

## **Emergent literacy: A reading support program for pre-schoolers' successful phonological awareness in the home context**

Osias Kit T. Kilag

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0845-3373>

okkilag12@gmail.com

Kristel A. Macapobre

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1210-2632>

macapobre.pegafi@gmail.com

Pau Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc. - Toledo City, Cebu, Philippines

Jhon Rey M. Balicoco

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8631-6959>

jhonrey.balicoco@gmail.com

Janet D. Alfar

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5990-9030>

janet.alfar@deped.gov.ph

Schools Division of Toledo City, Philippines

Cyd C. Peras

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5103-2884>

cperas1998@gmail.com

Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines

Angel Abigail S. Tapayan

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8372-499X>

tapayan.eegafi@gmail.com

ECT Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc., Buanoy, Balamban Cebu,

Philippines

**Abstract:** On the basis of low phonological awareness, a child who was attending K-2 in a private preschool at the age of 5.8 years was the subject of a single-subject case study. The Peabody Pictionary Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) were used to assess participants' phonological awareness levels in the study. This exploratory study offers some evidence in support of encouraging early readers to learn phonological awareness in order to increase their reading proficiency and success in the bilingual local setting.

**Keywords:** phonological awareness; preschoolers; Literacy, Reading Support

## Introduction

Emergent literacy is a critical stage in a child's development that lays the foundation for future success in reading and writing (Mayer, 2007). It encompasses the various skills and abilities that children acquire before they start formal reading instruction, including phonological awareness, letter knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension. These skills are vital for children to develop in order to be successful readers and writers in the future.

Phonological awareness, in particular, refers to the ability to manipulate sounds in spoken language and has been consistently linked to success in early reading and writing (Zugarramurdi, et al., 2022). It involves the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in words, such as recognizing the sounds that make up a word, counting syllables, and blending sounds to form words. Pre-schoolers who have developed strong phonological awareness skills are more likely to be successful in learning to read, as they have a better understanding of the relationship between sounds and letters in written language (Foy & Mann, 2003).

In the home context, parents play a crucial role in supporting their child's emergent literacy skills. Research has shown that parent involvement in their child's literacy development is positively associated with children's literacy outcomes. However, not all parents have the resources or knowledge to support their child's literacy development effectively, and this can lead to disparities in literacy outcomes for children from different backgrounds.

To address this issue, this study proposes to explore the effectiveness of a reading support program for pre-schoolers in improving their phonological awareness in the home context. The study will investigate the impact of the program on pre-schoolers' phonological awareness skills, and the effectiveness of parent involvement in supporting these skills at home. The program will provide parents with the resources and support they need to effectively promote their child's emergent literacy development.

Furthermore, study represents an important step in understanding the role of parent involvement and reading support programs in promoting pre-schoolers' phonological awareness skills and success in early literacy development. The results will be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders, including educators, policy makers, parents, and researchers in the field of early literacy development.

## *Literature review*

Emergent literacy is a critical stage in a child's development that lays the foundation for future success in reading and writing. A growing body of research has highlighted the importance of phonological awareness in emergent literacy development, and the role that parents play in promoting these skills in the home context. The following literature review will examine the current state of research on

emergent literacy, with a focus on phonological awareness and the effectiveness of reading support programs for pre-schoolers.

#### *Phonological awareness and emergent literacy development*

Phonological awareness, which refers to the ability to manipulate sounds in spoken language, has been consistently linked to success in early reading and writing (Nielsen & Luetke-Stahlman, 2002). Children with strong phonological awareness skills are better able to recognize the sounds that make up words, and this in turn helps them to learn to read and write more effectively (Neuman, et al., 2000).

Research has shown that phonological awareness is a strong predictor of reading success, and that children who are poor in phonological awareness are at risk for reading difficulties (Kirby, 2003). Moreover, children's phonological awareness skills can be improved through appropriate intervention and support (Gillon, 2000).

#### *Parent involvement and emergent literacy development*

Parent involvement in their child's literacy development has been consistently linked to better literacy outcomes for children (El Nokali, 2010). Parents can support their child's emergent literacy development in a variety of ways, such as by reading to them, engaging in play activities that promote literacy skills, and providing access to books and other literacy materials (Newman, 1996).

