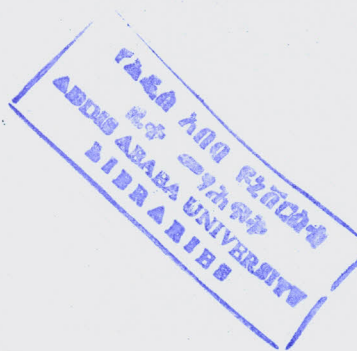


**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND  
LITERATURE GRADUATE PROGRAM**

**AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHERS' APPLICATION OF  
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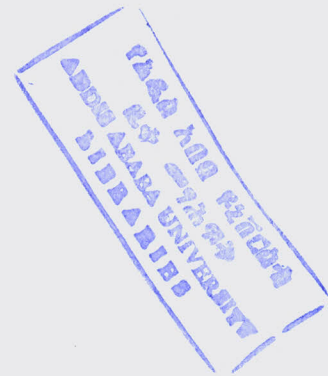
**BY  
THEODRA GEORGE**



**JULY, 2009**

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**BY  
THEODRA GEORGE**



**A Thesis Submitted to  
The Department of Foreign Language and Literature  
(Graduate Program)**

**In partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in  
Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)**

**JULY, 2009**

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JULY, 2009



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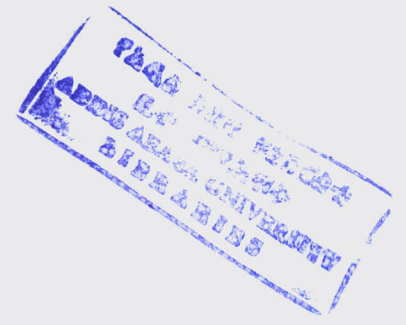
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## Definition of Key Terms

**Grapheme** – the smallest part of written language that represents a phoneme in the spelling of a word.

**Onset and rime** – are parts of spoken language that are smaller than syllables but larger than phonemes.

**Phonics** - the sound-letter relationships to recognize words.

**Phoneme** – the smallest units of a spoken language that makes a difference in the meaning.

**Phonemic Awareness** – the ability to manipulate the individual units of sounds in words

**Phonological awareness** – understanding the structure of words and how they are broken down; it involves the ability to notice and manipulate the sounds in words. Abbreviated as **PA**.

**Word wall** – A wall on which words are displayed under the alphabets; usually irregular or high frequency words. For example under ‘a’ we might put the words apple, ape and axe.

## List of Abbreviations

<b>AIA</b>	Addis International Academy
<b>ELLS</b>	English Language Learners
<b>EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>FL</b>	Foreign language
<b>NEPS</b>	New English Private School
<b>TEFL</b>	Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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## Abstract

*The main objective of this study was to explore teachers' application of "Phonological Awareness" in three private kindergarten schools and to explore the extent to which kindergarten teachers are aware of "Phonological Awareness" in the level mentioned.*

*To gather information on the above main objectives various instruments were used: classroom observation using video recorder, teachers' questionnaire, and interview. All the eight English language teachers in the three private preschools participated in the study.*

*The data were transcribed, categorized, analyzed and discussed. The findings revealed that teachers are aware and apply "Phonological Awareness" to some extent in their classroom. Problems were observed in the classroom during observations which was teachers' lack of sufficient knowledge on the language structure. And also there was a discrepancy between the real classroom practice and the result from questionnaire and interview. These problems are mainly related to the teachers' educational background and their qualification. To apply it properly the teacher needs to have the knowledge of the language structure they teach.*

*To overcome the observed problem of teachers' application, This research paper provide recommendations that could bring about a change in the practice of teaching and learning initial reading in kindergarten level.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1. Background of the study

The objective of language teaching is to provide students with the necessary skills. Skills which help them tackle the problem and face their environment accordingly; hence to master these skills students are expected to learn well in the language class room.

Concerning English language learning, it is obvious that there is a greater demand to learn English as a foreign language; as English is one of the widely used internationally and particularly for academic purposes; basic language skill learning program has to start from a well organized base. This basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) learning has to start from the pre-school level. It is at this level children should learn vital skills like, identifying alphabets and aware of how the alphabets works in reading to understand and be understood Ur (1996). According to scholars like Fisher (1996) this process in learning needs proper attention.

Reading is one of the most important skills in learning foreign language. It is needed in both classroom and real life situations. As Nuttal (1982; 19) explains it, the main importance of reading in FL class is to teach the language. McDonough and Shaw (1993:89) also stated that “reading is clearly one of the most important; in fact in many instances around the world we may argue that reading is the most important foreign language skill, particularly in cases where students have to read English material for their own specialist subject may never have to speak the language....” To foreign language learners especially in situations where a FL is used as a medium of instruction; reading plays significant role; because learning of almost all subjects requires reading academic material (Girma, 1994:1).

In Ethiopia the teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) dates back to 1946 GC. In those days it was used as a medium of instruction starting from grade one. Girma (2005:1) in his doctoral dissertation quoted a report of Bender et.al. (1976:382) as follows

*The aim of teaching English in the order given in 1947/48 elementary English curriculum was first reading and understanding; second hearing and understanding; this was followed by teaching to speak the language fluently and accurately; the last skill to be taught was writing correctly and clearly.*

Girma also added that, this 1947/48 developed elementary and secondary English curriculum had been in use until 1958/59. A new elementary English curriculum was appraised in 1962. This 1963/64 English curriculum recommended that English has to be introduced as a subject starting from grade three and the medium of instruction from 1-6 has to be in Amharic (Tamene, 2000: 13). Since then up to 1994 English is used as a medium instruction in secondary and tertiary levels and it is given as a subject at the levels mentioned. After the 1994 educational and training policy English is given as a subject starting from grade one onwards. The policy also has given much emphasis to use English as a medium of instruction in the secondary and tertiary levels (Girma, 2005). To this end, the practice of the English language skills has crucially much importance in foreign language education.

Nowadays in school too many children struggle with learning to read. Many teachers and parents confirmed that students have problems on reading which causes tremendous long-term consequences in learning, understanding and being understood. This failure also affects the developments of children's self-confidence and motivation to learn, as well as their school performance. (National Reading Panel issued in 2000 retrieved from the internet on Jan 20, 2009 available <http://www.nichd.gov/publications>; Steven and Murray, Journal of Educational Psychology June 1994, 86 (2))

Over the decades scholarly debates occurred regarding the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches used to teach children how to read, and these debates are ongoing. In this ongoing process theoreticians tried to use a skill that connected with speech sounds which is called "*Phonological Awareness*". It provides the basis for sound curriculum; decisions and instructional approaches that can help to prevent the predictable reading problem. This individual awareness of the manipulation of speech sounds (phonemes) comprised of spoken words (Yopp, 1992). This ability is necessary for children to learn how to read because letters represent

phonemes and measures of PA are strong predictors of future reading success in kindergarten, first grade, and beyond (: Kame'enui, et. al., 1997, National Reading Panel, 2000, Leu,2005).

Learning the English language utilizes 26 letters in 250 different spelling configurations to represent approximately 40 phonemes. (The list is attached in the appendix section) It is difficult because those phonemes that make up the words are not distinctly separate from each other and thus must be taught. The ability to distinguish and manipulate phonemes is a must for the successful acquisition of beginning reading skills. Good evidence exists that a major difference between successful and struggling readers is due to differences in the readers' phonological skills (Snow, 1998).

Children who are learning EFL/ESL has problem in learning to read as compared to native speakers. Research shows that the development of basic literacy skills for both native speakers and second-language learners are similar (Chiappe, Siegal, Wade-Woolley, 2002 as cited in Gillon 2004; 50). Kindergarten English language learners (ELLs) consistently fall significantly behind in the development of English PA. According to Goswami(1990) much more research is needed to determine factors to close this performance gap.

In this study the main focus is to explore teachers' application of phonological awareness in teaching initial reading in the classroom.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

In high school reading class, students are expected to have the knowledge of how to spell words, ability in reading new or unfamiliar words, understanding and get the meaning while reading a word, and interest in reading a given passage or text (Nuttal, 1996). All the above capacity in reading helps the students to understand a given text or passage. Now a day's reading a given text in a language class is not the only defect but also it revealed difficulty in understanding subjective notes to achieve result in other subjects.

Poor reading performance in primary, secondary and college levels has been observed by local MA researchers, such as Dubale Lawgaw (1990) Genene Mekonen (1994) and Mesfin Derash (2008). To list their findings of the above studies; Dubale's studied the impact of reading ability in English on the performance of some content subjects. In his finding Dubale shows that certain skills in reading do correlate more closely with subject success. Word attack skill performance tests results correlated more closely with subject abilities than the cloze and multiple choice performance tests. Reading ability correlates with students' content subject performance. He also added that students' performance in reading was also very poor. Genene's research was on the reading abilities of junior secondary school students with the reading levels required of them in their content areas, the finding shows that the grade seven students cannot read and understand the science and geography subject textbooks even with the help of a teacher.

To see what has been done on reading related areas in the local research; Mendida Barkessa (1988) made a comparison of reading level of Bahir Dar Teachers College freshman students with the reading levels expected of them. In his finding Mendida shows that there is a gap between the students' actual reading ability and what is expected of them in their subject area textbooks. Getachew Asrat (1996) made an attempt to investigate the teaching of reading in government high school in Addis Ababa. Getachew's finding shows that "reading was not taught in its own right and high school English teachers in Addis Ababa have not had any training in teaching reading in high schools. No pre/while/post reading activities are employed. The teachers rigidly follow the text book. There was no attempt made to supplement or substitute text book exercises with their own tasks" (1996:51). So the students' performance in reading will not be as expected of them when they join university.

Wudu Liyew(2008) made a research on the English language competence of primary school first-cycle level teachers emphasizing attitudinal competence. In his paper Wudu (2008) includes "Phonemic Awareness" as an area explored by Barr and Jonson (1997) Cunningham et al. (1995) for the development of children's reading under the topic of teaching reading and writing in elementary classes.

Mesfin Derash's (2008) research was on first cycle primary school students. His research findings show, "the teaching of English reading in grade four in Addis Ababa city has turned out to be traditional and students reading ability was observed to be low. As recommendation he suggested one of the solutions as "early childhood education should be offered to every child before he/she comes to regular school." Based on aforementioned researchers' findings and recommendation, this study attempted to fill the gap that was left out by other studies in the TEFL area by trying to explore the application of a skill which was not studied i.e. teaching initial reading using "*phonological Awareness*" in kindergarten.

### **1.3. Objectives of the study**

- To explore the extent to which kindergarten teachers at private school are aware of "Phonological Awareness"
- To explore teacher's application of PA in three private kindergarten school
- To examine the extent to which "Phonological Awareness" is applied in Ethiopian context.

### **1.4. Significance of the study**

Because of its direct relevance to the immediate and long term needs of the nation's English Language Education Program at preschool or kindergarten level, the significance of this study is to create awareness on phonology in solving poor performance of reading and also create procedural method of developing curriculum concerning the short coming. It takes into account the actual classroom practice of teaching initial reading. Since it is the first research that has been done in the area,

- It will raise primarily the awareness of teachers in the perception of teaching initial reading.
- Provide teacher trainers with useful information about the approach.
- It will help as a base line for initiating another researcher on this field of study.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

This study is limited to the kindergarten level teachers, specifically the study focuses at teachers who are teaching at prep level (the students age is 5-6). In our context, most kindergarten stages of learning development; classes are divided into three sections; Kg, UKG and Preparatory. This study only focuses on the preparatory level. The data gathering instrument, observation depended on the schools quarterly coverage of class time.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 2. Introduction

Different scholars view differently the teaching and learning of reading as a foreign or second language in general and the teaching of English at the initial/early stage using “Phonological Awareness” in kindergarten level in particular. In this section, the views of the scholars will be discussed into different sub-topics.

#### 2.1 Definition and Nature of Reading

Scholars who did research on reading defined reading according to their research purpose; but the definitions seem to have similar concept. To see some of them:

According to Snow (1998:17) “Reading is used essentially to be successful in our society. The ability to read is highly valued and important for social and economic advancement.” Grellet (1981) defined reading as a process of extracting and understanding the required information from the text. As Bright and McGregor (1972) stated the major language skill that enables to understand ideas, facts concepts and thoughts are reading.

Carrel (1998:3) states that reading is an active process in which a reader makes interaction with the text using his linguistic and schematic knowledge along with the input presented in the text. Williams (1984) also assert that reading as a process of decoding symbols: looking at words and understanding what has been written. “Reading is hierarchy of skills from processing of individual letters and their associated sounds to word recognition to text processing competencies” (Pressley 2000, cited in Mesfin, 2008).According to this definition reading begins as early as the first day of identifying a single letter.

## 2.2. Views of reading

According to Wallace (1992) there are two views about reading; a process view and a product view. A process view investigates how the reader may arrive at a particular interpretation of what s/he reads while a product view relates reading only to what the reader has ‘got out’ of the text. Researchers in the area of reading argued that texts are not self contained objects by themselves. In other words, they do not contain meaning instead; they have potential for meaning. This potential will be realized by reader-text interaction. As she further states “meaning is created in the course of reading as the reader draws both an existing linguistic and schematic knowledge and the input provided by the printed or written text.”(1992; 39)

To consider the above discussion with initial reading, to help children make meaning out of the materials they are working with things that are incorporated in their material have to be taken from their environment and from what they do and see in their day-to-day activities. In line with this Wallace has the following to say:

*“It has been found out that children from all social background very readily acquires an understandings of print reigned to the ways they perceive their day-to-day needs and interest ...this is something called environmental print” (1992;7)*

On top of this McCullough M. et al (1976;87) affirms that by the time the child starts schooling if s/he comes from a favorable home environment, s/he has acquired an oral vocabulary useful to her/him in their daily living before learning the printed words. For instance, friends, animals, clothes, houses, vegetables etc. Children should have many different experiences with these objects. They should play with them, talk about them, notice similarities and differences among them and cut out pictures showing different varieties of each. After these experiences, the child is ready to see the particular word pasted under the appropriate picture. Example the word ‘rabbit’ may be pasted on a page of many different kinds of rabbits in various models. This is to mean that experience comes first, labels next. McCullough, M. et al (1976) puts this idea in the following way:



*Reading like talking should be an intrinsic part of the child's living. If associating the printed word with the sound of the spoken or with an object or action meets in real need in the child's life. Moreover, the printed word is then learned with its meaningful association (1976;88)*

According to Murcia (1991) there are also different views about teaching reading to children; one of this views is that teaching children the phoneme-grapheme correspondence. And then making them to practice the form of the written form is more advisable than getting them to practice the meaning of written word first. Murcia puts this idea as follows:

*The taught is that once learners are able to sound out the letters, they will be able to read the words and then once they are able to read the words they will be able to make meaning of the text. This is an example of a bottom up strategy whereby it is assumed that understanding the individual sounds will eventually lead to understanding text (199:170)*

The assumption here is that if children are first made to be familiarized with the written form with its correspondence sound representation, they will then go to the meaning of the written form. She goes on to say in this strategy that students are not given the vocabulary words whose sounds they do not practice.

