

**PHONEMIC AWARENESS AS A TOOL WITHIN A BILINGUAL PROGRAM IN
PRE-KINDER PLANNING**

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ABSTRACT

This research provides an insight into the development of phonemic awareness – PA- in young children. Different research studies have been done on PA in countries, like China and USA. One finding from these research studies is that it is important to do an early intervention with strategies that foster PA in young children, in order to improve the oral production of the L2 learners and prepare them to be successful readers. For this study, a Pre-School course in a private school was selected. The focus was to analyze whether there were or not specific activities in regards to phonemic awareness within the course. To do so, the lesson plan of Pre-Kinder was analyzed to describe the activities and strategies used to establish their relation to PA itself. Some principles to work on this area with preschoolers will be suggested to the School for it to implement the program. Surveys given both to teachers and administrators gave insights of the knowledge they had on the matter of study. Class observations were conducted to gather information on the real practices developed inside the classroom. All of the information was crossed to identify common and divergent arguments to understand the degree of theoretical and practical approach developed at school about PA. The results of this research show that this skill can be approached since Pre-Kinder by using special tasks and training, both for teachers and for students, to promote a conscious phoneme level and future success in the reading process.

Key Words: Phonemic awareness, Bilingualism, Phonics, Phonological awareness, Literacy.

INTRODUCTION

Bilingual education programs are often concerned with developing phonemic awareness into the content and methodology of instruction. This study involves both teachers' and school's interests on this topic.

This work focuses on the important aspects to develop phonemic awareness in young children. While the following pages do not offer an exhaustive or definitive account for developing phonemic awareness in young children, they do offer a perspective to explore what phonemic awareness implies. It may be interesting to focus on the different aspects related to phonemic awareness skill and look for the relationship between this special skill to the teaching and learning process.

In the educational context of learning a second language, working on phonemic awareness is an important area to consider during the language learning process. Yopp (1992) states that phonemic awareness skill requires from the learners a special treatment of speech as an object, focusing the attention on the form of speech and demanding the learners analyze and manipulate the units of speech rather than focusing on meaning.

This research begins with an exploring survey to find out the teacher's point of view about this subject. Because there is a relation between phonemic awareness development and success in reading comprehension, the need of a formal study related to phonemic awareness in Pre-Kinder emerged as a need. The course of the research implied the analysis of different stages of the educational process in Pre-School students; among the activities performed, lesson plan analysis, surveys to both teachers and L2 instruction program administrators and class observations, which will give a more holistic insight of what was being done, in formal terms, about the instruction on phonemic awareness in the target population of study. In this community there is an interest about phonemic awareness because PA is an interesting area in the language learning process and many schools not only in Cali but also in others cities are working with positive results on it.

Consequently, to get a general idea and know more about Phonemic awareness specific aspects, teachers and people around the education field need to face and live an experience through this concrete study.

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nowadays, in the education field, it is very important for some private schools in Colombia to have a successful bilingual program because schools need to face new perspectives that involve a new conception of the world (globalization, connectivity, use of technology, proficiency in different languages, equity and diversity) in order to prepare competent students to act as world citizens, to create meaning and sense during their interactions with others and to understand cultural differences.

In most of the private bilingual schools, Pre-Kinder is the first grade where kids begin the process of learning English as a second language mainly focused on oral development. Therefore it is very important to consider that one of the first things that young learners need to know is related to the language sounds in order to learn “how to pronounce them precisely, how to hear the language well enough to understand, how to speak well to be understood, and in the near future to read the language, to read its literature from literary works to instruction manuals” (Schneider, 1971, p6). In the particular case of the Pre-Kinder of the private bilingual school where this study took place, there is not a formal lesson plan related to how young learners understand that speech is composed of a series of individual sounds, and how teachers should train them to perform the English sounds. That is why through the analysis of the planning elaborated for Pre-Kinder at this school, and the observation of the classes it is possible to find out what activities are related to Phonemic awareness tasks and what other strategies can be implemented in order to look for better results not only in the language learning process but also in the treatment of English sounds.

Some years ago, at the school where this study took place a new curricular area was included in Kinder and in the last course of Pre-School section called “Language Arts”. According to one of the kinder course planning, the purpose of this subject is “to work on auditory discrimination or phonological awareness which is purely processing the sounds and sound patterns in language”. Therefore, beginning readers must first have some understanding that words are composed of sounds (phonemic awareness) rather than conceiving each word as a single indivisible sound stream”. Currently, in the school there is

a teacher in charge of this specific area, who does not have any pedagogical contact with Pre-Kinder.

The present study aims at working on the categorization of Pre-Kinder curriculum activities in terms of how many activities related to phonemic awareness are in it, in order to improve the learning process of English sounds performed by young learners.

Hence, the research question is: In the bilingual program at this private school in Cali, what kind of activities or strategies within the Pre-Kinder lesson planning are related to phonemic awareness tasks?

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To search for activities and strategies related to phonemic awareness development in the Pre-Kinder planning in order to suggest some recommendations leading to strengthen the work within a Pre-School bilingual program.

2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To identify and describe the activities and strategies used in Pre-Kinder lesson plans in the learning of English as a second language.
- ✓ To analyze the teacher's practices to make a contrast between those practices, the information registered in the lesson plans and the required steps to develop phonemic awareness in preschoolers.
- ✓ To establish the relation between phonemic awareness development and the activities or strategies used in the Pre-Kinder English lesson plans.
- ✓ To suggest some recommendations in order to implement activities and strategies in the Pre-Kinder lesson plans to develop phonemic awareness.

3. JUSTIFICATION

It is important for teachers and learners to understand the relevant role of phonemic awareness skill in the Pre-Scholar's language learning process, because according to Schneider (1971) few of language learners are conscious of what is happening to their lips, teeth, tongue, veil and glottis while they speak. They concentrate on expressing their ideas and feelings. But English teachers expect their students to be able to speak English intelligibly. Therefore, to teach the sounds of a language is a very important task not only to recognize and produce sounds, but also to develop phonemic awareness (PA) in order to prepare young learners to read, write and communicate specially in schools that run bilingual education programs. Last summer a group of nine foreign teachers who work at "Capital School" an institute to learn English in Bournemouth, England pointed out that:

"The phonemes of a language are vital to being able to communicate. If you do not know the sounds of a language, you cannot pronounce words and be understood".

"Pronunciation is a key to be understood".

"Sounds affect meaning, fluency and natural speech" (see Annex1).

Yeung and Chan (2013), researchers from the Department of Psychological Studies from the Faculty of Education in Hong Kong, worked on a study that aims to investigate L1 and L2 phonological awareness and oral language proficiency as predictors of English reading among children with Chinese as L1.

Their findings show the important role of phonological awareness at the sub-syllabic levels (rhyme and phoneme) and oral language proficiency in the course of L2 reading development in Chinese ESL learners. The significant contribution of L1 tone awareness to L2 reading, suggests that phonological sensitivity is a general competence that ESL children need to acquire in early years. This finding has significant implications for understanding L2 reading development.

In contrast, other researchers in China, like Shu, Peng and McBride (2008) explored the nature of phonological awareness in Chinese. They found syllable and rhyme awareness

increased gradually and steadily across ages 3-6. In this sense there are some patterns that suggest different influences of age and literacy instruction for different PA levels.

In Colombia, professor Millan (2000), in her study about L2 acquisition in pre-scholars within a bilingual program model, showed that working with texts develop comprehension skills in the young learners within bilingual programs. She found that teaching English as a second language does not affect the cognitive development of the kids. In contrast, kids develop high listening comprehension skills and they are learning to express their feelings, ideas and thoughts, too. She concluded that the pronunciation of English sounds is in process and could be better through the right instruction.

At the private bilingual school where this study took place there are no purposes or a specific area to work on the ability to manipulate individual sounds within words in Pre-Kinder lesson plans. That is why it is interesting to include some recommendations related to this skill in the preschool bilingual program. Furthermore, identifying and describing the activities and strategies used in the current lesson plans will help children not only to learn naturally about the different English language components but also considering more phonological aspects.

