



## APPS FOR TEACHING AND PRACTICING PHONEMIC AWARENESS

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### **Abstract**

Reading is an essential part of language instruction, it supports in learning of other language skills in multiple ways. This skill ensures success in learning and helps students to achieve greater progress in listening, speaking, and writing skills. The average learner's second language reading ability is below when compared to first language. It is the onus of second language teacher to assist the student in learning to read in second language fluently and comprehend it. Learning to read involves five important components like phonemic awareness, Phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Master these components is very essential for proper habit formation in reading skill. Finding from meta analytic syntheses of a large volume of local and international evidence-based research reveals for beginning reading during the early years of schooling indicate that systematic instruction in phonics makes significantly greater contribution to children's initial and subsequent growth in reading, writing, spelling and comprehension. Indeed evidence reviewed indicates that all students are provided with the best opportunities for mastering the each components of reading skill. English teacher can make use innovative practices to provide input to give constant practice and drill to enable the learners to master the each reading component. The first important component is phonemic awareness in this regard computers and the Internet play paramount role in facilitating reading component among learners. This paper presents use of technology/app in teaching and practicing phonemic awareness among learners.

**Key words:** Technology, Reading skill, components, phonemic awareness, teaching, practicing.

**Introduction:** Phonemic Awareness plays a vital role in the reading acquisition. It is essential in learning skills and also helpful in word recognition and spelling. Hence, it is necessary to give continuous practice in the aforesaid reading component. This fin turn forms the habit in the





second language learners, to comprehend the text better. Studies conducted revealed that the children over learn these lower-order processes until they are automatic, so, that conscious attention will not be diverted from the higher-order process of comprehending during reading (LaBerge and Samuels, 1974). Phonemic Awareness is essential for second language learners, because most of them are struggling to read and comprehend the text given to them. It is due to lack of early intervention of phonemic awareness. Use of technology or app help them to recognize the sounds that letters stand for in a word and in isolating the individual sounds in the context of the other sounds in the given word. Teacher can provide material with help of app to assists them to co-ordinate letter sound relationships to read or write novel words.

A phoneme of spoken words roughly corresponds to written words. These are composed of sequences of letters. In order to learn to read and spell words and also to isolate speech sounds, students must have the knowledge of phonemic awareness. Concepts of print and letter recognition deal with the visual dimensions of language for this, it is essential to use technology while teaching and for giving practice to learners in phonemic awareness.

**Brief Review of Studies:** Previous research reveals with respect to phonemic awareness that using software with text-to speech capabilities designed to help young children develop phonemic awareness. A study conducted on kindergarten and first grade students who were at risk for reading problems received software intervention on blending phonemes. The results show that these students improve their skills as much as a group of peers who worked directly with a teacher. A third group of students who received no intervention failed to show any improvement. Students at the two grade levels responded equally well to the software (Mitchell and Fox, 2000). A similar study conducted on primary school children who received phonemic awareness instruction through a software application significantly outperformed classmates who received no instruction and performed on par with or slightly below a group of classmates who worked directly with the teacher during this time (Reitsma and Wesseling, 1998). Another study revealed that children who practice with a software application designed to teach blending and reinforce phonemic awareness instruction could read more words and identify letters more readily than peers who did not use the software (Van Daal and Reitsma, 2000). Similar study was conducted on first-grade students who used a software application with text-to-speech capabilities of phonemic awareness, children in the experimental group outperformed their peers in both the specific skills and software was explicitly drilling and in their consequent ability to identify and read words (Baker and Torgesen, 1995).

**Phonemic Awareness:** Phonemic awareness deals with the oral dimensions of language. English is an alphabetic language, which means small number of graphemes represent the sounds of the





oral forms of the language. Phonemic Awareness refers to the insight that spoken language consists of identifiable units for example that utterances are composed of spoken words, that spoken words consists of one or more syllables that spoken words and syllables are composed of sounds. Awareness of the speech sounds of language is phonemic awareness. It is an ability to be aware of and to perform tasks using individual sounds in spoken words. Phonemic awareness is the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to make words. Phonemic Awareness is the understanding that spoken words consist of series of individual sounds (Ball & Blachman, 1991; Yopp, 1992).

### **Importance of Phonemic awareness**

It is necessary every student have to understand how the sounds in words work before they learn to read. Many research shows that the phonemic awareness is the single most powerful predictor of future reading ability. Phonemic awareness is a crucial determinant of success in reading and spelling attainment of an alphabetic language (Adams, 1990). Difficulty in phonemic awareness is sign of struggling reader. Measures of phonemic awareness are among the best predictors of success in learning to read (Adams, 1990; National Reading Council, 1998; Learning first Alliance, 1998, National Reading Panel, 2000).

