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Phonemic Awareness as Predictor of Word Decoding Ability among Bachelor of Science in Information Technology Students

Genesis Genelza
University of Mindanao, Tagum, Philippines
literarytropes@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive correlational study aimed at the level of Phonemic awareness as a predictor of Word Decoding ability among BS-IT students using a total enumeration technique that involves students enrolled in the course program. Moreover, it sought to determine the significant relationship between the two variables. To verify, three different tests were being utilised to collect the necessary data, i.e., a listening test for measuring the respondents' level of awareness of words with critical sounds; a phonetic transcription test to identify the respondents' level of awareness of sound-symbol relationship; and spelling test to know the respondents' level of ability for transcriptions to be translated to its American Standard English spelling. After the data had been collected and tabulated, it was interpreted that the students have a high level of Phonemic awareness with a mean of 3.66. Moreover, their Word Decoding ability resulted in a high level with a mean of 3.93. Further, it is being noticed that there is a tremendous significant relationship between the two variables with a p-value of 0.0000000859. With these findings, the researcher encourages the school, administrators, and teachers to give more exposure to sound-word connections by engaging the students with activities involving speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities and practice-based tasks.

1. Introduction

Students with poor decoding ability have been shown to lack phonemic awareness, and they may not even understand what the term "sound" means. They can typically hear well and may even be able to name the alphabet letters, but they have little or no understanding of what the letters mean. Phonemic awareness is required for learning the English language, which uses an alphabetic writing system in which letters represent single speech sounds both alone and in combination. Students with a firm foundation in phonemic awareness can break words down into sounds, recognise their identities, and put them back together again. Students may be confused by the print system and how it represents the spoken word if they do not have it. Furthermore, it was mentioned that if students lack phonemic awareness, it will be difficult for them to acquire the language, particularly in reading and spelling, because knowing the basic sound is the foundation for learning to decode (Babiano et al., 2015).

Spoken language is a sound that an experienced listener deciphers into meaningful chunks. This sorting takes a child several years to perfect. A foreign language learner must break down strange sounds into understandable chunks: phrases or sentences, words, syllables, and even phonemes (the smallest sound segments). For years, reading experts have recognised that difficulties with the sorting process, often known as phonological abilities, are linked to many students' reading and spelling difficulties. Researchers are studying native English-speaking students having difficulty learning a foreign language. It has been recently discovered that these students have issues similar to poor readers and spellers in that they are unable to perceive and manipulate the sound system and its corresponding written code effectively. To look at it another way, at-risk foreign language students also have poor phonological skills (Schwarz, 2012).

Several literature reviews on the effectiveness of phonemic-based training with English Language Learners learning English as a second language in English-dominant settings have been undertaken (Thorius and Sullivan, 2013; Stephens, 2014; Richards-Tutor et al., 2015). According to a national reading panel, ELL kids respond to phonemic-based instruction just as native English speakers (August et al., 2019). A review of studies involving ELL students

who were struggling readers was done (Richards-Tutor et al., 2015). The findings revealed that the interventions had moderate to significant benefits on word reading, with phonemic-based training being one of the instructional components. Stephens (2014) looked at intervention trials with Spanish-speaking students who were having trouble with English reading and discovered that complete programs that incorporated phonics and phonemic awareness training had a significant impact on reading comprehension.

In addition, improved phonemic awareness is linked to reading ability among children, especially in the early stages, and it is a strong predictor of future reading ability at the age of six in Serbia. As a result, the level of phonological awareness acquired determines a child's readiness to read. Milankov et al. (2021) have highlighted phonemic awareness as a significant element in reading incomprehensible words and text comprehension (Dixon, 2013).

Furthermore, the prevalent notion in the Philippines that English is deteriorating could be considered an example of indigenisation, resulting in a language variant that qualifies as a dialect despite the fact that the method that produced it differs from the traditional definition of dialectalisation. It has distinct linguistic features as a result of a gradual shift in language learning away from native language speakers, with generations of Filipino English learners picking up the forms and rules of the English language from Filipino second-language learners whom other Filipino second-language learners trained. As a result, when this new sound is introduced to Filipino speakers, various pronunciation models may generate confusion, making it difficult to understand the term. As a result of the emergence of different pronunciations, the learner's decoding skills will decline (Malicsi, 2010).

Similarly, Erfe & Lintao (2012) illustrated certain essential English consonants that some adult Filipinos stumble over. These are the sounds /f/, /v/, and /th/. Filipinos are baffled as to how to pronounce those crucial sounds. As a result, Filipinos have difficulties detecting the aforementioned important English sounds.

In the local setting, a study conducted at the University of South-eastern Philippines Tagum Campus entitled “Critical Sounds in English and Decoding Skills of Second Year BSED-English Students” quantified that there were still sounds considered least recognised. It implied that the respondents of the said study had a low level of detecting critical sounds, which eventually hampered them in identifying other critical sounds. Significantly, there is an apparent existing weakness in identifying critical sounds (Durango et al., 2013).

Moreover, according to the researcher's observations in a classroom, some pupils have difficulty putting their thoughts into words. Even familiar and straightforward terms are difficult for some students to pronounce. As a result, there are still issues with phonemic awareness and word decoding ability. Furthermore, the researcher has not come across any research that looked into phonemic awareness as a predictor of students' word decoding ability. One of the best predictors of a student's ability to read and speak fluently is phonemic awareness. This ability to effectively hear and distinguish speech sounds allows us to pick up a language quickly, and language expertise is essential for understanding what we read and speak. This research would significantly benefit and give a high contribution to the students, teachers, and institutions since the study is new and would pave the way for understanding the student’s capability in decoding such words if he/she has high or low phonemic awareness.

In general, the researcher's aim in doing this research is to determine the elements mentioned above that affect phonemic awareness and how that affects word decoding skills among BS-IT students. It will greatly assist researchers in providing people with the necessary activities, reinforcements, remediation, and programs to assist with their phonemic awareness and overall English language development.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Phonemic Awareness

Through phonemic awareness, students learn to hear and control sounds as well as understand that spoken words are made up of sequences of spoken sounds. Pupils who were able to recognise phonemes fast were able to read more fluently due to this rapid processing. Students who took longer to process phonemes had difficulty comprehending what was said. Decoding the words appeared to take too much time, leaving less time to interpret what was read (Prendergasy & MacPhee, 2018).

To read and speak fluently, students must improve their phonemic awareness to the point of automaticity. It frees up their mental energy, allowing them to comprehend what they are reading more quickly. Instead of defending their sound system by learning to naturally recall the 44 English language sounds, students rely on weak decoding methods and coping tactics such as memorising. These skills may allow children to begin reading, but as texts become more complex, pupils' comprehension suffers since it becomes too difficult to comprehend what they are reading while focused on laboriously decoding every word. If students are to master the 44 sounds, we must expose them to each one repeatedly and teach them how to discern each sound rapidly among others (Tallal, 2012).