Children cannot learn to read an alphabetic language like English unless they understand that the words that they hear contain smaller sounds, called Phonemes. Phonemes cannot actually be heard by the ear, because when we speak the sound in each syllable and word are folded into one sound to permit rapid communication. Thus, when speaking the word 'cat' the ear hears one sound, not three as in /k/ /a/ /t/. Accordingly, children must be given awareness about phoneme-grapheme correspondence since learning to read is not a natural process rather it requires systematic and well-informed instruction.([www.kidsdource.com](http://www.kidsdource.com))

### 2.3. Views on Initial Reading

Different scholars use the word early or beginning reading to refer to initial reading. According to McCullough, et.al (1976:86) learning to read is a life time process. The acquisition of "real" reading typically begins at about age five to seven, after the child has entered kindergarten (Snow, 1998: 68). The baby takes his/her first step on the road in learning to read when she/he starts differentiating the vague blur of light with that of darkness, his mother's and father's face other objects that has interest and meaning for him. Soon she/he begins to notice printed words in signs around the house and on the street. Then she/he starts noticing the black or white marks on his/her picture books and on other printed materials that his/her families are using. In line with this, Wallace (1992:53) also states, if learning to read is considered as a developmental process; it is difficult to say where or at which point reading begins. She asks the following questions in an attempt to find out a point where children start reading.

*Is it when child turns the page of a book and tells a story which is not a story in the book? Is it when child recognizes his or her own name in print? Is it even earlier when she/he climbs on to an adult's knee to take part in the reading of a story to an older brother or sister?*

*(Wallace1992:53)*

Wallace further discusses that early reading is usually characterized by practice that engage motor skills. For example the ability to identify shapes and patterns of phonemes and word recognition skills.

Other researchers give a scientific order for reading process. "Reading process consists of the five critical components of reading, which are Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension of connected text. These elements support each other and are woven together to build a solid foundation of linguistic understanding for the reader." (Olson, 1993, reading and writing quarterly, 9(4); Cunningham, 2000).

The first step in early reading is understands of print concept. As Smith (1978:131) points out, understanding the printed marks by making an association between spoken and written words is the insight that the beginning reader must acquire. But, according to Wallace (1992:9) the lack of

predictable sound symbol correspondence in English, presents children readers with challenge in figuring out a connection between the language they hear and the language they see in print. Scholars in this area suggest phonological awareness teaching as a solution for such problems. (The detail of “Phonological Awareness” briefly presented section 2.8). It is the foundation for success in reading she/he will succeed to read, if s/he has the knowledge of phonology/ phonological awareness. (Wallace 1992; Gillon2004; Zgonc 2000; Adams et.al 1998; [www.kidsource.com](http://www.kidsource.com))

### **2.3.1 Some Guidelines in Teaching Initial Reading**

Ur (1996) in his book “A Course in Language Teaching” jots down some guidelines on teaching beginning reading. Their list is written here under.

1. It is preferable to begin reading only after the learners have some basic knowledge of the spoken language
2. Begin with single letters starting with the most common and useful. A collection of known common letters very quickly enables students to cope with large number of words.
3. It is, surely more useful for reading purpose if the learner knows the most common sound of the letter; its name can be left until later
4. Teach the different forms of the letters together. This slows down the process a little.
5. Alphabetical order can be learned later when the learners need to know it for dictionary use.

And also in his master’s dissertation Wudu(2008) mentioned one important point when teaching reading in the class room is that teachers has to nurture students by creating an opportunity to discover the outside environment. The class must be animated with all the resources the teacher can create.

*...the teacher needs to create such an environment -'a language rich environment' in his classroom, Graves et al. (1999: 55). A language rich environment classroom is one that is permeated with things to read, write, listen to, and talk about (Cunningham et al., 1995). So, classroom walls should be covered with posters, pictures, signs, labels, and student work as the above writers express. (Wudu, 2008:29)*

#### **2.4. Linguistic knowledge schema and language input versus initial reading.**

Murcia, (1991) discusses, usually when readers read texts, they relate what is given in the print with what they know. They do not absorb each and every formation given in the print passively without bringing to their experience. It means they interact with the print by using their own schema. Marine citing Rumelhart defines schemata as follows. “Schemata are ‘packets’ or ‘units’ of knowledge that represent our beliefs about objects, situations, events, sequences of events and sequence of actions”(1991:176) In relation to this, children’s ability of using their schemata to understand prints are not strong. As it is stated in marine, schemata plays a great role to understand texts. Therefore teachers should help learners to develop schemata for reading. Not only because they are facing new schemata every time they approach a text, but also they need to develop schemata generally for what reading is.

*Children are sometimes led to think that reading is “sounding out letters” or filling in phonics worksheets, but the real connection between the spoken word and the written word often eludes them. The first job for the teacher is, of course to try to help his/her students to develop schema (script) that let them in on the nature of reading as the interpretation of the written word (1991:177)*

Quoting Vigotsky, Murcia (1991) further claims that the child learning to read should be base on two things or needs; first the print is meaningful and second is that reading may require developing or changing or discovering new knowledge structure.

## **2.5. Approaches to Teach Early Reading**

According to Mason (1981:66-83) and Murcia (1991:178-182) there are three major approaches that are used to teach children early reading. These are the basal-reader-approach, the language-experience approach, and the literature based approach.

### **2.5.1. The Basal reader approach**

This approach affirms that reading is a bottom-up-process where one begins reading instructions with the phonics of the language and goes on to a more difficult passage step-by-step. In this approach learners are not responsible for reading passages that include sounds of sight words which they have not yet been introduced. Mastery of sound-symbol correspondence is the heart of this method. Critics of this approach claims that reading is neither bottom-up or top-down, rather it is a multifaceted phenomenon with various processes operating in parallel. They argue that exclusive reliance on this approach will not encourage reading for meaning. To this end, they suggested that a strict basal approach will need to be supplemented by other meaning based activities if ESL learners are to succeed.

### **2.5.2. Language Experience Approach**

The emphasis in this approach is an acquiring of a reading vocabulary i.e. personally meaningful and immediately useful. The idea here is that the reading selection is based on something generated from the life experience of learners when a student tells his/her story to the other students. They write and then read what they have been dictated. After this the teacher selects some vocabularies from the story and discuss to the students. This activity is accompanied by other reading skill practices like introducing phonics, patterns, punctuation, syntax and semantics. Finally in this approach, students are supposed to move from reading to their own dictation to reading material authorized by others. According to the proponents of this approach, it has an advantage to teach or show students a connection between text and meaning. They further claim that it helps students to make a bridge between spoken language and written language. This intern makes learners to realize the text is meaningful. The following points are outlined as an advantage of this approach to teach children to read.

- It allows them to use what they know to begin to read
- It doesn't make students to sound out words which have no meaning for them.
- Since the context is very clear, it helps students to develop their prediction skills, based on semantics.
- It helps learners to bring meaning to the text in order to get meaning from the text.

This approach is not only confines students initiated texts but also it encourages the use of literature and other content areas. Advantages of this approach claims that before getting a meaning from the texts, children need to built up lot of schemata

### **2.5.3. Literature Based Approach**

In this approach children's literature is used as a starting point to teach children reading and all its sub skills. The selection of literature can include picture books, folk-tales, fables, myths, epics, modern fantasy, poetry, modern fiction, biography, etc. For the non-reader children, the teacher reads the story to them. The reading of the literature is accompanied by supportive interactions that help the children understand the text. Sometime is spent in discussing about the message of the text to develop new schemata to the children. The assumption for such practice is that it would help children to have an idea about how authors are able to communicate with their audience through written language. In this approach, the story of the text is accompanied by pictures that reflect the story. This assists children to develop an idea that "..... as the picture represents events, writing represents speech" Murcia (1991:181). The advocates claim that this approach guides child learners to read for meaning. They also discusses that based on the literature selection child learners also study vocabulary, language art skills, phonics and other reading skills.

## **2.6. Methods for Teaching Early Reading**

As Mason, E, (1981) and Carbon, M. et.al (1991) point out, along with the major approaches, there are also other methods meant to teach early reading such as; oral discussion, reading method, the guided, the

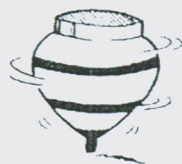
cloze, the kinesthetic, the linguistic phonetic, the impress, the sustained silent reading methods, From these lists, based on their suitability to this study context, this section will try to discuss only the three methods that are: the cloze, the kinesthetic and the linguistic phonetic method.

### **2.6.1. The cloze method**

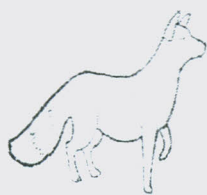
This method assumes that people naturally have a tendency to close up gaps that naturally occurs in pictures or in languages. “When we read Twinkle, twinkle, little\_\_\_\_\_, for example, our minds add the missing word, ‘*star*’. Mason, E (1981:105). Psychologists address this tendency as the principle of closure.

Beginner readers can be taught words through this method in the following ways: by matching sounds or words to pictures; pictures accompanied by words with missing letters; simple sentences with missing words or words with missing letters. Examples are given below

Fill in the blank with missing letter sound



t \_\_\_\_\_ p



f \_\_\_\_\_ x

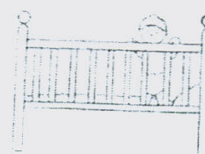


b \_\_\_\_\_ x

Fill the missing first sound for the words



\_\_\_\_\_at



\_\_\_\_\_ot



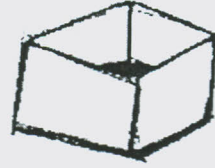
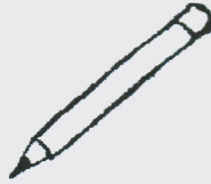
\_\_\_\_\_up

2. by matching sounds/words and pictures

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

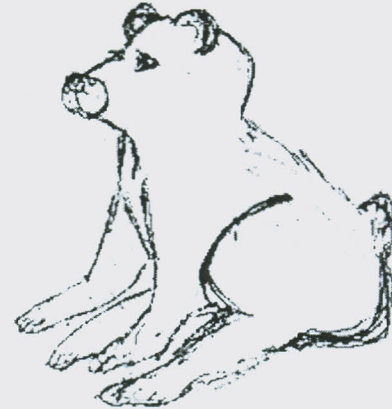
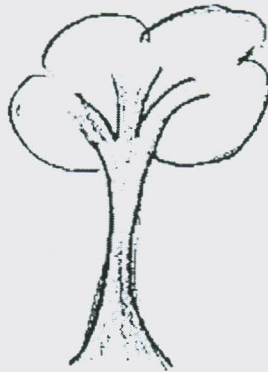
Help the baseball go to the correct initial letter sound.

Bb



10

Pp



Tt



(Adopted from English for upper KG (2006:42))

This method requires children to have writing ability and teachers must have the means to produce sufficient copies of cloze materials.

### **2.6.2 The Kinesthetic Method**

This method is meant to teach only a part of a reading process. It is a method helpful for children to learn words by tracing them. The adjective kinesthetic, according to Mason (1981:107) is derived from two words 'Kinetic' and 'esthetic'. 'Kinetic' describes the energy of motion and 'esthetic' is related to feelings. Therefore, kinesthetic means the feeling of motion.

In this method children are given familiar words printed on a sheet of heavy paper in a heavy black ink marker. Then they are instructed to trace the words in a way that they were made while the teacher is sounding out the letter in a word slowly. This process is repeated several times until the child can write the word correctly from dictation and recognize it in context and in isolation. The kinesthetic method found to be effective way of teaching children to read though it is slow. And, it is also identified to be suitable for children that are having difficulty in learning to recognize words.

### **2.6.3. Linguistic-Phonetic Method**

Like the kinesthetic method, this method is also designed to teach only word recognition. This method teaches children to use the correspondence between phonemes (language sounds) and graphemes (the letter and set of letters representing the sound) to guess the pronunciation of printed words presented to them.

According to Mason (1981) and Carbon (1991) experience of this method, there are three ways used to teach children letter-sound correspondence. In the first case, pictures are displayed with initial letter in upper-case and lower-case forms. The children are to associate the first sound in the name of the object pictured with the letter. If an *apple* is shown with the letter 'a' then the

children are to learn the short sound of 'a'. In this way children also taught to 'blend' sounds to make words. For example rhyming words: *flood, blood, bread, grade* etc.

The second way of teaching children letter representation sounds is whole word phonics. This one is also similar with the above way, but the difference is that children not taught the particular sounds and their representation in isolation rather they will be given number of words which have same sounds in common. Pictures for these words also be given then students are supposed to mark sounds that these words have in common.

In the third way, to teach letter-sound correspondence in the linguistic word method, pictures will not be used, rather words containing two of the same phonemes are listed. Sets or 'families' of words such as '*bag*' *gag, lag, nag, rag, sag*, etc. are taught as entities using the look-and-say procedure. Teaching a few sight words like *the, was, a, of, from* etc., children read sentences that contain '*family*' words together with these sight words.

Each approaches and method has their own unique character; but using them in an integrated way will give the out most result.