To do so, it is important to differentiate concepts like: bilingual, phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, phonics and articulation amongst others which will be explained later in this study. Likewise, it is clue to look for the kind of aspects that can be adapted according to the age of the kids to work on phonemic awareness in Pre-Kinder. Beginning to work early in the aspects mentioned above can guarantee a better language learning process for Pre-scholars and at the same time can improve different features of the bilingual program like: motivation for learning an L2, to have a specific strategy to prepare kids to read before beginning a formal instruction. Because working on phonemic awareness tasks with young learners will give them opportunities to play games, enjoy literacy, live art and to use English during their social interactions in the school context and out, according to their age and the requirements for preschool education.

4. CONTEXT

The school where this study took place was founded on October the 2nd, 1933 in Cali. Throughout the years, the school has educated people inspired in the principles of the Society of Jesus.

At the moment, it has about 1700 students (women and men) learning in a co-educational environment and personalized education. At the school students think, analyze and reflect critically about real life issues assuming an ethical position which implies the respect and disinterested commitment for others. This school has received the Quality Management System certificate, ISSO 90001-IQNET, granted by ICONTEC, a recognition which places the School as an educational institution with high quality standards. In Colombia there are ten educational institutions like this, grouped by an association, with its headquarters in Bogota.

Currently, the school is working to enriching the educational plan, getting ready to face the challenges of globalization. Based on this, it has developed an educational program towards bilingualism with emphasis on: bilingual homeroom teachers, classroom projects in L1 and L2, a partial immersion program (50% in English as an L2) and classes of different subjects in English.

There are 14 courses in Pre-School. In 12 of them, they are having some specific classes related to phonemic awareness. This context has an impact on the relationships that were examined: relationships between the teachers' knowledge of the subject of phonemic awareness and their practices in the classroom.

Working on phonemic awareness since Pre-Kinder constitutes a very important element to enrich the Pre-Kinder planning, because "most children enter Kindergarten with substantial vocabulary and adequate syntax. In addition, they have a sufficient command of most of the phonemes that constitute their language; that is, they can pronounce most sounds clearly" (Singer, 1979). "The aspect of language that the young learner typically lacks is phonemic awareness, an understanding that speech is composed of a series of individual sounds. "Cat" is simply "cat "a furry animal that purrs, young children are

unaware that the spoken utterance “cat” is a word that is made up of a series of sounds /k/ /a/, and /t/” (Adams, 1990). Therefore, in this study the analysis of the Pre-Kinder lesson plan, will be a job that helps to classify the different activities that are related to phonemic awareness in order to bring a tool to train the young learners on this important skill related not only to reading but also to early oral production.

On the other hand, at the school the core of the educational plan is the person as an integral human being. This is why the mission in the school is to accompany the students in their own educational process in which every single activity is lived and carried out with the characteristics of Ignatius of Loyola’s thinking paradigm. The school has worked on enriching its educational plan, getting ready to face the challenges of globalization nowadays. Based on this, it has a bilingualism program with some emphasis, for instance: the emphases in Pre-School are: bilingual homeroom teachers, classroom projects in L1 and L2, a partial immersion program (50% in English as a second language) and new classes of different subjects in English (Physical Education class, Science, Music, and Languages Arts). On the other hand, the bilingual program allows children to use two languages in an appropriate atmosphere, recognizing the importance of the mother tongue in the cognitive, affective and social development; promoting the use of English during the daily activities. In Pre-School, students enjoy and learn in an atmosphere that includes games and the contact with nature, giving a head start to an educational process.

In 2010, in the Pre-School section, the area of Language Arts was included in the bilingual program for Pre-scholars with the purpose of focusing on auditory discrimination or phonological awareness, which is purely processing the sounds and sound patterns in language. Therefore, beginning readers must first have some understanding that words are composed of sounds (phonemic awareness) rather than conceiving each word as a single individual sound stream.

Finally, Adams (2011) highlights that it is important to keep in mind that working on phonemic awareness with Pre-scholars demands a process in which different tasks need to be developed during the L2 learning process and like Cummings (2011) pointed out, it is

appropriate to do an early intervention when kids are 3 or 4 years old, just beginning the first year of school.

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Working on how to develop phonemic awareness in young learners is an interesting area of research, because when kids begin to learn English as a second language within bilingual programs at schools, they need to develop different skills in order to understand the new language and to speak it intelligibly. This big task inspires tremendous respect for the young language learners.

According to Jürgen M. Meisel (2008), parents and educators that had serious doubts about bilingual education thought that the child exposed to more than one language during early developmental phases might be confused linguistically, cognitively, emotionally and possibly morally.

Nowadays, as never before, “people have had to learn a second language, not just as a pleasing past time, but often as a means of obtaining an education or employment” (Ellis, 1997).

Considering the communicative dimension, it is mandatory and very important in educational plans at schools, where teachers are working with young learners, because it refers to the expression of ideas and feelings about different situations or elements around the world. That is why interaction plays a relevant role first in the mother tongue and then in another, in order to develop communicative skills during the language learning process.

In Hong Kong, learning to read is a challenge for children who learn English as a second language (ESL), as they must acquire two very different writing systems, beginning at the age of three. One study “aims to investigate L1 and L2 phonological awareness and oral language as predictors of English reading among children with Chinese as L1. Participants were assessed for English reading, English and Chinese phonological awareness at different levels, and English oral language skills”. (Susanna S. Yeung^{1, 2}, and Carol K. K. Chan², 2013).

As a conclusion, the findings of the study mentioned above show the important role of phonological awareness at the sub-syllabic levels (rhyme and phoneme) and oral language

proficiency in the course of L2 reading development in Chinese ESL learners. These findings have significant implications too for understanding L2 reading development and curriculum development.

Researchers have also focused on models of bilingual education in Pre-School, in Colombia professor Millan (2000) presented two different experiences in two bilingual schools in Cali with Pre-scholars. After studying the two partial and total immersion models related to the acquisition of English as a second language, adopted by the schools A and B in Cali, Millan (2000) made some important conclusions related to the importance of L1 during the acquisition of English as a second language, because children can transfer their L1 skills to L2.

These conclusions are focused on the role of the clear policies about how to teach reading and writing, the motivation that kids can develop to learn the second language through the daily interaction, the use of texts to read and analyze, and how the oral production is observed in the kids that participate in one program or another. Millan (2000) pointed out that the oral production is short, but it is in the process and could be better, and they were beginning to read and write in their own language and some of them in the second one.

Finally, it is pointed out that the teaching of English as a second language is not a negative experience for young learners. On the contrary, it makes a good impact on the child's learning process developing language skills and acquiring different concepts.

5.1 PHONEMIC AWARENESS AND BILINGUALISM

There are a number of variables in the definition of bilingualism which must be specified to better understand the matter. Many authors have given their own definition of bilingualism. For instance: Bloomfield (1935, 55-56 in Baetens Beardsmore. 1982), cited by the professor Millan defined bilingualism as “a native-like control of two languages”. Grosjean (2012) proposes that “bilinguals are those who use two or three languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives”. Other definitions followed from Einar Haugen, (1953)

asserted that bilingualism begins “at the point where the speaker of one language can produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other language”.

Furthermore, the document “*Ser más para servir mejor*” (at school Communication Department Publication, 2008) states that working on bilingualism means to allow children the use of two languages in an appropriate atmosphere, recognizing the importance of the mother tongue in the cognitive, affective and social development: promoting the use of English in a lively way.

5.2 CHILD BILINGUALISM

Systematic investigations of child bilingualism began approximately one hundred years ago with the careful study by Ronjat (1913)...In fact the first surge of publications on language acquisition by psychologist and linguists investigating bilingual children happened during the 1960's.