If the children have not developed the insight that oral words are composed of a limited number of units called sound. They will not able to use this fundamental approach to word identification. Phonemic awareness helps children grasp and use the alphabetic principles to read and write (Griffith & Olson, 1992). It is powerful indicator of success in attainment of early literacy skills (Adam. 1990). This reading component serves as an indicator of reading disability (Yopp, 1992). It appears that a lack of phonemic awareness poses a chief obstacle in learning to read (Juel, 1988; Lyon. 1995). Poor reading ability correlates with long-term negative outcomes. This likely to cause poor reading skills in future, and reading is the cornerstone of academic success. Hence, it is essential to make use of effective ways to teach and practice phonemic awareness among learners.

### **Phonemic Awareness skills**

Phonemic segmentation and blending is critically and directly related to acquiring reading skills. Repeated exposure to words leads to the automatic recognition of words. Without the conscious examination or attention to individual letter sound associations mastery of reading skills is not possible. Constant Teaching and practicing phonemic awareness helps in the process of reading to achieve fluency and automatic recognition of words. This component can be developed among the readers initially carefully by attending to the process of the letters in printed words and the





sounds associated with those letters. The important skills students need to learn to form proper habit in phonemic awareness are phonemes, blending, segmentation, deleting, and manipulating.

**Phonemes:** Identify on sound by position of a word. E.g., The first sound in the word morning /M/.

**Blending:** The ability to join speech sounds together to make words is called blending. It is crucial in phonemic awareness that helps students to read unfamiliar words. Stating the word formed when two or more segmented sounds are presented.

Ex: what word do you hear when uttered? /T/a/p/

**Segmentation:** The ability to divide words into their separate speech sounds is called segmentation. It is an important phonemic awareness skill that helps students to develop spelling skills. Identifying the individual sounds in the given word.

Ex: What are the sounds of the word? Cat /K/a/t/.

**Deleting:** Identify what remains when asked to remove one or more sounds from the given word.

Ex: Delete one sound from the word pan the remaining sound is an.

**Manipulating:** Changing sounds in the given words and to form new words.

Ex: Take out the /a/ and put in an /o/ what is the new word? Mop.

#### **Apps in teaching and practicing Phonemic Awareness:**

Many apps and software are available free of cost for teaching and practicing phonemic awareness. Some mobile apps represent a new and often inexpensive resource now available to parents, teachers and others who try to help students struggling to master the components of reading skill. It is the onus of language teacher to make use of the available resources to provide proper foundation in phonemic awareness and to assist them to master the reading skills.

#### **Apps for facilitating phonemic awareness:**

- Reading Raven
- Sound beginnings
- Rhyming words





- ABC phonics Rhyming
- Sounds
- Sound sorting beginning sounds
- Pocket charts Rhyming
- Blending
- ABC Magic Reading

**ABC Magic Reading:** It is an app, which can be used to teach basic reading skills to students, learns how to read including those learning English as second language. Through games it focus on blending and segmenting. The app has a built in feature to encourage reading skills, rather than dependence on picture. Platforms like iphone, ipod, Touch, ipad required to use this app in the classroom.

### **Implications**

- This app helps student's future reading success by giving constant practice.
- It provide solid and direct experience with letters and sounds to help build their Phonemic awareness.
- It helps to prepare our students as good reader.
- Provide strong foundation in reading skill.
- It provides significant experience in blending and segmenting.
- It strength's students phonemic awareness.
- It supports learners to master the phonemic awareness skill.
- It provides maximum opportunities for learners to practice.





## Conclusion

A strong foundation in phonemic awareness is necessary; it helps students to read and develops the ability to decode the written language and unfamiliar words. Teaching and practice in phonemic awareness is essential to understand the individual speech sounds of language and its relationship between spoken and written language, to enable students to read and spell easily, to prepare students, as independent, and competent reader. It is the onus of teacher to make use of innovative ways to teaching and practicing to master the phonemic awareness skill. Teacher needs to continuously support learner by providing increased opportunities for constant practice. To accomplish this task systematically teacher can take the support of technology. Teacher needs to address the different learning styles of learner by integrating sound, text and moving images. It is possible for teacher to address the learner's needs immediately with help technology. For constant practice and drill, record the progress, and give feedback to learners in phonemic awareness technology helps in the aforementioned tasks.

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