

# Decoding Ability Of Students With Visual Impairment Under Systematic And Explicit Phonics Instruction

Mohammad Ryan Syuhadi, mohammadsyuhadi16070835060@mhs.unesa.ac.id,  
Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia  
Prof., Dr., Susanto, M.Pd, Email, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia  
Slamet Setiawan, M.A., Ph.D., slametsetiawan@unesa.ac.id, Universitas Negeri  
Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

**Abstract.** This study discusses the decoding ability of students with visual impairment in a special need school under the implementation of systematic and explicit phonics instruction. The purpose of this study is to observe to what extent does the instruction help students with visual impairment in novice and mature alphabetic stage learn English word decoding. This qualitative study uses non-participant observation using unstructured field notes and loosely-structured interview to obtain verbal data from 1 teacher and 4 students in four meetings of classroom observation. All of the students are visually impaired whom divided into two big groups. 2 of the students belong to mature alphabetic stage and the other 2 students belong to novice alphabetic stage. The classroom being observed is an English extracurricular classroom in a school specialized for students with visual impairment. Although they are divided into two groups, they study together in a same classroom at once. The results derived from the observation and interview are (1) Students in novice alphabetic stage, although they have not memorized all of the alphabet's name, they still are able to gain knowledge of English word decoding, (2) Students in mature alphabetic stage, for they have memorized all of the alphabet's name, have an easier understanding and are able to cope with the instruction better and faster, (3) this kind of instruction could gain students confidence in reading English word even though they do not memorize the alphabet's name, (4) Once the students are able to relate between the words' shape and how it sounds, they start to build automaticity in building their understanding of English words decoding. This study concluded that with appropriate materials and instruction, students with visual impairment in novice and alphabetic stage could acquire the knowledge of how to sound English words.

*Keywords: Decoding, Students with Visual Impairment, Systematic and Explicit Phonics Instruction*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Students' achievement in successful reading skill is significantly determined by the possession of decoding ability. Decoding is a process of breaking code inside of written text into relevant sound (Mohammed & Omar, 2011). Another opinion also said that decoding is a skill of correlating between printed text and how the text is sounded. Therefore, it relates to the competency of recognizing sounds of words (McCandliss et al., 2003; Moats, 1998). In the beginning, human produce and receive language orally. The development of knowledge and need have led human to encode their language into written text in order to reach the wider area. The reverse process is needed to break the code in a written text so that the information can be revealed from the text. That reversed process is called decoding (Gough et al., 1986; Walpole et al., 2011).

Alphabetic writing system of English causes the possession of decoding ability emerged from the existence of phonemic awareness and the application of it. The existence of this ability can be possessed well when the students is treated with systematic and explicit phonics instruction. Phonemes is defined as a distinctive unit of language (Coxhead, 2006) and phonics is defined as instructional practices emphasizing on relating spelling systems to speech sounds in systematic ways (National Reading Panel, 2000). Phonemic awareness and phonics recognition would lead the students to be able to decode written language. English has agreed forty-four phonemes and forty-five phonics rules based in the generalization of Theodore Clymer and suggested to be revealed more than that Clymer, (1996) engaged from the combination of letters in twenty-six alphabet that compound written language. Once students have recognized some principal phonemes and phonics systems, they would start to be able to read words in English. Teachers can start to extend the lesson into reading longer words or possibly connecting the words with a story within a context after the possession of those two systems. At the common situation, students would have themselves acquire phonemes and phonics ability when they learn to read and write during the lesson especially with the kindergarten students. However, some students still find difficulties in acquiring the awareness since the cognitive level is different among students.

