

## **Abstract**

Phonics method is a considerable aspect to foster students ability to learn how to read and write. The purpose of this study is to discover the ways that teachers use phonics to help promote students success in reading and writing. The present study is a qualitative design using questionnaires to collect information from teachers and students in Infant school classrooms. Participants were chosen from a bilingual school in Córdoba. The data collected was analysed by observation and evaluation registers. Results indicate teachers use some principal instrumental methods to teach phonics: letter sounds, letter formation, blending, segmenting and identifying sounds in words.

In general way, we would ensure that the reading process in English is pleasant and attainable both for the pupil and for the teacher. To merely practical effects, the utilization of phonics is clearly feasible, an available, effective resource. In addition, easy to use for the teachers and pupils.

***Key words:*** *Phonics method, bilingual school, blending, segmenting.*

El método “phonics” es un aspecto importante para fomentar en los estudiantes la habilidad para aprender a leer y escribir. El objetivo de este estudio es descubrir procedimientos que los profesores/as usan para ayudar en el éxito de la lectura y escritura. El presente estudio es un diseño cualitativo donde se usa cuestionarios para recopilar información de profesores/as y alumnos/as de clases de infantil. Los participantes fueron escogidos de un colegio bilingüe en Córdoba. La colección de datos fue analizada mediante la observación y registros de evaluación. Los resultados indican que los profesores/as usan algunos métodos principales para enseñar “Phonics”: los sonidos la formación y unión de las letras y la indentificación de sonidos en palabras.

En general, aseguramos que la lectura sea agradable y alcanzable tanto para los alumnos como para el profesor/a. Con respecto a la práctica, el uso de “phonics” es claramente viable, un recurso disponible y efectivo. En resumen, fácil de usar tanto para los profesores/as como para los alumnos/as.

***Palabras clave:*** *Método “Phonics”, colegio bilingüe, unión, división.*

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## **1. Introduction**

The starting point of the TFM is the difficulty of students (3 to 5 years old) in reading comprehension, vocabulary, structures or speaking. From my point of view, students need to have phonemic instructions from when they are children. In a specific way, they are prepared to become independent readers in Primary Education. The present study analyses the benefits of a systematic phonics programme which might give children a start with their reading, writing and spelling, it might reduce special educational needs across the schools. That is, if children were taught to read using phonics techniques, they would achieve high results in their English learning process.

The method teaches children to read by identifying and pronouncing sounds rather than individual letters. Some studies show that students who come to Primary Education with an early phonemic awareness instruction are better readers than students that have not a phonemic awareness instruction.

The base of communication in any human language starts with oral skills: listening and speaking are related in this sense. Then, the technology of writing that is linked to the reading will come. In the first stages of children's schooling, providing qualified models of output in the learning of a foreign language. Henceforth the need to employ methodological strategies delve into comprehension, oral expression and build up a phonological system of language as an aim of study over solid foundation in their minds.

I have chosen this topic because I participated in an apprenticeship about teaching pronunciation and oral skills to young learners. In this way, phonics are used to teach the reading process to English-speaking children. It really attracted my attention due to the fact that in spite of the amount of works focussed on the reading process and Phonetics in L1, the role in the L2 has not been investigated.

## **2. Phonics: teaching pronunciation & oral skills to young learners**

### **2.1 Statement & significance of the problem.**

Understanding the importance of integrating phonics into reading instruction is important

because it can increase the students' reading ability at early ages. Also, students who are able to use phonics skills to help to decode unknown words will be stronger readers. Through interviewing teachers, the researcher describes how teachers in the field integrate phonics into reading instruction.

If a child can recognize the letters but not the phonemic sounds it has, they can have reading comprehension fluency and spelling difficulties in Primary Education. Those problems can give rise to behaviour problems or a rejection of the learning-teaching process. If this is an important issue for early childhood development, we wonder how teachers should instil this cognitive skill.

The learning process of reading is more complex in English than in Spanish. In English, the written language differs enormously from the oral language. This way, while in Spanish we rely on 29 letters that represent 24 phonemes; in English, the pupils face 26 letters that represent 45 phonemes either alone or blended together.

In addition, we have the difficulty of enormous irregularities of pronunciation when we study English. In fact, in the area of English speech, the process of learning of the reading possesses consistent pedagogic materials based on the phonological conscience. Then, they usually have a difficulty with reading comprehension, fluency and spelling. In relation to Bernstein & Ellis (2000), children without phonemic awareness who want to memorize visual letters may not understand what is the relation between letter and sound.

The lack of phonemic awareness can result in several consequences in the early childhood years such as a low mark in a reading test. Therefore, students could need educational reinforcement instead of going to regular classes.

In Spain, the organization of bilingual schools is regulated by the Order of July 24, 2006, by which they regulate certain aspects of the organization and functioning of the Bilingual schools (BOJA no. 156 of August 11, 2006). Curricula are official and, the areas directly linked to the Bilingual Program, carried out the corresponding adaptations.

Learning the first foreign language begins in early childhood education. The number of hours which are employed to learn a foreign language are the same as for other students. The difference is that students in bilingual form receive 30% to 50% some non-linguistic areas in a foreign language. The methodology applied to these students is CLIL (Integrated Learning Content and Language). English has been learnt as the first foreign language. The main purpose in the Spanish educative system deals with the significance of the acquisition of some

key skills at the end of compulsory education, like the information and digital skill, the social and citizen skill, the mathematics skill, etc. One of these key skills is the linguistic communication skill, both in Spanish and in a second language, usually English as a core subject.

The principal aim that we want to achieve in the language will be encourage the use of it correctly and students will become able to develop the linguistic skill. Moreover, since the creation of the bilingual programmes in many schools in Spain, other subject areas of the curriculum are taught in the foreign language to the achievement of the linguistic communication skill. We should bear in mind that one of the most important parts of communication is literacy.

Therefore, one of the methods to teach literacy is the use of phonics which is very effective and a resource available in our educational system.

As we have mentioned before, this study tries to understand some important concepts such as literacy or phonological awareness, and its relation to the teaching-learning process of the English language for Spanish students, it is based on using the technique of phonics.

## **2.2. Research questions & hypothesis.**

These two questions will be addressed in this research in order to show that phonemic awareness is an important part of reading instruction in early childhood education.

- a) Do phonics programs implemented in Infant Education develop an improvement to the pronunciation and reading of words?
- b) How do phonics strategies contribute to students letter sound acquisition knowledge?

Furthermore, we should take into account these hypotheses which make us think about what are the problems when teachers and students deal with the reading and writing process.

- The teaching methodology has not adapted to the decrease in age to start learning English and the increase of hours per week.

- This methodology does not help students to deal with written text. Therefore, it

complicates the reading process and it is detrimental to pronunciation, given that, the learner transfers graphology and phonemic rules of Spanish.

- The majority of students have centred in the learning of reading in their native language but this process is different in a foreign language. Due to the fact that, they know the alphabet, we should help them to have a relation between a sound and a letter in the new language.

### **2.3. Objectives of the study.**

We should keep in mind these objectives in order to develop this research:

- Providing an easy tool that adapts to the actual context of English classes to facilitate students of Infant Education to learning the process of reading and writing in English by means of phonics to avoid that writing text affects pronunciation.

- Favouring comprehensive reading to associate sound and graphical symbols.

- Improving motivation and the level of English of the foreign language by means of reading and writing.

### **3. Literature review.**

The purpose of this study is to discover the ways that teachers teach phonics to their students. The first section talks about what is the spelling, reading and the ability to be aware of this process. The second section deals with how beginners learn to read in the native and foreign language and the phonological awareness in the reading and writing process.

The third section is based on the definition of phonics approaches and the relation between sound letters and the ability to read and write. The last section refers to the methodology and strategies to teach phonics and some myths about it. Teachers have the responsibility to teach students to read as the main objective and that it takes part of their abilities. Hence, phonemic awareness has a big relation with the success of the reading and writing process.

