

**THE APPLICATION OF THE PHONICS APPROACH IN BILINGUAL LEARNING : IMPROVE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF SPELLING NAMES USING THE
ENGLISH ALPHABET**

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ABSTRACT

Bilingual learning in elementary schools requires strategies that can help students understand the differences in letter sounds between their first language and English. One approach that is widely used for early reading instruction is phonics, which emphasizes the relationship between letters and sounds. This study aims to determine the extent to which the phonics approach can improve students' ability to spell their own names using the English alphabet. The study used a quantitative method with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. A total of 19 third-grade students from Pelangi Private Elementary School were sampled for the study. The results showed a significant improvement in students' abilities after being taught phonics. The average post-test scores were much higher than the pre-test scores. These findings indicate that the phonics approach can be effectively applied in bilingual learning for early childhood students.

Keyword : Bilingual, Phoenic Approach, Alphabet

Article History

Received: November 2025
Reviewed: November 2025
Published: November 2025

Plagiarism Checker No 668
Prefix DOI: Prefix DOI:
10.8734/sindoro.v1i2.360
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Publish by: SINDORO



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INTRODUCTION

English is increasingly being introduced at the elementary school level as a foundation for recognizing global languages from an early age. At this stage, students are usually still in the early stages of reading development, so they need a simple, structured, and easy-to-understand approach. One strategy that is considered appropriate for elementary school-aged children is the phonics approach, which focuses on the relationship between letters and sounds.

For Indonesian students, the difference between the sounds of letters in Indonesian and English is often a source of confusion. For example, the letter A in Indonesian is pronounced "a," but in English it is pronounced "ey." To help overcome this confusion, spelling names using the English alphabet is a good first step. Students' names are the part of themselves that is closest to their identity, so the learning process becomes more meaningful and interesting.

Bilingual learning that combines the phonics approach is expected to strengthen students' phonological abilities. Therefore, this research is important so that teachers can determine whether the phonics approach is effective when applied in a bilingual context to

improve students' understanding of English letter sounds, especially when spelling their own names.

In addition to the importance of phonological understanding in bilingual learning, current developments in basic education emphasize the importance of sound-based approaches as the foundation of literacy. The systematic application of phonics can help students recognize English letter sound patterns more quickly and reduce interlanguage transfer errors (Anderson & Chen, 2021). This is particularly relevant in the context of Indonesian students, who often rely on Indonesian alphabet pronunciation patterns when learning English.

Bilingual learning that incorporates phonics is also part of efforts to improve early literacy readiness, especially for students who are in the early stages of reading. Another study states that activities closely related to students' identities—such as spelling their own names—can increase students' motivation, focus, and memory retention of letter sounds (Martínez & Lopez, 2022). Thus, this study aims not only to determine learning outcomes but also to provide pedagogical references regarding effective phonological strategies in the context of bilingualism in elementary schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative method with a one-group pre-test-post-test design. This design was used to observe differences in students' abilities before and after being given phonics instruction.

1. Research Subjects

The sample consisted of 19 third-grade elementary school students who had never received formal phonics instruction.

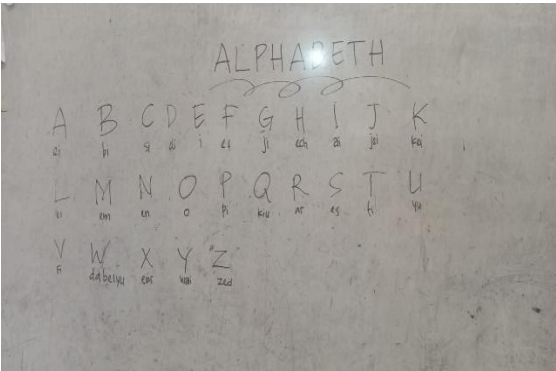
2. Research Procedure

- **Pre-test**

Students were asked to spell the alphabet in English without the help of a teacher. Common errors that emerged were inaccuracies in pronouncing the sounds of the alphabet and a lack of knowledge about how to read the alphabet correctly in English.

- **Treatment**

The teacher provided basic A-Z phonics instruction, introduced letter sounds (e.g., A = ey, B = bi, C = si), and trained students to spell their own names using the correct letter sounds.



• Post-test

Students were again asked to spell their names using the English alphabet. Researchers recorded the accuracy of the sounds pronounced by students.

3. Data Analysis Techniques

Data was analyzed by comparing students' abilities in the pre-test and post-test. The increase in scores indicates the effectiveness of the phonics approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study assessed students' ability to spell their names using the English alphabet after participating in phonics lessons. The assessment was divided into three categories of ability, namely:

Very Proficient: students are able to write and spell their names correctly in the English alphabet without further guidance from the teacher.

Proficient: students are able to spell and write names in the English alphabet but still need a little guidance to spell correctly.

