

# English Language Learners' Experience of Phonemic Awareness Activities for the Development

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**Abstract**— This study explored the experience of structured phonemic awareness activities on the reading skill development of selected Grade 11 learners identified as frustrated readers. Anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory, it examined how learners construct meaning through sound-based interaction and guided practice.

Using a qualitative case study design, the research described the experiences of teachers and learners in implementing structured phonemic awareness activities aimed at improving reading fluency and comprehension. The case study approach was selected for its capacity to provide an in-depth understanding of real classroom practices (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018).

Ten senior high school students, aged sixteen to eighteen, were identified as frustrated readers through the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). The intervention utilized the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program, implemented for ten minutes per English class over twelve weeks. Data were gathered through classroom observations, semi-structured teacher interviews, and student feedback.

Findings revealed that consistent phonemic instruction enhanced students' decoding, fluency, and confidence, with most learners progressing from the Frustration Level (below 89%) to the Instructional Level (90–96%) in the Phil-IRI post-assessment. The study underscores the effectiveness of short, structured, and daily phonemic awareness instruction in fostering foundational reading skills among struggling learners.

**Keywords**— decoding, fluency, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program, phonemic awareness, reading comprehension, qualitative case study.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill that underpins all areas of learning, yet many senior high school students continue to struggle with reading fluency and comprehension. For learners, especially those classified as frustrated readers under the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) standards, this difficulty often stems from weak phonemic awareness—the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words. According to the Department of Education (DepEd), students who score below 89% in word recognition or comprehension are categorized as frustrated readers, indicating that they can read but struggle to understand or decode words independently. This poses a major challenge for English language learners (ELLs), who must navigate a language system different from their mother tongue.

Phonemic awareness is essential for developing strong reading skills because it enables learners to decode words effectively, pronounce them accurately, and comprehend texts meaningfully. Without this

foundational skill, decoding and understanding printed words become especially challenging, resulting in poor fluency and low confidence in reading. Recognizing this, several educational interventions have emphasized the importance of explicit and structured phonemic instruction in literacy programs.

Recent research continues to emphasize the vital role of phonemic awareness in literacy development, particularly among English learners. Murphy Odo (2021) reported that explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics significantly enhances both word reading and pseudoword decoding among second-language learners. Similarly, Brooks et al. (2025) found that integrating phonemic awareness with vocabulary instruction strengthens oral language and phonological processing skills, leading to improved reading fluency. Brewer (2025) further demonstrated that targeted sound-based instruction promotes greater engagement and reading readiness among English learners.

A study by Zhang et al. (2018) on Chinese children learning English revealed that deficits in phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and letter knowledge predicted slower reading development, confirming that phonemic sensitivity is a key component of early L2 reading success. In the Indonesian EFL context, Sari and Mansur (2021) found a significant positive correlation between phonemic identification skills and reading comprehension, highlighting that learners with higher phonemic awareness tend to comprehend texts more effectively. Likewise, Alqarni (2023) reported that phonemic awareness instruction was positively associated with decoding and comprehension performance among elementary EFL learners.

In the Philippines, several studies affirm the importance of phonemic awareness instruction in addressing literacy challenges. Dela Cruz (2022) and Reyes (2021) found that consistent engagement in phonemic activities—such as rhyming, blending, and segmenting—improves reading fluency and pronunciation among secondary students. Santos (2020) likewise reported that phoneme-based reading drills significantly reduce the number of frustrated readers in public schools. Supporting these findings, the Department of Education (DepEd, 2023), through the MATATAG Curriculum, emphasizes the integration of phonological and phonemic awareness strategies into English instruction to strengthen foundational literacy skills.

One structured intervention program proven effective in this area is the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program. A study by Kathleen Michelle Fox (2024) titled “Effect of Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program on Fourth Graders’ Foundational Reading Skills” found that fourth-grade students identified as at-risk or struggling readers showed statistically significant improvement in phonemic awareness and word-recognition skills when taught using the Heggerty program in addition to their regular instruction. This curriculum provides short, daily lessons focused on rhyming, blending, segmenting, and phoneme manipulation—activities designed to build students’ decoding and pronunciation skills.