What we want to achieve is that all children become successful readers and phonemic

awareness is one key to helping a student reaches his/her full potential as a successful reader. In order to teach phonics, teachers have to know what this concept is, they must investigate how it is taught in Great Britain as a reference with the purpose to familiarize and organize their work. It is assumed that teachers who are teaching phonics know the standards for phonics and how to best teach them to students. A teacher must consider the level of students, difficulties and the school contexts in order to provide a meaningful and successful learning experience for each student. They must use strategies to improve the motivation and the continuous progress.

### **3.1. Reading and spelling skills**

First of all, spelling<sup>1</sup> is one of the elements of orthography. It is related to the writing of a word or words with the corresponding letters. It is the standard rules which several graphic symbols are used in the writing system.

In Spanish, the spelling sounds of the language have to do with the alphabet, but fully phonetics spellings are exceptions in many languages, for instance in English. Pronunciation changes in most of the phonemes. That is, spelling is irregular in most languages.

In addition, foreign words may be adopted without being adapted to the spelling system. Besides, the use of English words means that these words can be adopted by our language without using spelling conventions. Besides, in Spanish, words that are written similarly and they have different meanings may be spelt in different ways to differentiate them visually.

Basic reading programs use the memorization methods which is when to give the students the words to study and then assess the words that students have retained. According to McCullough (2000), it is believed these reading programs do not capture the students' interest and do not allow them to retain the knowledge of spelling; or they memorize words for a test and they forget them, not really knowing how to spell the words. Therefore, we should lay out if we use the current reading programs or the phonics strategies.

How phonics is taught is probably more important than what phonics is taught. Phonics is a listening skill. McCullough (2000) stated that the English language was a sound/symbol system. However, if we take into account a correct spelling, we could develop an important phonetic awareness. So what and how should phonics and spelling be taught?

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<sup>1</sup>See more information : <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spelling>

Along to Roberts & Meiring (2006), most reading programs have phonics instructions inside. Most of the inset instructions tell us what is the use of phonics in our current text. In relation to Griffith & Klesius (1990), to become a good reading program, spelling should be taught at the same time as phonics instructions. The main objective of current reading programs is to centre on reading skills, vocabulary and comprehension skills when they start to read. They claim that children learn phonics skills unconsciously when they compare words with similar spelling.

Following that, reading<sup>2</sup> is a cognitive process to decipher codes in order to understand a meaning (reading comprehension). Students acquire this skill with the purpose of achieving a communicative skill, and putting into words their ideas. Students who could have a different attitude or knowledge face a written text in a specific socio-cultural context. According to (Rayner et al., 2000) “Teaching children to read well early on obviously helps to develop a valuable lifetime habit; thus, it is no wonder that educators have placed enormous emphasis on finding the best way to teach these skills” (p.86). We should practice it continuously.

In addition, reading encourages our creativity, imagination and critical analysis. It makes us create an image of unfamiliar places the texts describe in our mind. Readers use a variety of reading strategies such as associating an image with words to identify the meaning of unknown words.

Another important reading skill is fluency. There are many reasons why children have difficulties with reading. One reason is they do not have basic phonics skills to help them to read. Children should be taught phonics as a routine, using story text, flashcards, videos or songs every day. According to Roberts and Meiring (2006), these instructions make children rouse their motivation and use techniques to read vocabulary. It does not make students feel frustrated. Phonics method is essential to being able to read. Teachers use direct strategies by means of instructions (Phonics). Therefore, MacCullough (2000) stated that students need to know the strategies of language to start to read. When they are not able to identify words while they are reading, it affects their fluency and ability to comprehend what they have read. They are too busy worrying about how to say a word then being able to say it. Fluency and comprehension are two skills that occur when children assimilate and analyse a text in their minds.

Griffith and Klesius (1990), affirmed that children who had difficulties to read and

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<sup>2</sup> See more information: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reading\\_\(process\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reading_(process))

associate graphic symbols with letters, they would continue at the end of the Primary Education. The ability to relate a sound and a letter is not achieved. Therefore, they do not become good readers.

Furthermore, Phonological and Orthography<sup>3</sup> are used in both reading and spelling. Therefore, these two skills are connected. Thus, phonics method is a crucial step in improving a student's spelling ability. If a student can read a word, that does not necessarily mean they can spell it.

Spelling is often more problematic for students than reading because there are so many options for spelling a word. Conversely, if a student can spell a word, it is almost guaranteed that they can read it.

If a student lacks the ability to recognize each sound of a word, he or she could not spell it. This will lead a student to spell using whole word strategies of memorization, instead of actually understanding the fundamentals that create spelling patterns. Therefore if a student is relying on memorization, he or she will have to memorize every new word. Whereas, if he or she is relying on an understanding of phonology, the student will be able to spell new words more readily and automatically.

### **3.2 The teaching of reading & writing in English in Infant and Primary Education.**

Even if in the first few years of Infant Education we are more clearly concerned with the implementation and practice of the oral skills (speaking and listening), it is also true that throughout Primary Education we try to ensure that the child covers its basic needs in the written language.

As to written comprehension, pupils in Primary Education should develop an attitude and ability to interpret and understand a text.

A child is able to learn a language without effort and in a natural way. However, learning a language as an adult, in contrast, is often a difficult process. Besides, some studies tell us that adults are not able to learn a second language (L2) using the same neurocognitive mechanisms as children. However, a recent evidence shows that some aspects of language, such as grammar, that are difficult to learn in L2, our brain is prepared to learn it following the L1 structures and comparing them.

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<sup>3</sup> This information is available in <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/why-phonological-awareness-important-reading-and-spelling>. (pages 9,10 & 11 of TFM)

Moreover, we can differentiate explicit training which is defined as training that provides learners with information about L2 grammar rules, and implicit training is defined as training that engages L2 learners with the target language but does not provide any explicit information or direction to search for rules.<sup>4</sup>

We can take into account the research on how people learn their first and following languages in child and adulthood. For example, Lightbown and Spada (2006) showed that children might acquire their mother tongue mastering basic structures and rules that govern the language.

There is a real relation between oral language and the reading and writing process. Besides the oral language, which is a context for literacy, promises success in reading and writing in the future. Besides, the role of the teacher is very important to increase the oral interaction and develop strategies to use the language.

Recognition of phonemes, the fluency in oral reading, and recognition of letters in names are skills that are very important in Infant Education. However the attainment of vocabulary, phonological memory and the comprehension of reading is less clear. Indeed, it could not be possible until the fourth course of Primary Education or later that the real effects of work on vocabulary knowledge (particularly academic vocabulary) and knowledge of discourse.

The research literature has identified a number of approaches to teaching reading comprehension based on oral language. For example, instructions that teach students how to use comprehension strategies of a text.

Despite the fact that some studies involving early learners have shown disappointing effects for discussion-based strategies on children's reading comprehension, researchers strongly recommend the use of comprehension strategies that place a strong emphasis on oral language usage.

Basic strategies which are very effective have to do with the answer to a student's questions or answer a specific aspect of a text, verifying and clarifying students' understandings. Children should also reflect on their use of reading comprehension strategies, so they can better understand when it is appropriate to use them (metacognitive knowledge).

### **3.3. The phonological awareness in the reading and writing process**

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<sup>4</sup> This information is available in Morgan-Short, K., Steinhauer, K., Sanz, C., & Ullman, M. T. (2012). Explicit and Implicit Second Language Training Differentially Affect the Achievement of Native-like Brain Activation Patterns. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 24(4), 933–947. [http://doi.org/10.1162/jocn\\_a\\_00119](http://doi.org/10.1162/jocn_a_00119)

The English language certainly holds a leading position in the world and it offers learners an opportunity for personal, cultural and social growth.