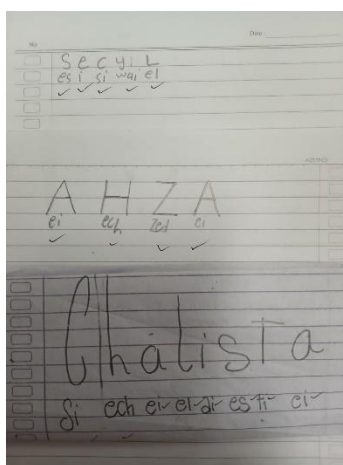
Less Proficient: students still need full guidance from the teacher when spelling and writing names in the English alphabet.

Categories of Ability to Spell Names Using the English Alphabet for Grade 3 Students at Pelangi Elementary School:

No	Nama Siswa	Kemampuan
1	Gia	Very Proficient
2	Chalista	Very Proficient
3	Sechyl	Very Proficient
4	Airish	Very Proficient
5	Bais	Very Proficient
6	Ahza	Very Proficient
7	Zahra	Very Proficient
8	Keiko	Very Proficient
9	Fauzan	Very Proficient
10	Adit	Proficient

11	Zoya	Proficient
12	Jaelani	Proficient
13	Aisyah	Proficient
14	Hilmi	Proficient
15	Zio	Less Proficient
16	Aqila	Less Proficient
17	Arka	Less Proficient
18	Rafa	Less Proficient
19	Rafisqy	Less Proficient

Post-test results for writing and spelling names using the English alphabet for third-grade students at Pelangi Elementary School:



Recapitulation and Persentage

Kategori	Jumlah Siswa	Persentase
Very Proficient	9 people	48%
Proficient	5 people	26%
Less Proficient	5 people	26%

Interpretation of Results

Based on the data in the table, 48% of students were in the Very Proficient category, indicating that they were able to spell names using the English alphabet correctly according to phonics. A total of 26% of students were in the Proficient category, meaning that they understood the concept of phonics but still made a few mistakes in pronouncing certain letters. Meanwhile, 26% of students fall into the Less Proficient category, meaning they still often use Indonesian alphabet pronunciation or make more mistakes in spelling.

Overall, these results show that phonics learning has a positive impact on students' spelling abilities in the context of bilingual learning.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study are in line with the view that phonics is a strong foundation for early reading proficiency. In bilingual learning, phonics not only helps introduce letter sounds,

but also reduces students' confusion about the differences in pronunciation between Indonesian and English.

In spelling name activities, students showed high enthusiasm because the material was directly related to themselves. This makes the learning process more effective. In addition, the phonics approach has been proven to guide students to more consistently associate letters with the correct sounds.

The improvement in ability proves that phonics learning, when taught gradually, can improve spelling accuracy. Thus, this approach can be used as a bilingual learning strategy that is not only suitable for beginner students but also relevant for continuous application in other English language materials.

The improvement in students' abilities after the treatment shows that the phonics approach can overcome the main obstacle in bilingual learning, namely the differences in sound systems between languages. Structured phonics helps students build more consistent sound-letter mapping, so that students can spell and read with more confidence (Rahmawati & Prasetyo, 2023).

In addition, the use of students' names as practice material proved to be relevant. Learning materials related to self-identity can increase students' emotional involvement in the learning process (Kim & Park, 2021). This was also reflected in the enthusiasm of the students during the learning activities.

In line with phonological learning theory, the results of this study also support the view that phonics is not only an introductory reading technique, but also part of the gradual development of bilingual competence. When students become familiar with the sounds of the English alphabet, they can move on to the stage of reading words and sentences more easily (Santos & Rivera, 2020). Therefore, phonics learning can be used as the basis for long-term English language learning at the elementary school level.

CONCLUSION

The application of the phonics approach in bilingual learning has proven to be effective in improving elementary school students' ability to spell names using the English alphabet. The post-test results show a significant improvement compared to the pre-test, indicating that students have a better understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds after participating in phonics lessons. This approach also helps students overcome pronunciation confusion that often arises due to differences in the sound systems between Indonesian and English.

In addition to improving phonological skills, the use of students' names as a medium for practice provides a more personal and engaging learning experience. This has an impact on increasing student motivation and engagement during the learning process. Gradual phonics introduction also helps develop early literacy foundations that are important for advanced reading skills.

Overall, this study shows that the phonics approach can be an effective, sustainable, and relevant strategy to be applied in bilingual learning in elementary schools. This approach

not only improves spelling skills but also strengthens students' readiness to learn English at the next stage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that teachers apply the phonics approach continuously in bilingual learning in the classroom, not only when spelling names but also when introducing new vocabulary and beginning to read. Teachers need to utilize attractive visual and audio learning media so that students can more easily remember the sounds of letters and be able to distinguish them from the sounds of the Indonesian alphabet. Schools are also expected to provide support through the provision of short training or workshops on the application of bilingual-based phonics, so that teachers have a deeper understanding of phonological literacy strategies that are appropriate for student development. Furthermore, future research could develop experimental designs with control groups or broader material coverage to examine the long-term effects of phonics learning on students' reading abilities. This approach has the potential to become a strong foundation for early literacy, so it needs to be continuously evaluated and developed to support the improvement of English language learning quality in elementary schools.

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