## **2.7. Phonological /Phonemic awareness and its relation to initial reading success**

Educators are always looking for valid and reliable predictors of educational achievement. One reason why educators are interested in phonological awareness/phonemic awareness is that; it is the best predictor of the smoothness of early reading acquisition. PA is a foundational ability underlying the learning of spelling-sound-correspondences. (Stonovich 1994; Gillon 2004)

The relation between PA and reading acquisition are complex and many researchers have proved that phonological awareness is highly correlated to reading and spelling success to list some of them

- Phonemic awareness can be developed through instruction and furthermore, doing so significantly accelerates children's subsequent reading and writing achievement (Ball and Bachmann 1991, Byrne and Fielding-Barnsley, 1991, 1993, 1995)
- Phonemic awareness is both a prerequisite for and a consequence of learning to read (Adams 1990, Morals 1979, Yopp1992)
- Phonemic awareness is the first component of effective reading instruction (Moats1996)
- A number of studies also support phonemic skills are critical to the early stages of learning to read (e.g. Duncan, Seymour, & Hill, 1997; Høien, Lundberg, Stanovich, & Bjaalid, 1995; McDougall, Hulme, Ellis, & Monk, 1994; Nation & Hulme, 1997 in *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*).

Research supports that phonological awareness and reading has a causal relationship. This has important implication for teaching PA. Phonological awareness helps children learn to read and to spell. According to Cunningham (2000) Students taught with PA instruction read 54% of new words correctly, students with whole-language read 3%. However, balance is necessary. It is not an innate ability and needs to be included in teaching programs prior to reading instruction.

This research's main objectives are to explore teachers' awareness and application of PA in teaching of initial reading at preschool. Based on this the next section will present about Phonological Awareness in detail.

## **2.8. What is "Phonological Awareness?"**

According to scholars the term "phonological awareness" began to appear in the research literature in the late 1970s and early 1980. It refers to an individual's awareness of the sound structure or phonological structure of a spoken word (as cited in Gillon 2004:p 2 Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Leong & Sheh, 1982; Marcel, 1980; Rozina & Gleitman, 1977; Tunmer &

Fletcher, 1981; Zifcak, 1981).Phonological awareness is one of the broader category of metalinguistic. Gillon also added the following about Phonological awareness:

*'Metalinguistic awareness' is a general term that refers to the ability to think about and reflect upon language. Instead of using language in a functional sense, knowledge of metalinguistic awareness demonstrates awareness of and reflection upon, the structural features of language. Mattingly (1972) was among the first researchers to discuss a relationship between children's awareness of language and their progress in reading development. Mattingly argued that reading is a language-based skill dependent upon awareness of primary linguistic activities of speaking and listening (2004:10).*

The following figure illustrates the intersection of met linguistic awareness and phonological awareness in relation to word recognition processes. It is cited from Gillon(2004,10)

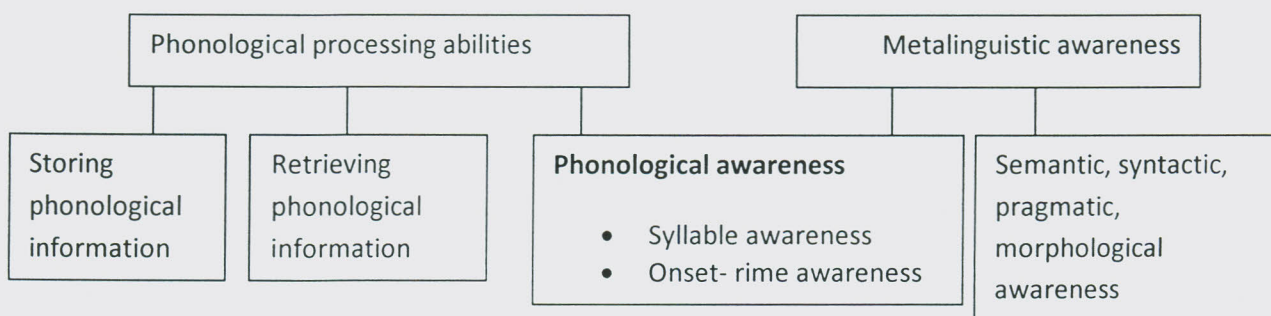


Figure 1: Phonological awareness in relation to Phonological Processing and metalinguistic awareness.

Phonological Awareness (PA) is defined as an understanding of the different ways in which our spoken language can be broken down and manipulated, also spoken language is made up of words and words are made up of individual units of sounds called phonemes. Children need to be able to manipulate these sounds in order to become fluent readers (Zgonc, 2000; Adams et al, 1998). Phonological Awareness is an oral skill independent of print and also; this skills include

concepts of spoken word, rhyme, syllables, phonemes and phoneme manipulation. Children learning EFL/ESL are able to demonstrate phonological awareness skills in English after a relatively short period of study (Siegel, et.al. 1999). Phonological awareness or phonological sensitivity is the ability to attend explicitly to the phonological structure of spoken words, rather than just to their meaning and syntactic roles. (Snow, 1998:111)

Stanovich (1993) also defines “phonological awareness” as the ability to deal explicitly and segmental with sound units smaller than the syllable. In terms of importance, he found out that phonological awareness is the best predictor of the ease of early reading acquisition. In agreement, Lundberg (1988) also indicate that students who increased their awareness of phonemes facilitated their subsequent reading acquisition. That research goes on to say that phonological awareness can be learnt, which conflicts with the pure whole-language argument that phonological awareness is only naturally acquired.

### **2.8.1. Importance of phonological awareness**

Phonological awareness appears to play a causal role in reading acquisition. It is a foundational ability underlying the learning of spelling-sound correspondences (Olson 1993, 352). Children who do not develop phonological awareness do not keep up and go on to learn how to read. According to Adam (1990) it is critical for children to be able to link phoneme grapheme relationship to knowledge of letters. Research indicates that once beginning readers have some awareness of phonemes and their corresponding grapheme representation; further reading instruction heighten their awareness of reading in a language.

Phonological awareness has important implication for teaching. It is not an innate ability and needs to be included in teaching programs prior to reading instruction, as well as being taught in relation to text. Many studies have found that certain levels of phonological awareness are essential to the development of early reading ability as an awareness of rhyme, the ability to

blend sounds to isolate initial and final consonants and to distinguish phonological elements smaller than syllables (Lewkowicz1980:690; Yopp, 1992:697)

So to sum up the two main importance of PA are:

- It helps children understand the alphabetic principle and notice the regular ways in which letters represent sounds in words.
- It enables the generation of possibilities for words in context that are only partially “sound out”

### 2.8.2. Phonological awareness and Phonics

From a teaching perspective the terms phonological awareness and phoneme awareness are sometimes confused with the term “phonics.” All these terms have some relationship to sounds with words. “*Phonics* is the system by which symbols represent sounds in an alphabetic writing system.” (Adam, et.al, 1998;3) *Phonics* refers to teaching sound-letter correspondence for reading and spelling. For example, /a/ is for **apple**; /b/ for **bat**; /c/ for **cat** or ‘s’ says /s/ are phonics activities. (Cunningham, 2000; Strickland,1998)

These activities are clearly differing from phonological awareness tasks that require an awareness of the sound structure of words.” For example, understanding the word, **bat** has three phonemes, or that **bat** and **cat** are a rhyming words, differs from being taught the sound-symbol relationships for **a**, **b**, and **c**”(Gillon, 2004; 11). Historically phonics was taught in a skill-and-drill manner through workbook activities; that is phonics was taught in isolation from phoneme awareness. Phoneme awareness also can be taught in isolation, with children asked to segment words into individual phonemes or blend phonemes to make words without any reference to letters. However, research has clearly verified that for achievement of early/initial reading to occur, integrating phonics and phonemic awareness is needed (Cunningham, 2000).



In short phonemic awareness is being "aware" of where the sound is (beginning - middle - end), while phonics is knowing the sound itself. From the researcher teaching experience, phonemic awareness exercises are also a great method for teaching phonics as well and phonics is what needs to be used for decoding new words.

### 2.8.3. Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness

There is a distinction between Phonological awareness (PA) and phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness represents a skill that fits under PA. Most of the times these two terms are consistently interchanged in the literature or researches. So to conclude PA is an umbrella term that includes phonemic awareness. The broader phonological awareness skills are identifying and making oral rhymes and identifying syllables in spoken words. The narrower phonological awareness skills includes identify onset and rimes in spoken syllables and identifying individual phonemes in spoken words (phonemic awareness)(Gillon, 2000). This research will study on the broader phonological awareness skills.

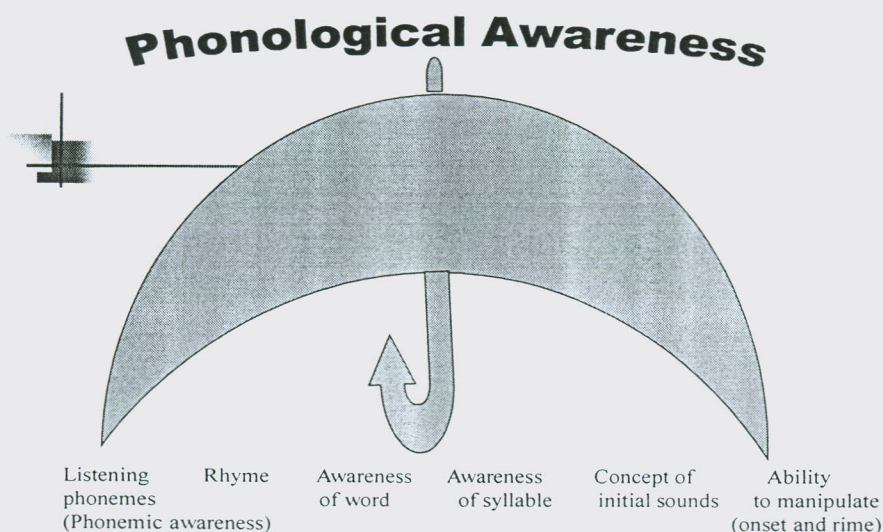


Figure 2. Terms under the Umbrella of Phonological Awareness.

National Reading Panel, 2000 and Snow, et al, 1998, retrieved from the internet 20/3/2009

#### **2.8.4. Levels of phonological awareness**

According to Gillon(2004: 4 ), the levels of PA involve the following.

- Onset and rime awareness
- Syllables awareness
- Phonemic awareness

##### ***2.8.4.1. Onset and rime Awareness***

Onset and rime are parts of spoken language that are smaller than syllables but larger than phonemes. “Demonstrating awareness that syllables and words can be divided at the onset-rime level shows phonological awareness at the interasyllabic level and is often referred to as “onset-rime awareness”. (Goswami & Bryant, 1990; Moats, 2000 as cited in Gillon 2004:6).

“An onset is the first consonant or consonant blend in a word; rime, which is spelled the old English way, without the ‘h’ and with an ‘i’ instead of ‘y’, is the first vowel of a word plus all the letters that follow it.” (Zgonc, 2000;69) “An onset is the initial consonant(s) sound of a syllable e.g. the onset of ‘bag’ is |b|; of ‘swim’ is |sw-|. A rime is the part of a syllable that contains the vowel and all that follows it e.g. the rime of ‘bag’ is –ag; of swim, -im). In order to understand that words rime first there must be awareness that the words share a common ending (rime unit) that can be separated from the beginning of the word (onset) (Zgonc, 2000; Adams, 1998)

##### ***2.8.4.2. Syllable awareness***

Syllable awareness at the syllable level requires awareness that words can be divided into syllables. Gillon(2004:5 citing Treiman,1993) “discussed three principles of syllable division that have been tested in experimental work investigating children’s spelling development”

1. Each syllable in a word contains a vowel (or vowel sound, such as that produced by the letter *y* in *baby*)
2. Syllables division follows the stress pattern of a word, with as many consonants as possible beginning a stressed syllable. Thus, *patrol* is divided as *pa-trol* not *pat-rol*
3. Syllables are divided to ensure that consonants which cannot be clustered together in English do not begin or end a syllable. For example, *only* is divided at *on-ly*, not *onl-y* or *o-nly*, because *nl* is not a legal cluster in English. (1993:18)

There are some differences in the marking of syllable boundaries. For example, the syllables in the word *hospital* may be verbally segmented (or clapped out by a child) as *hos-pital* or *hos-pi-tal* both attempts would be considered correct, because both reflect awareness of the vowel principle (Gillon, 2004, 6)

The ability to blend, segment and delete syllables

Example : *foot-ball* together says *football*

Clap the word parts in *rainbow*. (two claps)

Say *outside* without *side*. (*out*)

#### **2.8.4.3. Phonemic Awareness**

Different scholars defined phonemic awareness. Phoneme is the smallest unit of language which has no inherent meaning. It is also the units of speech that are represented by the letters of an alphabetic language. "Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words and syllables that are made up of sequences of speech sounds" (Yopp, 1992).

It is the ability to recognize that words are made up of discrete sets of sounds and to manipulate this sounds is called phonemic awareness (Cunningham, 2000). The ability to learn how sounds map to letters is related to phonemic awareness. (Strickland, 1999:5)

All the above definition tell us that phonemic awareness develops through a series of stages and children are first to be aware of language is made up of individual words, that words are made up of syllables, and syllables are made up of phonemes. “Reading beginners must learn to separate these sounds one from the other and categorizes them in ways that permit them to understand how words are spelled. It is this sort of explicit, deep knowledge that falls under the rubrics of phonemic awareness” (Zgonc, 2000; Adams et.al. 1998; Blevins, 1997)

The difficult part in acquiring phonemic awareness is that sounds of any given phoneme can vary considerably from speaker to speaker, and from word to word. For ex. “in northern USA the pronunciation of “grease” typically rhymes with “peace”, whereas in the southern part it rhymes with “sneeze”. “ In order to build phonemic awareness in all children class room teachers should know little about the structure of the language especially phonology. Phonology is the area of linguistics that focuses on understanding the speech-sound system and the sound patterns of spoken language. (Gillon, 2004; Adams et.al.1998)

And also in his master’s dissertation Wudu(2008) mentioned one important point when teaching reading in the class room ; teachers has to nurture students by creating an opportunity to discover the outside environment. The class must be animated with all the resources the teacher can create. Phonemic awareness is further analyzed into the following five levels

#### **2.8.4.3..1. Recitation of nursery rhymes**

Nursery rhymes offer a resource. They are the traditional verses that have been handed down orally over the generation and enjoyed by young children. In England these rhymes, first sung by their mothers to their children at home. Now days it plays an important role in the nursery school curriculum. The majority of nursery rhymes are short and uncomplicated a bonus when teaching younger children. They often consist of a four line verses with rhyming couplets.(Chris Burrows,

learning English with nursery rhymes” [www.oup.com/elt/preschool](http://www.oup.com/elt/preschool), retrieved from the internet  
December 14,2008)

For example

Jack and Jill went up the hill,  
To fetch a pail of water;  
Jack fell down, and broke his crown,  
And Jill came tumbling after.

