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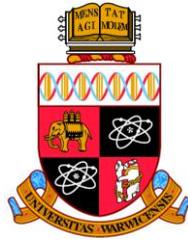
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**Exploring Learning Progress and Challenges
in English Decoding Skills Development
in the Korean EYL Context:
From the Perspectives of the Children**

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in
English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics

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This thesis is dedicated to my daughter, Jihu.

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Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own except where stated otherwise. The research reported here has not been submitted, either wholly or in part, in this or any other academic institution for admission to a higher degree. During the preparation of this thesis, papers were presented at international conferences, as detailed below. The remaining sections are unpublished.

Researcher-Reflections: Theory and Practice of Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation in Child-Centered ELT Research. Kaleidoscope Conference 2018, Cambridge University, UK. 25th May 2018.

Exploring Parental Challenges in English Decoding Skills Development in the South Korean EYL Context: A Case Study. Early Language Learning Conference 2018, University of Iceland, Iceland. 13th June 2018.

Exploring the Child's Perspectives of Progress and Challenges in English Decoding Skills Development: A Case Study of a Young Korean-English Learner. Warwick International Conference of Applied Linguistics 2019. 25th June 2019.

Heeyang Park

Abstract

The cognitive-linguistic dimensions of early English literacy development for young South Korean English Language Learners (ELLs) are well documented in terms of phonological awareness, phonics, sight word recognition and cross-language transfer. However, little is known about the relative progress and difficulties experienced by these children when they develop English decoding skills. This research therefore explores the learning progress and challenges of primary-aged Korean ELLs when taking English decoding instruction in terms of cognitive-linguistic and socio-contextual foundations, and suggests effective ways of assisting such learners to develop their English reading skills.

Data were collected through a four-month exploratory intervention in 2017 with 14 children in Seoul, Korea. The participants were aged from eight to 10 and presented a range of English reading abilities. A wide array of mostly qualitative instruments, employing child-friendly methods, were utilized to collect and triangulate data from the children and from their parents, since the home environment is acknowledged to be an important contextual factor affecting FL learning.

The findings revealed that the Korean ELLs' age, schooling experiences and L1 acquisition gave them a cognitive-linguistic head-start in English decoding skills development in terms of speed, efficiency and spillover effects. However, limited exposure, negative inter-linguistic transfer, including L1 interference, and various contextual pressures such as parenting styles and gaps between the early English reading experiences of the parents and their children were identified as factors causing EFL reading to be a challenging process for many of the learners. Based on these findings and on observation and documentation of the participants' progress and challenges from their own perspectives, the study offers suggestions for more effective early English reading instruction in Korea in terms of syllabus design, teaching materials and practice, teacher education, parental support, and the national English education policy.

Abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learner
ELT	English Language Teaching
EPIK	English Program in Korea
EYL	English for Young Learners
FL	Foreign Language
GPC	Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence
INSET	In-Service English Teacher Training
LET	Local English Teacher
L1	First Language
NC	National Curriculum
NEST	Native-English Speaking Teachers
PA	Phoneme Awareness
SES	Socioeconomic Status
TETE	Teaching English through English
TEYL	Teaching English to Young Learners
TL	Target Language

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This study explores and identifies the learning progress and challenges of primary-aged Korean children when they experience instruction in English decoding, and suggests effective approaches to assist the target students in dealing with the challenges. In this chapter, I begin by explaining the background and motivation for embarking on this study and present the aims of the study. Then, I provide background information about early reading instruction and practices in South Korea (henceforth Korea) both in public and private sectors. Next, I explain how this research could contribute to early English education in Korea and similar EYL environments. Finally, I explain the use of terms and symbols in this thesis, before presenting the structure of this thesis.

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

- 1.2. Motivation behind the Study
- 1.3. Aims of the Study
- 1.4. The English Education System in Korea
- 1.5. Curriculum Revisions
- 1.6. Neglect of Early English Reading Instruction
- 1.7. English Teachers in Public Primary School
- 1.8. Private English Education in Korea
- 1.9. Possible Contributions of the Study
- 1.10. Use of Terms and Symbols for the Thesis
- 1.11. Structure of the Thesis

1.2. Motivation behind the Study

As English language education spreads to the primary and preschool levels worldwide (Hu and McKay 2012), Korean children are starting to learn EFL at the age of four or five (Rixon 2013: 209) and learning to read in English at an earlier age. Learning to read in English is a lengthy and complex process even for native-English-speaking children. In her description of six stages of L1

English reading acquisition, Chall (1983) showed that the first three stages leading to skilled word recognition extended from birth to ages seven to eight. Since English is an alphabetic language, children who are learning to read must learn the alphabetic principle, which is the systematic correspondence between graphemes (in spelling) and phonemes (in pronunciation) (Byrne 1999; Hoover and Gough 2000; Birch 2015). Referred to as 'decoding', this term describes the ability to 'recognize written representations of words' (Hoover and Gough 2000: 13) by 'translating printed words into spoken words' (Samuels 2005: 1131).

Much research has explored the cognitive-linguistic dimensions of English decoding development for young Korean readers. These topics are well documented in terms of phonological awareness (Lee 2004; Park and Jeong 2005; Kim et al. 2007; Kim 2008, 2009; Kang 2009; Jo and Kim 2012; Kim and Son 2012; Choi and Lee 2015; Kim and Kim 2015), phonics and/or sight words (Lee 2000; Lee and Lee 2001; Han and Cha 2007; Park 2008; Han 2012; Lee and Kim 2012; Jeong 2014; Madill 2014), and cross-linguistic transfer (Cho and Seo 2004; Kang 2012; Cho and Chiu 2015). However, little is known about the children as the subject of learning on what they find easy or difficult. Even rarer are studies that investigate children's perceptions of socio-contextual challenges at school and at home.

As noted above, there is a lack of research studies investigating the progress and associated learning challenges regarding English decoding acquisition from Korean children's own perspectives. This topic has been particularly relevant to me because, during my 15 years as an EYL teacher, teacher trainer and parent consultant in Korea, I have encountered many children who suffered from low English decoding performance despite lengthy and intensive instruction. Besides, I am a parent of a primary-school-aged daughter and have long heard from my daughter's friends (children) or my own friends (their parents) that English decoding acquisition was stressful and confusing to the children. So I grew interested in identifying specific challenges that the Korean ELLs face when taking English decoding instruction. I have also wondered for some time whether there are cognitive-linguistic and sociocultural factors in the language learning backgrounds of the children that may hamper facilitate their FL

learning, and what kind of learning progress can be made by these particular learners.

1.3. Aims of the Study

Setting out to explore and document the learning progress and challenges of primary-school-aged Korean children when learning to decode English words, this study focuses on two research questions.

RQ1. What types of progress do young Korean children make when acquiring English decoding skills?

RQ2. What challenges do young Korean children experience when acquiring English decoding skills?

Based on the findings of the two research questions, this study details how the challenges were addressed with these particular participants, and offers suggestions regarding how young Korean children can be assisted in dealing with the challenges identified in RQ2.

1.4. The English Education System in Korea

The Korean government takes a strongly centralized approach to public English education, with close control over curriculum and materials (Butler 2005; Kang 2012). As of 2016 and 2017 when this research was designed and implemented, primary English education was following the 2009 curriculum revision (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, MEST 2009). Korean children start formal English learning from Grade 3 in primary school with two 40 minute lessons per week in Grades 3 and 4, and three lessons a week in Grades 5 and 6. Five textbooks are available for schools to choose from, and these are developed by commercial publishers and authorized by the Korean Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE). Table 1, adapted from Hayes (2014) and updated in the teacher sections, summarizes the basic features of public primary English instruction in Korea.

Table 1. Public primary English education in Korea (adapted from Hayes 2014: 19)

Formal school starting age	Six years; Grade 1
Status of English in the curriculum	7th National Curriculum; the 2009 reform
Age at which English instruction starts	Eight years; Grade 3
Organization of instruction per week	Two x 40-minute classes for Grades 3–4 Three x 40-minute classes for Grades 5–6
Achievement level objective	School curriculum specifies skills-based accomplishment standards for each grade of a general nature
Teaching methods	Age-appropriate communicative, as appropriate to learning objectives
Teaching-learning materials	Criteria for textbooks and instructional materials prescribed by law; textbooks must be approved by KICE; schools choose textbooks from the approved list.
Types of local English teachers (LETs)	Homeroom teachers, special teachers of English, and English conversation instructors (Korean personnel with high English proficiency) (Butler 2015a); a majority of schools have specialist English teachers who give English lessons to students at all grades (Garton 2014).
LET qualifications	Four-year primary teaching degree; national teacher exams including an interview in English
LET English language level required	Not specified
In-service provision	Widespread; primary class teachers required to take a minimum of 120 hours on English teaching (language and pedagogy); English has very limited presence in this environment.
Native-English speaking teachers (NESTs)	Recruitment through the government-sponsored English Program in Korea (English Program in Korea, EPIK 2016)
NEST qualifications	Applicants from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the USA and South Africa; no teaching certificates or prior experiences required (EPIK 2016)
NEST allocation	One NEST per school scheme (Yim and Hwang 2019)

The 7th National Curriculum (NC), which officially instituted English education in all primary schools as a compulsory academic subject in 1997, underlies current pedagogical approaches in all public education in Korea. The flagship reform principle of the 7th NC was to build a foundation for basic communication in English in everyday life with a heavy focus on oral communicative competence and minimal input of written language. Therefore, the instructional focus at the primary level has been geared towards oral communicative competence, resulting in the neglect of systematic written language development (Min 2007; Kim 2009; Lee 2009; Byun 2010; Chang 2011).

Along with comprehensive educational innovations for authentic language input and use has come the promotion of a top-down policy implementation: Teaching English through English (TETE) or using English for instructional purposes (Kim 2001; Kim 2008; Heo 2016). In an attempt to create English-rich classrooms, the Korean Ministry of Education proposed in 2001 that local English teachers (LETs) should avoid the L1, in this case, Korean, and use English as an instructional language (Nunan 2003). At the same time, there has been a massive influx of native-English speaking teachers (NESTs), who joined the government-sponsored English Program in Korea (EPIK) from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States and South Africa (EPIK 2016). This has had a profound effect on the public perception of the importance of oral English competence, whether inside or outside of the classroom (Chang 2011).

With regard to the training of LETs, the Korean government has gradually expanded the Intensive In-service English Teacher Training (INSET) program since 2003. This has strongly been geared towards building the LETs' own English competence for oral communicative language use (Na et al. 2008; Yang 2009; Min and Park 2013). In 2006, 53.4% of the INSET programs focused on the trainees' English proficiency and communicative language use development, compared to 37.4% on English instructional professionalism and pedagogical knowledge (KICE 2006). LETs have also acknowledged that English proficiency enhancement was the strongest motivator for attending such programs (Kim and Ahn 2011).

1.5. Curriculum Revisions

The original 7th NC completely excluded written language components for the first year of formal English instruction. Third graders only received instruction pertaining to listening and speaking skills, while reading skills were introduced to fourth graders, though limited to the alphabet level. In the fifth grade, children learned reading at word level and writing at the alphabet level. Only with sixth graders were all four skills taught together, with writing skills including short sentences (Min 2007).

In an effort to ensure a more balanced pedagogical approach, major curriculum revisions for primary English education were made in 2007, 2009 and 2015. From the spring term of 2018, Korean public schools have used the English textbooks that adopt the 2015 revision (NC Information Center). However, as of 2016, when this research was designed, and 2017, when data collection began, public primary English education was following the 2009 NC revision and each school had the right to choose one of the five government-approved textbooks. Recognizing the increasing importance of early reading skills development, changes in 2007 and 2009 revolved around longer time allocation for reading, with resultant textbook upgrades.

The 2007 curriculum revision

The first turning point came with the revision in 2007, when the starting age of reading and writing instruction was lowered to the third grade. Distinctive features of the 2007 revision in terms of beginning English literacy were the institution of phonics-based instruction in Grades 3 and 4 and the incorporation of phrase-level reading between word- and sentence-level reading to facilitate more effective transition (Huh 2015). Vocabulary was strictly controlled both in quality and quantity. For primary English, only 520 words, taken from everyday life situations, were chosen by the government to be taught over the course of four years (MEST 2008):

- Grade 3: within 120 words
- Grade 4: within 120 words
- Grade 5: within 140 words

- Grade 6: within 140 words (Sum: within 520 words)

English reading achievement standards for elementary school are set at three levels: words and phrases, sentences, and texts. During the first two years of schooling (Grades 3-4), reading primarily remains at word level, which begins with alphabet letter recognition and develops into letter-sound relationships and the recognition of easy and simple words and phrases. By the end of the fourth grade, children should be ready to move on to more advanced reading. From the third year of instruction (Grades 5-6), reading is taught on sentence (Grade 5) and text level (Grade 6). By the end of the elementary education, children should be able to read and understand a short and simple text about daily life and use basic reading strategies such as skimming and summarizing.

The 2009 curriculum revision

While the 2009 revision showed no drastic change in the objectives or contents of reading and vocabulary targets when compared to 2007, it is noticeable that Grades 3 and 4 were integrated into one band and Grades 5 and 6 into another band. Accordingly, reading achievement standards were presented according to the band. Reading achievement standards for Grades 3-4 were divided into four areas: alphabet knowledge, phonics and word reading, phrase and sentence reading, and meaning construction (MEST 2011). Table 2 presents the 2009 English reading achievement standards for the Grade 3-4 band.

Table 2. 2009 English reading achievement standards for Grade 3-4 band

①	Alphabet	
	①-1.	To discern and read the printed alphabet in capital and small letters.
②	Phonics and word reading	
	②-1.	To understand the relationship between sounds and spellings.
	②-2.	To read aloud easy and simple words using the sound-spelling relationship.
③	Phrase and sentence reading	
	③-1.	To read along with easy and simple words and phrases.
	③-2.	To find and read words and phrases after listening to them.

	③-3.	To read along with easy and simple sentences.
	③-4.	To read aloud easy and simple words and phrases.
④	Meaning construction	
	④-1.	To read and understand easy and simple words through pictures, objects and actions.
	④-2.	To read and understand easy and simple words and phrases.

Comparison of the two achievement standards in English word reading shows that the 2009 revision explicitly necessitates the use of sound-spelling correspondences in the reading of simple English words. In other words:

- In 2007: To read aloud easy and simple words.
- In 2009: To read aloud easy and simple words using the sound-spelling relationship.

By the end of Grade 4, children are expected to read aloud easy and simple words and phrases either as whole words or using the phonics letter-sound rules. Other than that, learning objectives and contents as well as vocabulary targets (240 for Grades 3-4) remained similar between the two revisions. That is, meaning construction of words and phrases should ultimately be done without contextual cues such as pictures, objects and actions. There was a component of sentence reading but it remains as 'Read Along' or 'Listen and Repeat', since reading at the level of sentences and texts was primarily for the next band, in Grades 5 and 6.

1.6. Neglect of Early English Reading Instruction

Despite the educational reforms, the ratio of spoken to written English still remains at 8 to 2 (Lee 2009). Unlike listening and speaking, which each receives a full class period, reading and writing are taught together in one period. Because of this limited exposure, it is hard to expect young FL learners to acquire substantial English reading skills, particularly since reading and writing skills development takes more time and effort, compared to spoken language development, even for L1 learners (Geary and Bjorklund 2000). In an interview

with a Korean English teacher, Rixon (2011: 194) cited discomfort and concern among Korean primary teachers about this situation.

Examination of the five government-approved English textbooks for Grades 3 and 4 shows that Lessons 1 and 2 focus on listening and speaking, and that no reading-related components appear until Lesson 3. This means that written language instruction occurs only once in two weeks, contradicting the recommendations of many FL professionals and experienced practitioners. Curtain and Dahlberg (2000) pointed out that infrequent time allocation is a common problem in the planning of FL courses. Elementary level FL programs work best if lessons are scheduled for three to five days per week for no less than 30-40 minutes per class (Swender and Duncan 1998). Further, Arnold and Rixon (2014) have indicated that little substantial reading skills development actually occurs, since the reading and writing lessons in the Korean primary context largely function as a vehicle for reinforcing oral words and expressions that have been introduced in the spoken language lessons.

Instruction in early English literacy development in public schools is particularly insufficient and ineffective in many respects (Kim 2009). First, the centralized control of vocabulary to 120 words per grade is not favorable for beginning reading acquisition (Lee and Kim 2009), since a large bank of oral vocabulary is a crucial prerequisite for more effective early literacy development (Ehri 1998; Pinter 2011; Arnold and Rixon 2014). According to Biemiller (2009), native-English-speaking children have obtained a spoken lexicon of about 5,000 root words at the time of school entry. An ability to recognize a word in print is facilitated simply by having heard it before (Perfetti 1985).

Second, current English textbooks do not contain phoneme awareness (PA) activities (Wee 2014), although PA is a predictor of early reading acquisition and later reading success (Wagner and Torgesen 1987; Adams 1990; Goswami and Bryant 1990; Lonigan et al. 1998; Hoover and Gough 2000; Anthony and Francis 2005). A phoneme is the smallest unit of a sound that makes a difference in meaning. If 'mat' and 'pat' are differentiated in meaning by their initial sounds, /m/ and /p/ are regarded as two separate phonemes.

Third, the teaching of word reading in Korea largely depends on a 'Listen and Repeat' approach or the use of visual cues such as pictures, objects, and actions in a 'Look and Say' format. While letter-sound knowledge is taught in the first two years (Grades 3-4), it is far from sufficient in terms of helping learners decode English words, since it does not cover the entire phonemic inventory, including digraphs, diphthongs and split digraphs (Ahn et al. 2007; Kim 2014; Kim 2016). Due to the 'speaking out' element of early reading, pronunciation is an important aspect of what children learn. However, overt pronunciation instruction is rare in most phonics materials and practices (Rixon 2011: 206). None of the five approved English textbooks provide a well-defined comprehensive syllabus for phonics acquisition over two years. This can pose a big problem for Korean children, since, even for native-speaking children, the introduction of sound-spelling patterns is so complicated that *Letters and Sounds (Notes of Guidance)* in the United Kingdom recommends that it should be 'in a clearly defined, incremental sequence' over a long period of time (Department for Education Skills, DfES 2007: 10).

1.7. English Teachers in Public Primary School

In Korea, there are three types of LETs in public primary school: homeroom teachers, special teachers of English, and English conversation instructors (Korean personnel with high English proficiency) (Butler 2015a). Recently, specialist teaching has become prevalent across the country, with only a small number of English specialist teachers giving English lessons to students in all grades. Accordingly, the specialist teacher system in primary education has been widely investigated, addressing teacher professionalism and the efficiency of the system (Park 1998; Kim 2000; Ko 2005; Garton 2014; Yim 2014; Kim and Ahn 2018). These studies have also revealed that it is not uncommon for English to be taught by homeroom teachers, who are generalists and not specialist teachers of English.

Many of the specialist English teachers have low content knowledge and skills in early reading instruction (Kim 2004; Lee 2006; Butler 2015a). In a study investigating Korean primary school English teachers' knowledge and beliefs about reading instruction, Lee (2014) revealed a gap between the teachers'

awareness of the necessity for stronger reading instruction in the classroom and their lack of knowledge and support in teaching reading. This gap is further aggravated by the lack of adequate attention and extensive support from the teacher education programs (Min and Park 2013; Woo 2016).

The use of NESTs in teaching English has become a controversial topic, due to their general lack of professional knowledge and pedagogical competence, particularly in teaching English reading to young Korean learners (Carless 2006; Wang and Lin 2013; Garton 2014; Butler 2015a). This is not surprising, since EPIK considers nationality as the most important criterion for recruiting NESTs, rather than teaching certificates, prior experience in ELT, or knowledge of the Korean language, all of which are not required. Jeon (2009) reported that many NESTs had little understanding of curriculum requirements, textbooks and learning objectives, or the needs of the learners, when giving English lessons. Under a 'one NEST per school' scheme, NESTs were often isolated from the school community (Yim and Hwang 2019). The language barrier was also a factor, with a lack of communication between LETs and NESTs compounding the situation. Many LETs felt anxious about using English or felt burdened by their interpreter roles between NESTs and the school community.

1.8. Private English Education in Korea

Any description of Korean primary English education must be incomplete without reference to the ever-incremental expansion of the private English education market. Despite all the educational innovations that the Korean government has rigorously implemented in response to globalization, there has been strong bottom-up pressure from Korean parents who consider public education inadequate and ineffective and prefer extracurricular English education, including immersion kindergartens, after-school programs, private tutoring, cram schools, English camps and overseas language training (Paik 2008; Park 2009; Hu and McKay 2012; Song 2012; Garton 2014).

Korean parents often spend a large portion of their income in giving their children a head start in English learning. According to a report by the Samsung Economic Research Institute, the estimated consumer expenditure on private

English education in 2005 reached approximately 15 billion US dollars, which is 47.5% of the national educational budget. This is a sharp increase when compared to only 10 billion US dollars in 2000 (Chun and Choi 2006). This national zeal has been termed 'English fever' or 'English frenzy' (Seth 2002; Park 2009), and represents a phenomenon which has been intensifying since the mid-1990s and has created a billion-dollar ELT market.

In contrast to the English teaching practices of formal education, which largely overlooks emergent English literacy skills, private English education in Korea has drawn significant attention to explicit reading instruction, particularly phonics, for young learners, including preschoolers and infants (Hahm 2008). The private English education market for children in Korea offers a wide range of highly diversified programs in terms of both format and price (Park and Abelmann 2004). These can be divided into a number of different categories:

- 1) comprehensive and intensive programs by English-only kindergartens that create an immersion environment for children aged between three and five, and luxurious play centers for children aged two to three, providing fairly extensive English exposure on a daily basis;
- 2) skills-based intensive lessons by private/group tutoring with Korean or native-speaking tutors, specialized English institutes, called *Hagwons* in Korean, and private-run after-school programs in public schools;
- 3) regular but brief lessons by general kindergartens, nurseries and community centers; and
- 4) home-based programs such as Internet lessons and English worksheet visitations where teachers visit the home once a week and teach with worksheets for 15 to 30 minutes.

Analyzing the curriculum of six successful English kindergartens in the Gangnamgu district, an affluent area in the capital city of Seoul, Lee (2006) found a fairly equal distribution of class hours for reading and writing *per se* in comparison with listening and speaking, in an integrative approach. The six English kindergartens adopted phonics as the foundation of early reading skills

acquisition, many of them giving a 40-minute phonics lesson every day for three years. Most of the kindergartens used commercial phonics textbooks such as *Phonics First Step* (Random House), *Phonics for Kids* (Longman), *Mr. Bug's Phonics* (Oxford) and *Scholastic Phonics* (Scholastic), all of which introduce the sound-spelling relationships in linear stages – alphabet letters first, then CVC blending, followed by split digraphs, and finally consonant blends, digraphs and diphthongs (Lee 2006: 57-64). Phonics is sometimes misunderstood in Korea as involving one-for-one letter to sound correspondences and a linear teaching sequence that goes from A to Z.

An emphasis on handling written language becomes even more prominent in storybook-based activities, where exposure to print and shared reading by adults further promote the children's language and literacy development (Lonigan et al. 1999; Sénéchal 2006; Baker 2013; Butler 2014a; Niklas and Schneider 2015). Given that these six English kindergarten companies have over 300 branches nationwide, their teaching practices reach well beyond this wealthy district of Seoul. Parents have also expressed a strong sense of satisfaction and pride in the performances of their children, who enjoy independent reading even before school entry (Yi and Yang 2009).

Proliferation of early English literacy development, particularly phonics, is currently so prominent in Korean private English education that almost all the private institutions and programs acknowledge the value of written language skills in early acquisition. Kang (2014) found that 4,522 general kindergartens and nurseries nationwide offered English lessons to very young Korean children aged three to five. Yang and colleagues (2001) surveyed 1,700 Korean kindergarten teachers who were teaching English at general kindergartens, where children take a 20-minute English lesson two or three times a week, with a focus on not only listening and speaking but also letter knowledge and phonics for the 26 alphabet characters. As a result, Kim (2014) suggested that a majority of young Korean ELLs have actually acquired the names and shapes of 52 upper- and lower-case alphabet characters before school entry.

The home-visit worksheet English service is less expensive than other private learning services, with price range from 25,000 to 60,000 won (\$21-\$50) per

month. It is therefore considered to be ‘at the very bottom of the highly stratified market’ (Park and Ablemann 2004: 653). This worksheet visitation program offers explicit early reading programs to more than 5,500,000 children nationwide (Korea Consumer Protection Board 2000), incorporating phonics, whole word recognition and/or storybook reading.

Private early childhood English programs and curricula in Korea thus give children a head start in reading English books and practicing spelling, compared with those who, with no experience of private education, would not officially be exposed to ABC alphabet letters until Grade 3. As Kang (2014) has maintained, many private English programs achieved the learning objectives for the written language by the age of five, though these are prescribed in the public curriculum for the end of Grade 4, at the age of ten (Table 3). Consequently, students who do not take additional commercial English lessons suffer a dramatic transition from elementary to secondary school, where the emphasis is on reading and grammar (Rixon 2015; Shin and Crandall 2019).

Table 3. Comparison of objectives in early English literacy (adapted from Kang 2014: 139)

Reading Objectives	Private Sector	Public Sector
To discern the printed alphabet in capital and small letters	Age 3	Age 9
To read aloud easy and simple words after listening to them	Age 4	Age 9-10
To read aloud easy and simple words and phrases	Age 5	Age 10

1.9. Possible Contributions of the Study

I propose that research findings from the study can make a meaningful contribution not only to early English education in Korea but also to the field of TEYL and child-centered research, by promoting:

- 1) an enhanced understanding of Korean children in terms of their progress and challenges regarding English decoding skills development;

- 2) the design, piloting and implementation of ELL decoding skills development syllabus and materials;
- 3) the provision of a model for research with a larger number of children;
- 4) the identification of topics for new programs or supplementary materials that Korean TEYL practitioners can apply to the teaching of English decoding;
- 5) increased awareness of the importance of adopting learners' voices in TEYL research and relevant policy-making processes; and
- 6) child-friendly research methods that researchers can apply to the design of their research.

It is hoped that the resulting proposals for syllabus and materials design for English decoding skills development at the primary level will provide a valuable resource for children, parents, teachers and the relevant educational institutions.

1.10. Use of Terms and Symbols for the Thesis

In this thesis, the abbreviation PA stands for 'phoneme awareness', not phonological awareness. Phonological awareness refers to the ability to detect, analyze and blend the sounds of spoken words independent of meaning. It encompasses a set of skills, with the larger units of syllables, intermediate structures such as onsets (initial consonant/cluster), rimes (vowel plus final consonant/cluster), bodies (initial consonant/cluster plus vowel) and codas (final consonant/cluster), and the smallest phonemic unit. Therefore, phonological awareness is an umbrella term, in which PA only deals with the phoneme level.

The number of phonemes differs slightly for varieties of English. There are 44 phonemes in English Received Pronunciation of British English (Underhill 2005). Vocalis Publisher's 2006 book, *IPA Phonics: American English Pronunciation Guide*, identifies 47 phonemes of General American. For the sake of consistency, this thesis refers to American pronunciation following the

widespread practice of teaching and learning American English in Korea. Individual sounds are presented in slashes using the phonetic symbols taken from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) (Appendix 1, p. 279). For example, the word 'chunk' is represented as /tʃʌŋk/.

A grapheme is a single alphabetic letter (e.g. <p>) or groups of letters (e.g. <sh>) that correspond to a phoneme. Graphemes are shown in brackets to distinguish themselves from phonemes. Spelling patterns adopt the work from *Letters and Sounds* (DfES 2007) and Calfee and Patrick (1995) and include:

- single alphabetic letters;
- consonant clusters (e.g. <bl>, <fr>, <sp>, <st>);
- digraphs (e.g. <sh>, <th>, <ch>, <ng>);
- diphthongs and long vowels (e.g. <ay>, <ou>, <ow>, <ea>); and
- split digraphs (e.g. <a_e>, <i_e>, <o_e>, <u_e>).

The two terms, 'decoding' and 'deciphering', are defined in a different way, while they are often used interchangeably. Adopting the characterization by Hoover and Gough (2000), 'deciphering' is one of the decoding strategies, which is the ability to sound out regularly spelled words that follow the systematic letter-sound correspondence in English. For example, the written word 'cap' is easily deciphered to its spoken form through the one-to-one connection between its graphemes (<c>, <a>, <p>) and their corresponding phonemes (/k/, /æ/, /p/). Meanwhile, 'decoding' enables readers to recognize both regular words and irregularly spelled words such as 'eye' that violate the consistent conventional grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs).

1.11. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion. Subsequent to this chapter, Chapter 2, Literature Review, presents a comprehensive review of previous studies and empirical findings in five main areas: importance of reading in FL learning, English word recognition, L1 English decoding acquisition, English decoding for Korean ELLs, and research with children. Chapter 3, Methodology, describes the

methodological approach for this study, with particular attention to exploratory teaching intervention and the qualitative approach. It also illustrates the participants, and the research procedures for data collection and analysis from a diverse range of research instruments.

Chapter 4 analyzes data from both the numeric and qualitative sources. Numeric data are collected from two tests and interview worksheet tasks. This research adopts a qualitative design, but tests are employed to provide numeric reference data in diagnosing the children's decoding accuracy and keeping track of their progress. The qualitative data analysis provides detailed accounts triangulated from qualitative sources in terms of cognitive-linguistic and socio-contextual factors that have an impact on the young Korean ELLs when they take English decoding instruction. Chapter 5, Discussion, discusses the significance of the research findings in relation to previous studies and addresses the two research questions. It also identifies research areas that have not been sufficiently examined and are thus worthy of further investigation. This chapter then builds on the outcomes of the research questions, by suggesting effective ways of assisting such learners develop their English reading skills in terms of syllabus design, teaching materials and practice, teacher education, parental support, and the national English education policy. Chapter 6, Conclusion, provides a summary of the thesis, its findings, contributions, issues, dilemmas and limitations of the study as a whole, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the conceptual background of this research. As stated in the previous chapter, this study focuses on the Korean ELLs in terms of what they find easy and difficult when they develop English decoding skills in the EFL context. In this study, a group of primary-aged Korean children were invited to take English decoding instruction and express their ideas and opinions about their learning experiences. To my knowledge, little is known about the learning progress and challenges from the Korean children's perspectives. Still, I provide here a selective review of relevant previous studies, focusing on why English reading is important in the Korean context and what is required in terms of the acquisition of English decoding accuracy as a prerequisite for word recognition.

In this chapter, I begin by presenting the importance of reading skills in FL learning in Korea. Then, I provide an overview of the literature on the importance of accurate English decoding in word recognition and the decoding process in English as an L1. English is an alphabetic language and the associations between letters and sounds are more opaque than in other languages. Given the existence of a universal background for language learning, it is generally considered beneficial to examine L1 English decoding processes before shifting attention to those of Korean ELLs. Next, I review a host of context-specific linguistic, cognitive, social and cultural processes that affect primary-aged Korean ELLs when they learn to read in English as a foreign language. The cognitive-linguistic factors include learners' age, schooling, limited exposure and cross-linguistic transfer both in positive and negative ways, while other contextual factors are parents, siblings, teachers and peers. Finally, I examine the literature on research with children in the view of the fact that children are the primary participants of this study. It describes the characteristics of child-focused research, including the benefits and limitations for the child participants and the adult researcher.

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

- 2.2. Importance of Reading in FL Learning
- 2.3. English Word Recognition
- 2.4. L1 English Decoding Acquisition
- 2.5. English Decoding for Korean ELLs
- 2.6. Research with Children
- 2.7. Conclusion

2.2. Importance of Reading in FL Learning

Reading is important in an EFL context such as Korea, where authentic and meaningful oral communication in English is infrequent (Nuttall 1996; Anderson 1999; Song 2000). Korean ELLs therefore find it difficult to obtain sufficient language input in an authentic and meaningful manner, and reading, being an important source of comprehensible language input, represents a greater portion of their FL learning experiences (Kim 2009).

Particularly in the 21st century, when digital-friendly generations can enjoy computer-mediated communication, the importance of reading in English is clearly manifested online where English serves as a lingua franca for socialization in cyber communities through email, social media and participation in multiplayer online games (Jeon 2014; Butler 2019). However, the strongest motivation behind English reading for many Korean children still comes from the prospective high-stakes college entrance exams, for which reading is essential (Cho and Brutt-Griffler 2015).

2.2.1. Extensive Reading

With limited exposure to English in everyday life, extensive reading in English, or reading large amounts of self-selected texts, is an effective way to improve FL skills (Mason and Krashen 1997). Reading is an important source of comprehensible language input that fosters communicative competence in the L2 (Nunan 1991; Anderson 1999; Comwell 2005). The linguistic benefits of recreational reading for FL learners include vocabulary growth (Horst 2005; Pigada and Schmitt 2006; Senoo and Yonemoto 2014) and reading fluency (Elley 1991; Mason and Krashen 1997; Iwahori 2008). FL learners gain attitudinal rewards when they feel a sense of achievement and develop reading

interest after reading large quantities of self-selected English books (Nuttall 1996; Mason and Krashen 1997; Leung 2002).

The positive effects of extensive English reading on Korean learners' FL learning are also well documented in terms of enhanced vocabulary (Cho et al. 2004; Kweon and Kim 2008), reading and writing skills (Lee and Kim 2009; Ahn et al. 2010), and reading interest and confidence (Choi 2010). Choi (2012) suggested that reading extensively improves the learners' speaking proficiency by providing them with substantial knowledge of the linguistic structures that ELLs need for communicative competence. This is particularly true of input exposure from reading that is rich in vocabulary and narrative structures (ibid.).

Free voluntary reading is being widely accepted by not only reading researchers but also Korean parents, who agree that reading English materials, not merely textbooks, is very important in improving their children's English ability (Linse 2011). Korean parents are willing to spend money on English books in addition to encouraging their children to visit libraries or bookshops to select English materials to read at home. Recently, e-based reading programs have become popular, since young children react positively to online materials (Oakley and Jay 2008; Im 2009; Ciampa 2012; Yoon 2013; Istifci 2015; Smeets and Bus 2015).

2.2.2. Cyber Communication

In recent years, reading in English as an international language has become important for younger generations who wish to participate in cyber communities. Approximately one fourth of the world's population is currently using the Internet and these numbers are continuously increasing with the advance of mobile technology (www.internetworldstats.com). This growth of digitally mediated communication has made it easier for people with different language backgrounds to interact online, through email, social networking services, Internet interest groups and massively multiplayer online (MMO) games (Thorne et al. 2009). For successful, typically text-based communication in this multilingual context, individuals make the best use of their L1 and L2

proficiencies in ‘socially and pragmatically appropriate, locally meaningful ways’ (Garett 2008: 190).

While communication in cyberspace witnesses an increase in the use of multiple languages, it is also the case that transnational global communities provide non-native English-speaking learners with immense opportunities to communicate in English with other native English speakers or ELLs worldwide (Jeon 2014). For example, participants in *fanfiction.net*, the largest online fan writing community, use English as a core communicative language both in composing and exchanging feedback (Black 2005). In a study of a diasporic online space called *Welcome to Buckeye City*, Yi (2008) has highlighted ‘English relay writing’, a form of multi-author online composition. When a topic is given, members take turns writing a portion of a novel in English after reading through what has already been written.

Among the various forms of English-medium digitally mediated communication, online games, particularly an MMO role-playing game called *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, are perhaps most popular among young Korean children (Jeon 2014). MMO games are avatar-based virtual spaces which thousands of players can access simultaneously and interact with team members to complete goal-directed challenges. While playing the games, players build tightly coordinated teamwork through chatting, discussing game strategies, collecting or making items such as weapons, and developing new scenarios. All these complex cyberspace activities can only be achieved through text-based English-medium interaction (Butler et al. 2014; Pinter 2017; Butler 2019).

2.2.3. Academic Settings

It is widely accepted that reading competence serves as a major foundational academic ability for successful FL learning (Yoon 2013; Al-Mahrooqi and Roscoe 2014). Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) established a clear relationship between reading ability and successful academic performances for L1 learners. Weak L1 readers typically have limited access to academic vocabulary and in-depth knowledge about various topics and the world, thus falling behind in terms of academic success. For FL learners, reading in English may not have the

equivalent effect on their overall academic performance. Even so, the opportunities for successful academic outcomes in learning English as an FL are limited without the ability to read.

There is a strong tradition of exam-oriented learning in Korea (Haggerty and Fox 2015; Jin and Cortazzi 2019), so that the strong motivation behind reading in English for the majority of children and their parents derives largely from the need to receive excellent results in tests (Song 2000; Min 2007; Choi 2008; Butler 2015a; Cho and Brutt-Griffle 2015; Li et al. 2019). In particular, the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) is a high-stakes college entrance exam, for which reading skills are essential. The English section constitutes nearly 20% of the CSAT, and focuses primarily on receptive skills, such as listening and reading (Moodie and Nam 2016). Despite large-scale governmental efforts to raise the status of oral English proficiency in secondary schooling, the reality is that teaching practices and tests still focus on reading comprehension, using the traditional grammar-translation method for direct vocabulary learning and grammar drills (Shin 2012; Butler 2015a).

While the primary English education curriculum is less affected by the CSAT, Jin and Cortazzi have noted that the 'gatekeeping effect of university entrance exams affects perceptions of English at school levels' (2019: 478), in that children (and their parents) are keen to pass the tests for the best primary schools and then prestigious secondary schools. Furthermore, the emphasis of secondary English education is on reading and grammar (Rixon 2015; Shin and Crandall 2019). On a personal level, many Korean parents that I know have experienced a dramatic transition from elementary to secondary school through their elder children's education. They complain about the neglect of written language skills development in public primary English education and demand solid English reading preparedness at the primary level. According to Song, 'it is not unfair to say that South Korean children prepare for it [CSAT] even before entering primary school' (2012: 33).

2.3. English Word Recognition

Reading is essentially a complex process that involves a great deal of knowledge and various strategies. Since literacy ability is 'biologically secondary' in terms of human development (Geary and Bjorklund 2000: 63), it requires some degree of instruction for its mastery. This lengthy process of reading acquisition begins with word recognition, which Adams (2004) called the 'engine' of reading. Defined as the ability to read words accurately and quickly, Adams and Huggins see word recognition as 'the single best class of discrimination between good and poor readers' (1985: 263). According to Adams (2011b), reading comprehension depends on understanding at least 95% of the words in a text.

Word recognition involves a two-step process: decoding a printed word and then understanding what the word means. Decoding is defined as 'the ability to recognize written representations of words' (Hoover and Gough 2000: 13) by 'translating printed words into spoken words' (Samuels 2005: 1131). Because English is an alphabetic language, children who are learning to read in English must learn the alphabetic principle, in which one grapheme corresponds to one phoneme (Ehri 1998; Byrne 1999; Hoover and Gough 2000; Birch 2015). Unlike logographic systems in languages such as Chinese, where written symbols do not represent sounds, the alphabetic principle requires readers to understand and acquire a systematic correspondence between graphemes and phonemes of words.

2.3.1. Decoding and Meaning Construction

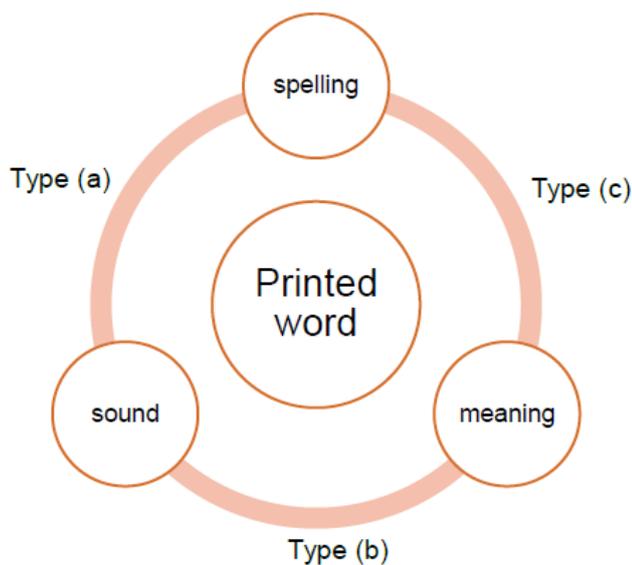
For early reading, it can be argued that decoding from spelling to sound is an essential prerequisite for meaning activation. Once the individual words are correctly decoded, a skilled reader then associates them with meaning almost immediately by retrieving relevant lexical knowledge from memory. Adams summarized the importance of decoding in word recognition as follows:

As the spelling thus selects the word's pronunciation, the phonological processor in turn relays activation to the many areas of the brain that are involved in generating the word's meanings and in working out its usage and

specific significance within the context in which it has been encountered. Thus, the mapping from orthography to phonology – that is, from spelling to pronunciation – are the nexus between seeing and understanding the print on a page. (Adams 2011a: 8)

Word recognition involves three mental representations of a printed word – orthographic, phonological and semantic (Ehri 2005; Samuels 2005; Perfetti 2007). The connections between these lexical representations manifest themselves in three types of relationships: (a) between spelling and sound, (b) between sound and meaning, and (c) between spelling and meaning (Ari 2016: 719) (Figure 1). Semantic processing of a printed word (Type c) is nearly impossible without decoding the word through the orthographic-phonological association (Type a). In other words, even if a child has a large amount of spoken lexical knowledge, it will not be activated unless the child can translate the written form of a word into its spoken counterpart. Adams argued that orthographic-phonological connections must precede other types of connections, because cleaning up its linkage enables readers to ‘more powerfully, efficiently, and unambiguously direct energy exactly and only to its meaning’ (2011a: 12).

Figure 1. Connections between spelling, sound and meaning (Ari 2016: 719)



2.3.2. Decoding Accuracy and Fluency

While skilled English decoding requires both accuracy and fluency, it has been observed that accurate decoding practices typically precede automatic and fluent word reading (Vanniarajan 2012). Once beginning readers learn to read words accurately, they then read simple, decodable texts with increasing fluency. As Chall's (1983) stages of reading development and Ehri's (1998) alphabetic phases clearly demonstrated, word reading development shifts from the accuracy dimension to the speed dimension at a certain point in time. Juul, Poursen and Elbro (2014) claimed that word reading speed can only substantially develop after children have achieved a basic accuracy level of 70% correct, referred to as the 'basic accuracy achievement time'. This accuracy-before-speed pattern appears reasonable, since speed without accuracy is of little practical use for comprehension. An empirical study by Bogacz and colleagues (2010) also discovered that when offered a speed-accuracy trade-off, readers mostly chose to be accurate at the expense of being fast.

Research has found that accuracy and speed are distinct cognitive processing strategies in early word recognition and thus should be assessed and interpreted separately (Byrne et al. 2009; Shany and Share 2011). In many studies that investigate beginning readers' word recognition development, a battery of assessments includes four code-related measures as strong predictors of early reading success in English: letter knowledge, PA, nonword reading and rapid naming (Storch and Whitehurst 2002; Chow et al. 2010; Catts et al. 2015). Among these code-related measures, letter knowledge, PA and nonword reading predict word reading accuracy, whereas naming speed is a strong predictor for fluency (Savage and Frederickson 2005; Juul et al. 2014).

Since the present research focuses on accurate English decoding practices, the discussion will revolve around decoding accuracy, rather than automaticity and fluency. Indeed, the later speed-oriented stage, often referred to as the 'orthographic stage', is regarded as an advanced level of word recognition (Castles and Nation 2006; Kida 2016), vital for text comprehension (Perfetti 1985, 1992; Ehri, 1995, 1998, 2005; Morris et al. 2012).

2.4. L1 English Decoding Acquisition

When discussing FL English decoding accuracy acquisition, it is beneficial to examine L1 English decoding processes, given the existence of a universal background for language learning. The crucial cognitive and linguistic skills for recognizing print include a phonological coding strategy, a visual-orthographic strategy and/or a combination of the two.

2.4.1. The Great Debate

Over the past five decades, there has been continued scholarly debate about effective early reading instruction (Thompson and Nicholson 1999). Chall noted that many controversies about best practices in beginning reading instruction boil down to one question: *Do children learn better with a beginning method that stresses meaning or with one that stresses learning the code?* (1967: 75)

At one end of this dichotomy is Chall's classic, *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (1967), while at the other end is Goodman's famous 'psycholinguistic guessing game' (1967: 127). Researchers and educators who support Chall's stance emphasize explicit instruction for early code-breaking practice at the letter level (bottom-up approach). A prime example of this is phonics. By contrast, the other line of research holds that good readers use whole language elements such as context clues and background knowledge to guess new words (top-down approach). An example of this is the so-called 'Whole Language' / 'Real Books' approach. They contend that the primary goal of reading instruction, however early it may be, should be meaning construction rather than the teaching of letter-level decoding processing.

In recent years, the famous 'Reading Wars' have evolved into a 'Grand Synthesis' (Stanovich 2000: 405-6) in pursuit of a proper balance between the two approaches. McCardle and Chhabra (2005) noted that effective reading instruction should examine the efficacy of a broader set of instructional approaches, incorporating all five components of reading: PA, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. In the field of beginning English reading, research indicates that students should first acquire the foundational word

recognition skills before the instructional focus shifts to higher level skills including fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (Otto 2008).