To encounter this problem, evidence shows that the best way to teach students phonemic awareness is by applying systematic and explicit phonics instruction (Blachman et al., 2012; Felton, 1993). NRP refers systematic phonics instruction as a planned, logical sequence to introduce the most useful phonic elements (National Reading Panel, 2000). Explicit phonics instruction refers to a teaching strategy when the teacher directly points out what is being taught and leaving a little chance to the students to control the lesson. Systematic phonics instruction gives the opportunity for students to learn and practice phonemic awareness and phonics recognition gradually from the simplest to the more complex phonemes system especially for those who have difficulty in acquiring phonemic awareness. While the implicit phonics instruction emphasizes the phonemes and phonics inside the reading learning activity only when the students have trouble with it, explicit instruction pulls entirely phonemes and phonics activities out of reading learning activity. It ensures that students would have more time to learn and practice phonemes and phonics throughout the lesson. By the end of the learning activity, teachers must realize that the goal of this instruction is not to memorize phonemes and phonics rules, nevertheless it must ensure that students recognize phonemes and phonics pattern and get used to it (Blachman et al., 2012; Moats, 1998). There are several previous studies which have similarities with this study indicating that systematic and explicit phonics instruction gave positive effect for students gaining ability in English decoding which is the beginning of acquiring reading ability, three of those studies discussed in this study are relating to students without visual impairment and two of them are relating to students with visual impairment. The first study indicated that explicit phonics instruction can help students gaining their ability in reading skill (Dakin, 1999). The study was broadly applied to the students and teachers in order to gain information of how effective the explicit phonics instruction helping students gaining their ability in decoding English words. In this study, the characteristics of the students are not discussed specifically so that the effect of visual impairment was not discussed. The second study indicates that systematic instruction of decoding can help middle students with moderate intellectual disabilities improving

their reading ability in English. Nevertheless, the vision loss was not discussed as a factor of intervention due to the focus of the study is to students who have intellectual disabilities only (Bradford et al., 2006). The third study discussing the impacts of explicit systematic phonics instruction for students with specific learning disability. This study focuses on how the instruction help students with specific learning disability gaining their skill in reading. This study indicates that the instruction gave positive impacts for the students. The intervention in this study is set by the researcher so that the program is not naturally established. However, the visual impairment is not discussed in this study. Nannemann et al., (2017) in their study shows that the decoding instruction could deliver positive impact to students with visual impairment's reading ability. The study was conducted in an environment where students use English as their first language and the program applied during the reading lesson as the part of curricular.

Another study of phonics instruction for students with visual impairment within an almost similar situation stated that the instruction could also give positive impact to the students (Prakosha et al., 2018). The similarity between the study and this study is that these two studies focus on decoding on students with visual impairment in the environment of country which consider English as a foreign language. However, the previous study focuses on the enrichment of students' vocabulary in speaking. Meanwhile, this study focuses on decoding ability of students in reading

Aligning decoding with the reading stages (Chall, 1983), there are three reading stages based on students' alphabetic knowledge level, logographic, novice, and mature alphabetic stage. Students who are in the logographic stage have not been able to recognize the alphabet in full both the form of writing, how to read it, and how to sound it. Students who are in the novice alphabetic stage have just been able to recognize alphabets. They have begun to be able to recognize the alphabet separately, and sound it and begin to be able to recognize the combination of the two alphabets and how to sound them. Students in the mature alphabetic stage have the ability to recognize the alphabet as a whole and how to sound it. They are also able to recognize patterns that are common in the use of English phonemes. Students at this stage have been able to be taught to understand the meaning of words in their use in the sentence (Moats, 1998). Referring to the stages that have been discussed earlier, teacher needs to develop the instruction based on students' need for each stage. Teachers need to cluster the students carefully based on what stage they belong based on a pre-observation. The instruction was based on this observation result so that teachers can define students' need and pick sufficient materials that can help delivering the meaning of decoding lesson well for each student.

In general, students with the average ability would go through these three stages at the same age within the same time, starting at the age of four to seven years. But for students who have barriers, even with the same relative age, they would experience differences in their ability to recognize alphabets and their sounds. Students with learning barriers for example, with limited cognitive abilities they would experience a slowdown in the above stages even though they are already at a fairly mature age. It could be that they are at the right age to become a mature alphabetic, but because of their limitations, they are only able to recognize a few alphabet letters and how to read

them. This also applies to students with visual impairments. Students with visual impairments would also experience a slowdown in mastering the above three stages caused by the loss of their ability to process information visually (Radojichikj, 2015). In the case of students with visual impairments, visual acquisition of information would be replaced by tactile abilities. With limited reach in obtaining written information, as well as with varying abilities in each student, coupled with relatively unbalanced cognitive abilities, making them have the ability to recognize alphabets different as well.