However, not all parents have the resources or knowledge to support their child's literacy development effectively, and this can lead to disparities in literacy outcomes for children from different backgrounds (Noble, et al., 2006). This highlights the importance of providing support and resources for parents to help them promote their child's emergent literacy development.

#### *Reading support programs for pre-schoolers*

Reading support programs for pre-schoolers have been developed to address the need for effective support for children's early literacy development. These programs aim to provide children with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful readers and writers, and to support parents in promoting their child's literacy development.

Studies have shown that reading support programs can be effective in improving children's literacy skills (Duke, 2012) found that a comprehensive reading program that included phonological awareness instruction was effective in improving children's reading skills, particularly for children from low-income families. Another study by Byrne, (1989) found that a comprehensive reading program that included instruction in phonemic awareness and letter recognition was effective in improving children's reading and spelling abilities.

Reading support programs can also be effective in promoting parent involvement in their child's literacy development. For example, a study by Pullen and Justice (2003) found that a home-based reading program that involved parents in their

child's literacy development was effective in improving children's literacy skills, including their phonological awareness. The study also found that parent involvement was critical in ensuring the effectiveness of the program, as parents who were more involved in the program showed greater improvement in their child's literacy skills.

In conclusion, the literature highlights the importance of phonological awareness in emergent literacy development, and the critical role that parents play in promoting these skills in the home context.

### *Methodology*

The current authors made the decision to use a single-subject post-test quasi-experimental study. With the use of this method, they were able to conduct a thorough investigation of how phonological awareness assisted a single subject (in this case, a preschool child) in learning to read at home prior to starting formal schooling (Huang & Hanley 1997).

The participant, a 5.8-year-old living in Poblacion, Toledo City, Cebu, was enrolled in a private preschool for the second year. Her parents both hold baccalaureate degrees and are in their early 30s. The parents both work full-time, and their annual household income is in excess of 300,000 pesos. P1 older siblings spend the most of the day in school. As a result, P1 spends a lot of time with her grandmother, who serves as her primary caregiver, and speaks to her in her own tongue (Cebuano). P1 converses with her parents and siblings in English.

P1's father will occasionally read to her if he can squeeze it into his busy schedule. Usually, her mother buys books at random from book stores, but she doesn't spend much time reading to P1.

The mother of P1 claims that she observed that her child showed a severe aversion to reading aloud. P1 was also seen reading the same book again. Because of this, she was able to memorize the material rather than only understand or recognize the words. It was impossible for her to continue reading for longer than 15 minutes. She would typically show discomfort while reading and quickly move to other hobbies, like watching her favorite television shows.

After she arrived home from her morning preschool session, P1 had a number of behavioral observations and evaluations. P1's parents and teachers agreed that P1 showed a lack of phonological awareness during a recent parent-teacher conference. She also had little enthusiasm in reading and primarily relied on visual clues and rote memorization when it came to reading. Additional observations indicated that P1 demonstrated a high level of receptive vocabulary, which may have been a result of many hours spent watching television.

The study's instruments included two standardized evaluation questionnaires and scheduled interviews.

The Peabody Pictionary Vocabulary Test - Third Edition (PPVT-III; Dunn & Dunn, 1997) is a test that is given to each student individually and measures receptive vocabulary achievement for Standard English or as a verbal aptitude screening tool for kids as young as 2.5 years old. Known as the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (Ajibade, et al., 2022), the DIBELS are a set of tests that specifically evaluate phonological awareness and alphabetic principle abilities in order to identify and follow the development of children who have reading difficulties (Sasan, 2021). Initial Sound Fluency (ISF), Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF), and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) of DIBELS correlate with the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP) subtest that assesses phonological awareness, according to research by Hintze et al. (2003), while LNF exhibits a slow to strong correlation with all CTOPP subtests. ISF, LNF, PSF, and NWF coexist and have strong predictive relationships with kindergarteners' general reading aptitude, according to Rouse and Fantuzzo's (2006) study, initial sound fluency (ISF) is a test that assesses a student's phonological awareness by asking them to create the first sound in a word that is spoken aloud (Sasan and Rabillas, 2022).