2.4.2. Oral Vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary plays an important role in literacy development. When native-English-speaking children begin to cope with written language, they come well equipped with a large bank of oral vocabulary (Ehri 1998; Arnold and Rixon 2014). According to Biemiller (2009), L1 English learners have obtained a spoken lexicon of about 5,000 root words by school entry. When attempting to read, children rely on oral lexical knowledge as a useful source for making intelligent guesses (Pinter 2017). Children rarely encounter words in print that they have not already been exposed to via listening (Duff et al. 2015). *Letters and Sounds* (DfES 2007), the government-backed public phonics curriculum in the United Kingdom, also acknowledges the importance of oral vocabulary in learning to read and write:

Put simply, the more words children know and understand before they start on a systematic program of phonics work, the better equipped they are to succeed. (*Letters and Sounds: Notes of Guidance*, DfES 2007: 10)

Referring back to the connections between spelling, sound and meaning (Figure 1, p. 23), sound-meaning connections have already been established for L1 children by the time they learn to read. Once spellings are correctly decoded into spoken forms, the connections between spelling and meaning are completed almost immediately by way of sound-meaning connections. All the children need to do is to learn how to decode.

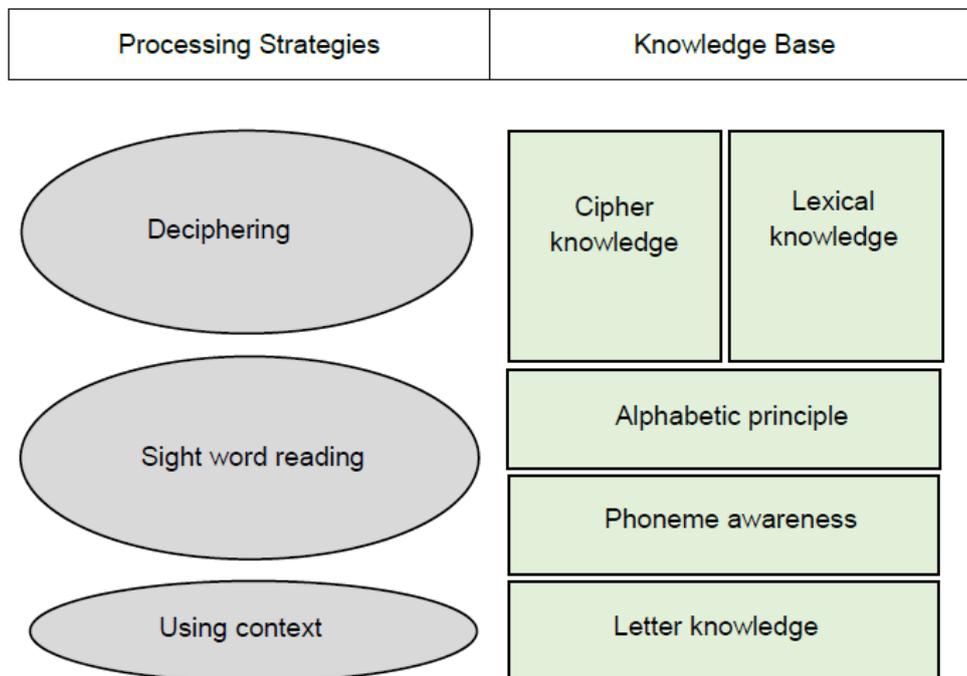
2.4.3. Cognitive Knowledge and Strategies

Two types of knowledge base are needed for children learning to read in English: cipher knowledge and lexical knowledge (Hoover and Gough 2000). Cipher knowledge refers to the readers' ability to recognize systematic GPCs and sound out regularly spelled words. Lexical knowledge is necessary when cipher knowledge is insufficient for word recognition. When the readers encounter an irregularly spelled word like 'tongue', they may make an initial deciphering

attempt. But upon realizing that it does not work, they may search their lexical knowledge for an approximate word that they already know in its spoken form.

Cipher and lexical knowledge is composed of other abilities at lower levels: letter knowledge, PA and the alphabetic principle (Hoover and Gough 2000). Letter knowledge is the ability to perceive and manipulate alphabet letters. PA enables readers to detect and manipulate the smallest unit of sounds in spoken vocabulary. Learners with PA understand that there are intraword subunits in a word, such as /s/-/p/-/u:/-/n/ in 'spoon'. It is not enough, however, to simply know letters and sounds *per se* to decode words. Readers should learn the alphabetic principle by associating letters with the corresponding sounds. Without a conscious effort to discover this systematic connection, learners may rely on random guessing rather than applying a strategy (McConnell and Kubina 2016). The entire processes of decoding are summarized in Figure 2, as adapted from Hoover and Gough (2000).

Figure 2. Cognitive knowledge and strategies for English decoding (adapted from Hoover and Gough 2000)



2.4.4. Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness refers to the ability to detect, analyze and blend the sounds of spoken words independent of meaning. Since the landmark studies by Isabelle Liberman and associates in the 1970s (Liberman 1973; Liberman et al. 1974), the development of this cognitive processing represents an excellent predictor of early reading acquisition and later reading success (Wagner and Torgesen 1987; Adams 1990; Goswami and Bryant 1990). It encompasses a set of skills, using the larger units of syllables, intermediate structures such as onsets, rimes, bodies and codas, and the smallest phonemic unit (Goswami and Bryant 1990; Stahl and Murray 1994; Lonigan et al. 1998; Anthony and Francis 2005).

'Small versus large unit' debate

While many agree on the powerful relationship between phonological awareness and reading attainment, there still remains significant disagreement about which level or segment unit best explains early English reading. Questions have been posed particularly about the distinction between phonemes and rhymes (Seymour and Evans 1994). The initial discussion revolved around phoneme level. Gough and Hillinger (1980) claimed that an alphabetic language necessitates learners to acquire phonemic segments in spoken words prior to alphabetic instruction of letter-sound correspondences.

In contrast, Bradley and Bryant (1983) argued that alliteration and rhyme awareness had a direct causal link to early reading acquisition. One of the most influential hypotheses was advanced by Goswami and Bryant (1990). They proposed a developmental sequence of early phonological skills, with children first becoming aware of larger segment units (syllables and onset-rime) and finally phonemes. A critical claim is that onset-rime skills, which naturally emerge prior to reading development, should predict early reading. Phonemic skills only become important in later phases, possibly as a result of reading.

In 1998, Hulme and colleagues rebutted this hypothesis and reaffirmed the predictive power of phonemic segmentation, rather than rhyming, in early reading skills (Muter et al. 1997; Nation and Hulme 1997). Carroll and

colleagues (2003) noted that these two segments are separable skills that correlate with different cognitive and linguistic skills. While rhyme awareness correlates with speech and grows naturally out of language development, PA correlates with reading and is considered as cognitive and metalinguistic development (Gombert 1992; Foy and Mann 2001). Renewed debate was sparked when the researchers questioned the validity of the methods and procedures of the studies (Bryant 1998; Hulme et al. 1998; Bryant 2002; Goswami 2002; Hulme 2002; Hulme et al. 2002).

This 'small versus large unit' debate is still ongoing. On the one hand, it is argued that sensitivity to onset and rhyme as well as phonemic segmentation plays a crucial role in early reading success (Goswami and East 2000; Corriveau et al. 2010). The research scope has expanded into children with dyslexia or hearing problems (Goswami 2000; Johnson and Goswami 2010) and languages other than English (Goswami et al. 2005; Ziegler and Goswami 2005). On the other hand, a wealth of evidence confirms that PA, rather than larger segments, is more closely predictive of early reading of normal children (MacMillan 2002; Hatcher et al. 2004; Savage and Carless 2005; Carlson et al. 2013; Cunningham and Carroll 2015), children at risk of reading failure (Hatcher et al. 2004; Savage and Carless 2005; Bailet et al. 2013), and for languages of different degrees of transparency (Marketa et al. 2005; Caravolas et al. 2012; Caravolas et al. 2013).

However, a dichotomy between both frames can be misleading. As Goswami suggested, the segment unit children use in reading depends on 'the nature of the reading task, the type of words being read, the methods of reading tuition that they [the learners] are experiencing, and the orthography under investigation' (2002: 47). Rather, it is necessary to examine factors that can help children develop phonological awareness and associate this skill with subsequent word-level reading.

PA and letter knowledge

While phonological awareness is purely oral, a growing body of evidence shows that its development is most effective in the explicit links between speech and print. Hatcher, Hulme and Ellis (1994) proposed a 'phonological linkage

hypothesis', in which they argued that children who were taught both PA and GPCs produced considerable improvements in phonemic processing skills and word reading (Hatcher et al. 2004; Bowyer-Crane et al. 2008; Hulme et al. 2012). This view is sympathetic with Ehri and Soffer's (1999) term 'graphophonemic awareness' as opposed to purely PA.

The relationship between letter knowledge and PA is well documented (Bowey 1994; Wagner et al. 1994; McBride-Chang 1999; Carroll 2004; Castles and Coltheart 2004; Piasta and Wagner 2010). Lerner and Lonigan (2016) found that the more letter-name knowledge children had, the more growth in initial PA they showed, and vice versa. Kim and colleagues (2010) also showed that children with a higher level of PA were better able to identify and produce individual sounds by using the clues that letter names provided. While the question of how letter knowledge facilitates phonemic segmentation is still open, Castles, Wilson and Coltheart (2011) concluded that GPCs may have encouraged children to develop more precise phonemic representations for the sounds they knew.

Orthographic knowledge, however, does not always facilitate performance on phonological tasks. Ehri and Wilce (1980) showed that fourth graders responded differently when they segmented phonemes of 'pitch' and 'rich', although both words have the same number of phonemes. The extra letter <t> in 'pitch' may have interfered with their phonological judgements. Further, Stuart (1990) found that when 9-year-old children were asked to delete /n/ from 'bind', many produced 'bid' as an orthographically based answer rather than a purely phonological 'bide'.

In phoneme segmentation or deletion tasks, preliterate children may have to rely only on their phonological awareness. By contrast, children with literacy skills can be selective – responding purely phonologically or orthographically. They may access the written form of the spoken word and work on the letter(s) that correspond to the target sound. As Ehri and Wilce concluded, spelling knowledge 'shapes children's conceptualization of their phonetic structure' (1980: 381).

Reciprocity between PA and reading

Phonological awareness takes a long time to obtain, particularly at the phoneme level. A good deal of research has highlighted the reciprocal relationship between PA and literacy acquisition (Perfett et al. 1987; Whitehurst and Lonigan 1998; Castles and Coltheart 2004; Cunningham and Carroll 2011; Kim and Petscher 2011; McBride-Chang 2016).

Simple PA is a prerequisite for alphabetic literacy, while more sophisticated phonemic manipulation skills develop through literacy experiences in reciprocal fashion, i.e., gains in reading engender corresponding gains in phonemic skills, which, in turn, promotes further reading enhancement (Koda 1998: 196).

The basic level of PA involves simple tasks, such as detecting the beginning or end consonant of monosyllable CVC words (e.g. 'ten'). These words typically have the same number of phonemes and letters and a clear correspondence between them. More sophisticated skills involve more challenging tasks including phoneme deletion (e.g. "Take out /f/ from *fan* and say the rest"), segmentation, counting or reversal (e.g. "Say the sounds of *skin* backwards"). Words become longer and more complicated with complex spelling patterns, syllable structure or opaque letter-sound knowledge. Goswami and East (2000) further suggested that such a bidirectional relation between PA and reading abilities can be extended to different levels of phonological awareness.

Given the complex nature of PA and the time and effort required to achieve its mastery, a question arises over how to perceive the mistakes that learners make in the developmental process: Should they be considered as 'errors' or rather as evidence of phonological sensitivity in progress? Gombert (1996) examined how children with various literacy skills performed on phoneme counting tasks. When asked to tap the number of phonemes in words, nonliterate children counted syllables and some beginning readers counted letters, not phonemes, producing two taps for a digraph. These performances were categorized as errors and the subjects who failed to do the task correctly were deemed to lack the ability to analyze the phonological structure of a word. Even in a simple

blending task with a CVC word like 'bag', some children may say *buh-ae-guh* when asked to combine the sounds. This is because speech units overlap and 'any alphabetical representation of speech is, in some ways, flawed' (McBride-Chang 2016: 26). In this case, should their production be assessed as wrong or should they be seen as phonologically aware, or both? Little is known regarding this topic, but it does not seem fair to judge phonological sensitivity in the developmental stage as entirely negative.

2.4.5. Alphabetic Principle

English GPCs are notoriously complex and inconsistent (Adams 1990, 2011a; Perfetti 1992; Ehri et al. 2001; Arnold and Rixon 2014; Pinter 2017). Although there are just over 40 phonemes in English, over 500 different spelling-sound rules are needed to read (Juel 1994). The orthographic irregularity and inconsistency of the English language is such that one example demonstrates 18 different spelling patterns for the long /u:/ phoneme in such words as: moon, group, fruit, glue, drew, two, flu, canoe, through, rule, lieu, loose, lose, coup, bruise, deuce, sleuth, rendezvous, and mousse (American Literacy Council 2008). From a teaching perspective, it is practically impossible to teach children all those ciphering rules. Even so, there is a general consensus over scope and sequence.

Referring to *Letters and Sounds (Notes of Guidance)*, the introduction of GPCs should be 'in a clearly defined, incremental sequence' (DfES 2007: 10). As shown in Table 4, this phonics curriculum introduces GPCs of some alphabetic letters and simple blending in Phase Two, following oral blending and segmenting in Phase One. GPC recognition of all 26 single alphabetic letters is complete in Phase Three, which also teaches sounds that are represented by more than a single letter, such as <sh> and <ch> for digraphs and <ei> and <ee> for diphthongs and long vowels. Attention is given to consonant clusters in Phase Four, and split digraphs are taught in Phase Five.

Table 4. Sequence of GPC introduction in *Letters and Sounds* (adapted from DfES 2007)

Phase	Learning focus
1	Development of phoneme awareness through oral blending and segmenting
2	Introduction of GPCs of some alphabetic letters and initial practicing of VC/CVC blending and segmenting
3	Completion of GPCs of all 26 alphabetic letters and some digraphs and diphthongs represented by typical groups of letters, such as <sh>, <ch>, <ee>, <ai>, <ou> to represent at least 42 phonemes
4	Acquisition of consonant clusters by beginning with CCVC ('stop') and CVCC ('tent'), and even more adjacent consonants in words like 'stand' (CCVCC) and 'scrunch' (CCCCVCC)
5	Understanding of one-to-several mapping between graphemes and phonemes, that is, alternative pronunciations for graphemes (i.e. <ow> in 'cow' and 'arrow') and alternative spellings for phonemes including split digraphs (<a_e>, <i_e>, <o_e>, <u_e>)
6	Focus on proficiency with spelling

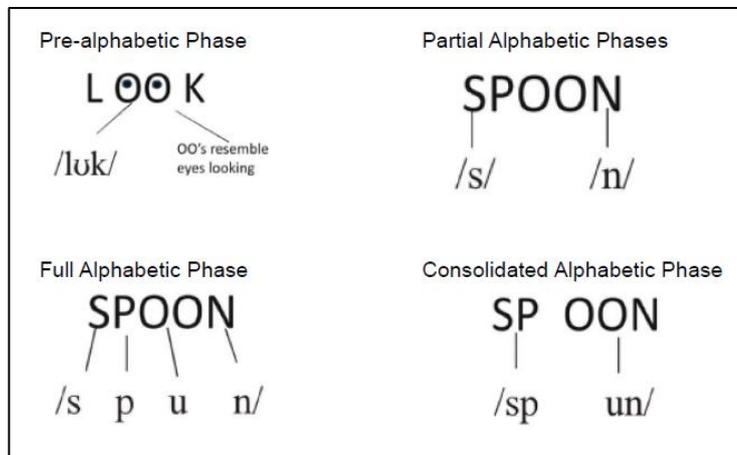
Even for the 26 single letter sounds, there are varying levels of difficulty for the acquisition of their GPCs in terms of the letter-name structure hypothesis and the letter-sound ambiguity hypothesis (Huang et al. 2014). According to the letter-name structure hypothesis, the sounds of English alphabet letters that contain letter-sound cues (e.g. /b/ for in 'bee') are easier to grasp than others (e.g. /j/ for <y> in 'yes') (McBride-Chang 1999; Evans et al. 2006; Kim et al. 2010). The letter-sound ambiguity hypothesis states that some letters correspond to multiple sounds (e.g. <c> in 'car' or 'city'), which may take more time and instruction to master (Scanlon et al. 2010).

2.4.6. Ehri's Alphabetic Phases

Given systematic and idiosyncratic relationships between English graphemes and phonemes, Ehri (1995, 1998) identified four different strategies that mature readers use for accurate word processing: decoding (deciphering), analogy, sight and prediction. Ehri's alphabetic phases primarily deal with consistent GPCs in deciphering phonetically regular words (1998: 17-24). Figure 3 illustrates the four deciphering stages, including pre-, partial, full and

consolidated alphabetic phases. Pre-alphabetic readers are adept at sight word reading by noticing and remembering certain visual features of a word, referred to as ‘visual cue reading’ (Ehri and Wilce 1985). Examples are the two round eyes in ‘look’ in Figure 3 and the tail dangling at the end of ‘dog’, or environmental print reading such as the golden arches of McDonald’s restaurants. In contrast, children in subsequent phases understand that the English writing system represents sound and develop ‘phonetic cue reading’ by taking advantage of their grapheme-phoneme knowledge and blending the sounds of the letters to decipher words.

Figure 3. Ehri’s alphabetic phases (adapted from Ehri 1998: 18)



Deciphering and analogy

The transition from the pre-alphabetic to the alphabetic phase requires three types of knowledge or skills: letter knowledge, PA and GPCs (Byrne and Fielding-Barnsley 1991; Hoover and Gough 2000; Birch 2015). Similar to Chall’s (1983) Stage 0, non-alphabetic children can recognize some written signs and their own names in print and also know some letter names. However, they have to be taught to perceive the shapes, names and primary sounds of the 52 upper- and lower-case alphabet characters in order to move to the alphabetic phase. In addition, readers have to develop or strengthen PA, since the ability to break down spoken vocabulary into its composite sounds is a strong predictor of early English literacy acquisition.

During the partial alphabetic phase, readers can segment only some parts of a word, mainly its initial or final consonant(s), and link the letters to corresponding sounds stored in their mental lexicon to approximate a real word. The reason why deciphering is partial rather than complete at the initial stage of the alphabetic phase is that fledgling readers tend to give their attention to 'partial orthographic information such as initial letters' (Juel and Minden-Cupp 2004: 316). At the same time, vowels are harder to recognize at the early stage of deciphering because, compared to consonants, English vowels are less salient in sound yet more complicated in spelling (Ehri 1998). Because consonants are perceived as more salient in sound recognition, a beginning reader often spells 'hn' for 'hen' without the vowel 'e' and 'gdn' for 'garden' missing out all the vowels. Conversely, this observation emphasizes the particular importance of vowel correspondences before learners reach the full alphabetic phase.

Full alphabetic readers then apply complete GPCs to all component sounds of the letters in a word, widely known as a 'word attack strategy' (Ehri 2005). Since full alphabetic reading with increased GPCs makes word reading much more accurate than partial alphabetic reading, it enables readers to decipher words that they have never before seen in print or heard. Without having to rely on the oral vocabulary knowledge in their mental dictionary for comprehension, readers in this phase can read unfamiliar and unknown words simply by blending individual sounds that they have practiced. Furthermore, it is during the full alphabetic phase that readers begin to manipulate the graphophonic system and blending skills in a more flexible and creative way, deciphering even nonwords such as 'fram' and 'shong' (Adams 2011a). At this stage, word recognition is not always in parallel with meaning construction or pronunciation search in the oral vocabulary, but appears as an independent coding skill with or without regard to the identification of meaning.

Ehri's final stage - the consolidated alphabetic phase - makes deciphering both accurate and fast, since readers process chunks of letters instead of attacking individual letters. For example, more advanced readers in English recognize common letter patterns in words such as <-all> ('all, hall, tall, fall, small') and <-ack> ('back, sack, crack, black') from their reading experiences. In this phase, readers begin to recognize words that contain inconsistent spelling patterns

that defy conventional GPCs. Goswami (1990) found that English readers can use their knowledge of rhyming words to read words with polysyllables or tricky spellings by orthographic analogies. For example, a learner can read 'brother' by analogy to the already known word 'mother', or read 'peak' by analogy to 'beak'.

Sight and prediction

Developing English readers can attack regularly spelled words using letter-sound knowledge while making attempts to read some irregular words by analogizing to already known words. However, a majority of unusually spelled words (e.g. 'eye') that do not conform to consistent spelling systems need to be remembered by sight as whole words. Knowledge of sight words is also essential for early literacy development, since one third of written words in English defy consistent letter-sound relationships (Colheart and Rastle 2001). The most frequently occurring sight words are particularly important, since they account for nearly 60% of English text (Vousden 2008). Masterson and colleagues (2010) discovered that almost half of the 100 most common words contain irregular spellings and are thus not easily decodable by using grapheme-phoneme rules (Figure 4).

Figure 4. 100 most frequent words (Masterson et al. 2010: 229)

Regular by simple grapheme-phoneme rules	Regular by more complex grapheme-phoneme rules	Irregular
And, in, it, on, at, up, but, can, had, went, not, will, him, get, mum, dad, back, big, got, it's, help, just, from, off, if, an	for, with, that, her, out, this, down, then, like, here, see, when, them, very, came, now, too, house, children, day, saw, time, about, made, make,	the, a, to, said, he, I, was, you, of, they, she, is, his, we, my, all, little, what, no, me, have, there, one, are, go, so, be, were, do, come, as, look, into, some, looked, Mr, your, old, don't, Mrs, put, could, oh, by, their, people, asked, called, I'm
Total: 26	Total: 25	Total: 49

Using contextual cues to guess or predict unfamiliar or irregularly spelled words was identified by Ehri (1998) as one of the important strategies that readers use for decoding. With reference to the use of pictures and texts as contextual cues, readers take full advantage of their knowledge and cognitive

processing strategies in making intelligent guesses of the meaning and pronunciation of some words. Reading, as a 'psycholinguistic guessing game' (Goodman 1967: 127), should involve interaction between language and thought, relying on the context and previous knowledge in order to identify words and guess their meanings.

However, the top-down approach does not explain how readers read most words in a text (Stanovich 1986). When guessing is necessary to cope with unfamiliar words on a page, mature readers are skillful at using both bottom-up and top-down strategies. This does not seem to apply to beginning readers, however. Many beginning readers tend to use a top-down reading style because they find it easier to guess the identity of a new word from its context than to decode it (Adams 1980; Chall 1983; Birch 2015). This reliance on top-down strategies may work for simple texts, but as readers advance to more authentic and complex reading material, guessing may not be sufficient in successful word recognition. In fact, it can become a 'hindrance when it is used to avoid decoding altogether' (Adams 1980: 17).

Although beginning readers need substantial support for top-down processing when recognizing words as a way to supplement deficiencies at the intraword level of decoding processing (Birch 2015), it is also a fact that more attention needs to be paid to bottom-up strategy development to ensure more accurate word identification. As Adams suggested, skilled reading can only happen 'when the processes involved in word recognition have become sufficiently overlearned that they require minimal effort' (1980: 18).

2.4.7. Socio-Contextual Foundation

Learning to read is not a value-free, pure skill-developing training but a socially embedded practice that is hugely affected by the sociocultural environment (Barton 2001). The importance of the sociocultural dimension in beginning literacy was identified by Vygotsky (1978), who viewed the process of learning and cognition as a socially situated and culturally mediated activity. From this perspective, learning to read is not decontextualized information processing

but requires an adequate understanding of the specific settings and mediating factors that affect the learning processes.

In trying to justify the view of literacy as a social act, Street (1984) made a distinction between autonomous models and ideological models of literacy. The autonomous model presented a view of literacy as a neutral, technical matter of universal cognitive skills acquisition that is common across contexts. On the other hand, the ideological model of literacy views literacy development as a social act between children and their carers/teachers, who are engaged in meaningful social and cultural intentions and interactions in specific contexts. One example was the perceived lack of continuity of literacy practices, behaviors and interactions between home environments, teacher beliefs and classroom practices (Michael 1981; Heath 1983). Street (2017) summarized the argument:

The way in which teachers or facilitators and their students interact is already a social practice that affects the nature of the literacy learned and the ideas about literacy held by the participants. (Street 2017: 5)

Family characteristics

Much of family literacy research and practice has shown that various family characteristics such as the home literacy environment and the socioeconomic status (SES) have been identified as having strong relationships with children's cognitive and linguistic abilities. The home literacy environment includes parent-child shared reading, exposure to English materials and parental teaching (Sénéchal 2006; Baker 2013; Butler 2014a; Niklas and Schneider 2015). Han and Neuharth-Pritchett (2015) discussed the various potential benefits of parent-child interactions through shared reading such as the enhancement of children's letter knowledge and also meaning construction. Hume, Lonigan and McQueen (2015) found positive relations between parent literacy-promoting practices, such as shared reading and providing reading materials, and the children's reading interest. The importance of the family's socioeconomic backgrounds is well documented (see Hoff 2006 for a review). Bourdieu (1986) argued in 'social capital theory' that a low SES would make it

difficult for parents to provide their children with a stimulating language environment. Hart and Risley (1995, 2003) showed that young American children with high socioeconomic family backgrounds hear more diverse words than those in low socioeconomic families, which affects their vocabulary growth.

In line with the emphasis on reading as a social process, Taylor (1983) recognized the impact of child-parent relationships on children's early literacy knowledge generation and skills development. She also identified the reciprocity of learning between parents and children as opposed to the unilinear act of parents teaching a series of discrete skills to their young children. Intergenerational literacy practices and differences have also been examined in the United Kingdom (Gregory 1996) and the United States (Gadsden 1998). Apart from parents, Gregory and colleagues (1996, 2001, 2004) highlighted the role of siblings in supporting the literacy development of younger siblings in terms of 'scaffolding, guided participation and synergy taking' (Gregory 2008: 71).

Reading texts

Discussions on appropriate English decoding texts revolve around highly decodable texts, such as '*The fat cat sat on the mat*' and '*My hat is big and red*' (Cheatham and Allor 2012). Text with high decodability is beneficial to beginning readers because the words that are phonetically regular and can be decoded sound by sound provide them with scaffolding to foster the development of decoding skills by applying the taught alphabetic principle to identify words (Mesmer 2001). Some of Dr. Seuss's books offer good opportunities for sound-letter patterns (Hiebert 1998). For example, *Hop on Pop* explicitly presents the proper vehicle for fostering early literacy in a fun and meaningful way in sentences like, '*All. Tall. We are all tall. All. Small. We are all small. All. Ball. Ball. Wall. We all play ball up on a wall*'.

However, there is a concern that highly decodable text typifies short sentences and simple storylines as well as strictly controlled vocabulary, which may turn young children's first reading experience into a tedious and awkward mechanical drill practice (Adams 2009). It is important to note that not only

decodability but also predictability and high frequency words are essential in cultivating English decoding ability, particularly for reading real books (Mesmer 2010). A suitable English language learning text should include repetition of phrases and structures, making language predictable (Cameron 2001; Linse 2007). A majority of high frequency words defy the consistent spelling systems and need to be remembered as whole words via frequent encounters in texts.

2.5. English Decoding for Korean ELLs

English decoding acquisition for Korean ELLs entails a host of context-specific linguistic, cognitive, social and cultural processes such that their prior knowledge and experiences in different learning environments have a significant effect on how they cope with the TL. The differences between beginning readers in L1 and FL are summarized as follows. When FL learners learn to read in English:

- 1) reading instruction may begin at a later time, compared to L1 learners (Pinter 2017);
- 2) they may not come with extensive experiences of spoken communications (Arnold and Rixon 2014; Pinter 2017);
- 3) they may have incomplete linguistic knowledge of English, particularly vocabulary knowledge (Laufer 1997);
- 4) they may already have had literacy experiences of one language - L1 (Arnold and Rixon 2014; Pinter 2017); and
- 5) their L1 literacy experience may either facilitate or interfere with their FL English reading acquisition (Koda 2005).

In the following sections, the benefits or challenges regarding young Korean ELLs' English decoding acquisition are discussed in terms of the learners' age and schooling, oral language deficiency, Korean phonology and orthography, cross-linguistic transfer, and socio-contextual challenges.

2.5.1. Learners' Age and Schooling

Many young children are curious about reading in a new language when they start learning it and are cognitively capable of developing reading and writing skills in the foreign language (Pinter 2017). In EFL contexts, simultaneous biliteracy acquisition is rare and there is a sequential relationship between L1 and FL. This sequential language acquisition brings cognitive-linguistic benefits to FL learners in various respects (Cummins 1999; Proctor et al. 2006; Arnold and Rixon 2014; Shin and Crandall 2019). When children begin to learn to read in an FL, they possess wider and deeper factual, experiential and schematic knowledge about the world than L1 learners. Further, young FL learners have already attained some knowledge and reading/writing strategies in their own language. They are well aware of text and fully knowledgeable of the basic concepts about print and what it means to read.

If FL learners learn to decode English after school entry, aged seven or eight, it can enable them to process abstract information more efficiently. Unlike children in early childhood, aged between two and seven, those of seven years and upwards are cognitively capable of undertaking abstract thinking, logical reasoning and other higher-level thinking skills such as inference, classification, comparison and contrast (Philp et al. 2008). Age seven refers to Piaget's famous turning point from a pre-operational to an operational stage (Piaget 1923) and Wood's 'intellectual revolution' (Wood 1998: 23).

It is widely accepted that prior experience of L1 literacy acquisition empowers FL learners with the abstract symbolic transformation processing that is needed to develop the ability to read and write. Since written words are abstract representations of objects and ideas, learning to read and write requires high-level cognitive strategies to allocate meaning to these socially defined symbols (Vygotsky 1978). Taking one example, the burden on memory in remembering the shapes, names and primary sounds of 52 upper- and lower-case alphabet characters will be much less for FL learners, compared to L1 learners who begin to cope with the written language (Ehri 1998).

Formal schooling is important for literacy development (Cunningham 2010; McBride-Chang 2016). Morrison and colleagues have examined the impact of schooling on children's cognitive-linguistic and reading abilities in the United States (Christian et al. 2000; Skibbe et al. 2011; Skibbe et al. 2012). Across these studies, academic schooling was found to have a significantly positive impact on the children's phonological awareness, letter knowledge and reading achievement. In addition, there was a considerable increase in short-term memory among the children who attended school. Cunningham and Carroll (2011) also showed that the effect of one year of schooling was approximately twice as great as an extra year of reading and spelling.

2.5.2. Oral Language Deficiency

As discussed in Section 2.4.2 (Oral Vocabulary p. 27), oral language competence plays an important role in literacy development (Ehri 1998; Arnold and Rixon 2014; Pinter 2017). FL learners' low oral competence and limited spoken vocabulary knowledge are detrimental to noticing similar patterns in English words (e.g. 'bat, cat, mat, fat') on the one hand and to recognizing exception words on the other hand. A lack of oral vocabulary delays the lexical restructuring processes (Walley et al. 2003). In contrast, massive vocabulary growth triggers changes in learners' lexical representation from being initially holistic (e.g. 'cat') to becoming segmented at the phoneme level (e.g. /k/-/æ/-/t/), which then promotes PA and development. Further, Mitchell and Brady (2013) confirmed that learners with extensive oral vocabulary knowledge are better equipped for reading unusually spelled words.

2.5.3. Korean Orthography and Phonology

Before discussing cross-language transfer in the following section, it is important to explain the orthographic and phonological characteristics of the learners' L1 Korean. Just like English, Korean orthography *Hangeul* is an alphabetic language, in which alphabetic letters represent speech sounds (Figure 5). Unlike many other writing systems, Korean *Hangeul* was invented, rather than developed, and thus its GPCs are transparent, though there are

sound changes over time and dialect differences (Cho and McBride-Chang 2005; Shin et al. 2013).

Figure 5. *Hangeul* consonants, vowels and syllables (Cho and McBride-Chang 2005: 565)

Basic Consonants	ㄱ ㄴ ㄷ ㄹ ㅁ ㅂ ㅅ ㅇ ㅈ ㅊ ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ ㅎ		
	/g/ /n/ /d/ /l,r/ /m/ /b/ /s/ /ŋ/ /j/ /ch/ /k/ /t/ /p/ /h/		
Basic Vowels	ㅏ ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅜ ㅠ ㅡ ㅣ		
	/a/ /ya/ /ɔ/ /yɔ/ /o/ /yo/ /u/ /yu/ /ü/ /i/		
Syllables	도시	얼굴	컴퓨터
Pronunciation	/do si/	/öl gul/	/köm pyu tö/
English word	city	face	computer

Hangeul: the Korean alphabet

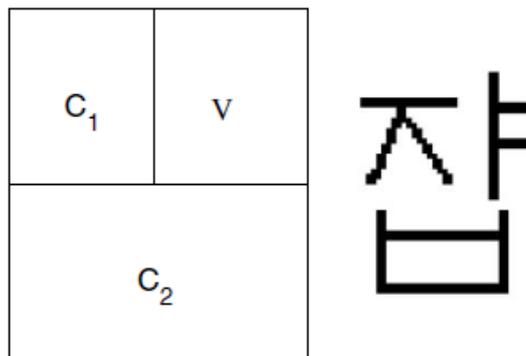
Hangeul consists of 24 basic letters and 16 complex letters. Among the 24 basic letters, 14 are consonants and 10 are vowels (Figure 6). There is systematic correspondence between letters. For example, lax consonant sounds become aspirated by adding a stroke: ㄱ→ㅋ; ㄷ→ㅌ; ㅂ→ㅍ; and ㅅ→ㅆ. Further, doubling of basic consonants results in the tensing of sounds: ㄱ→ㄲ; ㄷ→ㄸ; ㅂ→ㅃ; ㅅ→ㅆ; and ㅈ→ㅉ.

Figure 6. *Hangeul* alphabet (Shin et al. 2013: 4)

(1) Korean alphabet
a. Basic letters for consonants (14)
ㄱ, ㄴ, ㄷ, ㄹ, ㅁ, ㅂ, ㅅ, ㅇ, ㅈ, ㅊ, ㅋ, ㅌ, ㅍ, ㅎ
b. Basic letters for vowels (10)
ㅏ, ㅑ, ㅓ, ㅕ, ㅗ, ㅛ, ㅜ, ㅠ, ㅡ, ㅣ
c. Complex letters for consonants (5)
ㄲ, ㄸ, ㅃ, ㅆ, ㅉ
d. Complex letters for vowels (11)
ㅘ, ㅙ, ㅚ, ㅛ, ㅜ, ㅠ, ㅡ, ㅣ, ㅝ, ㅞ, ㅟ, ㅠ, ㅡ, ㅢ

A feature of Korean *Hangeul*, which makes it distinctive from English, is that the script is syllabic as well as alphabetic in the sense that letters are written within a square block, with each block representing one syllable. Unlike English, in which words are composed of a string of letters in a linear format, Korean letters or letter combinations are arranged from left-to-right, top-to-bottom within a square figure, with only one vowel letter per block, that is, per syllable (Figure 7). With the CVC structure within a block, C1 is the syllable-initial position (onset), V is the syllable-medial position (nucleus), and C2 is the syllable-final position (coda). Because of the dual features of the alphabetic principle and the syllabic configuration of *Hangeul*, Taylor and Taylor (1995) have called this script an alpha-syllabary.

Figure 7. CVC orthographic block pattern of a Korean syllable (Perfetti and Liu 2005: 197)



Korean phonology

The Korean oral language has fewer phonemes than English, having 19 consonants, 10 vowels and 2 glides. A glide is also called a semivowel and has the properties of vowels as well as consonants. Unlike a vowel, however, a glide can only form a syllable in combination with a monophthong. In English, the glides like /w/ and /j/ are considered as consonants, but in Korean, they are classified as a type of vowel (Shin et al. 2013).

Figure 8, adopted from Shin and colleagues (2013), shows the inventory of Korean consonants, classified according to the place of articulation (across the top of the table) and manner (down the left side of the table). Korean stop

consonants and affricates have three subdivisions: lax-tense-aspirated. The doubling of a lax consonant (i.e. /p-ㅍ/) makes a tense sound (/p*-ㅍ/), while the addition of a stroke results in the aspiration of the sound (/p^h-ㅍ/). This pattern applies to /t, t*, t^h/, /k, k*, k^h/, /tc, tc*, tc^h/. One thing to note is that /r/ in English does not exist in Korean, in which the English sound often corresponds to /ㄹ/ in Korean. But /ㄹ/ makes the [r] sound as the allophone of /l/ when the sound is in the onset (C1) position of the first syllable of the word. Otherwise, /ㄹ/ makes the /l/ sound. For example, ‘radio’ is spelled ‘라디오’ and pronounced as /ra:-di-o/, while ‘hello’ is spelled ‘헬로’ and pronounced as /hel-lo/.

Figure 8. Korean consonant inventory (Shin et al. 2013: 57)

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Alveolo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop (plosive)					
Lax	p (ㅍ)	t (ㅌ)		k (ㄱ)	
Tense	p* (ㅍ*)	t* (ㅌ*)		k* (ㄱ*)	
Aspirated	p ^h (ㅍ ^h)	t ^h (ㅌ ^h)		k ^h (ㄱ ^h)	
Fricative					
Lax		s (ㅅ)			h (ㅎ)
Tense		s* (ㅅ*)			
Affricate					
Lax			tc (ㅈ)		
Tense			tc* (ㅈ*)		
Aspirated			tc ^h (ㅈ ^h)		
Nasal	m (ㅁ)	n (ㄴ)		ŋ (ㅇ)	
Liquid (lateral approximant)		l (ㄹ)			

With regard to vowels, Standard Korean Pronunciation (SKP) states that Korean has 10 monophthongs. In natural speech, however, the 10-monophthong system is debatable. For example, there is no distinction between /e-ㅔ/ and /æ-ㅐ/ , and /ε/ replaces both /e/ and /æ/. The orthographic differences between these vowels might lead the speakers to perceive and produce them distinctively. However, an empirical study with 210 native speakers in Seoul showed that the participants pronounced the two vowels the same 80 percent of the time (Choi

2002). Figure 9 shows a total of seven simple vowels, which are more applicable to the Korean speakers in everyday lives than the 10-monophthong system.

Figure 9. Seven monophthongs (Shin et al. 2013: 102)

	Front		Back	
	Unrounded		Unrounded	Rounded
High	i		ɯ	u
Mid	ɛ		ʌ	o
Low			ɑ	

2.5.4. Cross-Language Transfer

FL learners' prior knowledge of their L1 may either facilitate or interfere with their English decoding acquisition. For example, a large body of research on L2 phonological acquisition has argued that a learner's L1 has a huge effect on the sound perception and production in an L2 (Altenberg and Vago 1983; Flege et al. 1997; Riney et al. 2000; Major 2001; Zampini 2008). This section examines how two languages can trigger cross-linguistic transfer both in positive and negative ways.

PA in Korean

When Korean learners learn to read English after school entry, their Korean literacy acquisition is complete (Cho 2009). Since Korean is an alpha-syllabic language, it can be assumed that the cognitive strategies they employed in identifying Korean phonemes may play a facilitative role in developing L2 English PA and word reading. However, little is known about how Korean readers actually apply their Korean PA to English decoding. Rather, the paucity of research allows for different arguments.

One line of research argues for a positive relationship between the two languages. Goswami (2002) maintained that PA is developed fastest when children acquire orthographically transparent languages with consistent GPCs, like Korean. In an empirical study with Korean students in Grade 6, Cho and Seo (2004) found a positive transfer between Korean phonological awareness and English word reading. The second line of research examines a more accessible

phonological unit for Korean readers both in Korean and English in comparison to L1 English readers. McBride-Chang (2016) noted that language itself influences phonological awareness. In the example of ‘ca’ and ‘t’ instead of ‘c’ and ‘at’, one of the most common phonological divisions in Korean is body-coda unit, as opposed to onset-rime (Kim 2008; Cho et al. 2017).

The last line of research claims that L1 Korean acquisition does not account for any striking benefits in English PA and decoding performance. Comparing two ESL groups of Korean and Chinese ELLs, Koda (1998) argued that different L1 orthographic experiences are not directly related to English PA. Since Chinese is a logographic language whose written symbols do not represent sounds, L1 Chinese learners have limited prior alphabetic experiences in decoding skills. Nevertheless, both groups have demonstrated virtually the same level of PA and decoding ability in their L2 English reading acquisition. Kang (2009) even suggested that PA in the Korean oral language is rarely promoted as a critical role in enhancing Korean children’s word recognition, nor is it explicitly taught in Korean reading instruction. Since Korean *Hangeul* is orthographically transparent with fairly systematic letter-sound connections, children have little difficulty sounding out most of the letter combinations once they can identify the names of the Korean alphabetic letters. Consequently, Korean word reading typically revolves around letter names, rather than sounds (Park 1988), and the concept of PA is not as widely accepted in the instruction of Korean language as that of English.

L1 pronunciation interference

In oral reading, the ‘speaking out’ element is important, so that pronunciation should be taken into due consideration (Rixon 2011: 55). Although this research views pronunciation from the perspective of intelligibility rather than unaccented or native-like speech (Kenworthy 1987; Jenkins 2000), distinction of similar English sounds is crucial for oral word reading out of context. For example, ‘fan’ and ‘pan’ are different in meaning when the words are read aloud in isolation.

Many researchers have noted L1 pronunciation interference on non-native speakers' reception and production of English sounds (Altenberg and Vago 1983; Flege et al. 1997; Riney et al. 2000; Major 2001; Zampini 2008). In an empirical study with Taiwanese ESL children on phonics learning, Kuo (2011) discovered that the learners failed to recognize English phonemes that do not exist in their L1 Chinese. According to Saito (2011), many Japanese ELLs found it challenging to pronounce /æ/, /f/, /v/, /θ/, /w/ because these sounds do not exist in the Japanese oral language. Similarly, primary-aged Korean ELLs struggle with the perception and articulation of particular English sounds because of L1 pronunciation interference (Lee 2006; Shin et al. 2013).

In comparison to the inventory of English consonants, there are no Korean consonant sounds equivalent to /f/, /θ/, /ð/, /r/, /v/, /ʒ/ and /z/. Consequently, accurate perception and production of these English sounds is not easy for Korean learners. Many Korean English speakers have identification problems of the following consonant contrasts as well: /b/-/v/; /f/-/p/; and /l/-/r/. This is different from the typical voiced-voiceless minimal pairs of /b/-/p/ and /v/-/f/ in the English phonology (see Carley et al. 2018 for review). In Korean phonology, there is only a single Korean phoneme that can represent each pair: /ㅂ/ for /b/-/v/; /ㅍ/ for /f/-/p/; and /ㄹ/ for /l/-/r/ (Shin et al. 2013). As such, the distinction of these pairs can be blurred both in perception and pronunciation. For example, the Korean /ㅂ/ corresponds to /b/, whereby 'victory' is often pronounced by Korean speakers as /biktory/. Consonant correspondence between Korean and English is summarized in Appendix 2 (p. 280).

Regarding vowels, the distinction in English between /e/ and /æ/ actually disappears in Korean despite their different orthographic representations. In natural speech, /ɛ/ replaces /e/ and /æ/. For example, Korean English speakers may find it hard to distinguish 'bed' from 'bad' in spontaneous speech. In addition, there is no distinction between lax /ɪ/ and tensed /i/ vowels in Korean. Instead, the two are merged into /i/. As a result, English words like 'live/leave' and 'ship/sheep' can appear to be identical to many Koreans, without the

variation of length. Appendix 3 (p. 281) summarizes the vowel correspondence between the two languages.

One important thing to note about English-Korean vowel correspondence is that some English diphthongs are considered as having two syllables in Korean (Shin et al. 2013). Since all Korean diphthongs contain glides, English diphthongs with off-glides such as /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /oʊ/, /aʊ/ correspond to the combination of two simple vowels, resulting in two-syllable words. For example, the one-syllable English word 'out' is spelled as two-syllable '아웃' in Korean and pronounced as /a-ut/.

Orthographic influence on English decoding

Seymour, Aro and Erskine (2003) found that beginning English readers may require at least 2.5 more years to achieve mastery of familiar word recognition than readers of other languages with more orderly alphabetic systems such as German, Greek and Korean. Altani and colleagues (2017) noted that Korean ELLs who have experienced clean letter-sound mappings have difficulty in accurately recognizing spelling patterns that do not conform to the consistent GPCs.

The Korean orthographic pattern has the CVC structure within a block, in which the nucleus is a vowel. In comparison to English, the following restrictions are found in the syllable structure of Korean, as adapted from Shin and colleagues (2013: 226).

- (C1) Syllable-initial position (= onset)
Neither /ŋ/ nor any other consonant cluster may occur.
- (V) Syllable-medial position (= nucleus)
- (C2) Syllable-final position (= coda)
 - (i) One consonant prevails in syllable-final position. Two-letter consonant clusters are not uncommon (e.g. '닭, 많, 갔') but only one consonant sound is realized.
 - (ii) Fricatives or affricates cannot appear in syllable-final position.