For students with visual impairment, there would be a special treatment that need to be applied to overcome their visual limitation as the most considered obstacle. Although they experience obstacle visually, this obstacle do not affect them in gaining knowledge. They can also develop their reading skills because they already have the media to read and write, braille writing. In fact, there are many students with visual impairments who do not suffer for intelligence disability and even exceed the ability of students who are able to see. Therefore, their opportunity to achieve education at a higher level is wide open. Similar with the sighted students, students with visual impairments are very much required to improve their reading skills, especially reading in English. The most prominent reason is because a lot of information is written or translated into English. It is considerable since the sighted text translation can be easily disseminated and used by a wider audience.

In fact, the problems in enhancing reading ability possessed by students with visual impairments are more complex than students who are sighted (Ferrell et al., 1994). If sighted students are able to rely on their visual abilities to be able to learn more easily, then students with visual impairments automatically rely solely on their tactile ability to receive written information (Mohammed & Omar, 2011; Sarah, 2018; Wetzel et al., 2006). It was the result of written information in any language is very much available in writing that can be seen by the eye. In addition, the scope of the eye view is far wider than touch so that students who are sighted can learn anytime and anywhere when they are able to see the writing around them where students with visual impairments are only able to do so when they are faced directly with Braille texts which are very limited in number (Bara & Florence, 2014). For students sighted it is very easy to learn associating letter and sounds, especially if the words are written in a printed form. With the various kinds of visible text around them, they would automatically grow their ability to recognize words and they would learn to speak or read. When they already have an awareness level of the word, they would also be able to connect the word they see with the sound, especially if there is a repetition on it (Steinman et al., 2006). Nevertheless, it would not be happened to the students with visual impairment when they learn to read.

The theories show that systematic instruction would help significantly students to learn English decoding especially if it is explicitly treated rather than that teaching decoding without systematic and explicit instruction. It is obvious that students with visual impairment also need systematic and explicit phonics instruction to improve their ability in reading and understanding the use of English phonemes and phonics system. If they do, then the problem to be focused is “to what extent does systematic and explicit phonics instruction help students with visual impairment gain their ability in recognizing English phonemes and phonics system to be able to decode English

words?”

## **B. METHOD**

This study focuses on a certain small homogeneous population which was orienting a certain event or phenomena; therefore, a case study approach was chosen to deliver a brief meaning of the phenomena occurred (Dey, 1993).

This case study was a classroom consists of students with visual impairment who are beginner learner of English as a foreign language learning decoding by using systematic and explicit phonics instruction. This study has special feature because in real context, systematic and explicit phonics instruction is given for kindergarten students who learn to relate printed words with their sounds, meanwhile in this study, the instruction is given to students in junior high school since the demand of curriculum in this country, English must be given for the first time in junior high school.

The participants of this study are an English teacher in an extracurricular classroom in a special need school and four students, two belong to novice alphabetic stage, and the other two students belong to mature alphabetic stage. The participants were chosen since they have implemented the systematic and explicit phonics instruction with students with visual impairment as the target means they have completed the criteria set for this study. Otherwise, they are all the natives of Bahasa Indonesia and the students use English as foreign language, they do not use it for daily basis.

This study observed the implementation of the systematic and explicit decoding instruction in the classroom situation in four meetings as part of a thirty-two meetings of extra-curricular program. In every meeting unstructured field-note was employed to capture the phenomena happened in the classroom and interviews would be employed after the meeting if there were questions revealed based on the phenomena observed to the teacher or students.

## **C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Studies by other researchers in the previous section state that systematic and explicit decoding instruction could show positive effect both for students with or without visual impairment. A good decoding instruction supposes to provide students with the opportunity to learn English decoding gradually from the introduction of phonics knowledge, discriminating between English spelling system and English phonics system, identifying English phonemes, maintaining the use of the phonemes, and applying their knowledge into practical use (Blachman et al., 2012; Moats, 1998) which mostly has been provided by the teacher observed in this study. The other studies also stated that this instruction could attract student's interest in joining the lesson, therefore they could improve their English decoding ability for their use in reading (Dakin, 1999). Some studies also stated that this instruction not only improving decoding ability for students without visual impairment only but also students with visual impairment.