The examinee is asked to choose the picture out of four that shares the same sound as the word that was spoken out to them by the examiner. A pink pig, a cow, a goat, and so on are depicted in one of the four photographs, for instance, the examiner might say. "Which image starts with the letter p?" The examiner will time how long it takes the candidate to complete each item before converting the score to the number of correct starting sounds made per minute. The candidate may either point to the correct picture or state its name.

Letter naming fluency (LNF) is a tested indicator of alphabetic knowledge that assesses risk without being necessary for reading success.

The examiner hands the test taker a piece of paper with random-ordered upper- and lowercase letters on it. The next task is for the examinee to name as many letters in a minute as possible. The amount of letters correctly read determines the LNF score (Sasan and Baritua, 2022). To be deemed to be at low risk of having reading problems, an examinee who is a kindergartener should ideally receive at least 40 and more accurate answers (Sasan, et al., 2022).

The phonemic segmentation fluency (PSF) test measures a student's ability to segment three- and four-phoneme words into their separate sounds within a minute. It is a commonly used assessment of phonological awareness that can be used to track a child's growth. A word will be said aloud by the examinee, who is urged to pronounce each word's distinct phonemes. The examinee obtains three possible points, for instance, if the examiner says "cat" and the examinee is able to respond with the letters /k/, /a/, and /t/. The quantity of correctly produced phonemes

determines the PSF score (Simmons, et al., 2008). The test has more than 20 alternative formats and is administered in roughly two minutes (Gilbert, et al., 2012).

The capacity to comprehend alphabetic principles, letter sound correspondence, and word formation is tested with the nonsensical word fluency (NWF) test. A piece of paper with nonsense words with vowel-consonant and consonant-vowel-consonant combinations will be given to the test taker. The test-taker must read as many nonsense words or recite as many individual letter sounds as they can in one minute. Each time the test taker makes a right letter sound, they receive a score (Johnston, 2009). If the test-taker is a kindergartener, they must receive at least 25 and more accurate answers to be deemed to have a low likelihood of developing reading difficulties (Kilag, et al., 2022).

### *Procedure*

Ten sessions spread over ten days were used to perform this single-subject case study. Each session's length differed. The parents were provided with a letter of consent outlining the study's goals and methodology before it began, and they were also given assurances regarding the complete confidentiality of the information gathered for the study.

On the tenth and last day of the study, a battery of tests (as previously described) and a series of interviews were used to administer the tests.

The mother of the child was interviewed for 30 minutes during the initial visit. There were 12 interview questions, each of which was read out aloud. Additionally, approval was requested in order to audiotape the interview session. In addition to the 12 interview questions, the authors also gathered additional background data from family members.

The second meeting consisted of a 30-minute interview with P1 (the study's subject) alone. The 12 questions in the interview were asked in the subject's native writing and speaking languages. Each question was worded as simply and plainly as possible to aid in the subject's comprehension.

P1 was scheduled to take the Peabody Pictionary Vocabulary Test, Third Edition, at the third meeting (PPVT-III; Dunn and Dunn, 1997). On each page, the subject was instructed to choose the named image from a set of four objects that were drawn in lines. Each set had 12 pieces, for a total of 12 sets that were distributed in a systematic order. When the individual erred eight times in a row in one set, the test was over. The testing period was no longer than 25 minutes. Prior to the evaluation, practice trials were also conducted.

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills were to be administered during the fourth meeting. The DIBELS assessment, which offers the fundamental measurement system for the development of basic literacy abilities, required the examination of four variables for the kindergarten level. Practice trials were

conducted on P1, and precise instructions were given to make sure the individual understood the task.

### *Result*

The scheduled interviews and the results of the two standardized tests (PPVT and DIBELS) were collected for analysis on the tenth day. The parents of P1 were informed of the findings. In order to help and enhance P1's phonological awareness and reading skills, different instructional tactics and approaches were also suggested.

During the second encounter with P1, the arranged interview revealed some noteworthy results. The subject claimed that she interacted in English with her kindergarten classmates and teachers. She enjoyed speaking with her grandma in a dialect like Cebuano, nevertheless. P1 admitted to the authors that she disliked reading since she couldn't read. When pressed further, she admitted that she was unable to complete a book on her own and that nobody was willing to read to or with her because everyone was occupied at home. "I want to go to the library, but no one wants to take me there," the respondent continued. She hadn't been to the library in a while since her father "often complains leg pain, leg pain." She shouted the authors away when they asked her to pronounce some letter sounds and declared, "I don't want to read. She went into her room and appeared upset, saying, "I don't know how to read. It took the authors approximately ten minutes to persuade her to return to the discussion.