According to the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (2008), repeated-reading interventions for struggling readers are most effective when conducted for 10–20 minutes per session, three to five times per week, promoting both fluency and retention. Aligning with this, the Heggerty program recommends

approximately 10-minute daily sessions, making it an appropriate and time-efficient intervention model for classroom integration.

In this study, the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program was implemented among selected Grade 11 learners identified as frustrated readers under the Phil-IRI standards. The program was conducted for 12 weeks, with 10-minute sessions per English class, twice daily, totaling 100 minutes per week. These structured sessions provided repeated exposure and guided practice to reinforce phonemic skills essential for fluent reading. The study aimed to explore how this consistent, short-duration intervention could enhance students’ decoding, pronunciation, and comprehension skills.

This research is anchored on the Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978), which posits that learning is an active and social process wherein learners construct knowledge through experience, interaction, and reflection. Within this framework, phonemic awareness develops as learners meaningfully engage with language through sound-based activities. Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) highlights the importance of scaffolding—teacher guidance that supports learners in mastering phonemic patterns and gradually achieving independent proficiency. Through this process, learners enhance their decoding, pronunciation, and comprehension skills, making reading a more meaningful and interactive experience.

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the direct relationship between phonemic awareness activities (independent variable) and reading skill development (dependent variable). When learners participate in structured activities—such as rhyming, blending, segmenting, and phoneme manipulation—they strengthen their decoding abilities, which subsequently improve pronunciation and reading comprehension. These interconnected skills contribute to overall reading proficiency and fluency.

Reading proficiency remains a persistent challenge among senior high school students, particularly those classified as frustrated readers. Recognizing that phonemic awareness is a foundational skill for reading development, this study aims to explore how phonemic awareness activities were experienced by selected Grade 11 learners who are classified as frustrated readers and six teachers in the senior high school.

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

- What are the types of phonemic awareness activities are employed in English classrooms?
- What are the experiences of students and teachers of engaging with these phonemic awareness activities?

Despite the growing body of research, limited studies focus on how phonemic awareness activities are implemented in secondary or multilingual classrooms. Addressing this gap, this study aims to determine the types of phonemic awareness activities used by teachers, how learners experience and respond to them, the ways these activities contribute to decoding, pronunciation, and comprehension, and the challenges faced by both teachers and learners in their implementation.

The significance of this study extends to multiple stakeholders. For learners, it promotes improved phonological awareness, decoding, pronunciation, and comprehension—leading to greater reading confidence and literacy growth. For teachers, it provides practical insights into effective strategies for implementing phonemic awareness instruction.

For school administrators, the results can inform curriculum enhancement and the integration of evidence-based literacy programs aligned with the MATATAG Curriculum. Finally, for future researchers, this study offers a foundation for further inquiry into the relationship between phonemic awareness and reading proficiency in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts.

The scope of this study focused on selected Grade 11 students and their classroom-based experiences with phonemic awareness activities through the Heggerty program. It specifically examines how these activities influence reading development within a public secondary school setting.

Factors beyond classroom instruction—such as home literacy environment, prior language exposure, or socio-economic status—are not included, limiting the generalizability of findings to similar educational contexts.

**II. METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore and describe the experiences of teachers and learners in implementing structured phonemic awareness activities. The case study approach was chosen because it allows an in-depth examination of a specific educational setting, providing a holistic understanding of real-life classroom practices and their effects on reading development. In this context, the study focused on how both teachers and learners perceive, experience, and respond to phonemic awareness instruction aimed at improving reading fluency and comprehension. According to Creswell (2013) and Yin (2018), the case study method is appropriate when the goal is to investigate a bounded system or a specific intervention within its authentic context. Previous research also supports this approach—Fabre Merchán et al. (2021) and Garcia and Doronio (2024) demonstrated that qualitative case studies of phonological instruction provide valuable insights into how reflective and experiential practices shape literacy development and classroom engagement

The participants of the study included ten English learners identified as frustrated readers through the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) and six English teachers who regularly implemented phonemic awareness instruction one of the public secondary schools located in the district of Iloilo. The learners, aged sixteen to eighteen, demonstrated varying degrees of reading difficulty, particularly in decoding, pronunciation, and fluency. Most had trouble with word segmentation, sound blending, and identifying rhyming patterns—areas crucial to successful reading development. The teachers, on the other hand, were selected based on their experience in literacy instruction and their consistent use of phonemic awareness strategies. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the participants could provide meaningful and detailed accounts based on their lived experiences.