### **The Instruction**

The teacher gave four groups of words given in four meetings and the two-word groups are divided into two main phoneme groups. This selection is very appropriate based on the choice of phoneme given because students can learn groups of words that have almost similar sound patterns. Unfortunately, there were several words in the group which is a word that had been modified into a second form of verb that is used to

identify sentences in past tense. It would give students an understanding that the word given is a basic word which in Indonesian does not recognize changes in the form of verbs. Moreover, when the teacher gave the concept of understanding the use of the word in the story, the teacher did not explain that the word has changed its form, so that students would use it in sentences in general. Although this was actually valid for students in the early stages that they could have a concept that is not really good about using the right words form in accordance with the time the activity is intended, it would be nice if the teacher considered giving an explanation, although a little, especially when the storytelling stage about the use of verbs in accordance with the time information. However, maybe because the focus on this study is the sound pattern of the word in question, this can be very understandable.

In the learning, the teacher transformed the book that he got in the form of sighted into braille form. According to Sarah, (2018) in Danish Association of the Blind and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment, this greatly helps students to have an understanding in accordance with what is desired by the teacher. Especially, the teacher was also able to provide appropriate adjustments in the story material in which in the original book the target word is marked in red, it is impossible for the blind to be able to distinguish colors so that the teacher changed it into words placed in the bracket. In addition, because the student was learning English as a beginner, the instruction in Indonesian given by the teacher was very appropriate (Nikolic, 1987).

The steps of learning delivered by the teacher in outline are as follows: The teacher sounds the target phoneme (middle letter) to be learned and asks students to repeat it; The teacher spells the target word and asks students to do it; The teacher sounds each letter in the target word according to the phoneme and asks students to do it; The teacher reunites the sounds he has broken down into one complete word and asks students to do it; The teacher reads the story and asks students to sound the words contained in the bracket; The teacher asks students to spell, break words into phonemes in each letter and sound the words in full while in the story telling session; The teacher repeats the last process by using words on the list that they got at the beginning to conclude the learning.

### **Students in Novice Alphabetic Stage**

The group of students in novice alphabetic stage were Sally and Mark. Any of information readers want to know about the students would be shown as follow.

#### **Sally**

Overall, Sally was very engaged with the lessons that took place on that afternoon. She listened well when the teacher gave instructions and could understand the commands given by the teacher and can carry them out well, it was mainly because the teacher gave commands in the class in Bahasa.

When the teacher asked students to spell the word being studied, Sally was among students who are brave and did not hesitate to sound the spelling of the word. But when it was her turn to sound the phonemes together, Sally seemed hesitant and would repeat the sound produced by the teacher after the other students had finished sounding, even though they sounded very slowly. She would try to sound the phoneme as her friend has repeatedly sounded very slowly. Looks like he wants to memorize the sound in question.

When the shared learning was finished and the teacher began to give individual

questions, Sally looked nervous by changing her sitting position a little more stiffly. When the teacher gave a question to another friend, Sally was silent while following the reading that was being discussed by walking around a braille book using her finger. But when it comes time to read the next word in the sentence being discussed, surprisingly, she is able to sound the word correctly in accordance with the example given even with a very low voice.

When entering the learning stage related to the story, she seemed interested in putting a smile on her face when the teacher presented an illustration of the story to help students understand the story being learned. She seemed to be very concentrated on the teacher's words and occasionally traced the braille letters in the book she was holding, although she also occasionally lost readings because she was too focused on listening to the illustrations presented by the teacher. When the teacher asked students together to read the words in the bracket of the story being studied, Sally also remained the same as not being the first person to give the answer. She tends to listen to her friends first before deciding to answer in a slow voice. But when the teacher asked students to follow the process individually, Sally was able to sound all the four words being studied that come in sequence very well in a low voice. However, she had a little difficulty in sounding the last word, but only in the phoneme of the first letter. Apparently, this success grew her confidence, as seen from her starting to dare to ask a number of questions to the teacher about the illustrations of the story being studied. In addition, Sally has also begun to dare to sound the words being discussed together at the end of the lesson.

Apparently, the positive trend continued at the next meeting. The skepticism expressed by Sally in learning seemed to diminish in subsequent meetings. Although she was not always the first students to answer to the teacher's questions, she had begun to dare to answer in a slightly louder voice. In addition, when some friends made mistakes or just stay quiet when asked, she had the courage to reprimand and asked them to answer immediately. She also became more active in learning by asking a few simple questions both about the sound of the words they were learning or about illustrating the story being discussed.