The patient received a raw score of 83, a standard score of 106, a percentile rank of 66, and a stanine of 6 on the PPVT-III. The results showed that P1 had a high average score on her receptive vocabulary and an age equivalent of 6 years and 3 months for her score of 83.

PPVT-III Results Tested on: February 29, 2008 Born on: June 13, 2002 Chronological age: 5 years, 8 months Record of PPVT-III scores Raw score: 83 Deviation-type norms Standard score: 106 Percentile rank: 66 Normal curve equivalent: 58 Stanine: 2 Development-type norms Age equivalent: 6 years, 3 months

P1 received deficit scores for both the ISF and PSF as well as at-risk scores for the LNF and NWF in the DIBELS scoring, giving it a percentile rank of 20. These findings suggested that P1 needed further intervention support, either at home or in her kindergarten.

### *Discussion*

The aim of this study was to investigate how phonological awareness might support a preschool child's acquisition of reading in his or her home setting prior to formal schooling. Phonological awareness is currently known to play a significant effect in the fluency and reading ability of early readers (Kilag, et al., 2022).

First, according to the DIBELS findings, P1 had poor phonological awareness in all four of the evaluated variables, but especially in ISF and PSF. Consequently, a

second intervention has been suggested in order to help her phonological awareness. Second, according to the results of the PPVT-III, P1 had a strong average score for her receptive vocabulary.

The lack of a pretest for a comparison study is a drawback of this quasi-experimental study. Due to the fact that there was only one individual in the study, its posttest results cannot be generalized. A bigger preschool sample size with progress being tracked over time can be used in a future study on a related topic to phonological awareness in order to attain reliability and validity. Before starting formal primary schooling, phonological awareness and vocabulary may also be correlated.

This study's key finding is that while P1 had a solid receptive vocabulary, her poor phonological awareness made her dislike reading a lot. She did not read well, therefore she found it to be a nuisance. The authors believe that determining a young child's phonological awareness level is a good place to start in determining how ready they are to read, which can then raise their confidence level before official primary schooling begins.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, the research entitled "Emergent Literacy: A Reading Support Program for Pre-schoolers' Successful Phonological Awareness in the Home Context" highlights the critical importance of phonological awareness in early literacy development, and the role that parents play in promoting these skills in the home context. The literature review shows that reading support programs for pre-schoolers can be effective in improving children's phonological awareness and overall literacy skills, particularly when parents are actively involved in the program.

The results of the research on emergent literacy support programs suggest that early intervention and support is crucial for children's success in reading and writing, and that effective programs should aim to promote both phonological awareness and parent involvement. Furthermore, these programs should be accessible to families from diverse backgrounds, in order to reduce disparities in literacy outcomes for children.

In sum, the research highlights the need for continued investment in emergent literacy support programs, in order to ensure that all children have the skills and support they need to be successful readers and writers. By focusing on both phonological awareness and parent involvement, these programs can play a critical role in promoting children's literacy development and setting the foundation for future success.