According to Grosjean's ideas (2012), children become bilingual either by acquiring two languages at the same time (simultaneously) or by acquiring them one after the other (successively).

Further to this, in a classical version developed by Lenneberg (1967), the critical period hypothesis claimed that native competence cannot be attained by mere exposure if the onset of acquisition happens after a certain age. It can be deduced from the critical period hypothesis that one should distinguish between three types of bilingual acquisition: 1) simultaneous acquisition of bilingualism (2L1), if the child begins to acquire two or more languages during the first three or four years of life; 2) child second language (L2) acquisition, if the onset of acquisition of the second or further language happens between ages five and ten; 3) adult L2 acquisition, after the age of ten.

Rod Ellis (1997) in one of his studies points out that it's possible to acquire native speaker competence if learners start very young when their brains are, in some sense, open to language and he realizes that L2 learners bring an enormous amount of knowledge to the task of learning on L2. To start, if they have already learned a language (mother tongue) or

if they are in the process, it can be expected that they draw on this, when they learn an L2. They also possess general knowledge about the world to understand L2 input. Thus, learners possess communicative strategies to use L2 knowledge and it is also possible that learners are equipped with knowledge on how language in general works and that can help students to learn a particular language.

5.3 PHONEMIC AWARENESS AND PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

As it is known, bilingual education programs usually involve a special work about phonemic awareness in some cases through projects, lesson plans or specific areas. Taking into consideration that “a child produces his first words towards the end of his/her first year, yet discrimination of the mother tongue starts at an early age; thus, six-month olds make phonetic distinctions. Studies show that a richer linguistic input from the environment fosters a better development of the relevant skills. If both monolingual and bilingual infants develop in a similar way, the bilingual develops skills which will enable him to distinguish between the two languages. At two months of age the infant is able of recognizing basic features of the mother tongue as distinct from another language. By the age of six months infants are capable of segmenting the vowel continuum in accordance with the language they have been exposed to. Thus, selective attention for speech sounds is either present prenatally or starts in the first days of life and evolves in the first months. Analyzing the perception of phonemes by four-to-eight-year-old infants raised in bilingual (Spanish-English) or monolingual (English) environments, it was found that the bilinguals discriminate better than the monolinguals not only between English and Spanish phonemes, but also between the phonemes of English and those of Czech, a language to which they have never been exposed” (Târnoveanu,2010 page 47).

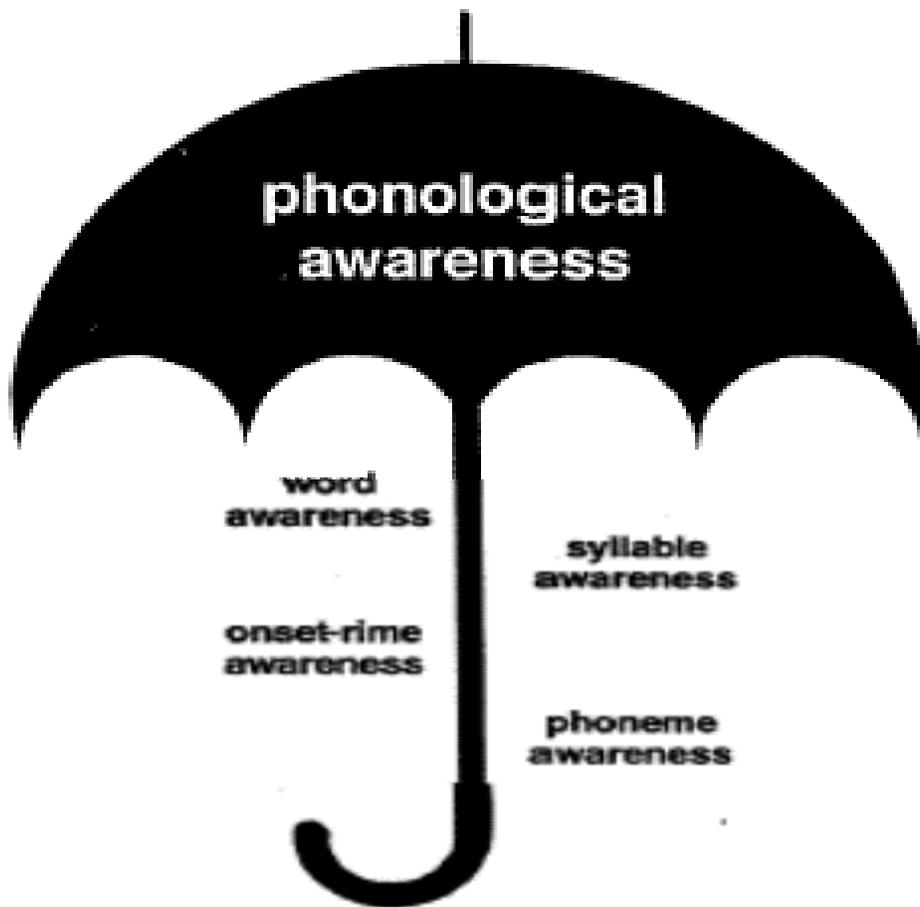
Considering these results, they may be interpreted as possible evidence that a richer linguistic input from the environment fosters a better development of the relevant skills, in our case phonemic discrimination.

Moreover, “phonological awareness (PA) is the conscious awareness of or sensitivity to the sound structure of language. PA includes the ability to detect, match, blend, segment, or otherwise manipulate the sounds in spoken language” (Lane, 2007pag 1).

5.4 LEVELS OF PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Phonological awareness is an umbrella term used to explain several levels of metalinguistic skills. The term is often—but incorrectly—used interchangeably with phonemic awareness. *Phonemic awareness* refers only to the most sophisticated level of phonological awareness.

Figure 1: Levels of Phonological Awareness



Source: Lane, Pullen, Eisele, & Jordan, 2002, page 2

The Word Level – refers to the ability to isolate individual words from the speech flow.

The Syllable Level – refers to the ability to blend and segment chunks within words.

The Onset-Rhyme Level – refers the ability to manipulate intra-syllabic units.

The Phoneme Level – refers the ability to manipulate individual sounds within words.

There is no single definition of phonemic awareness. This term gained popularity in the 1990s, Adams (1990) as an understanding of speech composed of a series of individual sounds; or Ehri, Nunes, Willows & Schuster (2001) as the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in the spoken word. According to Wiley Blevins (2006) phonemic awareness is the understanding or insight that a word is made up of a series of separate sounds. Each of these sounds is called a phoneme. This awareness includes the ability to pick out and manipulate sounds in spoken words. That it is why when children are learning to pronounce the words of a new language, “they must be taught the mechanics of producing them. It is important to train and retrain the speech organs (the muscle of the face, mouth, and throat) and it is equally important for training the ear, because the very first step in learning a language is learning to distinguish its sounds”(Schneider,1971p 6).

5.5 ARTICULATION

Articulation exercises help children attend to the differences in mouth formation when making sounds (see Annex 4 charts).

Phonological awareness was presented above like an umbrella term that includes phonemic awareness or awareness of words at the phoneme level. It also includes an awareness of word units larger than the phoneme. Work on phonemic awareness and phonological awareness implies some task or stages for learners and for teachers. (Blevins, 2006, p35). Phonological awareness includes the following:

- Rhyme units within words
- Beginning and ending sounds
- Syllables within words

- Phoneme, or sounds, within words (phonemic awareness)
- Features of individual phoneme such as how the mouth, tongue, vocal cord, and teeth are used to produce the sound.