Griffith, Klesius, and Kromrey (2011) examined how decoding and spelling skills and writing fluency developed in children with varying levels of phonemic awareness at the start of the year. Whole language or traditional basal instruction was offered to children in

first grade who had a high or low level of phonemic awareness. The comprehensive language curriculum included a shared-book experience and intense writing activities, whereas the old basal curriculum only included explicit phonics instruction and very little writing. The amount of phonemic awareness at the start of the year was more important than the style of instruction in literacy acquisition. On all reading metrics, children with high phonemic awareness outscored children with low phonemic awareness. The role of constructed spelling in teaching the alphabetic principle to children with little phonemic awareness is investigated.

The proceeding sections of this literature review will explore the two indicators of Phonemic Awareness. The indicators include critical sounds and phonetics.

Critical Sounds. Nerrière and Hon (2009) defined critical sounds as sounds in the English language that tends to be unfamiliar among listeners. They claimed that students from many native languages learn many sounds that are usual to them. In short, English sounds are considered critical as it varies in students' familiarity with the heard words. Moreover, they recognised that critical sounds are those problematic sounds in more than three languages, including mainly Spanish such as: /ʌ / as in mud, /ɪə / as in fear, / θ / as in thing, /oʊ/ as in no, / aʊ / as in now, and /eɪ/ as in face. These critical sounds were identified by letting the students read a given context. It appears that these students from each mother tongue had trouble when they spoke English – with an extra adapted set of sounds, particularly the found critical sounds.

Furthermore, in the Philippine context, Erfe & Lintao (2012) exemplified that some critical sounds in English are /f/, /v/, and /th/. She addressed those critical sounds after reading stories to her son. It had led her to an accidental learning insight that constant introduction of the subject paves the way to awareness of the said critical sounds to young learners, which some adult Filipinos trip on because the latter are confused on how to sound out those critical sounds. Thus, they found to have difficulty recognising the critical sounds of English.

In particular, Conboy & Kuhl (2011) and his colleagues found that when we learn a second language, the brain instinctively organises words based on their similarity to phonemes. For example, categorising the artificial phoneme spectrum between /r/ and /l/ is designed for native English speakers, not Japanese speakers, because native English speakers perceive all sounds as either /r/ or /l/, a phenomena Kuhl has compared to a "perceptual magnet." In comparison to typical adult speech, the discussion between the young one and the adult amplifies this phonetic distinction. Learning language throughout development necessitates amplifying and modifying intrinsic biases through proper postnatal experience.

Phonetics. According to the University of Oulu (2012), phonetics is the science that considers and investigates all aspects of speech. These features include how we create speech with our speech organs, the qualities of speech sounds in the air as they travel from the speaker's lips to the listener's ear, and how we hear speech and recognise its structural elements as linguistic symbols or signs. In other words, it is the discipline of linguistics concerned with the generation, combination, description, and representation of speech sounds via written symbols.

However, many people disagree regarding the similarities and distinctions between phonetics and phonology. The study of how sounds are made, transferred, and understood is known as phonetics (we will only look at the production of sounds). Phonology is the study of how sounds in a language interact with one another. In other words, phonetics is concerned with language sounds, whereas phonology is concerned with the sound systems of language. Hamann & Schmitz (2005) define phonetics as a descriptive method used to explore the phonological features of a language.

Many different English vowels tend to sound the same to many non-native English speakers, according to Ettlinger & Johnson (2009), including qualities in 'bit' and 'beat,' 'bid' and 'bead,' and groups like 'bad,' 'bud,' and 'barred,' which are notoriously problematic for foreign learners of the language. With phonetics, understanding, hearing, and reproducing distinct vowel characteristics are made more accessible with phonetics. Unfortunately, learning pronunciation is a neglected aspect of language learning and teaching, leaving pupils deaf to the sounds of their second language (s). Apart from the pronunciation of speech sounds, intonation is an essential feature of phonetics that is frequently overlooked in foreign language learning and instruction. Both students and teachers frequently overlook the importance of intonation in conveying meaning and expressing speakers' emotions and attitudes.

2.2 Word Decoding Ability

According to the study of Bailey (2015), as cited by Babiano et al. (2015), the ability to decode words is an essential aspect of learning to read and improving reading fluency. These abilities include distinguishing the basic sounds and sound blends inside a word, comprehending its meaning, understanding the word's role in the sentence, both grammatically and contextually, and understanding how the word changes when prefixes or suffixes are added. Decoding skills, in other words, are the abilities required to interpret and analyse words when reading. It takes a long time and effort to learn how to decode. It may take long for a learner to sound out each word or break words down into bits to comprehend the entire term. Decoding skills, on the other hand, are necessary for proficient reading. Reading will become more automatic when

students improve their decoding abilities and become more skilled at identifying words. It will allow the student to focus on the meaning rather than the specific words.

Further, the ability to decode printed words is employed to make sense of them. It entails being able to detect and evaluate printed words in order to link them to the spoken words they represent. These abilities include the potential to perceive the basic sounds and sound blends (phonemes) that make up a word, as well as the ability to understand what it means, comprehend it in context, and determine whether it is being used accurately in a sentence (Morin, El-Sayed & Racy, 2015; Okada, 2013).

Likewise, decoding is converting printed words into sounds and meanings (often silently). The reverse process is encoding or spelling. Encoding skills are frequently developed in tandem with decoding skills and reflect similar learning. Learners must first gain some basic understanding of print and how it relates to spoken English in order to become competent decoders and spellers. Learners must have established phonological awareness, which means they must know the names of the letters of the alphabet and the sounds the letters represent, as well as understand essential print concepts. Readers will not learn to decode without this knowledge, and writers will not learn to spell without it (National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults, 2012).

Additionally, the word decoding ability is the ability to accurately pronounce written words using knowledge of letter-sound correlations, including understanding letter patterns. Students can rapidly recognise known words and figure out words they have not encountered before by comprehending these relationships. While some students may be able to figure out some of these relationships on their own, the majority of students will benefit from formal education in this area. As far as phonics is concerned, it is one of the methods for teaching students the concepts of letter-sound relationships and how to sound out words (WETA Washington, 2013).

To put it differently, decoding is the process of breaking down a printed word into its constituent pieces and detecting its pronunciation using typical English sound/letter patterns. Decoding teaches kids how to read any word length and figure out what it means. While decoding abilities are necessary for reading, pupils must also be able to spell the words they hear and say in order to become genuinely literate. Encoding skills are a type of "reverse" talent. Students who understand how to encode can turn sounds into letters and combine letters to form words (Reading Horizons, 2014).

This section of the review of related literature involves the discussion of the dependent variable of the study. The indicator attributed to Word Decoding Ability is spelling.

Spelling. In written language, spelling refers to the selection and placement of letters that make up words. It is a combination of different sounds to form a comprehensible word. Therefore, in order to spell, one must know how letters are individually represented, how they are arranged, and how they are joined to form comprehensive sounds (Norquist, 2021).