In conclusion, overall, she likes the lesson because she could practice to sound the English words. Even before, she did not have courage to speak or read English words loudly because she always sounded them incorrectly. She thought English was difficult because the way to sound them was different with the way she read. By joining this class, now she has more confidence to learn English. Anyhow, the teacher delivered the instruction clearly and easy to understand. Even though she had difficulty in the beginning of the lesson, she could adapt with the lesson very well and engage herself into the lesson very well.

### **Mark**

Overall, Mark always tried to be always engaged with ongoing learning. At some time during the learning process he was quiet while shaking his head, but occasionally he would issue mild pouts both commenting on what his friend was doing and what was said by the teacher.

When learning began and the teacher gave an explanation of the lessons to be

discussed in today's learning, Mark seemed speechless. But when his friend gave a comment or asked something, Mark would greet the comment with a laugh. When the teacher asked all students to spell the word to be learned this afternoon, Mark was speechless. Every now and then he seemed to open his mouth and try to make the shape of the mouth as spoken by his friends while his fingers tracing the braille book in front of him. When the teacher gave individual directions to other students, most Marks would put his head on the table. When the teacher asked students to put all the sounds they break down into full words to all students, he once answered very loudly, but he makes a mistake.

From what I could conclude, Mark was a noisy boy who sometimes lost his focus during the lesson. This made him difficult to engage with the lesson all the time. However, he said that he likes the English extracurricular activity mostly because his friends join the lesson as well. Although he said that he enjoys the lesson, he did not seem like he put his effort on the lesson very well because he annoyed other students most of the times. His friends sometimes got annoyed and warn him whenever he made fun with something happened during the lesson. However, there was still a stage that he likes during the lesson, sounding the broken phoneme. He likes this stage because he felt like this stage was funny for him because he could hear a funny sound produced by the teacher and his friends. Based on the observation, he always smiles and makes fun with the sound produced. He also sometimes made some jokes from the sound he heard.

### **Students in Mature Alphabetic Stage**

The group of students in mature alphabetic stage are Grace and Fancy. Any of information readers want to know about the students would be shown as follow.

#### **Grace**

Overall, Grace was very engaged with ongoing learning. She could always carry out the instructions given by the teacher. She was also always able to master the material being discussed. She was able to recognize all the alphabet names in which she was able to spell when her teacher asked to spell the words they were learning. But occasionally she would lose what was being learned in his book. This was probably because she was only able to read braille recently so that sometimes she was slower in reading than other friends. But she was able to follow the material given by the teacher well, such as when the teacher gave an example of how to sound the part of the word they are learning, she always tried to repeat it with the intention to remember how to sound it.

When learning was carried out together, Grace was always the first student who was able to carry out her teacher's instructions, such as when the teacher asked students to spell, then sounded each letter, she was the first when sounding it. Even when another friend makes a mistake, occasionally she would come to remind. However, at first she found it difficult to sound one letter at a time, especially when the teacher taught the sounds of each letter separately, she would have difficulty sounding consonants when they were at the beginning of words separately, and her difficulty would affect the sound of the next letter, especially if the next letter was the vowel letter. However, as



learning progressed, she became increasingly accustomed to her learning patterns and was able to recognize and sound the phoneme well.

Entering into story reading session, when the teacher reads illustrations of the story, she always seemed to show a serious face full of concentration with her hands always following the braille book in front of her. In fact, sometimes Grace asked the meaning of words that she did not know to the teacher. When the teacher read the sentence, she was very focus, then when it was time for the teacher to ask students to read words together in brackets, she was the first student who was able to read the word and always read it out loud. Then when it was time for the teacher to ask students to read the words in parentheses alternately, she continued to follow the braille book in front of him with a serious facial expression. When the time come to conclude where the teacher repeated the process of spelling, splitting, and combining the words that have been learned, she was able to carry out all these processes very well. Moreover, she no longer repeated the mistakes she made as at the beginning of learning.