In the discussion of the different syllable structures and features between Korean and English, particular attention should be paid to a vowel /u/, spelled as ‘ㅡ’ in Korean, in decoding English loan words. Since syllable-initial position does not allow consonant clusters, an /u/ vowel is inserted in the middle of the consonant cluster. For example, ‘star’ is spelled ‘스타’ and pronounced /su-ta:/ with the insertion of /u/ between /s/ and /t/. Likewise, ‘black’ is spelled ‘블랙’ and pronounced /bul-læk/. In addition, fricatives or affricates cannot appear in syllable-final position. English words that end with these consonant sounds have an additional /u/ vowel as pronounced in Korean. In fact, there are an enormous number of examples where Korean English speakers put an illusory vowel at the end of English loan words that end with /s/, /t/, /k/, /ʃ/ or /tʃ/. Examples are shown in the following:

- bus – ‘버스’ /bʌ-su/
- milk – ‘밀크’ /mil-ku/
- sports – ‘스포츠’ /su-pɔ-tsu/

This addition of a /u/ vowel causes discrepancy in the number of syllables between the two languages. As seen in ‘sports’ above, which is a one-syllable word in English, it is regarded as a three-syllable word in Korean. Similarly, the one-syllable ‘strike’ changes into a five-syllable ‘스트라이크’ /su-tu-ra-i-ku/.

2.5.5. Socio-Contextual Factors

Research has shown that young children are particularly influenced by their immediate environment such as home and classroom. Amid the current English learning frenzy in Korea (Park 2009; Hu and McKay 2012; Butler 2014b), many Korean parents do not consider public education sufficient and manage their children’s English education by taking this task on themselves (Paik 2008; Kim 2017). Mothers’ perspectives are particularly important in Korea, since educational decisions are mostly made by mothers on behalf of their children (Kim and Bang 2017). In school, for example, the exclusive use of TL in the TETE

classroom has been increasingly questioned by teachers regarding its efficacy in early English reading instruction.

Parental' perceptions of English literacy learning

As discussed in the Introduction, English reading skills have been regarded as essential in FL acquisition and high-stakes exams including college entrance exams. Research has consistently shown Korean parents' robust support towards their children's English learning as one of the best ways to improve their children's schooling, future careers, social stance, and class (Seth 2002; Park and Abelmann 2004; Linse 2011; Hu and McKay 2012). Kim and Bang (2017) have pointed out that Korean parents' educational aspirations for their children are overheated regardless of social class, although their actual educational choices may be influenced by their financial conditions.

Yoo and Lee (2006) noted the increasing popularity of 'Mother-Brand English' in Korea, in which mothers become their children's first English teachers and immerse their young in the English-rich home environment from early infancy by reading English storybooks and providing input using a variety of multimedia materials. Linse (2011) echoed the widespread 'the earlier, the better' viewpoints, but she highlighted Korean parents' obsession with native-like pronunciation and the avoidance of parental home reading with their non-native-like pronunciation. As a result, Korean parents of very young children often enroll children in phonics classes at English institutions or commercial programs, preferably taught by NESTs, as a strategy for helping them develop native-like pronunciation as well as beginning reading.

In terms of vocabulary learning, Linse (2011) also found that Korean parents strongly believe in the value of rote memorization of words in isolation as an effective method of English vocabulary acquisition. This is surprising given that these parents typically lamented such practices when they learned English in school and were aware that knowing words and definitions in isolation is not the hallmark of a rich vocabulary. As Rokita (2019) has noted, parents tend to resort to the strategies learned from their own educational experiences or to others that are familiar to them.

SES and parenting styles

There is ample research on the impact of the SES of parents and their education on their children's English learning in Korea (Park and Abelman 2004; Paik 2008; Kim and Seo 2012; Shin and So 2018; Lee 2019). As mentioned in Section 1.8 (Private English Education in Korea, p. 11), the private English education market in Korea offers a wide range of highly diversified programs in terms of format and price. As such, parents make strategic educational decisions according to their family's SES. In Park and Abelman's (2004) narrative study, a Korean mother from the working class admitted that her family's financial situation failed to afford her children the best available English education.

The family's SES affects the children's English learning achievement such that 'regardless of their merit and efforts, children and parents in low socioeconomic status will be punished with educational under-achievement' (Paik 2008: 76). According to Kim and Seo (2012), this widening English proficiency gap among elementary children causes demotivation in FL learning. Low proficiency children tend to give up learning English even before entry to secondary school, due to 'the sense of relative deprivation and deep frustration compared to the tutored children, and to their accumulated negative experience of learning EFL throughout their school grades' (ibid.: 167).

Parenting styles and parent-child relationships also have a great effect on children's learning attitudes and achievements. It is widely accepted that supportive and adaptive parenting styles generally have a positive relation to their children's English learning motivation, while controlling, coercive and nonchalant attitudes have a negative impact (Jeong 2004; Park and Kim 2006; Park and Kim 2015). In Confucian cultures like Korea, however, children with controlling and coercive parents often achieve high academic results, since the children wish to study harder in order to meet the expectations of their parents and gain their approval (Park and Kim 2004, 2006; Cheung and Pomerantz 2012; Gao 2012; Li et al. 2019). As Park and Kim claimed, Korean children 'feel indebted toward their parents for all the devotion, indulgence, sacrifice, and love that they have received', and this interpersonal emotion promotes 'filial piety, achievement motivation, and relational closeness' (2006: 424).

Parents' English learning backgrounds

In the EFL context, a small amount of research has examined parents' roles with reference to FL development in Europe (Enever 2011) or to very young children before school entry (Rokita 2007, 2019). As Rokita (2019) has noted, parents typically have little knowledge of the FL acquisition process and tend to resort to the strategies learned from their own educational experiences. Despite the growth of parental accountability in Korea, little is known about Korean parents' English learning backgrounds, particularly those who learned to read in English before 1997, when the 7th NC officially instituted English education in all primary schools. Early childhood English reading is unfamiliar to many Korean parents, since their first encounter with English was in junior high school at the age of 12 or 13.

Learning with siblings

Young children's learning with siblings has been well documented in other contexts (Rogoff 1990; Gregory 1996, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2008; Gregory et al. 2004; Volk and de Acosta 2004; Howe et al. 2015; Segal et al. 2018). These studies concur that older siblings tutor younger children through natural dialogue, modeling, play or direct teaching. Some research has examined the influence of first-born children on younger siblings' FL language development in immigrant families in English-speaking countries, such as Bangladeshi families in the United Kingdom (Gregory and Williams 2000), and Korean families (Shin 2002) and Latino families (Kibler et al. 2014) in the United States. In the Korean EFL context, however, this area has not received sufficient research attention and little is known about how older siblings support younger siblings in terms of early English literacy development.

Classroom environment

It is important that teachers cultivate a supportive, nurturing classroom atmosphere to foster their students' learning motivation. (Gardner 1985; Dörnyei 2000; Tam 2009; Enever 2011; Dewaele and MacIntyre 2014; Astuti 2016; Pinter 2017). While there are many motivational teaching practices that teachers can employ (Dörnyei 2001), Enever (2011) showed in the ELLiE

project in seven European countries that teachers themselves were frequently cited as one of the strongest motivators to young children. Primary English teachers in the EFL context need to be well equipped with strong competence and confidence in their own English skills, pedagogical knowledge, methodological skills, and a good understanding of young learners and their L1 (Pinter 2017). Hayes (2014), who discussed factors that have an impact on the quality of English education in primary schools, made 14 recommendations for effective primary English instruction. Table 5 summarizes the teacher factors.

Table 5. Recommendations for effective primary English teachers (adapted from Hayes 2014: 2-3)

Recommendation 1	Best be taught by generalist class teachers with appropriate training
Recommendation 2	Teachers' English proficiency level of at least CERF B2, but preferably C1
Recommendation 3	Teachers with Master degree
Recommendation 4	Provision of a school-focused system of continuing professional development
Recommendation 5	Teachers' freedom to organize instruction
Recommendation 6	Teachers' own positive attitudes towards English
Recommendation 10	Materials prepared by teachers

With regard to LETs in Korea, the specialist teaching system is prevalent, while a minority of schools allow homeroom teachers to teach English though they are not specialist teachers of English (Ko 2005; Garton 2014). As discussed in Section 1.7 (English Teachers in Public Primary School, p. 10), however, these specialist teachers have not been fully prepared to give early English reading instruction, which the curriculum has consistently neglected, (Jung and Norton 2002). The 120-hour INSET courses are far from sufficient and are 'made up of theoretical and formal lectures which are not applicable to class teaching' (Hayes 2008: 37).

Role of L1 in the EFL classroom

As a communicative language teaching model has become the mainstream in the ELT world, English-only monolingual instruction and the NEST scheme have

been thriving around the world (Copland et al. 2016). In the EYL classroom, there is a view that younger children can absorb language more easily and quickly than older learners (Singleton and Lengyel 1995), thus helping to promote the creation of English-only classroom environments. Recently, however, the monolingual approach has been increasingly questioned, partly because it has failed to reflect the actual classroom life (Lin 1996; Enever 2011; Hall and Cook 2012). The pedagogical value of L1 has been highlighted in a number of studies in various ways: to enhance scaffolding, to reduce learner anxiety, to strengthen learner motivation and engagement, and to foster cross-lingual, cross-cultural comparisons (Auerbach 1993; Crawford 2004; Edstrom 2006; Carless 2008; Brooks-Lewis 2009; Copland and Neokleous 2011; Littlewood and Yu 2011; McMillan and Rivers 2011; Bhooth et al. 2014; Paker and Karaağaç 2015).

In the Korean context, the national English education policy of TETE has requested that English teachers avoid the use of L1 Korean and maximize the use of English as the medium and object of the instruction to ensure exposure and uptake of the TL (Kim 2001; Kim 2008; Heo 2016). While the monolingual approach is still acknowledged among teachers (Lee and Lee 2011), this initiative has been somewhat eroded (Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education 2010), since it has been found ineffective in the classroom. In a study with secondary school pre-service and in-service LETs in Korea, Lee (2016) found that the deliberate exclusion of L1 was rejected by in-service teachers, since the monolingual approach was not practically viable in a large-sized, mixed-level class, not to mention the teacher's lack of confidence in their own oral communicative competence (Cho and Lee 2009; Kim 2012).

In the Korean primary school context, Kang (2007) highlighted the issue of classroom discipline and real-time student reactions as important factors that affected the teacher's switch to L1 despite her high English proficiency and pedagogical beliefs. In a large class, the exclusive use of the TL was ineffective in maintaining classroom discipline as well as the students' interest in lesson content (Rabbidge and Chappell 2014), due to their low TL proficiency (Woo 2003). The students' perspectives were identified in Kang's study (2007), in which they felt more enthusiastic about learning when the L1 was used

appropriately, whereas the teacher's English-only instruction caused a loss of interest. Macaro and Lee (2013) also found that young Korean FL learners did not necessarily feel more comfortable in the TL only classroom than adult learners.

The role of the L1 is particularly important in early English literacy instruction, since English teachers must understand how their learners have become literate in their L1 (Copland and Yonetsugi 2016; Shin and Crandall 2019). Many of the challenges that the FL learners face come from L1 interference, and bilingual teachers can identify areas of difficulty (Thornbury 2015). After all, the issue of language choices in the FL classroom should be addressed within 'flexible weak versions of pedagogic approaches, which encourages teacher variation within a recommended framework' (Tomlinson 2005: 143), considering student proficiency levels and the difficulty of the task at hand.

School-family partnership

The connection between school and home is important in children's learning (McBride-Chang 2016; Pinter 2017). It is widely accepted that children tend to become successful learners when parents get actively involved in their school performance. Many researchers have also noted that parental involvement is a critical factor in helping children foster positive learning attitudes and strengthening self-efficacy beliefs and motivation (Gottfried et al. 1998; Duncan et al. 2007; Mady 2010; Gao 2012; Butler 2015b; Li et al. 2019).

The best example of school-family partnership is parental homework involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2001; Daza and Garavito 2009). Scaffolding is essential in young children's learning, and it works best when adults explain possible difficulties and provide immediate, meaningful support so that the children can take control of the task and gain confidence to finish it (Wood et al. 1976). At home, this means that parents discuss school work with their children and offer immediate help for homework when necessary (Li et al. 2019). Ariès and Cabus (2015) even suggested that actual improvement in learning outcomes can only be expected when the parents are directly involved

with specific pedagogical knowledge and strategies rather than merely assisting, structuring or emotionally supporting the homework process.

In the Korean context of early English literacy development, little is known about how Korean parents support their children's homework. Given the Korean parents' English learning backgrounds, it can only be assumed that substantial, meaningful parental homework involvement rarely occurs. Korean parents' lack of knowledge and experience in English education in general was briefly identified in Paik's (2008) study, which indicated that their educational decisions were affected by non-educational factors. One of the most influential factors affecting their educational decisions is networking with other families in the neighborhood. While networks among mothers may provide information about popular educational practices or the latest educational trends, such information tends to be poorly supported by sound theoretical backgrounds or disregards individual differences among children. Park and Abelmann (2004) noted that even after a decision is made, parents are often ill at ease because they are not well equipped to judge its educational quality, mainly due to their unfamiliarity with English decoding practices and lack of professional support.

2.6. Research with Children

From the early 1990s onward, research on childhood has witnessed the elevation of children's status from objects of research to competent social actors who actively influence their own lives (Kellet 2010). This new paradigm, under the name of 'New Sociology of Childhood', claims that traditional research has largely overlooked the active role children play in making decisions that affect themselves and has constructed knowledge for the most part from the perspectives of adult researchers in order to analyze and interpret childhood (James et al. 1998; Woodhead and Faulkner 2008).

The attempt to position children's voices at the center of the research has led to the development of innovative ways of engaging with children, based on their preferred way of communication such as drawings, photographs, stories or song (Christensen and James 2008). In the field of applied linguistics, this perspective shift has been promoted by child-centered researchers such as

Pinter, Zandian and Kuchah, who have suggested using various child-focused methods including child-friendly questionnaires, friendship group interviews and participatory activities (Kuchah and Pinter 2012; Pinter and Zandian 2014; Zandian 2015).

2.6.1. Children's Informed Consent

Informed consent is a primary key to ethical research. Regardless of age, potential participants have the right to decide whether it is in their own best interests to contribute and collaborate in the research. Therefore, it is important that the participant must be fully informed and empowered in order to choose whether to participate or not, before any data collection process commences. Coady (2010: 74-75) described the requirements that underpin informed consent. Potential participants should be informed of these in a language they can understand:

- the nature of the research
- exactly what will be expected of them
- any possible risks of the research
- that they can withdraw from the research at any stage and withdraw any unprocessed data.

Coady (2010) also argued that the participants must not be pressured or induced by financial or other rewards and that consent must be obtained ahead of the start of a project.

In the field of child research, it is imperative to seek the informed consent of the child participants as well as their legal guardians, since children should be viewed as 'competent and interpretive social participants' (Dockett and Perry 2003: 12) and 'sophisticated thinkers and communicators' (Harcourt and Conroy 2005: 567). A burgeoning child's rights discourse helps to position children as beings rather than becomings. Within this theoretical base, children 'are seen as future adult citizens, but, importantly, also as existing citizens in their own right' (Howe and Covell 2005: 62). By engaging with children as an integral aspect of the research, child-centered researchers ensure that children

are fully informed about the research and how they may be involved, before they give consent to take part in a project.

While there is a global consensus regarding the idea of ensuring children's participation rights, the actual implementation and exercise of these rights varies across countries. Under English law, children can give consent if they are competent enough to fully understand the purpose of the research after sufficient guidance and support (Robson 2011). According to United Nations legal definitions of informed consent, however, children cannot give consent. When the legal age of consent is 18, it is the child's adult legal guardians (parents/carers) who must give consent on behalf of the child, while minors are asked to give informed 'assent' (Conroy and Harcourt 2009). While 'consent' and 'assent' are often used interchangeably in the literature and in practice (Bray 2007), Alderson and Morrow state that assent refers to children's approval when they understand 'some but not all' of the main issues of the proposed project (2004: 103). From this perspective, assent is not refusal.

In addition to the legal dimension, differences in exercising children's participation rights across countries also relate to the beliefs about children's autonomy in the respective society or culture (Robson 2011). It is argued that the idea of autonomy or the right of the individual participant to consent is a western middle-class notion that does not necessarily apply to other notions of community (Alderson and Morrow 2004; Coady 2010). Some cultural groups believe that informed consent should be given by an adult figure of a family or a group. For example, in the Pasifika community in New Zealand (Pacific Islands), it is assumed that once parents have given their approval on behalf of their children, the consent of the latter was not necessary (Fletcher et al. 2009). Similarly, Harcourt and Conroy (2005) observe that within the traditional Singaporean context, children are accustomed to complying with the requests of parents or teachers, and thus they may find it difficult or intimidating to implement their participatory rights.

2.6.2. Limitations of Child-Centered Research

Despite the researchers' awareness and conscious efforts to ensure that children's voices be heard, however, child-centered research is still scarce. The power imbalance between older and more knowledgeable adults and children can never be overcome in actual studies (Baker and Weller 2003). It is the adult researchers who construct, analyze and interpret the children's viewpoints and experiences and ultimately publish the findings (Pinter 2014). Furthermore, it is important to note that what adult researchers regard as child-friendly may actually be perceived by child participants as adult-centered and intimidating.

Although there are limitations in the development of research with children, researchers can continue to strive to develop constant awareness, reflective discussion and evaluation of the 'impact on our research of the spaces, institutions, cultures and individuals of the school, household and family and the wider context in which children are situated' (Baker and Weller 2003: 51).

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has provided the theoretical background of this research in five main areas: importance of reading in FL learning, definition of English decoding, L1 English decoding acquisition in pursuit of a universal framework, English decoding for Korean ELLs, and research with children.

While the motivation for Korean children to read in English has been growing, either for general comprehension or for entry into cyberspace, the strongest driving force is still the need to get good grades in tests. English reading skills are essential for FL learners in various ways, but young Korean ELLs in primary schools are under pressure in their initial stages of literacy development due to the neglect of reading instruction in public education, the lack of qualified English teachers and high parental expectations. In addition, other factors include the learners' cognitive-linguistic backgrounds, limited TL exposure, oral language deficiency, and cross-language transfers.

Given the complex and lengthy process of English decoding acquisition, overt instruction needs to begin at an appropriate time in a systematic and

comprehensive manner for FL learners. To my knowledge, however, comprehensive programs are scarce in the field of early English literacy development in the Korean EFL context, and even rarer are studies that have put learners' perspectives at the core of the research. In the next chapter, Methodology, I take account of these gaps and attempt to justify the research design and the components of the methodological approach.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The Introduction and the Literature Review have offered a theoretical and contextual backdrop for this research, highlighting a significant gap in EYL research and the reasons for attempting to address that gap, as outlined in the two research questions. In this chapter, I first describe the design of the research and provide the rationale behind its methodological approach. Given the qualitative nature of the study and the absence of appropriate pre-existing learning materials, this study recognizes the need to embed the participant children in the actual learning context and creates an alternative early reading program that suits the purpose of the research. Next, I provide a detailed account of specific data collection instruments, including child-centered methods, and also details of the intervention program in terms of syllabus, materials and teaching methods. Then, I explain about the child participants in this research and their family backgrounds. I also discuss methodological and ethical issues of this research. These involve research with children, dual roles as teacher and researcher, and prior relationships between researcher and participants. Lastly, I explain the nature of the data analysis along with the issue of trustworthiness and validity regarding qualitative data analysis.

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

- 3.2. Research Design
- 3.3. Data Collection
- 3.4. Intervention Program
- 3.5. Participants
- 3.6. Methodological and Ethical Issues
- 3.7. Nature of Data Analysis
- 3.8. Conclusion

3.2. Research Design

In order to select a particular research design, it is important to revisit the research focus, based on ‘the nature of the research problem or issue being

addressed' (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 3). In this study, the focus is encapsulated by two research questions.

RQ1. What types of progress do young Korean children make when acquiring English decoding skills?

RQ2. What challenges do young Korean children experience when acquiring English decoding skills?

3.2.1. Exploratory Intervention

An important aspect of the design of this research is that it is an exploratory intervention. Standard intervention in experimental research is administered to at least two groups (an experimental group and a control group) to test the effect of certain treatments (Richards et al. 2012). This intervention, however, is exploratory in nature and there is no control group. As discussed in the Literature Review, little is known about the progress and challenges of Korean children in English decoding acquisition. Exploratory research is aimed 'to discover and then present a picture of the social phenomenon and formulate more precise research questions that could be addressed by subsequent explanatory research studies' (Riazi 2016: 115). Consequently, this intervention is not intended to confirm or refute the effect of certain quantitative variables. Rather, 'new, uncharted areas' (Dörnyei 2007: 39) are explored with one group by taking a largely qualitative approach.

Contextualization

The need to embed subjects in the actual learning context emerged from the idea of collecting data on site 'where participants experience the issue or problem under study' (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 181). English decoding involves a great deal of knowledge and requires the use of various strategies. If a meaningful context is created, the participants can identify content-specific issues more effectively by carrying out tasks. Contextualization is particularly important for children as a child-friendly communication strategy, since they perform better when given a meaningful context (Zandian 2015; Pinter 2017).

Alternative early reading program

A new program was designed out of necessity. Previous interventions in the Korean EFL context did not seem to fit the purpose of this research because they had focused on one or two elements of English decoding skills development such as phonological awareness, phonics or/and sight words, and cross-linguistic transfer. By contrast, this program incorporated a mixture of components (Hudson et al. 2009): PA, GPCs, sight words, unfamiliar words and receptive vocabulary. Letter knowledge was not included because alphabet letters are taught in preschools in Korea (Kim 2014). Regarding GPCs, this program is distinctive in the way they are introduced. In Korea, many traditional phonics books introduce GPCs in linear stages – alphabet sounds first, then CVC blending, followed by split digraphs, and finally blends, digraphs and diphthongs. This intervention used story texts as the base for the selection of more complex GPCs. For example, after reading *Little Red Hen*, the children learned spelling patterns such as <ea>, <wh> and <a_e> from words like ‘eat’, ‘wheat’ and ‘bake’.

Five English storybooks and one English song were used (Table 6). Regarding the classic fairy tales, *Read It Yourself* (Level 1) from Ladybird was chosen because the series were carefully written for children who are ‘ready to take their first steps in reading’. Sight words were also selected from the story text. Further discussion on the teaching materials will be in Section 3.4 Intervention Program.

Table 6. Storybooks and song

Lesson	Stories and Songs
1	<i>Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?</i> (Dr. Seuss)
4 – 5	<i>Hop on Pop</i> (Dr. Seuss)
6	<i>Little Red Hen</i> (Ladybird)
7 – 8	<i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> (Ladybird), <i>Wheels on the Bus</i> (song)
9	<i>The Enormous Turnip</i> (Ladybird)

For unknown words, Adams noted that context-free pronounceable pseudoword identification offers ‘clean tests of readers’ working knowledge of spelling-sound correspondences and their ability to blend’ (2011a: 6). Hoover and Gough (2000) emphasized that cipher knowledge should enable readers to read regularly spelled words that they have not encountered in print. This intervention included not only novel words (e.g. ‘shen’) but to-be-learned words (e.g. ‘mound’), which were unlikely to be known to the children. It is important that such reading practices come only after the children have sufficiently practiced new sounds with genuine familiar words (Pinter 2011: 71).

The vocabulary domain explored strategies to expand the learners’ receptive vocabulary knowledge. While Miller (1956) proposed the ‘magic number of seven plus or minus two’ for the capacity of short-term memory of seemingly unrelated words, Baddeley (2010) suggested that when these words are put together in meaningful chunks, short-term memory capacity increases up to 15 words. Accordingly, lessons on *Little Red Hen* expanded the thematic vocabulary on farming by adding words like ‘seed’ and ‘dig’.

Mixed-level class at a private setting

Unsuccessful attempts to gain access to public schools and private language institutes led me to organize a class of my own in a private context. The entry issue is one of the main problems when undertaking any research (Alty and Rodham 1998). Since my career in ELT has involved materials design and teacher training at an ELT publisher, there was no direct contact with schools and private institutions. My phone calls to offices were immediately rejected and email inquiries remained unanswered. It was impossible for me to gain the approval of gatekeepers, ‘individuals at the research site who provide access to the site and allow or permit the research to be done’ (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 185).

Instead, I have developed a close network with parents (primarily mothers) since I myself am the mother of a young daughter and used this network as a basis. Dörnyei’s (2007) suggested that researchers should have a good sense of reality and common sense. This encouraged me to recruit participants through

my friends who were also mothers from the same community. Mothers' perspectives are extremely important in Korea, since educational decisions are mostly made by them on behalf of their children (Kim and Bang 2017).

Recruiting took place in Seoul, Korea, in August 2016. Preparation had begun in May by reaching interested parents online. Promotional leaflets were disseminated in June and two workshops were scheduled for August. Parental workshops aimed to explain the purpose of the research and the possible benefits for the children. Sample lessons and a brief verbal introduction about the research gave the children first-hand information about the project.

Interested parents had children aged eight to 10 in Grades 2 to 4. This indicated a variety in the learners' English decoding ability as well as age and year groups. Indeed, the sample lessons revealed that several children were already skilled readers, who were above the English decoding level that the intervention targeted. From the researcher's perspective, the intervention was to have been aimed at pre- and partial alphabetic readers who need to improve their skills. Attempts were made for sample screening.

It was explained to the advanced learners and parents that lessons would be too easy for the children to gain substantial benefits because they would already know almost everything that would be taught in class. Expressed in an indirect and subtle way, it was my suggestion that I would prefer the samples to be purposefully selected to suit the nature of the study. Some decided not to participate because they considered the lessons to be redundant. But four families were adamant that they wanted to participate in academic research either to refresh their skills or to experience new styles of teaching/learning, and I was unable to turn them down.

On the one hand, it would not have been ethical to reject these families when they were genuinely willing to participate. On the other hand, they are my friends or neighbors, and our personal relationships should continue regardless of this research event. These friends had made the research possible in the first place and they truly wished to make a meaningful contribution. However, I was afraid that turning them down would negatively affect our friendship. After all,

this intervention was exploratory in nature and could be more flexible than standard experimental research.

Holliday has advised that good qualitative research is built on a research design in which 'the unexpected is allowed to emerge and perhaps change the direction of the research' (2015: 52). Consequently, this intervention took the form of a mixed-age, mixed-level class for two reasons. First, it was intended to seek a natural learning context since a mixed-level class reflects the actual classroom situations in public and private English education in Korea. Second, it would be interesting to explore the stories of advanced readers, since a new reading program designed for this research could challenge them in various ways.

3.2.2. Qualitative Approach

The research was designed as a qualitative study in order to investigate the topic more closely and examine the perceptions and meanings that the participants held. A detailed study with a strong qualitative approach is especially appropriate when few studies exist concerning a given phenomenon. Qualitative data were collected from multiple sources. More detailed accounts of each instrument follow in the next section:

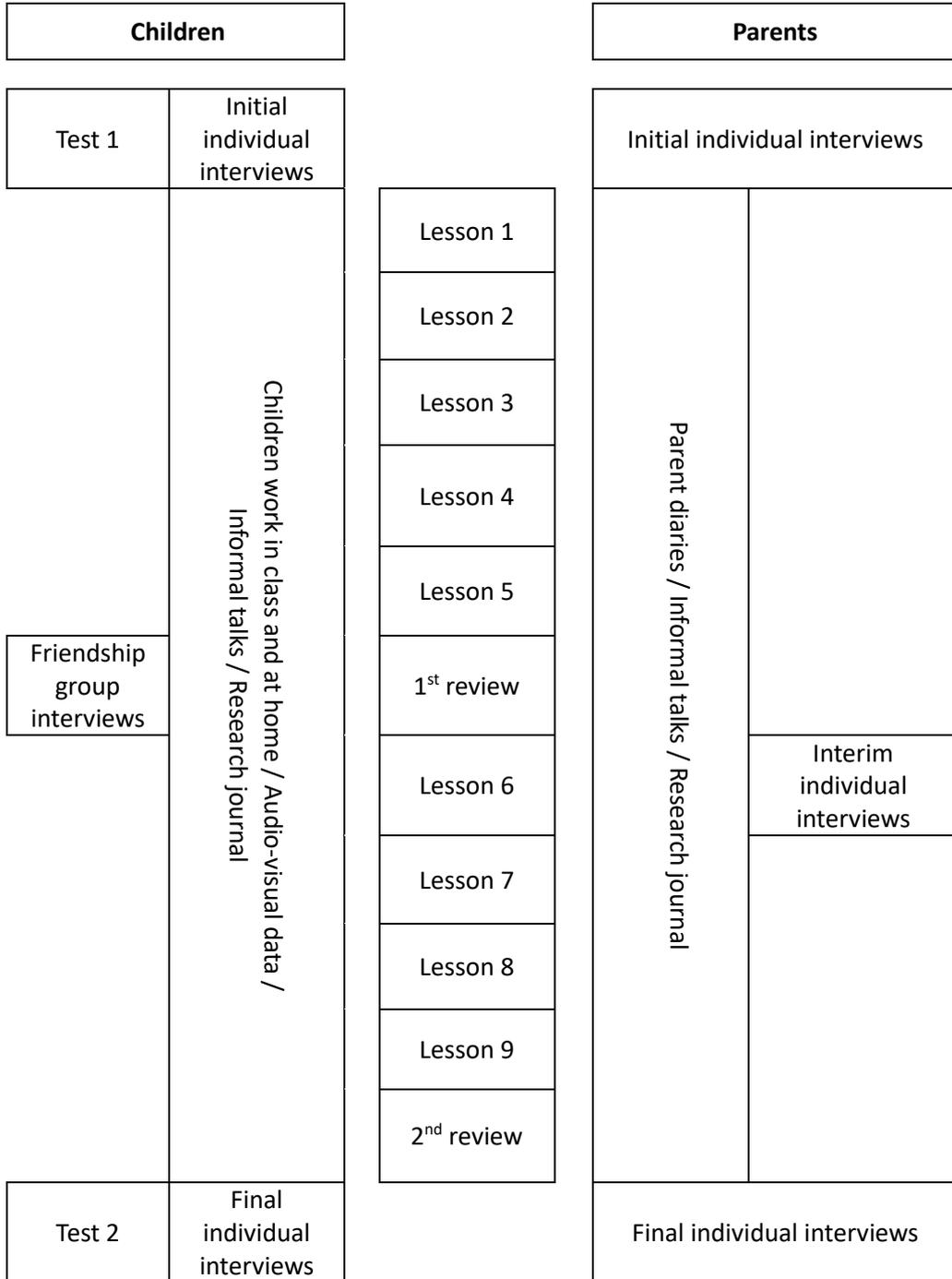
- individual child interviews
- friendship group interviews
- children's work in class and at home
- audio-visual data
- informal talks
- individual parent interviews
- parent diaries
- research journal.

Tests were employed in this research but as an educational tool to provide numeric reference data on the children's English decoding progress. Comparison of the results of two tests before and after the intervention helped me identify the decoding elements that demonstrate any evolution, fluctuation or decline over the course. The integration of different approaches, strategies and methods in multiple data collection is more likely to 'corroborate (provide

convergence in findings), elaborate (provide richness and detail), or initiate (offer new interpretations) findings' (Rossman and Wilson 1985: 627).

Figure 10 illustrates the design of the entire research.

Figure 10. Design of this research



3.3. Data Collection

Holliday admits that qualitative researchers strive to search for the richest possible data, since the aim of qualitative research is to ‘get to the bottom of what is going on in all aspects of social behavior’ (2015: 50). Whatever is seen or heard can be data which help the researcher interpret the issues implicit in the research questions. This research employed a diverse range of instruments to address each research question and triangulate all the information gathered over the entire period of the intervention.

3.3.1. Demographic Questionnaire

A demographic questionnaire was distributed to the parents to gain background knowledge of each family and their home English literacy practices. The questionnaire adopted Yeung and King’s (2015) study of Hong Kong Chinese ESL kindergarteners, since Korea is similar with Hong Kong China in terms of English as a school subject and limited English exposure. The questionnaire had four sections: the child’s English learning experiences, the child’s English decoding practices, home English literacy environment and SES. Table 7 presents more detailed accounts of each section.

Table 7. Summary of questions in the demographic questionnaire

Section	Focus	Question
1	Child’s past English learning experiences	Q1. Experience of living in English-speaking countries
		Q2. Experience of attending English immersion institutions
		Q3. Learning English in school
		Q4. Taking private English education
2	Child’s past experiences related to English decoding	Q5. Types of institutions and programs
		Q6. Duration and frequency
		Q7. Letter knowledge
		Q8. Pleasure reading
3	Home literacy environment	Q9. Shared reading at home
		Q10. Exposure of English materials through various resources
		Q11. Visit to English library or bookshop

		Q12. Number of English books at home
		Q13. Home teaching
4	Socioeconomic status	Q14. Father's education
		Q15. Mother's education
		Q16. Family income

3.3.2. Tests

The children's English decoding accuracy was tested twice at the initial (Test 1) and final stages (Test 2) of the intervention. Test results were used alongside all the qualitative data to describe progress at the level of different individuals. The assessment was a comprehensive test, measuring oral language and code-related accuracy measures (Hoover and Gough 2000; Catts et al. 2015). The code-related measures consisted of PA and word processing strategies, such as GPCs, sight word reading and unknown word reading.

Test construction

Test construction referred to well-established assessment batteries (Table 8). Adaptation was necessary to consider the test time and possible impact of the repetitive use of the same test items on the results. If the original tests in Table 8 were used in their entirety, the total test time would be too long for the young learners. In this research, each assessment did not exceed 30 minutes. The use of different items in the two tests increased the validity of the results in demonstrating time-related change in the children's English decoding skills.

Table 8. Batteries of assessment for adaptation

Measures	Assessment Batteries for Adaptation	
Receptive vocabulary	<i>Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test: Third Edition (PPVT-3)</i>	Dunn and Dunn 1997
Word reading strategies	<i>The Diagnostic Test of Word Reading Processes (DTWRP)</i>	Forum for Research in Literacy and Language, Institute of Education 2012

Phoneme awareness	<i>The Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing - Second Edition (CTOPP02)</i>	Wagner, Torgesen, Rashotte and Pearson 2013
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The vocabulary items were selected from Fry and Kress' (2006) 300 most frequently used American English words and 300 most common British English words in *Letters and Sounds* (DfES 2007). American English is widely accepted in formal English education in Korea, but English storybooks published by British publishers such as Oxford University Press and Ladybird Books are also popular for beginning readers. The vocabulary test was administered to assess the learners' recognition of the meaning of spoken vocabulary. A list of 15 words was pre-recorded (twice per word) by a native speaker. The participants listened to the recording and selected one of four pictures corresponding to the meaning of the target word. The vocabulary items used for Tests 1 and 2 were as follows:

- Test 1: *down, eat, windy, dragon, clothes, house, plant, shout, mouse, boat, run, trees, cold, green, tea*
- Test 2: *up, cook, rainy, monkey, socks, fire engine, gloves, ride, turtle, plane, dig, nut, strong, blue, milk*

For PA, the children performed on tasks on phoneme elision, blending and isolation.

- Phoneme elision was used to measure learners' ability to delete a phoneme in single syllable oral words and say the remaining words. For example, learners said /ed/ after deleting /b/ in 'bed'. Five target words were: *box, can, get, had, but* (Test 1); *duck, lip, jam, pop, met* (Test 2).
- Phoneme blending required learners to combine individual sounds to make a spoken word. For example, learners listened to /b/, /e/, /d/ and said 'bed'. Five target words were: *pin, set, end, run, hot* (Test 1); *rub, cot, mad, men, fill* (Test 2).
- Phoneme isolation asked learners to break spoken words into their component phonemes. For example, learners listened to the spoken word

'bed' and said /b/, /e/, /d/. Five target words were: *sat, keep, duck, red, dog* (Test 1); *fit, tab, den, bog, hut* (Test 2).

Regarding word processing strategies, three types of words were used: regular words, unknown words and exception words. According to DTWRP (Table 8), regular words are genuine familiar words that contain unambiguously consistent GPCs like 'tent'. Regular words in this research were divided into five categories of five words each: basic CVC structure, consonant clusters, digraphs, diphthongs and long vowels, and split digraphs. Unknown words are regularly spelled decodable words that are either to-be-learned like 'mound' or nonsense like 'delp'. 25 unfamiliar words were made by changing a single letter from the regular words. For example, 'zong' is the result of substituting /z/ for /l/ in the regular word 'long'. Exception words are defined as genuine words with inconsistent spelling patterns like 'eye' and 'tongue' (Mitchell and Brady 2013). Tables 9 and 10 present the entire word list of Tests 1 and 2.

Table 9. Test 1 target words

	Regular Words	Unknown Words	Exception Words
CVC	let, top, man, did, yes	det, toz, mun, fid, yek	we, was, are, there, some, little, one, eye, your, by, the, have, said, what, two, people, our, high, eye, put
Consonant clusters	from, help, stop, just, went	crom, hemp, stov, pust, zent	
Digraphs	long, much, with, when, ship	lonk, muth, wich, shen, thip	
Diphthongs & long vowels	green, may, food, boy, sound	sreen, yay, zood, noy, mound	
Split digraphs	time, make, home, like, name	fime, hake, tome, pike, rame	

Table 10. Test 2 target words

	Regular Words	Unknown Words	Exception Words
CVC	set, top, ban, kid, yes	tet, fop, zan, nid, yel	was, come, what, by, now, said, are, there, your, where, some, put, one, little,
Consonant clusters	frog, pelt, skid, went, just	drog, pemp, stid, wels, jomt	
Digraphs	song, chop, thin, ship, when	cong, chap, thes, shik, whiz	

Diphthongs & long vowels	tree, say, moon, boy, round	blee, jay, roon, coy, lound	have, go, woman, pull, she, who
Split digraphs	date, cone, ride, fame, bike	tate, fone, nide, pame, rike	

Procedure

Tests 1 and 2 were conducted individually at the children’s homes. The home was chosen as a test site because the children would be more comfortable if their first one-to-one encounter with the researcher were in their own house. My suggestion of a home visit was well received by the parents, since we had prior relationships as friends or neighbors.

Prior to the tests, the children were given the right to decide on some aspects of the test setting. Most children wanted the test to be taken in their own room but some preferred the living room. Notably, many children cared about privacy and asked their parents not to pay attention to how the test was being taken. The parents were asked to stay away from the room and not to listen to what the children would say. A few children even asked their parents not to be present in the house during the test. Only when everything was comfortably set up did the children sit down and signal that they were ready.

During Test 1, there was an introductory phase. I explained about the purpose and structure of the test, the expected duration, and the reason for audio recording. The children were informed that they could stop and withdraw from the test any time if they felt uncomfortable. The test consisted of three sections: first receptive vocabulary, then PA tasks, and lastly word reading. Unlike the first two sections that posed few problems, word reading seemed to be daunting for weak readers, in which case they were allowed to read words that they were confident about. Words were marked correct if they were intelligible, even if the children produced imperfect pronunciation (McConnell and Kubina 2016).

3.3.3. Child Interviews

Upon the completion of the test, a 15-minute individual interview followed. While the tests provided evidence on core English decoding variables,

interviews were employed to explore various context-specific issues that had not been addressed in the tests. Prompt worksheets had been prepared (Appendix 4, p. 282). These activities examined how Korean ELLs with different English literacy skills performed on complex phonemic manipulation tasks. The selected words contained English diphthongs, like /aʊ/ in 'house' and /eɪ/ in 'cake', and the children counted the number of phonemes in each word. Another task was designed to explore the children's perceptions about their own decoding-related ability. When the children were asked to circle the alphabet sounds that they knew, a gap could be found between what they thought they knew and what they really knew. Besides, the initial interviews included questions about how the children felt about previous learning experiences in school/institutions and at home.

The interim child interviews were conducted in friendship groups, since children can be more relaxed and confident with adult interviewers or researchers in friendship groups than in individual interviews (Kuchah and Pinter 2012). Group interviews were scheduled after Lesson 5 with a focus on exploring the children's understanding of English phonemes, since the first five lessons of this intervention put a strong emphasis on English PA instruction both at basic and complex levels. With regard to the final interviews, the children undertook similar tasks to those in the initial interview (Appendix 5, p. 286). They were also asked to identify perceived progress and challenges in English decoding acquisition that they had experienced during the intervention.

3.3.4. Children's Work in Class and at Home

Both worksheets and audio-visual materials were collected as evidence of the children's learning progress and challenges. The children kept all the worksheets in their binders. Audio-visual materials showed the children's reading aloud homework. Video homework was advocated by previous researchers, since video data carry 'evidence of action, body language, facial expression and verbal interaction' (Robson 2011: 181), though for the children who did not like this, audio recording was made available.

3.3.5. Parent Interviews and Diaries

Data were collected from the parents, since the home environment is an important contextual factor affecting FL learning. Parent interviews took place at three separate times – before, during and after the intervention. The initial parent interviews began by referring to the parents' own responses to the questionnaire as 'retrospective prompts for further open-ended reflections about what they really meant and why' (Dörnyei 2007: 171). Then semi-structured interviews followed to collect more detailed accounts of how early English reading practice had been carried out at home. Semi-structured interviews offer the flexibility for researchers to explore, clarify, elaborate and expand the interviewee's responses and hence yield richer in-depth data (Lewis and Lindsay 2000). The predefined interview protocols were helpful to 'maintain a systematic coverage of the domain' (Dörnyei 2007: 143). However, this format also encouraged the parents to talk about any issues that they had to deal with when helping their children at home. Flexibility was maintained in the actual interview situation, in which respondents spoke freely even though they sometimes digressed from the questions.

The interim interview, about two months after the intervention began, started with my explanation about each child's learning progress and difficulties. This phase naturally led the parents to share what they had experienced at home after the intervention began. No predefined questions were prepared but parent diaries proved to be valuable resources. More topic-specific questions and concerns were discussed, sometimes transforming the interview into a parent-teacher consultation. The final interview focused on the parents' reflections over the entire course of the intervention.

Participant diaries are effective qualitative research instruments, since diaries can be used to 'elicit the participants' own descriptions and interpretations of events and behaviors' (Dörnyei 2007: 157). The benefits of parent diaries were three-fold in this research. First, the parents could identify content-specific challenges that their children experienced, as they made a habit of writing entries right after an issue arose at home. Second, regular writing routines reduced the problem of recalling rather distant events in individual interviews.

Last, diaries enabled the parents to notice any changes to a particular input over the four-month intervention period by collecting data on a weekly basis. If certain challenges persisted for some participants but appeared to be resolved for others over time, this observation was worthwhile for further discussions. The diary template was distributed to the parents in a hard and a soft copy (Appendix 6, p. 288). The template was needed to obtain the data from 'accounts produced specifically at the researcher's request' (Dörnyei 2007: 156), rather than personal diaries. Also, examples were provided in case the parents were not familiar with this type of writing.

3.3.6. Informal Talks

This research defines informal talks as any type of improvised talk/chat between the researcher and the participants, either orally or via mobile texting. While informal talks with the children took place around the class time, I exchanged messages and chats with the parents throughout the duration of the project. Since the parents were my acquaintances in the same community, frequent encounters on the streets, home visits, phone calls and texting naturally led to informal discussions over research-related issues. No audio recording was possible for the oral talks, so the contents were written down promptly in the research journal before they were forgotten.

3.3.7. Research Journal

In qualitative research, the researcher's field notes, comments and reflections can be perceived as potential data, since personal agency is an important aspect of qualitative inquiry (Creswell and Creswell 2018). In the journal, the researcher records field notes, impressions, questions, real-time comments, decision making, emergent themes, annotations and any other issues that arise. Having a research journal is particularly helpful 'when information that earlier was very salient and memorable becomes harder to retrieve and reconstruct with time' (Duff 2008: 142).

My original plan was to create a well-designed framework as adapted from Silverman (2005). It was supposed to have four categories: types of data and descriptions, observations and interpretations, any evidence of perceived

progress or challenges, and personal notes. However, maintaining the triple roles of teacher/researcher/materials developer made it hard to write a full account of detailed contents. Duff admitted that keeping a systematic research journal is considerably challenging ‘especially when juggling many kinds of tasks (including data collection and analysis) at once’ (2008: 142).

Instead, recording semi-systematically was deemed to be realistically more plausible. Similar to the example in Schmidt and Frota’s research (1986), my journal entries contained greater or lesser details at various times. Events were mostly written down at the end of the day, but some events were recorded several days after the fact. Despite that, I ensured that the entries contained specific details rather than general summaries. It was important to write exact quotes of particular expressions from the participants and to include supportive materials such as lesson plans, worksheets and captured images to enrich the notes (Altrichter and Holly 2005).

Table 11 summarizes the research instruments that were used in this study.