Twinkle twinkle little star,  
How I wonder what you are,  
Up above the world so high  
Like a diamond in the sky.

The children do not need to understand the meaning of every word. What is important generally at this early stage is the ability to listen and to imitate the correct pronunciation and intonation, and this is where the repetitive vocabulary, word pattern rhythms of the verse come in. Just as English children learn these rhymes today to develop their language skills, it seems logical to use it to children who are starting to learn English as a foreign language. Most rhymes tell simple stories of often silly and consequently keep young children interested and stimulated. The rhyme characters are good, fun and varied. By singing the rhymes the children easily grasp the correct intonation pronunciation and rhythm of the language. Singing the rhymes can be adapted to class room settings. ( Chris, [www.oup.com/elt/preschool](http://www.oup.com/elt/preschool))

Gillon(2004) also agree with the idea that nursery rhymes facilitate early phonological awareness development; his idea is quoted here under:

*Children's knowledge of nursery rhymes at 3 years was strongly correlated with performance on rhyme detection at 4 years and with phoneme detection at 5 and 6 years of age. Rhyme detection performance at 4, and 7 months, also strongly predicted reading and spelling performance at 5 and 6 years. Variables that may have influenced this relationship (i.e. intelligence, socioeconomic status, and initial phonological ability) were controlled. The researchers concluded that knowledge of nursery rhymes enhances phonological awareness knowledge, which in turn is linked to success in reading and spelling. (2004:47).*

## **Rhyme**

The ability to recognize rhyme, complete rhyme and produce rhyme. Word rhyming activities evoke the realization that almost any words can be rhymed. (Zgonc, 2000 and Blevins1997)

Example: Does **pick** rhyme with **stick**?

Complete this rhyme: Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall

Humpty Dumpty had a great \_\_\_\_\_.

What word or pretend word rhymes with **ball**?

Different kinds of rhyming word examples are presented here under:

Example of rhyming words with identical sounds at the end-same pronunciation

cat-hat	chair-hair
car-far	mouse-house
bed-red	rose-hose
bag-rag	face-lace

Example of rhyming words different sound letters at the end – same pronunciation

to	two	too
bowl	mole	poll
bread	said	fed
won	fun	done
pare	pear	pair

2.8.4.3.2. Ability to compare and contrast sounds in words

It is grouping words with similar or dissimilar sounds (beginning, middle, and end of words).

Eg. Recognizing which words in a set of words begin with the same sound

**Which word begins with different sound?**

dog	drum	cot	doll
bat	ball	egg	bag
ant	apple	ape	hot

**Write the beginning sound for each word**

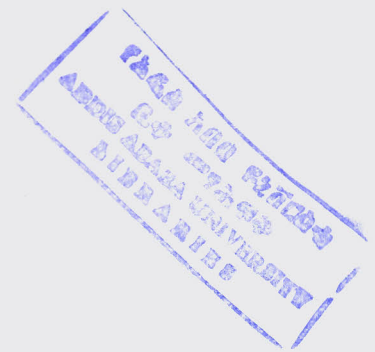
\_\_\_\_\_ *bell*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *doll*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *cup*

**Oral activities like; recognition of the same beginning sound.**

Listen to this word. Which of these words have the same beginning sound?

fan fox

tap pot



### 2.8.4.3.3. Ability to blend sounds (synthesis)

Children listen to a sequence of separately spoken phonemes, and then combine the phonemes to form a word. Then they write and read the word.

Eg. Teaching to blend sounds:

What word is |b| |i| |g| the student will answer 'big'

Now let's write the sounds in 'big' write |b|, write |i|, and then write |g|

Example of blending onset and rime (Zgonc, 2000)

We can use song

if you're happy and you know it, say my name: /c/-/ake/

if you're happy and you know it, say my name: /c/-/ake/

if you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

if you're happy and you know it, say my name. Children in unison will say "cake"

### 2.8.4.3.4. Phonemic segmentation or the ability to isolate individual sounds in syllables (Analysis)

Children break a word into its separate sounds, saying each sound as they tap out or count it. Then they write and read the word.

How many sounds are in *grab*?

How many sounds are in *hat*?

/gr/ /a/ /b/: three sounds?

/h/ /a/ /t/

Or tell the children they will be playing game in which they put sounds together to make a word or segment onset and rime.

"I am thinking of a word it starts with /b/. It ends with /at/. Can you guess the word?" /bat/.

The teacher can use by these words (listed below) to continue this game.

cake /c/ /ake/

shop /sh/ /op/

tack /t/ /ack/

boy /b/ /oy/

chin /ch/ /in/

peach /p/ /each/

#### **2.8.4.3.5. Ability to manipulate phonemes/syllables by omitting and deleting phonemes to make new words**

Children recognize the word that remains when a phoneme is removed from another word.

Teacher: What is *smile* without the /s/?

Children: *Smile* without the /s/ is *mile*.

Or use a game like “I am thinking of a word ‘stop’ .if I take the /s/ sound out we can create a new word, what is the word? It is ‘top’.

A teacher can continue with the following examples.

Eg. Plane –lane          glad-lad          tracks-racks

Replace the first sound in **back** with /t/. ‘tack’

#### **2.8.5. Points to be considered while teaching phonemic awareness**

As Yopp (1992, 700) put it; while teaching reading using phonemic awareness we have to consider the following points.

- Phonemic awareness is most effective when children are taught to manipulate
- Phonemes by using the letter of the alphabet.
- Phonemic awareness instruction is most effective when it focuses on only one or two types of phoneme manipulation, rather than several types
- Phonemic awareness instruction can help essentially all of your students learn to read, including preschoolers, kindergarteners, and first graders, who are just starting to read, and older, less able readers.
- In general, small group instruction is more effective in helping your students acquire phonemic awareness and learn to read. Small group instruction may be more effective than individual or whole group instruction because children often benefit from listening to their classmates respond and receive feedback from the other.

## 2.9. Alphabet knowledge

According to (Gillon, 2004, Blevins, 1997) to develop the children's phonemic awareness and knowledge of basic letter-sound correspondences spelling instruction is important. Beginning with regular short words, such as **pot**, **pat**, and **pan** is the focus of these instructional activities and then gradually extended to more complex spelling patterns and words, including long vowel spellings, inflections and so on. Scholars like Johnston et al. (1996) argued that letter knowledge trigger for phoneme awareness in pre-school children. In our context also as a researcher experience; the teaching and learning of English started by identifying the alphabets. As Murcia(1991) contends, guidelines for phonemic instruction suggests that teaching reading begins with a single sound consonant like ( **b, c, d, f, g, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, z**) and moves to consonants that have more than one sound depending on the environment like ( **c, g, h, w**)for example the /c/ in '**cat**' against the /c/ in '**cent**', the |g| in '**goat**' against |g| in '**giant**'. List of initial consonant sounds with words are under here as an example:

Table 1. Examples of Initial Consonant Letter Sound

<b>Initial consonant letter sounds</b>			
Sound	Example	Sound	example
b	boy	l	log
c	cat	m	mat
d	dog	n	net
f	fog	p	pan
g	get	r	rat
h	hat	s	sit
j	jug	v	van
k	kite	w	wet

This is to be followed by introduction of consonant blends in which two or more sounds are combined together to form all other sound. The sound retains the original sounds that form the

blend. For example |sl| in “*slow*”; |bl| in “*blow*”. Roach (1983) gave detail about consonant blends (consonant clusters).

*If the first syllable of the word begins with a vowel... we say that this initial syllable has zero onset. If the syllable begins with one consonant that initial consonant may be any consonant phoneme except η, ɳ, ʒ is rare. We now look at syllables beginning with two consonants. When we have two or more consonants together we call them a consonant cluster. (1983:58)*

Some more consonant blends are listed below:

Table 2. Example of Blended sounds (consonant clusters)

<b>Two or more letter-sounds that are blended (consonant clusters)</b>					
<b>Blends beginning with s</b>		<b>Blends ending in l</b>		<b>Blends ending in r</b>	
<b>Sound</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>sounds</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>sound</b>	<b>Example</b>
Sc	score	bl	blue	br	bring
Sk	skip	cl	clock	cr	crib
sm	smile	fl	flag	dr	dress
sn	snake	gl	glass	fr	frog
sp	spot	pl	play	gr	grass
st	stop	sl	sled	pr	pray
sw	swim	spl	split	sc	screen
				spr	spring
				spr	spring
				str	string
				tr	tree

Following this, consonant digraphs come which are the combinations of two consonant sounds that are together pronounced. First as beginning and then as ending sound and finally as middle sounds. Example of the words are listed below:

### **Initial Consonant Digraph**

A combination of two letters that represents one speech sound.

Sound	Example
ch	chin
sh	shell
th	thumb
wh	white

Vowel sounds are introduced in relation to their syllabic environments. In here consonant-vowel (cv) or consonant-vowel-consonant (cvc) clusters. Example '*cat*', '*pet*'. Consonant-vowel (cv) or consonant-vowel-consonant-silent-e (cvce) clusters in which the vowels have a long sound Example '*me*', '*made*'; consonant-vowel-vowel-consonant (cvvc) clusters in which the first vowel is usually pronounced ; 'long' and the second vowel is silent example '*teach*', '*meat*'. The other kinds of words which have no direct sound symbol representation as much of the English words are said to be sight words, Examples of these words are tough, thought, though etc. in this approach, the sounds in such words are thought through citing on a word by word bases."A decoding or phonemic approach presupposes the learner knows the sounds of the language to start with" Murcia, (1991;171)

Table 3. Examples of Long and Short Vowel Sounds

Long Vowel sounds		Short vowel sounds	
Sound	Example	Sound	Example
a	bake	a	bat
e	be	e	pet
i	pipe	i	big
o	rope	o	hop
u	fuse	u	bug

### r- Controlled Vowels

When there is only one vowel in a word and it is followed by “r” the sound of the vowel is neither long nor short but changed, or controlled, by the consonant “r”. These vowels are read as one sound. Examples of r-controlled vowels are listed below

Sound	Example
ar	yard
er	term
ir	bird
or	storm
ur	nurse

Table 4. Example of variation of vowel sounds

<b>variations of vowel sounds</b>			
<b>sounds</b>	<b>example</b>	<b>sound</b>	<b>example</b>
ai	rain	oa	boat
ai	chair	oa	boat
au	laugh	oo	moon
au	haul	oo	look
ea	bean	ou	rough
ea	bread	ou	would
ee	seen	ow	cow
ee	been	ow	snow
ei	eight	ua	usual
ei	their	ua	guard
ie	view	ue	guess
ie	field	ui	build
ie	quiet	ui	guide

### **Vowel Diphthongs**

<b>Sound</b>	<b>Example</b>
oi	<u>oil</u>
ou	<u>house</u>
ow	<u>owl</u>
oy	<u>boy</u>

([www.eduplace.com/Ids/article/phoneme.html](http://www.eduplace.com/Ids/article/phoneme.html))

Sartell (1968 as cited in Murcia (1991:71) research indicates that students read words improperly or misinterpret them when the word contain sounds which they cannot discriminate. It is to say that if they cannot hear the difference between |r| and ||, they may read “light” for “right” and “cloud” for “crowd”. This problem results in a temporal slowdown in comprehension, but this does not mean that misunderstanding occurs always.

The following recommendations for instruction in phonemic awareness are derived from different scholars

Kindergarten teachers can facilitate language and literacy development through play-based literacy instruction if they:

(Snow, 1998)

- allow enough time and space for play in the classroom
- provide the needed material resources
- develop children’s background knowledge for play setting
- scaffold the rehearsal of dramatic retellings, and
- become involved in play settings so as to guide the children’s attention and learning through modeling and interaction.

Spector (1995)

- At the preschool level, engage children in activities that direct their attention to the sounds in words, such as rhyming and alliteration games.
- Teach students to segment and blend.
- Combine training in segmentation and blending with instruction in letter-sound relationships.
- Teach segmentation and blending as complementary processes.
- Systematically sequence examples when teaching segmentation and blending.
- Teach for transfer to novel tasks and contexts.

Yopp (1992) offers the following general recommendations for phonemic awareness activities:

- Keep a sense of playfulness and fun, avoid drill and rote memorization.
- Use group settings that encourage interaction among children.
- Encourage children's curiosity about language and their experimentation with it.
- Allow for and be prepared for individual differences.
- Make sure the tone of the activity is not evaluative but rather fun and informal

The following principles have been developed to guide teachers in the selection and application of PA (Leu, et.al.2005)

- Instruction should be explicit with each skill taught directly
- Teaching should involve modeling more than explaining-show rather than tell
- For students with very poor phonological awareness skills, begin instruction using sound only .initially use sounds that can be emphasized easily without distortion (eg. continuous sounds before stop sounds).
- Make instruction concrete by using manipulative to represent parts of words. Use different manipulative for each unit of analysis.
- Teach skills in sequence from simpler to more complex.
- Teach correct pronunciation of sounds and monitor students' sound production carefully
- Provide a great deal of guided practice until students have mastered skills.
- Reinforce students' ability to analyze sounds by teaching them to focus on the way sounds 'feel' as they are produced.
- Consistently pronounce words slowly and clearly.

