross land (1990). Rhyme and alliteration, phoneme detection and learning to read. *In Developmental Psychology*, No 26, pp 429-438.
- Bus, A.G. and Professor van Ijzendoorn, M.H. (1999), *Reading Research Quarterly*, No 30.
- Castles A. & Coltheart M. (2003). Is there a causal link from phonological awareness to success in learning to read?, *Cognition* 91(2004)
- Chall, J.S. (1967). *Learning to read: The great debate*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Foertsch, M. (1988). *A study of Reading Practices, Instructions and Achievement*. Oak Brook, IL. North Central Regional Education Laboratory.
- Grabe, William and Stoller, Fredericka, L. (2011). *Teaching and Researching Reading*, New Delhi, Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt. Ltd.
- Hatcher, P. J. (1998). Hulme International Reading Association & National Association for the Education of Young Children. Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children.
- Johnston, R.S. and Watson, J.E. (2003). A Seven Year Study of the Effects of Synthetic Phonics Teaching on Reading and Spelling Attainment. Scottish Executive, Education Department. Macmillan, B.(2005).Jolly Phonics and the Research. Jolly Learning.

- Lundberg, I., Frost, J. & Peterson, O. (1988). Effects of an extensive program for stimulating phonological awareness in preschool children. *Reading Research Quarterly*, No. 23, pp 263-284.
- Manzo, K.K. (1999). Whole-language model survives despite swing back to basics. *Education Week on the Web*.
- Morag S., (2003). Fine tuning the National Literacy Strategy to ensure continuing progress in improving the standards of reading in the UK: Some suggestions.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1996). Phonics and whole language learning: A balanced approach to beginning reading
- Rack, J., Snowling, M., & Olson, R. (1996). The non-word reading deficit in developmental dyslexia: A Review. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 27, 29-53.
- Robinson, V. (2005). Phonics: Where Has the National Literacy Strategy Really Gone To?
- Routman, R. (1996). *Transitions*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Savage, R., Carless, S., & Stuart, M. (2003). The effects of rime and phoneme-based training delivered by Learning Support Assistants. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 26, 211-233.
- Solity, J. (2003). Teaching Phonics in Context: A Critique of the National Literacy Strategy, Paper presented to DIES Seminar, Teaching Phonics in the National Literacy Strategy.
- Stahl, A. and Duffy-Hester M. et al., (1998). Everything You wanted to know about Phonics (but were afraid to ask) in *Reading Research Quarterly* July/August/September, vol.33/3, 1998.
- Stanovich, E. (1994). *L. The Reading Teacher*, vol.47, No. 4, December! 993/January 1994.
- Strickland, D. S. (1998). *Teaching phonics today: A primer for educators*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Stuart, M. (2003). *Fine Tuning the National Literacy Strategy to Ensure Continuing Progress in Improving Standards of Reading in the UK: Some Suggestions for Change*, Institute of Education, London.
- Stuart, M. (1999). Getting ready for reading: Early phoneme awareness and phonics teaching improves reading and spelling in inner-city second language learners. *British Journal of Education Psychology*, 69, 587-605.
- Stuart, M. (2002). Using the dual cascade model as a framework for considering reading development in R. Stainthorp and P. Thomlinson (ed): *Learning and teaching reading*. Leicester: British Psychological Society.