Table 11. Summary of research instruments

Instruments	Timing	Purposes
Demographic questionnaire	Before intervention	To explore more about each family’s backgrounds and their child’s English learning practices
Tests	Before and after intervention	To assess children’s general decoding level; to investigate time-related evolution and fluctuation; and to identify the decoding elements involving cross-linguistic transfer
Child interviews	Before intervention	To complement the test results in terms of any cognitive-linguistic and sociocultural challenges that the children experienced when they learned to read English
	After Lesson 5	To explore children’s understanding of English phonemes
	After intervention	To examine the children’s reflections on the various types of English decoding-related challenges as well as any perceived progress that they have noticed during the project

Children's work	Throughout the entire period	To complement other data in identifying the children's learning progress and challenges
Parent interviews	Before intervention	To explore more about each family's backgrounds and their children's English learning practices
	After Lesson 5	To identify children's learning progress and challenges from parents' perspectives
	After intervention	To identify any time-related changes in their children's English decoding acquisition
Parent diaries	Throughout the entire period	To encourage parents to get actively involved in their child's English learning; to let parents keep track of their child's progress; and to let parents note down specific challenges
Informal talks		To let participants express themselves in a more informal way
Research journal		To acknowledge the researcher's personal agency as an important aspect of the qualitative approach; and to gather 'metadata' to offer valuable insights into the research

3.3.8. Child-Centered Methodologies

An examination of literature dedicated to child-centered research emphasizes that research instruments should be tailored to suit child respondents (Christensen and James 2008). This research adopted child-friendly methods particularly for gaining informed consent from the children and helping them express themselves through drawing.

Sample lesson

Before young children give informed consent to take part in a project, it is important for them to be fully informed about the research and how they may participate. This research organized sample lessons during the recruiting stage to help the children better understand what they were expected to do in the research before they agree to participate. The idea of sample lessons emerged from the recommendation that contextualization is a child-friendly communication strategy. Four identical sessions were offered at different times and children came at their preferred time. This resulted in small groups of five

to seven children each time. Five English decoding activities were prepared with different learning points and diverse teaching materials, as in Table 12.

Table 12. Activities of the sample lesson

Activity	Objectives	Examples	Materials
1	GPCs for 26 alphabet letters	/æ/, /b/, /k/	Alphabet discs and cubes
2	CVC blending	/s/-/ɪ/-/m/	Phonics builder
3	Complex GPCs: consonant clusters, digraphs, split graphs, diphthongs and long vowels	blast, swing, tate, nail, green	Pictures of shop signboards
4	More word reading	pizza, fresh, peanut	Packets of a cereal and a pizza
5	Sight words and reading fluency	<i>From Head to Toe</i> by Eric Carle	English storybooks

The lesson was followed by a brief introduction of the purpose of the research, but the general impression was that the children did not seem to care about the research *per se*. They said that the sample lesson was fun and that they liked being together with friends. Obviously, academic research was new to the children and it would take some more time for them to be sufficiently informed of the nature of the research. Such realization led to the need to create an informative leaflet for children, as suggested by Baker and Weller (2003).

Child-friendly leaflet

The leaflet was written in simple, clear Korean, accompanied by visual aids and organized in a question-answer dialogue format (Appendix 7, p. 290). The first draft was examined and commented on by four Korean children. The overall response was positive in terms of accessible language use (O'Reilly et al. 2013), explicitly organized structure and child-friendly tools such as images and attractive icons (McGee and d'Ardenne 2009). Comments were made about the word 'test' and the need for a schedule. Modification was made, replacing 'test' with 'quiz' because 'test' was said to create fear. A visualized timeline was added

to help the children understand when they would be doing the tasks. When the final leaflet was distributed to the parents by email, they were asked to look at the leaflet together with the children before signing both their names on the consent form.

Drawing

Drawing is a preferred method of communication for children and is becoming increasingly popular in children's research (Baker and Weller 2003; Alderson 2008). In this study, drawing was used during the child interviews. Drawing spaces were explicitly provided on the initial interview prompt sheet to explore how they felt about previous learning experiences in school/institutions and at home. For the final interview, blank sheets and pencils were provided so that children were free to draw. Unlike the initial interview, no predefined questions were given at the final interview. Rather, the children were able to scribble or draw while talking, in order to make themselves feel comfortable or possibly to enrich their verbal answers. In employing drawings as a child-focused research method, interpretation is a key to ensuring that the drawings represent the children's ideas and meaning (Hart 1992). In this research, the children were asked to talk about their drawings. Further, their nonverbal messages such as facial expressions and body language were observed and taken note of.

3.4. Intervention Program

The intervention took place from January to April 2017 once a week. It was a winter vacation in January and February, while the new school term began in March. Higher frequency with a shorter class time had been pursued, since frequency of instruction is particularly crucial for young learners (Curtain and Dahlberg 2000). Due to the hectic schedule of the children's private education, however, no time could be agreed during the normal weekdays even in the winter vacation. Considering these constraints, it was agreed that the lessons should take place on Saturday mornings for two hours, with a 20-minute break. Given their ages and familiarity with school environments, the children were able to cope with a relatively long lesson time. A classroom in a local community center was available to use. In this classroom, there was a whiteboard, a beam

projector and a screen, though other teaching equipment had to be supplied, including a laptop, sound magnifiers, a CD player and stationery. Internet access was limited during the first half of the intervention period, but free Wi-Fi became available in February.

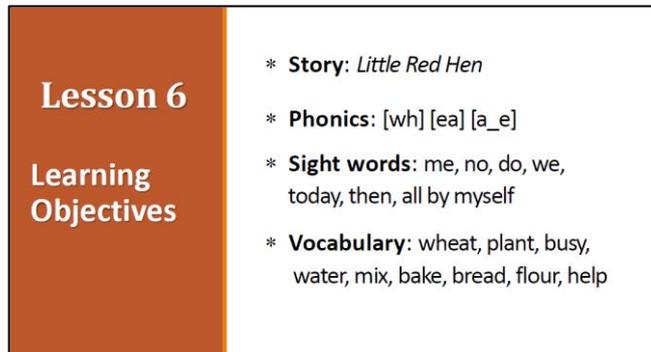
3.4.1. Syllabus

The syllabus incorporated several elements of English decoding skills development: PA, letter-sound knowledge, sight words, receptive vocabulary and story reading. Prior to the intervention, the syllabus had planned 10 lessons over four months, but the participants were informed of the possibility of change to accommodate the actual teaching/learning processes. The revision was first made after Test 1 and initial child interviews to contain more PA elements. It was found out that most children had already acquired some basic level of English PA, but more sophisticated phonemic skills needed instruction. Being fine-tuned throughout the entire intervention, the syllabus was finalized with nine lessons with two reviews.

PA instruction came first, in which the concept of phonemes was introduced. Regarding complex phonemic manipulation, phonological differences between Korean and English were explained and practiced with simple counting exercises. GPCs of 26 alphabet characters and VC-CVC blending followed up to Lesson 5. Special attention was paid to sound contrast. Consonant contrast dealt with /l/-/r/, /b/-/v/ and /f/-/p/. This is different from the typical treatments of the voiced-voiceless minimal pairs of /b/-/p/ and /v/-/f/ in the English phonology (see Carley et al. 2018 for review). In the Korean phonology, there is only a single Korean phoneme corresponding to each pair: /ㅂ/ for /b/-/v/; /ㅍ/ for /f/-/p/; and /ㄹ/ for /l/-/r/ (Shin et al. 2013). Vowel contrast concerned /æ/-/e/, /ɪ/-/i/ and /ɑː/-/ɔː/-/ʌ/. Dr. Seuss' stories provided useful contextual sources to practice rhyming word reading and phoneme counting. GPCs of English diphthongs and long vowels were induced from the story texts: <ow> in 'brown'; <ee> in 'see'; and <ou> in 'out'.

After the first review in Lesson 5, the intervention shifted its focus towards sentence-level reading. More importance was placed on story texts, from which the GPCs, sight words and vocabulary were selected (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Lesson 6 introductory PowerPoint slide



The slide is divided into two sections. On the left, a dark orange vertical bar contains the text 'Lesson 6' and 'Learning Objectives' in white. On the right, a white background contains a bulleted list of learning objectives.

Lesson 6 Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Story: <i>Little Red Hen</i>* Phonics: [wh] [ea] [a_e]* Sight words: me, no, do, we, today, then, all by myself* Vocabulary: wheat, plant, busy, water, mix, bake, bread, flour, help
---	--

The problem was that the class time was too limited to cover everything. As a solution, the children had vocabulary preview homework, in which they did self-studying of the pronunciation and meaning of key words (Appendix 8, p. 294).

Table 13 presents the syllabus and schedule for the entire intervention.

Table 13. Syllabus and schedule

Lesson		Date	Storybooks	Decoding Skills	Spoken Vocabulary	Sight Words	Homework
Dec. 2016 – Jan. 2017		Initial student assessment & Initial mother interviews					
January 2017	1	07/01	<i>Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phoneme counting [ay]/-ei/ in 'ray' 	Onomatopoeia		① [ay] words reading ② Phoneme counting
	2	14/01		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phoneme counting Initial sound-letter matching [ow]/-aʊ/ in 'brown' 	desk, window, marker, chair, backpack, pencil, laptop, coat, screen, door, gorilla, frog		① [ow] word reading ② Initial sound-letter matching
	3	21/01		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final sound-letter matching Pronunciation: /b/-/v/, /f/-/p/, /æ/ 	wind, turtle, milk, lion, hot, hospital, guitar, five, boat, nine, scissors, walk, down, dragon, hat, sun, violin, slide, flower, mouse	I, see, with, my, little, eyes, something	① Pronunciation: /b/-/v/, /f/-/p/, /æ/
February 2017	4	04/02	<i>Hop on Pop (1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [ee]/-i:/ in 'see' Vowel contrast: /æ/-/e/, /ɪ/-/i:/ CVC blending: Aa ~ Mm 	red, yellow, pink, black, green (colors); fish, bee, bed, hill, tent, snack, tree, leg, lips, three, six, ten	we, all, he, me, is, after, a, three, fish, they, call, no, don't, very, what, eat, that, snack, black, into, the, two, for	① Vowel contrast: /æ/-/e/, /ɪ/-/i:/ ② <i>Hop on Pop</i> text reading (1)
	5	11/02	<i>Hop on Pop (2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vowel contrast: /ɑ:/-/ɔ:/-/ʌ/ Consonant contrast: /l/-/r/ CVC Blending: Nn – Zz [ou]/-aʊ/ in 'out' 	(26 phonics words) apple, book, cat, dog, elephant, frog, gorilla, hat, igloo, jam, king, lion, mouse, nut, octopus, panda, queen, rabbit, sock, tiger, umbrella, violin, watch, fox, yo-yo, zebra	eat, a, with, into, the, out, of, two, they, for	① Vowel contrast: /ɑ:/-/ɔ:/-/ʌ/ ② <i>Hop on Pop</i> text reading (2) ③ L6 vocabulary preview
	18/02		Review 1	Interim mother interviews after Review 1			

	Lesson	Date	Storybooks	Decoding Skills	Spoken Vocabulary	Sight Words	Homework
	6	25/02	<i>Little Red Hen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [wh]-/w/ in 'wheat' • [ea]-/i:/ in 'wheat' • [a_e]-/eɪ/ in 'bake' 	help, wheat, plant, busy, water, mix, bake, bread, flour	all by myself, me, I'm, no, do, will, we, play, day, today, then	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① <i>Little Red Hen</i> text reading ② [ea], [wh] words reading ③ [a_e] Youtube video watching ④ L7 vocabulary preview
March 2017	7	04/03	<i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears (1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [th]-/θ/ in 'three' • [th]-/ð/ in 'this' • [oo]-/u:/ in 'too' 	three, bears, porridge, hot, cold, love, eat	there, were, they, to, what, what's, this, all, once upon a time, one day, right, said	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① <i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> text reading ② [th], [oo] words reading ③ [th], [oo] Youtube video watching ④ L8 vocabulary preview
	8	18/03	<i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears (2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [ch]-/tʃ/ in 'chair' • [sh]-/ʃ/ in 'ship' 	chair, hard, soft, fall asleep, cry, look, ask, run away	who, look, cry, away, fall, came	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① <i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> role-play ② [ch], [sh] words reading ③ [ch], [sh] Youtube video watching ④ L9 vocabulary preview
	9	25/03	<i>The Enormous Turnip</i>		woman, boy, plant, seed, turnip, want, tea, grow, strong, pull	was, for, my, it's, time, to, said, come, began, they, pulled, didn't	① <i>The Enormous Turnip</i> story completion
April 2017		01/04	Review 2				
		15/04	Wrap-up workshop for parents				
		10/04-28/04	Final student assessment & Final mother interviews				

3.4.2. Teaching/Learning Materials

Primary sources were PowerPoint and worksheets, but various supplementary teaching/learning materials and aids were used, including realia, puppets, picture/letter cards and free online resources on YouTube. The children were also asked to bring learning materials such as alphabet cards, a hand mirror for pronunciation checks, and a mini board for sound contrast and spelling practices.

Story selection and text types were a fundamental component of this program. Five English storybooks were used (Table 6 in Section 3.2.1, p. 65), but the original story texts had to be modified since some texts were too long or contained too many unusually spelled words. For example, *Hop on Pop* by Dr. Seuss was selected for CVC blending and consonant blends. This was an excellent story text, rich in words with VC and CVC structures (e.g. ‘up-pup-cup’, ‘red-bed-ted’). However, the text contained complex words as well, which were unlikely to be decoded by many children: ‘thing-sing’ (digraphs), ‘mouse-house’ (diphthongs), and ‘night-flight’ (irregular spelling patterns). The text was therefore shortened to include highly decodable words (Appendix 9, p. 295).

Not only decodability but also predictability and high frequency words were considered for text adaptation (Mesmer 2010). Taking *Little Red Hen* as an example, repetitive patterns were obvious enough for readers to be able to predict what to read next. These patterns also helped them to spot sight words easily, like ‘all by myself’. To make the repetition even stronger, the text was changed from a statement into a dialogue (Table 14). Two situations were added, ‘watering the wheat’ and ‘mixing the flour and eggs’ using either easily decodable words or high frequency words (Appendix 10, p. 296).

Table 14. Text modification of *Little Red Hen* from Read It Yourself series (Ladybird)

Original Text	Modification
“Will you help me plant the wheat?” asked Little Red Hen.	Little Red Hen: Will you help me plant the wheat?
“No,” said the rat, the cat and the dog.	Rat, Cat, Dog: No, no, we are all busy. It’s a play day today.

<p>“Then I will plant it all by myself,” said Little Red Hen. And she did it.</p>	<p>Little Red Hen: Then I will plant the wheat all by myself.</p>
<p>“Will you help me cut the wheat?” asked Little Red Hen. “No,” said the rat, the cat and the dog. “Then I will cut it all by myself,” said Little Red Hen. And she did it.</p>	<p>Little Red Hen: Will you help me cut the wheat? Rat, Cat, Dog: No, no, we are all busy. It’s a play day today. Little Red Hen: Then I will cut the wheat all by myself.</p>

3.4.3. Teaching Approach

Children at this age take in linguistic information indirectly from a rich diet of experiences and sources (Harmer 2007; Pinter 2017). Peregoy and Boyle maintained that English learners ‘should not be involved in phonics instruction that isolates sounds and letters from meaningful use in text’ (2004: 61). Indeed, decoding work may not be effective if it is presented in isolation and through abstract and seemingly unrelated exercises. Therefore, it is useful to keep three principles in mind:

- Move from whole to part;
- Move from meaning to form; and
- Move from familiar to unfamiliar. (Gibbons 2002: 133)

In an attempt to provide integrative instructions, this intervention divided the syllabus into three domains: story, spoken vocabulary and decoding. The selection of classic tales was intended to reduce the burden of story comprehension, since primary-aged Korean children may have read or at least heard them in Korean translations. Previous knowledge about the stories would help them focus on individual English vocabulary items and word forms. The vocabulary domain explored the strategies for consolidating and expanding the FL learners’ receptive vocabulary knowledge on a thematic basis. Words such as ‘seed’ and ‘dig’ from *Little Red Hen* were recycled in *The Enormous Turnip* in subsequent lessons. Similarly, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* was a great text

with which to practice the usages of 'too hot', 'too cold' and 'just right' in various contexts.

Decoding skills development moved from familiar to unfamiliar. In Lesson 7 with *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, the children became familiar with the sound-spelling relationship of <oo> by learning 'too hot' and 'too cold'. Only then was the GPC of <oo> taught. The children practiced sufficiently using known words such as 'zoo', 'food' and 'moon'. After that, unfamiliar words or nonwords were practiced in class and consolidated as homework (Appendix 11, p. 297).

Language choice for instruction was made on the basis of student proficiency levels and the difficulty of the task at hand. For example, instruction of key concepts was delivered in the L1 for clear delivery, such as phonemes, distinction between letters and sounds, pronunciation practices, and the purpose for unfamiliar word reading. Korean was also used for the purpose of classroom management. English was used for activity instruction with gestures and other cues available, but this was not effective in the first few lessons since the children had difficulty understanding. Repetition of the same phrases over time gradually worked for the class and sometimes the advanced children voluntarily translated into Korean for their friends.

3.5. Participants

11 families participated in the research. Since three families had siblings taking part, there were 14 children with six girls and eight boys, aged eight to 10 (mean age of 9.1 years). The children went to a public elementary school in Seoul, Korea. They were in Grades 2 to 4 when the intervention began in January 2017, but they were in the next grade by the time the project ended in April since Korean formal education begins in March. For the sake of this thesis, acronyms are used for the grades such as G2 for Grade 2.

The children were asked to choose their own pseudonyms, since this practice would give them further involvement in the research process (Baker and Weller 2003). As a result, this thesis uses three types of pseudonyms or nicknames: fake Korean names (e.g. Nari), English names (e.g. Tina), and nicknames (e.g.

Spider). Table 15 illustrates the children’s choice of Korean names or pseudonyms for themselves. Meanwhile, the parents (all mothers) are identified as ‘so-and-so’s mother’ following the maternal naming conventions in Korea (Park and Abelmann 2004; Paik 2008).

Table 15. Children’s self-chosen pseudonyms and nicknames (G: girl / B: boy)

Fake Korean Names	English Names	Nicknames
Nari (G)	Tina (G)	Spider (B)
Junseo (B)	Ariel (G)	Roopi (B)
Seongoh (B)	Erica (G)	Strike (B)
	Ailee (G)	September (B)
	Ryan (B)	Rosari (G)
	Jake (B)	

3.5.1. Mixed Levels in English Decoding

Data from the demographic questionnaire indicated that the children’s prior English learning experiences were varied. Given that public English education begins in G3 in Korea, the eight children in G2 had no experience of learning English in school, while three in G3 and three in G4 had received English instruction for one and two years respectively. However, the private learning experiences showed a great diversity regardless of grades. All the children had encountered English through commercial programs or home learning over one to three years. Table 16 summarizes the participants’ prior English learning experiences.

In this context, the eight G2 students had received private English instruction for 1.5 years on average without any formal English learning. More specifically, Rosari began private group tutoring at the age of five. This continued for three years, progressing beyond literacy into grammar and reading comprehension. Spider experienced one year of home learning in vocabulary acquisition through rote memorization. Six other children were enrolled in various commercial institutions or programs for phonics and/or vocabulary for one to two years (see Section 1.8. Private English Education in Korea for various private English education programs, p. 12).

Table 16. Children’s prior English learning experiences (M: male / F: female)

	Children	Grade	Public Eng. Edu. (Year)	Private Eng. Edu. (Year)	Private Eng. Program	Decoding-related Subject
1	Strike (M)	4	2	2	Worksheet	Phonics, vocabulary
2	Erica (F)	4	2	2	After-school	Phonics, vocabulary
3	Tina (F)	4	2	1	English-only kindergarten	Phonics, story, vocabulary
4	Roopi (M)	3	1	2	<i>Hagwon</i>	Phonics, vocabulary
5	Junseo (M)	3	1	1	After-school, group tutoring	Phonics
6	Seongoh (M)	3	1	1	Worksheet	Phonics, vocabulary
7	Rosari (F)	2	0	3	Group tutoring	Phonics, story, vocabulary
8	Jake (M)	2	0	2	Worksheet, after-school	Phonics
9	September (M)	2	0	2	Worksheet	Phonics, vocabulary
10	Nari (F)	2	0	1	After-school	Phonics
11	Ailee (F)	2	0	1	After-school	Phonics
12	Ariel (F)	2	0	1	After-school	Phonics
13	Ryan (M)	2	0	1	<i>Hagwon</i> , home	Phonics
14	Spider (M)	2	0	1	Home	Vocabulary

Because of the resultant wide variety of English decoding ability, the class was divided into three groups, based on the results of the word reading section of Test 1 (Ehri 1985): full alphabetic, partial alphabetic and non-alphabetic groups (Table 17). The criterion employed was the reading of regularly spelled nonwords (e.g. ‘delp’) or to-be-learned words (e.g. ‘mound’), categorized as ‘unknown words’ in this study. According to Adams, context-free pronounceable pseudoword identification offers a ‘clean tests of readers’ working knowledge of spelling-sound correspondences and their ability to blend’ (2011a: 6). Full

alphabetic reading enables readers to decipher regularly spelled unfamiliar words by blending individual sounds they have practiced.

Table 17. Children’s alphabetic phases (Test 1)

	Children	Grade	Regular Words (25)		Unknown Words (25)		Exception Words (20)		Ehri’s Alphabetic Phase
1	Strike	4	25	100	25	100	19	95	Full alphabetic
2	September	2	24	96	25	100	18	90	
3	Jake	2	25	100	24	96	18	90	
4	Roopi	3	21	84	21	84	11	55	
5	Tina	4	18	72	12	48	16	80	Partial alphabetic
6	Erica	4	22	88	10	40	13	65	
7	Junseo	3	15	60	10	40	9	45	
8	Rosari	2	22	88	10	40	12	60	
9	Seongoh	3	19	76	9	36	12	60	
10	Nari	2	6	24	4	16	4	20	
11	Ailee	2	9	36	3	12	5	25	
12	Ryan	2	6	24	3	12	3	15	
13	Ariel	2	1	4	2	8	0	0	Non-alphabetic
14	Spider	2	10	40	1	4	12	60	

Grouping based on the test results alone raised two questions. The first of these concerned the group allocation of G4 Roopi, who did not reach near perfection like Jake and September but successfully read 21 unknown words out of 25 (Figure 12). He missed four items by reading: /mʌt/ for ‘muth’, /neɪ/ for ‘noy’, /mɑːnd/ for ‘mound’ and /təɪm/ for ‘tome’. While Roopi had not yet consolidated learning of a few complex GPCs, his understanding of the alphabetic principle seemed to be solid. According to my observation, he was able to identify individual letters, match letters to sounds on the basis of what he knew, and finally blend them when reading. For example, he did self-correction for ‘71. preen’ immediately after he had initially read the word as ‘green’. Therefore, Roopi was finally categorized as full alphabetic through a

combination of his test results and my observation of the way he processed word reading during Test 1.

Figure 12. Roopi's unknown word reading (Test 1)

56.	57.	58.	59.	60.
det	toz	mun	fid	yek
61.	62.	63.	64.	65.
cröm	hemp	stov	pust	zent
66.	67.	68.	69.	70.
lonk	muth	wich	shen	thip

71.	72.	73.	74.	75.
preen	yay	zood	noy	mound
76.	77.	78.	79.	80.
fime	hake	tome	pike	rame

The second question concerned the children in the lower alphabetic groups, who read fewer than five unknown words. Similar to Roopi's case, the numeric data combined with my observation grouped Nari, Ailee and Ryan as partial alphabets. These three children clearly attempted segmentation and blending of the initial or final consonant(s) of many words. They only failed to recognize most of the vowel sounds.

Meanwhile, Ariel and Spider were seen to be unable to read words yet that they had not encountered before. Ariel managed to sound out a few words but otherwise remained silent most of the time. According to my observation, her silence was not an expression of denial or discomfort about the test. Rather, it was due to genuine difficulty in carrying out the task. Spider's word recognition was primarily by sight. Having had no prior decoding instruction, Spider stated that unfamiliar words were hard to read. His relatively higher scores with regular and exception word reading may have been the result of memorization-oriented vocabulary home learning.

For the three full alphabetic children and their parents, the intervention was seen as 'extra lessons', supplementary in nature. In the initial interview, Strike's mother acknowledged the importance of repetition in learning. Strike was also quoted saying that he liked to challenge himself with a new program from a different teacher.

3.5.2. Family Backgrounds

Parental age is an important factor for this study, since English teaching/learning practices in Korea have changed tremendously between generations. Five of the participating mothers were in their 30s, while six were in their 40s. Their school years ranged from the 1970s to the early 1990s, well before 1997, when the 7th NC officially instituted English education in primary schools. When these parents were in school, English was not taught until middle school, at 13 years of age, and English word reading was performed either by memorizing spellings or translating phonemic symbols in the dictionary. Thus, concepts such as phonics, sight words and early English literacy development were unfamiliar to these parents.

Regarding home literacy environments, it is significant that parental English reading at home rarely happened. Except for G2 Rosari, none of the other 10 families had engaged in this practice before, although the parents acknowledged the importance of parental reading in language development. In fact, they had all been actively engaged in Korean reading to help their children with Korean literacy acquisition. Many mothers were not happy with their own English pronunciation and worried that their poor input would negatively influence their children's English listening and speaking.

The mothers' education varied from high school to Masters level. None of them had studied English-related majors or lived in English-speaking countries. Eight parents considered themselves as belonging to the middle class, and three saw themselves as low-income families. Table 18 summarizes the details of each family's home English literacy practices and SES.

Table 18. Family backgrounds

	Mothers	Age	Mother's Education	Father's Education	SES	English Exposure per Week	Parental Reading	Parental Teaching
1	Strike and September's mother	30-39	High school	College	Middle	1-2 days x 30 minutes; conversation	X	Mother; vocabulary
2	Erica and Ariel's mother	30-39	College	High school	Middle	3-4 days x 30 minutes; songs, films and animations	X	X
3	Tina and Ryan's mother	40-49	College	College	Middle	3-4 days x 1-2 hours; films, animations and storybooks	X	Mother; vocabulary
4	Roopi's mother	40-49	Master	Master	Low	X	X	X
5	Junseo's mother	40-49	College	College	Middle	X	X	X
6	Seongoh's mother	30-39	College	College	Middle	X	X	X
7	Rosari's mother	40-49	Master	Master	Middle	1-2 days x 30 minutes; songs, films and animations	Mother	Mother; sight words
8	Jake's mother	40-49	College	Master	Middle	Irregular; films and animations	X	X
9	Nari's mother	30-39	College	High school	Low	X	X	X
10	Ailee's mother	40-49	High school	College	Middle	Irregular; films and animations	X	Father; vocabulary
11	Spider's mother	30-39	College	Master	Low	3-4 days x 30 minutes; films and animations	X	Mother; vocabulary

3.6. Methodological and Ethical Issues

This research is unique in various ways. Taking multiple roles as researcher, teacher and materials designer was definitely a challenge, although there were benefits from playing the teacher/researcher dual roles. Also, my intimate relationships with the parents had an impact on the interview talks and interactions. As this study pursued child-centered research, informed consent from the children was crucially important, but there were also ethical dilemmas.

3.6.1. Researcher as Teacher

Successful implementation of an intervention depends not only on the program but also on the instructor (Marulis and Neuman 2013). The instructor in this intervention was also the researcher/teacher. These multiple roles are similar to those of the teachers in action research. Action research requires teachers to engage in research while carrying out their teaching practices (Dörnyei 2007). It would be challenging for such practitioners to conduct these dual tasks within an institution despite a heavy workload, little background knowledge and insufficient research expertise (Dörnyei 2007; Mitton-Kükner 2016). By contrast, I gave only one class a week and had strong support and enthusiasm from the parents. Compared to the challenges that action research practitioners face, the difficulties that I had to deal with appeared less daunting.

However, this did not mean that the research process was without challenges. It was not easy to collect data from two groups of participants through a diverse array of instruments. In class, when absorbed in teaching, I would often fail to grasp subtle aspects of the classroom dynamics, which would otherwise have been noticed by a researcher as observer. Furthermore, with the addition of my third role as materials developer, a great deal of time had to be given to developing lesson plans and materials throughout the entire period of the intervention. In addition, a number of unexpected factors surfaced such as student drop-outs, different individual learning needs and a discrepancy between expected and actual student reactions. Parental expectations were also burdensome.

In this complicated situation, it was imperative that I should stay flexible and open-minded. Writing a research journal and reading the relevant literature was helpful in maintaining conscious awareness and achieving a proper balance among the roles. After all, the core of the research was to listen to the participants' voices. For this to happen, I should not be afraid of negotiating the contents and processes with the participants through mutual interaction and close communication

3.6.2. Acquaintance Interviews

Acquaintance interviews are semi-structured interviews, in which prior relationships exist between interviewer and interviewees. Informants are the interviewer's family members, friends, colleagues or anybody whose relations 'have evolved through contexts other than research' (Garton and Copland 2010: 536). Block (2000) noted that interview data in research are not simply generated through the production of interviewees' accounts. Rather, they seem to be strongly affected by the participants' relationships with the researcher. Research has shown that a previous relationship that the researcher has maintained with respondents has an impact on data generation (Baker 2004) and rapport building (Rapley 2004). If there is already a history and shared experiences among the parties, they can be used as a resource to co-construct the interview.

Since the parents of this research were either my friends or associates, the interviewer and interviewees played diverse roles. Not only were the institutional roles of researcher-informant important, but there were also 'lifeworld' roles, in which pre-existing personal relationships were discussed (Sarangi 2004). Interview talks and interactions often shifted to a more 'chatty' style. Interviewees also reconciled their status 'depending on the way they situate themselves vis-à-vis a particular question and the person asking it' (Block 2000: 760). With all these complexities in acquaintance interviews in mind, Garton and Copland (2010) recommended that the researcher should develop reflexive evaluation of the impact of prior relationships of research participants on data generation, interactions in the research process and the analysis and interpretation of data.

3.6.3. Informed Consent from Children

Researching young children presents unique ethical challenges in terms of informed consent. Young children are vulnerable to adults' decisions and tend to participate in the research even if they feel uncomfortable and anxious (Langston et al. 2004). For this reason, it is crucially important to obtain consent directly from the children and to make sure that their participation is informed and voluntary.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) *Revised Ethical Guidelines* (2004) in the United Kingdom stress the importance of ensuring that children's prior consent is fully informed. Since my study was based in England, I submitted the ethical approval application to the Ethics Committee of the University. Table 19 illustrates a series of efforts that I had made to seek fully informed consent by the children over seven months. Sample lessons and a child-friendly leaflet are explained in Section 3.3.8 (Child-Centered Methodologies, p. 80). The participant workshop in December 2016 was the third time that I explained to the children what the researcher would be doing and how they might participate. Then, a consent form that was specially designed for children was distributed to them for their signatures (Appendix 12, p. 298).

Table 19. Ethical research practices for children's fully informed consent

When	What	For Whom
May – July, 2016	Contacting potential parent participants from UK	Any interested parents by email and text to seek their approval
	Disseminating a promotional leaflet	
Researcher's temporary visit to Korea in August for recruitment		
August	Giving a parent workshop	Potential parent participants
	Giving sample lessons	Potential child participants
	Having individual meetings	Parents & children for further information
Researcher's return to UK in September		

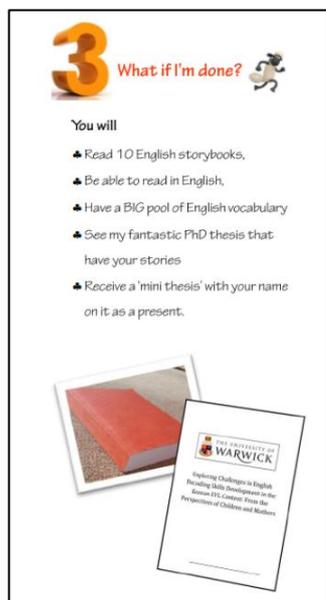
September	Creating an online space	Parents & children for information sharing and Q&A
November	Disseminating a child-friendly leaflet	Children by uploading on the online space and texting to individual parents for check
Researcher's return to Korea in December for research		
December	Giving a participant workshop and obtaining informed consent	Parents & children by preparing different consent forms and explaining the research in full

In order to ascertain that children's consent is truly informed, researchers need to decide how much information is appropriate, so that children can actually make sense of what is being proposed. In addition, more innovative ways of presenting this information should be developed and applied such as audiotape explanations (Thomas and O'Kane 1998; Hill 2005), illustrated information leaflets (Alderson and Morrow 2004) and mock videos of a research interview (Munford and Saunders 2001). Most importantly, initial consent should not be deemed as a one-off and final decision but should continuously be revisited, negotiated and reaffirmed throughout the entire course of the research (Valentine 1999).

The children will grow more knowledgeable and informed about the research after they actually experience the activities first-hand. In this respect, this research gave multiple opportunities at each research encounter so that the child participants would be in a better position to reconsider and reassess their initial choices. Further, it was promised to the children both orally and in writing on the child-friendly leaflet that the final product – PhD thesis in its entirety – will be shown to them along with a mini thesis with their name on it as a present (Figure 13). This idea was adopted from Pinter and Zandian (2015), which highlighted the importance of the presentation of a final product to the child participants for their full understanding of the project they participated in. That research was undertaken as part of the researcher's MA dissertation, and the same participants were invited to a follow-up session several months later. During the session, the children saw the final product – MA dissertation – for the first time and heard from the researcher in details about how the data

collected from each child were used to answer her research questions. It was only then when the children understood more fully what the whole project was really about.

Figure 13. Mini thesis as a present



3.7. Nature of Data Analysis

Working on a large amount of messy qualitative data and extracting its hidden meaning is a daunting enterprise (Leung et al. 2004). Approaches to the analysis of qualitative data are so diverse that there seem to be few commonalities among them except for the rejection of quantitative techniques (Punch 2005). Nevertheless, Dörnyei acknowledged that a good deal of actual analytic practice follows certain principles or 'generic, method-independent procedures' (2007: 242) that are followed by various scholars when trying to make sense of their data.

Richards characterized the qualitative data analysis process as 'an open process of breaking down the data set and exploring different ways of arranging it in order to promote a better understanding of what it represents' (2003: 271). Used as a broad term, qualitative content analysis refers to the identification, analysis and the reporting of main themes and their relations as grounded in the data (Riazi 2016). While quantitative content analysis seeks an objective

description of the surface meaning of the data, qualitative content analysis focuses on 'interpretive analysis of the underlying deeper meaning of the data' (Dörnyei 2007: 246), unraveling content in a manner different from the ordinary interpretation of the material.

3.7.1. Research Journal Analysis

In the spirit of the above, qualitative content analysis is often used in exploratory research seeking to answer questions in a relatively underexplored area (Riazi 2016). In this research, a research journal was selected as the primary material for content analysis. Duff suggested that 'journal keeping becomes part of the analysis and interpretation process itself as researchers start to mull over new data and themes' (2008: 142). She also noted that the journal is not only a record of research but also 'a kind of intervention: a platform for conceptualizing, noticing, articulating, or testing our new hypotheses or ideas' (ibid.).

Holliday (2015) advised that qualitative data should be analyzed holistically and collectively rather than being divided into parts and treated separately. In this research, the journal has become a 'metadata' platform where the key points of various events from different data sources have converged so that certain ideas or patterns could be noticed and conceptualized as a single body of experience. In addition, it appeared to be practically impossible for me to code all the data separately, since the data were varied in terms of resources, types and stages. As Dörnyei suggested, doing research is 'often a balancing act between goals and resources' (2007: 249). The huge investment of a full transcript of all the data was seen as a very demanding and labor-intensive task and thus was simply not feasible within the time constraints.

3.7.2. Procedures and Instruments

Qualitative content analysis follows the generic sequence of coding for key words or phrases, determining themes, constructing an argument, and going back to the data as an iterative process of refinement (Holliday 2015). Coding follows either a top-down deductive approach or a bottom-up inductive approach. In the deductive approach, themes or a coding scheme may be chosen

in advance from the relevant theories and then applied to code segments of the raw data. When using a priori coding scheme, the data analysis is a process of 'looking for the fit of the data to theory' (Riazi 2016: 12). By contrast, the inductive approach allows researchers to immerse themselves in the data without a priori themes and code spontaneously. As themes emerge from the coding process, researchers are able to develop plausible interpretations of the data and produce theoretical explanations of the phenomenon under study.

Considering the complex nature of English decoding acquisition, this research undertook a hybrid process of deductive and inductive approach for coding. Priori themes were chosen from the analysis of the numeric data that were collected from the two tests and the interview worksheet tasks. While this research design puts more weight on qualitative data, the analysis of the numeric reference data will lay the groundwork for identifying any noticeable decoding elements that may require further interpretation using qualitative data. Using these predefined themes, however, researchers may overlook some important constructs in the data. As suggested by Riazi (2016: 12), the top-down analysis should be compensated by 'considering a priori themes as tentative and thus making themselves ready and open to possible emerging themes as well'. Accordingly, more importance has been placed on the bottom-up inductive analysis using the research journal as discussed above.

Prior to the actual coding process, it is important that the researcher note down a list of ideas about what is interesting about them (Dörnyei 2007). My research journal is written in Korean in MS Word, including not only detailed accounts of events but relevant illustrative materials such as photos, lesson plans and captured images of online communication. During the pre-coding phase, I revisited the soft copy of my journal and noticed a number of repetitive patterns, which I marked down in colors and notes.

The pre-coding phase involved not only the preliminary work for identifying patterns but the constant refinement and elaboration of the journal entries. Since the entries have suggested things to look for in the actual data, I moved back and forth between the journal and the raw data for an interplay among data sources. Furthermore, this process has led me to make comments to the

initial entries, asking for clarification or checking on other possible points that had not been mentioned. I even questioned some of the interpretations I had made at the time of journal making. With more time of literature review and reflection on a series of events, the same phenomena could perhaps yield different interpretations. Taken altogether, Figure 14 is a sample that shows the dynamic pre-coding process of my research journal concerning Nari's Test 1 and initial interview, translated from Korean into English.

Figure 14. Pre-coding sample

29/12/2016. Nari's Test 1 & Initial Interview

Nari has a very strong motivation and desire to do well in English. Her motivation seems to come from her personality, wanting to outperform others in not only English but all the other subjects and even sports. In addition, she has three American cousins who are currently living in Seoul. She visits them quite often and they get along well because her American cousins are bilingual; they can speak Korean. But Nari says she feels isolated when her cousins switch into English and feels bad because she has no clue what they're saying. So she really wish she could do very well in English.

In sheer contrast to her strong motivation, however, Nari is very stressed out learning English and has a very low confidence. Her phonics learning for the past 1 year hasn't been going so well. When I encouraged her to read the CVC words that she can or want to read, she was always hesitant, asking "Is this correct? Isn't it wrong? I don't know. I can't do it." She seems to have a kind of obsession with 'being correct'; otherwise she doesn't even want to try.

Her basic phoneme awareness tasks were almost perfect. At first, she looked afraid but she grew more confident and comfortable with the tasks with my encouragement. She said she had never done anything like this.

Her regular word reading needed a lot of improvement. Particularly, her vowel recognition was almost zero. She could identify the initial and final consonants, though.

Unknown word reading, she got only two correct out of 28.

She has taken phonics lessons for one whole year, and that five days a week. What and how do they teach, I wonder.

For diphthongs, Nari split one phoneme /au/ in 'house' into two separate phonemes /a/-/o/.

Park Heeyang
Check Nari's alphabet sound recognition, any gap btw what she thinks she knows and what she REALLY knows.

Park Heeyang
motivation

Park Heeyang
stress, low confidence

Park Heeyang
easily done with basic PA, no prior learning

Park Heeyang
vowel recognition difficult

Park Heeyang
unknown word reading even more challenging

Park Heeyang
effects of previous learning experiences

Park Heeyang
cross-language transfer: Should I consider this as an error, or can I say she has at least phonemic sensitivity?

In the next phase, a more formal and structured coding process followed. Nowadays, there is a range of Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software, such as NUD*IST, NVivo and MAXQDA. Despite the increasing popularity of computer-aid software among applied linguists, I have decided not to use it because my material could not easily be coded by the software; the research journal included photos, lesson plans and captured images, which had not fully been illustrated and explained in the form of texts. More importantly, every time I looked back at the journal and the raw data, I found something different. This has led the entries to be continuously refined and updated during the coding phase. Trying to be too systematic in the analysis was actually taking me excessive time and inefficiency. I needed to code in a more flexible way.

Holliday also suggested that software ‘cannot replace the intuition of the researcher who was there when the data was collected’ (2015: 54). Consequently, I decided to code manually using basic word processing software.

3.7.3. Transcription

Journal analysis may not incorporate oral data into analysis. However, the verbal raw data such as child and parent interviews were transcribed. In this research, the focus of the interviews was primarily to get information rather than to look into the linguistic details. Accordingly, it was probably unnecessary to include in the transcription the speakers’ tone, normal pause (less than three seconds) and mundane nonverbal behaviors such as eye gaze or head scratching. These behaviors are not likely to provide theoretically significant information about the respondents’ experiences. Also, a very fine-tuned transcription can interfere with readability or clarification of excerpts, especially if the purpose of including the excerpts was to provide the content. I adopted the conventions presented in Richards (2003) because they were simple to use as well as comprehensive and effective (Table 20).

Table 20. Transcription conventions (adapted from Richards 2003)

.	Falling intonation	!	Exclamatory utterance
,	Continuing contour	=	Latched utterances
?	Questioning intonation	(...)	Pause longer than three seconds

The same pragmatic principle was applied to translation from Korean into English. In this thesis, an utterance-by-utterance global translation is provided, since the gist of utterance is the primary interest rather than the linguistic detail (Duff 2008). The recorded data was transcribed and analyzed in Korean but was translated only for representation purposes at a later stage (Zandian 2015). For enhanced accuracy, my initial translation was proofread by a biliterate British native speaker.

The recorded data were transcribed not entirely but only selectively when necessary. As themes emerged from the research journal, I referred back to the raw data and listened carefully before transcribing the relevant parts.

Transcription was conducted manually using the Soundsciber software. I have used this software since I was a master student. Soundsciber has fully satisfied my need for a simpler and easier tool, and its speed control and rewind functions were very useful. In this thesis, the speakers are identified in the left column by the child's name, R for Researcher, and M for Mother. English utterances appear italicized, while nonverbal communication is put in brackets. For example:

- 01 Spider: (Looking at the first page) *Is this a test?*
02 R: *What makes you think so?*
03 Spider: (Turning to the next page) *Isn't it? Ah. Here's a space for drawing. We don't draw at tests. It's not a test, then.*

If the data are not from audio recording but written sources such as text messages, parent diaries and research journal, they do not appear italicized. For example:

- Jake's M: As expected, the pronunciation of <th> was difficult. It's as hard to teach it properly to my child when I pronounce it myself.

3.7.4. Subjectivity and Validity

Holliday has claimed that qualitative data analysis is inevitably subjective since 'the ideas and presence of the researcher will be influential in what the data looks like and the way in which it is interpreted' (2015: 49). This is particularly true of qualitative research in applied linguistics, which is undertaken within specific social settings such as classrooms, language institutions and homes. Given the social dimension of research, the individual researcher can hardly behave as an 'objective automaton' (Walford 1991: 2) and data analysis may not be a purely objective analytic practice. Research outcomes, therefore, are the result of 'an extended process of social construction' (ibid.) of data among all shareholders of the research, including the researcher him/herself, and thus will always be affected by the researcher's beliefs and ideology.

Despite its inevitability, however, subjectivity needs to be managed to enhance internal validity and trustworthiness of the research. According to Holliday's

(2015) three principles, 'transparency' requires the researchers to be always aware that they are the designer of the study and to describe how their personal involvement has affected the research. Next, 'submission' implies that the researchers should submit or be open-minded to whatever occurs or emerges that may change the direction of their study. Then, 'making appropriate claims' refers to the way a claim is presented. In qualitative studies, researchers should claim that 'in a particular location at a particular time, certain things seem to be the case' (Holliday 2015: 52-53).

With regard to data analysis and representation in this research, the principles above will be applied in three ways. First, it is important to describe how the presence of the researcher has affected data analysis. The journal is already a product of the researcher's interpretation, 'filtered through the perceptions and possibly the biases' (Schmidt and Frota 1986: 238) of the journal keeper. In order to compensate partially for the weakness of the self-report data, there was an interplay among data sources, as discussed earlier. Further, it is necessary to identify potential researcher's biases in creating and analyzing data as an open and honest narrative. Second, submission will be addressed by paying full attention to detail. Attending to detail is crucial since it is the detail that will enable the researchers to go beyond their predefined agenda and look further. Third, in order to make an appropriate claim, this thesis will look at instances of behavior and provide explanations that are sensible in the particular situation studied. Thick description of the context will also help the readers make better sense of the researcher's interpretations and arguments.

After all, the primary interest of qualitative research is not to confirm or refute anything but to 'generate ideas which are sufficient to make us think again about what is going on in the world' (Holliday 2015: 53). Although the particulars of a study may not generalize, good qualitative research with sound internal validity might help the researchers in different contexts to identify issues, do research and understand the situations under study.

3.8. Conclusion

It is hoped that the rationale for using the exploratory intervention, a qualitative approach and data collection instruments has been justified in the attempt to address the central areas for inquiry of this research. In the next chapter, I discuss the findings of numeric data collected from the two tests and the interview worksheet tasks. In addition I provide detailed accounts triangulated from qualitative sources in terms of cognitive-linguistic and socio-contextual factors that had an impact on the young Korean ELLs when they were taking English decoding instruction.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I first present the overall analysis of numeric data collected from the two tests and interview worksheet tasks before and after the intervention. This research adopts a qualitative design, but tests are employed to provide numeric reference data in diagnosing the children's decoding accuracy and to keep track of their progress in numbers. The test results also identify decoding elements that demonstrate time-related change. Next, I provide a more detailed account of what the learners in this research found easy and achievable or difficult and challenging when taking English decoding instruction. With reference to the data collected from qualitative sources, I present the findings in terms of cognitive-linguistic and socio-contextual foundations. The cognitive-linguistic foundations concern English PA at basic and advanced levels, individual sound recognition and production, and the reading of words and sentences. Socio-contextual factors identify the impact of parents, peers and teachers on children's language learning. Regarding parental involvement, I illustrate three types of parental behavior and how the parents' beliefs and behaviors influenced their children's learning attitudes.