## 2.10. Summary

To conclude by the end of kindergarten students should demonstrate:

### 1. Sound and word discrimination

- tells whether words or sounds are the same or different (cat/cat/ = same; cat/car = different)
- identifies which word is different ( eg. sun, fun, sun)
- tells the difference between single speech sounds ( e.g. which one is different s, s, k)

### 2. Rhyming

- identifies whether words rhyme (eg. cat\mat; ring sing)
- Produces a word that rhymes with another ( eg. a word that rhymes with **rose** is **nose**. Tell me another word that rhymes with **rose**)

### 3. Blending

- Orally blend syllables (mon-key) **or** onset-rimes (m-ilk) into a whole word.
- orally blends 2-3 separately spoken phonemes into on- syllable words( e.g. | m| |e|, me; |u| |p|; |f| |u| |n|)

### 4. Segmentation

- claps or counts the words in a 3-5 word sentence ( e.g. sue can jump far)
- claps or counts the syllables in 1-, 2- and 3- syllable words
- say each in 2- and 3- syllable word ( di-no-saur)
- Identifies the first sound in one syllable word ( e.g. |m| in man)
- Segments individual sounds in 2- and 3- phoneme, one syllable words(e.g. run: |r| |u| |n|; feet, |f| |e| |e| |t|)

### Phonological benchmarks for kindergarten

- 25 first sounds per minute by mid-year
- 35 sound segments per minute by the end of kindergarten.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

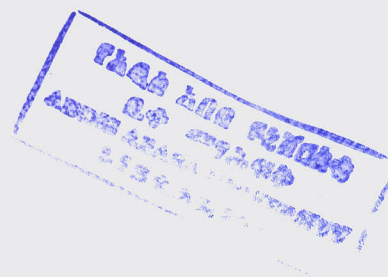
#### 3.1. Methodology of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore whether English language teachers apply phonological awareness skill to teach initial reading in three private kindergarten level schools. The researcher applied various tools in order to obtain pertinent information for the study. Based on the data generated through different instruments, the researcher analyzed and discussed the findings using both the qualitative and quantitative methods. Finally, attempts were made to draw valid conclusion from the facts discovered.

#### 3.2. Schools for the Study

Addis Ababa city was chosen as the research setting. This was done on the bases of the experience that the researcher had teaching in the city. According to the statistics that the researcher obtained from the registrar office of Addis Ababa Education Bureau, there are Five hundred nine(509) private, ninety(90) public, thirty four(34) downer NGO, twenty(20) missionaries, nineteen(19) church, ten(10) government and three mosque kindergartens. From the above general population, the private schools were chosen for the present study. This was done, from the preliminary survey I have made and the experience I had when teaching in preschool; I could understand that phonological awareness is widely practiced in private schools.

The selection of sub cities was made randomly from the ten sub cities, which are Gulele , kirkose and Lideta . From the three sub cities, the chosen private schools were Addis International Academy (AIA), New English Private School (NEPS), and Ethio-Parents school. The researcher chose these three schools using purposive sampling as it was believed to get the necessary information from these schools.



### 3.3. Subjects of the Study

AIA and Ethio-Parents school each have three preparatory sections and NEPS has two preparatory sections. Since the main focus of the study is on teachers' application and awareness of PA skill, the subjects were teachers only. The target samples of the population are all eight English teachers from the three schools.

#### 3.3.1. Background of the subjects

The teachers' educational background has significance for this study. By so doing the researcher collected the necessary background information from the questionnaire and the interview. Concerning their sex all are females. And the information gathered about the teachers educational background information is presented in table 1 below.

Table 5. Teachers' response to their background

No	School name	Educational background	Field of study	Work experience In KG	Training on teaching PA in kindergarten	Training type
1	NEPS	Degree	English Education	15yrs	Yes	University
2	AIA	Degree	Health and physical education	4yrs	Yes	Summer Short training
3	AIA	Degree	Health and physical education	4yrs	Yes	Summer Short Training
4	AIA	Diploma	English Education	6months	Yes	Six-month training
5	Ethio-parents	Diploma	English	6yrs	No	-
6	Ethio-parents	Diploma	English	6yrs	No	-
7	Ethio-parents	Diploma	Physics	7months	No	-
8	Ethio-parents	Diploma	Amharic Education	7 months	No	-

Table 1 showed that from the whole population 4(50%) of the teachers have degree or diploma in English. The other 4(50%) of the population is covered by other fields of study. These are Degree in Health and physical education, Diploma in physics and Amharic education. Out of these teachers who does not have related field of education to teach English; only 2(25%) have got a chance to take summer time training. And also from the other 50% who have diploma or degree in English only 2(25%) have knowledge of PA by training. It seems that these schools don't give much emphasis on the kindergarten education. When conducting the interview the researcher found out that kindergarten teachers are recruited from any field of education. The only thing that is expected of them is to have a good command of English. The researcher mentioned in the review of literature section 4.4.quoting Gillon, (2004) and Cunningham (1995) that teachers should have sufficient knowledge of phonology or structure of English language in order to teach phonemic awareness. In addition teachers' response for question item 10 shows that from the teachers who got training 1((12.5) thought that the training help her to a very great extent; 2(25%) thought that it help them to great extent; and 1(12.5) thought the training helped her to some extent.

### **3.4. Instruments of data collection**

Three research instruments were employed to obtain the relevant information for the study. These were classroom observation, questionnaire, and interview.

#### **3.4.1. Classroom Observation**

Class observation was made in all the three private kindergarten schools. Each sample school was observed using video tape recorder to make the observation more reliable. Then the data was analyzed based on a pre-designed check-list derived from the review of literature. In order to particularly explore the application of PA in the class room, the data is transcribed; analyzed and discussed.

### **3.4.2. . Questionnaire**

The theoretical background in the review of literature serves as material for the preparation of the questionnaire. The purpose was to explore teacher's application and awareness of PA; and what they actually do in the classroom. Since the students ages are four to five, we do not expect them to fill a questionnaire, so the questionnaire was only filled by the teachers.

Closed and open-ended questionnaire were used to elicit the necessary data. The items were set in English. It has five parts. The first part has ten question items that dealt with the respondent's background information with Yes/No and Likert Scale question types. Part two has four closed ended and one open-ended items that dealt with information on the application of PA. Part three has prepared in table format; which should be answered by ticking 'Yes' or 'No' in the place provided. It deals with Information on the levels of PA. Part four and five are all open ended questions. The first part deals with information on PA activities. The latter deals with teachers' opinion. The questionnaire was designed based on the review of literature.

### **3.4.3. Interview**

In addition to the classroom observation and questionnaire, interviews were conducted with all the eight teachers. Zoltan(2007:121)in his book called "Research Methods in Applied Linguistics." It is used because interviewing is a known communication routine that the method works so well as adaptable researches instrument in fact, although there is a range of qualitative research techniques available for researchers, the interview is the most often used method in qualitative inquiries.

A semi structured interview was used for collecting data. The purpose of this semi structured interview was to verify the validity of the teachers' responses to the questionnaire.

### **3.5. Data collection procedures**

The teachers' questionnaire items were first designed from the literature review. Then, examined repeatedly by the advisor to be reformulated and rearranged. The teachers' questionnaire items and format are arranged in such a way that it avoids redundancy so that the respondent teachers would not feel exhausted.

Before the final distribution of the questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out to assess the content, logical flaws, clarity of the questions, and validity of the questionnaire. Accordingly, teachers' questionnaire was piloted on my three colleagues who teach in Kindergarten and a kindergarten director. Similarly, based on the inputs obtained in the pilot study from respondents of teachers, some adjustments were made. For instance, some questions were left out from the teachers' questionnaire since they did not elicit the required data. Some types were also transformed into other types. The logical flaw of some items was changed in the questionnaire.

Finally, the questionnaire was ready and distributed to the respondents. The distribution of the questionnaire is conducted at the same time. The researcher personally did the distribution of the questionnaire; but collection of questionnaires was done by a colleague because of lack of on time completion of the questionnaire.

While the questionnaire was in a process of being filled by the teachers the classroom observation took place. Then after getting all the questionnaires back, the researcher tried to look the gap which was not filled by the process and also the discrepancy between the respond to the questionnaire and the observation then conducted an interview based on the gaps, discrepancies and predesigned interview format.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA**

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis as well as discussion of the data obtained from the sample school teachers through observation, questionnaire and interview. As previously mentioned in the first chapter, the general objectives of this study are: To explore the extent to which kindergarten teachers at private school are aware of “Phonological Awareness” and to explore teacher’s application of PA in three private kindergarten schools. To this end a descriptive data was in use where much of the study is qualitative and some parts are quantitative.

The data collected through the indicated instruments are presented below, some with tables and others in a narrative form.

#### **4.1. Teachers’ response to the questionnaire**

The research question that deals with the application, levels and activities of teaching reading in kindergarten preparatory level was looked through teachers’ questionnaire. The teachers’ questionnaire was distributed to a total of eight teachers who are currently teaching English in kindergarten. Obviously, the teachers at this level are self contained teachers.

#### 4.1.1. Teachers' response on the application of Phonological awareness

Table 6: Teachers response on the application of phonological awareness

No	Question item	Response	
		In No	%
1	Do you teach reading?		
	Yes	8	100
	No	0	0
	Total	8	100
2	If your answer is "Yes", how often do you teach reading?		
	Always	6	75
	Sometimes	2	25
	Rarely	0	0
	Never	0	0
	Total	8	100
3	Do you know about "phonological awareness"?		
	Yes	8	100
	No	0	0
	Total	8	100
4	If your answer is "Yes", for the previous question, do you use it to teach initial reading?		
	Yes	8	100
	No	0	0
	Total	8	100

As shown in table 2 above, all of the teachers said that they teach reading. Responding to the questionnaire to how frequently they teach reading; 6(75%) said that they teach reading always, while 2(25%) said that they sometimes teach it (once or twice a week).

Item 3 tried to explore whether the teachers know about 'phonological/phonemic awareness'. The teachers' response showed that all the 8(100%) of them know about PA.

In addition, the teachers' response to item 4, which is an extension of item 3, show that all of them i.e. 8(100%) use it to teach initial reading.

As can be seen from table 2, a considerable number of teachers seem convinced about using PA to teach initial/early reading.

#### 4.1.2. Quantitative analysis of Teachers' response regarding the application of levels of PA

Table 7. Teachers' response regarding the application of PA levels

No	Item	Response			
		Yes		No	
		No	%	No	%
1.	Do you use nursery rhymes when teaching initial reading using phonemic awareness?	8	100	0	-
2	Do you teach students to identify phonemes/sounds that stand for the alphabet letter?	8	100	0	-
3	Do you teach students to isolate words with same or different beginning, middle, or end sounds?	8	100	0	-
4	Do you teach phoneme/sound blending of cvc words eg. What word is formed from  b   i   g  sounds? 'big'.	8	100	0	-
5	Do you teach two or more letter blended sounds Eg. Pl, sk, sm, str, dr etc.	7	87.5	1	12.5
6	Do you ask the student to blend onset and rhyme? Eg. Onset of the word 'big' is  b  the rhyme is  ig	5	62.5	3	37.5
7	Do you teach initial consonant diagraphs (ch, sh, th, wh) when they come at beginning, middle and end position.	7	87.5	1	12.5
8	Do you teach your students to count phonemes while they hear the sound by using tallies?	3	37.5	5	62.5
9	Do you teach phoneme/sound segmentation/ isolation? Eg. How many sounds does 'grab' have?  gr  a  b	5	62.5	3	37.5
10	Do you teach your students to insert and/or remove initial middle and end sounds to form different words?	4	50	4	50
11	Do you ask students to match the initial sounds to pictures?	8	100	0	-
12	Do you teach students vowel sounds (a,e,i,o,u)?	8	100	0	-
13	Do you make students be aware of r-controlled vowel sounds? Eg.  ar , in yard;  ir  in bird etc.	4	50	4	50
14	Do you make the students be aware of variations in vowel sounds? Eg.  ai  in 'rain' and 'chair'	7	87.5	1	12.5
15	Do you teach students segmenting words in a sentence?	7	87.5	1	12.5
16	Do you read story to your students?	8	100	0	-

Table 3 shows that all of the teachers, i.e. 8(100%) said that they use nursery rhymes when teaching reading by using phonemic awareness activities. The teachers' response to this same question on the interview showed that they use it always when doing oral activities in the teaching process. National reading panel (2000) and Adam et.al. (1998) pointed out that initial instruction has better be auditory then followed by manipulation of letter phonemes/sound.

In responding to item 2 in the questionnaire, all of the teachers' say that do not teach their students to identify phonemes/sounds that stand for the alphabet letter.

In the interview the teachers explained that teaching students to identify phonemes/sounds that stand for the alphabet letter was learnt at the second stage of kindergarten development. When students join preparatory (Prep); they already know about phonemes/sounds and read consonant-vowel-consonant (cvc) words. Now it is the last quarter of the prep level; the students can read simple sentences.

In responding to item 3 8(100%) of the teachers teach students to group words with same and different beginning, middle and end sounds. In response to the same question, on the interview the teachers explained that there are four quarters, and each quarters has its own coverage on the application levels of PA. When students are promoted to this level from UKG/KG they already have knowledge of phonemes/sounds. So the teachers started teaching from grouping words with same or different beginning, middle and end sounds.

In responding to item 4 in the questionnaire, 8(100%) of the subjects said that they give lesson on consonant-vowel-consonant (cvc) word blending. In the open-ended item, 4(50%) explained that they use activities such as asking students to blend sounds by using flash cards or magnetic charts/board to put the sound one by one; and each student put the sounds together and read the words. The data obtained from the interview revealed that teachers always use it to teach new words to students. The reason is obvious; children who cannot hear and work with the phonemes of spoken words will have a difficult time learning how to relate these phonemes to the graphemes when they see them in written words. Similarly responses to item 5 indicated that, the

majority of the teachers or 7(87.5%) of the teachers teach two or more letter blended sound Example pl, st, sk etc. They also explained on the interview that at the Upper KG level they learnt and develop the concept of blending cvc words. when they join prep level in addition to blending phonemes we teach them consonant blending at the beginning, middle and end of a word larger than cvc. To this same question item 12.5% of the respondent doesn't teach consonant blends. The reason behind it as the teacher explained was that; the students are all four years old; it is difficult and too early for them to identify consonant blending at this age.

Item 7 deals with teaching diagraphs (ch, sh, th, wh); when they come at the beginning middle and end. 87.5% of the teachers' responses revealed that they teach diagraphs. Teachers' response to the interview confirmed that they teach diagraphs by using list of words that begins or ends, and also when they come at middle.

The remaining 12.5% do not teach diagraphs. As mentioned in item 6, teaching the students to identify diagraph is too early for them. As the teacher explains they learn phoneme blending until the students eternalize it, and she does not want to confuse them with diagraphs since they will learn it at the next stage.

