

## Students' Phonological Awareness in PAUD IT Ihya Assunah

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**Abstract.** This study aims to analyze the students' phonological awareness in PAUD IT Ihya Assunah. Phonological awareness is a child's sensitivity to the sound structure of spoken words. Phonological awareness not only interprets words, but also the scope of spoken language that is related to the ability to think sounds in words. This research was conducted at IT Ihya Assunnah. The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach using descriptive methods. Data collection techniques in this study used the method of observations, tests, and interviews. The observations carried out both inside and outside the classroom to see children's phonological awareness supported by the tests results, as well as interviews. The students of PAUD IT Ihya Assunnah is directly involved in the process of learning sound and sound games, they are able to mention words that have the same initial vocabulary, and segment words into syllables. The method used in raising phonological awareness is by detecting alliteration and single phonemes, spelling words, combining phonemes, and phoneme beats.

### 1. Introduction

Reading development begins in the early childhood through the introduction of letters and sounds, then continues to the advanced reading process related to words, sentences and paragraphs. Children's success in reading is closely related to the development of reading at the early stages. At an early reading stage, students gain ability and master reading techniques and capture the contents of the reading well (Andayani, 2015). The ability to read can be obtained through the introduction of letters, shapes and sounds, also more complex systems involving syllables, words and sentences.

The proper learning approach can help the development of reading skills in the early stages, specifically at the beginning of reading. According to Bryant et al., Raising phonological awareness in preschoolers is one of the preparatory training courses that can be a prerequisite or facilitator for reading skills in the school phase (Bryant et al., 1990). Phonological awareness is an aspect that needs to be considered to develop children's reading skills, especially at an early age which is prepared in the early reading process. Anthony and Francis (2005) said that phonological awareness refers to the level of sensitivity a person has of sound structure in oral language. So that children who have good phonological awareness are able to manipulate sounds into small parts. Phonological awareness helps children to know the relationship between oral language and the text that represents it (Lonigan, Anthony, et al, 2009). Thus, having good phonological awareness supports the ability of children in the beginning of reading process.



The ability of children in the early reading process affects to the children reading abilities in the future. The Weaknesses of children's phonological awareness will have an impact on reading disabilities (Torgesen et al, 1999 in Castles & Coltheart, 2003). In Indonesia, training in reading preparation in kindergarten has been widely carried out. For example, training to retell a story, to spell the words, and to look for words with pictures. However, training with a particular emphasis on explicit phonological awareness is still very limited. Yet as Hirsh said in Alsa (1984) that reading is an associative process between letters or words with sounds that represent the letters or words. This will be especially apparent when observed in individuals who are learning to read, by trying to create auditory images of these symbols. In fact, it is still often found in kindergartens (TK) which provide reading programs to prepare students for the next level without considering the development stages. Not a few kindergartens interpret the early process of reading (emergent literacy) as a process to recognize words and sentences. The students are taught to read simple words and even simple sentences. They are given letter recognition, both form and sound, read one word then read the sentence. Aspects of phonological awareness look for the rhyming similarity of a word, look for similarities and differences in sound from the initial letter of a word and other aspects of phonological awareness are lacking. Therefore, phonological awareness psychoeducation needs to be given to early childhood.

The reading process begins with the introduction of language. Language is a complex system that requires coordination from four subsystems: phonology, semantics, grammar, and pragmatics (Caroll et al. 2011). Of the four subsystems, phonology is the most important thing in developing the reading process. Isabelle Liberman was the first researcher to emphasize that phonological sensitivity is closely related to reading ability (Rhyner, 2009). The same thing was stated in a journal (Lonigan, et al, 2009) which stated that recent research on reading problems in children was caused by a weak phonological process.

Phonological awareness is the sensitivity of analyzing, storing, and manipulating sounds in a language into the smallest parts and putting them into writing (Caroll, et.al, 2011). It is an aspect that needs to be considered to develop children's reading skills, especially at an early age who are in the reading process at an early level. Anthony and Francis (2005) stated in their journal that phonological awareness refers to the degree of sensitivity a person has to the sound structure of oral language. So that children who have good phonological awareness are able to manipulate sounds into small parts. Phonological awareness helps children to know the relationship between oral language and the text that represents it (Lonigan, Anthony, et al, 2009). Thus, having good phonological awareness supports the ability of children in the early reading process.