According to Gagen (2013), the letter of the word goes through a process of spelling, in which students base their orthographic structure on turning the sounds from spoken words into print, which is a phonemic approach to spelling. He also highlights that as students learn to 'spell' words via phonemic processing, their spelling ability improves gradually. There are certain English words that are spelt differently than how they sound. These terms are crucial and confounding to second language learners, making them difficult to spell. Furthermore, some English words have a well-established symbol-sound link that is inconsistent. He also acknowledged that spelling is one of the key sub-skills of efficient written communication in the English language system. Both the reading and writing processes rely on it. He also stated that a student's proper written expression of his or her language is how-to-spell. As a result, he recommended the six cornerstones for spelling success and ways to improve spelling skills. He said in his sixth cornerstone that English spelling is specific and challenging. As a result, precise spelling can be difficult, and it necessitates memorising which spelling patterns are employed in specific terms.

Similarly, Carreker (2010) stated that children require adequate information to recognise spelling patterns. She claimed that in order to achieve the goal of spelling education, pupils must be more aware of the sounds in words and the frequently repeated sequences that spell those sounds. It is necessary to teach reliable spelling patterns. Students learn about the roots of words, which enhances their learning. In this approach, the process of spelling out words is not just remembered but also makes logical sense to improve spelling competence (Eshiet, 2014).

Therefore, proficiency in spelling and high awareness of critical sounds in English is joined in the term phonological awareness, thus affirming the connectionist Theory of Sadoski and Paivio (2000). A connectionist model emphasises that phonological awareness is needed along with orthographic and semantic knowledge to read regular and irregularly spelt words. Phonology is also integral to the development of word recognition. Therefore, phonological awareness predominantly affects the spelling ability of the learners.

With the researcher's findings and discussions regarding phonemic awareness and word decoding abilities, the need for this study is fundamental. Finding out if this is reflected in the BS-IT students is a worthwhile endeavour for the researcher. As a result,

the researcher investigates whether there is a link between phonemic awareness and word decoding ability among BS - IT students. In connection with this, the study is anchored on the Connectionist Theory of Sadoski and Paivio (2013), stating that phonological awareness (sound) influenced word recognition and spelling behaviours (decoding). The theorists suggest that learning the connection between sounds and spelling is an essential step in students' word decoding ability. Learners with high phonemic awareness will also have high decoding ability and otherwise. In addition, the theorists emphasise the importance of knowing the sounds in order to decode words properly.

The typographic principle and phonics understanding are required for children to understand phonemic awareness. It can be accomplished through exposure to the target language and text, as well as time to investigate and experiment with language use (Ehri, 2014). Children should employ curiosity, love of learning, and improvisation to help them learn, according to constructivist theory and best practices for educating phonemic awareness (Tracey & Morrow, 2009).

Furthermore, the study, based on the Emergent Literacy Theory, assumed that children's literacy acquisition began early in life and continues throughout their lives. Development takes place in deliberate, meaningful, everyday circumstances. Emergent literacy theory advocates for explicitly teaching phonemic awareness and phonics as part of a larger literacy curriculum (Yopp & Yopp, 2000).

With this, the study attempts to identify the relationship between Phonemic Awareness and Word Decoding ability among BS-IT Students at the University of Mindanao Tagum College. The following objectives are presented and considered for thorough discussion: to describe the level of phonemic awareness of the BS-IT Students in terms of Critical Sounds and Phonetics; to describe the level of decoding ability of BS-IT students, and to identify if there is a significant relationship between phonemic awareness and word decoding ability among BS-IT students in the University of Mindanao Tagum College.

Further, the following null hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance using appropriate statistical tools: There is no significant relationship between phonemic awareness and word decoding ability among BS-IT students. Below is the conceptual paradigm showing the variables of the study.

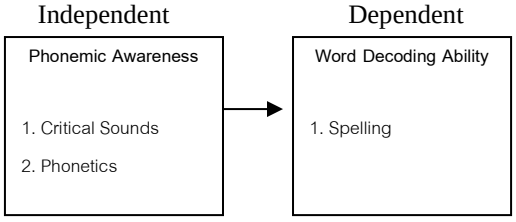

Figure 2.1 The conceptual paradigm

Figure 2.1 shows the independent (phonemic awareness) and dependent (word decoding ability) variables of the study to give emphasis if there is a positive correlation between the two.

3. Method

This study used a quantitative, non-experimental design. Furthermore, the level of phonemic awareness in terms of crucial sounds and phonetics, as well as the level of word decoding skill in terms of spelling, are described using a descriptive-correlational method. Furthermore, this method identifies a significant relationship between phonemic awareness and word decoding skills among BS- IT students at the University of Mindanao Tagum College. This research task entails obtaining data in order to test hypotheses or answer questions about the study problem's present situation.

Moreover, a descriptive correlational study is one in which the researcher's primary goal is to describe connections between variables rather than attempting to establish a causal link. Correlational Research determines whether two or more variables have a relationship or association, but not whether one variable cause another.

Further, a descriptive study is research that aims to give a glimpse of the existing situation. A correlational study is research that aims to uncover correlations between variables and anticipate future events based on current information (Creswell, 2012).

With this, the research study explores the variations between the two qualities of the study group using the correlational research approach. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), the degree to which a researcher discovers statistical association between two traits is dependent on how accurately those characteristics have been estimated. As a result, validity and reliability are critical factors influencing correlation coefficients. The goal of a correlational study is to determine whether two or more variables are connected. Moreover, according to Creswell (2002), correlation is a statistical test that establishes patterns between two variables. The statistical examination of the research issue can be done in a series of analyses using a standard test for correlation that yields a result called "r." The r coefficient is provided as a decimal number in the Pearson Correlation Coefficient method (Cooper and Schindler, 2001).

Researchers must ask themselves about the new knowledge and theoretical views they bring to any research. They must consider the tactics they plan to apply in their research, which will inform their approaches. They must also consider how they will gather and analyse data. According to Vogt et al. (2012), this must be done so that researchers are aware of any bias they may bring to any research investigation and how it will affect the approach they take and the tools they use to collect data. Also, the

respondents of this study involved 95 Bachelor of Science in Information Technology students. This study used a total enumeration technique involving students enrolled in that course program. The respondents involved 30 students from First Year, 26 students from Second Year and 20 students from Third Year, and 19 students from Fourth Year.

Further, this study utilised adapted tests. These tests are the Listening test, Phonetic Transcription test, and Spelling test, following American English as the standard language used in the study.

The purpose of these instruments is to test the indicators of each variable. The Phonological Awareness utilised Listening Test for the indicator, Critical Sounds, and the Phonetic Transcription Test for the indicator, Phonetics. On the other side, the Word Decoding Ability utilised the Spelling Test for the indicator, spelling. All items of all tests were based on the observed seven critical sounds from the research study of Nerrière and Hon (2009), which are /ʌ/, /æ/, /ɪə/, /θ/, /oʊ/, / aʊ /, and /eɪ/ and another two critical sounds which are /f/ and /v/ according to Erfe & Lintao (2012).