The learners’ demographic and reading profiles are presented in Table 1 to provide a clear overview of their characteristics and identified reading difficulties as determined by the Phil-IRI assessment.

*Table 1. Profile of Student Participants*

Student	Age	Sex	Strand	Reading Level (Based on Phil-IRI)	Reading Difficulties Identified	Teacher-in-Charge
1	17	Male	Bread and Pastry	Frustrated Reader	Struggles with decoding	Teacher 1

			Production (BPP)		unfamiliar English words and pronunciation.	
2	16	Male	Bread and Pastry Production (BPP)	Frustrated Reader	Difficulty identifying sounds within words; reads slowly due to limited phonemic awareness.	Teacher 1
3	17	Male	Bread and Pastry Production (BPP)	Frustrated Reader	Difficulty blending and segmenting sounds, affecting comprehension.	Teacher 2
4	16	Female	Bread and Pastry Production (BPP)	Frustrated Reader	Struggles to recognize vowel sounds and often mispronounces words.	Teacher 2
5	17	Male	Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW)	Frustrated Reader	Difficulty decoding multisyllabic words and reading fluently.	Teacher 3
6	16	Male	Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW)	Frustrated Reader	Difficulty recognizing rhymes and blending phonemes; gradual improvement through guided reading.	Teacher 3
7	17	Female	Agri-Crop Production (ACP)	Frustrated Reader	Limited word recognition; depends on context clues for comprehension.	Teacher 4
8	16	Female	Agri-Crop Production (ACP)	Frustrated Reader	Difficulty isolating beginning and ending sounds; affects	Teacher 4

					pronunciation and fluency.	
9	17	Female	Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS)	Frustrated Reader	Struggles with phoneme manipulation; skips unfamiliar words while reading.	Teacher 5
10	16	Female	Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS)	Frustrated Reader	Difficulty decoding and understanding complex English sounds.	Teacher 6

Note. Phil-IRI = Philippine Informal Reading Inventory.

To determine the learners' reading proficiency levels, the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) developed by the Department of Education (DepEd) was utilized. This standardized tool measures students' oral reading fluency and comprehension in English and

Filipino. It categorizes readers into three levels: Independent, Instructional, and Frustration.

The learners' reading fluency was determined using the following formula:

$$\text{Accuracy Rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{Total Words Read}}{\text{Total Words Read} - \text{Errors}} \times 100$$

Learners' reading levels were then interpreted based on DepEd standards:

Reading Level	Accuracy Rate	Description
<b>Independent Level</b>	97–100%	Can read and comprehend independently without assistance.
<b>Instructional Level</b>	90–96%	Can read with minimal guidance; suitable for classroom instruction.
<b>Frustration Level</b>	Below 89%	Struggles significantly with reading and comprehension; needs intervention.

This computation was applied to both pre- and post-tests to determine students' progress after the 12-week intervention.

segmenting drills, and phoneme manipulation tasks. Teachers ensured that each session adhered to the ten-minute structure to maintain fidelity to the program.

The study utilized the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program as the primary instructional framework. This program provides short, daily lessons focused on rhyming, blending, segmenting, and manipulating phonemes. The program was implemented over a twelve-week period, with each session lasting ten minutes per day. This schedule was aligned with the findings of the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (2008), which stated that repeated-reading and phonemic awareness interventions are most effective when conducted for ten to twenty minutes per session, three to five times per week. Each Heggerty session followed a consistent structure consisting of warm-up rhymes, sound isolation, blending and

Data were collected in several stages to ensure depth and accuracy of information. The first stage involved orientation and ethical preparation. Permissions were obtained from concerned authorities, and both learners and teachers were informed of the study's objectives, confidentiality measures, and voluntary nature. Informed consent was secured from all participants before the start of data collection.