In conclusion, Grace was a diligent student who always put her attention to the lesson really much. She always tried to understand the materials and never was afraid and ask questions to try what she has not been able to do with the materials. She likes this type of lesson because this lesson could answer her curiosity of how to sound the words in English. She stated that sounding English words has been her difficulty and obstacles in learning English. She also stated that sometimes she felt like she lost in jeopardy when it comes to the reading English words session even before when still has her sight. For more information, she had lost her vision when she was in the seventh grade. Since this lesson focuses on sounding English phonemes individually, then she could get a suitable lesson for her which could help her understand the sound of each words. Because of this lesson was suitable for her, she seems very excited since the beginning of the lesson until the end.

### **Fancy**

Overall, Fancy was very engaged with the learning carried out that day. When the teacher gave her a braille book, he immediately checked it by stretching his hand over the book he was holding. When the teacher asked all students what words they would learn today, she answers correctly first. When the teacher gave an example of how to sound the phoneme of the word to be learned, she imitated it slowly in a low voice but becomes the first student to follow what the teacher says. When the teacher asked students to repeat what they have just learned, Fancy answering it first. When the teacher explained further, she seemed to listen carefully. When the teacher made a mistake in sounding the phoneme of a word in the last letter, she still sounded the correct phoneme and then the teacher corrected what she has said. When the teacher asked all students to spell the word being studied, she was able to spell it very well and with a voice that was quite loud.

She was mistaken when sounded a word in which she distorted phoneme in consonants at the beginning so she sounded the middle letter by vowel the first letter. She did it several times in the beginning for the first two or three words learned, but when the teacher responded and corrected what was being sounded, she improved the

way it sounded and repeated continuously without being asked to improve her memorization. When the teacher gave all students the choice of the right sound for the middle letter sound, she was able to choose which sound was most appropriate first than other friends. When the teacher gave questions to the students one by one, she was able to sound the words exactly according to the phoneme that was sounded by his teacher.

When entering story reading session, Fancy also kept her concentration by walking along her hand into the braille book in front of her. Whenever she had lost and looked for what was being read by the teacher, she would catch up quickly. When the teacher explained the instructions they would carry out in this activity, she seemed very focused, did not make a sound, and went through her braille book. When the teacher read the sentence and asked the students to sound together the words in the bracket, she become the second student who was able to sound it correctly after Grace. The rest, she always tried to keep her focus with what was being read by the teacher, it appears that she always tried to direct his right ear upward so that she was able to hear well. Even when the teacher discusses the illustration of the story, she was the only student who answered the teacher's question about the illustration. The rest she answered questions along with other friends.

From the beginning of the lesson she found herself difficult to understand the materials because this type of learning was really new for her. Even so, she always tried to catch up and cope herself with the materials and never have any hesitation to try more some materials that she found difficult to understand. When she got used to the lesson implemented, she started to cope with the lesson better and have a better understanding with how the words are sounded. It was shown with how could she answer better in the middle of the lesson challenges the teacher gave to her. She also sometimes become the first student to answer the questions or challenges given by the teacher when it come to the group session faster than her other friends. She also was able to sound the words correctly whether it was in group or individual session. She also never lost her focus during the lesson. Even so, in the story-reading session, sometimes she asked questions about English words' meaning that was read by the teacher, which shows that her understanding has gone further than what the teacher expected. And this also support the statement that by joining the class, she has developed her basic ability in reading and understanding English words.

### **Students in Novice Alphabetic Stage**

Overall, students in novice alphabetic stage demonstrate an increasing performance during the lesson. They seem like having difficulty in the beginning of the lesson but they can improve their performance after sometimes. One thing important here is that the absence of sufficient alphabetic knowledge for students in this stage. Blachman et al., (2012); Moats, (1998) stated that before children learn how to sound correct phoneme in a text, they should have enough alphabetic knowledge.

However, even though students in this stage do not have sufficient knowledge of alphabet's name or alphabetic knowledge, they still can cope with the learning material of phoneme and in fact they can finally understand how to use the sound of phoneme in the words. The study result shows that even though students did not recognize the name of the alphabet, they still are able to understand the learning

materials because the teacher is able to provide sufficient materials and furthermore, he is able to provide the students with comprehensible example and directions on how to shape their mouth in producing the sound. It is very important since those directions replace the existence of vision for the students (Sarah, 2018). Furthermore, since the teacher complete the instruction with comprehensible language, in this case student's first language, students are able to comprehend the instruction, process it within their mind and map what they should do in order to cope with materials.