Each test for each indicator is composed of 45 items. A listening test involves audio materials of 45-item words with critical sounds to be identified. Similarly, the Phonetic Transcription test involves 45-item words with underlined sounds to be transcribed. Also, 45 items for the Spelling test that intends to make out the ability of the students to translate the given transcribed words into its American Standard English spelling with the use of audio dictionary software, specifically the version of the American Oxford Dictionary Version 5.2.34 (Babiano et al., 2015).

Scores for each test used the given scale, descriptive equivalent, and interpretation. The equivalent percentage distribution is based on the University Standard where the study was conducted.

Scores from the administered tests were interpreted accordingly. The range of means is indicated below as the basis for quantifying the level of Phonemic Awareness Word Decoding ability of Second Year BS-IT Students.

In gathering data for this study, the researcher followed the following ethical procedure: The researcher sent a letter to the Dean of the University of Mindanao Tagum College with the collaboration of the Department of Teacher Education requesting permission and recommendation to conduct this study among the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology students. In administering the tests, the researcher presented to the subject teacher, apportioned the time the test was administered, and respondents the letter of approval from the Dean.

Upon approval, the researcher directly disseminated and administered the tests. Correspondingly, the researcher asked for the written outputs and collected them with the guarantee of secrecy and for academic purposes only. Then, the data were collected, tallied, tabulated, and interpreted confidentially and accordingly.

In analysing this research data, the statistical tools employed were Mean, Pearson r, and T-test.

Mean was used to answer Problems 1 and 2, which determined the students' Phonemic Awareness in terms of Critical Sounds and Phonetics and the Word Decoding Ability of the students in terms of spelling.

Pearson r. It was used to measure the significant relationship between students' Phonemic awareness and Word Decoding ability of the BS–IT students

T-test. It was used to compute the r-value.

4. Result

Table 4.1 shows the overall data from the variable, Phonemic Awareness. Remarkably, the result in the level of Phonemic awareness is presented in this table. From the given data, the indicator Critical Sounds has the highest mean compared to Phonetic Structure. It has a mean of 3.73, which signifies those students have a greater level of awareness in this area than the indicator, Phonetics. Mainly, the overall result on this variable attained a mean of 3.66 which means that respondents in general and as regards their Phonemic awareness have a high level of awareness.

The school and teachers have done their best to provide worthwhile experiences for students, which eventually developed the students' competence. It is of great discernment that critical sounds are somehow of the knowledge of these inspiring IT.

Table 4.1 The Level of Phonemic Awareness as responded by BS – IT Students

Phonemic Awareness	N	SD	Mean	Description
Critical Sound	95	0.89	3.73	High
Phonetics	95	0.84	3.61	High
Overall	95	**0.85**	**3.66**	**High**

Legend:

Range of Means	Descriptive Equivalent
4.5-5.00	*Very High*
3.5-4.49	*High*
2.5-3.49	*Moderate*
1.5-2.49	*Low*
1-1.49	*Very Low*

The findings support the statement of the University of Southampton's Center for Languages, Linguistics, and Area Studies (2015), which states that students from various linguistic backgrounds enjoyed having to learn phonetics about the core assumptions of speech sounds and becoming cognizant of its many application areas in daily life. Weekly ear-training exercises and performance practice also assisted them in identifying and reproducing the distinctive sounds utilised in other languages.

Furthermore, when it comes to the result of critical sounds (3.73), Fennel (1999) stated that it is preferable for learners to encounter errors from their native languages in the target language, such as aspiration, intonation, rhythm, and melody, in order to understand the genuine scenario of learning. The issues arise when the rules for combining sounds in syllable forms differ between languages. When it comes to learning or strengthening speech skills, age is crucial. He claims that introverted students cannot learn properly in the classroom because they are unsure if they can accomplish it. If learners can pronounce the second language as if it were their natural tongue, it is likely that they have improved their ability since they were young.

Smith (2011), on the other hand, claims that the most challenging degree of phonemic awareness is becoming aware of particular sounds in words. He stated that languages change and that they vary. It was referred to as "sound modification" by him. He also claimed that phonology had something to do with how sounds are combined to form meaningful utterances. In this way, phonology's study of sound change has a systematic distinction.

With the result stated in Table 4.1 about critical sounds, the finding may be credited to the students' exposure to the critical sounds as these are used and methodically observed at some point of academic or typical spoken discourse. Particularly on the GE 2 subject, they seemed to learn about these sounds and tried their best to retain that knowledge for essential communication. It is necessary to know what is being said with these kinds of sounds since, as by name, these are critical, especially for most Filipinos.

Nunes (2016) backs up the study by emphasising that letters represent English language sounds. She claims students need to be able to access sounds to understand what letters mean. As a result, having a high awareness of critical sounds suggests that they have a high perceptive of spoken language sounds, which will work together to form words.

In support of the findings, Høien-Tengesdal & Tønnessen (2011) discovered that students occasionally have problems understanding sounds based on how they are pronounced. As a result, many researchers have proposed their variants of Standard English pronunciation. They frequently need students from a variety of mother tongues to learn a variety of unfamiliar sounds, such as variances in English and American pronunciation, as well as other dialects that make learning much more difficult. It explains why matching many new sounds to English spelling is considerably more challenging for children.

They argued that students from a variety of original languages pick up on a variety of sounds that are familiar to them. In brief, English sounds are important because students' familiarity with the words they hear differs. Furthermore, they identified essential sounds as those that are problematic in more than three languages, primarily Spanish, such as / / as in mud, / / as in fear, / / as in thing, /o/ as in no, / a / as in now, and /e/ as in face. These crucial sounds were discovered by allowing pupils to interpret a specific context. It indicates that when these students spoke English, they had difficulty with an extra modified set of sounds, especially the detected critical sounds.

With this, the phonological reading abilities exploit the process of audibly dividing a word into smaller pieces and using sound-print-conversion principles to sound it out, which was explicitly addressed in the phonological-based teaching, as seen by the intervention procedures analysis. The favourable instructional results suggest that explicitly teaching decoding abilities in English may be independent of oral language experience and proficiency in the English language. Learning English alphabetic principles and phonological awareness may not require a specific amount of oral language competency or sight vocabulary.

On the other hand, when it comes to the result of phonetics (3.61), Small (2005) agrees with the findings of this study, stating that phonetic transcription is difficult, time-consuming, and complex. It is because various letters make different sounds when produced in sounds, and as part of the topic of English, the entire course is not intended for that specific critical sound. In order to solve these issues, some guidelines must be properly followed. As a result, any prospective transcriber must first realise that the human ear is not a

microphone, which might lead to misinterpretation. That is, people should always receive rather than immediately analyse and interpret incoming auditory signals based on their prior experience with them.