The learning of a foreign language must have the communicative approach as its main reference, but in order to prove communicative, pronunciation and phonological accuracy both are quite important if we want to be understood by our interlocutor. If sounds are not articulated clearly, it will be too difficult to keep a conversation. It is for this reason that we as teachers should care about those aspects of phonology that could facilitate mutual understanding and, thus, make communication possible.

Furthermore, a balanced and effective reading program should include instruction or practice in five areas<sup>5</sup>: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension.

Specifically, direct and systematic instruction of phonemic skills is important for building reading skills. Research by Pullen & Justice (2003) supports that explicit instruction in phonemic awareness is essential for preventing reading failure for young participants otherwise at-risk for poor reading achievement.

In recent years, many researchers have studied the relationship between phonological awareness and reading and spelling. Phonological awareness is the area of oral language that relates to the capacity to think about the sounds in a word rather than the meaning of the word. It is an understanding of the structure of spoken language. It is a set of words, and words consist of syllables, rhymes, and sounds.

This ability is important for using the relation between sounds and letters properly in reading and writing. Phonological awareness is taught from Infant Education and it is one of the most successful skills in the first course and beyond. Many children begin Infant Education with a good phonological awareness. Some students develop these skills by means of a stimulating classroom environment, while others need more instruction to achieve this skill.

Moreover, a strategy to use the phonological process is used in invented spelling. That is, when students try to write a word, they must first pay attention to their own language, classify the sounds in the word, and finally, try to match the sounds with known letters. Students need some phonological awareness to use invented spelling, but their exploration of sounds through

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<sup>5</sup> This information is available in [https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/prf\\_k-3/Pages/PRF-teachers-k-3.aspx](https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/prf_k-3/Pages/PRF-teachers-k-3.aspx)

writing helps them to discover more about how sounds and letters work in English, and then how to use this knowledge as they read.

Strickland (1998) stated that child was able to learn phonics by means of the amount and quality of his/her previous learning experiences with written and oral language. The ability of children to understand phonics.

Adams (1996) claimed that children might need clear instruction in phonemic awareness. As soon as children learn the letters of the alphabet, they start to connect the letters with the sounds they hear and blend them together to form words. When developing phonemic awareness skills, children become aware of syllables and are able to hear initial and final sounds in words. Children are then able to combine consonants to create new sounds and to hear and discriminate rhymes. Well-developed phonemic awareness is the ability to hear different sounds, to discriminate between phonemes, and to orally manipulate these sounds. Many experts encourage teachers to give opportunities to readers to use phonics strategies to recognize unfamiliar words (Hiebert, Pearson, Taylor, Richardson, & Paris, 1998). Phonics instruction will help children learn sounds of unknown words; however, Honig (1996) asserted that if children manipulated sounds of unknown words, it may stop their reading. "Sounding out words is a very slow and cumbersome process, and any student who must rely on only sounding out in order to read many words is not reading fluently enough to concentrate on meaning" (p. 20). He affirmed that impediments to word recognition and reading comprehension among poor readers were problems in spelling sounds. This means that teachers must look to the prerequisite skill of phonemic awareness before focusing on phonics instruction.

Adams (1996) stated that teachers began by teaching children to hear rhymes and alliteration. Children then need to be able to hear and distinguish different sounds. Activities that reinforce these skills can be taught through the use of songs, poems, and nursery rhymes. The ability to divide words into individual sounds and blend these sounds together promotes successful reading.

Finally, children should be able to add, delete, and manipulate phonemes to form new words. Methods such as these increase phonological awareness in Infant and Primary Education and promote successful reading.

### **3.4. Phonics approaches.**

According to Adams (1994), phonics is the method of teaching reading that is based on the alphabetic system, the main objective is to teach the relationship between letters or groups of letters and their pronunciations. That is to say, phonics refers to associating letters or letter groups with the sound they represent.

Phonics method refers to a method for teaching speakers of English to read and write that language. It teaches how to connect the sounds of spoken English with letters or groups of letters and teaching them to blend the sounds of letters together to produce approximate pronunciations of unknown words.

Phonics method is about the understanding of letter-sound relationships between written words and spoken language and the applications of how to use these letter sound correspondences in reading and spelling.

According to Gunning (2000), all the phonemes, varieties of graphemic units are derived from 26 letters. Generally, the graphemic units of English can be classified into six categories: single consonant (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z), consonant digraphs (ch, sh, ng, th, ph, wh), consonant blends (r-blend, l-blend, s-blend), single vowels (a, e, i, o, u), vowel digraphs (ea, ee, ay, oa) and vowel diphthongs (oy, oi, ou). When reading an alphabetic language like English, it is important for learners to understand the alphabetic principle, in which letters or letter sequences in printed words represent sounds.

In relation to Blevins (2006), phonics instruction, which primarily focuses on the teaching of letter-sound correspondences, can help language learners get the idea of the alphabetic principles.

Therefore, phonics is not necessarily a method for teaching English pronunciation; it is a method for teaching English speakers to read and write.

	Whole-words	Phonics
Presentation	A word is presented as a whole. Teachers often use flashcards to introduce new words.	When presented, each phoneme of a word is first introduced and combine the phonemes to read the word.

Practice	Look-and-Say method	Phonemic awareness activities
Product (Result)	The children are expected to guess and recognize the words they have memorized	The children are expected to break down words into their component sounds and/or blend them when reading new words.

Table 1: Whole approach vs Phonics. (The National Reading Panels)

There are several different types of phonics approaches that can be different in order to the analysis or how the combination of letter-sound is showed to the student. For example, in synthetic phonics approach, students are able to put together an individual letter or letter with their own sound and then blend the sounds to form words. In analytic approach, firstly, students learn the entire word and then link each letter with its appropriate sound.

There are different ways to teach phonics instructions, they could be used and practised when a student reads a full text. For instance; on the one hand, many instructions are taught with the purpose to use these skills in a text with an arranged vocabulary where the student must circle different sounds. On the other hand, phonics are inserted in a text, and students learn phonics along the way because of the way they are presented systematically.

Analogy phonics	When students start to know the familiar word, they can associate part of this word with an unfamiliar word and then blend the new structure with the new word. For instance, while recognizing that -wh is inserted in the known word whale, or reading skate by analogy to

	skirt.
Analytic phonics	Students are able to analyse the relation between sound and letter by means of words that have been learnt to avoid the use of isolated sounds.
Embedded phonics	Teaching of inserted phonics instructions in a text in an inferable way where an incidental learning is produced
Phonics through spelling	The teaching of cutting words into phonemes and selecting letters for these phonemes, that is, teaching students to spell “sit” by means of phonemes such as “s-i-t”. Once children can read pin, they also need to use their knowledge of sounds to break it down to /p/ /i/ /n/ in order to write the word.
Synthetic phonics	<p>Teaching to convert letters into sounds and then blending sound to form words.</p> <p>Blending is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word. For instance sounding out d-o-g and making the dog word. It is a technique every child will need to learn, and it improves with practice.</p> <p>To start with, you should sound out the word and see if a child can hear it, giving the answer if it is necessary. The sounds must be said quickly to hear the word. It is easier if the first sound is said slightly louder. Try little and often with words like b-u-s, t-o-p, c-a-t and h-e-n</p>

Table 2: Phonics approaches (The National Reading Panel<sup>6</sup>)

### **3.5. What do we know about how to teach phonics?**

Phonics instruction must ensure students have a cognitive clarity. That is, a student could figure out and follow the teacher instruction because he or she knows what the teacher is trying to teach and transmit.

<sup>6</sup> It was a National Panel with the stated aim of assessing the effectiveness of different approaches used to teach children to read.

(Rayner et al., 2002), “Teaching that makes the rules of phonics clear will ultimately be more successful than teaching that does not. Admittedly, some children can infer these principles on their own, but most need explicit instruction in phonics, or their reading skills will suffer”(p.89).

Downing (1979) defined cognitive clarity as “a technical label for the psychological components that lie behind what the layman might refer to as ‘clear understanding,’ ‘clear thinking,’ [or] ‘grasping the problem’” (p. 5).