According to Adams (1990) there are five basic types of phonemic awareness task or abilities. Each task type includes activities that become progressively more complex. Although some of the tasks can be more accurately labeled phonological awareness task, the goal of most of them is awareness at the phoneme level; in other words an understanding about the smallest units of sound that make up the speech stream. These task types and sample activities include the following:

TASK 1. Rhyme and alliteration

- ✓ Rhyme
- ✓ Alliteration
- ✓ Assonance

TASK 2. Oddity tasks (phoneme categorization)

- ✓ Rhyme
- ✓ Beginning consonants
- ✓ Ending consonants (long vowels)
- ✓ Medial sounds (short vowels)
- ✓ Medial sounds (consonants)

TASK 3. Oral blending

- ✓ Syllables
- ✓ Onset/rhyme
- ✓ Phoneme by phoneme

TASK 4. Oral segmentation (including counting sounds)

- ✓ Syllables
- ✓ Onset/rhyme

- ✓ Phoneme by phoneme (counting sound)

TASK 5. Phoneme Manipulation

- ✓ Initial sound substitution
- ✓ Final sound substitution
- ✓ Vowel substitution
- ✓ Syllable deletion
- ✓ Initial sound delectation
- ✓ Final sound delectation
- ✓ Initial phoneme in a blend deletion
- ✓ Final phoneme in a blend deletion
- ✓ Second phoneme in a blend deletion

The first four phonemic awareness task types should be part of the kindergarten curriculum, although not all children will master all the task types.

And there are other examples of the development sequence for phonological awareness and phonemic awareness, all of them like the ones presented above go from the easiest tasks to the most difficult ones. Furthermore, another concept to consider in this study is that phonological awareness and phonemic awareness are not phonics.

Phonological awareness as it was mentioned before Lane (2007) it is the conscious awareness of or sensitivity to the sound structure of language meanwhile Phonics Blevins (2006) it is the relationships between sounds and their spelling.

It will be clear for teachers that go from one task to another it not very easy that it is why other aspects have to be consider, because when ELLS (English language learners) are in the language learning process, they go through different stages that are important to be taken into consideration. According to Stephen Krashen (1985)most new learners of English will go through a “silent period” which is an interval of time during which they are unable or unwilling to communicate orally in the new language.

The silent period may last for a few days or a year depending on a variety of factors. It occurs before ELLs are ready to produce oral language and is generally referred to as the “pre-production” stage of language learning. After this stage Judie Haynes (2010) presents other important stages of the language learning process. The second one is “early production”. This stage may last up to six months and students will develop a receptive and active vocabulary of about 1000 words. During this stage, students can usually speak in one-word or two-word phrases.

Students can use short language chunks that have been memorized although these chunks may not always be used correctly, the next stage is “speech emergence”, here students have developed a vocabulary of about 3,000 words and can communicate with simple phrases and sentences. They will ask simple questions that may or may not be grammatically correct, such as “May I go to bathroom?” ELLs will also initiate short conversations with classmates.

Students will understand easy stories read in class with the support of pictures. They will also be able to do some content work with support from the teacher. After that the “intermediate fluency” stage appears. English language learners at the intermediate fluency stage have a vocabulary of 6000 active words. They are beginning to use more complex sentences when speaking and writing and are willing to express opinions and share their thoughts. They will ask questions to clarify what they are learning in class. These English language learners will be able to work in grade level math and science classes with some teacher support.

Comprehension of English literature and social studies content is increasing. At this stage, students will use strategies from their native language to learn content in English. The last one is “advanced fluency”, which takes students from 4 to 10 years to achieve cognitive academic language proficiency in a second language. Student at this stage will be near-native in their ability to perform in content area learning. Most ELLs at this stage have been exited from ESL and other support programs. At the beginning of this stage, however, they will need continued support from classroom teachers especially in content areas such as history/social studies and in writing.

5.6 PHONEMIC AWARENESS VS. PHONICS

“Phonics involves the relationships between sounds and written symbols. Phonics deals with learning sound spelling relationships and is associated with print. Phonics is not a specific teaching method. In fact there are many ways to teach it. However, what most types of phonics have in common is that they focus on the teaching of sound spelling relationships between sounds and their spelling, so that a young reader can come up with an approximate pronunciation of a word and then check it against his or her oral vocabulary” (Blevins, 2006, p 8).

Phonemic awareness activities help children learn to distinguish individual sounds or phonemes within words” (Blevins, 2006, p 42). Many children have difficulties with phonics instruction because they have not developed the prerequisite phonemic awareness skills that other children gain through years of exposure to rhymes, and songs and being read to. Phonemic awareness training provides the foundation on which phonics instruction is built (Blevins, 2006, p. 13).

On the other hand, through phonics children learn the relation between the specific printed letters (including combinations of letters) and specific spoken sounds. A teacher asks children to show their phonics knowledge when she/he asks them which letter has the first sound in *bat* or *dog* or the last sound in *car*.

The stages and the clarity of the different concepts related to phonemic awareness facilitate the understanding of this skill for teachers and show the implications for the young learners.

5.7 INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH SOUNDS

5.7.1 English Sounds

According to English teachers’ experience, in order to learn a language it is very important to know about its sounds, and the best way to produce them by practicing, to get familiar with the new language sounds. Working hard on pronunciation at the beginning of the process is a task that every teacher needs to take into consideration especially in Pre-

School when learners are gaining control over the components of the language (phonology, semantics, syntax).

“Most children enter kindergarten with a substantial vocabulary and adequate syntax. In addition, they have a sufficient command of most of the phonemes that constitute their language; that is, they can pronounce most sounds clearly” (Singer, 1979). “The aspect of language that these children typically lack, however, is phonemic awareness, an understanding that speech is composed of a series of individual sounds” (Adams, 1990).

5.7.2 Sound Types

According to Lane (2007), most of the sounds in English can be categorized as either voiced or unvoiced sounds. Understanding the type of sound each letter has helps teachers produce the sound in a way that is useful to children.

Voiced sounds: “voice” occurs when the vocal folds (a.k.a. vocal cords) vibrate. This vibration makes the sound more audible.

Unvoiced sounds: unvoiced sounds are produced without vocal fold vibration. Air moves past still vocal folds during an unvoiced sound.

“If teachers give no explanation to their students of how to perceive and how to reproduce these new sounds, and their only recourse is to repeat basic expressions endlessly, hoping that they will catch the sounds of English. Students will try to imitate the teacher, with varying degrees of success” (Schneider, 1971, p1).

5.8 LITERACY INFLUENCES PHONEMIC AWARENESS

According to Bigelow and Watson (2013), working on literacy with language learners can avoid future problems in the language learning process. Their research has shown that even a small amount of literacy can make a difference in certain oral skills. Adults with some print literacy can manipulate language units as phonemes and syllables, in the oral mode, while adults without print literacy performed significantly worse on these oral skills.

A well-developed work done with adults with and without alphabetic print literacy suggests that literacy engenders phonemic awareness, not the reverse, which is the assumption among most literacy researchers and practitioners who focus on children.

Some phonological awareness activities (e.g. Adrian et. al., 1995) such as word games involving rhymes could be early literacy activities because their use does not require prior literacy.

In other words, in order to benefit from formal reading instruction, (Yoop, 1992) youngsters must have a certain level of phonemic awareness. Reading instruction, in turn, heightens their awareness of language. Thus, phonemic awareness is both a cause and a consequence of learning to read.

6. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 METHOD

According to the different types of research this study was developed using qualitative and descriptive research. Descriptive because this type of method was chosen considering its procedure represents in some way the kind of research that the problem presented in this study requires in terms of description, register analysis and interpretation of the phenomenon during the teacher's practices.

So in order to achieve the aims of this study three analyses were carried out: firstly, on teacher's answers in the surveys about how to develop phonemic awareness in pre-scholars in order to see if they knew what phonemic awareness really mean to apply it; secondly, on teacher's practices in the classroom with the kids to identify how they make an emphasis in tasks that are related to phonemic awareness; and thirdly, through the analysis of the Pre-Kinder lesson plan to identify and describe the activities and strategies used in Pre-Kinder and at the same time analyze them considering what changes can be done to implement activities related to phonemic awareness in order to develop this skill from Pre-Kinder.

Finally, some suggestions will be made to develop phonemic awareness in Pre-Kinder based on the findings from the different sources of information used as input in this research, including the actual proposal but incorporating new ideas to enrich it and get better goals in the learner's language learning process.