The findings may be explained using students' understanding of Phonetic Transcription. It may be attributed mostly to the way students learn and are taught in GE 2 class, as this is one of the topics covered in this subject. The subject's content has been linked with its description and, more importantly, its curriculum aim. Moreover, indirectly, the teacher was successful in conveying the subject's desired content.

Teachers think that because all learners have mastered their first language, they all have the same capacity to acquire a second language. However, some teachers may not have sufficient training to assist their students with pronunciation instruction. A number of scholars have worked to address this issue, asserting and recommending that various factors influence students' pronunciation. Previous research has shown that factors such as native language age, exposure, innate phonetic ability, identity, language ego, motivation and concern for good pronunciation ability, and motivation and concern for good pronunciation ability all appear to have an impact on teaching and learning pronunciation. The items given are instruments that will assist students in their studies (Celce-Murcia, 2015).

Hence, many different English vowels tend to sound the same to many non-native English speakers, according to Ettlinger & Johnson (2009), including qualities in 'bit' and 'beat,' 'bid' and 'bead,' and groups like 'bad,' 'bud,' and 'barred,' which are notoriously problematic for foreign learners of the language. Understanding, hearing, and reproducing distinct vowel characteristics are made easier with phonetics. Unfortunately, the pronunciation part of foreign language learning and teaching is frequently disregarded, leaving pupils deaf to the sounds of their second language (s). Apart from the pronunciation of speech sounds, intonation is an important feature of phonetics that is frequently overlooked in foreign language learning and instruction. Both students and teachers frequently overlook the importance of intonation in conveying meaning and expressing speakers' emotions and attitudes.

Although second language learners have experienced difficulty with some critical sounds in English, especially when they are non-native speakers of the English language, as cited by Ballesteros (2002), it can be aided through constant and formal instruction. The school can teach students to assist this particular dilemma in discourse.

The alphabetic principle and phonics expertise, on the other perspective, are required for students to understand phonological awareness. It can be accomplished through exposure to language and text and time to investigate and experiment with language use, according to constructivist theory and practice guidelines for teaching phonemic awareness (Morrow, Williams & Liu).

According to Collom (2005), the ability to assess sound quality is not a gift or a property of hyperactive imagination; instead, it is a taught talent that can be mastered through example, education, and practice. To put it another way, each student has their own learning style. In order for a skill to be strengthened and shared, it must be expressed and openly discussed. Students must have fun while learning in order to practice developing self-confidence since once they have it, they can show the rest of the world that they can do it. Because edification is the means of obtaining the parcel, pupils must perfect their talent before obtaining it.

Teaching and understanding phonetics have always been beneficial. It has traditionally been used in language teaching and speech and language therapy. It now helps with voice technology and, increasingly, forensic science. As previously said, this is the sound we make when we speak and how our mouth organs vibrate (British Association of academic Phoneticians, 2015). Further, communication, according to Stetson (2015), is a collection of audible movements rather than a collection of sounds created by movements. For this dialect to be meaningful, it must be created via action. Phonetics is separated into three categories: speaker, sound, and listener. The speaker is the primary source of sound for the listener to hear.

On the other hand, the level of word decoding ability in terms of spelling through the employment of spelling tests among BS – IT students are specified in Table 4.2. The table shows the students' level of awareness in terms of spelling. This result implies that respondents are considered to have a high level of word decoding ability in terms of spelling, with a total calculated mean of 3.93.

Table 4.2 The Level of Word Decoding Ability as responded by BS – IT Students

Word Decoding Ability	N	SD	Mean	Description
Spelling	95	**0.96**	**3.93**	**High**

Legend:

Range of Means	Descriptive Equivalent
4.5-5.00	*Very High*
3.5-4.49	*High*
2.5-3.49	*Moderate*
1.5-2.49	*Low*
1-1.49	*Very Low*

The findings can be related to the students' knowledge of sounds-words relationships. The students can readily translate the sound combinations into words. They have primarily attained and maintained the appropriate level of awareness of sound representation. As a result, they are competent spellers who have been influenced by their writing activities, which have increased their knowledge of the subject.

Hempenstall (2011) summarised the previous remark by stating that the written word is merely a technique of institutionalising the sound qualities of spoken symbols or sounds. The latter highlighted how a child must understand the logic of the writing system and, as a prerequisite, the logic of oral creation in order to decipher written words. Students must first generate the sound before recognising its written sign.

Moreover, the stated indicator competent speller approximately happens at 10 years old and above. It suggests that, concerning spelling, a student at a good level is working with the years 6 and more in school (the State of South Australia, 2013). Thus, as implied in the results and findings of the study, the respondents maintained that quality as they are expected to have this ability in spelling (Gunderson, 2014).

The result is supported by the State of South Australia (2013), which suggested how to spell sound moderately. It states that sophomore students should be engaged in learning vocabulary strategies among their lesson instructions. In any unit of work, it is essential that all teachers define the appropriate terminology that students must know and utilise. Furthermore, teachers should urge students to keep a list of current words and a vocabulary glossary.

Additionally, according to Archer & Hughes (2011), decoding is the capacity to use letter-sound (phoneme-grapheme) relationships and structural factors to determine the pronunciation of unknown words. She underlined in her study that decoding is closely tied to comprehension and that no comprehension approach is powerful enough to compensate for a student's inability to read the words. The most considerable discrepancies between high-performing and poorly performing learners are due to inadequate word recognition skills. She also mentioned that the capacity to decipher multisyllabic words is complicated for older struggling readers.

Students must use their attention skills in order to decipher words correctly. In order to form a meaningful word, pupils must be able to discern the salient or key elements of letters and words while matching sounds (phonemes) to symbols (letters). Students must constantly check their work and self-monitor while reading to ensure that the sounds they are mixing and the words they are revealing are meaningful. Word decoding determines the letter sequence in a word and remembers that information while combining sounds to produce a meaningful word. Active working memory aids a student's capacity to maintain numerous letters sounds together on a 'thinking counter space.' Decoding words necessitates the application of analytical skills to a word's phonological (sound) and structural (symbol) properties (All Kinds of Minds, 2015).

In written language, spelling refers to the selection and arrangement of letters that make up words. It is a symphony of distinct sounds that come together to produce a recognisable word. To spell, one must understand how letters are represented separately, organised, and linked to produce entire sounds (Norquist, 2021). However, several English spellings in which the letters used to write them do not adequately represent the sounds. It is due to the fact that English is not a phonetic language, which means that most English sounds have different spellings. These sounds, like vowel sounds, are important and difficult to spell, owing to the fact that standard American English has at least fourteen vowel sounds (Oliver, 2021).