Furthermore, according to Guthrie & Wigfield (1997), the students can interact with what they are learning. It has to do with the motivation and learning. Joined learners work in a motivated way. That is, they use whatever skills and strategies they have with training, constancy, and an apprehension of success.

Recent theory and research have changed the perspective of motivation, it is related to the self-esteem of students and their achievement instead of a way to conduct students by means of teachers. We now know that motivation has to do with three important factors: self-confidence, beliefs about the success or failure, and finding it a pleasurable experience. Schunk and Zimmerman (1997), “Self-efficacy refers to beliefs a person has about his or her capabilities to learn or perform behaviours at designated levels” (p. 34).

Besides, Gardner (1993) introduced the idea of multiple intelligences and said to us that children did not all learn in the same way. They had their own personalities, they could be faster or slower than others. We can name like multiple bits of intelligences, learning styles or personalities.

Moreover, Guided reading, self-selected reading, and writing instruction are the methods and strategies of a complete reading program that are the principles of teaching. Furthermore, we believe that phonics instruction must not take a little part of our time in class because of the way many children will feel tired and think they are failing.

To outline what type of phonics instruction is most appropriate, we must look at research findings of how children learn phonics. Research indicates that children need to develop phonemic awareness and a constant learning and have regular opportunities to apply their phonics skills. The research, however, does not agree with a secluded phonemic awareness and synthetic phonics instruction with a full text with a different association of letters and sounds as the best way to teach phonics where students only can read.

Experts also use aids to teach orthographic patterns and analogy decoding, as well as

morpheme patterns. Furthermore, when there are different tasks or activities, children learn in an effective way.

Over the past 12 years, we have developed an effective instructional framework for primary literacy instruction called “The Four Blocks”

(Cunningham, Hall, & Defee, 1998; Cunningham, Hall, & Sigmon, 1999). Children in Four Blocks classrooms spend 30 to 40 minutes each day engaged in guided reading, 30 to 40 minutes in self-selected reading (which includes teacher read-aloud), 30 to 40 minutes in writing, and 30 to 40 minutes working with words. Three blocks, or three-quarters of the language arts time each day, are allotted to real reading and writing.

These three methods largely consist of “real” literacy activities, they help develop cognitive clarity about what reading and writing are and how they are used. As children find pleasure and success in reading and writing, their level of literacy engagement increases. There is much variety within each of these three methods, making the literacy experience a multifaceted one. Self-selected reading and writing are always on each child’s reading level and thus, assure that a good part of each day’s instruction is multilevel. In addition, these three methods support the teaching of phonics that takes place in the working-with-words block.

Guided reading instructional time provides students with guided practice in applying the phonics skills they are taught during the working with words sessions. Self-selected reading and writing instructional times each provide students with both guided and independent practice in applying

Those phonics skills. During writing instructional time, writing with invented spelling also fosters phonemic awareness and sequential decoding.

Clarke (1988) compared the effectiveness of invented spelling versus an emphasis on correct spelling in first-grade classrooms. The children who had regularly invented spellings were superior to the others on measures of word decoding at the end of the year. Furthermore, invented spelling was particularly helpful to learning phonics for those first graders who had been designated as having a low level in reading at the beginning of the year.

Research has proven that teaching the 44 letter sounds systematically and with certain speed accelerates early reading and writing development. Along with the recognition and knowledge of the sounds, children also require being taught the skills of blending and segmenting.

### **3.6. Why do we use phonics to teach reading?**

National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005) stated that:

...teachers provide systematic, direct and explicit phonics instruction so that children master the essential alphabetic code-breaking skills required for foundational reading proficiency. Equally, those teachers provide an integrated approach to reading that supports the development of oral language, vocabulary, grammar, reading fluency, comprehension and the literacies of new technologies. (p.9)

In 1934, Paul McKee, one of the most prominent experts of his day, wrote the following:

The question of instruction in phonics has aroused a lot of controversies.

Some educators have held to the proposition that phonetic training is not only futile and wasteful but also harmful to the best interests of a reading program. Others believe that since the child must have some means of attacking strange words, instruction in phonics is imperative.

There have also been disputes regarding the amount of phonics to be taught, the time when the teaching should take place, and the methods to be used. In fact, the writer knows of no problem around which more disputes have centred. (p. 191)

When we have learned what is the meaning of a word by means of letters, we can build it in our memory and recover it. It makes us that we have a clear concept in our mind.

We should have to take into account that isolated letters can not do their function, they have to link sound to form a consistent group. People who can reproduce this junction between sounds and letters in a correct way, can store an amount of words depending on the level and read it properly. Familiar words are delved into quickly, the information has been learnt and located in our brain, students acquire techniques to take in new words even when we do not know all the meaning of the story.

In some languages, such as Spanish, Finnish and Italian, the connection between sounds and letters are very harmonious, what you see and write is what you say or read. In English, the links between sounds and letters have been affected by historical events and long-term changes in speech and pronunciation. Therefore, phonics is a crucial method to learn English and we have to adapt our brain to interpret the meaning of the letters rather than simply translate letters into sounds and vice versa. Teachers and experts should pay attention when we teach phonics, because of the way students could mix up when two words are pronounced in a similar way but the meaning is different such as “soup” and “soap”.

### **3.7. Techniques and activities of phonics instructions.**

First of all, the most common *technique* is “Big Book reading”<sup>7</sup> This is a way to transmit knowledge between teachers and pupils in the class, the students' attention is attracted by a text with engaging pictures and they can understand it very well. But students can use it not only to know the meaning if not to associate words, the illustration and the sound mentally.

In the past, teachers prepared their own Big Books in pieces with enormous size. But nowadays Big Books are produced commercially. We could use this book as a routine where pupils read it each day and they could review each sound depending on the level of students. There are several stages when we use it. Firstly, the teacher read the book out loud to students, then with the class and finally, students read it individually.

To start with, teachers read the book each day in a session for four days, and then the Big Book is replaced by another one. Frequently, teachers highlight some letters and sounds of the text by means of a picture or explain several characteristics such as unfamiliar vocabulary, stress, vowels or consonant blend.

The main characteristic is that the teaching of phonics is not well-defined. Students learn phonics without realizing in relation to the context. The teacher shows the link between letter and sound. For example, *cat* word starts with c but it is not acquired as a phonological process in a clarified way as in “c-a-t.” However, teachers foster students to practice the first letter or letters of a word and a sentence with a picture to analyse unfamiliar words. Hence, Big Book reading does not teach what sounds correspond with a letter in an explicit way, if not it helps to use the initial letter sounds and the consonant blending (sh, sn, sp). In this way, pupils know several prompts to know how to decode words with phonics but they are not directly taught to sound out the entire word. The procedure is that pupils use the initial letters of the word and a picture or a specific movement with our hands or something like that to work out the meaning of the word. Due to the fact that students are practising continuously, they acquire phonological rules to decode several letters.

The most common Big Book is *Jolly phonics*. The main objective is teaching to convert letters into sounds and then blend sounds to form words. With actions or pictures for each of the 42 letter sounds, it encourages the teaching-learning process, and it shows productive results. The letter sounds are divided into seven groups of sounds. It shows a way to develop

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<sup>7</sup>All this information is available in the book “*The Phonics Handbook*”. Sue Lloyd.

the main skills: listening, speaking reading and writing. Moreover, in later courses, it ensures that students learn essential grammar, spelling and punctuation skills.

### Order of Letter Sound Groups

The letters are in groups of six. They have been carefully selected to help learning. The first six letters can be used to make many simple words, e.g. 'pin' and 'sat', so that letters can quickly be turned into words. The letters that get easily confused are not too close together, such as 'b' and 'd'. The 'c' is introduced early on, as it forms a template for writing the letters 'd a, o, g, q. <sup>8</sup> The letter sound groups, listed below, are used throughout the Jolly Phonics material.