The second stage focused on systematic classroom observations documenting the implementation of the Heggerty lessons. A Phonemic Awareness Observation Checklist, adapted from the Heggerty framework, was

used to assess learners' engagement and progress in rhyming, blending, segmenting, and manipulating sounds. Observations lasted for ten to fifteen minutes per session, matching the duration of the intervention. Notes on learner participation, engagement, and decoding improvement were recorded.

The third stage involved semi-structured interviews with teachers. These interviews gathered insights into instructional strategies, perceived learner progress, and challenges encountered during implementation. Teachers also reflected on how daily, structured phonemic activities affected students' motivation, pronunciation, and confidence in reading.

The final stage consisted of learner interviews and feedback sessions. Students were encouraged to share their experiences during the twelve-week implementation and reflect on any noticeable changes in their reading skills, confidence, and enjoyment of reading English texts. This data complemented teacher and observational findings, providing a learner-centered perspective.

Data were analyzed following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, which includes familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. Transcribed interviews, observation

notes, and feedback responses were carefully reviewed to identify recurring themes such as improved decoding accuracy, increased reading confidence, and active learner participation. Triangulation across multiple data sources—observations, teacher interviews, and student feedback—ensured validity and reliability. Peer debriefing and member-checking were also conducted to strengthen trustworthiness.

Ethical standards were upheld throughout the study. Participant identities were kept confidential through pseudonyms, and data were securely stored for research purposes only. Participation was voluntary, and all participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

## II. RESULTS

The study focused on the observed improvements among students who participated in the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program. Six English teachers conducted classroom observations to monitor the progress of ten identified frustrated readers. This also presents the findings of the study on the implementation of the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program in English classes. Data were gathered from classroom observations, student performance results, and teacher-student feedback.

*Table 2. Summary of Teachers' Observations on Students' Reading Improvement*

Teacher	Observed Students	Observed Improvements
Teacher 1	Student 1 and Student 2	Both students showed improved decoding and word recognition skills. Student 1 demonstrated better sound blending, while Student 2 became more confident in oral reading.
Teacher 2	Student 3 and Student 4	Noticeable progress in phoneme segmentation and pronunciation accuracy. Student 3 actively participated during drills, while Student 4 showed increased reading fluency.
Teacher 3	Student 5 and Student 6	Both students moved from frustration to instructional level. Student 5 improved in rhyming and sound discrimination, and Student 6 exhibited enhanced vocabulary recall.
Teacher 4	Student 7 and Student 8	Improved engagement and focus during reading sessions. Student 7 showed clearer articulation, and

		Student 8 developed better comprehension after decoding practice.
<b>Teacher 5</b>	Student 9	Demonstrated consistent improvement in identifying beginning and ending sounds. Reading speed and confidence also increased.
<b>Teacher 6</b>	Student 10	Showed the highest progress among all participants, shifting from the frustration level (below 89%) to instructional level (90–96%) in the Phil-IRI post-assessment.

The data in Table 2 summarize the progress observed by teachers who implemented the Heggerty phonemic awareness program. Each teacher monitored the performance of assigned students before and after the 12 weeks. The findings revealed that most students exhibited improvement in decoding accuracy, phonemic

manipulation, and oral reading fluency. Teachers also noted higher engagement and confidence during classroom activities, with several learners advancing from the Frustration Level to the Instructional Level in the Phil-IRI post-assessment.