Thus, with the results being stated, according to Gagen (2013), the letters of the word follow a phonemic approach to spelling, in which students base their orthographic structure on transferring the sounds from spoken word to print. He also highlights that as students learn to 'spell' words via phonemic processing, their spelling ability improves gradually. There are certain English words that are spelt differently than how they sound. These terms are crucial and confounding to second language learners, making them difficult to spell. Furthermore, some English words have a well-established symbol-sound link that is inconsistent. He also acknowledged that spelling is one of the key sub-skills of efficient written communication in the English language system. Both the reading and writing processes rely on it. He also revealed that pupils' how-to-spell is the right written representation of their language.

Similarly, Carreker (2010) stated that kids require sufficient information to recognise spelling patterns. She claimed that in order to achieve the goal of spelling

education, pupils must be more aware of the sounds in words and the frequently repeated patterns that spell those sounds. It is necessary to teach reliable spelling patterns. Students learn about the origins of words, which enhances their learning. In this approach, the process of spelling out words is not just memorised but also follows a pattern to improve spelling competence.

Also, according to Johnston, Ivey & Faulkner (2011), learning the rules for spelling out important sound symbols may increase pupils' ability to spell, but teaching them in isolation is insufficient. He believes that understanding the underlying words and how they are altered is critical. He also mentioned that students' lack of awareness of simple one-to-one letter/sound correspondences in words, as well as apparent exceptions to spelling rules, contribute to spelling errors. As a result, it is important to recognise that students cannot learn good spelling habits without explicit instruction (Li & Chen, 2016).

As a result, phonological awareness encompasses both spelling skills and a high level of knowledge of essential sounds in English, confirming Sadoski and Paivio's connectionist theory (2000). In order to understand regular and irregularly spelt words, the Connectionist model emphasises the importance of phonological awareness, as well as orthographic and semantic information. The development of word recognition is also dependent on phonology. As a result, phonological awareness has a significant impact on students' spelling abilities.

Table 4.3 The Significant Relationship between Phonemic Awareness and Word Decoding Ability

	SD	**Mean**	**r-value**	ρ**-value**	**Description** α **= 0.05**
Phonemic Awareness	**0.85**	**3.66**			
Word Decoding Ability	**0.96**	**3.93**			
			0.51	**8.59^{-09}**	**Ho is rejected**

Table 4.3 shows the relationship between the variables, Phonemic Awareness and Word Decoding Ability among BS - IT students at the University of Mindanao Tagum College. Based on the given data, it has a relationship value of 0.51. In contrast, its significance has a value of 0.0000000859, which means that Phonemic Awareness has a significant relationship to Word Decoding Ability. With that, the null hypothesis that claims no significant relationship between the said variables is hereby rejected. Results can be simplified that Phonemic Awareness does count as a major contributing factor to the Word Decoding Ability of the BS – IT students.

4.1 Significant Relationship between Phonemic Awareness and Word Decoding Ability

The r-value of 0.51 implicates a positive correlation between Phonemic Awareness and Word Decoding Ability. It further explains that 51% of the Phonemic Awareness affects the Word Decoding Ability of the respondents. The remaining 49% can be explained by other factors not covered explicitly in the study.

This result was further established by Cornwall and MacDonald and Cornwall (2014). Their research also indicated that phonemic awareness was a significant factor in students' word identification and spelling skills. In assisting the students in identifying the word and how to spell it, there is a need to be aware of what phonology is and how it plays along the process.

In light of the findings, Apel and Masterson (2001) stated that evaluating students' phonemic awareness and reading abilities is critical in determining their spelling ability. The findings of this study show that to help students enhance their spelling skills, specific metrics of phonemic awareness (sound-to-letter problems) and reading ability should be detected in their college endeavours.

Spelling, on the other hand, is a language skill that is the visual depiction of spoken language and relies on one's knowledge of the letter-sound, morphological, and syntax structure of the English language, as Arndt (2010) discovered in her study of factors affecting the development of spelling at the teacher, student, and world level.

Phonemic awareness has been shown to be a predictor of word decoding even in early elementary school. Because spelling errors are often phonetically accurate, there is a significant link between phonemic awareness and spelling ability (Kamhi & Hinton, 2000).

The alphabetic principle and phonics expertise, on the other hand, are required for youngsters to understand phonemic awareness. It can be accomplished through exposure to language and text and time to investigate and experiment with language use. Children should employ curiosity, inquisitiveness, and spontaneity to help them learn, according to constructivist theory and best practices for teaching phonemic awareness (Morrow, Williams & Liu, 2012).

It should be noted that phonics/phonemic awareness training was not used as the sole English program in any studies. The training in the studies examined is meant to be used in addition to conventional English classes, and it is most successful

when given on a regular and discrete basis. Language understanding and communication should be the fundamental goals of early foreign language instruction. Learning phonetic abilities and alphabetic knowledge in English is insufficient to substitute entire language instruction.

Furthermore, rather than focusing primarily on word pronunciation, EFL students' English word reading should be assessed in a multi-faceted manner. Not only does print-pronunciation association not ensure lexical access, but the task also yields incorrect results since rating pronunciation is influenced by a variety of circumstances, including the background of the scorers (Fletcher-Flinn et al., 2014). Both lexical access and word pronunciation should be examined in the future to ensure that the findings are more trustworthy and valid (Shepherd, 2013).

It is insufficient to memorise the sounds that the letters represent if the student is unable to use that information because he is unable to perceive the distinct sounds in a word. If a struggling reader's brain cannot process the various sounds, how can he mix them and recognise the word? The series of sounds does not automatically transform into a complete word for this reader. Similarly, how can a writer guess the spelling of a spoken phrase if he does not "hear" the sounds? Readers and even speakers of the language with phonemic awareness can use phonics to recognise words as they read and to spell words as they write and speak.

Learning to read with comprehension or improving reading skills begins with developing phonemic awareness. It is not a goal in and of itself. When learners have enough ability to manipulate sounds to enable them to use phonics in reading and spelling, we teach phonemic awareness when and for as long as they need it. We also have to teach phonemic awareness with phonics and other reading abilities because the skills are mutually reinforcing. In fact, studies with youngsters have demonstrated that teaching phonemic awareness using letters is more effective than teaching it through oral practice alone. This approach to phonemic awareness is technically phonics training, but if the primary focus of the activities is on manipulating the sounds, they can also be thought of as phonemic awareness development (NICHD, 2000, p. 2-34; Kruidenier, 2002).

5. Discussion

The current study looked at phonemic awareness as a predictor of word decoding ability among University of Mindanao Tagum College BS-IT students. In order to accomplish this, the researcher established the following objectives:

- To describe the level of phonemic awareness of the BS-IT Students in terms of: Critical Sounds; Phonetics
- To describe the level of decoding ability of BS-IT students.
- To identify if there is a significant relationship between phonemic awareness and word decoding ability among BS-IT students at the University of Mindanao Tagum College.

5.1 The Level of Phonemic Awareness of the BS-IT Students

The BS-IT students' level of phonemic awareness in terms of Critical Sounds is 3.73, which indicates that respondents have a high level of awareness of critical sounds when using the Listening test. Specifically, none of the crucial sound outcomes is associated with a low level of awareness. Furthermore, the BS-IT students' degree of awareness of Phonetics is 3.61, indicating that the respondents have a high level of awareness of Phonetics when using the Phonetic Transcription Test. To be more precise, several of the crucial sounds were categorised as mediocre, but none were rated as poor.