Letter Groups 1. S, a, t, i, p, n

2. c k, e, h, r, m, d

3. g, o, u, l, f, b

4. ai, aa, le, ee, or

5. Z, w, ng, v, little oo, long oo

6. y, x, ch, sh, voiced th, unvoiced th

7. qu, au, ue, er, ar

### Letter Names

When the first three groups of letter sounds have been taught, the children can be told that the letters have names as well as sounds. They need to know both sounds and names. A good way of introducing the letter names is through the alphabet. This can simply be sung or recited.

### Alternative Spellings of Vowels

Once the children have learnt the 42 letter sounds in the initial programme, they need to be made aware of the alternative ways that some of the vowels can be written.

### Learning letter formation

For young children to learn fluent, neat handwriting they need to be taught how to hold their pencil, and form their letters correctly. Early mastery is well worth the extra effort. Anyone who has tried to correct an older child's bad pencil hold, or incorrect formation, knows how difficult, if not impossible, it can be. It is much better to get it correct from the start.

### Identifying the sounds in words

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<sup>8</sup> See the following video : Jolly phonics sounds and actions <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-bZlmRw2uI>.  
And appendix 1

The main phonic skill for writing is to start with the spoken word, then listen, identify and write the sounds in that word. This ability to hear the sounds in words is called phonological awareness. For example, with the word 'bin', if you listen you can hear the sounds 'b.. i.. n'. Then if you know how to write those letter sounds, you can write the word 'bin' without help. This is the opposite to the skill needed for blending.

### Tricky words<sup>9</sup>

Irregular words are known by the children as 'tricky words', because they are inclined to trick you! However, some part of a tricky word will be regular. For example with the word 'come', the 'c' and 'm' are regular. Children are more able to read and write irregular words when they have knowledge of letter sounds and can relate the sounds to symbols. The children look carefully at the words. They find it amusing to look for the irregular part. It is the start of analysing words. The extra attention to the details helps to put it in their memory.

Teaching		Week 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
<b>Letter Recognition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worksheets + actions</li> <li>Flash cards &amp; games</li> <li>Sound books</li> <li>Put up alphabet frieze, section by section</li> </ul>	s a t i p	n c/k e h r	m d g o u	l f b a i j	oa ie ee or z w	ng v y x oo oo	ch sh th th qu ou	oi ue er ar	Main alternative spellings	
							Beginning letter names and capitals Beginning to learn alphabet Introducing consonant blends				
<b>Letter Formation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-sensory practice – pencil hold</li> <li>– correct formation</li> </ul>	Air writing			Air writing, including joined-up digraphs				Air writing, including joined-up digraphs and joined c.v.c. words		
<b>Blending</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hearing the word after the sounds have been spoken a) by teacher, b) on their own</li> <li>Sound Books</li> <li>Letter games/ activities</li> <li>Word Boxes</li> </ul>		Practising sounds: first loud, then soft	Practising blending techniques on simple c.v.c. words			Practising blending regular words with consonant blends				
							Beginning word boxes for capable children – takes 3-4 weeks				
<b>Identifying Sounds in Words</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encoding regular words</li> <li>Writing simple sentences</li> <li>Dictation</li> </ul>	Dictation of sounds, then of c.v.c. words									
		Identifying the sounds in words. Is there an 's' in nest? Where is it? – beginning, middle or end?		Whole class calling out sounds in given word, e.g. dog, then holding up a finger for each sound, and counting			Whole class identifying and counting the sounds in words with consonant blends				
<b>Tricky Words</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading tricky words</li> <li>Learning spelling of tricky words</li> </ul>		Learning to write first name			Learning to spell tricky words – two per week	Dictation of simple sentences using regular words and tricky words already taught.				

<sup>9</sup> See appendix 2

Table 3: Timetable for the first term with Jolly Phonics. (The Phonics Handbook Sue Lloyd)

Here's an example of how we teach 'Tt'

We introduce the letter with a story about going to watch a tennis match. We pretend we're following the ball with our eyes from left to right and we make a 't' sound each time the ball lands.

This is the action associated with the sound 't'.

We also eat tiny teddies while we pretend to watch the tennis.

After our initial story introduction, we break into groups to do rotation activities.

1. Children stick toothpicks on a large 't' shape.
2. They roll play dough and place it over 't' laminated cards.
3. They use play dough to make objects that begin with 't'.
4. They practise writing 't' (and previously learnt letters) on whiteboards.
5. They draw pictures of things that start with 't'.
6. They trace a sand letter 't' with their fingers and sing T says 't' to the tune of 'Skip to my Lou'.
7. They load teddies on trains with ten in each carriage.
8. They crawl through tunnels of chairs in a t' shape.

Table 4: What's so jolly about phonics? (Coralie Fraser Kindergarten teacher, Avondale School, Cooranbong, NSW)

The second strategy is "Playing with Phonics". It has to do with the motivation of children to learn and participate using amusing phonics games where children have a chart or a bingo and they can circle and identify different sounds. Each week they can practice a different game with different sounds such as hangman or phonics soup.

Furthermore, "Phonics worksheets" They have got different pictures which are associated with a skill such as identifying or saying phonics, they must fill in the worksheet according to the instructions.

Thirdly, "the box" can be used as a "sound corner" where each sound is kept in a box and it

is presented with a huge illustration to identify the sound. For example, the “s” sound is related with a snake.

We are going to take into consideration a selection of main *activities* that help teachers and students to use and learn phonics.

Firstly “Making Words”.<sup>10</sup> In this activity, students associate a sound pattern with other words that have a similar sound so a letter of the word is changed to form another different word. Each Making Words lesson has three parts. First, children change letters to make a set of words including a “secret” word made from all the letters.

Next, they classify the words into patterns. Finally, they acquire a way to phonological awareness by means of words that rhyme that they have prepared and worked on.

To plan a Making Words lesson, we begin with the secret word. Here is an example for a Making Words lesson in which the secret word is *carrot*. This word was chosen to fit a theme, *fruit and vegetables* and it allows us to make words we can then sort for the *c-r-t* blend and lots of rhymes. Using the letters in *carrot*, we choose 10 to 15 words that will give us some easy and harder words, some *c-r- t* words, and several sets of rhymes. We then decide on the order in which words will be made, beginning with shorter words and building to larger words.

We write these words on flashcards to be collected in the classroom. As the children make each word, we choose one child who has made it correctly to come and make it in a pocket chart. As the lesson begins, the letters *a*, *r*, *c*, and *t* are in the pocket chart. The children each have the same letters and a holder. The teacher leads them to make words by saying the following: Take two letters and make *cat*: the cat meows. Now, change just one letter and you can spell *car*: The *car* is red.

Secondly, Practising with known Words. The purpose is that students practice with words that they know and they have learnt to identify and spell them and introduce new words. For instance, using the known words *snake*, *sheep*.

Firstly, a chart is divided into two columns and each column is labelled with a name: *snake and sheep*. The students copy these columns in a piece of paper.

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<sup>10</sup> The information is available in the article “*What We Know About How to Teach Phonics*”. Patricia M. Cunningham and James W. Cunningham

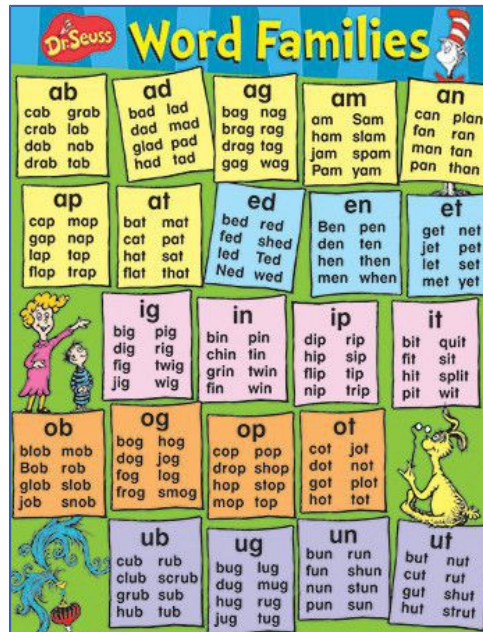


Figure 1: Word Families (Eureka Dr. Seuss Phonics Bulletin Board Set)

The teacher reminds them that this is the *s* sound but there is a peculiarity when they are pronounced. The teacher and the children underline the spelling patterns and students will be shown some words and they should write them under the word with the same spelling pattern. The teacher shows written words on flashcards that have one of these patterns. Students write these words on their papers in the correct columns and the teacher chooses a student to write each word on the chart. After each word is written on the chart, students pronounce like a *rap sound* the word that labels the column and new words have been introduced.