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

- 4.2. Findings from Numeric Data
- 4.3. English PA
- 4.4. Complex English PA
- 4.5. Individual Sounds
- 4.6. Word and Sentence Reading
- 4.7. Contextual Factors
- 4.8. Conclusion

4.2. Findings from Numeric Data

As discussed in Section 3.7 (Nature of Data Analysis, p. 99), I undertook a hybrid process of deductive and inductive coding. While this research design puts more weight on qualitative data, analysis of the numeric reference data lays the

groundwork for identifying any patterns, which can be used as *a priori* themes. Further, factual data are used to support the participants' perceptions of what they find easy and difficult or how they improve English decoding over time.

The numeric data on the children's English decoding elements were collected from two resources: tests and interview tasks, both before and after the intervention. Tests 1 and 2 measured spoken vocabulary, basic English PA and word processing strategies, whereas the interview tasks concerned more complicated PA. Table 21 illustrates the average points for each alphabetic group, with distinctive features marked in color. The double line indicates the criterion that divided the class into three groups.

The results present some interesting facts regarding English decoding development. First, many children were already well versed in English oral vocabulary knowledge and basic English PA before the intervention. Second, there was a wide gap in Test 1 between regular and unknown word reading for the lower alphabetic groups. Third, the weak readers' word reading ability considerably improved over four months with only nine lessons, given once a week. Finally, almost all the children made significant errors in conducting complex English PA tasks, although their performances generally improved throughout the intervention. The full alphabetic group also performed very poorly on these tasks before the intervention, in contrast to their overall excellence in all the other measures.

4.2.1. Spoken Vocabulary

Before the intervention, the children's spoken vocabulary competence was generally high: 97.8 points for the full alphabetic group; 85.2 points for the partial alphabetic group; and 73.3 points for the non-alphabetic group. In particular, the G2 students gained 83 points on average. Despite a lack of prior English learning in school, their private English learning experiences may have helped them acquire a certain amount of oral vocabulary knowledge.

Table 21. Results of tests and interview tasks for alphabetic groups

	Tests														Interview tasks	
	Spoken vocabulary		Basic phoneme awareness (CVC words with a short vowel)						Word reading strategies						Complex PA	
			Isolation		Blending		Elision		Regular words		Unknown words		Exception words		Counting	
	Test 1	Test 2	Test 1	Test 2	Test 1	Test 2	Test 1	Test 2	Test 1	Test 2	Test 1	Test 2	Test 1	Test 2	Task 1	Task 2
Full alphabetic	97.8	95.3	100	100	100	100	100	100	98.7	100	98.7	96	91.7	95	11.7	66.7
Partial alphabetic	85.2	93.3	86.7	97.8	84.4	100	95.6	95.6	61.3	74.2	36.4	63.6	47.2	77.8	13	55.6
Non-alphabetic	73.3	90	80	100	90	100	70	100	22	80	6	68	30	75	8.3	75
Class average	85.4	92.9	88.9	99.3	91.5	100	88.5	98.5	60.7	84.7	47	75.9	56.3	82.6	11	65.8

4.2.2. Basic English PA

The basic English PA tasks of the tests used simple CVC words that have a short vowel in the middle (e.g. 'bus', 'set', 'can'). The results of Test 1 show that the children in all alphabetic groups activated strong basic PA. Their mean points were 88.9 points for isolation, 91.5 points for blending, and 88.5 points for elision. Particularly for non-alphabetic Ariel and Spider, Table 22 shows that Ariel's skills were very strong, and Spider also possessed noticeable cognitive ability despite lacking prior instruction in English decoding.

Table 22. Non-alphabetic readers' basic English PA task scores in Test 1

	CVC Isolation		CVC Blending		CVC Elision	
	Test 1	Test 2	Test 1	Test 2	Test 1	Test 2
Ariel	100	100	100	100	80	100
Spider	60	100	80	100	60	100

4.2.3. Word Reading

Compared to the Test 1 results in spoken vocabulary and basic PA, word processing abilities demonstrated wider gaps among the participants. In this context, the lower alphabetic groups quickly improved their skills over the intervention. The most dramatic improvement occurred with the non-alphabetic group. At Test 1, Ariel read only one regular word and two unknown words among the 25 items each, while reading none of the 20 exception words. Spider read 10 regular and 12 exception words, but only one unknown words. At Test 2, each of their scores considerably increased for all three types of word reading to an extent that the group's average became similar to that of the partial alphabetic group (Figure 15).

There was a wide discrepancy between regular and unknown word reading for the lower alphabetic groups at Test 1. As explained in Section 3.3.2 (Tests, p. 73), unknown words were made by changing a single letter from the regular words. If the learners acquired proper phonics skills, they should demonstrate the similar deciphering accuracy of unknown words simply by blending individual sounds. This principle seems to have applied to the full alphabetic readers, with

the same mean points for these two measures. However, the partial alphabetic group's accuracy at Test 1 is about half of their regular word reading performances: 36.4 points versus 61.3 points (Figure 16).

Figure 15. Test 2 word reading results of partial and non-alphabetic groups

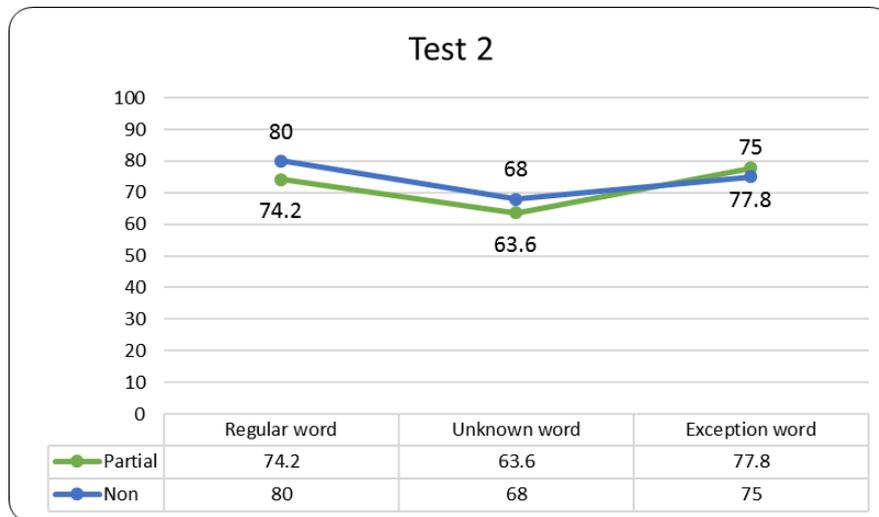
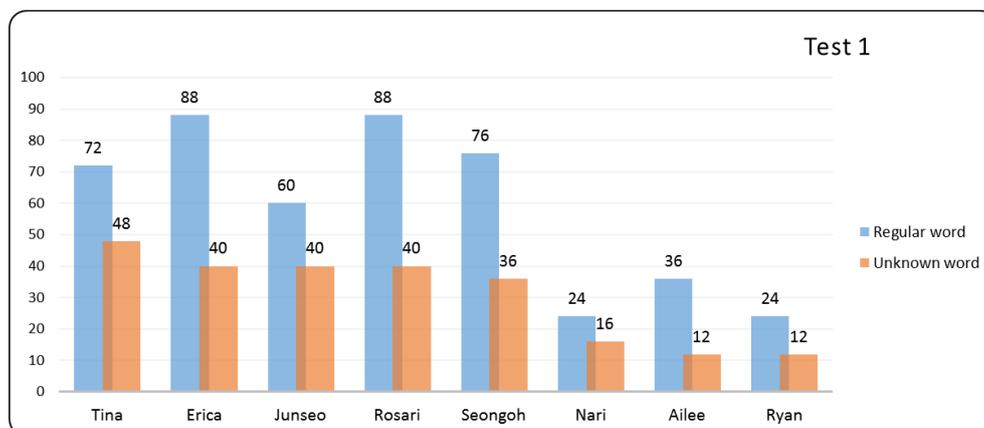
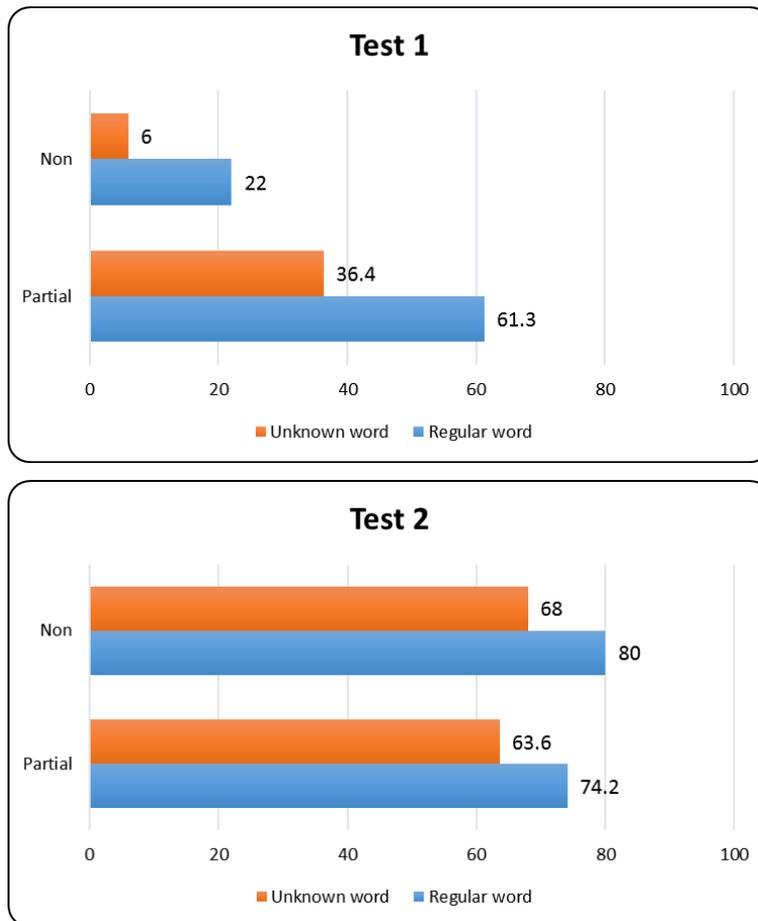


Figure 16. Partial alphabetic group's Test 1 scores of regular and unknown word reading



After the intervention, the discrepancy was reduced for the lower alphabetic groups. As explained in Section 3.4 (Intervention Program, p. 88), the children practiced reading of unfamiliar, to-be-learned words or even nonwords as well as familiar words when learning new spelling patterns. As a result, not only did two groups improve their overall word reading performances but the gaps were reduced although unbalance still existed (Figure 17).

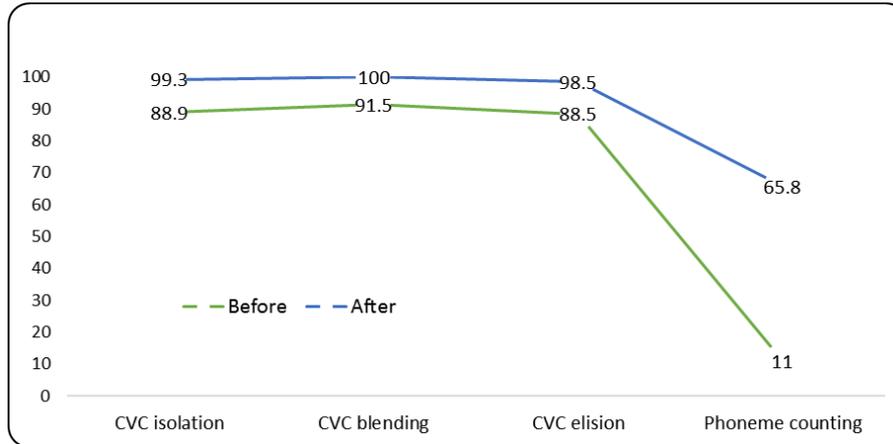
Figure 17. Reduced discrepancy in regular and unknown word reading for lower alphabetic groups



4.2.4. Complex English PA

Figure 18 shows that the entire class performed poorly on the initial phoneme counting task with complex English PA. The full alphabetic group was no exception, with 11.7 points on average, in contrast to their results in all the other measures. This time, the children looked at the pictures and counted the number of constituent sounds in each word for themselves. Then, they wrote the numbers down on the sheet and sounded them out for audio recording. For 'boat', for example, the correct number is 3, with the word segmented into three phonemes /b-ou-t/.

Figure 18. Comparison of scores between basic PA and complex PA



Three types of error were observed in the way that the children performed the segmentation. The first type of error was spelling-based, with the children counting the number of letters rather than sounds. For example, they would write 4 for 'boat', spelling the word <b-o-a-t>. For the second type, the children segmented the English diphthongs into two salient vowels, giving an answer of 4, which derived from the four constituent sounds /b-o-o-t/. The third type of error was more complex. The children added an imaginary /u/ vowel at the end of any word ending with a consonant sound. Then, they broke the word down according to its Korean syllabic transcription. According to this processing strategy, the English word 'boat' was transcribed into the three-syllable 보우트 (/bo-u-tu/) or the two-syllable 보트 (/bo-tu/). Accordingly, their answers were either 3 or 2.

Overall progress was made for the class, from 11 to 65.8 average points on the final tasks. The lesson contents incorporated explicit phoneme instruction and metalinguistic knowledge of the different phonological systems of Korean and English. At a later stage of the intervention, little explicit instruction was given at the phoneme level, since the lesson focus shifted towards bigger units such as word- and sentence-level reading. Even so, there was a constant visual exposure of PA components both in class and as homework, in which spellings were presented as being broken into phoneme units (e.g. 'wheel' → <wh>-<ee>-<l>).

Despite the overall progress, however, a few children either did not improve or improved only slightly. For example, one G2 student did not get any segmentation correct, while one G4 student got only one correct. Also, the results did not reflect individual alphabetic phases. Full scores were gained by non-alphabetic Ariel and partial alphabetic Erica, who outperformed full alphabetic readers on this final task.

4.3. English PA

The Test 1 results showed the learners' high competency at basic English PA regardless of alphabetic phases. The analysis of qualitative data reveals that such cognitive foundation seemed to have been developed without prior explicit instruction but that L1 Korean acquisition may have had a positive impact. A certain degree of phonemic sensitivity had already been developed in Korean, which many learners applied to English reading. Accordingly, this group of learners overall found the English PA tasks easy at the basic level, whereas cross-linguistic transfer occurred when the tasks required more complex manipulation skills. When the learners struggled with simple CVC deciphering despite their knowledge of letter-sound relationships, the acquisition of basic-level phonemic manipulation skills produced the immediate successful performance in English decoding.

4.3.1. No Prior Learning Experience

When I was introducing the first PA task item at Test 1, the children in all the groups looked puzzled. It was not until I gave an example ('bed' → /b-e-d/) that they gradually became relaxed, signaling that they understood what the tasks were meant for. For the sake of this thesis, a child's alphabetic group and grade are presented as an acronym, like FA2 for full alphabetic second grader. In Extract 1, FA2 Jake had not done a task of this kind (line 10) and he initially uttered spellings rather than sounds (line 4). After I explained more, however, his confusion dissolved (lines 6 to 8) and he then carried out the tasks successfully.

Extract 1 (Jake at Test 1, December 28, 2016)

- 01 R: *I'll say a word. Listen carefully and say what sounds are in this word.*
- 02 Jake: *(low tone) Uh. I don't know what you're saying.*
- 03 R: *Here's an example. When I say 'bed', you say =*
- 04 Jake: *= (saying letter names) <b-e-d>?*
- 05 R: *Close. But you've just said its spelling. I mean, alphabet names like <a, b, c, d>, but here you should say their sounds like /æ, b, k, d/.*
- 06 Jake: */b/ instead of ?*
- 07 R: *Exactly. Got it now?*
- 08 Jake: *Aha! Then it's /b-e-d/.*
- 09 R: *Exactly. Very good. By the way, have you done anything like this before?*
- 10 Jake: *Um. No.*

This initial sense of novelty was evident with all the other children and their lack of experience with this type of task was commented upon by them in the interim group interviews after Lesson 5. These interviews of groups of four or five students were designed to explore the children's understanding of English PA after they had experienced various phoneme activities over the five lessons. In response to my question, they gave a flat choral answer of 'no' concerning the existence of any similar activities in their previous English learning. Just like Jake above, however, the children did not find the PA tasks of Test 1 too difficult but soon grew calm and performed well (see Table 21 on p. 109 for the test results).

4.3.2. Phonemic Sensitivity in L1 Korean

There were three strong cases that showed these learners' use of L1 knowledge in working out the English PA tasks. The first two cases occurred at Test 1, while the last episode was collected from the initial interview. First, FA4 Strike was not familiar with identifying constituent sounds in a word, as with Jake above. Right after my example, however, Strike found the task easy, since it reminded him of the rules that he had obtained from his Korean literacy acquisition (Extract 2).

Extract 2 (Strike at Test 1, December 29, 2016)

- 01 Strike: *Aha! I know. It's easy.*
02 R: *Easy? Have you done anything like this before?*
03 Strike: *No. But I think I know.*
04 R: *How do you know?*
05 Strike: *Isn't this like the Korean consonants and vowels?*

Then, NA2 Ariel demonstrated sound blending using the Korean alphabet letters, following my demonstrations in English (Extract 3). While Strike mentioned Korean consonants and vowels above, Ariel went further to refer to the similarity between the two languages and gave an example in Korean by blending the three Korean alphabet sounds for the word '신' /ʃɪn/.

Extract 3 (Ariel at Test 1, January 2, 2017)

- 01 R: *When I make three sounds, you're going to put them together to make a word. For example, which word do you get when you put /b-ɹ-s/ together?*
02 Ariel: *'bus'*
03 R: *Yes. Well done. Was it easy?*
04 Ariel: *Isn't this the same as Korean? When shi-ot (ㅅ), i (ㅣ) and ni-eun (ㄴ) are put together, it makes /ʃɪn/ (신):*

Last, NA2 Spider relied on his L1 knowledge to figure out a more challenging phoneme task during the initial interview – counting the number of phonemes in the words with diphthongs. As can be seen in Figure 19, Spider scribbled down the Korean transcription of the English pronunciation of 'boat' in the margin. As he was explaining about his answer, Spider wrote 보트 /bo-tu/ as a result of his perception of the pronunciation of 'boat' as /bot/, not /boot/, and the addition of the imaginary /u/ at the end. Then, 보트 was broken down into 브오트 /bu-o-tu/ in Korean, which was equivalent to /b-o-t/.

Regarding the third word 닭다리, however, many children were confused by <ㄹ> in the first syllable 닭. Despite the double consonant, <ㄹ> has only one sound in this case - /ㄱ/, whereas <ㄹ> is silent. Thus, the Korean PA segments the word into /ㄷ-ㅏ-ㄱ-ㄹ/ (/d-a-k/). An analogy with English would be the <kn> letters in the word 'know', in which <k> is silent. I stressed that the children should pay attention to sounds rather than the spelling. As can be shown in Figure 21, however, PA2 Rosari perceived /ㄹ/ as a phoneme as well as <ㄱ>.

Figure 21. Rosari's Korean phoneme counting (Lesson 2)¹

Lesson 2: Phoneme 감각 키우기 (한국어 vs. 영어)

1.	산	ㅅ	ㅏ	ㄴ						3
2.	바다	ㅂ	ㅏ	ㄷ	ㅏ					4
3.	닭다리	ㄷ	ㅏ	ㄱ	ㄹ	ㅏ	ㄹ			7
4.	...									4
5.	...									6

Subsequently, the children segmented their Korean names. For example, one of the common Korean family names 김 /kim/ was divided into /ㄱ-ㅣ-ㅁ/. Everything seemed to go well, until some children had to deal with the unvoiced <ㅇ> in the onset. The Korean <ㅇ> consonant corresponds to an /ŋ/ sound in English only when it comes at the coda. For example, 공 (ball) is pronounced as /gɔ:ŋ/. However, when the letter is placed in the onset, like 우유 /u:-yu:/ (milk), it simply occupies the position without an actual sound, resulting in a single-syllable word with the V structure. Unaware of this, a majority of the children cried out 3 for the last syllable of my Korean name 양 /ya:ŋ/ mistakenly identifying as /ㅇ-ㅣ-ㅇ/, rather than the two phonemes /ㅣ-ㅇ/.

¹ Questions 4 and 5 are blurred because they are the real names of participating children.

These results showed that a certain degree of phonemic sensitivity had already been developed with these learners as a result of the acquisition of the alpha-syllabic Korean language. However, mistakes in segmenting <리> and 양 showed that Korean phonemic isolation was still not in place at an advanced level. Since the children answered in the negative regarding similar prior practices in Korean, it is not clear whether there had been explicit instruction on Korean phoneme manipulation in the acquisition process. Even so, it is evident that the children were equipped with basic phonemic sensitivity in Korean, which they seemed to have applied to the English PA tasks of simple CVC words at Test 1.

4.3.3. Negative Transfer

Many cases of cross-language transfer were identified during the phoneme counting task, in which two types of negative transfer appeared. One of these was the separation of off-glide English diphthongs into two vowels. As discussed in Section 2.5.4 (Cross-Language Transfer, p. 50), English diphthongs like /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /oʊ/, /aʊ/ are counted as one phoneme, whereas Korean phonology considers them as two phonemes. For example, the single syllable English word ‘out’ /aʊt/ is pronounced as /a-ʊt/ in Korean and is spelled as the two-syllable ‘아웃’. As can be seen in Extract 4, PA2 Nari was consistent with this strategy.

Extract 4 (Nari at initial interview, December 29, 2016)

- | | | |
|----|-------|---------------------------------|
| 01 | R: | <i>Why is it 4 for ‘boat’?</i> |
| 02 | Nari: | <i>/b-o-ʊ-t/</i> |
| 03 | R: | <i>Then what about ‘eight’?</i> |
| 04 | Nari: | <i>/e-ɪ-t/</i> |
| 05 | R: | <i>‘cake’?</i> |
| 06 | Nari: | <i>/k-e-ɪ-k/</i> |

The other type of negative transfer was more complex, involving a wide range of Korean linguistic features. Figure 22 shows FA2 September’s answers. The number 2 for ‘pig’ refers neither to the number of sounds nor the spelling. Extract 5 reveals the strategies that September was processing in order to cope with this task.

Figure 22. September's phoneme counting at initial interview



Extract 5 (September at initial interview, December 29, 2016)

- 01 R: You had 2 for 'pig'. Why is that?
 02 September: /pɪ/ and /gw/
 03 R: /pɪ/ and /gw/?
 04 September: It's 'pi-geu' /pɪ-gw/ when we say this. So, it's divided into two parts, /pɪ/ and /gw/.

First, he put an /u/ vowel at the end of /pɪg/, resulting in /pɪgu/. Then, he transcribed its English pronunciation into the two-syllable Korean 피그 /pɪ-gw/. Finally, he counted the Korean syllables rather than phonemes. Table 23 summarizes how September applied these strategies to all the words.

Table 23. September's initial phoneme counting

English Segmentation	Phoneme	Korean Transcription and Syllable Segmentation	
pig	/pɪ-g/ (3)	피그	/pɪ-gw/ (2)
boat	/b-oʊ-t/ (3)	보트	/bo-tw/ (2)
eight	/eɪ-t/ (2)	에잇	/e-ɪt/ (2)
cake	/k-eɪ-k/ (3)	케이크	/ke-ɪ-kw/ (3)
house	/h-aʊ-s/ (3)	하우스	/ha-ʊ-sw/ (3)
eye	/aɪ/ (1)	아이	/a-ɪ/ (2)

In this way, it was discovered that before the intervention took place, there were both positive and negative inter-linguistic transfers when these learners performed English PA tasks at various levels. These findings led me to introduce the English term 'phoneme' in Lesson 1, since its concept was not unknown to the learners.

4.3.4. English PA Instruction

In Lesson 1 when I explained about ‘phonemes’, I first used the term ‘sounds’ and then introduced ‘phoneme’ as a synonym. I also made clear distinctions about the two concepts – names and sounds – in the way that was instantly understandable to the children. This was necessary for these learners, since some showed the confusion between letter names and sounds during Test 1 and initial interviews. The PowerPoint slide with a photo of a dog (Figure 23) was particularly designed to help the learners understand that a name is not always the same with the sound it makes. In this case, the name of the creature is a ‘dog’, but its sound is not ‘dog, dog’ but ‘woof, woof’.

Figure 23. Distinction between names and sounds



In the first phase of the intervention, there were various phoneme and graphophoneme activities. As discussed in Section 2.4.4 (Phonological Awareness, p. 31), graphophoneme awareness is more effective than purely PA in improving phonemic processing skills and word reading, particularly when the learners are already well-equipped with letter knowledge. The phoneme and graphophoneme activities in the first five lessons are summarized in Table 24.

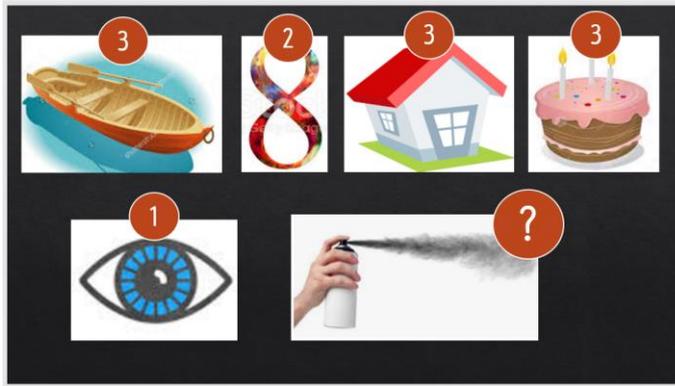
Table 24. Phoneme and graphophoneme activities in Lessons 1 to 5

Lesson	In Class	Homework
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Introducing concept of phoneme ◆ Matching letter-sound, phoneme counting & blending: <ay> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phoneme counting: <i>Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Comparing Korean and English 	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Working on Korean phonemes ◆ Matching letter-sound, phoneme counting & blending: <ow>, <ee> ◆ Recognizing initial consonant sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phoneme blending: <ow> & <ee> • Recognizing initial consonant sounds
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Recognizing final consonant sounds ◆ Recognizing initial & final consonant sounds ◆ Articulating confusing consonants: /b/-/v/, /f/-/p/ ◆ Phonics: <a> to <m> ◆ Recognizing & articulating middle vowel sounds: /æ/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing initial & final consonant sounds • Articulating confusing consonants: /b/-/v/, /f/-/p/ • Recognizing & articulating middle vowel sounds: /æ/
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Recognizing & articulating middle vowels: /æ, /e/, /ɪ/, /i:/ ◆ CVC segmenting & spelling: <a>, <e>, <i>, <ee> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVC word reading: <a>, <e>, <i>, <ee> • Reading (1): <i>Hop on Pop</i>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Matching letter-sound, phoneme counting & blending: <ou> ◆ Phonics: <n> to <z> ◆ Recognizing & producing middle vowels: /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ʌ/ ◆ CVC segmenting & spelling: <o>, <u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVC word reading: <o>, <u> • Reading (2): <i>Hop on Pop</i>

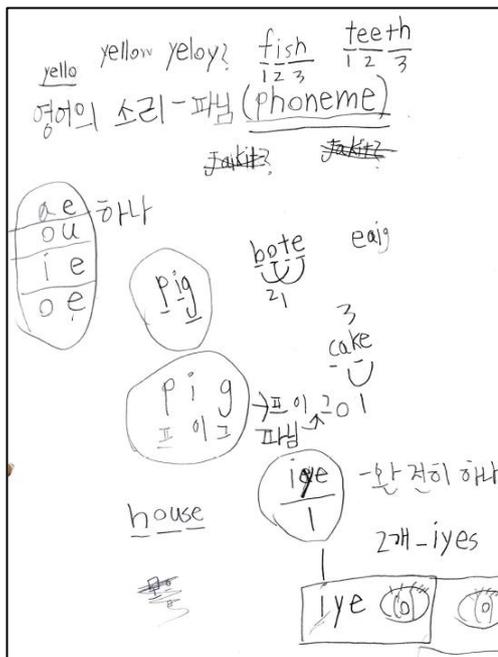
In Lesson 1, I also explained about the difference between Korean and English in terms of diphthongs. This decision was made, since all the learners were fairly skillful at performing basic English PA. The children were excited to see the images of the words, which they had already seen at the initial interviews (Figure 24). At first, I only revealed 3 for 'boat' and elicited the children's interpretations. Some justified 3 as having three syllables (보우트 /bo-u:-tu/). Others insisted that I was wrong and that the number should be 4 (/b-o-o-t/). Then I explained that /oʊ/ was considered as a single phoneme in English.

Figure 24. Phoneme counting task with diphthongs (Lesson 1)



Responses to my explanations varied. While a few children looked confused or indifferent, the majority of them showed interest in these new pieces of information and the linguistic differences. Among them, Jake seemed to be most keen to learn, since he immediately took out a piece of paper and started taking notes. He wrote down the definition of phonemes and highlighted the information that diphthongs were considered as single sounds in English (Figure 25). Despite the mixed initial responses, however, there was an incremental excitement in class over finding out the correct numbers of phonemes for the following words, including the new word ‘spray’. It was a surprise to see how smoothly the class went on this topic (Extract 6).

Figure 25. Jake’s note-taking about phonemes (Lesson 1)

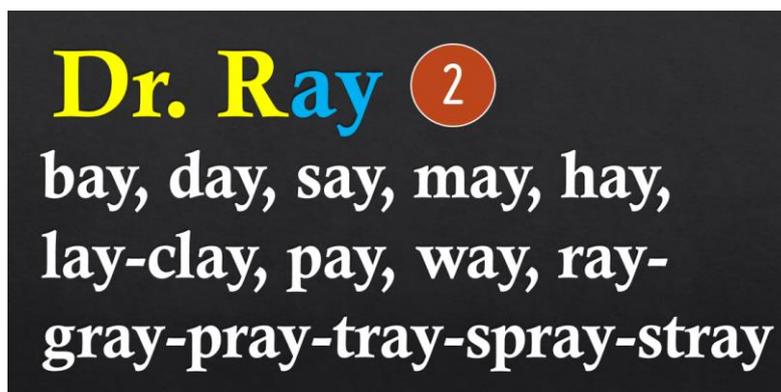


Extract 6 (Research journal, January 7, 2017)

We played a game. When I asked about 'eight', there were two groups: 2 and 3. The '2' group got together on the left side of the classroom, while the '3' group on the right side. On the count of three, the answer was revealed and there was a triumphant cry from the '2' group. The '3' group was disappointed, but they seemed to understand why they lost. The mood was heating up with the next words, and the entire class was absorbed in getting the correct answers through the heated debate between the two groups. [...] Finally, with the last new word 'spray', it was a thrill to hear a unanimous choral exclamation 'FOUR, S-P-R-AY!'.

After this, links between speech and print were presented. I introduced my English nickname as Dr. Ray, meaning 'a drop of golden sun' from the famous *Do-Re-Mi* song. With 'Dr. Ray' shown in writing, I articulated my nickname several times. The children were then encouraged to do three tasks on 'ray': (1) to elicit the sound of <ay>; (2) to count the phonemes of 'ray'; and (3) to read other <ay> words (Figure 26). As with the previous activity, all three tasks were completed fairly easily. What seemed to be challenging was the reading of longer words. A few weaker readers appeared to be overwhelmed by having to cope with so much information in such a short time. Extract 7 is my journal entry highlighting how the children performed on this graphophoneme awareness task and word reading in class.

Figure 26. Graphophoneme awareness task (Lesson 1)



Extract 7 (Research journal, January 7, 2017)

The class did really well on the first two tasks. The spelling pattern of <ay> may have been unfamiliar, but it didn't matter. From my pronunciation, the children identified its sound very easily. Its phoneme counting was a piece of cake. Their roaring voices were full of confidence, which was thrilling. Then, I asked them to practice reading the <ay> words in groups. I was very happy to see them figure out the reading for

themselves, when strong readers helped weaker readers. As I was walking around, I noticed that even weak readers had no problem with the short words, but a few of them were struggling with the longer words like 'spray' and 'stray'. For them, it may have been too much to move to longer word reading straight away. They needed more time and practice.

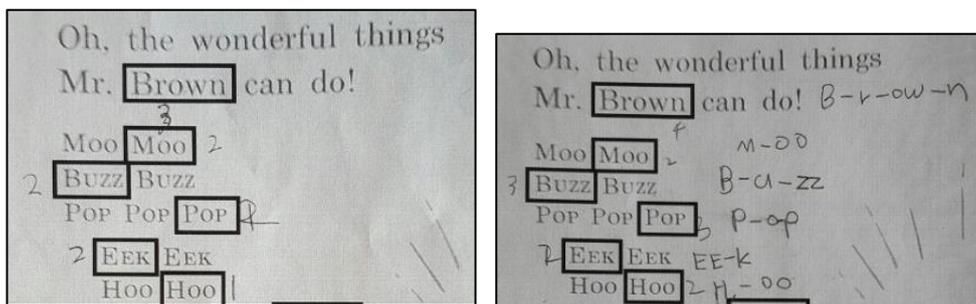
Meanwhile, consolidating the learning of phonemes/graphophonemes at home did not always go as smoothly for different families as I had observed in class. Extract 8 is a compilation of parents' text messages after Lesson 1, showing mixed feedback about how well their children grasped the English phonemes. Lines 1 to 3 show positive feedback, whereas lines 4 and 5 reveal confusion and lack of confidence. Lines 3 to 5 mention homework, which was the phoneme counting of selected words from Dr. Seuss' *Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?* For the children who could not read the words, I recorded them with my mobile phone and shared the file with the parents.

Extract 8 (Compiled parents' text messages, after Lesson 1)

- 01 Jake's M: Jake seems to understand because he's giving me quizzes. He gives me quizzes only when he's fully understood.
- 02 Nari's M: Nari says that 'spray' has four phonemes. Is this correct? She's explained so passionately to her younger sisters. It's something I didn't know either. It's amazing!
- 03 Spider's M: Spider's done his homework alone, and I don't know whether he's done it right. But I'm relieved to see him do something hard for himself.
- 04 Ryan's M: Ryan is very confused. He listened to your recording five times and he kept changing the answers. He doesn't seem to get it yet.
- 05 Ailee's M: We both worked together on this homework, but I don't know if we've done it right. I'm still confused.

Individual differences were evident in the phoneme counting homework. As can be seen in Figure 27, some children, like PA3 Junseo (on the left), were still confused, while others, including PA2 Rosari (on the right), were beginning to grasp the concept even after this brief instruction.

Figure 27. Phoneme counting homework: Junseo and Rosari



As in the extract above, many parents stated that they could not help at home because it was their first time that they had heard about English phonemes. Interestingly, this lack of knowledge and hands-on experience produced two opposite emotional responses (Extract 9). On the one hand, there was a sense of frustration, as with Junseo’s mother, who did not know how to help her son despite really wishing to do so (line 1). On the other hand, some stayed hopeful and even curious, as with Nari’s mother, who took this opportunity to learn English along with her daughter (line 2).

Extract 9 (Compiled parent diaries from Junseo’s and Nari’s mothers, mid-January 2017)

- 01 Junseo’s M: It’s frustrating that I can’t help Junseo when he’s confused. I don’t know either. It’s so different from my school days.
- 02 Nari’s M: I’m learning English myself with Nari and I’m growing confident.

Overall, these learner’s performances in class made me optimistic about the upcoming series of instruction. At home, however, the absence of an expert on an unfamiliar technical topic seemed to have made task completion more challenging, resulting in large individual differences.

4.3.5. Children’s Understanding

Group interviews took place after Lesson 5, with a focus on exploring the children’s understanding of English phonemes. Reflecting on what they had learned over the past five lessons, the children were encouraged to define a phoneme and to share any learning progress and difficulties.

While their answers to the first question were varied, all of the participants identified a certain aspect of phonemes or manipulation tasks (Extract 10). Jake offered the definition that I had taught in Lesson 1 (line 1), while the answers of four other children concerned deciphering (lines 2 to 6). Erica sought similarities between the two languages (line 6), and the last two children referred to the phoneme counting tasks (lines 7 and 8).

Extract 10 (Group interviews, February 18, 2017)

- 01 Jake: *I think they're alphabet sounds.*
02 Ailee: *Reading by breaking down words.*
03 Ryan: *I think they're like /h-as-l/.*
04 Spider: *They seem to be related to English reading.*
05 Rosari: *Phonics.*
06 Erica: *I think they're consonants and vowels, like Korean.*
07 Nari: *We can count the letters.*
08 Ariel: *I read a word and write the numbers.*

This led to discussion of whether the learning of phonemes was helpful, which created great excitement in the groups. Extract 11 illustrates the positive feedback in terms of perceived improvement on word reading (lines 1 to 3), pronunciation (lines 4 to 8), confidence building (line 7) and joy of learning about language (lines 8 to 10).

Extract 11 (Group interviews, February 18, 2017)

- 01 Ariel: *I got better with reading.*
02 Spider: *At first, I couldn't read anything. But now I can read well.*
03 Nari: *I can read long words as well.*
04 Ryan: *I was often confused between /ʌ/ and /a:/, but now I am learning how they're different.*
05 Tina: *For <a> and <e>, I got to know which one I should pronounce longer and which one shorter.*
06 Seongoh: *I knew nothing about vowel. But this time I've learned they're different, like mouth shape.*
07 Ailee: *Pronunciation and confidence. When I read the words that I've seen for the first time, you praised me and I grew more confident.*
08 Jake: *My mouth shape is better as I pronounce. For /æ/-/e/, they sound similar but they're different in mouth shape. Now their*

sounds are different, indeed. Also, it was interesting to know that Korean and English are different.

- 09 Erica: *I've found that alphabet letters and phonemes have a lot in common. For example, <d> makes a /d/ sound and <p> makes a /p/ sound.*
- 10 Strike: *I've learned about phonemes, which I didn't know before.*

The participants also explained what they found difficult or confusing. As can be seen in Extract 12, meaningful responses concerned the comparison between Korean and English (lines 1 to 2), inconsistency between phonemes and spellings (line 2), difficult pronunciation (lines 3 to 4) and the use of long words (lines 5 to 6).

Extract 12 (Group interviews, February 18, 2017)

- 01 Jake: *Things like 'boat' are confusing when phonemes (oa) are combined.*
- 02 Tina: *That's right. /eɪ/ is said to be one. Also, when two letters have one sound, like 'bee' there are three letters in spelling but two sounds.*
- 03 Rosari: *The vowels /æ/-/e/ are confusing.*
- 04 Erica: *The pronunciations of <o>-<u> are difficult. /ɔ:/ and /ʌ/.*
- 05 Ryan: *I'm fine with short words, but with the longer words, I'm totally lost.*
- 06 Spider: *I wish we wouldn't go for long words.*

These comments were valuable in that the learners clearly identified what they had learned and their own learning progress and difficulties. These findings were all the more significant because few of the participants had previously been offered the opportunity to discuss metacognitive questions about their own learning. PA2 Ailee stated at the final child interview that it was her first time to seriously reflect on what she had learned. It did not mean, however, that there had been no such chances at all. She checked the boxes without serious consideration, since no relevant activity followed (Extract 13).

Extract 13 (Ailee at final interview, April 17, 2017)

PA2 Ailee: *We had the checking activity when a unit was finished. But it was just like a routine. We had only to check and that was it, so I never took it seriously. When you asked those questions at the interview, it was difficult at first.*

The learners' feedback about the learning of English PA, both positive and negative, concerned several areas: (1) its relevance to English decoding, (2) recognition and pronunciation of certain sounds, (3) metalinguistic knowledge, (4) confidence building, and (5) complicated level of English PA. Details on each area will be further explained in the following sections.

4.3.6. 'Aha' Moment

The findings thus far indicated that the learners had acquired a certain degree of phonemic sensitivity. All of them, apart from NA2 Spider, had taken phonics programs previously. However, what was striking to me at Test 1 was that quite a few of the participants experienced significant difficulty in deciphering simple unknown words with the CVC structure. Many of these partial alphabetic or non-alphabetic readers commanded solid knowledge of individual sounds of many of the 26 alphabetic letters. If PA and the alphabetic principle were two important prerequisites to English decoding, I began to wonder why they would not have led to successful word reading for some learners.

Two episodes demonstrate how basic PA helped beginner English readers with simple CVC deciphering. The first of these concerns PA2 Ailee. After the preparatory workshop on 17 December 2016, Ailee's mother, who is also my friend, visited me and we had a short talk. During this time, she shared her frustration about her daughter's sluggish learning progress in phonics. Before she joined this research, Ailee had already taken phonics for about a year in Grade 2 with an after-school program, five times a week. But she was still struggling reading simple CVC words although she knew many of the individual sounds.

When I demonstrated the hand motions for the phoneme blending of a word 'cat', Ailee and her mother experienced an 'aha' moment in terms of the relations between PA and word reading. Extract 14 shows my journal entry about this event.

Extract 14 (Research journal, December 22, 2016)

I put my hands in front of my chest as I made each sound, /k-æ-t/. Then, I drew my hands together, like clapping, as I said 'cat'. Ailee's mother repeated after me with

other CVC words like 'dog', 'bus' and 'pen'. This was a few days ago. Today when we came across on the street, Ailee's mother excitedly told me that Ailee has finally understood the principle behind CVC reading! "The fact was that Ailee had only memorized individual sounds but didn't know how the sounds were put together!" she said.

The second episode concerns NA2 Spider. He was the only learner in the class with no English decoding experience. For this reason, Spider's mother had worried whether her son could follow the lessons. In order to alleviate her concerns, I visited her house prior to the intervention. This was also for the purpose of making up for the preparatory workshop, which they had missed because of an examination that Spider had taken elsewhere. After informed consent was obtained, Spider's mother asked me to talk with her son because he was also very nervous about participating.

Seeing some magnetic alphabet letters in his house, I decided to do a quick phoneme activity. Picking up the letters of <s>, <i>, <d>, I taught him their individual sounds and asked him to read 'sid', but he said, "I don't know". Then I took away the initial <s>, leaving 'id', which he could not read either. So, I tried to demonstrate the VC reading myself by substituting the final consonants, like 'ik', 'im', and 'ip'. Extract 15 shows the subsequent 'aha' moment for Spider.

Extract 15 (Research journal, December 19, 2016)

Carefully watching me, Spider gradually grew interested and tried himself by reading other VC words that begin with <i>. Suddenly, he put <s> in front of <id> and articulated 'sid' in a big, confident voice. After that, Spider was so excited that he even called out for mother, who had been away in the kitchen on Spider's request, and boasted about his new skills before her. His skills were not secure yet and he needed my help for the sounds of alphabet letters. But it was encouraging to see him playing with the letters and beginning to read a few CVC words all by himself in such a short time.

In Ailee's case, the simple hand motions of phoneme blending helped her one year of phonics learning to finally contribute to her successful word reading. Her case offers a good example of the importance of basic English PA as a tool for combining separate sounds for decoding. On the other hand, Spider had not had any solid linguistic instruction about the alphabetic principle in English, but

once he grasped how English sounds are blended into words, he was ready to learn the letter-sound relationships.

4.3.7. Confidence Building

PA2 Nari and NA2 Ariel were friends, who had received phonics instruction for a year, five days a week, from an after-school program. When I looked at their phonics textbooks, the one-year curriculum covered 26 alphabet letter sounds, CVC reading with short vowels, and consonant blends and digraphs. According to the Test 1 results, however, Nari read only six regular words and four unknown words out of 25 items each. She was able to identify initial and final consonants, but failed in blending them with the middle vowel sounds into articulating a whole single word. For example, she mumbled /bn/ for 'ban' and tried several forms of production, like /pl/ or /pt/ for 'pelt'. Ariel struggled even more. As explained in Section 3.5.1 (Mixed Levels in English Decoding, p. 92), Ariel managed to sound out a few words at Test 1 but otherwise remained silent most of the time. She had some knowledge of individual alphabetic sounds though, according to the subsequent interview.

As with PA2 Ailee earlier, the link seemed to be missing between PA and decoding for these learners who had obtained the alphabetic principle but were lacking in the skills to put the sounds together. Throughout the intervention, Nari and Ariel always did their word-reading homework using the hand motions of phoneme blending as taught in class. In the second phase of the intervention, I asked the children to choose how they would prefer reading words for homework – reading with or without phonemic segmentation. In other words, <sh>-<i>-<p> in Figure 28 could be read either as a whole word /ʃip/ or as phonemically segmented /ʃ/-/ɪ/-/p/ before whole word production. Many children opted for the first approach since that would save time. However, Nari and Ariel were two of the few who continued to use hand motions (Figure 29).