However, this discussion is still debatable considering that even students do not have sufficient alphabet's name in English, they have background knowledge of how to use alphabet because their first language uses the same alphabetic system. If Blachman et al., (2012); Moats, (1998) refer alphabetic knowledge as the knowledge of how to use the alphabetic system, then students in this stage are not quite sufficient to be considered as novice alphabetic stage. Nevertheless, if Blachman et al., (2012; Moats, (1998) refer alphabetic knowledge as memorizing alphabet in target language, than it would be another case. However, this could show that even students who use different language with the same alphabetic system could understand the use of phonics system under the sufficient instruction.

### **Students in Mature Alphabetic Stage**

Overall, students in this stage performed good responses towards the implemented instruction. Although they always had difficulties in the beginning of the instruction within the stage of introducing the phoneme of the target words, they could show the improvement of materials acquisition over the period. Moats, (1998) stated that students in mature alphabetic stage have better opportunities in acquiring phonics to decode English words because they have already mastered the form of using alphabets, not only the name but also the shape and their function. Moreover, because the teacher provided students with suitable materials such as braille for students reading and description for giving understanding to the students of how to shape the sound in English words as stated also by Columbia Ministry Education, (2006) that this could definitely help students to acquire the knowledge.

Students in this stage also showed that they could acquire more materials in one meeting only if the teacher provided them with a class within only students in mature alphabetic stage at once. It was shown after each of the instruction's stage or a material had finished to be taught, they expanded their knowledge by asking more questions about the vocabularies and sometimes they also asked about the context within the text. Başaran, (2011) stated that students with visual impairment, especially for those who has not additional impairment would expand their knowledge as long as the teacher could provide them materials which could attract their interest. If only the teacher could provide them with additional time of learning excluding the students in novice alphabetic stage, students within this stage could improve their knowledge more by learning more than one material instead.

## **D. CONCLUSION**

There are two focuses on this study, the implementation of systematic and explicit decoding instruction in the certain classroom and students' English decoding ability. The evidence in the field reflected that the implementation of the instruction in

the classroom had fulfilled the demand of providing students with a sufficient structured phonics instruction starting from introducing students with phonemes as We can see in the beginning of each meeting, training students to discriminate between English phonics and spelling, identifying the use of the phonics by trained the students how to break phonemes out of a whole words, training students to maintain the use of phonemes by structuring the phonemes into whole words, and providing students with some practices for practical use. The most important thing to underline is that the teacher also provided students with braille-materials to gain students' accessibility throughout the instruction. These treatments has given a full -hand for the students with visual impairment in both of the stages, novice and mature alphabetic, to gain ability in English decoding.

Students with visual impairment in novice alphabetic stage did not have enough knowledge about alphabet's name. It affected students' ability in recognizing letter in braille becomes slower even they had recognized braille symbols. The only adjustment needed to consider for students in this stage is that the treatment for the students. Teacher needed to give the instruction slower to make sure that the students in this stage could follow the instruction while they read their braille book. Nevertheless, their lack of alphabetic name mastery did not affect their ability in acquiring English phonics sound. The activities in the systematic and explicit phonics instruction in this classroom could help students with visual impairment in novice alphabetic stage gain their ability in acquiring English decoding.

Students in mature alphabetic stage had already the requirement to acquire English decoding knowledge since they have mastered and memorized all of the English alphabet's name, shape, and usage. They only had difficulty in the beginning of the lesson because this instruction was the first time for them and initially, they had difficulty to shape their mouth by only listened to the phoneme's production of the teacher. Nevertheless, since the teacher provided the appropriate description of how to shape the mouth when producing the sound, students in this stage were able to capture this description and copy what the teacher did. In general, students in this stage could acquire the materials given in the instruction very fast and they were always full of confidence in completing the challenges and sometimes asked further questions about the meaning of the words. After several meetings, they did not only answer the challenges but they could also predict the words with the similar pattern.

Following these findings, those who want to implement this kind of instruction for similar situation must pay attention into the detail in the stages of the instruction to make sure that the students could gain their decoding ability gradually. Make sure that those who want to implement this instruction could give more time for students to learn the materials since students with visual impairment need more time than students without visual impairment to read and understand the description given by the teacher. And the last, braille materials are such important part that need to be presented in each meeting.

## E. REFERENCES

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