Next, we can say that the peculiar sounds of these words can help you to spell words. Therefore, teachers introduce words and students classify the learnt sound and use the spelling pattern to spell them. Then, students write these words in a chart in the correct column. They learn how to write and pronounce words at the same time.

Reading/Writing Rhymes. Students practice all the patterns that they have learnt before of an amount of words. While all the patterns are brought about students write rhymes using these words and then read one another's rhymes. Because writing and reading are connected to every lesson, students learn how you use these patterns as you actually read.

<p>Say that sound</p>	<p>Hold up the sound cards one at a time for the children to see. Ask the children to say the sound as quickly as they can. Older children can say a word that contains the sound.</p> <p><i>Sound and action game</i></p> <p>Hold up the sound cards that you have covered one by one at random. Have the children say the sound and do the action in quick succession.</p>
<p>Jump and hop! Where will I stop?</p>	<p>Place one sound card per child in a large circle on the floor. Children step from card to card while singing, <i>Jump and hop! Where will I stop?</i> Go around the circle asking each child to name their new sound.</p>
<p>Musical sounds</p>	<p>Extra materials: a feely bag, objects with initial sounds to match cards, lively music.</p> <p>Show the objects to the children and ask them to identify initial sounds. Place the objects in the centre of the circle. Place the sound cards in the feely bag. Pass the feely bag around the circle in time to the music. Pause the music. The child holding the feely bag should pick out a card, identify the sound and place it next to the corresponding object. If you don't have objects, children can move around the classroom placing cards next to classroom items.</p>
<p>Sound chain</p>	<p>Have the children sit in a circle. Begin to pass the sound cards around. Give the first sound card to the child on your left and say the sound yourself. The child should pass the card to their left, saying the sound. Wait until the card has gone all the way around the circle before starting with the next one. Once you can see that the children</p>

	have got the idea, you can have three or four sound cards moving around the circle at the same time.
Which one's missing?	<p>Set out the sound cards in a row. Children say the sound and do the action for each one collectively. Ask the children to close their eyes. Remove one of the cards and the children say which one is missing.</p> <p>Extension: instead of removing a sound card, add one.</p>
Throw the die	<p><u>Extra material: a large die</u></p> <p>Make a large die from a card. Stick a sound card on each face. Older children can say a word that contains the sound. Children roll the die to each other and identify the sound card at the top when the die stops.</p>
Swat the sound	Stick the sound cards that you have covered on the board. Choose two volunteers to come out and give each a flyswatter. Say a sound and the children 'swat' the corresponding sound card.
Flashlight sounds	Have your chosen sound cards on display. Turn off the lights and shine a torch on each sound card in turn. The children say the sounds that are illuminated. They could make words.

Table 5: Phonics sound card and word card games (Macmillan Publishers 2014.)

Modelled teaching	Independent teaching	Guided teaching
The teacher uses this teaching strategy when students	The teacher uses this teaching strategy when students	The teacher uses this teaching strategy when students need

<p>need to learn new phonics skills and concepts. The teacher assumes major responsibility for directing and controlling the literacy interactions that take place between the teacher and students. You might hear teachers say: This is the letter ‘a’ and it makes the sound /a/. This is the letter ‘m’ and it makes the sound /m/. I can push them together like this /a-/m/ to make the word ‘am’. Students are likely to be saying/thinking: I have learned a new phonics skill.</p>	<p>need a guided support to practise and apply new phonics skills and concepts. The teacher structures literacy interactions in a way that allows students to assume more responsibility and demonstrate more control over what they are learning. You might hear teachers say: Listen to the sounds in the word ‘dad’ and find the three letter tiles to make the word. Well done, you found the ‘d’ for the beginning and end of ‘dad’. Listening to the sound in the middle of the word and see if you can find the letter for that sound. Students are likely to be saying/thinking: I will have a go at using this new phonics skill by myself, but I know I will still need some help.</p>	<p>minimal support to apply and demonstrate new phonics skills. The teacher structures literacy interactions in a way that allows students to assume a greater degree of the responsibility for literacy learning. You might hear teachers say: As you are reading today remember to practise blending the sounds together when you try to read new words. Students are likely to be saying/thinking: I know how to use this phonics skill and when and where I need to use it.</p>
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Table 6: Kinds of teaching (NSW Department of Education and Training Learning and Development.)

### **3.8. Myths about phonics.**

During several decades, the teaching and learning of phonics have been an important topic to be dealt with. There are several opinions. Therefore, we are going to deal with some of the *myths* about phonics teaching and learning which have almost become accepted as *truths*.

Talking about some of these *myths* is intended to make teachers examine and reflect on their classroom practices.

Myths	Truths
<p>Teaching only one letter-sound per week taking into account the alphabet as an effective way to start teaching phonics in Infant Education.</p>	<p>If teachers introduce particular groups of letter-sound relationship, it will make beginners students start to blending and segmenting words as soon as possible.</p>
<p>Phonics, phonemic awareness and phonological awareness are one and the same thing they all have something to do with sounds and/or letters.</p>	<p>The three terms are not the same thing. Phonological awareness is a broad concept that not only includes phonemic awareness but also encompasses awareness of things like words, rhyme, syllables and rimes.</p> <p>Phonemic awareness is a sub-skill of phonological awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words while phonics method involves making connections between sounds and letters when reading and spelling.</p>
<p>Students need to know all letter-sound relationships before they begin learning about other aspects of literacy, such as comprehension.</p>	<p>As we know a number of categories of reading and writing are essential to acquire early literacy success. Therefore, phonics is one of these aspects. It should take into account in the literacy program, students need to learn phonics at the same time as reading comprehension or copying a written to text. Indeed, it serves to develop the rest of all skills.</p>
<p>Phonics knowledge is caught not taught. Students will discover phonics knowledge simply with practice, fun activities such as: playing word games and doing letter/sound matching activities or cutting out pictures of things that start with particular sounds.</p>	<p>Letter-sound correspondences are arbitrary and therefore difficult to discover without explicit teaching. Many students would acquire phonics knowledge too slowly or fail to learn it at all.</p>
<p>Teaching phonics can stop the reading</p>	<p>Effective phonics teaching help students to</p>

process because of the way students are concentrated on decoding and not enough on reading for meaning. It means that students do not understand what they have read.	recognise and produce familiar words immediately and easily and to identify and produce words that are new to them. This automatic word recognition will support and enhance students' comprehension skills.
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Table 7: Myths about phonics (NSW Department of Education and Training Learning and Development.)

#### **4. Methodology.**

##### **4.1. Research design.**

This research was centred on a qualitative design using a diary whereby several videos about different English classes where phonics method was the focus, and a research by means of several questionnaires in Córdoba for six weeks.

This research addressed two research questions. The first research question was “Do phonics programs implemented with infant and primary education develop an improvement the pronunciation and reading of words?”

The second research question was “How do phonics strategies contribute to students letter sound acquisition knowledge?”

The research hypothesis which were set out before, stressed the methodology which was not adapted to new circumstances and the transfer of Spanish grammar rules to the English reading and writing process and we should realise that the learning of reading and writing is different in native language and foreign language.