Item 8 was intended to obtain information as to whether teachers teach students to use tallies to count phonemes while they hear the sounds. 5(62.5%) of teachers said that they do not teach students to use tallies to count phonemes while they hear the sound. But this skill is essential to students at this level to identify sequences of sounds in words. The objective of this activity is as (Adam1998:17) pointed out;"to develop the memory and attentional abilities for thinking about sequences of sounds and language for discussing them." The remaining 3(37.5%) use tallies to count phonemes while they hear the sound. At the time of the interview teachers explained that they use tallies and any countable object like stick, Lego for teaching the number of phonemes/sounds in a word.

In response to item 9 in the questionnaire; 5 (62.5%) of the teachers reported that they teach phoneme segmentation/isolation; and only 3 (37%) don't teach this aspect of reading. The response to the open-ended question and the interview showed that they teach segmenting using the activities like; using alphabet flash card; magnetic chart/board. As the teachers explained it; For example, first they say or put each sounds/phonemes of the word **cat** on a magnetic chart and show the picture or a toy cat, and then ask the students to segment the phonemes of **cat**, then the students put the phonemes using the flash card on the magnetic board as follows /c/-/a/-/t/. Each student will have a chance in different words.

Half of the teachers teach students to insert and/or remove initial, middle and end sounds to form different words. The open-ended item in the questionnaire and interview revealed that 50% of the teachers teach students phoneme substitution and subtraction by using activities such as,

- For initial sounds:

What words do we get if we substitute /c/ with /m/?

cat ( m, b, p, s)

luck (d)

pan - (c, v)

stop - 'what word do we get if we cancel/remove /s/? top

- For middle sounds

What words do we get if we substitute /a/ with /o/?

cat cot

tap top

- For end sounds

What word do we get if we substitute the last sound of man with?

/p/ = map

/d/ = mad

The other four teachers' does not teach this aspect of reading.



All the teachers teach vowels and teach to match the initial sounds to pictures or words. 50% of the teachers declared that they teach r-controlled vowels; but the other 50% never do it. Moreover 87.5% of the reports show that teachers make students aware of variation in vowel sounds. The rest 12.5% did not teach it.

The response to the last item in the same table shows that 8 (100%) teachers read story to their students. Zgonc (2000) believes that reading a story has significance to the reading success. "The more you read to the child, the better reader the child will be."(2000, 152)

In view of the fact that teachers' awareness and application of the different levels and activities of PA in the questionnaire, showed that 82.5% of the teachers apply levels of PA in the class. The other 17.5% do not apply some of the levels in their class.

From the response of the teachers to the interview, this happened due to various reasons mentioned in the analysis. So the teachers confirmed in the open ended question part that teaching initial reading using PA is the best way to teach reading to children at kindergarten level. And also they affirmed that teaching initial reading using PA can be applicable in non-private schools, if the number of the students in a class is reduced at least up to twenty five.

The result of the classroom observation showed that there is a difference between the questionnaire and the classroom practice. This will be transcribed and interpreted in the next section. The above information could serve as a springboard for the further discussion to be made at a later stage

Tale 8. The mean number of teachers' response to the application of levels of PA

N	X	Y
1	8	0
2	8	0
3	8	0
4	8	0
5	7	1
6	5	3
7	7	1
8	3	5
9	5	3
10	4	4
11	8	0
12	8	0
13	4	4
14	7	1
15	7	1
16	8	0
<b>Total</b>	105	23
$\bar{X}$	6.6	1.4

**Key**

X. Number of teachers who are put under the category of YES in the PA Level application

Y Number of teachers who put under the category of NO in the PA Level application

N Number of items in the table

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} = \frac{105}{16} = 6.6$$

The mean number of the teachers who respond 'yes' to the items that asks, whether they teach each levels of PA in their class are 6.6 (82.5%) Whereas, the other 1.4 (17.5%) answer 'No'. This indicates that most of the teachers do the stages of development of PA in their teaching of initial/early reading in the English lessons.

Table 9. The standard deviation and variance of table 8

N	$X - \bar{X}$	$(X - \bar{X})^2$	$Y - \bar{Y}$	$(Y - \bar{Y})^2$
1	1.4	2	-1.4	2
2	1.4	2	-1.4	2
3	1.4	2	-1.4	2
4	1.4	2	-1.4	2
5	0.4	0.2	-0.4	0.2
6	-1.6	2.6	1.6	2.6
7	0.4	0.2	-0.4	0.2
8	-3.6	13	3.6	13
9	-1.6	2.6	1.6	2.6
10	-2.6	6.8	2.6	6.8
11	1.4	2	-1.4	2
12	1.4	2	-1.4	2
13	-2.6	6.8	2.6	6.8
14	0.4	0.2	-0.4	0.2
15	0.4	0.2	-0.4	0.2
16	1.4	2	-1.4	2
<b>Total</b>	0	47	0	47
<b>S</b>	0	4	0	4
<b>S<sup>2</sup></b>	0	2	0	2

So here on an average the deviation of each questionnaire from their mean are 4.

When calculating the variance, it is used the average squared deviation of values from the mean. The variance reflects the amount of dispersion which is 2.

#### **4.2. Qualitative Analysis of Classroom Observation**

To explore the teachers' application of PA in teaching initial reading, the best way taken as an instrument was class room observation. which was the main tool for this study not only revealing all the actual class room practice but also help the researcher to give due attention to the discrepancy between the response to the questionnaire and the actual classroom practice. NEPS has two prep sections but one main teacher to teach English in both classes. AIA has three sections with their own main teacher. And Ethio-parent has four section each having own main teacher. Continuous observations of eight teachers in two consecutive days were made in the three selected schools covering one teacher twice in average of two per day.

Since the observation made in the class room on all of the chosen schools was almost identical in structure, the researcher took only three of the observations for explanation purpose. Which is one teacher teaching rhyming words, one action words using segmenting and blending, and another who taught diagraph. The observation was conducted from April 22, 2009 to May 6, 2009; which all of the school was on their fourth quarter.

##### **Teachers' arrangements**

The teachers at this level are self contained. This means that a teacher teaches all subjects in each kindergarten levels. There are three adults in one class, ranked as main, assistance, and a baby sitter

*The main teacher* teaches all the subjects namely, English, Math, Science and Social studies and Amharic. This teacher is also responsible for each and everything that happened in her class.

*Assistant teacher*, who assists the main teacher in academic aspect activities, for example, when students do the class work, distribute learning aid such as pencils, books and also assists the students according to the main teacher instruction. Since the New Private School (NEPS) teacher is a foreign teacher; the assistant teachers in both classes teach Amharic and social-studies while the main teacher teaches one subject in the other class.

And each class/section has a *babysitter* to take care of the students when they eat, nap or for the biological need.

### **Class room Observation in NEPS**

#### **Observation one**

The first observation was started in New Private English School (NEPS). When entering the class room, your eyes caught by the decoration. The walls are covered with colorful pictures; alphabets, days of the week, months of the year, list of words, different kinds of colors, shapes, fruits vegetables. In addition to this the shelves in the class room are full of teaching aids and toys. Though the students' project was displayed on the window; still the class had enough light. As quoted in Wudu's (2008:29) MA dissertation (Cunningham et al., 1995) explained that classroom walls should be covered with posters, pictures, signs, labels, and student work.

The students' table and chair are arranged as round colored table with four plastic chairs that fits their size. Each student name is pasted by their sit on the table. By the left side of the door there is a mat for the students to sit and play on it and for story time and whole class instruction. Apart from this there is enough space for the students to move around the class. Based on the observation the researcher may conclude that the class is a conducive environment for the children to learn.

Every day, in the morning before they go to class all of the students stand in a line on the outside field for devotion. At this time the students sing songs; teachers give advices like what a good behaved student look like by using a story. Then they go to class. After they entered the class the

assistant teacher told them to sit on a mat and made them sing a song under the title “A week has seven days.” Then by pointing at the days of the week chart; she asked the students to repeat after her, /m//o//n //d//a//y/-Monday; /t//u//e//s//d//a//y/-Tuesday; /w//e//d//n//e//s//d//a//y/- Wednesday, Then she did the same with months of the year. After that she told them to drill altogether. She told them to clap for themselves. When all's said and done; the next step she did was asking them the day and date. Some students tried to answer. After she arrange the day and date on a magnetic board the whole class read it twice.

At this moment the main teacher entered the class with warmth greeting holding a book. The students greet her back. From the observation the researcher found out that every morning the teacher read a story to her students. While she narrates the story the teacher ask what she said previously for the students to answer and check if they are following her or not. Here at this point the teacher accomplished her usual practice of telling a story as she responds to the interview and on the questionnaire as well.

The next step the teacher did was singing a rhyming song together with the students. It is a song performed with an action song to give example from some of the verses

The ants go marching one by one Hura (2)

The ants go marching one by **one**

The little one stopped to check the **time**

The ants go marching two by **two**

The little one stopped to tie his **shoe**

It continues like this up to ten with rhyming word endings. These shows the teacher's response to the questionnaire and interview that “*they use nursery rhymes to teach*” is correct.



After the song, the students sit on the mat and the teacher continued an activity to teach rhyming words.

T: "I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with **"hair"** in this class room.

Ss: all shouted **'chair'** (by pointing at a chair)

T: Good: I spy with my little eye something in this classroom that rhymes with **'fox'**

Ss: replay.....**'box'**

T: V. Good; I spy with my little eye something in this class room that rhymes with **'pen'**

Ss: answered **'hen'**

T: you are correct; but something in this class room; that is found in this class room.

Then the teacher showed them number **'ten'** that is displayed on the wall.

Ss: all shouted **'ten'**.

T: yes **'ten'** **'hen'** that's correct.

The teacher did this activity until all the students are done with the words in the rhyming song. (one-time, two-shoe; three-tree; four-door; five-hive, six-sticks; seven-heaven, eight-gate; nine-spine; ten-hen) the next step the teacher did was bring a magnetic word chart of alphabets showing to the students to sound out each phonemes loudly. Then the teachers stick it on the board sequentially to form a word. The word **hen, hat** and **hop** were listed downwards for the children to see the difference and similarity. Afterward she asked a question,

T: Who can see a sound similar to all words ... look at them carefully?

Ss: all say **/h/ /h/ /h/**

She praised them and elucidate that the three words have the same beginning sound which is **/h/**.

The teacher explained that this was what same beginning sound mean. The teacher using this activity showed that she has the knowledge of PA and apply it as per the literature.

Next she gave explanation on what they are going to learn; which was rhyming words.

Subsequently, she followed the same procedures with the previous one but with different words.

This confirms the response of this teacher on the interview *"always use blending and segmenting*

*whenever I wanted my students to read a word.*” At this time the listed words were rhyming words **mat**, **cat**, **sat** and **bat**. The students read each word together twice.

Then the teacher asked the students to tell her what similarities they saw on the words. Some students answered /**at**//**at**//**at**/ are same sounds. The teacher confirmed what they answered by saying. “Yes they all have the same ending sound/**at**/; we call these kinds of words rhyming words.

After she made sure all of the students understand the concept; the teacher explain what to do on the worksheet; the students all gone to their sit to do the class work.

This was what NEPS teacher was practicing to teach rhymes on the two days observation. We may conclude that the response of this teacher on the interview and questionnaire was match with the class room practice. This shows she apply PA activities in her class with awareness and understanding.

#### **Class room Observation – in Addis international Academy ( AIA)**

##### **Observation one**

The class room walls are covered with word walls the same as NEPS. Here the difference lies on vowel variation word wall.

There are four rows and three columns of desks in the class; each having two students. On the first day of observation, the teacher started the class with greeting. Then write the date at the right corner of the white board and action words at the middle. She explained what they are going to learn on that day. It was about ‘an action words’ giving enough detail about what an action word is all about. The teacher told them to tell her action words they know one by one by raising their hands. All of the students raised their hands, and then the teacher started to choose students. When the students tell the words; the teacher writes it on the white board.

Teacher: nominated Melat

Melat: says .....stop

T: Good ..... next before the teacher nominated

Student: shouted .....write

Teacher: next....., Lyu

Lyu: ..... go

Teacher: asked the opposite of what? ..... What is the opposite of go

Students: answered stop

*Sleep, jog, jump, bump, hop, stand, sit, skip, awake, run, click, read and write* were all the words that the student chose other than the extract. The researcher observed confusion on the students' face, when the teacher said "**the opposite of what?**" the first reason for the confusion to occur was the way the question is presented. The second confusing phenom was the switch to opposites while the students were thinking about the action words practice. The above extract indicates a minor gap but a major communication break down between the teacher and the students while in a learning process. Putting this in mind; the lesson continued till the entire student got a chance.

The teacher wanted to check whether or not the students can do all the action words. Subsequently, when she said each action words they do the action. When she said **sleep** they all act sleeping on their desk. When she said the word **stand** they all stand. For **jump** they all jump. And she makes a sentence. '*I can jump*' they repeat the sentence while jumping. When she calls the word **sit** they all sit on their chair. When she call the word **read**. They act like they are reading. Then she asks them "*what are you reading?*" The students answered. "*We are reading a book.*" For word **write** they pretend as if they were writing. The teacher asked them. "*What are you writing with?*" The students answered "*we are writing with a pencil.*" This activity continued till the whole words covered. After this she makes them sing the song:

Look at me (2) I am a butterfly

I fly (4)

Just like a butterfly

Look at me look at me I am a kangaroo

I jump (4)

Just like a kangaroo

Look at me (2) I am a dancing girl

I dance (4)

Just like a dancing girl.

It continued with different action words. After this she made them read the words twice by using segmenting and blending each phoneme/sound.

Example. /s/-/l/-/i/-/p/ = sleep

/b/-/u/-/m/-/p/ = bump

/cl/-/i/-/k/ = click

After the teacher chose some weak students to read the action words; she explained what to do on the worksheet.

### **Second observation day**

On the second day of observation, the very same teacher in AIA started the class as usual with greeting. She made them sing a week has seven days song then the students drill days of the week; months of the year. After wards the teacher asked the students the day and date. The next thing she did was write the same action words that they learnt in the previous day. She tried to

give chances for the students to read; by asking “Who did not have a chance yesterday?” Then the teacher distributed a work book to the students with the help of the assistance teacher. Ask the students to turn the page by telling the page number, while assisting the students to open the appropriate page. On that page there are pictures doing action. Under each picture there is a sentence with a blank space. For example, the first picture shows a girl skipping. Under the picture the sentence is written “*she \_\_\_\_\_ with a rope*”. So the students have to fill the blank with the word ‘skip’ by looking at the picture. The teacher made them chose the words from the board while the students identify what the picture perform all the students did one by one orally. Then the students did it by themselves. While they are doing the class work the main teacher and the assistant teacher were supervising the class.

