

POOR READING SKILLS IN THE STUDENT OF THE LOWER PRIMARY

A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH MEDIUMS SCHOOLS
IN SRI LANKA

A. F Rozairo

Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Masters in Linguistics

Department of Linguistics
University of Kelaniya
March, 2015

ප්‍රවේශ අංකය:	1039
වර්ග අංකය:	

Index No: FGS/O4/05/2006/144

Abstract

The number of students in the Lower Primary who possess poor reading skills in English medium international schools are particularly high. Such students are capable of reading material they are familiar with as they have memorized the words on the page. New unseen material poses a great difficulty to these students who seems not to have mastered the mechanics of reading. This study proposes the use of systematic synthetic phonics as a solution to enhance reading skills in these beginning readers. The reason being that students needed a 'bottom-up' approach when initially learning the process of reading. For purposes of demonstration the effectiveness of the systematic synthetic phonics, the study took into consideration two groups of students who have similar reading abilities. One group was administered a programme of synthetic phonics (i.e. the treatment group) whereas the other (i.e. treatment group) received regular instruction from teachers. Testing of their abilities was performed at the commencement and at the end of the said phonics programme. Results of these tests were studied and compared. The students who received a programme of synthetic phonics performed significantly better in comparison with those who had only received regular instruction on reading. However, it appears that there are other factors which would have contributed to the enhancement of reading ability within the treatment group. The mastery of the alphabetic principle, development of phonological and phonemic awareness and appropriately trained guided teachers, creating the correct ambience in class seem to contribute to the further advancement of reading. In conclusion, there seems to be a doubt if systematic synthetic phonics alone could be the panacea to cure the difficulties of reading in the students of the Lower Primary of English medium schools