6.2 INSTRUMENTS

The instruments for data collection were as follows:

The first element used was surveys. They were revised by some specialist in research professors. The survey was applied first to some teachers to have their first reactions, prior to apply it to the real participants in order to make the necessary adjustments.

The surveys as a source of information were used due to several considerations. Firstly, surveys permit anonymity, since answers are given without names. Thus, the

chance of receiving responses that represent people's beliefs and real knowledge about the phenomenon increases. Secondly, they also allow a person a considerable amount of time to think about his/her answers and they can be given to many persons simultaneously. Also, surveys answers can be interpreted more easily than oral responses.

This is why it was important to design one survey with ten questions to get the information needed from the Pre-School teachers. As Hernández (1991) points out the surveys try to be useful for different kinds of research. Sometimes it includes multiple choices or yes/no questions and in other cases it includes open questions. Ended questions are easy to analyze, but they demand effort from the participants while open questions are useful when there is not too much information about the possible participants' answers, but they are difficult to classify and analyze, and answers of this kind demand more time for the analysis".

The questions need to have specific characteristics:

- a) They have to be clear and comprehensible for the participants.
- b) They have to respect the participants' private life.
- c) They have to refer only to one subject.
- d) The language needs to be adapted to the educational level of the participants.

In this study, the survey used had opened and ended questions. It was sent by mail so there was not any feedback and the participants did not receive any kind of support to answer it.

Other important elements as source of information were the lesson plans. At the school where this study took place, they have a format and some important points to consider according to the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm, which is a method for teaching and learning at Jesuit schools. So when the teachers are going to present the activities to develop during each period of the academic year, they have to plan following some special moments. These moments have a specific order in the format. First, **the justification** of the project and something about the main text that will be the inspiration to choose the activities and other texts to work on the comprehension process itself. Second, the

purposes show what the teachers really want to get during the development of the project and other activities that are related to the book's ideas. Afterwards, it comes with the **didactics**, where the activities are presented according to the steps of the paradigm: Context, Experience, Reflection, Action, and Evaluation. So the paradigm process has key components organized as: **experience**; **reflecting** on that experience; and the **action** that follows from learning. Therefore it is clue to understand the **context** in which teaching and learning take place, and the constant need to **evaluate** the impact and effectiveness of education. To learn more about these stages or moments it is important to explain them a little bit more.

First, **the context** in which the learner finds himself or herself is crucial. This is composed by the real circumstances of a student's life which include family, peers, social situations, the educational institution, politics, economics, cultural climate, the church situation, media and music and so on.

The socio-economic, political and cultural contexts must not be forgotten, as these can seriously affect students' growth as a person before others. Cultures of poverty usually negatively affect expectations about success; oppressive political regimes usually discourage open inquiry.

Prior learning is part of the context. Points of view and insights acquired from earlier study or spontaneously acquired from their environment are part of the context. Their feelings and attitudes regarding the subject matter also form part of the real context for learning.

Experience: the learning experience is expected to move beyond rote knowledge to the development of the more complex learning skills of understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The term "experience" is used to describe any activity in which in addition to a cognitive grasp of the matter being considered, some sensation of an affective nature is registered by the student.

Learners gather and recollect their own experiences in order to understand what they know already in terms of facts, feelings, values, and insights.

Reflection: it is the fundamental key of the paradigm. This is how the student makes the learning experience his/her own and obtains the meaning of the learning experience for him/her and for others.

Reflection means thoughtful reconsideration of subject matter, an experience, an idea, a purpose or a spontaneous reaction, whose significance may be more fully grasped. Reflection is how meaning becomes a part of the human experience. Memory, understanding, imagination and feelings are used to perceive meaning and value in the subject matter, and to discover connections with other forms of knowledge and activity, and to understand its implications in the further search for truth and liberty. It is the component of reflection where meaning and significance arise, and where integration of that meaning translates into competence, conscience and compassion. The student considers what the material means to him/her, and personally appropriates it.

Action: it means the learner's internal state. That is attitudes, priorities, commitments, habits, values, ideals, and growth flowing out into actions for others. When teachers educate considering this paradigm the goal is not merely to educate the mind, but to change the person into a better, more caring human with a developed conscience. Rather, while respecting human freedom, it strives to encourage decision and commitment for the “Magis” which is the best service to God and our sisters and brothers”. It is not meant to end in mere personal satisfaction. It is meant to move the learners to act, for themselves and for others.

Evaluation: periodic evaluation of the learner's growth is essential in the paradigm. It measures more than intellectual success, artistic talent, or athletic ability. Evaluation is to assess those aspects, but it is also to produce an awareness of the real needs, as well as to understand the learner's own moral growth (Reyes, 2013, p 103-141).

Finally, to observe the classes of the teachers, it was created a chart (see Annex 3) to make the register of the activities developed during a period of class and students and teachers participation according to the activities proposed and the materials used.

6.3 PARTICIPANTS

With respect to the participants, there are different aspects to keep in mind:

There are two Pre-Kinders in the school (Pre-Kinder A and Pre-Kinder B) with eighteen kids in each classroom. Kids come from small nursery schools or from home without a formal L2 exposition. According to the information given by the families at the beginning of the school year during the enrollment, form they are stratum 4 or 5.

The activities analyzed for this study were taken from Pre-Kinder B planning during 2014-2015 academic year where there are 18 students (8 female and 10 male).For both courses there is an English homeroom teacher who has a diploma in Modern Languages and experience working with Pre-Scholars in the languages teaching area. She plans the activities for both courses following the guidelines established by the school and puts them into practice in the classroom. There is a Spanish teacher with a degree in Pre-School education and experience working with Pre-Scholars. She prepares the Spanish activities for both courses and puts them in to practice too, according to a special schedule in order to respond to the partial immersion program established in Pre-School (50% in English as an L2). But other English teachers in the Pre-School section from Kinder answered the survey and were observed to facilitate the research process in order to do a formal analysis of the findings according to the objectives of the study. Another participant was the Language Arts Teacher, a bilingual teacher and who has been working at school for the last three years.

The following tables show the information gathered:

Table 1:

Phonemic awareness Related to Class Activities Performed by the Teacher and the Students in Language Arts Class in Kindergarden

ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PHONEMIC AWARENESS	RESOURCES
Activities performed by the teacher.	-Talks with the kids in English and asks some questions to give the class instructions, sings songs using a exaggerate pronunciation to catch students' attention and encourages them to repeat. -Practices a tongue twister. First she presents the model and then encourages the kids to repeat.	The teachers' body movements. Board, flash cards with the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The teacher helps kids with the pronunciation, making and emphasis in the position of the lips. -The teacher review a rhyme worked in other classes. ‘Hey, diddle, diddle’ and ask questions about the words with the same ending sound (moon, balloon...). 	<p>pictures and the words.</p> <p>A poster with the rhyme and the end sounds underling.</p>
Activities performed by the students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Kids sitting on the floor sing the songs and pay attention to the teacher movements. -Repeat and practice the tongue twister in groups paying attention to the teacher’s mouth. -kids participate individually repeating the tongue twister and showing comprehension. -Kids answer questions and sing the song. 	<p>A poster with a tongue twister on it.</p>

Source: The Author

Table 2:

Phonemic awareness Related to Class Activities Performed by the Teacher and the Students in English Class in Kindergarden

ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PHONEMIC AWARENESS	RESOURCES
Activities performed by the teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The teacher uses rhymes to catch students’ attention. -The teacher explains the daily plan saying sentences that kids complete during the interaction. -The teacher reads the story following the sentences with the fingers to show where she is reading. -The teacher speaks in front of the kids. -The teacher asks questions to analyze the pictures of the story. 	<p>Board, rhymes, big book of the story.</p>
Activities performed by the students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students follow the teacher’s instructions. -Students participate during the daily plan completing sentences and answering questions. -Students repeat and follow the rhyme, some of them look at the teacher, other repeat withouth to look at the teacher. -Kids repeat and complete sentences during the reading time. -They show comprehension about the pictures’ description. -Kids ask questions about the words meaning and they show interest in the activities. 	<p>Student’s book.</p>

Source: The Author

With the interest of getting more information about the phenomenon studied an interview was conducted to the English Area Coordinator at the School. The interview was conducted in English and it was recorded (see Annex 5).