It could be attributed to the students' exposure to critical sounds, which are employed and analysed at some point in academic or everyday spoken speech. Students appeared to learn about these sounds, particularly in the GE 2 course and tried their hardest to preserve that knowledge so that it might be used for important communication. It is crucial to understand what is being said with these sounds since, as the name implies, they are crucial, especially for most Filipinos.

As a result, the BS-IT students are so thoroughly influenced by the native Filipinos' native tongue that they frequently interchange similar sounds in words. Furthermore, because of the students' accents, which mismatch the new sounds in English spelling, this area of concern on important sounds is very likely. It could be related to the native Filipino's mother tongue, which frequently interchanges similar sounds in words.

More recently, studies of phonemic awareness training have been published that compare and contrast purely oral language methods to the development of phonemic awareness abilities with techniques that include print engagement throughout the training. These studies suggest that programs that encourage high levels of student dialogue and collaboration with print (for example, through read-aloud, shared reading, and invented spelling) produce the same amount of growth in phonemic awareness abilities as programs that focus solely on oral language instruction. These findings also imply that when there are both interactions with print and explicit attention to phonemic awareness abilities, the greatest influence on phonemic awareness is produced. In other words, the optimal vehicle for growth is engagement with print mixed with conscious attention to sound structure in spoken words.

Although phonemic knowledge is crucial for learning a language, language learning is an unconscious process that requires immersion in an active linguistic context; explicit instruction is not required. The child's language learning system achieves this extraordinary accomplishment by responding to information at the phonemic level without the requirement for cognitive awareness of that level. If the language is written alphabetically, learning to read it requires a specific understanding of the phoneme since, unlike learning a language, learning to read is a more time-consuming process.

Teaching students to read entails various components, one of which is phonemic awareness. Phonological awareness is a subset of phonemic awareness, a subset of metalinguistic awareness (Arrow et al., 2017). Phonemic awareness is concerned with the sounds of the phonemes, which aid decoding and reading abilities. Because children have a hard time breaking down speech into the smallest units of sound, this becomes one of the most challenging aspects of reading (Blachman, Ball, Black, & Tangel, 2000).

In reading education, phonemic awareness instruction is a popular topic. Many people think it is crucial (for example, Carson et al., 2013; Ball & Blachman, 1991; Ukrainetz, 2017). Students that struggle with reading frequently start having challenges at a young age, and the issues often revolve around letter-sound relationships. Teachers must ensure that they evaluate students to determine the specific nature of the problem so that proper instruction may be offered at a young age. It is critical for teachers to understand how phonemic awareness might help students develop their reading skills. Students can overcome their shortcomings and achieve in reading and spelling by introducing phonemic awareness early in their education (Allen-Tamai, 2012; Yeung, 2012).

The importance of phonemic awareness in the language curriculum cannot be overstated. It is just one component of a much bigger puzzle. To help close the gap between at-risk readers, teachers must recognise the importance of early phonemic awareness. Teachers can help their students improve their reading and spelling skills by giving phonemic awareness training. Students are able to comprehend the letter-sound link, which will aid them in decoding as they continue.

5.2 The Level of Word Decoding Ability of the BS-IT Students

The average level of word decoding ability among BS-IT students is 3.93, indicating that the respondents had a high ability to decode transcribed words using the Spelling test. Words with /aʊ/ sounds were proficiently spelt by the respondents for specified reasons, indicating that they had a high level of awareness of the sound. It means that the study's respondents had a hard time detecting critical sounds, which made it difficult for them to recognise other critical sounds. Thus, there is a significant existing deficit in identifying essential sounds.

Students must use their attention skills in order to decipher words correctly. In order to form a comprehensible word, students must be able to discern the salient or vital elements of letters and words while matching sounds (phonemes) to symbols (letters). Students must regularly monitor their self-development and self while reading to ensure that the sounds they are mixing and the words they are revealing are meaningful. Word decoding determines the letter sequence in a word and remembers that information while blending sounds to produce a meaningful word. The ability of a student's active working memory to store numerous letters sound together on a 'thinking counter space' is aided by this skill. Decoding words necessitates the application of analytical skills to a word's phonological (sound) and structural (symbol) properties (All Kinds of Minds, 2015).

According to Klusek et al. (2015) research, word decoding is a critical aspect of learning to read and increasing reading fluency. These abilities include identifying the know the following and sound blends inside a word, comprehending its meaning, understanding the word's role in the sentence, both linguistically and thematically, and comprehending how the word changes when prefixes or suffixes are added. Decoding skills, in other words, are the abilities required to interpret and analyse words when reading. It takes a long time and effort to learn how to decode. It may take a long time for a learner to sound out each individual word or break words down into bits to comprehend the entire term. Decoding skills, on the other hand, are necessary for proficient reading. Reading will become more automatic when students improve their decoding abilities and become more skilled at identifying words. It will allow the student to focus on the meaning rather than the specific words.

Furthermore, the word decoding ability is the capacity to accurately pronounce written words using knowledge of letter-sound correlations, including understanding letter patterns. Students can rapidly recognise known words and figure out words they have not encountered before by understanding these relationships. While some students may be able to figure out some of these relationships on their own, the majority of students will benefit from formal education in this area. As far as phonics is concerned, it is one of the methods for teaching pupils the concepts of letter-sound relationships as well as how to sound out words (WETA Washington, 2015).

Students learn orthographies master decoding more quickly than students learning deep orthographies, according to Kim, Park & Wagner (2014). Poor readers of shallow orthographies, such as Finnish, decode words rather accurately but in a dysfluent manner, whereas poor readers of deep orthographies, such as

English, decode words inaccurately and in a dysfluent manner. It makes sense because words in superficial phonetic symbols can be decoded simply by knowing the sounds of individual letters in the word. However, he claims that accurate decoding of words in deep orthographies necessitates memorising many words that cannot be fully decoded simply by knowing the sounds of the letters. As a result, decoding plays a part in the reading.

The findings revealed that children learning to read in a transparent orthography achieve ceiling levels of word decoding accuracy from the start, while their efficiency scores improve. The first essential processes of learning to read are predicted by early literacy and lexical retrieval and, to a lesser extent, verbal and visual short-term memory. Individual differences in the development of early word decoding demonstrate a high level of consistency over time.

Thus, integrating content between decoding and text reading exercises may be one approach to encourage decoding gains to be transferred to comprehension benefits. Teaching assistant text reading exercises may also facilitate the transfer of decoding gains to comprehension gains by assisting youngsters in orchestrating their efforts to decode words as well as comprehend message content effectively. The Vocabulary Building intervention incorporates decoding and text reading, making it an ideal test case for measuring improvements in reading comprehension assessments.