## **2. The Research Method**

The most appropriate research method used is descriptive method. Descriptive method is used to provide an overview of the phonological awareness psychoeducation process on the students of PAUD Ihya Assunnah of Tasikmalaya. The data needed in this study was collected with several data collection techniques, including observations, interviews, and tests.

## **3. Explanation**

The method for raising phonological awareness is given to the students of PAUD IT Ihya Assunah's at the preparation center every 10. 30 am. This center of preparation emphasizes the introduction of early literacy in children. It more enriched types of literacy and numerical play activities. The results showed that phonological awareness psychoeducation on the students of PAUD IT Ihya Assunah can increase their sensitivity to the structure of spoken language, phonemes, and syllables. Phonological awareness training includes the synthesis method, which is to train the students' ability to combine separate phonemes into one known or meaningful word and an analytical method that is to train their sensitivity to explicitly identify each phoneme in the word structure. Phonological awareness methods are provided through several methods with different levels of difficulty, they are:

### **3.1 Detect Alliteration**

The students of PAUD IT Ihya Assunah was invited to recognize words that ended with the same syllable and words that did not begin with the same syllable. For example in the word: sakit, rakit, bukit, rusak; which words begin with the same syllable and they are able to recite them exactly. Of the fourteen children who took part in the study, there were five children who were still unable to detect. This detection was also introduced by singing some alliterated children's songs.

### 3.2 Detect Single Phoneme

Single phoneme detection is introduced in the form of initial phoneme detection and final phoneme detection. The students are trained to recognize words that start with the same phoneme and mention words that don't start with the same phoneme. For example: cuci, cari, cara, bara. From the words mentioned, the students are able to detect bara that are not preceded by the same phoneme. Likewise with the detection of the final phoneme. They are able to mention the words that do not have the same final phoneme. All of students of PAUD IT Ihya Assunah are able to detect this.

### 3.3 Spell the Word

The students are trained to spell the words, for example the teacher mention a word *mata*, then he guides them to spell it m-a-t-a. When spelling out the word *mata*, there is a student who spells *m-a-t-i*. Then the teacher repeats it to guide them in spelling until they understand of spelling mistakes.

### 3.4 Combine Phoneme

Combining phonemes taught to the students is the opposite of the spelling words method. The teacher synthesizes the sounds presented separately *t-a-n-g-a-n*, then the students answer it, *tangan*. The students are able to combine the words that have few phonemes, but they are difficult to combine the words that have more than five phonemes.

### 3.5 Beat the number of phonemes

The students are trained to beat the number of phonemes of words that are heard. For example, four beats for the word *mata*. They line up, one student one word by trying to beat using claps. Besides phonemes, it can also be syllable beats. A beat will be made if you get one syllable.

The above methods are used for children 4 to 5 years old. Detection of alliteration and single phonemes is relatively easy for children to recognize the same initial syllable sound and the same final syllable sound (in rhyme) of the words presented. The techniques are by singing rhymes children song or reading a poem. More difficult-level methods that can be used such as the single phoneme detection method; in this case the level of difficulty has increased, because the students must recognize the sound unit that is smaller than syllable. If these skills have been mastered, the students can be further trained with methods that are increasingly high in difficulty such as the beat phoneme method. There is another method that can be used in the phonological awareness process of children, such as the phoneme elimination method. However, based on the psychological development of children, this method is not suitable for early childhood. Phonological awareness is sufficient to use the method described above with the aim of increasing the students' sensitivity to the syllable sounds and phonemes of the words spoken.

## 4. Conclusion

There are some methods that are given to the students of 4-5 years old, they are the methods of detect alliteration, detect single phoneme, spell the word, combine phoneme, and beat the number of phonemes. The method given to the students of PAUD IT Ihya Assunah can increase their sensitivity to phonemes, words, and syllables.

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