**Table 3. Summary of Students' Reading Improvement Based on Post-Assessment and Observation**

Student	Pre-Assessment (Phil-IRI)	Post-Assessment (Phil-IRI)	Reading Improvement
<b>Student 1</b>	Frustration (below 89%)	Instructional (91%)	Improved in sound blending and decoding short words.
<b>Student 2</b>	Frustration (85%)	Instructional (92%)	Gained fluency and confidence in oral reading.
<b>Student 3</b>	Frustration (83%)	Instructional (94%)	Developed clearer pronunciation and faster reading speed.
<b>Student 4</b>	Frustration (88%)	Instructional (95%)	Enhanced word recognition and sentence fluency.
<b>Student 5</b>	Frustration (82%)	Instructional (90%)	Improved rhyming and sound discrimination.
<b>Student 6</b>	Frustration (84%)	Instructional (93%)	Demonstrated better vocabulary recall and decoding.
<b>Student 7</b>	Frustration (80%)	Instructional (91%)	Clearer articulation and reading rhythm.
<b>Student 8</b>	Frustration (87%)	Instructional (96%)	Stronger comprehension and word identification.
<b>Student 9</b>	Frustration (86%)	Instructional (94%)	Greater accuracy in identifying beginning and ending sounds.
<b>Student 10</b>	Frustration (83%)	Instructional (96%)	Outstanding overall progress in fluency and confidence.

The Phil-IRI results and classroom observations showed consistent improvement among all ten students. Each participant advanced from the Frustration Level to the Instructional Level, with remarkable gains in decoding,

pronunciation, and reading fluency. The structured, daily implementation of the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program played a crucial role in fostering these improvements.

**Table 4. Teachers' Feedback Based on the Semi-Structured Interview Guide**

Themes	Key Insights from Teachers
<b>Lesson Planning and Implementation</b>	Teachers followed the Heggerty structure, dedicating 10 minutes daily to phonemic awareness activities such as rhyming, blending, and segmentation. They noted the ease of integrating these into English lessons.

<b>Effective Strategies Used</b>	Use of songs, clapping patterns, and choral repetition helped maintain engagement and reinforced sound recognition.
<b>Student Engagement</b>	Students were more participative and attentive during phonemic sessions, especially those previously identified as struggling readers.
<b>Observed Student Progress</b>	Teachers observed growth in decoding, pronunciation, and reading confidence. Learners became more active readers and better listeners.
<b>Challenges Encountered</b>	Time constraints and differences in reading levels among students required flexible pacing and peer-assisted learning.
<b>Support and Reflection</b>	Teachers valued the program's structure and expressed interest in continuing its use, citing its positive impact on reading behavior and confidence.

Teachers consistently emphasized that the Heggerty Program's short, daily lessons were practical, engaging, and effective in improving phonemic skills. While

challenges such as limited time and varying learner levels arose, adaptive strategies ensured that instruction remained inclusive and effective.

*Table 5. Combined Thematic Analysis of Teachers' and Students' Feedback on the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program*

<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b>Teachers' Perspective</b>	<b>Students' Perspective</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>1. Active and Enjoyable Learning</b>	Teachers observed that students were more engaged when lessons included songs, games, and clapping activities.	Students found the activities fun and interactive, saying it made reading less intimidating.	The program promoted active participation and motivation, by identifying effective techniques in developing phonemic awareness.
<b>2. Improved Decoding and Pronunciation Skills</b>	Teachers reported noticeable improvements in blending, segmenting, and pronunciation.	Students recognized their progress in identifying sounds and blending words correctly.	Both perspectives confirmed that core phonemic skills were effectively developed.
<b>3. Growth in Reading Confidence</b>	Teachers noted increased confidence in reading aloud and participation.	Students shared that they were no longer afraid to read in front of classmates.	The program helped students overcome hesitation, leading to improved oral fluency and self-assurance.
<b>4. Overcoming Challenges through Support</b>	Teachers cited time constraints and varying reading levels but used peer support and improvisation.	Students appreciated when teachers guided them patiently during difficult tasks.	The collaboration between teachers and students reflected adaptability and inclusiveness in implementation.
<b>5. Importance of Daily Practice</b>	Teachers emphasized that consistent short lessons produced visible progress.	Students noticed that daily repetition helped them remember sounds easily.	Consistency was essential to habit formation and mastery in literacy.
<b>6. Positive Classroom Environment</b>	Teachers observed enthusiasm and cooperation during sessions.	Students felt encouraged and enjoyed reading with peers.	The program cultivated a supportive and motivating classroom culture.

Thematic analysis showed strong alignment between teacher and student experiences. The Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program enhanced engagement, decoding skills, and confidence.