What this teacher respond on the interview and questionnaire match with her performance in the class which were using blending and segmenting always; using nursery rhymes, teach how to read consonant clusters when they comes together.

Still there were some gaps the classroom was arranged like an elementary or junior high school. According to the scholars children at this age needs free environment to learn. Here the teacher told the students to sit properly every now and then. This shows that students get board they can only concentrate for ten or fifteen minutes. A teacher has to make his/her class room lively; teach with fun and different game like activity.

### **Class room observation in Ethio-Parents School**

The teacher arrangement in this class is the same as the other three schools. The class is very small compared to the standard class. It is dark and no space for the students to move around. Some word walls are seen.

The teacher started the class by writing the date on the blackboard. Then she started to write words that started with the diagraph “ch”. The words are

Cheese	chair
Chicken	champ
Chunk	charm
Chain	cheer

Then the teacher explained when /c/ and /h/ comes together, we read them as one word. After she made them say the sound 'ch' produce; she started to read using word segmenting/blending and the students were repeating after her. Subsequently, she gave chance to each child to come out and read all the words like she did. The researcher observed some problems on the lesson presentation of this teacher. Firstly the teacher did not try to explain the meaning of each word. She simply jumps to reading part. Secondly' the way she segmented the words was not correct. For example she segments the word **charm** as /ch/-/a/-/r/-/m/instead of /ch-/ar/-/m/. **chicken** as /ch/-/i/-/k/-/e/-/n/ instead of /ch/-/i/-/k/-/n/. Almost after half of the class got a chance the class ends. The teacher continued this on the next day. And write these words on the worksheet.

As far as the class room observation is concerned, the teachers' performance in general shows that almost all of them have the awareness of PA levels. The PA skill they all applied was blending and segmenting of words that start with diagraphs, consonant blends at the beginning of a word, and rhyming words. But some of them do have a problem on applying it accordingly based on the structure of language that they are teaching. The above application problem was mainly seen on four of the teachers that the researchers undergo (out of the eight teachers; four of them had problems on applying the different PA manipulative.)The other four teachers who applied PA accordingly on the contrary, have students who read well because of their proper application. To show the mean, deviation and variance of teachers' classroom observation, quantitative method is used and presented here under:

Table 10. The mean number of kindergarten English teachers who are aware of PA skills and apply it according to the checklist.

N	X	Y
1	8	0
2	1	7
3	8	0
4	2	6
5	3	5
6	8	0
7	0	8
8	8	0
9	3	5
10	8	0
11	3	5
12	3	5
13	2	6
14	1	7
15	3	5
16	3	5
17	4	4
18	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

Key

X. Number of teachers who are put under the category of YES in the observation checklist

Y Number of teachers who put under the category of NO in the observation checklist

N Number of items in the checklist

$$X = \frac{\sum X}{N} = \frac{72}{18} = 4$$

$$Y = \frac{\sum Y}{N} = \frac{72}{18} = 4$$

The total number of the English teachers observed in the observation practice is eight. Now the mean number of teachers who were put under 'Yes' in the observation check lists is 4; and the mean number of teachers who are put under 'No' is 4.

From the statistics it is possibly to say that 50% of the teachers who teach initial reading using phonological awareness are aware of PA and apply it based on the observation check list items.

Table 11. The standard deviation and variance of table 10

N	X	X- $\bar{X}$	(X- $\bar{X}$ ) <sup>2</sup>	Y	Y- $\bar{Y}$	(Y- $\bar{Y}$ ) <sup>2</sup>
1	8	4	16	0	-4	8.2
2	1	-3	9	7	3	5.8
3	8	4	16	0	-4	8.2
4	2	-2	4	6	2	3.8
5	3	-1	1	5	1	1.8
6	8	4	16	0	-4	8.2
7	0	-4	16	8	4	7.8
8	8	4	16	0	-4	8.2
9	3	-1	1	5	1	1.8
10	8	4	16	0	-4	8.2
11	3	-1	1	5	1	1.8
12	3	-1	1	5	1	1.8
13	2	-2	4	6	2	3.8
14	1	-3	9	7	3	5.8
15	3	-1	1	5	1	1.8
16	3	-1	1	5	1	1.8
17	4	0	0	4	0	0.2
18	4	0	0	4	0	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>128</b>

The standard deviation provides a measure of the dispersion of the scores from the central tendency. So here on an average the deviation of each observation from their mean are 4.2

When calculating the variance, it is used the average squared deviation of values from the mean. The variance reflects the amount of dispersion, with a larger variance implying more variability than a small variance.

$$\text{Standard deviation:} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(X - \bar{X})^2}{N}} = \sqrt{\frac{129}{18}} = 4.2$$

$$\text{Variance} = \sigma^2 = (4.2)^2 = 17.64$$

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1. Conclusion

It has been indicated that the main purpose of this study was to explore the teachers' application of PA with special focus on three private schools. NEPS, AIA and Etio-parent school in Addis Ababa. To achieve this data gathering instrument used was observation, questionnaire and interview. By so doing, an attempt has been made to identify how teachers apply phonological awareness. And what percent of teachers do apply it with knowledge and understanding.

The findings of the other instruments; and the teachers' class room practice on phonological awareness skills have shown some discrepancies. What teachers respond on the interview and questionnaire did not coincide with the actual practices like "I always use nursery rhymes in the class" but did not practice it once at the lesson time. As Gillon(2004:46)stated nursery rhymes facilitate early phonological awareness development.

Only one teacher's response did show a match on "I always read stories to my students". Three teachers gave a reason for this by saying "they read story every Friday" The other four who did not practice in the actual class; said that they read story whenever the teacher thought it is necessary. Snow, et al. (1998) writes about the use reading story book to kindergarteners. " ..... Interactive storybook reading develop children's concept about print, including terms such as "words" and "letter"; building familiarity with the vocabulary of book language; as well as its syntax and style; and developing children's appreciation of text and their motivation to learn to read themselves." (1998; 180)

Even if the teachers response to the questionnaire explains that they always teach initial reading using different PA skills; the class room observation revealed that 50% of the subjects did not

always apply it, and also they do not have deep knowledge about the language structure to apply it properly. To see some example from the actual class room practice:

One teacher segment the sound in 'sleep' as /s/-/l/-/e/-/e/-/p/ instead of /sl/-/i/-/p/ Another teacher did the same mistake when asking the students to read words that starts with diphthongs using sound segmenting. The teacher segment the word 'chicken' as /ch/-/i/-/c/-/k/-/e/-/n/ instead of /ch/-/i/-/k/-/en/

While the correct way of teaching reading using phoneme segmenting suggested by a scholar like (Gray, 1973:314) is 'sl' reads as one sound when it comes together at the beginning of a word. And also when two vowels comes together like 'ee', 'ea', ie the first vowel usually takes its long sound and the second vowel is silent etc...

The literature asserted that kindergarten "teachers can facilitate language and literacy development through play-based literacy instruction. Child should feel as though s/he is playing while learning" (Snow et al. 1998:184) But in most of the classes except one could not/did not accomplish this in their classes room. It seems to me that all this is the result of the teachers who did not have training in teaching English in general and teaching reading using PA in particular.

Additional points found out from the teachers response was PA definitely helps our students to read quickly and fluently. Moreover the teachers believed that the current knowledge of phonological awareness will help the students to read when they face unfamiliar words in their latter educational levels. And they also suggest that it can be apply in all kindergarten level. But the biggest barrier that could restrict not to apply in non-private school is the number of students in a single class room (which is large in number making control and follow up almost impossible)

Based on what has been found out as result of the research finding the following conclusions are made.

- 5.1.1. The finding of this research indicates that all the sample schools teach initial reading using phonological awareness.
- 5.1.2. The finding of this study also revealed that there are problems in application of PA
- 5.1.3. Teachers' field of study and qualification are far from what is required of them.
- 5.1.4. Most of the teachers assigned to teach English do not have appropriate training for teaching English language in general and teaching reading in particular
- 5.1.5. Employment of teachers in private schools takes place without considering required qualification to the field. From the findings of the research almost all schools are interested on a good command of English rather than the qualification required.

## 5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendation are made

- 5.2.1. Knowledge of PA should be included in the criteria of teachers' recruitment.
- 5.2.2. Teachers Training Institutes, Colleges and Universities need to give sufficient attention to structure of language teaching.
- 5.2.3. Career development program should be implemented for teachers as it is the base line for refreshing and updating teachers with the newly invented methods.
- 5.2.4. Teachers should make their own personal effort to keep abreast with current theory and practices in language teaching in general and teaching reading in particular to familiarize them with appropriate methods of presenting reading lessons.
- 5.2.5. Teacher Training Institutes should give emphasis to Phonological Awareness
- 5.2.6. The concerned regulatory bodies should carefully develop a curriculum and set a standard for teaching preschool as it is the baseline for education.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

## The 44 Sounds of English

### CONSONANT SOUNDS

1. /b/ (bit)
2. /d/ (dog)
3. /f/ (fat)
4. /g/ (game)
5. /h/ (hop)
6. /j/ (jump)
7. /k/ (kite)
8. /l/ (leaf)
9. /m/ (map)
10. /n/ (not)
11. /p/ (put)
12. /r/ (rake)
13. /s/ (sit)
14. /t/ (tap)
15. /v/ (vest)
16. /w/ (window)
17. /y/ (yellow)
18. /z/ (zebra)
19. /ch/ (chip)
20. /sh/ (shop)
21. /zh/ (treasure)
22. /th/ (think)
23. /tʃ/ (though)
24. /hw/ (when)
25. /ng/ (king)

### VOWEL SOUNDS

26. /ā/ (make)
27. /ē/ (teeth)
28. /ī/ (kite)
29. /ō/ (soap)
30. /yōō/ (cube)
31. /a/ (dad)
32. /e/ (bet)
33. /i/ (sit)
34. /o/ (cot)
35. /u/ (hut)
36. /ə/ (ahead)
37. /ā/ (air)
38. /ū/ (bird)
39. /ā/ (far)
40. /ō/ (ball)
41. /oi/ (toy)
42. /ou/ (mouse)
43. /ōō/ (soon)
44. /ōō/ (look)



LETTER SOUNDS

Appendix 2

Stop Sounds (Voiced)	b, d, g, j
Stop Sounds (Voiceless)	h, k, p, t
Continuant Sounds (Voiced)	a, e, i, l, m, n, o, r, u, v, w, y, z
Continuant Sounds (Voiceless)	f, s
Letters Taking On Other Sounds	<p>c = /k/ or /s/     can, city</p> <p>qu = /k/ /w/     quick (q generally takes on the sound of /k/ and is usually followed by a u.)</p> <p>x = /k/ /s/     fox</p>

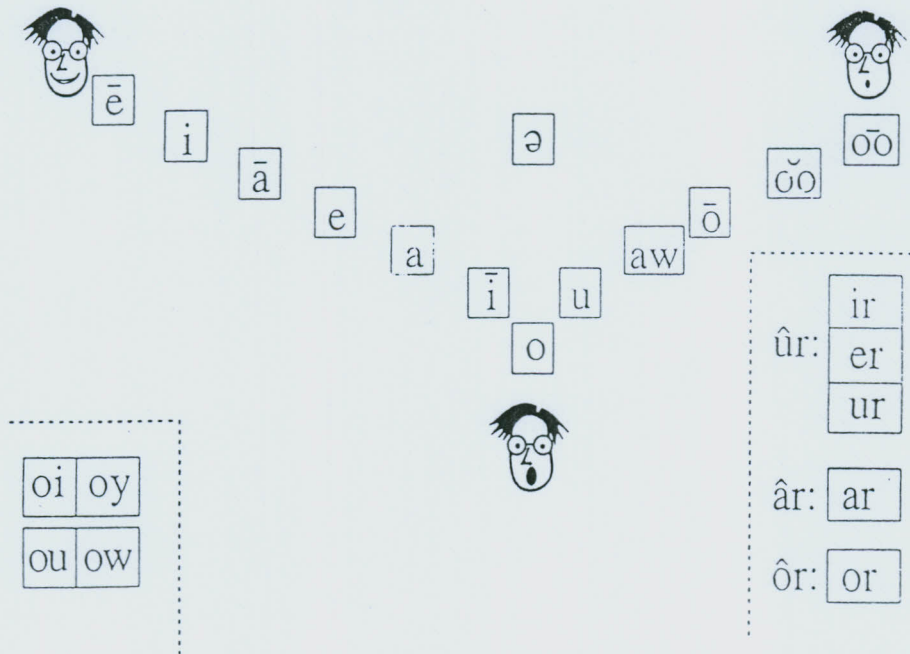
### Appendix3.

#### Phonetic Symbols and Classifications

##### American English vowels

Phonetic symbol	Phonic symbol	Spellings
/i/	ē	beet
/ɪ/	i	bit
/e/	ā	bait
/ɛ/	e	bet
/æ/	a	bat
/aj/	ī	bite
/ɑ/	o	bottle
/ʌ/	u	butt
/ɔ/	aw, ô	bought
/o/	ō	boat
/ʊ/	ōō	put
/u/	ōō	boot
/ə/	ə	between
/ɔj/	oi, oy	boy
/æw/	ou, ow	bow

From material prepared by Louisa Cook Moats for the Comprehensive Reading Leadership Program, California State Board of Education.



Vowel spellings by mouth position. (From material prepared by Louisa Cook Moats for the Comprehensive Reading Leadership Program, California State Board of Education.)