Furthermore, our objectives were to improve motivation, favour comprehensive reading and provide a tool to facilitate students the learning process.

The researcher's observation on teaching reading process using phonics as a synthetic approach led to the research questions. Different groups were observed in UK schools and Spanish schools using phonics as a tool to help decode unfamiliar words in reading. After watching these ten videos, I observed different English teachers and Spanish teachers in different schools. Afterwards, I wrote a diary about the addressed methodology and made it closer to reality. After that, I recorded some questionnaires which had been filled in by two English teachers and ten children of the last course of Infant Education.

## **4.2.Participants.**

The participants in this study were two English teachers and tutors of the second cycle of Infant Education and ten children that were five years old. On the one hand, teachers had the same working experience, they had been working in bilingual schools in Jaén since 2009 and nowadays they teach in another bilingual school in Córdoba. On the other hand, children started to study English when they were three years old. They knew some words and grammatical structures.

## **4.3.Procedures.**

First of all, I watched several videos and wrote down some conclusions. After that, I made contact with two English teachers from a bilingual school in Córdoba which has used this methodology since 2013, they had to fill in some questionnaires<sup>11</sup> where there was a general point of view, and the different sections about methodology (learning letter sounds, letter formation, blending, identifying the sounds in words, tricky words and struggling students), they had to mark yes or no and there was some information about each item. Afterwards, ten pupils of the last course of Infant Education completed another questionnaire<sup>12</sup> regarding known sounds, blending and writing regular words with these sounds, the alphabet, the tricky words, reading graded books and writing short stories. These students started to learn phonic this academic year in February.

## **5. Data analysis.**

The data analysed was based on the phonics methodology in New Zealand and Spain and how it is carried out in our classroom as an educational work by two teachers who were questioned about different items and how this method encourages the use of phonics to learn and write in English as a native speaker for weeks. Moreover, I collected data about the students' evaluation of their progress by themselves. Finally, I compared data as much in teachers as in students.

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<sup>11</sup> Jolly Phonics Teacher Checklist. ( Appendix 3)

<sup>12</sup> Jolly Phonics Students Checklist ( Appendix 4)

## **5.1. Findings.**

To begin with, in finding 1, I wrote down some conclusions about the phonics methodology in different teachers and educators. Finding 2 is related to the data about teachers questionnaires and finally, finding 3 is centred on students questionnaires.

### **5.1.1. Finding 1**

Title: Letter and sound correspondence. Phonics stage 2 <sup>13</sup>	
Date:	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2010
Place:	New Zealand
Topic:	Phonics
Purpose:	Scaffolding with both sounds and school routines
Description:	<p>Yolanda Soryl teaches New Zealand 5 years old pupils the letter and sounds correspondences. These children have been at school between 3-8 weeks. The lesson follows the “Read, Write Revise” approach to teaching phonics. The focus is on interactive learning, fun and success.</p> <p>The teacher introduces the letter m, she puts her hand in her mouth to represent the sound and puts her hand on her tummy. Children say different words with this sound. Then, they write the sound m and finally they review other sounds</p>
Reflection:	<p>The position of the teacher and students capture my attention, they are sitting around the teacher on the floor. Therefore, the teacher controls the activity better.</p> <p>Moreover, the teacher uses some strategies to</p>

<sup>13</sup>

Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P13PA1uFMBI>

	write the m sound, compares it with tunnels and students simulate to sweat when they review the sound quickly.
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Title: Croaker. A phonological awareness activity <sup>14</sup>	
Date:	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2012
Place:	New Zealand
Topic:	Phonics
Purpose:	Phonological awareness
Description:	Yolanda Soryl teaches pupils phonological awareness through a phoneme (sound) identification activity. The children learn how to hear and identify each sound in a word. This phonemic awareness is a vital skill for later success in spelling.
Reflection:	The teacher shows a puppet that does not pronounce sounds well. Therefore, students have to help it.

Title: Blending and segmentation. Phonics stage 4 <sup>15</sup>	
Date:	21 <sup>st</sup> December 2010
Place:	New Zealand
Topic:	Phonics
Purpose:	Blending and segmenting
Description:	Yolanda teaches pupils how to blend and segment. These children have been at school between 6-8 weeks.  The teacher shows wordcards with the written words and students have to blend sound(chat, hat, bat, cat sat, mat) and they say them quickly.  Then, the teacher dictates words and sentences

<sup>14</sup> Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va3aS9IKcp0>

<sup>15</sup> Watch this video :[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwJIPD\\_tXeM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwJIPD_tXeM)

	and they are able to write them.
Reflection:	I have observed that the teacher dictated a word, a sentence or showed a real object to know the meaning.

Title: Consonants digraph and hearing every sound .Stages 5 <sup>16</sup>	
Date:	21 <sup>st</sup> December 2010
Place:	New Zealand
Topic:	Phonics
Purpose:	Consonants digraph and sounds
Description:	Students clap their hands and repeat sounds, they link three sounds to form a word or put fingers up. After that, they have to discover what the sound is that they hear at the end. They say words quickly and write easy sentences.
Reflection:	Students foresee each activity as a routine.

Title: Jolly Phonics lesson in Reception/ year 1 classroom <sup>17</sup>	
Date:	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2013
Place:	Great Britain
Topic:	Jolly Phonics
Purpose:	Listen to sound
Description:	They listen to sounds (c, k) and write words on the digital blackboard and say the words. Then, they follow with a finger to practice handwriting. Students draw lines on a paper and stick on a blackboard. They practice segmenting and blending with the oi sound, listen to a story with

<sup>16</sup> Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKh8cZZ75tg>

<sup>17</sup> Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlKIC4Yls5I>

	this sound and finally complete a worksheet.
Reflection:	The use of TIC is very important to introduce sounds and practice them.

Title: S.G. Phonics Infant Education <sup>18</sup>	
Date:	18 <sup>th</sup> March
Place:	Spain
Topic:	Phonics
Purpose:	Teaching Jolly phonics
Description:	In this school (CEIP San Gregorio), Synthetic Phonics started up in 2012. Teacher reviews the oo sound with segmenting and blending and the leader of the group writes a word that is dictated by means of sound on the digital board and the teacher says the meaning in Spanish.
Reflection:	I noticed that the teacher uses the L1 to say the meaning of the word. Another important point is the collaborative work with children where the leader managed the situation.

Title: Jolly Phonics group 1 <sup>19</sup>	
Date:	10 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
Place:	Spain
Topic:	Jolly Phonics
Purpose:	Learning sounds by means of songs.
Description:	Children sing and interpret the phonics group 1 with different actions.

<sup>18</sup> [Watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ao6e9bP8hOM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ao6e9bP8hOM)

<sup>19</sup> [Watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgfJXWGeiKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgfJXWGeiKQ)

Reflection:	It is an efficient strategy to teach phonics because they memorize and practice the sound in a motivated way.
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### **5.1.2. finding 2**

Another key finding which is related to the analysis of the questionnaire.

First of all, both groups of students had 4 sessions of English per week. Therefore, the practice of phonics was very often and teachers had the support of a Language Assistant.

Generally, both teachers claimed that skills of learning the letter sounds, letter formation, blending and identifying sounds in words were being taught to form the beginning. They started to teach phonics in the second year of Infant Education. Beforehand, they knew some words such as colours, some animals and so on. Teachers affirmed that learners started to acquire sounds that were very similar to Spanish but not the letter names.

They insisted on the difficulty to teach 42 letter sounds in 3-6 years. They taught 3 letter sounds a week and reviewed each sound every day and they practiced the sounds.

Teacher A had not included the digraphs because his group was slower than the group of teacher B. Both introduced the spelling of simple words (cat, dog and so on).

According to letter formation, these children were younger than others. In spite of having been taught to hold the pencil properly from the beginning, they have difficulties in forming each letter correctly. Therefore, the regular letter-sound dictation was only possible in some letters. Besides, students had been monitored to ensure correct formation and neat handwriting.