Both groups confirmed that systematic, daily instruction contributed to measurable literacy growth and a positive learning atmosphere. The results directly answered both research questions, affirming the program's effectiveness in improving reading proficiency among struggling readers.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION**

The findings of the study revealed that the implementation of the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program significantly enhanced students' reading skills, fluency, and confidence.

Based on classroom observations and teacher interviews, English teachers employed a structured set of phonemic awareness activities grounded in the Heggerty program. These activities included rhyming, syllable segmentation, onset-rime awareness, phoneme blending, phoneme isolation, and phoneme manipulation. Lessons were conducted for ten minutes per session, twice daily, providing consistent reinforcement of phonemic skills across the 12-week intervention period. Teachers ensured that each new skill built upon previously mastered ones. Strategies such as oral repetition, clapping, choral responses, and word blending drills were used to help students recognize and manipulate sounds within words.

These approaches align with Heggerty (2020) and the National Reading Panel (2000), who emphasized that short, systematic, and explicit instruction in phonemic awareness significantly enhances decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Similarly, the results corroborate the findings of the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (2008), which concluded that reading interventions lasting 10–20 minutes per session, three to five times per week, yield the greatest gains for struggling readers. The present study confirmed that daily, short, and focused phonemic sessions can be successfully integrated into time-constrained English classes without disrupting other curricular components.

The use of songs, chants, and games made lessons more interactive, which teachers reported as beneficial for sustaining attention and participation. These activities promoted a low-pressure and enjoyable learning environment where students developed auditory discrimination and phoneme manipulation—skills essential to reading comprehension. This supports Adams (1990) and Stanovich (1986), who found that early phonological sensitivity predicts later reading success, as it helps learners form stable sound–symbol correspondences.

Teachers and students both attested to the program's practicality and effectiveness. Teachers described the Heggerty Program as highly structured and easy to implement, making it adaptable to existing routines. The consistency of short, daily lessons led to noticeable improvement in reading behavior. Data from Table 2

indicated increased attentiveness and motivation, while Table 3 confirmed measurable gains in the Phil-IRI post-assessment, where all participants advanced from the Frustration Level (below 89%) to the Instructional Level (90–96%).

From the teachers' perspective (Table 4), the most effective strategies included repetition, blending drills, and group reading responses, which improved pronunciation, decoding, and confidence. Although challenges such as time constraints, inconsistent attendance, and varying reading levels were encountered, teachers overcame these through adaptive pacing, peer collaboration, and flexible instruction. These findings echo Ehri et al. (2001), who demonstrated that explicit phonemic awareness instruction accelerates the development of word recognition and reading fluency, even among older learners.

From the students' perspective (Table 5), the activities were enjoyable, manageable, and motivating. Learners reported that repetitive and rhythmic exercises helped them internalize sounds and apply these in reading tasks. Though some initially struggled with blending and segmentation, continuous exposure led to mastery. Many expressed increased confidence and willingness to read aloud—clear indicators of improved fluency and self-efficacy. This aligns with Torgesen et al. (2006), who noted that repeated phonemic practice enhances both accuracy and reading confidence among struggling readers.

Moreover, these results correspond with Fabre Merchán et al. (2021) and Garcia and Dronio (2024), who found that active engagement in phonetic and phonemic tasks fosters deeper comprehension and stronger decoding abilities. The present study contributes to this growing evidence by demonstrating that systematic, teacher-led phonemic instruction remains beneficial even at the secondary level, traditionally viewed as beyond the foundational literacy stage.

Overall, the study confirmed that consistent implementation of the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program produces measurable gains in reading fluency, pronunciation, decoding, and motivation. The integration of structured phonemic activities improved reading accuracy and enhanced classroom engagement. These findings support the assertion of Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) that phonemic awareness forms a

critical foundation for literacy and should not be limited to early grade instruction.

Thus, the results affirm that phonemic awareness activities remain vital across all grade levels. For struggling secondary readers, especially those identified

through Phil-IRI assessments, structured interventions like the Heggerty Program provide an effective, evidence-based approach to addressing reading difficulties and fostering long-term literacy development within English Language Teaching (ELT).