## Appendix 4

### Observation Checklist

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

NO	Content	Observed (√)	
		yes	No
<b>Teachers Performance in teaching initial reading using PA</b>			
1	Does the teacher explain the daily lesson clearly?		
2	Does the teacher use relevant examples to the lesson?		
3	Does the teacher speak naturally with smile?		
4	Does the teacher correct pronunciation of sounds and monitor students' sound production carefully?		
5	Does the teacher use Nursery rhyme		
6	Does the teacher tell a story to the students		
7	Does the teacher make sure the tone of the activity is not evaluative but rather fun and informal		
Which PA activity does the teacher practice at lesson time?			
8	Discriminating words or sounds		
9	Rhyming		
10	Onset and rime blending		
11	Isolating initial sounds, medial or final sounds		
12	Segmenting words in sentences		
13	Segmenting phonemes in words		

14	Deleting or substituting phonemes in words		
15	Blending/spelling sounds in simple words		
16	Teach segmentation and blending as complementary processes.		
17	Producing sounds for digraphs/letter combinations (“ee”, “sh”, “oo”)		
18	Spelling words with consonant blends (“tr”, “sl”)		
	<b>Lessons/Activities</b>		
1	Whole group instruction/practice		
2	Teacher-led same-ability small group instruction/practice		
3	Independent work		
	<b>Materials Used</b>		
1	Oral language		
2	Manipulative		
3	Pictures Connected to print		
4	Letter tiles, letter cards, plastic letters, other _____		
5	Word cards, families, other _____		
6	Word wall		
7	Other: _____		

## Appendix 5

### Transcribed classroom observation

#### Classroom Observation in NEPS

The first observation was started in New Private English School (NEPS) on UKG level. The researcher arrived at the school by previously arranged appointment at 8:30 AM.

Every day at the morning before they go to class all the students stand in a line on the outside field for devotion. At this time the students sing songs; teachers give advices like what a good behaved student look like by using a story. Then they go to class. After they entered the class the assistant teacher told them to sit on a mat.

When entering the class room your eyes caught by the decoration. The walls are with colorful pictures; alphabets, days of the week, months of the year, list of words, the different kinds of colors, shapes, fruits vegetables. In addition to this the shelves in the class room are full of teaching aids and toys.

After the students sit on a mat, the assistant teacher made them sing 'A week has seven days'. The verses of the song were:

A week has seven days seven days (3)

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

After singing twice, the assistant teacher asked the students to repeat after her by pointing at the days of the week chart, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, \_ \_ \_ . Then she did the same with months of the year. After that she asked them to drill all by themselves together. After they finish she told them to clap for themselves. The next step she did was asking them what the day was.

**T:** 'what is the day today?' some of the students answered

**S:** 'today is Monday'.

**T:** She asked again 'What is the day today?' Students: now all of the students answered; 'Today is Monday'. She praised them.

**T:** 'what was the day yesterday?'

**Ss:** one student answered 'yesterday was Sunday.'

**T:** praised him good boy. Yesterday was Sunday. All of you again, 'what was the day yesterday?'

**Ss:** yesterday was Sunday.

**T:** Good; if today is Monday; 'What will be tomorrow?'

**S:** one answered 'Wednesday'

**T:** No! Try again. If today is Monday what will be tomorrow?

**S:** some say Tuesday

**T:** Yes; Good job; tomorrow will be Tuesday? Let's say it all together

**Ss:** Tomorrow will be Tuesday.

At this time the main teacher come, all students greet her.

She prepares herself to read a story by sitting in front of them. While she read the story she ask them what she reads earlier; the name of characters; who did this? Who say this? When she finishes the story; the students express their thanks.

After these she makes them sing a rhyming song "The Ants are marching one by one"

The ants go marching one by one. Hurra(2)

The little one stop to check the time.

The ants go marching two by two. Hurra(2)

The little one stop to tie his shoe.

The ants go marching three by three Hurra (2)

The little one stop to climb up a tree.

The ants go marching four by four Hurra(2)

The little one stop to open the door.

The ants go marching five by five Hurra(2)

The little one stop to check the hive.

The ants go marching six by six. Hurra(2)

The little one stop to pick up sticks.

The ants go marching seven by seven Hurra(2)

The little one stop to check up the heaven.

The ants go marching eight by eight. Hurra(2)

The little one stop to close the gate

The ants go marching nine by nine Hurra(2)

The little one stop to check the spine.

The ants are marching ten by ten Hurra(2)

The little one stop to say the end.

Then the students sit on a mat.

**T:** started an activity using game “I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with “**hair**” in this class room.

**S:** some students answered ‘**chair**’ by pointing at a chair

**T:** Good: I spy with my little eye something in this classroom that rhymes with ‘**fox**’

**Ss:** ‘**box**’

**T:** V. Good; I spy with my little eye something in this class room that rhymes with ‘**pen**’

**Ss:** answered 'hen'

**T:** you are correct; but something in this class room; that is found in this class room.

Then the teacher showed them number 'ten' that is displayed on the wall.

**Ss:** all shouted 'ten'.

**T:** yes 'ten' 'hen' that's correct.

The next step the teacher done was bring a magnetic word chart then put each sound on it the students were sounding out the phonemes while the teacher stick it on the board. The words were listed down wards for the children to see the difference and similarity hen, hat and hop. Then she asked a question,

**T:** "Who can see something on those words look at them carefully?"

**Ss:** all say /h/ /h/ /h/

**T :** now she add the words like ;cat, mat, sat and bat on the chart ten ask them who can see something on the words look at them carefully?

**Ss:** Some of them answered /at/ /at/ are the sounds which are same?

**T:** V. good; we call these words rhyming words ok

**Ss:** Ok

**T:** after she made sure all the students understand, she wanted the students to do some exercises on worksheet. She explained to them how they do it then. Each child goes to their table one by one to do the class work.

## Observation 2 in Ethio-parent school

The class started with the teacher greeting. Then ask students the date. They all told her the day and the date. Then the teacher writes words on the blackboard .After this, the whole class started to repeat after the teacher. The words written on the board were in this format:

Cheese	chair
Chicken	champ
Chunk	charm
Chain	cheer

First the teacher reads each words using blending/segmenting then; she read them normal.

/ch/-e/-e/-s/-e/=cheese

/ch/-a/-i/-r/ = chair

/ch/-i/-c/-k/-e/-n/ =chicken

/ch/-a/-m/-p/ = champ

/ch/-u/-n/-k/ = chunk

/ch/-a/-r/-m/ = charm

/ch/-a/-i/-n/ = chain

/ch/-e/-e/-r/ = cheer

After doing this repeatedly about three times each student stands and do as the teacher does by pointing each sound using a stick. When the students make a mistake the teacher told them to sound it properly.

After each student got a chance; the next step the teacher did was; try to explain about what to do on a work sheet. Distribute the worksheet. The environment feels like an adult class there was no fun activity.

### **Observation 3**

The teacher greets the students. Then write the date at the right corner of the board. Then after writing the date she writes action words on the middle of the board. She explained what they are going to do.

**T:** today we all work on action words. You will tell me an action words you know one by one by raising your hands.

All of the students raise their hands, then the teacher start to choose students

**S:** sleep

**T:** next Melat

**Melat:** stop

**S:** write

**T:** next, Lyu

**Lyu:** go

**T:** the opposite of what? What is the opposite of go

**Ss:** stop

**T:** chose Biruk he raised his hand but he can't say a word. The teacher said the word that you know one action word; no replay, then the teacher told him think of a word that expresses action. All of you have to give me on action word. Then she gives a chance to Johannes.

**Johannes:** jog

**S:** Jump

**T:** Ebenezer

**Ebenezer:** hop

**T:** thank you. The teacher chose Sabrina

**Sabrina:** sleep

**T:** we said that somebody told me that try another word. Then she chose Emanuel

**Emanuel:** bump

**T:** next Usra

**Usra:** quick

**T:** whatelse? Edlawit

**Edlawit:** stand

**T:** said who didn't get a chance? Ribka

**Ribka:** awake

**T:** next? Yosabel

**Yosabel:** run

Then the teacher said let me check you can do all the action words.

Then when she said each action words they do the action. When she said sleep they all sleep on their desk. When she said the word stand they all stand. For 'jump' they all jump. And she makes a sentence. 'I can jump' they repeat the sentence while they jump. When she calls the word 'sit' they all sit on their chair. When she call the word read. They act like they are reading. Then she asks them "what are you reading." The students answered. "We are reading a book." For word 'write' they pretend that they are writing. The teacher asked them. "What are you writing with?" "I am writing with a pencil."

After this she makes them sing the song

Look at me (2) I am a butterfly

I fly (4)

Just like a butterfly

Look at me look at me I am a kangaroo

I jump (4)

Just like a kangaroo

Look at me (2) I am a dancing girl

I dance (4)

Just like a dancing girl.

It continuous with different action words. Then she made them read the words twice by sounding out each phoneme. The teacher said now it is time to do writing

The assistant distributed the book for each of the students. Now turn the page 48 after all opened that page with or without the assistant teachers; she explained how to do the class work. That page has filled with pictures that show children performing an action. And at the bottom of each picture there are sentences with a blank space for the students to fill it by looking at the action made by the child in the picture. Then the students started to do the class work. While the students are doing the teacher was checking on them by going around table by tablet. The students finish their work with amazing speed. The teacher and the assistant teachers helped three students who have problem. Then the teacher asked them to read the sentences. Let's read the first one some of the students read it. Then she asked the students to read it all together "Elani is jumping". Correct the first answer is jumping. The second one..... After doing the class work the teacher praises them and told to clap for themselves. Then class ends for a snack break.

## Appendix 6

### QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE ANSWERD BY TEACHERS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore teachers' awareness and application of 'phonological awareness.' This research is primarily carried out as part of a course of study leading to an MA degree.

All the information that you provide will only be used for the purposes of this study. Your sincere replies are earnestly required since they will have a great impact on the outcome of this study.

Please attempt all the items in the questionnaire and read the suggested key before you give your responses to the items.

You need not write your name to make sure that the response you provide will be confidential.

Thank you in advance!

#### Part one: Personal Background Question

1. Sex                    M                     F
2. Educational background                    10 + TTI                     12 + TTI   
Diploma                     Degree                     postgraduate
3. Field of study \_\_\_\_\_
4. Work experience \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you been teaching in kindergarten? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which kindergarten level do you teach English?  
Nursery/Pre KG   
LKG/ KG   
UKG/Prep

7. Have you taken any training on teaching English to the Kindergarten levels?

Yes  No

8. If your answer is 'yes' what type of training?

Summer short training

Workshop and seminar

Others

9. Has the training made a difference on your teaching method?

Yes  No

10. If your answer is 'yes' for question number 9, to what extent?

to a very great extent  to great extent  to some extent

**Part two: Information on the application of phonological awareness.**

1. Do you teach reading? Yes  No

2. If your answer is 'yes' how often do you teach reading?

Always  sometimes  rarely  never

3. Do you know about 'phonological awareness'?

Yes  No

4. If your answer is yes do you use it to teach initial reading in kindergarten?

Yes  No

5. If your answer is no what methods do you use to teach initial reading?

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### Part three: Information on the Levels of Phonological Awareness

Put this mark (✓) in the box to show your answer.

No	Item	Response			
		Yes		No	
		No	%	No	%
1.	Do you use nursery rhymes when teaching initial reading using phonemic awareness?				
2	Do you teach students to identify phonemes/sounds that stand for the alphabet letter?				
3	Do you teach students to isolate words with same or different beginning, middle, or end sounds?				
4	Do you teach phoneme/sound blending of cvc words eg. What word is formed from  b   i   g  sounds? 'big'.				
5	Do you teach two or more letter blended sounds Eg. Pl, sk, sm, str, dr etc.				
6	Do you ask the student to blend onset and rhyme? Eg. Onset of the word 'big' is  b  the rhyme is  ig				
7	Do you teach initial consonant diagraphs (ch, sh, th, wh) when they come at beginning, middle and end position.				
8	Do you teach your students to count phonemes while they hear the sound by using tallies?				
9	Do you teach phoneme/sound segmentation/isolation? Eg. How many sounds does 'grab' have?  gr  a  b				
10	Do you teach your students to insert and/or remove initial middle and end sounds to form different words?				
11	Do you ask students to match the initial sounds to pictures?				
12	Do you teach students vowel sounds (a,e,i,o,u)?				
13	Do you make students be aware of r-controlled vowel sounds? Eg.  ar , in yard;  ir  in bird etc.				
14	Do you make the students be aware of variations in vowel sounds? Eg.  ai  in 'rain' and 'chair'				
15	Do you teach students segmenting words in a sentence?				
16	Do you read story to your students?				

**Part four: Information on Phonological Awareness Activities**

1. What kind of activity do you teach your students to identify sounds/phonemes? Specify please

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2. What kind of activities do you use to teach segmenting?

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3. What kind of activities do you use to teach blending?

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4. What kinds of activities do you use to teach the students phoneme substitution and subtraction?

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5. What activities do you practice with your students to detect onset and rime?

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**Part five: Teachers Opinion**

1. Do you think that teaching initial/early reading using phonological awareness make the teaching and learning of reading easy?

Yes

No

a) If your answer is yes, justify it please

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b) If your answer is 'No' give justification under here

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2. What problems do you encounter while teaching early reading using PA?

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3. Do you have a suggestion to overcome these problems?

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4. Do you believe that the current student's phonological awareness ability will help them in the reading class when they join primary and secondary level?

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## Appendix 7

### The semi-structured Teachers Interview

**Objective:** The aim of this interview is to get your inputs about PA on teaching initial reading in kindergarten level.

1. How long have you been teaching English in kindergarten?
2. What is your qualification?
3. Have you attended workshop, seminar and refresher program related to teaching initial reading using PA in KG?
4. To what extent did the training make a difference in your teaching knowledge?
5. How often do you teach initial/early reading using Phonological awareness?
6. If so, are you aware of the stages of developments of PA, and how to teach it?
7. Using nursery rhymes has significance in the teaching of PA skills, what is your opinion on this?
8. Do you use all PA manipulative like phoneme isolation/ segmenting /blending, onset rime detection? If so what kinds of activities do you use?
9. Do you teach your students to be creative by using substitution and subtracting initial, middle or end sounds? How often do you teach them?
10. How often do you teach your students to be aware of consonant and vowels?
11. How do you teach vowel variations, r-controlled vowels?
12. Do you teach your students to match words with pictures and read cvc words?
13. How do you teach to group words by putting as same and different?

14. What is your opinion on the teaching of initial reading using phonological awareness? Do you think the current PA will help for the latter success when join elementary and secondary levels?
15. What problems do you face while teaching reading using PA? do you manage to solve the problem?
16. In your opinion can teaching initial reading using PA can be applied in government and public KGs.

## **Declaration**

**I, the under signed, declared that this is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.**

**Name THEODRA GEORGE**

**SIGNITURE \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date JULY, 10,2009**

**PLACE ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY DFLL**