Finally, to describe the activities presented in the lesson plans it was necessary to make a table to have not only a qualitative information input, but also a quantitative one about the activities presented in the planning, and the strategies used by the teachers to put

the lesson plan into practice with the kids. To make this description some measures about the activities related to phonemic awareness within the planning were carried out.

The following tables show the information gathered.

Table 3:
Language Arts. Lesson Plan activities.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS (PA) ACTIVITIES ¹	LANGUAGE ARTS LESSON PLAN ACTIVITIES	WEEK	PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVITIES PER SPECIFIC PA TASK.
RHYME	-Song: Good Morning.	1	5/33x100=15 %
	-Game: Same sounds jars.	3	
	-Game: “Odd one out”		
	-Learn the Rhyme: Hey, Diddle, diddle.	3	
	-Watch the video: Hey, Diddle, diddle, listen to and repeat.	6	
	-Dance with the video according to what they listen to.	10	
PICTURE NAMING	-Sounds lottery.	2	4/33x100= 12 %
	-Game: Fly swatter.		
	-Game: Guess who?	3	
	-Worksheet (environmental sounds).		
	-Name pictures of the “Hey diddle, diddle” rhyme.	7	
-Game: Memory game.	7		
ALLITERATION	-Repeating patterns (clap, clap, slap, slap...).	2	3/33x100= 9%
	-Worksheet. Draw the sequence of the Rhyme.	3	
	-Worksheet, find the right pattern(group work)	6	
PHONEME CATEGORIZATION	-Which words end with the same sound “moon, spoon, balloon” or “diddle, fiddle, middle”.	5	1/33x100= 3%

Source: The Author

¹ Number of activities per lesson plan: 33 - 32

Table 4:

Pre-Kinder Lesson Plan Analysis. Lesson Plan II. "We like to Be Together"

PHONEMIC AWARENESS (PA) ACTIVITIES	PRE-KINDER LESSON PLAN ACTIVITIES	WEEKS	PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVITIES PER SPECIFIC PA TASK
Rhyme	Prayer: Thanks God	1	5/45x100= 11%
	Practice and learn special words (sing, everything, sweet, eat)	3	
	-Calendar Practice. Practice and learn the days of the week, through a song: the days of the week	2	
	-Chant: "Hurray is thanks giving day"	3	
	-Christmas carols	5	
Picture Naming	-Name pictures about the house	5	7/45x100=15%
	-Oral practice about family, using flash cards	2	
	-Video about Christmas, to practice vocabulary and expressions	3	
	-Games: "Handkerchief" "Fly vocabulary" Practice vocabulary and expressions	7	
	-Introduce the parts of the house. Practice vocabulary and expressions	7	
	-Game: "Guess the action" play and say	8	
	-Valentine's poem. Listen and practice	8	
-Play Lottery to practice family vocabulary	9		
Alliteration	Play with the title of the books. How many words do you listen? What is the first one?	4	1/45x100= 2%

Source: The Author

The percentages show that the activities on PA represent at the most no more than 15% of the total of the activities.

6.4 STAGES OF THIS STUDY

The table below describes the stages that were followed throughout this research

Table 5:
Stages of the Current Research

ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE	DATE
Establishing objectives to solve a situation related to phonemic awareness in preschool section	Phonemic awareness is important in the language learning process of the beginners. That is why it is a good idea to develop a research.	Researcher	April/2014
Looking for some answers about the importance of the phonemic awareness in the language learning process (Exploration)	A survey was applied to some foreign teachers in a native speaker environment (England)	Researcher	July/2014
Problem and objectives presentation	General and specific objectives were established to develop the research about how to develop phonemic awareness in Pre-Kinder.	Researcher	December/2014
Framework proposal	After a literature review a framework was presented.	Researcher	March/2015
Data collecting	Through a survey and some class observations the data were collected.	Researcher	March and April/2015
Data Analysis	Three aspects: class observations, surveys results, and lesson plans activities are analyzed using a correlational technique.	Researcher	May-June/2015
Written final thesis Report	Conclusions and principles to implement in Pre-Kinder are presented as a suggestion.	Researcher	June/2015

Source: The Author

7. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This section presents the analysis of the data gathered from the surveys, class observations and Pre-Kinder lesson plan.

According to the teacher's survey answers, it was found that to develop phonemic awareness in preschoolers; teachers can use rhymes, songs, and work on beginning and ending sounds. Furthermore, they said that the rhymes, songs, games, poems or chants can be related to the projects' subjects of each group in order to work on comprehension too. They suggest using different material like: videos, flash cards, books, posters, environmental sounds, and music patterns in order to help kids to understand, practice and do the tasks to develop phonemic awareness. They consider that work on pronunciation with preschoolers is a very relevant part of the L2 learning process; two teachers mentioned the importance of the speech organs like Schneider (1971) pointed out, in infancy; the Spanish speaker learned to control his muscles for a specific set of meaningful sounds and thus developed precise muscular habits. In English learners need to be train to assume new positions of muscle, lips, tongue, and glottis to develop the necessary muscular habits for speaking English.

However, it was found that although the surveyed teachers had a vague idea of phonemic awareness, there was not a systematic application of activities related to phonemic awareness itself. It could not be concluded whether the reason this happened was because of an unknown of the subject itself or because it was not considered important for the teachers in their daily practices. As set by Adams (1990), the phonemic awareness is a gradual process for children to perform, due to the immense amount of factors included, such as phonemic organs, the educational context and the flexibility of the process, according to the children's likes and needs.

Now, with regards to the teacher who has experience in this phenomenon of Phonemic awareness studied at school, she includes in her answers that there are some special activities to work with each group, according to their ages and their L2 learning process. Thus, there is a systematic application of phonemic awareness within the class. The

environment in class is relaxed, and the class dynamics lead to the use of correction as an element for the children's performance in L2. There is a use of environmental sounds as warm-ups for the class.

The English area coordinator points out that the school is interested in implementing phonemic awareness in the lesson plans. However, there is a concern about the extreme specialization in phonemic awareness and losing the holistic language posture the school has. It means that by applying a phonemic awareness program within the school, the language instruction could be constrained to the specialization of the language pronunciation, vocabulary and others, implied by the phonemic awareness, without significance or integrating the L2 language skills.

During the class observation, it was found that teachers work with rhymes, read and analyze stories, sing songs, but there isn't a special moment to focus on the aspects related to phonemic awareness tasks (rhyming, alliteration, and oddity task (with pictures clues). The teachers observed and their students do different things that can make an impact on the phonemic awareness development, for instance: teachers speak in English all the time, repeat difficult words, help kids to pronounce them, and encourage kids to use English to interact in the preschool context, and during the analysis of the texts the teachers ask questions to work on comprehension. The kids pay attention to the teachers to repeat the words, ask some questions about the meaning of the words, participate during the activities showing interest and comprehension, and trying to use English.

In contrast to this, in the Language Arts class students participate one by one focus on phonemic awareness activities (rhyming with posters, flash cards, videos, etc...) and paying attention to the teacher's speech organs during the interactions, to produce the new English sounds, and follow the rhymes or the songs considering the sounds practiced with the teacher (This class was recorded).