Figure 28. <ch>, <sh> word reading homework (Lesson 8)

[숙제 2] [ch], [sh] 단어를 소리 내어 읽으세요.			
ch	ch-i-n	ch-i-p	ch-o-p
	ch-i-ck	ch-ea-p	ch-e-ck
	ch-a-m-p	ch-ea-t	r-i-ch
	b-e-n-ch	l-u-n-ch	ea-ch
	b-ea-ch	p-ea-ch	t-ea-ch
sh	sh-i-p	sh-o-p	sh-u-t
	sh-ee-p	sh-ee-t	sh-e-ll
	sh-o-ck	sh-oo	sh-a-pe (a_e)
	f-i-sh	d-i-sh	w-i-sh
	w-a-sh	b-r-u-sh	c-r-u-sh
	f-l-a-sh	t-r-a-sh	s-m-a-sh

Figure 29. <sh> word reading homework with hand motions: Nari and Ariel (Lesson 8)



Extract 16 is a compilation of text messages sent by the mothers when they sent me the video homework. Nari persisted with the phonemic segmentation strategy in pursuit of accuracy. A similar response was provided by Ariel's mother, in which Ariel did not bother over the time taken, since she wanted to ensure accurate reading.

Extract 16 (Text messages by Nari's and Ariel's mothers, March 2017)

- 01 Nari's M: She's persistently reading by phonemes. I said it would be okay to read as whole words. But she said, "Only this can make me read accurately".

- 02 Ariel's M: She said she wouldn't bother over time. Only through using this method is she able to not make mistakes and read accurately when reading the words she's seen for the first time.

Once they understood how to decipher, Nari and Ariel challenged themselves to read English in their real lives during their overseas trips. At the final interview, Nari referred to an episode of her family trip to Japan, where she impressed her mother and younger sisters by reading English shop signs (Extract 17).

Extract 17 (Nari at final interview, April 10, 2017)

PA2 Nari: *In Japan, I saw 'hotel' on the sign and mumbled /hotel/ to myself. Mom heard what I was saying, and she was amazed. I remember reading 'free' as well. For 'ramen', I read as I was pointing at each letter with my finger. My younger sisters said, "You're good at reading" and this made me feel good.*

Similarly, Ariel shared a proud moment during her family visit to Guam, when she read an English word silently (Extract 18). This did not impress her family, but it did impress Ariel (line 1). The turning point for Ariel was in Lesson 6, when she found the word-reading homework less difficult than before (lines 3 to 5). By the completion of the intervention, Ariel was able to offer an explanation about how to read 'sen' (lines 6 to 9).

Extract 18 (Ariel at final interview, April 14, 2017)

- 01 Ariel: *We stopped by a toy shop in Guam, and an English word was written on a toy. I read it in my mind. I felt good.*
- 02 R: *Wow! You read English in Guam. That's great! When did you start feeling 'I'm doing better'?*
- 03 Ariel: *Since lesson 6, when we began to read stories.*
- 04 R: *What made you feel that way?*
- 05 Ariel: *When I did my homework, there were very few words that I couldn't read. Mom praised me.*
- 06 R: *What if you come across a word that you've seen for the first time? Like this (writing 'sen' on the paper) =*
- 07 Ariel: *= /sen/*
- 08 R: *Yeah. Very easy, isn't it? Will you tell me how you used to read a word like this previously and now?*
- 09 Ariel: *Previously I was confused. But now it's /s-e-n/ and then /sen/ after putting them together.*

FA4 Strike and FA2 September were brothers, both full alphabetic readers, who had taken phonics for two years in an English worksheet visitation program with the same teacher. Before the intervention, Strike and September were both accurate and fluent in reading simple English stories such as Dr. Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat* and *Green Eggs and Ham*. As explained in Section 3.5.1 (Mixed Levels in English Decoding, p. 92), their primary reason for participating in the research was to consolidate what they already knew through a new program with a different teacher. Therefore, their expectations were lower than those of the other participants in terms of what they would learn during the intervention.

As can be seen in Extract 11 in Section 4.3.5 (Children's Understanding, p. 128), Strike stated at the group interview that phonemes were new to him. At the final interview, he elaborated on how the understanding of phonemes enhanced his confidence in English decoding (Extract 19).

Extract 19 (Strike at final interview, April 17, 2017)

FA4 Strike: *Previously, I didn't like reading unknown words. But now, even though I come across words that I haven't seen, I can read them easily by making each sound and putting them together.*

The key role of English PA in building Strike's reading confidence was echoed by the mother of Strike and September both in her diary and in the final parent interview. According to her diary, she noticed the changed attitude and increased confidence of her children towards unfamiliar word reading (Extract 20). When asked about this during her final interview, she indicated that English PA was missing in her children's previous early literacy acquisition program. She also observed that English PA seemed to foster their vocabulary acquisition as well (Extract 21).

Extract 20 (Diary of Strike and September's mother, February 16, 2017)

Strike & September's M: *Previously, when I asked them "Will you read these words?" they simply said "I didn't learn" or "I can't because I don't know the words". But these days, they're pretty good at reading any words and try proactively to read difficult words as well.*

Extract 21 (The mother of Strike and September at final interview, April 26, 2017)

Strike & September's M: There was no such thing as phonemes in their English worksheet program. Thanks to the previous program, my children acquired good English pronunciation and did well with English reading. But it didn't provide any practice of reading words that they come across for the first time. They only tried to read fast. From your lessons, they learned about phonemes. Now they're receiving vocabulary lessons from the worksheet program, and I could see that they're trying their hardest to read unknown words aloud.

These episodes explained what had been missing for the weak readers and what finally contributed to their success in early English reading. Phonemic manipulation skills helped children of different alphabetic groups by increasing their confidence in English decoding in a short period of time. Further, these cases indicated that the awareness of two knowledge bases – English PA and the alphabetic principle – did not always enable young FL learners to be successful in English reading. As a teacher, I was amazed by the extent to which simple hand motions could affect substantial progress for weak English decoders.

4.4. Complex English PA

When the children practiced with the simple CVC words, they performed well on the basic level of English PA tasks. Further, simple phonemic segmentation and blending practices using those words helped the lower alphabetic readers to quickly grasp the principle behind word reading and improve their English decoding in a short time.

At a more complex level, however, the findings cast doubt on the immediate efficacy of teaching more sophisticated English PA on English reading skills development at the early stages. After all, the children's Korean PA was not in place at an advanced level, though they had all mastered Korean literacy skills. However, in addition to its relation to English decoding, this metalinguistic knowledge stimulated in some learners the joy of learning. These two aspects gave me as a teacher some insight into how a more sophisticated level of English PA could be introduced in early English literacy instruction.

4.4.1. Efficacy on Beginning English Reading

Before the intervention, negative transfer was evident among all the children when counting the phoneme of words, like 'boat' and 'cake'. During the interim group interviews, some children expressed confusion regarding the comparison between Korean and English in Extract 12 in Section 4.3.5 (Children's Understanding, p. 128). After the intervention, the children listened to six words ('*snub, fate, slash, coat, vex, wine*') and performed phonemic isolation again and overall progress was made from 11 to 65.8 points (see Section 4.2.4. Complex English PA, p. 112). However, there were large individual differences and the results did not reflect the alphabetic phases. PA4 Erica and NA2 Ariel achieved full scores while FA4 Strike got only half of the answers correct.

It was hard to identify any consistent patterns for this element in terms of time-related improvement, decline or fluctuation in learning. Rather, a question arose regarding the efficacy of teaching this level of English PA for Korean ELLs. Two cases highlighted the issue. The first of these concerned the full alphabetic readers. Jake, September, Strike and Roopi had already been full alphabetic without the solid knowledge of more sophisticated English PA. Strike was still confused at the final phoneme counting task. In my research journal, I reflected that English PA would be a prerequisite for the early phase of English reading only at the basic level, but not at a more advanced level (Extract 22).

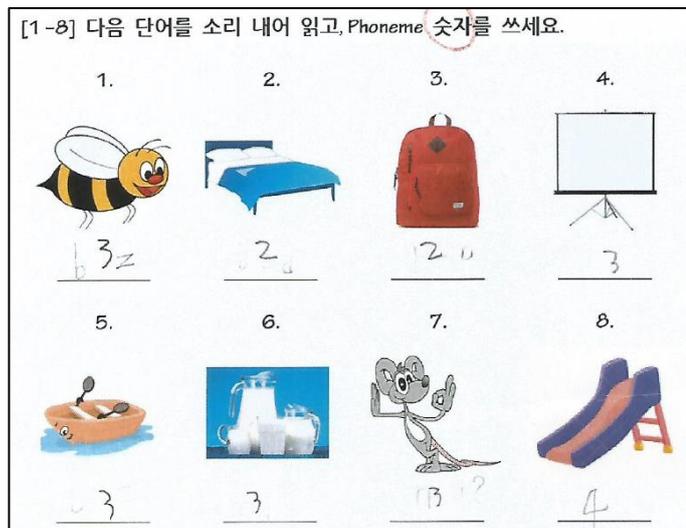
Extract 22 (Research journal, April 18, 2017)

Full alphabetic readers are still confused when identifying phonemes that contain diphthongs or digraphs. Strike counted /s-n/ and /s-l/ as 1 and perceived letter <x> as a single phoneme, which actually consists of two sounds /k/-/s/. Jake segmented 'wine' into /w-a-i-n/. A more advanced level of English PA would not seem to be necessary for beginning reading. Strike, Jake, September and Roopi were already full alphabetic without these skills. Indeed, it will take a long time to acquire English PA at a more advanced level.

The second case involved PA2 Ryan. He was highly proficient in basic phonemic manipulation and his unknown word reading improved throughout the intervention. However, he did not seem to understand English PA at an advanced level at all. After Lesson 1, Ryan's mother texted me that her son was very confused about how to do the phoneme counting homework from Dr. Seuss'

Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You? (Extract 8 in Section 4.3.4. English PA Instruction, p. 125). In Lesson 5, his confusion was still evident, and his answers indicated the use of three strategies: (1) number of letters in spelling for 'bee'; (2) number of Korean syllables of English transcription for most of the words; and (3) random guessing for 'milk' (Figure 30). During the group interview, Ryan expressed deep frustration about working on the phonemes of long and difficult words (Extract 23).

Figure 30. Ryan's worksheet of phoneme counting (Lesson 5)



Extract 23 (Ryan at group interview, February 18, 2017)

PA2 Ryan: *When I was just beginning to understand things like 'dog' and 'cat', long and difficult words poured out suddenly and I got completely confused. Even what I learned previously has been entirely mixed up. I'm totally lost.*

Ryan's mother was equally frustrated and worried about her son's struggle. During her interim interview after Lesson 5, Ryan's mother mentioned his personality as one of many factors that would cause him to take a long time to learn new things (Extract 24). She suggested that Ryan should be given ample time to solidify what he learned and to become confident before meeting more challenges.

Extract 24 (Ryan's mother at interim interview, February 20, 2017)

Ryan's M: *Once he's got it, he grows very quickly. But as he sets out to do new things, his personality makes him scared beforehand and he tends to think 'I can't do it. I don't know well. I'm not good at it'. So, it takes a very long time for him to get into*

it. [...] When he learned about phonemes, he needed more time to practice even simple things. But he had to deal with more challenging things the very next week. He said he was totally lost.

The interview data from Ryan and his mother were significant to me as a teacher, since they represented the voices of slow learners. Their feedback led me to reflect again on the usefulness of introducing a sophisticated level of English PA to beginning FL learners. I critically evaluated my curriculum and the pace I had planned in my syllabus (Extract 25).

Extract 25 (Research journal, February 21, 2017)

Introducing complex English PA may not have been essential to developing early literacy. It could be taught at a later phase of decoding acquisition, though. If I really want to include it in the beginning literacy development syllabus, then I must allocate enough time and practice, not doing it hastily. Also, it's important to be level-sensitive. I should prepare different materials for different levels.

It was worthwhile to incorporate this level of English PA tasks in the intervention in two respects. First, the findings suggested that English PA at an advanced level may not be essential for the early stage of English literacy development. Rather, this knowledge develops with the advancement of English reading ability. Second, if this element is taught, the pace and the learners' reception have to be carefully monitored. As Ryan pointed out in Extract 23 earlier, any rush might only cause complete confusion.

4.4.2. Joy of Learning

While the early English literacy acquisition needed basic English PA as a prerequisite, teaching more challenging elements increased the joy of learning and problem-solving for some children: FA2 Jake, NA2 Ariel, and FA brothers Strike and September.

FA2 Jake stood out most in terms of showing interest in learning about linguistic differences. As noted in Figure 25 in Section 4.3.4 (English PA Instruction, p. 123), Jake was the only student who took notes while I was explaining about phonemes. At the interim group interview, he expressed a joy of learning about linguistic differences in Extract 11 in Section 4.3.5 (Children's Understanding, p.

128). At the final interview, Jake took pleasure in explaining to ‘Greenie’ about how to decode English words with diphthongs (Extract 26). ‘Greenie’ here referred to Jake’s toy puppet that I had transformed into his imaginary younger brother.

Extract 26 (Jake at final interview, April 13, 2017)

- 01 R: *Here comes Greenie! “Jake, the way I hear, isn’t this /f-e-i-t/ with four sounds?”*
- 02 Jake: *In English, such sounds as /eɪ/ and /aɪ/, the sounds that have two letters are thought to be one sound, one phoneme.*
- 03 R: *“Wow! You’re so smart, Jake!”*
- 04 Jake: *(Laughing) I learned it too.*

As illustrated in Section 4.3.7 (Confidence Building, p. 131), NA2 Ariel made noticeable progress in decoding with the use of phonemic segmentation. At the final phoneme counting task, she performed well thanks to self-questioning and problem-solving. As can be seen in Figure 31, she was still confused by ‘(b) fate’ and ‘(f) wine’, but approached these words with a proactive learning attitude. Extract 27 is a compilation of the scripts of ‘(b) fate’ (lines 1 to 2) and ‘(f) wine’ (lines 3 to 8). For ‘wine’ in particular, Ariel identified what she found confusing and why, and tried to solve things for herself by challenging her own answers.

Figure 31. Ariel’s final phoneme counting

3. 선생님이 말하는 단어를 잘 듣고 소리가 몇 개인지 숫자를 쓰세요.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
<u>4</u>	3	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u> 3 4

Extract 27 (Ariel at final interview, April 14, 2017)

- 01 R: *Why is it 4 for ‘fate’?*
- 02 Ariel: */f-e/ (...) Ah. No. 3, it’s 3. (Crossing 4 and writing 3 down) /eɪ/ is one sound.*
- 03 R: *3 for ‘wine’?*
- 04 Ariel: */w-aɪ/ (...) Um, /w-aɪ-n/? No. Words with <w> are confusing. Is it 4? (Crossing 3 and writing 4 down) /w-aɪ-n/.*
- 05 R: *4? Let’s go for 4 then.*

- 06 Ariel: *Ah. Wait. I don't like it either. (Crossing 4 again and writing 3 back down) It's 3. The correct answer is 3.*
- 07 R: *(Laughing) 3 again?*
- 08 Ariel: *Yes. /w-aɪ-n/.*

Active discussion was also observed between brothers FA4 Strike and FA2 September at their final joint interview. As already mentioned, Strike perceived /sn/ and /sl/ as single phonemes. September questioned his elder brother about 'snub' and they engaged in problem-solving (Extract 28). Strike was mistaken about consonant blends and digraphs (line 4), and September pointed to their differences (line 5). However, Strike decided to stick with his choice (line 6).

Extract 28 (Strike and September at final interview, April 17, 2017)

- 01 September: *Uh. Why is this 3? I have 4.*
- 02 Strike: */sn-ɹ-b/*
- 03 September: *No. It should be 4, /s-n-ɹ-b/*
- 04 Strike: *No. It's 1 for /sn/. Just like the <ch>, which is counted as 1.*
- 05 September: *That's different from this. The <ch> has one sound, but this has two sounds. You should count them separately.*
- 06 Strike: *Um. Is that so? (...) No. I'll go for 3.*

It was encouraging to discover that some of these young FL learners took pleasure in acquiring and processing the metalinguistic aspects of difficult elements. Self-questioning and trial and errors were actively pursued, and peer discussion took place during the process of problem-solving. A more complex level of English PA may not be an essential element in early English literacy acquisition, but its teaching is not to be entirely disregarded since it can foster learners' interest in learning about languages and expand their metalinguistic knowledge.

4.5. Individual Sounds

Individual sound recognition is an essential phonological prerequisite of English decoding. Equally important is the articulation of sounds because of the 'speaking out' element of early reading (Rixon 2011: 55). The aim of this

intervention was that oral reading should be intelligible to the listeners, though not necessarily unaccented or native-like. This section presents data regarding factors that the young Korean learners found easy or difficult in terms of sound identification and production. Consonants and vowels are presented separately, since vowels are considered to be more challenging than consonants (Ehri 1998). Accordingly, the syllabus focused separately on the two types of alphabet sounds. Lessons 2 and 3 investigated consonants and Lessons 3 and 5 looked at vowels. This section ends by examining the participants' opinions regarding focused sound instruction, and sound production in particular.

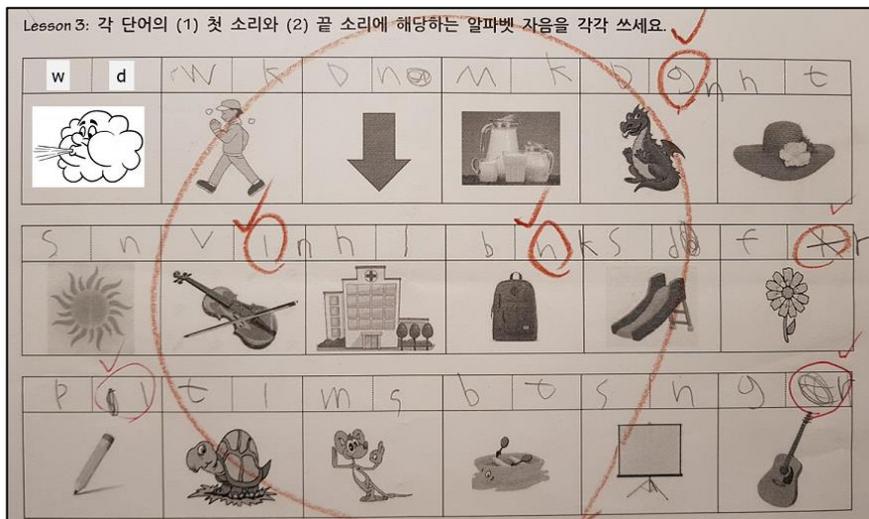
4.5.1. Consonant Sound Recognition

Explicit instruction on individual consonant sounds consisted of three parts: initial consonant recognition, final consonant recognition, and sound articulation and differentiation: /b/-/v/ and /f/-/p/. Lessons 2 and 3 were dedicated to these learning goals, but other lessons also included relevant elements as subsidiary lesson aims. Consonant sound recognition tasks given to the participants produced more mistakes with consonants in the final rather than the initial position. Figure 32 shows PA3 Seongoh's worksheet in Lesson 3. In this class activity, the children wrote alphabet letters corresponding to the beginning and ending consonants, like <w> and <d> for 'wind'. Individual student work was followed by my one-on-one check and self-correction when needed. When I asked Seongoh why he initially wrote <g> for the final sound of 'dragon' in the first row, his strategy reminded me of one of the negative cross-linguistic transfers mentioned in Section 4.3.3 (Negative Transfer, p. 119) (Extract 29).

Extract 29 (Seongoh at group interviews, February 18, 2017)

- 01 Seongoh: *This is /du-ræ-gon/. So, it's /g/ sound from /gon/ (...)*
02 R: *Is this why it's /l/ for 'violin'?*
03 Seongoh: *Yes. It's /va-ɪ-ol-lɪn/. The last letter is /lɪn/.*

Figure 32. Seongoh's ending consonant recognition (Lesson 3)

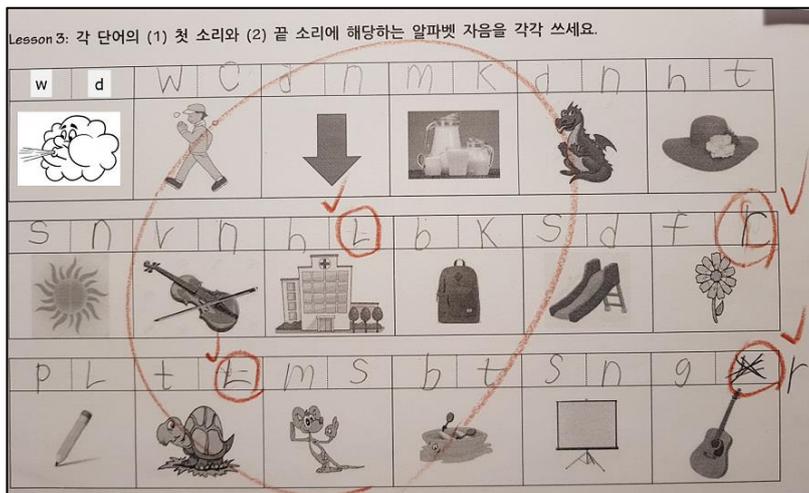


When confronted with the word ‘dragon’, Seongoh first transcribed its English pronunciation into a three-syllable Korean word, 드래곤 /du-ræ-gon/. Next, he paid attention to the final syllable ‘gon’. For Seongoh, the last consonant sound of ‘dragon’ was not /n/. Instead, it was the first sound of the last syllable of its Korean transcription, which was /g/. The same strategy produced <l> for ‘violin’, <s> for ‘pencil’ and <t> for ‘guitar’: 바이올린 /va-i-ol-lm/; 펜슬 /pen-sul/; and 기타 /gi-ta/.

Seongoh had no trouble with single-syllable English words, like ‘sun’, ‘hat’, ‘down’ and even ‘screen’, but this cross-linguistic transfer had an impact on his processing of the two-syllable words mentioned above. Interestingly, he did not use this strategy for other multi-syllable words, such as ‘turtle’ and ‘hospital’. Rather than choosing <t> for both words: 터틀 /tɜ-ttul/; and হাস্পিট /ha-su-pi-ttul/, he was correct in identifying the final <l>.

Similar errors were made by Junseo, Ryan, Rosari and Ailee. PA2 Ailee made mistakes mostly with the words ending with <l> or <r> (Figure 33), and spotted this pattern herself when I asked for self-correction in class, as explained in my journal (Extract 30).

Figure 33. Ailee’s final consonant recognition (Lesson 3)

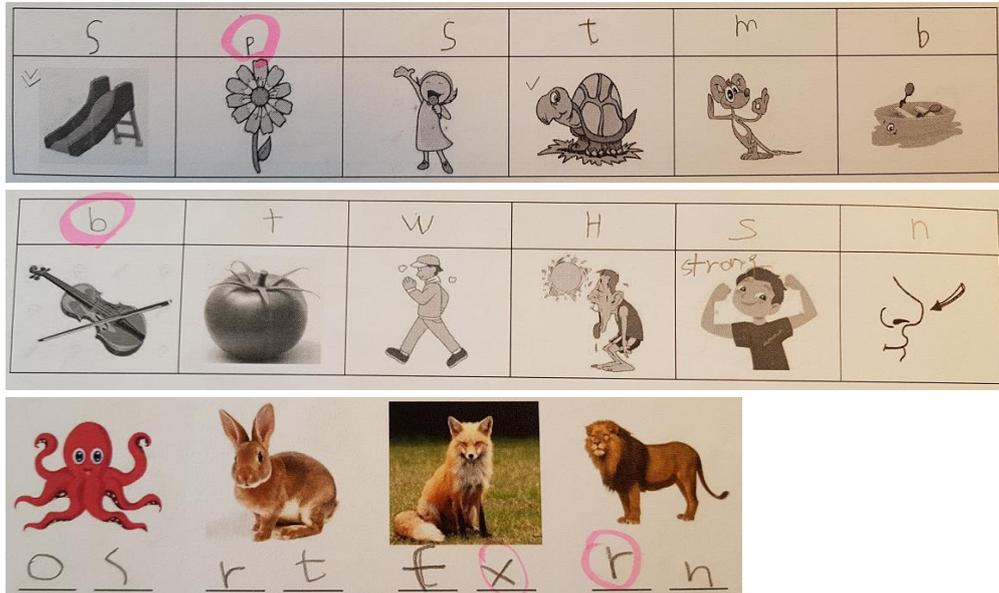


Extract 30 (Research journal, January 21, 2017)

On her first attempt, Ailee wrote <t> for ‘hospital’, ‘turtle’ and ‘guitar’, and <w> for ‘flower’. It was the same strategy Seongoh had employed. After self-correction, Ailee noticed that these errors mostly came from the words ending with /l/ or /r/ sounds. She made a face and said, “It’s more confusing when the words end with /l/ or /r/”.

With regard to initial consonant recognition, very few mistakes were made. However, these mistakes were all related to the inventory of English consonants to which there are no equivalent in Korean. As discussed in Section 2.5.4 (Cross-Language Transfer, p. 49), there are no Korean consonants equivalent to /v/ and /f/. As a result, /v/ and /f/ are transcribed into <ㅂ> and <ㅍ>, which correspond to /b/ and /p/ respectively. In addition, a single Korean phoneme /ㄹ/ represents both /l/ and /r/. Consequently, distinguishing these sounds is more challenging for Korean ELLs (Shin et al. 2013). Figure 34 shows the errors made by the three learners. In Lesson 2, PA2 Ryan wrote <p> for the beginning consonant of ‘flower’, and NA2 Ariel wrote for ‘violin’. In Lesson 5, PA3 Seongoh identified <r> for ‘lion’, whereas he was correct with ‘rabbit’.

Figure 34. Initial consonant recognition errors: Ryan & Ariel (Lesson 2) and Seongoh (Lesson 5)



The findings showed that the school-aged Korean ELLs performed well with the consonant sound recognition, but that some learners made errors in recognizing the ending consonants of the words with more than two syllables. While very few mistakes were made with the beginning consonant recognition, these were all related to the English sounds, whose Korean transcriptions misled some Korean learners to identify different consonants that sounded similar to them.

4.5.2. Consonant Sound Production

The two pairs of consonant sounds mentioned above were perceived to be confusing in terms of production. In Lesson 3, the children looked into their hand mirrors and carefully monitored how they should pronounce the /b/ and /v/ sounds. This individual practice was followed by pair work, in which they exchanged feedback with their partners. Then, the children distinguished the two sounds along with the melody of a Korean children's song (Figure 35). The same procedure was repeated for the /f/-/p/ pair. For further practice, the homework asked the children to videotape their performance of the song again and monitor their mouth shape closely. In Extract 31, PA2 Ailee and PA2 Ryan

shared their thoughts about the difficulties involved in the articulation homework.

Figure 35. /b/-/v/ articulation (Lesson 3)

Articulation: Bb - Vv

The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff contains a sequence of notes with phonetic labels below them: b b v v b b v v v b b v. The second staff contains a similar sequence: b v b v b v v b b. Both sequences are in 4/4 time and end with a double bar line.

Extract 31 (Ailee and Ryan at group interviews, February 18, 2017)

- 01 Ailee: /b/-/v/, /p/-/f/ are confusing. When I did my homework last time, I was so confused that I was terribly told off by Mom.
- 02 Ryan: I was also so much confused. I was told off by Mom so much that I wish I'd get rid of English entirely.

According to the parent diary and the interim interview with Ailee's mother, she was upset because Ailee would not open her mouth wide enough but only mumbled the sounds. From Extracts 32 and 33, it seems that Ailee was shy about making foreign sounds in front of her mother, who was holding a phone camera. However, thanks to the mother's exaggerated demonstration that made Ailee laugh, she successfully carried out the task.

Extract 32 (Diary of Ailee's mother, January 21, 2016)

Ailee's M: When I was filming her for homework, she was so shy that she was just mumbling under her breath. Obviously, it didn't look good to me and I told her off. "Open your mouth wider and make your mouth shape correct." She burst into tears. [...] After a round of crying, she felt better, and on a retake, it looked like she wanted to copy me. Finally, she gathered courage and articulated the sounds loudly. In doing so, she seemed to be satisfied with herself.

Extract 33 (Ailee's mother at interim interview, February 28, 2017)

Ailee' M: She cried. I don't know how many times we had to reshoot. It must be very awkward for her to pronounce foreign sounds. She's fine with Korean but it's a

foreign language. She's very shy when I get her to do what she finds uncomfortable. Besides, I was filming in front of her. How hard must it have been for her?

In addition to the two pairs of sounds discussed thus far, many children struggled with the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds of <th> words. There are no Korean equivalents to /θ/ and /ð/, causing many participants to make a /s/ sound for /θ/ and a /d/ sound for /ð/. <th> words were introduced in Lesson 7, since 'three' was one of the key words of the story *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Both sounds were taught and practiced (Figure 36). The phonemic symbol of /θ/ was nicknamed Pupa, while /ð/ was called Tadpole from my own school day experiences. With my index finger touching the tip of my tongue, which was sticking out, I demonstrated how the two sounds are different from /s/ and /d/. Then, the class watched a YouTube videoclip about the two sounds. More YouTube sources were shared with the parents afterwards so that the children could watch them at home and perform the <th> word reading homework.

Figure 36. Teaching of /θ/ and /ð/ sounds and words (Lesson 7)

Nevertheless, in the video homework, quite a few children read 'three' as /sri:/ and 'then' as /den/. In the parent diaries on Lesson 7, the mothers noticed that their children were experiencing difficulty in this way. Extract 34 is a

compilation of four entries concerning Jake, Spider, Seongoh, and sibling Tina and Ryan.

Extract 34 (Compiled parent diaries, mid-March 2017)

- 01 Jake's M: As expected, the pronunciation of <th> was difficult. It's as hard to teach it properly to my child when I pronounce it myself.
- 02 Spider's M: He's having difficulty pronouncing /θ/ and /ð/ of <th>, which he's learned in this seventh lesson. It's hard for me too. He keeps pronouncing them as tense /d*/ or /s/.
- 03 Seongoh's M: He found it hard to pronounce Pupa and Tadpole of <th>.
- 04 Tina and Ryan's M: Neither of them can pronounce <th> correctly. Pupa says /s/ and Tadpole says /d/. However much I show videoclips and I demonstrated myself, they just can't get it. It's really frustrating to all three of us.

Significantly, some of these children did not perceive the <th> sounds as difficult to produce. At the final child interviews in mid-April, one month after Lesson 7, the children circled the consonant sounds that they thought were difficult. Spider, Seongoh and Tina did not circle <th> sounds (Figure 37), whereas Jake and Ryan did. Tina circled them at first but crossed them out during her explanation, deciding that she knew how to produce them correctly.

What is interesting here is that while the three children did not actually pronounce the sounds correctly, they believed that they were correct (lines 1 to 3 of Extract 35). This reveals that there was a gap between what the children actually knew and what they thought they knew. Jake and Ryan identified their difficulties in lines 4 and 5.

Extract 35 (Final interviews, mid-April 2017)

- 01 Spider: *This [θ] is pronounced as tense /d*/, and this [ð] is like weak /d/.*
- 02 Seongoh: *We say Pupa like strong /s/ and Tadpole like a weak /d/.*
- 03 Tina: *This [θ] is /s/. The tip of my tongue slightly touches my front teeth. My tongue doesn't stick out, though.*
- 04 Jake: *It's difficult to pronounce Pupa. I know my tongue should stick out, but I only say /s/.*
- 05 Ryan: *I don't know these sounds. They're just too difficult.*

Figure 37. Difficult consonants for production: Spider, Seongoh and Tina (Final interview)

1. 아래 자음 중에서 정확한 소리를 내기가 어려운 자음에 동그라미 하세요.

<u>b</u>	c	d	<u>f</u>	g	h	<u>j</u>	<u>k</u>	<u>l</u>	m	n
<u>p</u>	<u>q</u>	<u>r</u>	s	t	<u>v</u>	<u>w</u>	x	<u>y</u>	<u>z</u>	
wh	<u>th (θ)</u>	<u>th (ð)</u>	ch	sh	ng	<u>ph</u>				

1. 아래 자음 중에서 정확한 소리를 내기가 어려운 자음에 동그라미 하세요.

<u>b</u>	c	d	<u>f</u>	g	h	<u>j</u>	<u>k</u>	<u>l</u>	m	n
<u>p</u>	<u>q</u>	<u>r</u>	s	t	<u>v</u>	<u>w</u>	x	<u>y</u>	<u>z</u>	
<u>wh</u>	<u>th (θ)</u>	<u>th (ð)</u>	ch	sh	ng	<u>ph</u>				

1. 아래 자음 중에서 정확한 소리를 내기가 어려운 자음에 동그라미 하세요.

<u>b</u>	c	d	<u>f</u>	g	h	<u>j</u>	<u>k</u>	<u>l</u>	m	n
<u>p</u>	<u>q</u>	<u>r</u>	s	t	<u>v</u>	<u>w</u>	x	<u>y</u>	<u>z</u>	
wh	<u>th (θ)</u>	<u>th (ð)</u>	ch	sh	ng	ph				

The <th> sound was perceived as difficult even for FA4 Strike, who seemed to have acquired good pronunciation of English (Extract 36). Strike gained confidence in pronouncing these sounds over time, but his mother noted in her diary that her son's improved articulation was only with words in isolation and not in sentences (Extract 37).

Extract 36 (Strike and September at final interview, April 17, 2017)

- 01 Strike: *The pronunciations that I didn't know =*
 02 September: *= The pronunciations that you didn't know? You knew them all.*
 03 Strike: *No, it wasn't that I didn't know them. I had difficulty making the right mouth shape for the <th> sounds. Now I know, for sure, how to pronounce them.*

Extract 37 (Diary of Strike's mother, March 16, 2017)

Strike's M: The <th> pronunciations sound fine with the words in isolation, but not perfect within the sentences.

From the episodes above, the findings showed four types of development regarding difficulties in sound production. First, the learners did not perceive that they were making incorrect sounds. Second, there was a gap between cognitive understanding and actual production. Third, articulation with the words in isolation did not immediately lead to the same level of proficiency at the sentence level. Last, shyness and a lack of familiarity with the foreign sounds inhibited the learners from practicing more actively.

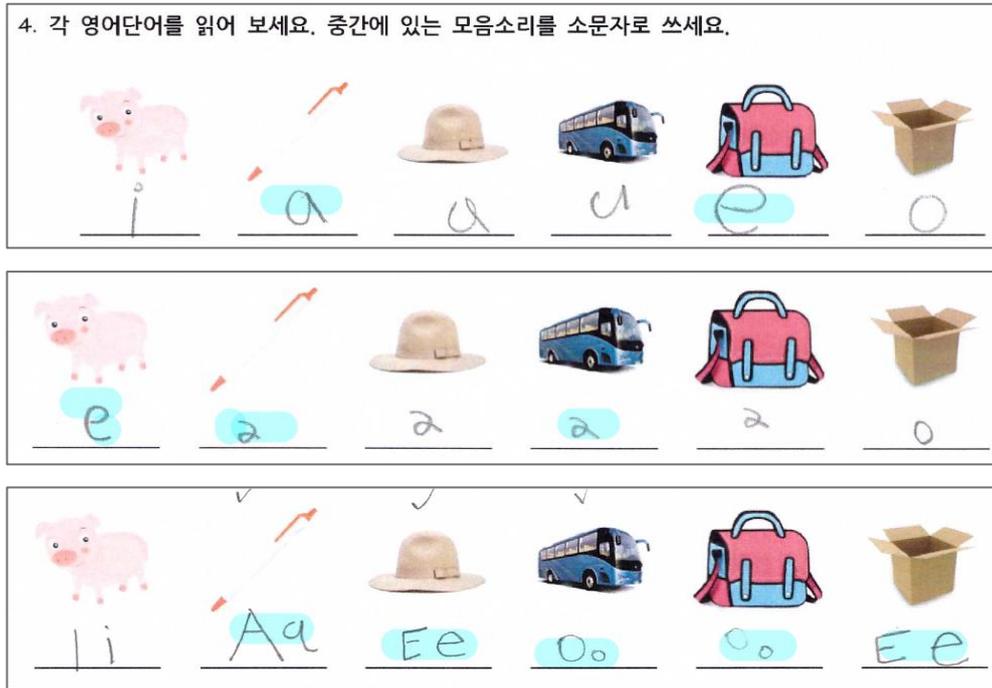
4.5.3. Spelling-Oriented Identification

Vowels were harder than consonants for the children to distinguish and produce. Many were confused between letter names and sounds. For example, letter <e> was often pronounced as /i:/ and letter <u> as /ju:/. Explicit vowel instruction highlighted the mouth shape as an indicator for vowel distinction and articulation, but this brought mixed results.

At the initial interview, the children looked at the pictures of six words and wrote the middle vowel of each word: 'pig, pen, hat, bus, bag, box'. They read the Korean instruction out loud; *Read each English word. Write its middle vowel sound in a lower case.* I emphasized that the children should read the words aloud and bring their attention to the sounds first and then write their matching alphabet letters. The immediate response of most children, however, was to call out spellings and write the vowels as they were spelled rather than matching sounds with letters. I observed that they wrote <a> by speaking out the spelling <h-a-t> rather than its sound /æ/ from /h-æ-t/ in pronunciation.

Some mistakes were made in the process, such as using <a> for 'pen', 'bus' and 'box', and <e> for 'bag' and 'pig' (Figure 38). According to my observation, this confusion arose from spelling errors, but none of the participants attempted to retrieve the phonics rules between sounds and letters that they should have acquired from previous learning. In Ryan's case, it was mostly random guessing of spellings (Extract 38).

Figure 38. Vowel recognition at initial interviews: Ailee, Seongoh, Ryan



Extract 38 (Ryan at initial interview, December 29, 2016)

- 01 R: *Will you pronounce this word again?*
 02 Ryan: *'bag'.*
 03 R: *What's the middle sound, then?*
 04 Ryan: *In fact, I don't know the spellings of these words.*

Spelling knowledge was dominant in another sound-related task. At the initial phoneme counting task, FA2 Jake was confused between spellings and sounds, resulting in the number of alphabet letters for his answers (Figure 39). I tried to bring his attention to the speech sounds, but Jake persistently pursued his spelling-based strategies (Extract 39).

Figure 39. Jake's initial phoneme counting



Extract 39 (Jake at initial interview, December 28, 2016)

- 01 R: *You've referred to spellings, haven't you? Like 3 for <e-y-e> of 'eye'. Let's forget about spellings but focus only on sounds. This is 'eye'. How many sounds can you hear in this word?*
- 02 Jake: *Three.*
- 03 R: *How is it three?*
- 04 Jake: *Word (...) <e-y-e>.*

Reliance on spelling knowledge was understandable in the sense that these findings were collected before the intervention, when the participants had no prior experience of English PA. At the same time, questions arose over why they did not employ their phonics knowledge at all and whether their previous phonics programs had ever covered vowel recognition. I also critically reflected on the choice of words I had used for the initial vowel recognition, since they only consisted of well-known words that were easy for these learners to spell. The result of this questioning led me to give vowel instruction in the first phase of the intervention, using words in the tasks that were unlikely to be known to the children.

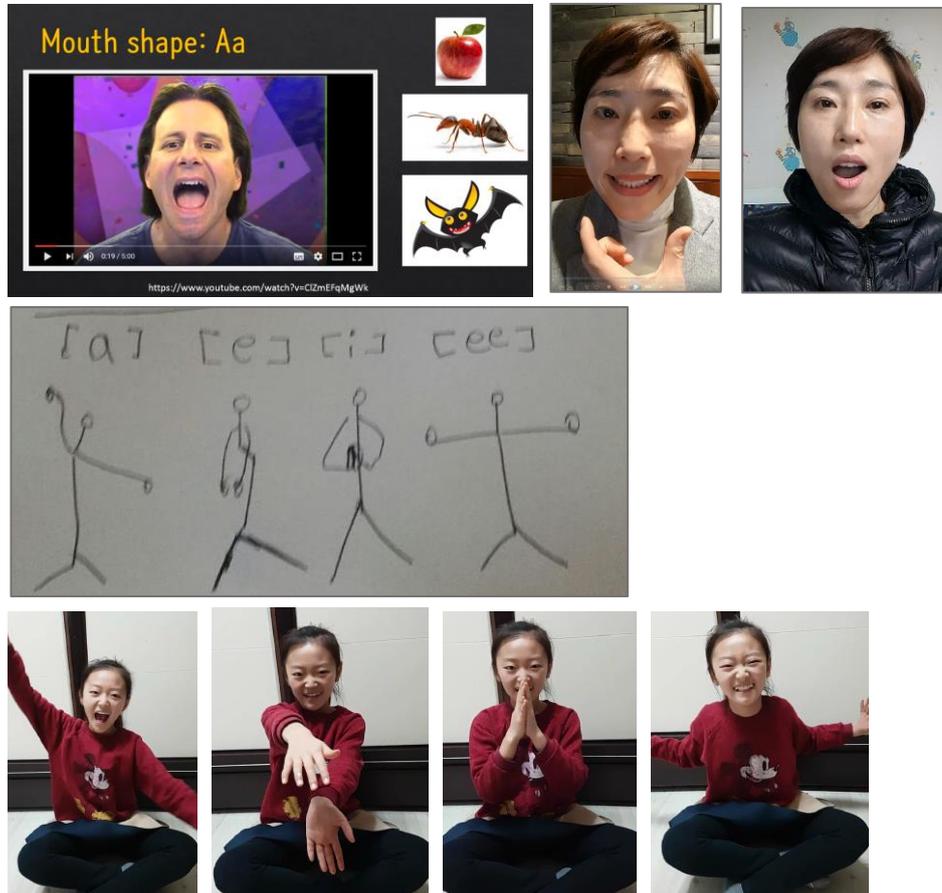
4.5.4. Mouth Shape for Vowel Sounds

Explicit vowel instruction took place in Lessons 3 to 5. As discussed in Section 2.5.4 (Cross-Language Transfer, p. 47), Korean speakers find it hard to differentiate the /æ/-/e/ pair and the /ɪ/-/i:/ pair. In spontaneous speech, English words like 'bad/bed' and 'live/leave' can be perceived as identical by many Korean ELLs. During my own school days in Korea, I was taught that length was the only variation. Referring to the children's dependency on spellings and my own learning experience, I set the primary objectives of these lessons as two-fold: to bring the learners' attention to the sounds rather than spelling memorization; and to highlight mouth shapes as well as length.

A variety of teaching methods and materials were used. Figure 40 shows an /æ/ YouTube video and my video tutorials on the distinctions of vowel sounds for letters <a-e-i-ee> and <o-u>. It also shows Ailee's drawing of the 'vowel actions' that I created by copying the mouth shapes with arm/hand gestures, which Erica practiced at home. I emphasized that length should come as a result of the

mouth shape, not vice versa. For example, /æ/ is longer than /e/ because the former makes us open our mouth much wider than the latter.

Figure 40. Various methods and materials to teach vowel sounds (Lessons 3 to 5)



One thing that I noticed during this activity was that many children paid particular attention to my mouth shape (Extract 40). Since these words were unfamiliar, they were not able to rely on spelling knowledge. At first, I was holding a piece of paper in front of my mouth so that the children had only to listen and identify the vowel sounds. However, they strongly demanded that they should see the way I pronounced the words, since it was still too difficult for them to recognize vowels only through listening. Although correct recognition still needed a great deal of practice, the children accepted mouth shape as a way to recognize vowel sounds

Extract 40 (Research journal, February 18, 2017)

When I was saying a word, almost all the children looked up at me. Seeing me cover my mouth with a piece of paper, they demanded that they should look at my mouth while listening. Some murmured that vowels were very hard to recognize only through listening so that my mouth shape would be a clue.

By the completion of the intervention, the children were given another vowel recognition task at the final interviews, approximately two months after the explicit vowel instruction in February (Figure 41). There were 12 words: ‘jug, fab, neat, kin, pad, den, cop, hem, rot, mug, tan, jean’. Just like Lesson 5, many of the children looked carefully at my mouth shape when identifying the vowel sounds, though wide individual differences existed mainly due to the passage of time.

Figure 41. Vowel recognition activity (Lesson 5)

Jake	Ailee
Junseo	Ryan
Spider	

It was significant that PA4 Tina engaged in rigorous problem-solving to compare similar sounds for herself. As can be seen in Figure 42, she wrote down minimal pairs in the margin. For example, when I said ‘(b) fab’, she stared at my mouth while listening carefully. Then, she copied me several times as she was writing ‘fab’ and ‘feb’. Repeating her own pronunciation of the two words by turns, she asked me to say ‘fab’ again, until she made a final choice after

thoughtful comparisons. Although her choices were not always correct, it was impressive to observe her problem-solving strategies and her active attitude towards task completion.

Figure 42. Tina's vowel recognition at final interview

4. 선생님이 말하는 단어를 잘 듣고 모음을 쓰세요 (a, e, i, ea, o, u).

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
jug	o	a	i	ea	a	e
cap	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)	(l)
ham	o	a	o	u	a	i
hem			rot	rut		

Handwritten notes: 'jug' written vertically on the left; 'fab feb' written at the top right.

The children acknowledged the effectiveness of mouth shape for production as well as for recognition. During the group interviews, Seongoh, Jake, Tina, Ailee and Ryan made positive comments about their enhanced vowel pronunciation in Extract 11 in Section 4.3.5 (Children's Understanding, p. 127). Parents also stated that their children found the video materials showing distinctive mouth shapes helpful for articulation (Extract 41). Findings from the parents also implied that enhanced knowledge about vowel distinction seemed to have provided the children with more interest and confidence in English learning.