Word decoding skills that are efficient improve reading comprehension and help to build some forms of phonological awareness. Failure to participate in full alphabetic decoding will result in poorer improvement in each of the reading abilities listed. Reading and speaking both require decoding. It enables pupils to decipher most words they have heard but never seen written, as well as sound out words they have never heard before. All other reading instruction—fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension—is built on the foundation of decoding ability.

5.3 The Significant Relationship between Phonemic Awareness and Word Decoding Ability

The relationship between Phonemic Awareness and Word Decoding Ability of BS-IT students at the University of Mindanao Tagum College has **r** (95) = 0.50, **ρ** (0.0000000859) < 0.05. It indicates that the given variables have a significant relationship, thereby rejecting the study's null hypothesis.

Since the instructions are included in most English classes, particularly in GE 2, it may be assumed that the knowledge has helped them improve their decoding skills. Indeed, the knowledge they obtained in English classes helped them improve their spelling skills in one way or another. Furthermore, as a communicator and an individual, this is a crucial ability.

MacDonald & Cornwall (1995) went on to confirm this discussion based on their research as well. In addition, phonemic awareness was found to be a significant effect on students' word identification and spelling abilities. To help students identify the word and spell it correctly, they must first understand phonology and how this role in the process is vital. This phonemic awareness has been a contributing factor and predictor of the word decoding ability of the BS-IT students.

Being able to discern the sounds of language is a necessary first step for a reader and speaker. According to Phillips et al. (2012), decoding text in an alphabetic writing system entail converting units of print (graphemes) to units of sounds (phonemes). According to their research, a solid consensus has formed over the last two decades on the relevance of phonological awareness in the acquisition of reading and spelling in alphabetic language. If the learner recognises the letter's sound, they will be able to read it. To put it another way, phonemic awareness is crucial in deciphering a single word. Phonemic awareness aids children in combining letter-sound combinations to form words (Thompson et al., 2015).

Reading requires phonological awareness since written words match spoken words. To get from a printed word to a spoken word (reading) or a spoken word to a written word (spelling), readers and speakers must be aware of the speech sounds that letters and letter combinations represent (Moats, 2010). To learn letter-sound correspondences, mix sounds together to decipher a word, and "map" words into long-term sight vocabulary, ones must be aware of the sounds in spoken language (Kilpatrick, 2015).

Although academic careers have been built on discussing seemingly minor aspects of models that can account for a student's performance when presented with words and nonwords, phonemic decoding is undeniably the foundation upon which fluent single word reading and fluent reading of the connected text for comprehension are built. Building appropriate internal word representations and spelling patterns requires effective phonological decoding. A considerable sight word vocabulary is developed through a combination of phonemic translation and rigorous orthographic analysis, allowing for fluent reading of related text and understanding. As a result, examining phonological decoding at the word level is an important aspect of reading and oral evaluation.

The precise nature of the fundamental language impairment that manifests as inadequate phonemic awareness and phonological decoding is unknown at this time, but it is being researched. One possibility is a slight problem with creating appropriate phonological representations, which leads to phonological awareness and decoding problems. When

l2 learners fall behind, they are subjected to reading training tailored for typical readers, which offers little help until they are finally identified as having a reading difficulty and receive a more appropriate education. As a result, even if the ultimate goal of reading is to comprehend the meaning of the text, assessing word-level reading in the form of phonological decoding skills and sight word knowledge is critical.

Students must increase their phonemic awareness to the point of automaticity in order to read fluently, freeing up their brain energy to readily absorb what they are reading. Students rely on poor decoding methods and coping tactics like memorisation instead of safeguarding their sound system by learning to recall the 44 sounds of the English language automatically. These abilities may allow kids to begin reading, but as texts become more complicated, students' comprehension begins to deteriorate since it becomes too difficult to comprehend what they are reading while they are focused on laboriously decoding every word. If we want pupils to master the 44 sounds, we need to provide them with repeated auditory exposure to each one and teach them how to distinguish each sound quickly from another sound.

Students learn to perceive and regulate sounds as well as grasp that spoken words are made up of a sequence of spoken sounds through phonemic awareness. Because of this order to produce high quality, students who were able to recognise phonemes quickly could read more smoothly, according to my research. Students who took longer to absorb phonemes had trouble understanding what was being spoken. It looked like decoding the words took up too much time, leaving less time for deciphering what was spoken and read.

6. Conclusion

Critical Sounds appeared to be critical for the respondents since they attained an overall high awareness in a Listening test of the BS – IT students. This means that students are significantly affected by these problems many times. This connotes that student sometimes struggles with critical sounds, especially those foreign ones with no alternative interpretation to their native language.

Further, Students on Critical Sounds, through the conduct of the Listening test, seemed to have higher awareness than Phonetics, which used the Phonetic Transcription test. However, despite this, the awareness of respondents on Phonetics is even acceptable as they attained high awareness of this indicator. Also, compared to the Word Decoding ability, the respondents appeared to be of high level. Hence, respondents have an average ability to translate transcribed words into their American Standard English spelling.

With this, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. It is indeed of high possibility to claim that they have very high significance with each other. It would generally imply that, certainly, Phonemic Awareness is a predictor of BS – IT students' Word Decoding Ability.

Phonemic awareness is a fundamental skill that must be developed before learning decoding skills. English is an alphanumeric language, which implies that symbols (letters) reflect the sounds of spoken words in written English. When "sounding out" a word, however, we must be able to (1) know and generate the sounds that the letters represent, as well as (2) blend those distinct sounds as we hear them in order, and (3) identify the word. Step 1, which is at the foundation of the phonics system, is frequently the focus of early literacy instruction. We believe that teaching novices the sounds of the letters are all they require. However, for many students, the procedure fails in steps 2 and 3 due to a lack of phonemic awareness.

The findings of this systematic review revealed a consistent pattern of phonological decoding and phonemic awareness benefits from phonological-based education. Phonemic awareness is similar to, but not the same as, decoding. Phonemic awareness is solely concerned with spoken sounds. Decoding is the process of connecting letters to the sounds they represent. When we talk about phonics instruction, we are talking about learning how to use letter-sound correlations to recognise words in reading or approximate spelling. Decoding skills, which are heavily reliant on phonemic awareness, are developed through phonics training.

With this, phonetic decoding and sight word knowledge problems can have major effects on the complex process of learning to read, especially as pupils are forced to read increasingly challenging literature with each successive grade level. Years of academic failure lead to alienation from school and demotivation for many elderly struggle readers and speakers who never learned to "break the code." As a result, it is vital to test and identify students who are still struggling with core phonological decoding skills. Nonword and sight word evaluations effectively isolate these skills, ensuring that older, struggling readers and speakers with decoding issues receive the targeted, intense instruction they require to get back on track to successful comprehension. Thus, it is highly recommended to get the awareness of phonemics in order to decode words properly through constant practice and the assistance of the teachers.

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