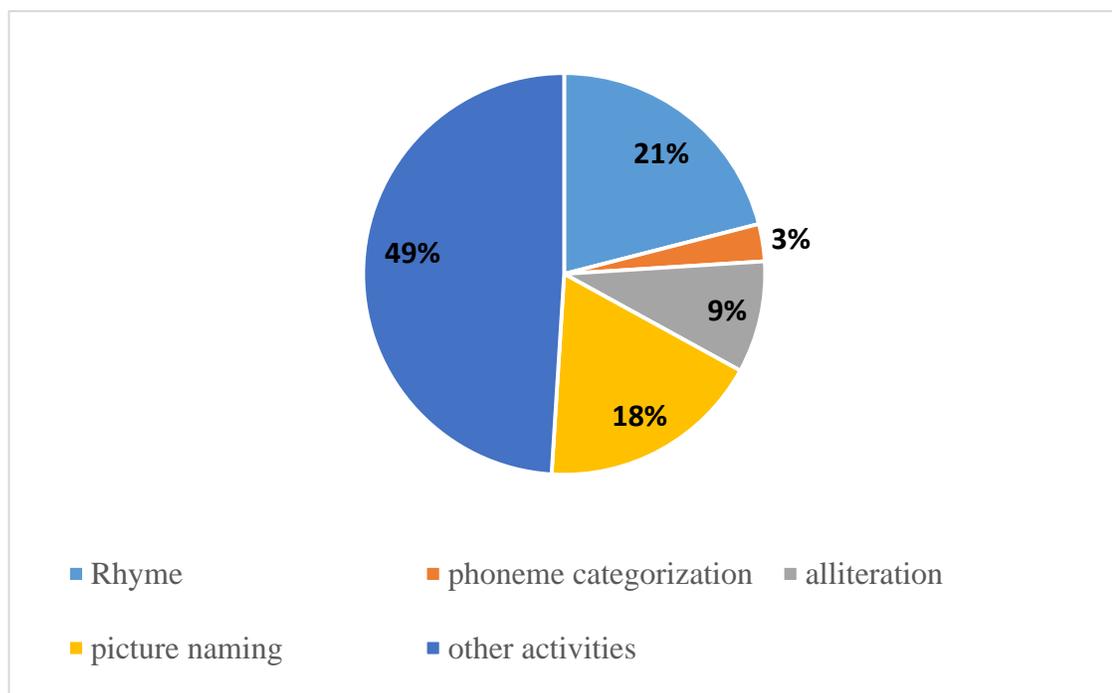
According to the findings, the practices in the classroom have elements related to phonemic awareness, but they have different purposes (see table 2). The elements need to be

categorized according to the phonemic awareness specific tasks, used consciously with a purpose, and present to the kids following a sequence.

With regards to the lesson plans for the Language Arts class, 21% of the activities used can develop rhyme task; 18% of the activities develop picture naming tasks; 9% of the activities develop alliteration task; and 3% of the activities work on phoneme categorization.

According to Adams (1990) all of them are basic types of phoneme awareness tasks or abilities. Another important aspect found on the lesson is that there were some special activities that beginner language learners can do to develop phonemic awareness, with a sense of playfulness and fun as Yoop (1992) pointed out in her study.

Figure 2: Percentage of PA per task in language art lesson plan

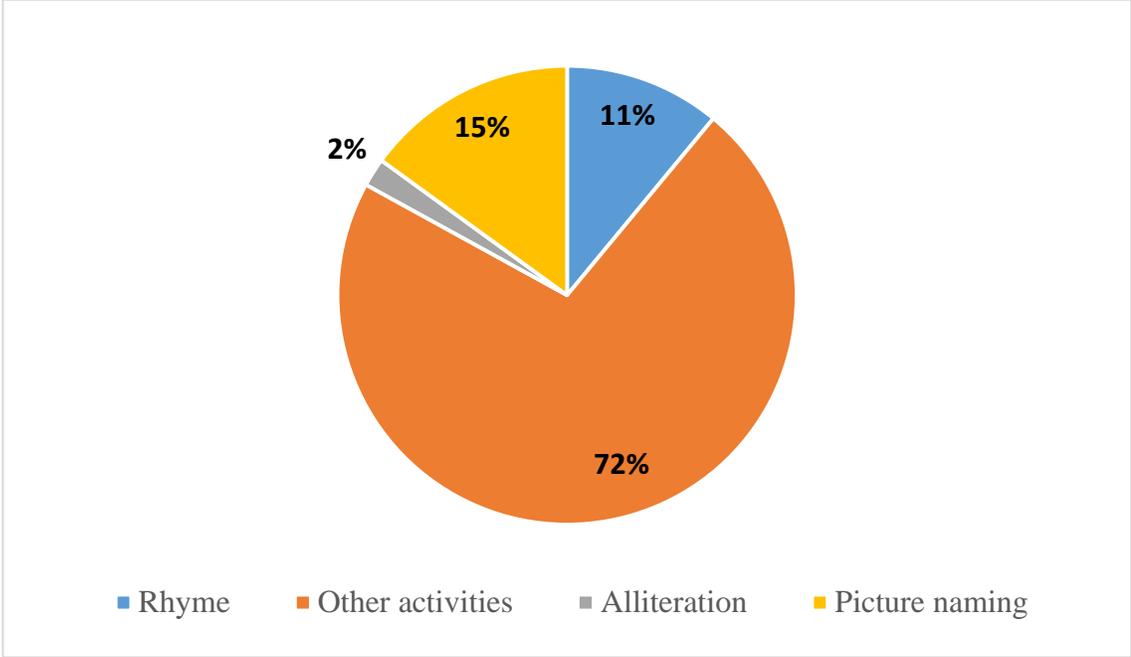


Source: The Author

The lesson plan analyzed in Pre-Kinder had different kinds of activities: 15% could be related to the picture naming phonemic awareness task; 11% with rhyme phonemic awareness task; and 2% with alliteration task. Although they are related, they are not

focused on phonemic awareness. At the beginning of the lesson there was no clear purpose about phonemic awareness tasks.

Figure 3: Percentage of PA per task in pre kinder lesson plan



Source: The Author

8. CONCLUSIONS

From this study it can be concluded that working on phonemic awareness with preschoolers is an important task to be developed during the learning of English as a second language within a bilingual program, because it represents an interesting process to prepare learners and teachers to get more goals related to the L2 language sounds. At the same time, in Pre-School, learners are building what they need to get ready to face the reading process, as it was evidenced through questionnaires, interviews, analysis and observations during the data collected.

Working on phonemic awareness with beginners will give them more opportunities to improve their oral production and at the same time will prepare them to face the reading process during the following grades, because they need to understand that words are made up of sounds, so include task related to Phonemic awareness in the Pre-Kinder lesson plans emerge as a need within a bilingual proposal in a school.

The answers of teachers about phonemic awareness and the activities performed in their classes showed the general perception they had about this concept, which is a result of the lack of training on that particular matter.

The activities and tasks to develop phonemic awareness should be included in the Pre-Kinder lesson plans, not only because it is a need, but also because kids are ready to learn about sounds. This is like a natural ability in the first part of the language process.

The results of this study imply the relevance of phonemic awareness as a crucial topic to work on the language education field nowadays, and the derived findings can give general ideas to implement a Phonemic awareness plan in bilingual programs at private schools.

According to the activities' percentages found in each planning, there is a low percentage participation of phonemic awareness activities in the lesson plans. This study also shows the importance to increase them with a logical sequence and without prior requirements.

Phonemic awareness is not a relatively new concept. However, it has acquired relevance in the last decades, with the emerging of programs including specific tasks to be applied, the further uses and considerations and the impact of the phonemic awareness skill in other skills. This would be a very interesting matter of study, to have a deeper and more holistic insight in regards of the L2 instruction.

PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTING PHONEMIC AWARENESS IN PRE-KINDER PLANNING

The work done in this study fulfilled the objectives proposed, by identifying the activities used in Pre-Kinder to teach English, analyze them and look for the relation to phonemic awareness skill in order to suggest other ideas to implement in the lesson plan of the course.