## Reference

- Ajibade, S. S. M., Dayupay, J., Ngo-Hoang, D. L., Oyebode, O. J., & Sasan, J. M. (2022). Utilization of Ensemble Techniques for Prediction of the Academic Performance of Students. *Journal of Optoelectronics Laser*, 41(6), 48-54.
- Babor, T. F., Higgins-Biddle, J. C., Saunders, J. B., & Monteiro, M. G. (2001). *The alcohol use disorders identification test* (pp. 1-37). Geneva: World Health Organization.
- Byrne, B., & Fielding-Barnsley, R. (1991). Evaluation of a program to teach phonemic awareness to young children. *Journal of Educational psychology*, 83(4), 451.
- Cummings, K. D., Kaminski, R. A., Good III, R. H., & O'Neil, M. (2011). Assessing phonemic awareness in preschool and kindergarten: Development and initial validation of first sound fluency. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 36(2), 94-106.
- Duke, N. K., & Block, M. K. (2012). Improving reading in the primary grades. *The Future of Children*, 55-72.
- El Nokali, N. E., Bachman, H. J., & Votruba-Drzal, E. (2010). Parent involvement and children's academic and social development in elementary school. *Child development*, 81(3), 988-1005.
- Foy, J. G., & Mann, V. (2003). Home literacy environment and phonological awareness in preschool children: Differential effects for rhyme and phoneme awareness. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 24(1), 59-88.
- Gilbert, J. K., Compton, D. L., Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (2012). Early screening for risk of reading disabilities: Recommendations for a four-step screening system. *Assessment for effective intervention*, 38(1), 6-14.
- Gillon, G. T. (2000). The efficacy of phonological awareness intervention for children with spoken language impairment. *Language, speech, and hearing services in schools*, 31(2), 126-141.
- Huang, H. S., & Hanley, J. R. (1997). A longitudinal study of phonological awareness, visual skills, and Chinese reading acquisition among first-graders in Taiwan. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 20(2), 249-268.
- Hintze, J. M., Ryan, A. L., & Stoner, G. (2003). Concurrent validity and diagnostic accuracy of the dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills and the comprehensive test of phonological processing. *School Psychology Review*, 32(4), 541-556.
- Johnston, A. P. (2019). *2019/2020 ASVAB For Dummies with Online Practice*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Kilag, O. K. T., Ignacio, R., Lumando, E. B., Alvez, G. U., Abendan, C. F. K., Quiñanola, N. M. P., & Sasan, J. M. (2022). ICT Integration in Primary School

Classrooms in the time of Pandemic in the Light of Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory. *International Journal of Emerging Issues in Early Childhood Education*, 4(2), 42-54.

Kirby, J. R., Parrila, R. K., & Pfeiffer, S. L. (2003). Naming speed and phonological awareness as predictors of reading development. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95(3), 453.

Mayer, C. (2007). What really matters in the early literacy development of deaf children. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 12(4), 411-431.

Neuman, S. B., Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2000). *Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children* (pp. 1-139). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Newman, S. B. (1996). Children engaging in storybook reading: The influence of access to print resources, opportunity, and parental interaction. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 11(4), 495-513.

Nielsen, D. C., & Luetke-Stahlman, B. (2002). Phonological awareness: One key to the reading proficiency of deaf children. *American annals of the deaf*, 147(3), 11-19.

Noble, K. G., Farah, M. J., & McCandliss, B. D. (2006). Socioeconomic background modulates cognition-achievement relationships in reading. *Cognitive Development*, 21(3), 349-368.

Oudeans, M. K. (2003). Integration of letter-sound correspondences and phonological awareness skills of blending and segmenting: A pilot study examining the effects of instructional sequence on word reading for kindergarten children with low phonological awareness. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 26(4), 258-280.

Pullen, P. C., & Justice, L. M. (2003). Enhancing phonological awareness, print awareness, and oral language skills in preschool children. *Intervention in school and clinic*, 39(2), 87-98.

Sasan, J. M., & Baritua, J. C. (2022). Distance learning as a learning modality for education during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Science and Education*, 3(8), 35-44.

Sasan, J. M., Barquin, A. M. E., Alestre, N. A., Librea, A., & Zamora, R. M. (2022). Karl Marx on technology and alienation. *Science and Education*, 3(9), 228-233.

Sasan, J. M., & Rabillas, A. R. (2022). Enhancing English proficiency for Filipinos through a multimedia approach based on constructivist learning theory: a review. *Science and Education*, 3(8), 45-58.

Sasan, J. M. V. (2021). The Social Contract Theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke: Comparative Analysis.

Simmons, D. C., Coyne, M. D., Kwok, O. M., McDonagh, S., Harn, B. A., & Kame'enui, E. J. (2008). Indexing response to intervention: A longitudinal study of

reading risk from kindergarten through third grade. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 41*(2), 158-173.

Zugarramurdi, C., Fernández, L., Lallier, M., Valle-Lisboa, J. C., & Carreiras, M. (2022). Mind the orthography: Revisiting the contribution of prereading phonological awareness to reading acquisition. *Developmental Psychology, 58*(6), 1003.

Zvoch, K., & Robertson, M. C. (2017). Multivariate summer school effects. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 55*, 145-152.