### APPENDICES

#### Appendix A

Letter to the Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Greetings!

We, the undersigned researchers, under the supervision of our research adviser Mr. Rex Paulino, are currently conducting a study entitled "English Language Learners' Experience of Phonemic Awareness Activities for the Development of Reading Skills."

The purpose of this study is to explore how phonemic awareness activities contribute to the reading skill development of English language learners. The study will involve classroom observation, teacher interviews, and student feedback, guided by ethical research practices.

In this connection, we respectfully seek your permission to conduct the research. Rest assured that all information gathered will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purposes.

We would deeply appreciate your favorable consideration.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

Respectfully yours,

**Gerly Rose Alvarez Bayoneta**  
**Ma. Beverly Tahum Jaleco**  
**Lynie Rose Ballego Molina**  
**Jydel Rose Samson Rodriguez**  
(Researchers)

Approved by:

**Mr. Rex Paulino**  
(Research Adviser)

#### Appendix B

##### *Phonemic Awareness Observation Checklist*

Based on Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Observed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Strand&Section:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

##### *Instructions:*

For each indicator, mark No if the skill is not observed, Developing if partial or inconsistent, and Yes if consistently observed. Include your observation notes.

Category	Indicators (Based on Heggerty Skills)	No	Developing	Yes	Observation Notes
<b>A. Rhyming Skills</b>	Student can identify words that rhyme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Student can generate words that rhyme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>B. Syllable Segmentation</b>	Student can count the number of syllables in a word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Student can clap or tap out syllables in a word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>C. Onset and Rime Awareness</b>	Student can identify the first sound (onset) in a word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Student can identify the rime (rest of the word) in a word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>D. Phoneme Isolation</b>	Student can identify the first, middle, or last sound in a word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>E. Phoneme Blending</b>	Student can blend individual sounds to form a word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>F. Phoneme Segmentation</b>	Student can segment a word into individual sounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>G. Phoneme Addition and Deletion</b>	Student can add a phoneme to a word to make a new word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Student can delete a phoneme to make a new word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>H. Letter-Sound Correspondence</b>	Student can identify the letter that corresponds to a given sound	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Student can produce the sound for a given letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>I. Oral Blending/Segmenting in Context</b>	Student can blend or segment sounds in words during reading or storytelling activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Appendix C

### *Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Teachers*

Based on Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade/Subject Taught: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Confidentiality Notice:**

The identity of the teacher will be kept strictly confidential. All information collected will be used for research purposes only and will not be shared in a way that could identify the participant.

#### **Purpose:**

To explore teachers' experiences, strategies, challenges, and perceptions regarding the implementation of daily phonemic awareness lessons in the classroom.

#### **Section A: Planning and Instruction**

- How do you plan and organize your daily phonemic awareness lessons?

- Which phonemic awareness skills (e.g., rhyming, syllable segmentation, phoneme blending) do you emphasize the most, and why?
- How do you integrate phonemic awareness instruction into your English or reading lessons?
- What instructional strategies or materials (e.g., songs, games, manipulatives) do you find most effective in teaching these skills?

#### **Section B: Student Engagement and Learning**

- How do your students respond to the daily phonemic awareness lessons? Are they engaged and motivated?

- Have you noticed improvements in students' phonemic awareness, decoding, or reading fluency since implementing these lessons? Can you provide examples?
- Which skills do students find most challenging (e.g., phoneme segmentation, blending, deletion), and how do you support them?

### Section C: Challenges and Support

- What challenges do you face when implementing phonemic awareness lessons (e.g., time, materials, student readiness)?
- What strategies have you used to overcome these challenges?
- What additional support or resources would help you teach phonemic awareness more effectively?
- Section D: Reflection
- In your opinion, how important are daily phonemic awareness lessons for reading development?
- Are there any modifications or adaptations you make to better suit your students' needs?
- How do you assess whether students have mastered each phonemic awareness skill?

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author, [G.R.A. Bayoneta, M.B.T. Jaleco, L.R.B. Molina, J.R.S. Rodriguez, and R.S. Paulino.]. The data are not publicly available due to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the research participants

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