The lesson plans have important aspects, activities and strategies to facilitate the learning of English as a second language , but to develop phonemic awareness it is important to create purposes, moments to present and develop the activities with the kids using different kind of materials and working on phonemic awareness specific tasks (rhyme, picture naming, alliteration etc.).

The program has to include a training plan for those English teachers in charge of Phonemic awareness instruction. Because Teachers need to be trained to develop their own conscious about how to produce the L2 language sounds, that is why in the Annex 3 of this study there is a chart included showing some examples.

From the stated above, five principles of implementation follow from the results of the study:

Principle 1: Purposes related to phonemic awareness need to be included in the Pre-Kinder lesson plan.

Principle 2: Phonemic awareness task can be worked during the analysis of the text selected for each class project in order to develop phonemic awareness abilities at the same time that working on comprehension takes place.

Principle 3: There are different research positions about how to work on phonemic awareness. The point is to choose the most appropriate one taking into consideration the school educational plan and create the procedure to implement the new ideas.

Principle 4: English lesson plans have different activities to facilitate the Learning of English as a second language, but it is important to increase the percentage of specific tasks to develop phonemic awareness.

Principle 5: Working on phonemic awareness requires the use of tests to measure in order to monitor the progress of students and identify possible risks, but with preschoolers, it is important to focus on active and fun learning in order to give kids more hands- on experiences so they can feel, touch, smell, and see phonemic awareness. These kinds of activities will keep learners motivated, and will help in creating in positive attitudes, greater awareness and academic success.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

SURVEY FOR FOREIGN ENGLISH TEACHERS

Teaching sounds to learners

Name:

Nationality:

Profession:

Answer these questions, please.

1. Why do you think it is important to teach the sounds of the language to learners?
2. What kind of activities can a teacher use to teach sounds to learners?
3. Why do you think is difficult for students to learn the right pronunciation of a language?
4. What do you know about the scientific study of this subject?
5. Can you write a personal comment about this subject (teaching sounds?)

ANNEX 2

SURVEY TO PRE-SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS

Phonemic Awareness and Bilingualism in Pre-Kinder Grade

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SURVEY FOR TEACHERS

Phonological awareness is an umbrella term that includes phonemic awareness or awareness at the phoneme level. It also includes an awareness of word units larger than the phoneme. Taking into account your experience as an English teacher please answer these questions.

1. ¿Which type of activities can you do with children that are acquiring a second language to develop phonemic awareness?
2. Which of these do you identify as powerful activities to develop phonemic awareness with 4 year old children?
3. Once kids have finished Pre-Kinder and they start kinder, what needs do you think they have, in order to continue with the development of the phonemic awareness?
4. According to your experience, which sounds do you think are difficult to pronounce in a second language for children in Pre-School?
5. What type of materials do you know or have you used to develop phonological awareness in a second language with children in Pre-School?
6. According to your experience, what kind of things can you incorporate in a Pre-Kinder planning, that develops phonological awareness?
7. During your practicum as a second language teacher, have you observed any interference between the acquisitions of sounds in English, with the acquisition of sounds in Spanish?
8. Which interferences have you identified and why do you think this happens?

9. What kinds of fears are expressed during the acquisition of a second language in Pre-School related to early partial immersion?
10. In your own learning process or acquisition of a second language, do you remember any special activities that your teachers used in class to develop phonological awareness?
11. Would you like to add any other type of information regarding the topic?

ANNEX 3

Phonemic awareness and bilingualism in Pre-Kinder grade. Class observation Rubric.			
Objective: Observe how Teachers in their practum emphasize on the development of phonological awareness			
Class type 1 (homeroom teacher).	Date:		
Beginning of the Class Age:	Number of students:		
Teacher's Activity: Observations:	Children's Activity:	Materials Used:	
Class Development.			
Teacher's Activity: Observations:	Children's Activity:	Materials Used:	
Class Closure			
Teacher's Activity: Observations:	Children's Activity:	Materials Used:	

ANNEX 4

ARTICULATION EXERCISES

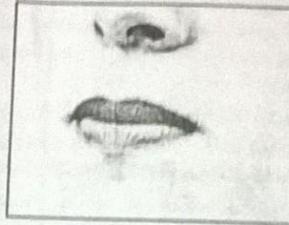
Vowel Sounds Mouth Position Chart		
		
<p>Smile Sound</p> <p>The long-e sound is a "smile sound." We look like we are smiling when we say this sound. The lips are close together, but not closed. Ask children to say the sound with you, noticing your mouth position. Have children place their hand under the chin as they say each of the following sounds in sequence: /ē/, /ī/, /ā/, /e/, /a/, /ī/, and /o/. Help them to notice how their mouth opens slightly with each sound.</p>	<p>Doctor Sound</p> <p>The short-o sound is an "open sound." The lips form a circle. Ask children to say the sound with you, noticing your mouth position. Remind them that the letter o stands for the /o/ sound. When making this sound, your mouth is in the shape of an o. The sound you make is the same as when you are at the doctor's office and he is checking your tonsils.</p>	<p>Surprise Sound</p> <p>The /ōō/ sound is a "surprise sound." This is the sound you make when you see fireworks on the Fourth of July. The lips are close together and oval in shape. Have children practice the sound as they look in a mirror. Help them to notice how their mouth opens a bit as they move from the /ōō/ sound to the /o/ sound.</p>

Consonant Sounds Mouth Position Chart



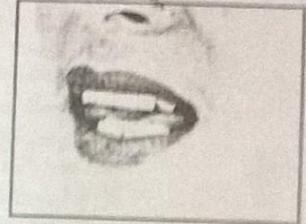
/t/t
/d/d
/n/n
/l/l

(tongue pressed against roof
of mouth behind top teeth)



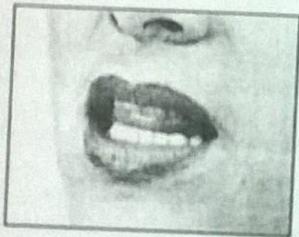
/p/p
/b/b
/m/m

(lips closed)



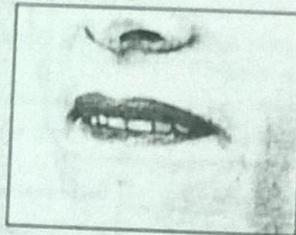
/k/k
/g/g

(tongue pressed against
bottom of mouth)



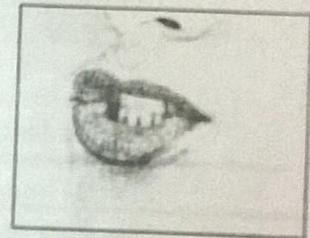
/th/th

(tongue between teeth)

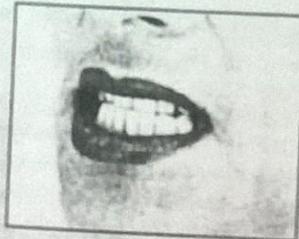


/f/f
/v/v

(top teeth on bottom lip)



/ch/ch
/j/j
/sh/sh
(lips stuck out)



/s/s
/z/z

(teeth together, lips apart)

ANNEX 5

Phonemic Awareness and Bilingualism in Pre-Kinder

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INTERVIEW WITH THE ENGLISH AREA COORDINATOR

I have listened that you are working on phonemic awareness, here in the school.

1. What are you planning?
2. Since where are you working on this special area?
3. Why are you working on phonemic awareness?
4. You went to San Pedro Claver school in Bucaramanga, what do you consider was important during the visit?
5. Now, after some days working on this subject, what is phonemic awareness for you?
6. What are the criteria to work on this area in a bilingual program?

ANSWERS

1. In general terms...I can say we are trying to apply this methodology.
2. I don't have too much experience in this area because I have worked with adults...
3. We need a phonemic awareness program because it is important to understand... how we are pronounced.
4. There are many aspects to take into account: Teachers use different strategies, the intensity of hours they have, the proficiency that the teachers have...the training.
5. Phonemic awareness is a strategy to learn how to read and write.
6. It is a biggest process... It is a step...