Extract 41 (Compiled parent diaries during Lessons 3 to 5)

- 01 Jake's M: I only knew that vowels are different and I was confused. But he was having fun copying you from your videos, which amazed me. I'm glad to hear that he now understands how the vowel sounds that sounded similar are different from each other.
- 02 Rosari's M: I think your videos helped her distinguish <a, e, i, ee> sounds and understand more clearly how they're different from each other. In the video homework, she cares more about her mouth shapes and tries hard to articulate each vowel. All this seems to help her recognize sounds as well.
- 03 Spider's M: YouTube videos and your videos help a lot. As he sees a big difference in his pronunciation and clearly understands how the vowels are different from each other, he's growing more

interested in English. I was amazed when he said English is fun. He has a very strong responsibility for the video homework. If he doesn't like it even a little, he asks for a reshoot. Today, he wasn't happy until the seventh attempt.

From the episodes above, my focus on mouth shape was well received by both children and parents. In particular, they found the audio-visual materials including my video tutorials effective in vowel identification and articulation. It appeared that no similar learning had been included in the children's previous English programs.

4.5.5. Challenges for Vowel Sounds

Despite improvement in knowledge and confidence regarding vowel distinction, vowels were still difficult and confusing for many participants. As mentioned earlier, the final vowel recognition results varied over a wide range of task performances, and some children were still very confused (Figure 43). Although this task was given two months after the explicit vowel instruction, the children were constantly reminded of what they had learned previously as they proceeded to sentence reading. In addition, their video homework reading was continuously monitored by themselves, their parents and me. I always gave feedback about their oral reading, including sound production. Despite this continuous exposure and practice, however, PA2 Ryan expressed deep frustration when carrying out this task due to the lack of learning consolidation (Extract 42).

Extract 42 (Ryan at final interview, April 10, 2017)

PA2 Ryan: *Vowels are really difficult. When I learned about this, I thought I understood. But as time went by, everything was so mixed up. I don't understand anything.*

Figure 43. Final vowel recognition: Ailee, Rosari, Ryan

4. 선생님이 말하는 단어를 잘 듣고 모음을 쓰세요 (a, e, i, ea, o, u)

(a) ✓ u	(b) ✓ a	(c) ✓ ea	(d) ✓ xi	(e) ✓ a	(f) ✓ a
(g) ✓ a	(h) ✓ a	(i) ✓ i	(j) ✓ o	(k) ✓ e	(l) ✓ e
(a) ✓ u	(b) ✓ a	(c) ✓ xi	(d) ✓ o	(e) ✓ a	(f) ✓ ea
(g) ✓ o	(h) ✓ a	(i) ✓ xi u	(j) ✓ u	(k) ✓ ea e	(l) ✓ e
(a) ✓ u	(b) ✓ a	(c) ✓ e	(d) ✓ i	(e) ✓ a	(f) ✓ a
(g) ✓ u	(h) ✓ a	(i) ✓ u	(j) ✓ o	(k) ✓ ea	(l) ✓ o

In fact, Ryan produced all the short vowel sounds as letter names. In a different vowel-related task, the children circled the vowel sounds that they thought were difficult and explained how to make the correct sounds. As can be seen in Figure 44, a majority of the participants including Rosari did not circle any vowels. A few circled only double letter vowels, like Seongoh, since there was not sufficient consolidation of these double letter vowels that had been taught in the second phase of the intervention. Finally, only Ryan had difficulty with <a, e, i, o, u, ee>.

Figure 44. Difficult vowels for production: Rosari, Seongoh

2. 아래 모음 중에서 정확한 소리를 내기가 어려운 모음에 동그라미 하세요.

Aa Ee Ii Oo Uu ee ay ow

a_e ea ou

2. 아래 모음 중에서 정확한 소리를 내기가 어려운 모음에 동그라미 하세요.

a e i o u ee

a_e ea ou ay ow oo

The children's explanations demonstrated three noticeable patterns. First, some children were correctly pronouncing all six vowels and used the mouth shapes as a means of distinction. Second, many others, as with Ryan, fell back on the spelling-oriented identification that many children had used before the intervention. For example, Rosari produced some vowels as letter names, such as /aɪ/ for <i> and /ju:/ for <u> (Extract 43). Even though I encouraged her to reconsider her answers, she did not correct herself but moved onto the next sound (lines 7 to 10). She also produced <ou> as the combination of the two short vowel alphabet names /oʊju:/.

Extract 43 (Rosari at final interview, April 11, 2017)

- 01 R: Will you compare the sounds of these two [<a>, <e>]?
- 02 Rosari: /æ/, /e/.
- 03 R: What about these two [<i>, <ee>]?
- 04 Rosari: /aɪ/ for this [<i>], and /i:/ for this [<ee>].
- 05 R: What about these two [<o>, <u>]?
- 06 Rosari: /oʊ/ for this [<o>], and /ju:/ for this [<u>].
- 07 R: /oʊ/ and /ju:/? Not about alphabet names but sounds?
- 08 Rosari: Yes? Uh (...)
- 09 R: Shall we move on?
- 10 Rosari: Yes.

Finally, I noticed that those who were confused were even less confident with <o> than with the other vowels. When I asked them to compare the sounds of <o> and <u>, some produced its letter name for <o>, while others sounded it as

/o/. None of the participants produced <o> either as /ɑ:/ in 'hop' or /ɔ:/ in 'dog', as they had been in Lesson 5. Back in class, the children received the /ɑ:/ sound easily, since there was an equivalent to the sound in Korean phonology - 아. During the lesson and my video tutorials, I emphasized that there was no exact equivalent to /ɔ:/ in Korean phonology although the closest Korean vowel was 오 /o/. I demonstrated the different mouth shapes of 오 and /ɔ:/ and stressed that the latter may require them to open our mouth wider than the former. I suggested to the children that it would help if they imagined a tiny balloon gradually inflating in their mouth. All of these tips were repeated in my video tutorial. At home, the children watched the tutorial and did two types of homework: minimal pairs and story reading (Figure 45).

Figure 45. <o-u> reading homework (Lesson 5)

After the lesson, I received many texts from the parents, who asked for my feedback after monitoring their children's pronunciation in the video

homework (Extract 44). Such responses were unique in comparison to the previous sound distinctions, since it was only for <o>-<u> that the parents requested my monitoring. Explicit instruction on vowel distinction was unfamiliar to many parents. However, <o>-<u> distinction may have been more challenging to the learners and parents alike, despite the same teaching approach and materials used (lines 1 to 4). The parents' feedback about their children concerned difficulty in making distinctive sounds for the /ɔ:/-/ʌ/ pair (lines 1 and 2), and even more blurred distinction in the sentence reading (line 3). Due to their own lack of knowledge and experience, the parents found it hard to offer substantial help to their children.

Extract 44 (Compiled parent text messages after Lesson 5)

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--|
| 01 | September & Strike's M: | This is very different from how I learned. After watching your tutorials and other videos, I learned to tell the differences of the previous vowels. But 'o-u' is different. They're really confusing. |
| 02 | Junseo's M: | Isn't this 'jog-jug' heard the same to you? Junseo's mouth shapes look the same to me. I need an expert's opinion. He wouldn't listen to me. |
| 03 | Ariel's M: | She can tell one from the other clearly when reading words, but the words sound similar when she reads the sentences. Is it only me? Please listen and let me know if anything is wrong. |

In conclusion, I found that certain vowel sounds were more difficult to identify and produce for Korean learners, while the parents faced challenges in helping their children at home due to their own lack of knowledge and experience. It is therefore suggested that vowels may need more time and practice in order to produce substantial progress and confidence for young Korean ELLs.

4.5.6. Pronunciation Instruction

The syllabus was distributed to the participant parents one month before the preparatory workshop scheduled in December 2016. During the workshop, Ailee's mother questioned the need of intensive pronunciation instruction in a reading program, since she thought that this would be more relevant to a speaking program. In response, I approached the role of pronunciation in oral reading in terms of intelligibility. I explained that English oral reading as an FL

did not have to stress native-like pronunciation but that correct pronunciation was important to ensure intelligibility. I also emphasized that the short time frame would not make it practical to aim for perfection. Rather, it would be more realistic to learn how to pronounce some difficult sounds correctly to distinguish between similar sounds.

The pronunciation element brought about the most active communication and negotiation between me and the participants. The participants went through both good and tough times and a few children strongly complained about the video homework. Some parents made suggestions for the improvement of the pronunciation instruction. Consequently, the teaching approach was constantly modified and adjusted after listening to the voices of learners and parents. After the rigorous process of negotiation and compromise, the participants found this instruction helpful in the end.

The parents welcomed this approach and positively responded to the video homework that I had planned to promote intelligible oral reading. The initial parent interviews showed that many of them were actually not sure how their children's previous phonics programs handled pronunciation. Only the mother of Strike and September acknowledged the intensive articulation training in her sons' home-visit worksheet phonics course. Spider's mother appreciated pronunciation instruction given by an expert, since she was not confident with her own English pronunciation (Extract 45).

Extract 45 (Spider's mother at initial interview, December 27, 2016)

Spider's M: I haven't read English books to Spider because I'm not confident with my own English pronunciation. I really appreciate the fact that you teach pronunciation as well in this reading program.

Throughout the intervention, the children's feedback was mixed about articulation practice. As has been illustrated so far, some children expressed frustration with the articulation or distinction of some English sounds. At the same time, positive comments were made about their enhanced pronunciation and confidence in oral reading (Extract 11, p. 127 and Extract 41, p. 154).

At the final individual child interviews, however, many participants evaluated the pronunciation instruction positively in two respects. As can be seen in the compilation of children's responses in Extract 46, one aspect was the promotion of their understanding of correct pronunciation (lines 1 to 4), and the other was the finding of useful materials on YouTube (lines 3 and 5).

Extract 46 (Compiled final child interviews, mid-April 2017)

- 01 Ariel: *It was sometimes difficult because of the pronunciations I couldn't do well, but I liked it because I know how the sounds are different.*
- 02 Rosari: *My previous phonics classes didn't do pronunciations, so at first, I wondered why we were doing this. Vowels were really difficult. But as I learned more about how similar sounds are different, it became okay.*
- 03 Nari: *There was a time when I filmed myself 'before-and-after' watching your video tutorials, and I was amazed at how different my pronunciations could be. It struck me that [correct pronunciations] really matter. [...] You recommended a lot of fun pronunciation videos on YouTube and it was fun to watch them with my younger sisters. I even correct my mother when her pronunciation is strange.*
- 04 Spider: *When I pronounce, I don't know how I do it. But when I monitor myself in the video, I know what I do. So, I reshoot several times and I'm glad that my pronunciations have improved.*
- 05 Strike: *I did pronunciation in my worksheet program, so it was not very hard. But for the first time, I learned that there were many YouTube videos on pronunciation. It was helpful because there was some stuff that my worksheet program teacher hadn't taught.*

The parents' feedback was also positive. They particularly appreciated the individual feedback that I had offered in response to the video homework in the second phase of the intervention. That idea was actually sparked by Ailee's mother, who questioned the efficiency of the pronunciation instruction in this short-term program. She suggested that more audio materials should be used to effect more substantial improvement (Extract 47).

Extract 47 (Diary of Ailee's mother, February 14, 2017)

Ailee's M: I'm wondering how efficient this [pronunciation] instruction can be in such a short time. I understand that the teacher wants the pronunciations to be correct and I hope that there will be more listening homework. Ailee has to listen a

lot and develop the skills to distinguish different sounds. I suggest that there should be more listening activities in this program.

This constructive feedback made me critically reflect on my teaching and led me to strengthen the efficiency of this program in two ways. One of these was to increase the use of audio-visual materials in class, which the children could watch again at home (Figure 46). The other was to provide individual feedback to the children’s oral reading homework (Extract 48), which was often accompanied by free YouTube videos in order to illustrate the specific points that each child needed to improve (Extract 49).

Figure 46. Lesson 7 homework with YouTube video links for <th> and <oo>

Extract 48 (Ailee’s mother in text, February 17, 2017)

- 01 Ailee’s M: I’ve sent the video homework.
- 02 R: Thank you. I’ll get back to you after I check.
- 03 R: [...] Ailee tends to pronounce the final <p> like an <f>. For example, bump, jump. Please check on this.

Extract 49 (Spider’s mother in text, March 3, 2017)

- 01 Spider’s M: (Video)
- 02 R: Thank you. I’ll check on this.
- 03 R: Well done. It’s almost perfect. But only <f> seems insecure. I’ve attached a link to a YouTube video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWMED_3Nvig. I recommend this as you can clearly see the mouth shape.
- 04 Spider’s M: Wow! I like it so much. I’ll make the best use of it.

According to the compiled final parent interviews of Extract 50, my feedback was valuable for three reasons. First, as an expert, I could spot subtle differences that the parents could not identify (line 1). Second, some children would not listen to their mothers but would listen to me as a teacher (line 2). Last, the parents liked the custom-tailored YouTube videos (line 3).

Extract 50 (Compiled final parent interviews, mid-April 2017)

- 01 Rosari's M: *When you pointed to Rosari's <r> sound, I was impressed that an expert is different. You identified this even in an audio recording. I was not aware of it, and I thought highly of how sharp you were.*
- 02 Junseo's M: *Junseo won't listen to me now. When I try to correct him, he's just upset with me. But when I show him your feedback message, he seems to care and tries again.*
- 03 Tina &
Ryan's M: *I really like the fact that you choose the right YouTube video for each child. In fact, I know that there are loads of useful videos on YouTube, but how would I know which one is right for my children?*

The pronunciation instruction finally turned out to be helpful although it was stressful for a few participants for some time. These satisfactory results were attributable to the active cooperation and enormous support and care from both the teacher and parents as well as learners. Also, such focused individual feedback was only possible in this particular setting: one class with 14 students, once a week.

4.5.7. Video Homework

While positive feedback was dominant regarding the pronunciation instruction, there was a controversy over the video homework in the first phase of the intervention. During the interim group interviews, only Jake and Erica made positive remarks about the homework. A few learners strongly expressed their discontent, while the majority of the children remained silent. The homework was intended to help self-monitoring as well as teacher feedback. I thought that videotaping was a good way to check the learners' intelligible oral reading. In reality, however, it was more complicated than I anticipated.

First, Ailee and Rosari did not feel comfortable about being filmed and seeing themselves in the videos. Rosari decided to have only her mouth shown. Then, Seongoh stated that his mother always came home late from work and that he was always very tired and sleepy when doing the homework. His father was working in a different province, and Seongoh's mother did not want him to record himself without her presence. Last, there were cases where either the parents or the children (mostly the parents) were not satisfied with the performances.

As shown in the compilation of Extract 51, it seemed that Ryan was deeply frustrated when he was forced to reshoot a video many times when he was not aware of what was wrong with his pronunciation (line 1). Spider sometimes disliked the homework, since his perfectionism caused him to make several recordings before he was satisfied (line 2). It was Spider himself, not his mother, who pushed ahead with the reshooting, though. According to Nari, meanwhile, plenty of practice was helpful and satisfactory in the end, although it hurt when her mother was sometimes too forceful and criticized her for her poor pronunciation (line 3).

Extract 51 (Compiled final child interviews, mid-April 2017)

- 01 Ryan: *Mom told me to reshoot, but often I didn't know what was wrong. Mom said that my pronunciations were strange, but I didn't know what she was talking about. When I had to do it until 11 o'clock at night, it drove me as mad as a hatter.*
- 02 Spider: *Mom and Dad both like being perfect, and so do I. When I do the video homework, I'm the one who stops and does it again and again if I pronounce even one single bit wrong. Previously, I reshot seven times. I sometimes hated the homework.*
- 03 Nari: *Before shooting, Mom told me to keep practicing. She told me to continue practicing until she came back from hospital. I did. It was hard, but I felt good when Mom praised me during the shooting. She said that my pronunciation had improved and that I could read fast.*

Those few children who were strongly against the homework did not represent the majority of the class. However, it was not clear how the silent majority truly thought. The explanation of Strike's mother of why some children remained silent was one of the possible interpretations (Extract 52).

Extract 52 (Strike's mother at interim interview, February 20, 2017)

Strike's M: *According to Strike, the atmosphere [of the group interview] was negative, so he couldn't speak. Strike was fine with videotaping. He's shy and doesn't like to speak out in such a setting. So, he said he remained silent.*

It was evident that the video homework had been stressful for some children. So, in response, I suggested that videotaping be optional for the second part of the intervention. As a result, Rosari changed to audiotaping and three children did not do any more recording. Interestingly, however, 10 children continued with the practice. Apparently, Jake, Erica and Strike were instigators of their own decision in this. For Ailee, however, it was her mother who persuaded her into carrying on (Extract 53). Meanwhile, Spider, who vocalized discontent during the group interview, decided not to stop, since he knew that the ultimate improvement through repetitive practice and self-monitoring would outweigh the immediate stress (Extract 54).

Extract 53 (Ailee at final interview, April 17, 2017)

- 01 Ailee: *I really hated the video homework. First of all, it's awkward to pronounce in front of Mom. I was told off and had to reshoot until it was good. You know I cried?*
- 02 R: *I'm sorry. It must have been very hard. I thought that videotaping would be helpful, but it only gave you stress. I'm sorry.*
- 03 Ailee: *I think I know why we do that, but the process was so hard.*
- 04 R: *But why did you continue in the second phase? I thought that you'd stop.*
- 05 Ailee: *Mom. Mom told me to carry on.*

Extract 54 (Spider at final interview, April 17, 2017)

- 01 R: *I thought that you'd stop because you said previously that you didn't like the video homework. Did your mother tell you to do it?*
- 02 Spider: *No. That was my decision.*
- 03 R: *What made you carry on?*
- 04 Spider: *It was hard because I'm a perfectionist by personality. But filming helped because I practiced a lot and could see how I pronounced in the video.*

I made it clear from the very beginning that the purpose of videotaping was not to demonstrate perfect pronunciation but to monitor and identify what each learner would need to practice in the future. During the entire period of the intervention, it was emphasized many times that within the short time frame of the intervention, it would be impractical and extremely stressful for the children to try to master perfection. Nevertheless, some participants were seemingly obsessed with the production of a perfect end product in the video homework. However, it transpired that stress was not always harmful to learning and that getting over stress could produce an even stronger sense of achievement for the learners.

4.6. Word and Sentence Reading

The core of the intervention was word and sentence reading. Previous elements such as English PA and individual sound recognition and production were prerequisite for the actual decoding of words in isolation and sentences. The participants' knowledge of the alphabetic principle for the 26 alphabet letters was checked during the initial interviews. When more complex letter-sound relationships were taught, both known and unknown words were used. Regarding sentence reading, equal attention was paid to irregularly spelled words such as 'she' and 'by' as to phonetically regular words. This section shows how young Korean ELLs coped with unknown word reading and sight word reading. Further, it describes how improvement in word- and sentence-level reading over a short period of time helped the learners voluntarily explore other areas of English learning.

4.6.1. Alphabetic Principle

As discussed in the Literature Review, the alphabetic principle refers to the relationships between graphemes (letters) and phonemes (sounds). For this to happen, English readers should comprehend the systematic correspondence between graphemes in the spelling of words and phonemes in the pronunciation of the words. While there are just over 40 phonemes in English, over 500 different spelling-sound rules are needed in order to read competently (Juel 1994). It is therefore impractical to attempt to teach beginning readers all

these rules, many of which are acquired over time with the advancement of English reading ability.

In Korea, different programs and textbooks vary regarding the selection of digraphs, diphthongs and split digraphs, but they commonly introduced the acquisition of GPCs for the 26 alphabet letters as prerequisite for VC/CVC blending (Lee 2006). Accordingly, the participants in this research, apart from NA2 Spider, had already learned to associate the appropriate sounds for all the 26 single letters represented, though some of them found certain relationships more difficult than others.

Almost all the lower alphabetic readers thought that they knew all 26 GPCs, but many of them made errors for certain correspondences. For example, PA2 Rosari checked “I know all of them” in Question 1, but her actual production was wrong for the following letters: <q, w, x, y, z> for consonants and <a, e, o, u> for vowels (Figure 47). For better presentation, I added blue marks for the letters on which Rosari drew a triangle, while I put red circles on those letters for which she produced wrong sounds.

Figure 47. Rosari’s prior knowledge of GPCs for 26 alphabet letters²

1. Aa 부터 Zz 까지 알파벳 소리를 얼마나 알고 있나요?

전부 다 알아요 거의 다 알아요 반 정도 알아요
 조금 알아요 하나도 몰라요 기타 _____

2. 아래 알파벳 자음이 있어요. 소리를 확실히 아는 자음에는 동그라미를 하고(O), 헛갈리거나 잘 모르는 자음에는 세모를 하세요(Δ).

B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N
P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	

3. 아래 알파벳 모음이 있어요. 소리를 확실히 아는 모음에는 동그라미를 하고(O), 헛갈리거나 잘 모르는 모음에는 세모를 하세요(Δ).

Aa	Ee	Ii	Oo	Uu
----	----	----	----	----

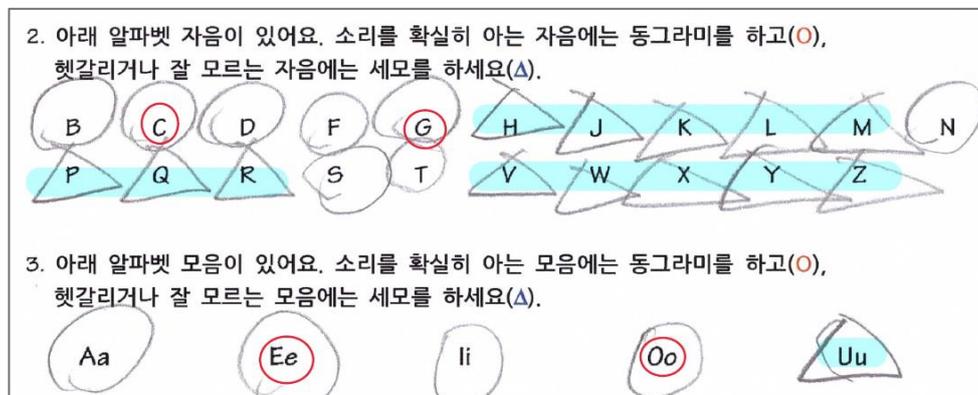
² Question 1: How much do you know about the sounds of alphabet letters Aa to Zz?

Questions 2 and 3: Here are consonants/vowels. When you know their sounds for sure, circle them. When you are not sure, draw a triangle.

NA2 Spider's responses were important, since they offered an insight into how a learner with little knowledge of the alphabetic principle found GPCs. As explained in Section 4.3.6 ('Aha' moment, p. 130), I met Spider four days before his initial interview in order to make up for the preparatory workshop that Spider and his mother had missed. During that time, I taught him a few sounds for the letters such as , <d>, <p> and <s> to demonstrate VC/CVC reading. By the end of the blending game, he picked up letters such as <g>, <h> and <w> at random and asked me to teach him their sounds as well.

At the subsequent interview, Spider remembered some of the sounds that he had heard four days previously, producing the correct sounds for the consonants <b, d, f, n, s, t> (Figure 48). More importantly, he seemed to have discovered from the previous blending activity that the names of some letters provided a clue for their corresponding sounds, while others did not. For the easier letters, Spider picked up their GPCs quickly and remembered them easily (Extract 55).

Figure 48. Spider's prior knowledge of GPCs for 26 alphabet letters



Extract 55 (Spider at initial interview, December 23, 2016)

- 01 R: *Previously, you said you didn't know any sounds. But this time you circled some.*
- 02 Spider: *You taught me some.*
- 03 R: (Pointing to the triangles) *What about these sounds?*
- 04 Spider: *Letters like are easy to guess sound from their letter names. But these are confusing.*

These episodes showed that the acquisition of the GPCs of 26 alphabet letters varied according to the level of difficulty. For Spider, the GPCs were identified more readily when their letter names included clues. By contrast, consonants like <q, w, x, y> and vowels seemed to take more time for consolidation.

4.6.2. Unfamiliar Word Reading

The Test 1 word reading results showed a wide discrepancy between genuine familiar word reading and unknown/nonsense word reading for the lower alphabetic groups (see Section 4.2.3. Word Reading for more details, p. 110). According to my observation, the initial responses that the participants made regarding unknown word reading were similar to English PA tasks. They looked puzzled or gave awkward smiles. Unlike the PA tasks, however, many participants did not perform well on this task. On average, the lower alphabetic readers gained only half of their regular word reading scores: 36.4 points versus 61.3 points.

Unfamiliar words were first introduced in Lesson 4 to practice CVC blending and segmenting with the vowels for letters <a, e, i, ee> (Figure 49). The children enjoyed the pair activity in particular using strange words, such as ‘jad’, ‘lib’, ‘deef’, and ‘cam/kam’. One student in each pair came to me to view a word. S/he then returned to her/his partner and articulated the word as clearly as possible. The partners listened carefully and attempted to spell the word. According to my observation, the children did not care whether the words were familiar or not. On the contrary, being strange seemed to add extra fun to this activity (Extract 56). The class was full of excitement, demanding that I should not stop at number 16 but continue.

Figure 49. First use of unfamiliar words (Lesson 4)



Extract 56 (Research journal, December 4, 2017)

The speakers burst into laughter upon seeing strange words, but they were serious with articulation. The listeners burst into laughter when they heard funny words. The children's expectation of what the next funny word would be went higher, and the entire class was full of excitement by the end of the activity.

Unfamiliar word reading became regularized when new spelling patterns were taught. The patterns were first practiced with easy, short and familiar words and then followed by to-be-learned words. This approach was received well by most participants during the rest of the intervention, and the efforts of the lower alphabetic readers bore fruit at Test 2. As can be seen in Figure 50, PA2 Nari and NA2 Spider improved their unknown word reading skills considerably over only nine lessons.

Figure 50. Nari's (above) and Spider's (below) unknown word reading at Tests 1 (left) and 2 (right)



Nevertheless, one learner maintained a negative attitude throughout the entire period of the intervention. Upon encountering unknown word reading, PA2 Rosari expressed strong discomfort (Extract 57).

Extract 57 (Rosari at Test 1, December 28, 2016)

- 01 Rosari: *What's this?*
02 R: *When you know phonics rules, you can read the words that you come across for the first time. So, I want you to read these unfamiliar words as well.*
03 Rosari: *Why should I do this? I hate doing this.*
04 R: *Why don't you just try? You've read the words on the previous page well.*
05 Rosari: *I'm too busy learning normal words. Why should I read these words?*

Rosari's score drew my attention, since it was far lower than I anticipated. Her three-year private tutoring placed her English reading at the highest level among the participants, and at the time of the research, Rosari was learning beginning English grammar and reading comprehension in her private classes. I therefore anticipated that she would score highly on all types of word reading. However, she was unable to correctly pronounce even simple words such as 'toz', 'mun' and 'yek'.

Over the entire intervention period, in response to Rosari complaints, I explained the usefulness of unfamiliar words in decoding accuracy skills development as well as the fact that some were to-be-learned words. However, her attitude remained equally negative at Test2 (Extract 58). Part of the reason for this appeared to be a rejection of an unfamiliar method of learning (line 4).

Extract 58 (Rosari at Test 2, April 11, 2017)

- 01 R: *Good job. Now let's move to the next =*
02 Rosari: *= I hate all these silly pumpkin-head words, stupid.*
03 R: *Silly stupid words? But since we've done this stupid word reading a lot, aren't you fine with this by now?*
04 Rosari: *I've never done anything like this in my English class.*

Compared to Test 1, the results of Test 2 overall showed general improvement in unknown word reading and a smaller discrepancy between regular and unknown word reading. When basic English PA was combined with the acquisition of phonics rules, even weak readers were able to decipher regularly spelled English words whether they were familiar or not. As with Rosari, however, a negative attitude towards an unfamiliar type of learning did not easily dissipate.

4.6.3. Sight Word Reading

A majority of unusually spelled words (e.g. 'eye') need to be remembered by sight. For beginning English reading, almost half of the 100 most frequent words contain irregular spellings (Masterson et al. 2010: 229) and are thus not easily decodable using grapheme-phoneme rules. Emergent reading in English should therefore require the knowledge of irregularly spelled sight words as well as English PA and the alphabetic principle.

At the initial parent interview, PA2 Nari's mother showed me several English storybooks from Scholastic that she had once asked Nari to read. Nari's mother had received the entire series from a friend, who said that Nari should be able to read the lower levels since she was learning phonics. The books that I saw were labeled as Level 1, but the texts were not entirely decodable, containing many sight words. One of the books was titled *Don't Cut My Hair*. Nari's mother had expected her daughter to read the text fluently, but Nari did not even finish the title. Looking upset and frustrated, Nari's mother asked me to explain what seemed to have gone wrong (Extract 59). She considered phonics as the sole instrument to enable her daughter to master English reading (lines 2 and 4), so it was annoying for her to see Nari struggling with the title.

Extract 59 (Nari's mother at initial interview, December 27, 2016)

- 01 R: *There are quite a few words that Nari can't read.*
- 02 Nari's M: *What? She's been doing phonics. Wouldn't phonics make her read fluently?*
- 03 R: *According to what Nari's learned so far, the only word she can read is 'cut'. She hasn't learned 'hair', and phonics rules don't apply to 'don't' and 'my'. These are called sight words, which have nothing to do with phonics.*

- 04 Nari's M: *What are sight words? I've never heard of them before. I was told that phonics can make her read English. But she couldn't even finish with the title. I was so annoyed.*

As with Nari's mother, many parents were ignorant of the concept of 'sight words'. They had believed that phonics was all that their children needed to learn to read in English. As a result, the parents were surprised to find out that this was not the case, and that a number of basic English words had to be learned by heart. At the same time, they were relieved to learn that further linguistic knowledge was required to read even simple texts in English.

Sight words represented a significant part of the main aims after Lesson 5, when the lesson focus shifted from word-level to sentence- and text-level reading. Sight words were chosen from story texts that had been modified to strengthen decodability and predictability. Repetitive patterns enabled the young readers to predict what came next. These patterns also helped them to spot sight words easily. In Lesson 5, after I had explained what sight words were and how to acquire them, we had a trial session using 10 sight words. In Lesson 6, the children were ready to experience the first text reading, *Little Red Hen*, with 11 sight words as well as three new GPCs (Figure 51).

Figure 51. Teaching of sight words (Lessons 5 and 6)

sight words

내가 아는 규칙으로 못 읽는 단어들.
자꾸 보면서 익혀야 하는 단어들.

The words that I can't read with phonics rules.
The words that I should memorize by sight.

Sight Words

eat a with into the
out of two they for

Lesson 6
Learning Objectives

- * **Story:** *Little Red Hen*
- * **Phonics:** [wh] [ea] [a_e]
- * **Sight words:** me, no, do, we, today, then, all by myself
- * **Vocabulary:** wheat, plant, busy, water, mix, bake, bread, flour, help

Sight Words

me all I then are It's
we today little myself by

According to NA2 Ariel's mother, Ariel's text reading was almost perfect except for two sight words – 'all by myself' and 'busy'. Ariel tried her hardest to memorize them, only to fail. As a last resort, Ariel's mother wrote down their pronunciation in Korean. She texted me to ask if her actions were acceptable (Extract 60).

Extract 60 (Ariel's mother in text, March 3, 2017)

- 01 Ariel's M: Ariel kept making errors, so I wrote down the pronunciation in Korean below the English words. Is this alright? She's always forgetful.
- 02 R: Are they sight words by any chance?
- 03 Ariel's M: 'all by myself', 'busy'
- 04 R: I usually advise the avoidance of Korean transcriptions. But if she struggles too much, I think you may use them only for that purpose, then quickly erase them as soon as she's fine.

At the final child interview, Ariel stated that phonics was easier than sight word reading, since there was no clue to tell how to read sight words and she had to rely only on memory (Extract 61).

Extract 61 (Ariel at final interview, April 14, 2017)

PA2 Ariel: *I had so much difficulty with sight words. Phonics has rules, but sight words are hard to read because I have no clue. I learn them by heart but then forget.*

One of the ways to help the learners remember sight words was to watch YouTube videos. When PA2 Ryan's mother was frustrated with Ryan's sight word reading, I sent her a link to a free educational animation that exposed 30 high frequency words in a fun way. For Ryan's elder sister PA4 Tina, I recommended another YouTube video of a slightly advanced level, which showed 100 sight words (Extract 62).

Extract 62 (Mother of Tina and Ryan in text, March 6, 2017)

- 01 Tina & Ryan's M: Ryan can hardly read sight words. What should I do?
- 02 R: Do you think that it's going to help if I put a link to an easy sight word YouTube video?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zd7tuu6lxQI>. In this video, one word is shown many times. Ryan will be

- exposed to the sight words naturally as he watches the video.
- 03 Tina & Ryan's M: Thank you so much. It'll be good for both Ryan and me since we can watch it together.
- 04 R: I've found another video for Tina. 100 sight words. The Dolch sight word list is famous.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWtMmRZDY-4>.
- 05 Tina & Ryan's M: It's such a relief to have you with my children.

The findings showed that many parents had not been aware of the importance of sight word reading in early English literacy development. The young learners needed sufficient time and practice to recognize the irregularly spelled words, since those words are normally acquired by frequent exposure. Watching relevant YouTube videos was an effective way in which to help the young learners with sight word acquisition (Figure 52).

Figure 52. Sight word YouTube videos



4.6.4. Positive Impact on English Learning

This intervention was designed to develop or reinforce beginning English reading. By the end of the research, however, I came across three significant episodes highlighting positive spillover effects on English learning in a broader sense.

The new school year begins in March in Korea. Accordingly, all the participants moved up to the next grade in school as the intervention focused on story-based text reading in March 2017. The eight second-graders, including NA2 Spider, began to learn English in school. As previously noted in 'Aha' moment (Section 4.3.6. p. 130) and unfamiliar word reading (Section 4.6.2, p. 170), Spider

showed noticeable improvement during the entire period of the intervention. At the final interview, he shared several exciting episodes about his self-driven pursuit of further English learning (Extract 63). As can be seen in the following compiled extract, word reading became so easy that he changed his self-study materials from a vocabulary book to e-storybooks. His interest in English reading then advanced to typing in English on the computer. He also gained confidence in taking English lessons in school.

Extract 63 (Spider at final interview, April 13, 2017)

- NA2 01 *I no longer use the vocabulary book. It's so easy after I learned phonics. [...] These days I read English storybooks and e-books. Spider: I've read one story, 32 pages, more than 100 times. I've learned them all by heart now.*
- 02 *One plan I'm thinking of is, I practice Korean typing on the computer a few times a week. That program has English typing as well. I found some games to play in English. I'm going to try that.*
- 03 *I learn English in school now. That's too easy. [...] One day we were supposed to hold up a telescope and ask 'What's this?'. The teacher kept saying 'ask', but my classmates didn't know what 'ask' meant. I knew what that meant, so I finished the speaking activity only within a minute.*

This changed attitude of Spider towards English learning was echoed by his mother. Before the intervention, Spider had been nervous and worried about learning English. At the final parent interview, his mother was delighted to describe an event that had occurred at a bookshop. Bookworm as he was, Spider had never wanted to buy English books because he was unable to read them. It was therefore a touching moment for his mother when her son selected an English story book for himself for the first time (Extract 64).

Extract 64 (Spider's mother at final interview, April 25, 2017)

Spider's M: *We visit bookshops very often. Previously, Spider had no interest in the English book section at all because he couldn't read. Now he's changed. [...] At the mid-point of this program, Spider bought an English book for himself. He selected it himself. The first time ever. The book was well beyond his level. He couldn't read it entirely, but there were some texts he could read. He was very proud, and I was so happy.*

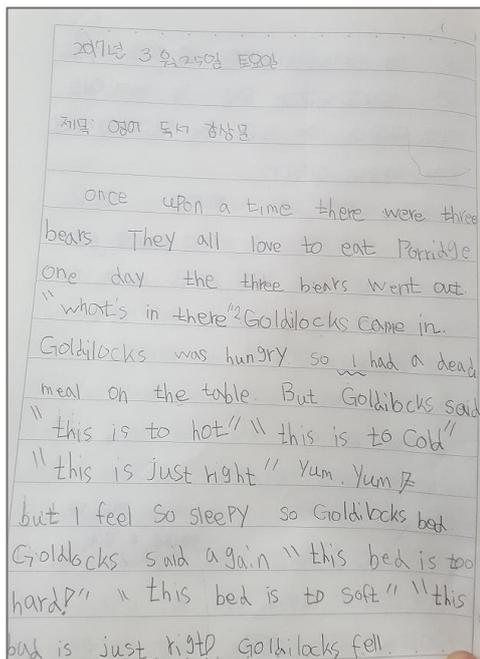
Another episode came from the full alphabetic brothers Strike and September. At their joint final interview, they stated that the previous two years of private reading lessons had not involved story reading at all. According to them, this intervention had introduced them to two new experiences. One was the learning of phonemes and the other was story reading. During the interview, they discovered that the Korean books they had read a long time before were actually translations of English originals, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *Little Red Hen*. This surprising discovery led to an expressed intention to read more English storybooks (Extract 65).

Extract 65 (Strike and September at final interview, April 17, 2017)

- 01 September: *It was the first time learning English with stories.*
- 02 R: *Really? I know that you've been learning English for quite a while.*
- 03 Strike: *We did phonics and grammar. We didn't do stories. That story, with three bears. The story was similar to what I had read in Korean before.*
- 04 September: *Also, Little Red Hen. That was similar to what I had read previously.*
- 05 R: *Didn't you know that those stories were originally written in English? They were translated into Korean. That's what you'd read. World classics.*
- 06 Strike: *Really? Are there some more? What are they? I should ask Mom to get them.*

Lastly, the story of PA4 Erica's voluntary English writing on *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* came unexpectedly. One afternoon in March, I ran into Erica at school while I was waiting for my daughter to finish her after-school program. Erica suddenly took out an English notebook from her backpack and showed me two pages of English writing. It was an English summary of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Erica came to love that story from the intervention (Figure 53). She submitted her English writing to the English teacher in school and received a big compliment both for her work and her positive attitude towards learning.

Figure 53. Erica's English review of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*



During a mobile chat with Erica's mother, I learned that Erica's younger sister, PA2 Ariel, had acted likewise. Both of them were proud of themselves, and their mother was pleased with the positive impact of the intervention on her children's English learning (Extract 66).

Extract 66 (Mother of Erica and Ariel in text, March 29, 2017)

Erica & Ariel's M: Inspired by her elder sister, Ariel also brought work to school. They both received praise from their teachers and they're very proud of themselves. I'm so glad that this English program is very helpful to them.

All these learners maintained a positive attitude towards learning as participants in the intervention. Strike and September were already full alphabetic, but they were also sincere and earnest in learning. Spider and Erica expressed intrinsic motivation for English learning. As can be seen in the following compiled extract, Spider mentioned a family factor that formed a clear extrinsic motivator, while Erica had always aspired to do more (Extract 67).

Extract 67 (Spider and Erica at initial interviews, December 2016)

- 01 Spider: *I like English. It's fun. [...] I have a cousin, who lives in America. He's invited me to come to his house next summer vacation, and I*

hope to use English then. A few years ago, when he came to visit us, we didn't communicate at all because he only spoke English.

- 02 Erica: *I love English. I just love all of it. I wish I could do better. I want to do everything about English. I've done everything in school, English camp and speech competition. I want more, especially outside of school. I wish I could go to the overseas camp as well.*

As a teacher, it was thrilling that this intervention served as a springboard for these learners in the voluntary search for further learning. The intervention finished after nine lessons, but the participants gained confidence from the experience and moved on to explore more in the lengthy journey of English learning.

4.7. Contextual Factors

The role of socio-contextual factors such as parents, peers and, teachers is important in the development of language learning among young learners. Parent's beliefs and behaviors have a significant impact on children's learning attitude, and this is particularly true for young children (Butler 2015; Li et al. 2019). In this research, three types of parental involvement in their children's learning were observed, while peer and teacher factors were essential for some participants in the decision to participate in, continue with or withdraw from the intervention.

4.7.1. Parents' English Reading Experience

The family's SES influences children's motivation to learn (Park and Abelmann 2004; Hu 2009; Gao 2012; Kim and Seo 2012; Baker 2013; Fernald et al. 2013; Butler 2015b; Niklas and Schneider 2015; Li et al. 2019). In this research, however, SES disparities were not substantial among the families, so that it was hard to notice distinctive patterns according to these criteria. Rather, parent-child relationships seemed to have a stronger impact on children's attitudes toward learning or self-efficacy, which is the children's 'belief in their abilities to do well and succeed in certain situations' (Pinter 2017: 13). Besides, there was evidence of a positive spillover effect on siblings. When the elder child(ren)

of the family participated in the intervention, they became more responsible for their learning and enjoyed teaching younger ones at home.

As explained in Section 3.5.2 (Family Backgrounds, p. 93), the parents of the participant children had different experiences in learning to read in English as children. When they were in school, English was not taught until middle school, at 13 years of age, and English word reading was performed either by memorizing spellings or translating phonemic symbols in the dictionary. Thus, concepts such as phonics, sight words and early English literacy development were unfamiliar to them, as has already been illustrated here. Table 25 shows a collection of the data from the parents, detailing their lack of knowledge, experience and confidence in terms of English PA, pronunciation and sight words.

Table 25. Parents' lack of familiarity with early English reading practice

Element	Parent	Data	Source
English PA	Nari's M	Nari says that 'spray' has four phonemes. Is this correct [...] It's something I didn't know, either.	Text
	Spider's M	Spider's done his homework alone, and I don't know whether he's done it right.	Text
	Ailee's M	We both worked together on this homework, but I don't know if we've done it right. I'm still confused.	Text
	Junseo's M	It's frustrating that I can't help Junseo when he's confused. I don't know either. It's so different from my school days.	Parent diary
Pronunciation	Spider's M	<i>I wouldn't read English books to Spider because I'm not confident with my own English pronunciation.</i>	Initial interview
		He's having difficulty pronouncing /θ/ and /ð/ of <th>, which he's learned in this seventh lesson. It's hard for me too.	Parent diary
	Jake's M	The difficult <th> pronunciation. It's hard to teach it to my child as I don't pronounce it properly myself.	Parent diary
	September & Strike's M	This is very different from how I learned. [...] But 'o-u' is difficult.	Text
	Jake's M	This week's o/u pronunciations are tricky. Neither Jake nor I are not sure if he's done it right. I didn't learn anything about this either.	Text

	Ryan & Tina's M	I only know that there's something wrong but I don't know anything more.	Text
Sight words	Nari's M	<i>What are sight words? I've never heard of them before.</i>	Initial interview

Due to their own lack of knowledge and experience, the parents found it hard to offer immediate help to children at home. As can be seen in Extract 68, Spiders' mother was not confident with her teaching of English although she had rigorously been engaging in parental teaching with four children. All that she could do was to teach in the way that she had been taught – rote memorization of English vocabulary and spelling.

Extract 68 (Spider's mother at final interview, April 25, 2017)

Spider's M: My husband and I want to teach my children at home as much as we can. We're fine with other subjects. But English is different. We don't know a lot about English and remember nothing from our own learning. Also, we have no direct experience in childhood English education. It's too unfamiliar. We don't know what to do. [...] So, I bought a vocabulary book and had him memorize words. That was all I could do.

Meanwhile, the parents of the children who learned English at the private institutions were hesitant to ask teachers about their children's learning progress or difficulties, since they lacked the relevant linguistic knowledge. When we talked about Nari's struggle with reading *Don't Cut My Hair* (Section 4.6.3. Sight Word Reading, p. 172), I asked Nari's mother if she had contacted Nari's English teacher for explanation. After a long pause, she gathered courage and revealed her honest thoughts (Extract 69).

Extract 69 (Nari's mother at initial interview, December 27, 2016)

Nari's M: How could I ask questions when I knew nothing? All I knew was that something was wrong, but how would I know where the problem came from? I didn't know what to ask because I knew nothing. Even if I did, I couldn't have understood what the teacher was explaining. I just quit trying. [...] Nari was terribly told off at that time. I'm really sorry for her.

These findings show that the parental lack of knowledge and experience made it hard to provide immediate substantial help to children in learning to read in English. With adequate professional support not readily available, the parents

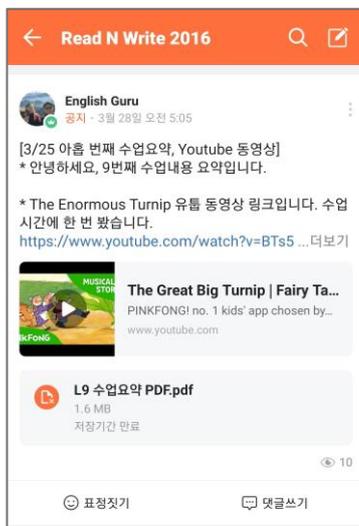
tended to teach their children according to their own learning history or to criticize poor performance without exactly understanding the problem.