Both teachers introduced an English Alphabet song as a routine, although they did not know some sounds they had learnt the letter. Students identified capital letter sounds and they were able to write some of them.

The blending was introduced since the first group and they felt motivated. Besides, at the end of the lesson, students blended some words that had caught their attention and read a book with letter sounds that they had acquired and were capable of blending unfamiliar words.

Both classes were being taught to identify all the sounds in words. Teachers dictated very easy sounds to maintain the motivation and teachers wrote model words on the blackboard.

Teacher A did not give sentence dictation due to the fact that most of the class could not

write words from dictation. However, teacher B, introduced some very easy sentences with tricky words.

Neither group A nor group B wrote independently, because they needed to review sounds.

Some tricky words were taught and teachers showed a big poster on the wall about awkward bits of tricky words for reading and spelling. In each lesson students practiced reading and writing the tricky words.

With respect to Struggling students, as I have analysed before, group A had more difficulties than group B from the beginning. Some of them had poor visual memory. They needed extra practice and support from the teacher and the Language Assistant.

Some students of group A had problems with blending and segmenting. Therefore, the teacher created a small group and the Language Assistant reinforced some sounds with them.

### **5.1.3. Finding 3**

The last key finding had to do with the search on students' progress questionnaires. Previously, we had dealt with children that were 4 years old, and these children were much younger than the rest. Questionnaires were completed orally by 5 year old students who had more experience although the teacher had to read instructions carefully.

In this study, I have used counting and the means of the data. There were ten participants and we can see in this graphic that with the first group of phonics, all of the students knew sounds and could blend and write regular words with these sounds. However, in the second group, the average was lower (8.7), than in the third group (6.3). Therefore, in the third group it was more difficult for them because there was an ample variety of sounds.

With respect to the alphabet, all of them knew the lower case and capital letter sounds and sang the alphabet song but two students claimed that they had difficulties to know names and form correctly.

With regard to reading tricky words, only two were not able to do it. However, 4 children were not capable of spelling tricky words. In reading age appropriate books, 4 students claimed that they read slowly, another four students steadily and only 2 of them fluently.

Finally, the most difficult aspect was to write news or a short story independently, 6 students asserted that had difficulties, 3 of them steadily and only 1 student with fluency.

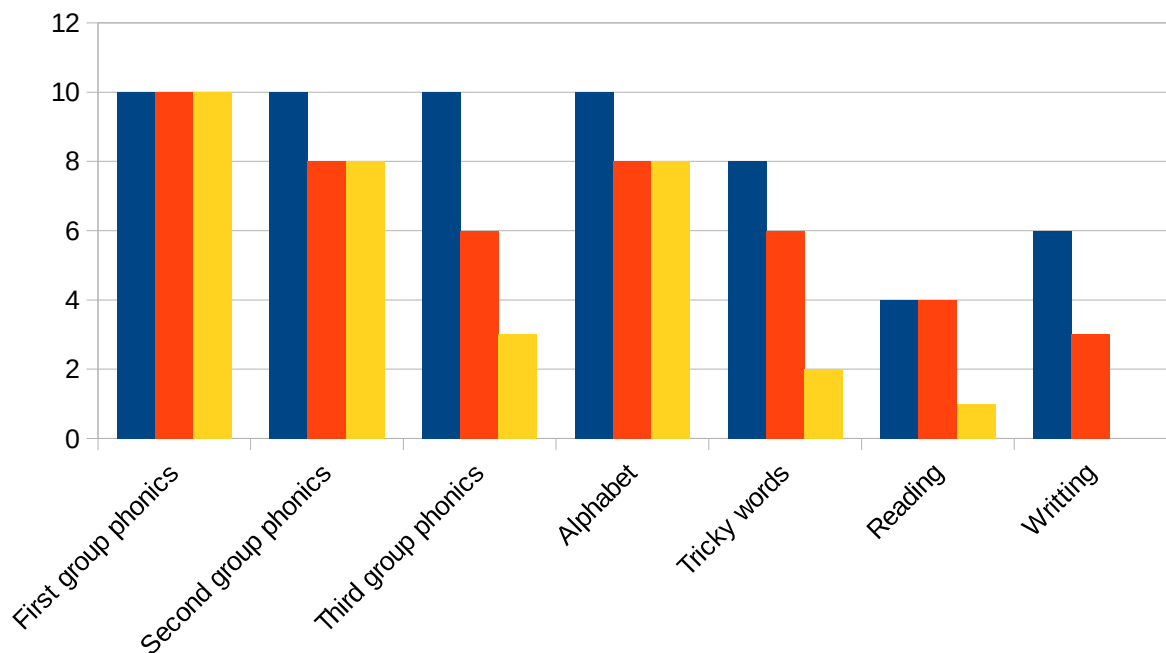


Chart 1: Questionnaires considerations

#### **5.1.4. Summary of findings**

During the questionnaires process, there were two topics that occurred throughout the collection of responses from the participants. These topics pointed out overall ideas and opinions of the teachers. One of the topics was the teachers found spelling to be a big role in the integration of phonics into reading. Students who were able to assign the phonetic patterns that were taught is a spelling lesson. They were able to read and decode words. The other topic that emerged was some difficulties that learners could have with some group of sounds and teachers should adapt their materials.

#### **5.1.5. Discussion.**

There are two research questions in this study. One purpose was to discover the best way to teach phonics and integrate it into reading programs and improvement of reading and pronunciation. A second purpose was to discover strategies to contribute to students letter sounds acquisition knowledge. The primary goal in Infant Education is to teach students to become fluent readers and with the integration of phonics. This goal might be achieved. The purpose of the study was to identify the best strategy to implement the integration of phonics

instructions into reading writing programs to help students' reading and writing abilities by means of a method called “Jolly Phonics”.

The first research question was clarified by Ellis, Hatcher, and Hulme (1994). They stated that students who received both reading and phonics instructions achieved a considerable progress.

In the second question, after questionnaires which were done by teachers and students and the research videos, we might find a variety of motivating strategies that make students value optimal results by leaps and bounds.

Different teachers revealed the idea that our students might see an easy way to recognize sounds and at the same time they acquire the letter which allows them to read and write from the bottom to the top instead of starting with the whole language. Most countries have been using this method and due to the high results, it has spread out to a lot of countries.

#### **5.1.6. Research Implications.**

It is true that students need to have phonics integration into their reading programs to become stronger readers. The phonics instruction make students aware of the phonetic patterns and matching with the reading and writing process acquiring concepts to help to decode words when it comes to reading.

For further research in this area, it is recommended that there is a correlation between the number of English lessons per week and the improvement in the reading and writing process and schools might introduce the phonics method in English and in the rest of Language competence subjects.

#### **6. Conclusions.**

Chomsky was one of its main precursors. For him and his followers, language learning is very much about deducing and guessing rules out of the language. According to Chomsky (1970), the human being (particularly with the mother tongue) has an innate ability to organise the messages that he or she receives and processes.

If learning a language is about communicating and being understood, it will certainly be useful to pronounce correctly and even more important that the speaker is able to transmit a

message which is meaningful to itself. Making no grammar mistakes but not being able to communicate will be useless, then.

As we know, all teaching English method, with perhaps the exception of the grammar-translation option, some principles can be consider as shared such as grammar is not an end in itself, it should not be learnt by heart, but rather through practice and deduction of rules of the language.

Once the structures have been fixed well enough, some analysis of what the learner says orally or writes will be made in order that the student becomes conscious of the rules and how things can be improved.

With regard to this study, the integration of phonics into Infant school reading and writing programs has shown to be the successful approach to teaching students to become independent readers.

If we compare it with the last methodologies, we want to implement a reading and writing system similar to our one. That is, in Spain, our phonetic pattern is exactly the same as our letters. This difference makes teachers reflect on this basic idea and we carry out the same methodology system as in Great Britain.

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# APPENDIXES