4.7.2. Controlling Behavior

Parental involvement was strongly encouraged throughout the entire period of the intervention. In particular, the importance of homework was emphasized, since young learners would find it difficult to retain learning content from nine weekly lessons. At the preparatory workshop, therefore, the parents were informed of the importance of their roles regarding the young children's learning achievements. During the intervention period itself, I offered two additional parental workshops in order to help them understand the key concepts and principles regarding early English decoding acquisition.

Teacher-parent communication was easy and frequent. A communal online space, *Read N Write 2016*, was created on a popular Korean portal site, *Naver Band*. Important details were visually provided and carefully explained in terms of learning objectives, contents, reference materials, homework and preparation for the next lesson (Figure 54). Questions were welcome any time through both the communal space and individual mobile chat, and my responses followed swiftly. It was constantly stressed that children benefit more from informative behavior or autonomous support from parents than controlling behavior.

Figure 54. Communal online space, *Read N Write 2016* (Lesson 9)



PA4 Tina and her younger brother PA2 Ryan seemed to have had troubled relationships with their mother, since she tended to demonstrate controlling behavior regarding her children’s learning. She had been implementing a home-based commercial English program and had bought a whole series of books, DVDs and other learning materials, trying her best to do exactly what the curriculum requested. Despite her rigorous efforts, however, the program did not work well for her children, and the mother-child relationships grew uneasy (Extract 70).

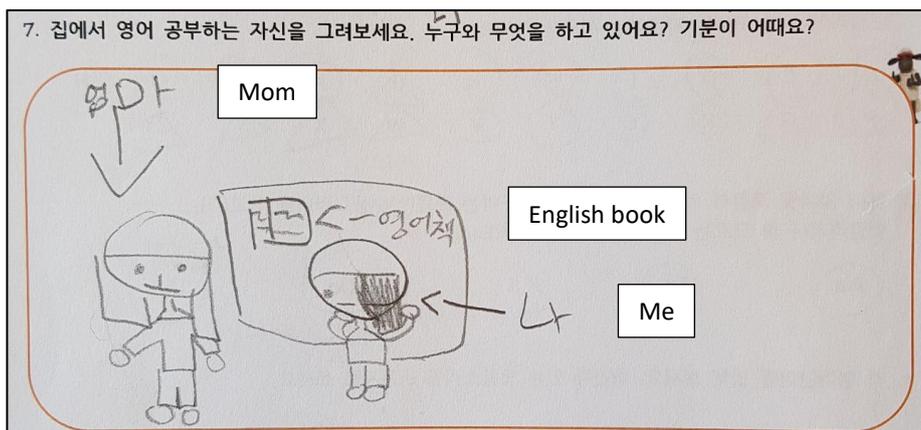
Extract 70 (Mother of Tina and Ryan at initial interview, December 28, 2016)

Tina & Ryan’s M: *On that website, I saw loads of success videos, and I expected my children to be like that. But it didn’t go well. If it didn’t work, I told my children off. They said that it should definitely work, but why wasn’t it like that with my children? I got tired and our relationship got rocky.*

Tina and Ryan described the situation from their perspectives by drawing. At the initial individual interviews, I asked them to draw how they felt about English learning at home (Figure 55). Ryan drew a scene in which conflict exploded over studying English reading with his mother. Tina’s drawing was simple, but her description also involved being criticized for putting her head down on the desk (Extract 71).

Figure 55. Ryan’s (above) and Tina’s (below) drawings about home English learning





Extract 71 (Tina at initial interview, December 30, 2016)

PA4 Tina: *Mom told me to listen to the CD. I put my head down on my desk, and she told me off for that. [...] I studied with Mom last year, but we have stopped since this year. Shall I do it again? (...) I don't know.*

Fourth grader Tina's first encounter with explicit English instruction was at the age of six at an English-only kindergarten. Unfortunately, the year-long experience ended up being so traumatic that Tina began to deny almost all types of institutional English learning whatsoever. It was a 'hell' to the young child. By contrast, Tina's mother became anxious that her daughter would fall behind in the English learning race. As a result, she decided to take the job into her own hands and led a home-based reading program for two years. However, Tina demanded to stop this home learning as well. Since then, there had been no supplementary English learning at all – no *hagwon*, tutoring, home visit worksheet program, online lectures or even anything for pleasure. Tina deliberately rejected English learning except for English as an obligatory school subject. Her mother was losing hope (Extract 72).

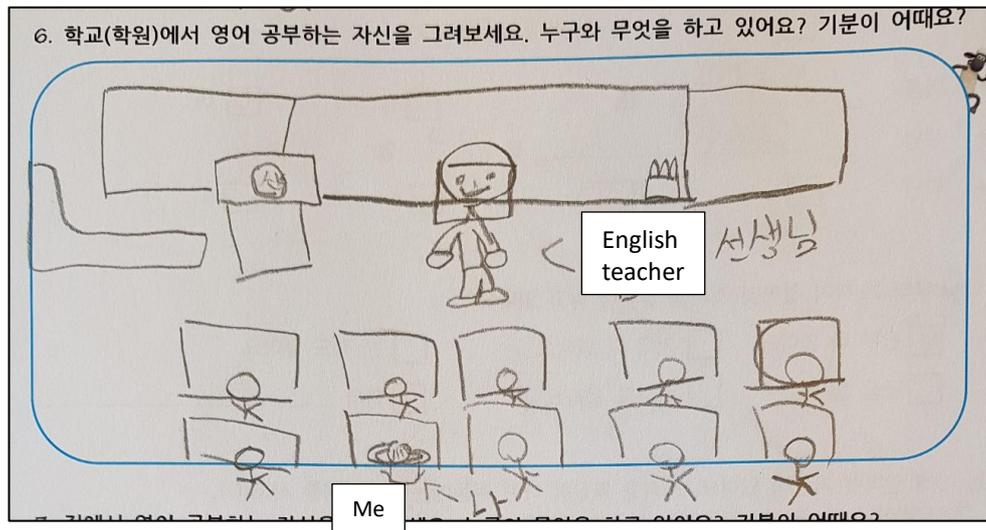
Extract 72 (Tina's mother at initial interview, December 28, 2016)

Tina's M: *At the kindergarten, Tina had a hard time with the teacher. But I pushed her to make her perfect on homework and tests. When she was brushing her teeth, I asked "What's Monday in English? Spelling!" I shouldn't have done it, but at that time I didn't know what to do. After a year, Tina said, "It's hell". I was shocked. We quit. After a while, I came across this program as I was searching for other ways. I just couldn't sit on my hands. At first, I was determined to have fun and be relaxed. (Sighing) But as time went by, I became the same person again, yelling, controlling and pushing. Having her watch English TV wasn't easy. I forced her to sit in front of*

the TV. There were certain sequences to watching that I had to follow. First, relaxed watching, then watching with strong concentration, and so forth. Nothing worked. Did we try for two years? Then we gave up. We've both given up. It was so hard for Tina and me alike.

Another drawing showed how unmotivated Tina was in school (Figure 56). According to her explanation, she sat with her head down on the desk, whereas classmates were actively participating. She was isolated. She did not listen to her English teacher because the lesson was either too boring or too difficult. She could not even read words for herself. The reason for Tina's decision to participate in this intervention was attributable to the teacher factor, which will be discussed in the following section.

Figure 56. Tina's drawing about English learning in school

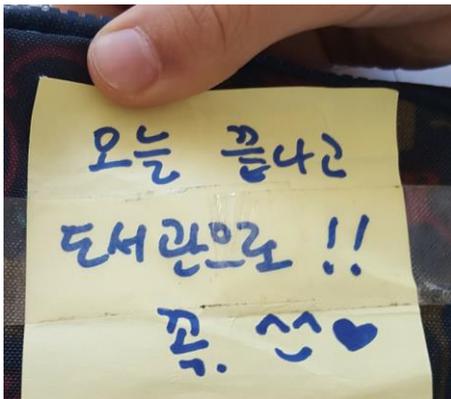


The mother of Tina and Ryan was well aware that she should not have been too forceful and strict, and she believed that such behavior had led her children to have low self-efficacy and negative attitudes towards English learning. She wanted to change, but this seemed easier said than done. As illustrated earlier in this thesis, Ryan was so severely criticized by his mother during the /b/-/v/, /p/-/f/ homework that he wished to eliminate English entirely (Extract 31, p. 145). He was also deeply frustrated when he was forced to reshoot a video many times, although he was not aware of what was wrong with his pronunciation (Extract 51, p. 164). His mother mentioned Ryan's low self-efficacy beliefs as

one of many factors that made him scared and caused him to take a long time to learn new things (Extract 24, p. 137).

At the final child interview, however, Ryan expressed his affection and allegiance towards his mother. He showed me a sticky note with his mother's writing in Korean: *Make sure to go to the library today after school!!* (a smiley face and a heart). The school library was the location of our interview (Figure 57). He kissed the note and said that he would keep it forever because it was his mother's message. There was a strong sense of being connected to his mother through studying harder and meeting her expectations in order to gain her approval. Even so, he preferred lessons without homework, since it was hard to stay up late at night to finish the homework to his mother's satisfaction (Extract 73).

Figure 57. Note of Ryan's mother



Extract 73 (Ryan at final interview, April 10, 2017)

PA2 Ryan: *I love Mom. I wish I could do better, but I can't. By the way, do we always have to have homework? Don't we have classes without homework? I wish we had no work to do at home. [...] I normally go to bed at 9 o'clock. When I do my homework, it's way after 11 o'clock. I must do it until Mom says okay. I should also clear up when she tells me to.*

The mother of Tina and Ryan pursued perfection and controlled her children's learning processes, pushing them to be perfect. I advised her that education involves trial and error and that we learn from our mistakes. She was well aware that she should change, but this did not happen as speedily as we all wished. Although parent-oriented motivation could be beneficial in enhancing

children’s learning achievements, these episodes showed that it may not help to foster intrinsic motivation and a positive attitude towards English learning.

4.7.3. Supportive Behavior

According to my observation, the mother of PA4 Erica and her younger sister PA2 Ariel was most active in asking questions that arose from her involvement in her children’s homework. As illustrated in Section 4.6.4 (Positive Impact on English Learning, p. 177), Erica had strong intrinsic motivation for English learning and yearned for more opportunities to learn and use English. Her mother regretted not having been able to maximize Erica’s potential due to the family’s financial status. Instead, she was determined to provide as much support as she could for her two daughters during the intervention (Extract 74).

Extract 74 (Mother of Erica and Ariel at initial interview, January 3, 2017)

Erica & Ariel’s M: I’m always sorry for not being able to support my daughters as fully as possible. When I heard about this program from Nari’s mother, I immediately asked her to tell you that we’d like to join. I don’t know anything about English and I’m terribly busy caring for three children. But if you let me know what to do, then I’ll do my best to be helpful.

Table 26 summarizes some of the questions that the mother of Erica and Ariel asked by mobile chat. Questions concerned not only key concepts of English decoding but also the parents’ role and appropriate methods of support. She wanted to be a source of information to her children (lines 1, 4 and 7), to be understanding of imperfection (lines 2 and 3), and to be sure of her approach (line 8).

Table 26. Questions by the mother of Erica and Ariel

	Date	Element	Questions
1	Jan. 13	English phoneme	To me, English phonemes are similar to Korean consonants and vowels. Am I right?
2	Jan. 20	Initial sound recognition	Two words on the homework sheet remained unfilled. Both of them are confused. Is it okay to send it incomplete?
3	Feb. 3	Video homework	I saw some mistakes in their pronunciation but I didn’t correct them. I think they’ve done their best although they were not perfect.

			Should I correct their mistakes and reshoot the videos?
4	Feb. 6	GPCs	Why does alphabet <a> have /eɪ/ at one time and /æ/ the other?
5	Feb. 8	Confusing vowel	Ariel finds <e> particularly confusing. She's fine with other vowels but always stops at <e>. What sound is that?
6	Feb. 9	Homework	Will you take a picture of Homework 2? They only brought Homework 1.
7	Feb. 13	Pronunciation	Both Erica and Ariel are not confident in pronouncing <o> in 'dog'. How should they do it?
8	Mar. 3	Sight words	Ariel couldn't get 'all by myself' over and over again. So, I wrote down its pronunciation in Korean. Is this alright?

The highlight of the mother's supportive involvement came in Lesson 8, which encouraged parents to join a role-play based on *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* in the video homework. It was actually in the form of script reading and voice acting. Parental participation was optional. If the parents chose not to join in, the children had to do the entire reading. The choice of playscripts and roles was up to each family (Figure 58).

Figure 58. Play scripts of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*: Scenes 1 and 2

<p>Goldilocks and the Three Bears Play Script (역할극 대본)</p> <p>- Scene 1 -</p> <p>Roles (2): Narrator Goldilocks</p> <p>Narrator: Once upon a time, there were three bears. They all loved to eat porridge. One day, the three bears went out.</p> <p>Goldilocks: Oh, there is a house! What's in there?</p> <p>Narrator: Goldilocks was very hungry. She wanted to eat the porridge.</p> <p>Goldilocks: This porridge is too hot! This porridge is too cold! This porridge is just right! Yum, yum</p> <p>Narrator: Goldilocks was tired. She wanted to sit on the chair.</p> <p>Goldilocks: This chair is too hard! This chair is too soft! This chair is just right! Oops!</p> <p>Narrator: Goldilocks broke Baby bear's chair. Goldilocks was very sleepy. She wanted to sleep in the bed.</p> <p>Goldilocks: This bed is too hard! This bed is too soft! This bed is just right! Zzzzzz</p>	<p>- Scene 2 -</p> <p>Roles (4): Narrator & Goldilocks Daddy Bear Mommy Bear Baby Bear</p> <p>Narrator: Goldilocks fell asleep. Then, the three bears came back.</p> <p>Daddy Bear: Who's been eating my porridge? Mommy Bear: Who's been eating MY porridge? Baby Bear: My porridge is all gone! (crying)</p> <p>Daddy Bear: Who's been sitting on my chair? Mommy Bear: Who's been sitting on MY chair? Baby Bear: My chair is broken! (crying)</p> <p>Daddy Bear: Who's been sleeping in my bed? Mommy Bear: Who's been sleeping in MY bed? Baby Bear: Mom! Dad! Come and look!</p> <p>Daddy Bear: Who are you? Mommy Bear: Where are you from? Baby Bear: What are you doing?</p> <p>Goldilocks: (screaming) AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! Time to run!</p> <p>Narrator: Goldilocks ran away to her house.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE END!</p>
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The four mothers of Rosari, Nari, Jake, and Erica and Ariel joined in. According to my observation, the mother of Erica and Ariel participated with the strongest sincerity and enthusiasm. With Ariel, she became a soft-spoken narrator, while with Erica she became a deep-voiced Daddy Bear and a high-pitched Mommy Bear who were both angry with the stranger's visit. As can be seen in the following compiled extract, Erica chose this moment as the best experience of the intervention. Ariel also referred to the Lesson 8 homework as amusing and positively evaluated her mother's engagement as supportive and encouraging (Extract 75).

Extract 75 (Erica and Ariel at final interviews, April 2017)

- 01 Erica: *Previously, Mom had never helped me like this when I learned English. She'd only checked whether I did my homework. This time, I liked it best when I did Goldilocks with Mom. We laughed really hard, though it wasn't in the video. I never imagined that Mom made voices like that.*
- 02 Ariel: *At first, I felt awkward. She wasn't like that before. But even though I couldn't read well, she didn't get upset but encouraged me to do what I could do. It was a lot of fun when we did Goldilocks. Mom pretended to be a news anchor for her narrator role. I was nervous at first that I'd make mistakes, but I gained courage when I saw her actively join.*

At the final parent interview, the mother of Erica and Ariel had tears in her eyes when she heard how much her daughters appreciated their mothers' support during the intervention. From her perspective, it was a big challenge to sustain supportive involvement, since she was not used to it. However, her initiative, accompanied by professional support, gradually turned this into a truly enjoyable experience for her and her children alike.

4.7.4. Lack of Attention

PA3 Ailee's mother had three children, of whom Ailee was the youngest, and had occupied herself with leadership roles in a wide array of parent-led groups at her local community and school. She was the parent representative on the governing board of Ailee's school. She also organized parental groups to discuss school-related issues or events and made suggestions to the school principal. At the community level, she formed and managed social and cultural clubs for

parents (mostly mothers) to engage in various activities, ranging from book clubs to sports clubs. In fact, Ailee's mother played a key role in recruiting subjects for this research.

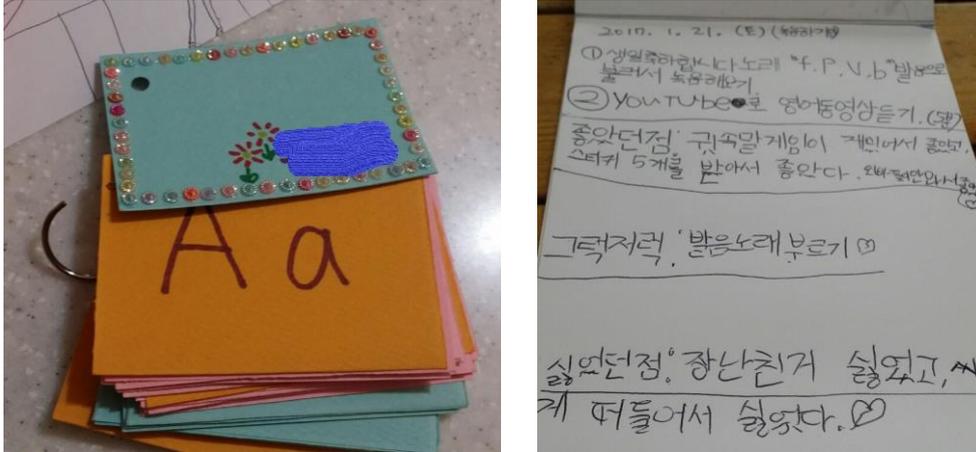
Ailee's mother was not sure about her involvement in Ailee's homework from the beginning. At the initial parent interview, she detailed two reasons for this. One of them was her hectic schedule. The other related to the trials and errors that she had gone through while raising Ailee's elder sister and brother. These were influential in the way she was educating her youngest child (Extract 76).

Extract 76 (Ailee's mother at initial interview, January 5, 2017)

Ailee's M: It's very burdensome that I should get involved in her homework. It's hard for me to spare time for that. To be very honest with you (...), I send her to many after-school programs partly because I want her to come home as late as can be. [...] Another thing is that I still don't know how much parents should get involved in children's learning. When I brought up my first child, I was a 'perfect' mom. I cared for every single thing, but it didn't work well. So, I went the opposite way with my second child. I didn't get involved at all and I wasn't happy either. I've now been led to believe that nothing is more important than autonomous learning. They should take the lead. Moms should not tell them to do this or that. Honestly, though, I'm not very sure that this is really correct either. Things are just mixed up so much now.

In the first half of the intervention, Ailee's mother was enthusiastic about Ailee's homework and lesson preparation, though her involvement was sometimes controlling, as in the episode where Ailee burst into tears during the video homework. Since Ailee did not open her mouth wide enough, the recording was made seven times before her mother was satisfied. Other than that, Ailee seemed to be happy with mother's active involvement. In Lesson 2, Ailee was proud to show me the alphabet cards, which she had made at home with her mother. During the break time of Lesson 4, Ailee told me that she had begun to write a reflection diary from Lesson 3, which incorporated learning objectives and described what she liked and disliked. This was at her mother's suggestion, which Ailee found useful in reflecting on what she had learned (Figure 59).

Figure 59. Ailee's alphabet cards (Lesson 2) and reflective diary (Lesson 3)



The situation started to change in March, when the new school year began and Ailee's mother became occupied with her own busy schedule. In the second phase of the intervention, Ailee often turned up to class late or with no homework. Homework was thought to be even more important at this time because previewing the story prepared the learners for story comprehension in class. The homework consisting of watching YouTube videos and pre-learning key vocabulary at home. If this was not properly done, the children would have difficulty following the lessons.

At the final child interview, Ailee admitted that she lost interest in this intervention as her mother became busy and paid little attention to her work. At home, Ailee was often left to work by herself. She also had ever-increasing amounts of school work and tests as well as her private music and sports education (Extract 77).

Extract 77 (Ailee at final interview, April 17, 2017)

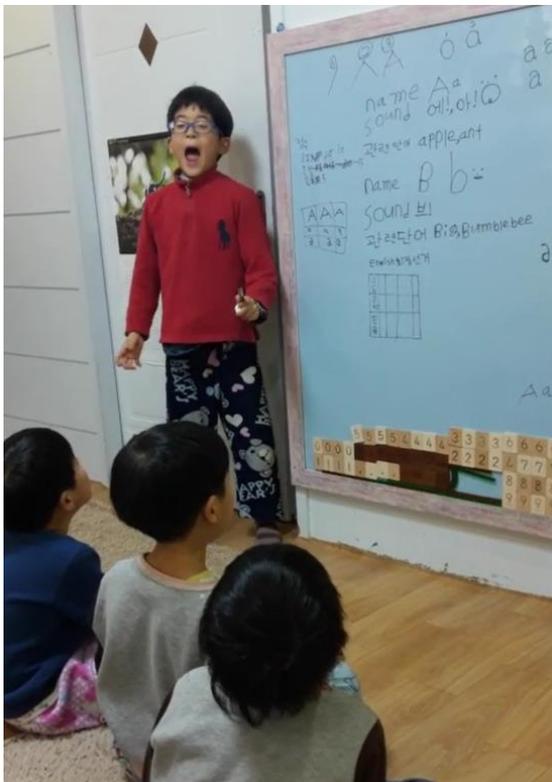
PA2 Ailee: *For sure, I felt different before and after March. At first, I worked really hard. Mom helped me a lot. But as Mom grew busier, I became loose and lost interest. I come home around 6 o'clock, and that's when Mom comes home too. We do this and that, and it's already late night. This program is very different from others, and I needed Mom's help. She was busy with her own stuff, and I didn't know what to do.*

As this intervention introduced new practices and methods, it was challenging for the young children to cope with homework alone. Some concepts and homework types were unfamiliar to the parents as well, so they had to learn along with their children to catch up with what was taught in class. When the parents could not afford the time and energy, parental involvement was lacking and the children became helpless. As a teacher, this experience posed the question of how to respond when the expected parental involvement did not take place.

4.7.5. Positive Spillover Effect on Siblings

In a family with siblings, some participants taught their younger brothers/sisters based on what they learned during the intervention. The most outstanding case of this came from NA2 Spider, who taught phonics to three younger brothers at home. In March 2017, Spider's mother sent me a video in which Spider was standing in front of his little brothers, teaching them the letter-sound relationships of <a> and (Figure 60).

Figure 60. Spider teaching phonics to his younger brothers



In the video, Spider was demonstrating the /æ/mouth shape as I taught with exaggeration, and what was written on the whiteboard incorporated what I emphasized during the lesson, such as distinction between letter names and sounds and exemplary words. However, he did not just copy my instructional style but added new contents in accordance with his brothers' English level, including capitals and lower cases and letter writing stroke sequence.

According to Spider's mother, when Spider watched *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* on YouTube as homework, the little ones showed interest in watching the video together. Spider's mother then asked her first son if he would start teaching phonics. By the completion of the intervention, Spider's three brothers had obtained the GPCs of <a> through <f> in the alphabetic order.

When I asked Spider about how he came to do the teaching, his immediate response indicated that he had acquiesced to his mother's suggestion. As his lessons carried on, however, he became aware of the personal benefits of teaching in terms of content review and the pleasant time spent with his brothers (Extract 78).

Extract 78 (Spider at final interview, April 17, 2017)

NA2 Spider: *It was Mom's idea at first. I forgot what I had learned before, so I had to go over it again. [...] I'm not sure how much longer I'll be able to carry on. It's hard but I'm having fun when we play games together.*

Nari also took pride in explaining to her younger sisters what she had learned, though this occurred on a less regular basis. Relevant episodes have already been described in this thesis, including when she impressed her little sisters by reading English shop signs in Japan (Extract 17, p. 133) and when she explained passionately about English phonemes (Extract 8, p. 125). This episode concerned YouTube videos, which were often found to appeal to the younger ones when the participants watched them at home. Nari's mother stated at the final interview that Nari's two sisters gathered around the i-Pad when she was watching *Alphablocks*. With no Korean subtitles provided, they were exposed to English-only input, but they had great fun. Nari added brief explanations and hand motion demonstrations about the principles behind CVC blending. Nari

described another episode at the final interview, which made her feel good as a big sister (Extract 79).

Extract 79 (Nari at final interview, April 10, 2017)

PA2 Nari: *My youngest sister spoke 'red', 'yellow' and so on. I taught her why 'red' is read as 'red', /r/-/e/-/d/. That made me feel good.*

When the learners helped siblings at home, it seemed to benefit not only the learners themselves but the siblings and parents. On the one hand, the learners benefited from content review, intimacy with siblings, self-esteem and confidence. On the other hand, the siblings were exposed to English input and learned from their big brother/sister in a natural context. Further, the parents were grateful to their son/daughter for being a good role model to their younger children. This virtuous cycle in the home environment is important in that it fosters a positive attitude in learning.

4.7.6. Peers and Teachers

During the recruiting stage, the most frequent question from children was “Who else will be in class?” Some children who looked uneasy about participation at first became comfortable when they heard their friend’s names. According to PA3 Seongoh, the strongest reason for his participation in the research was to be able to study with his close friends, the brothers of FA2 September and FA4 Strike (Extract 80).

Extract 80 (Seongoh at initial interview, December 27, 2016)

PA3 Seongoh: *When Mom talked about this program, she said that September and Strike would do it too. At first, I was both hesitant and excited. I was hesitant because I wasn't very confident about English. But I was excited because I could be in the same class with them learning English. We're close friends but not of the same age. I always wished that I could be in the same class with them in school, and I thought that joining this program would let me do that. That's why I joined.*

While the peer factor was a strong motivator for some children’s participation in the research, it also caused one participant to consider withdrawing from the research. At the final child interview, I asked PA2 Ryan what he liked and disliked about his experience in the research. Instead of giving me an oral

At the final parent interview, Ryan's mother mentioned the same incident as the most critical moment in terms of Ryan's continued participation or withdrawal. When Ryan thought that his best friends had mocked him at a difficult time, it struck him as a breach of faith and an insult. Nevertheless, he and his mother determined to stay on, since their trust in the teacher outweighed the peer factor (Extract 82).

Extract 82 (Ryan's mother at final interview, April 24, 2017)

PA2 Ryan's M: *That was a difficult time. We were actually considering withdrawal seriously. Ryan didn't want to see his friends again. Ryan seemed hurt when his friends laughed at him because he couldn't read simple words. I gave it a lot of thought. I really hated to lose you. I advised Ryan to carry on because there wouldn't be another chance of having you as a teacher. There were only a few more weeks to go. Ryan agreed. He likes you.*

The teacher factor had both a positive and a negative impact on Tina. She had experienced tough times with her first English teacher at the English-only kindergarten, causing her to reject English instruction entirely. Then, in August 2016, she decided to attend my two-hour free English storybook workshop out of curiosity, and that became a turning point. When I temporarily returned to Korea for recruiting, I gave a special English session on *Gruffalo* to students of the primary school that all the participants attended. It was part of a parent-led summer holiday program and I was invited to participate as a volunteer. Tina had known me for a long time as a neighbor, and she became curious about what the session would be like when English was taught by her mother's friend. After the workshop, Tina thought that if the teacher was me, then she could change her mind and try English instruction again (Extract 83).

Extract 83 (Tina at initial interview, December 30, 2016)

PA4 Tina: *I was glad to hear from Mom that you were going to be my teacher in this program. I liked the way you taught in the storybook session. I thought that I could probably learn English again if you were the teacher. Otherwise, I wouldn't have participated in the program.*

Meanwhile, the individual contact that I had with PA4 Erica through interviews and one-on-one feedback made her feel that I was a more friendly and accessible teacher. At the final interview, Erica stated that it was the first time

that she had had a long talk with an English teacher individually. To her knowledge, none of her teachers had asked her about English learning or had listened to her sincerely. When her work was now given immediate feedback by the teacher (me) along with explanatory details, she was thrilled and became enthusiastic in her study (Extract 84).

Extract 84 (Erica at final interview, April 13, 2017)

PA4 Erica: *I've never spent a long time talking about my English learning with English teachers. Teachers are people who do the teaching, but you were different. You were a teacher but at the same time you came to talk and listen. I really liked that. I liked when you listened. When Mom sent you the video homework, I couldn't wait to hear what you'd say. When I heard you wrote 'Fantastic!', I was so happy. When you wrote that I needed more practice, I practiced and practiced. I wanted to show you a better me.*

To Erica, I was a funny and friendly teacher, who she could run to whenever she had anything to ask and tell. At the end of the interview, she gave me a surprise present. During the interview, she was drawing something that I could not make out. This turned out to be a picture of me (Figure 62).

Figure 62. Erica's drawing of me



Peer and teacher factors can have varying degrees of influence on different learners, according to the characters and sensitivity of the learners. However, the findings showed that some learners were influenced considerably by how

their classmates and teachers talked and behaved. As Erica pointed out, the teacher in this research was unique in terms of her role as a teacher/researcher. The researcher's need to collect data put me in a position to meet learners individually, talk with them and listen to them. It was a big challenge for me to carry out the dual role, but it turned out to be beneficial for some learners to have a stronger sense of connection with the teacher, and had a positive impact on their learning.

4.8. Conclusion

The findings in this chapter showed a wide range of issues that influenced the progress and difficulties of primary-school-aged Korean ELLs when learning to read words in English. Even though it was only nine lessons with a less favorable frequency, the learners' age, schooling experiences and L1 acquisition seemed to have given them a cognitive-linguistic head-start in English decoding skills development in terms of speed, efficiency and spillover effect. On the other hand, limited exposure, negative inter-linguistic transfer, including L1 interference on pronunciation, and various contextual pressures were found to make EFL reading a challenging process for many learners though individual differences existed.

In the next chapter, Discussion, I attempt to show the significance of the findings in relation to previous studies and answer the two research questions. Further, based on the research findings, I make suggestions and recommendations for effective early English reading instruction in Korea.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

Having set out to explore and document the learning progress and perceived challenges of a group of primary-aged Korean children learning to decode English words, this study focused on two research questions.

RQ1. What types of progress do young Korean children make when acquiring English decoding skills?

RQ2. What challenges do young Korean children experience when acquiring English decoding skills?

In this chapter, I discuss the findings in relation to previous studies in the literature with regard to how far the data analysis contributed to answering the questions. First, I describe how the findings of this research contribute to the relevant literature. I highlight aspects that the young Korean ELLs found easy or challenging during the English decoding acquisition process in terms of the cognitive-linguistic and socio-contextual foundations. Then, I suggest effective ways of assisting such learners develop their English reading skills. The recommendations address how syllabus design, teaching materials and practice, teacher education, parental support, and the national English education policy might be developed in order to enhance the learning experiences of such students when taking English decoding instruction.

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

- 5.2. Cognitive-Linguistic Foundation
- 5.3. Socio-Contextual Foundation
- 5.4. Suggestion for Instruction in Korea
- 5.5. Conclusion

5.2. Cognitive-Linguistic Foundation

Before discussing the cognitive-linguistic foundations of the Korean participants, it is important to reiterate their characteristics as learners. The

participants were aged eight to 10 and were in Grades 2 to 4 when the research began. The previous English learning experiences of the 14 participants were varied in terms of duration, programs, contents and settings, resulting in a wide variety of English decoding ability. However, they shared a commonality of language learning in the sense that they had experienced schooling and demonstrated strong competency in reading in their own language. Furthermore, they had obtained some knowledge of receptive English vocabulary and recognized English alphabet letters both in capital and lower cases as well as the letter names. According to the learners' cognitive-linguistic backgrounds, certain aspects of English decoding acquisition were found easy and manageable, while others appeared challenging and confusing to them.

5.2.1. Oral Language Deficiency

While their experience of spoken communication in English was not as extensive as that of native-speaking children, the primary-aged Korean ELLs in this study were knowledgeable in terms of basic English vocabulary. Oral language competence has been found to play an important role in literacy development, and an extensive oral vocabulary is advantageous when learning to read (Ehri 1998; Arnold and Rixon 2014; Pinter 2017). However, oral language deficiency did not seem to be hugely detrimental to the decoding acquisition process for Korean ELLs. When combined with other cognitive-linguistic benefits of maturity, schooling and L1 literacy acquisition, the learners in this research were ready to take on early FL reading (RQ1). It is therefore suggested that while Korean ELLs, parents and teachers in primary English education should be aware of the need for spoken vocabulary knowledge prior to English literacy development, limited oral language competency can be offset by the learners' ages, cognitive-linguistic abilities, and experience.

5.2.2. English PA and Korean ELLs

It has been found that English PA is directly related to children's reading ability, but little research has been done, to my knowledge, in investigating the cognitive-linguistic backgrounds of Korean learners in the EFL context, for the

purpose of understanding the challenges these learners face. Research on English phonological awareness has focused on the predictive, developmental or environmental relationships between 'phonemes versus rhymes' and early reading (Goswami and East 2000; MacMillan 2002; Hatcher et al. 2004; Savage and Carless 2005; Vousden 2008; Corriveau et al. 2010; Carlson et al. 2013; Cunningham and Carroll 2015), and alphabetic knowledge and PA (Bowey 1994; Wagner et al. 1994; McBride-Chang 1999; Carroll 2004; Castles and Coltheart 2004; Piasta and Wagner 2010; Lerner and Lonigan 2016). In the studies with Korean ELLs, research attention has been paid to the body-coda phonological unit, as opposed to onset-rime, which is more accessible to Korean readers both in Korean and English (Kim 2008; Cho et al. 2017).

The focus of this research study has been to explore the successes and challenges for young Korean ELLs regarding English PA tasks at two levels – basic and advanced. As such, the issues of 'small versus large unit' debate and an accessible phonological unit for Korean readers have been sidestepped. Rather, the data presented here are intended to identify the level of PA that best explains Korean ELLs' early English reading. As suggested by Goswami, discussion about the efficacy of PA in word decoding depends on 'the nature of the reading task, the type of words being read, the methods of reading tuition that they [the learners] are experiencing, and the orthography under investigation' (2002: 47).

The research findings regarding English PA are significant in their implications for understanding Korean learners who have had the benefits of middle childhood (Philp et al. 2008), L1 literacy acquisition (Ehri 1998; Cummins 1999; Proctor et al. 2006; Arnold and Rixon 2014; Shin and Crandall 2019), and formal schooling (Christian et al. 2000; Cunningham 2010; Cunningham and Carroll 2011; Skibbe et al. 2011; Skibbe et al. 2012; McBride-Chang 2016). In this research, the learners were already well-equipped with the cognitive notion of phonemes and phonemic manipulation at its basic level both in Korean and English. The research findings show that a certain degree of phonemic sensitivity had already been developed in Korean, which many learners applied to the basic level of English PA tasks. These findings are consistent with Goswami (2002) in that PA is developed fastest when children acquire

orthographically transparent languages with consistent GPCs, like Korean. Cho and Seo's (2004) found a positive transfer with Grade 6 students, and this study suggests similar findings from younger students in Grades 2 to 4. After all, Korean children at this age seem to have a cognitive head-start in learning to read in English (RQ1).

Meanwhile, the participants' retrospective accounts regarding Korean phonemes in their L1 literacy development and their mistakes at the advanced Korean PA tasks illustrate that phonemic manipulation skills are not explicitly taught in Korean reading instruction (Park 1988; Kang 2000). In this regard, this research notes that primary-aged Korean children who are advanced Korean readers may not explicitly be aware of the fact that they have already obtained phonemic sensitivity. When Korean ELLs cannot apply phonemic manipulation skills to English deciphering, teachers should identify their understanding of PA in both Korean and English and provide proper instruction and tips to activate dormant cognitive ability. Once they experience an 'aha' moment, the learners will be ready to either learn the letter-sound knowledge in English or decipher English words if their GPCs are solid.

This research also highlights the children's spelling-oriented identification of phonemes in English. This phenomenon was frequently observed before the intervention. For example, the phonemes for 'eye' were counted as 3 with reference to the number of letters in spelling. It did not appear easy for the learners to make distinctions of the two concepts in the first place: English letter names and sounds. This research shows that the learners' previous phonics learning did not promote PA in English and that Korean ELLs tend to rely on spelling knowledge in doing English PA tasks if they are not given relevant instruction. The intervention of this research helped the learners enhance their explicit awareness of English phonemes as well as establish clear distinctions between names and sounds. Nevertheless, confusion still remained for vowel sounds, where learners' letter knowledge overrode phonemes (RQ2).

The strong positive relationship between letter knowledge and PA has been highlighted in previous studies. Hatcher, Hulme and Ellis (1994) proposed a phonological linkage hypothesis and Ehri and Soffer (1999) used the term

'graphophonemic awareness' as opposed to purely PA. Many researchers have maintained that orthographic knowledge facilitates the growth in PA and vice versa (Bowey 1994; Wagner et al. 1994; McBride-Chang 1999; Carroll 2004; Castles and Coltheart 2004; Piasta and Wagner 2010; Castles et al. 2011; Lerner and Lonigan 2016). However, the interference of letter knowledge with phonological judgements was also found in Ehri and Wilce (1980) and Stuart (1990), in which the learners relied on spelling knowledge to address phonemic manipulation tasks. In this regard, this research recommends that early English literacy instruction in Korea should introduce the concept of phonemes more explicitly so that the learners who are already well equipped with strong letter name knowledge can make the most of their knowledge in a balanced way.

This research contributes to the understanding of the appropriate prerequisite level of PA for beginning English reading of young Korean learners. Little was previously known about the level of English PA, other than segment units, which actually helps young Korean children learn to read in English. According to the research findings, Korean phonemic isolation was not in place at the advanced level and English PA at a more sophisticated level may not be essential for the early stage of English literacy development (RQ2). Rather, it appears that there is a reciprocal relationship between English PA and literacy acquisition for young FL learners (Perfett et al. 1987; Koda 1996; Whitehurst and Lonigan 1998; Goswami and East 2000; Castles and Coltheart 2004; Cunningham and Carroll 2011; Kim and Petscher 2011; McBride-Chang 2016).

This does not imply, however, that English phonemic manipulation skills at a complex level should be entirely excluded from instruction. This research suggests that advanced English PA tasks and linguistic differences can be good instructional topics for some learners in class, who like challenging tasks and are interested in the comparative analysis of their L1 and the TL. In Nam's study, even six-year-old Korean children successfully processed linguistic differences between Korean and English by 'constructing their own ideas about the principles of reading and writing from an early age as active language learners' (2017: 490). Despite the students' quick intake and ability to undertake the complex English PA tasks, this research cautions that large individual differences may be observed in homework tasks. Parental support may not be

readily available at home, since many Korean parents lack the relevant knowledge and experience. Further discussion on the parents' English learning backgrounds will follow in Section 5.3.1.

5.2.3. Letter-Sound Knowledge

Letter-sound knowledge is potentially 'one of the most optimal predictors of later reading success' (McBride-Chang 1999: 304), though letter sounds have varying levels of difficulty. This study shows that the Korean ELLs found certain letter-sound relationships easier than others and held easier correspondences more firmly in their memories. These findings are in accordance with previous studies on the letter-name structure hypothesis and the letter-sound ambiguity hypothesis (McBride-Chang 1999; Evans et al. 2006; Kim et al. 2010; Scanlon et al. 2010; Huang et al. 2014). With regard to the 26 alphabet letters, the learners quickly grasped the GPCs when the names of the consonants provided a salient clue for their corresponding sounds (e.g. , <d>, <p> and <s>) (RQ1). By contrast, consonants with no sound cues (e.g. <h>, <w>, <x> and <y>) were more likely to be mastered later or required more explicit instruction (RQ2).

Distinctions among vowel sounds were found more difficult both in recognition and pronunciation than consonants (RQ2). English vowels are less salient in sound yet more complicated in spelling (Ehri 1998). Not only are vowels associated with multiple sounds, but the targeted sounds are not related to their letter names (Huang et al. 2014). Consequently, many learners had difficulty holding the GPCs of the letters whose names have few iconic characteristics firmly in their memories, probably because lack of iconicity places heavy demands on working memory (Treiman and Kessler 2003).

The diverse levels of difficulty become even more complex with L1 pronunciation interference (Altenberg and Vago 1983; Flege et al. 1997; Riney et al. 2000; Major 2001; Zampini 2008; Kuo 2011; Saito 2011). Due to the 'speaking out' element of early reading, pronunciation is an important aspect of what children learn. The findings of this study suggest that overt instruction focused on pronunciation or phonemes is rare in most phonics materials and practice (Rixon 2011: 206), and that Korean ELLs struggle with the articulation

of particular English sounds because of the cross-linguistic transfer (Lee 2006; Shin et al. 2013) (RQ2).

5.2.4. Word Reading

When primary-aged Korean learners struggle with deciphering CVC words in English, teachers should explore various contributory factors. As discussed earlier, these include Korean literacy acquisition, the activation of basic English PA, GPCs in English, and L1 pronunciation interference. For partial alphabetic readers in particular, vowel recognition and production should be carefully checked (RQ2). Many fledgling readers tend to bring their attention to ‘partial orthographic information such as initial letters’ (Juel and Minden-Cupp 2004: 316), and vowels are not as salient as consonants (Ehri 1998; Scanlon et al. 2010; Huang et al. 2014). This study also suggests that articulation can be hard to make on account of the lack of blending practice in applying PA to the combination of separate sounds for decoding (RQ2). There is a quick solution to this problem. Deciphering will improve when the learners practice phonemic segmentation and blending with simple clapping hand motions (see Sections 4.3.6. ‘Aha’ Moment, p. 129 and 4.3.7. Confidence Building, p. 131) (RQ1).

A useful tool to enhance readers’ letter-sound knowledge and their ability to blend is the identification of unknown, to-be-learned words and even context-free pronounceable pseudowords (Hoover and Gough 2000; Ehri 2005; Adams 2011a). Despite the benefits of reading unfamiliar words, the Korean learners in this research had not experienced unfamiliar word reading in their previous phonics learning. The sense of novelty affected the partial alphabetic readers in that they could not decipher ‘yek’ for example although they successfully articulated ‘yes’ (RQ2).

At the introductory phase, working with engaging activities is important, since mechanical reading of a long list of words is not useful to young ELLs (Pinter 2017). Given Korean ELLs’ unfamiliarity with such practice, it is equally important that teachers should clearly explain the purpose of these activities. The provision of such clear explanations is one of the most effective teaching strategies, making the activities comprehensible to the learners (Brosh 1996;

Park and Lee 2006; Kim et al. 2012; Barnes and Lock 2013). For this purpose, this research supports the pedagogical value of L1 in FL classroom, which has been highlighted in previous studies in Korea (Kang 2007; Cho and Lee 2009; Kim 2012; Macaro and Lee 2013; Lee 2016) and other EFL contexts (Auerbach 1993; Crawford 2004; Edstrom 2006; Carless 2008; Brooks-Lewis 2009; Copland and Neokleous 2011; Littlewood and Yu 2011; McMillan and Rivers 2011; Bhooth et al. 2014; Paker and Karaağaç 2015).

Apart from the pedagogical efficacy of unknown word reading practice, however, Rosari's case in this research highlights young language learners' negative attitude towards new teaching methods and approaches, her discomfort arising from the fact that her private tutor had never implemented such practice (RQ2). The discomfort with unfamiliar methods and the resultant negative learning attitudes are understandable, since past learning experiences may have trained the learners to adopt certain learning strategies (Spratt 2011). In Korea, an increasing number of children start private English education well before public English education begins in Grade 3 (Kim 2017). Rosari's three years of experience with her private tutor seems to have had a psychological impact on her English learning motivation.

Recent research has identified the skepticism of adult learners towards the use of new technology in language learning (Ushioda 2013; Calabrich 2016; Annamalai 2019; Chopra and Bedi 2019), but younger learners tend to be less anxious and less inhibited than older learners (Pinter 2017). Many researchers have noted that outdated teaching methods and teacher complacency, rather than novelty, have been identified as causative factors for learner negativity at all age groups (Stipek 2002; Arai 2004; Kim and Seo 2012; Course 2018; Kim et al. 2018). Therefore, the young learner's rejection of unfamiliar and novel teaching methods is worthy of further examination and research.

With regard to sight word recognition, whole word processing appears challenging for Korean learners for three reasons. One of these concerns the fact that they are used to reading the orthographically transparent Korean language (Altani et al. 2017). Korean ELLs who have experienced clean letter-sound mappings have difficulty in accurately recognizing spelling patterns that do not

conform to the consistent correspondences. In addition, the participants' lack of parental reading in English or natural exposure is another factor, since frequent exposure is positively related to the identification of these words (Lonigan et al 2000; Mol and Bus 2011; Mitchell and Brady 2013). Finally, oral language deficiency has made it hard for them to make intelligent guesses of the meaning and pronunciation of irregularly spelled words even when the words are presented with contextual cues (Adams and Huggins 1985; Arnold and Rixon 2014; Pinter 2017) (RQ2).

5.3. Socio-Contextual Foundation

Learning to read is not a value-free, pure skill-developing training but a socially embedded practice that is hugely affected by the sociocultural environment (Barton 2001). In this context, the findings of this research are consistent with previous studies in that young children are particularly influenced by their immediate environment in terms of parents, siblings, teachers and peers (Gregory 1996; Dörnyei 1998; Barton 2001; Gregory et al. 2004; Sénéchal 2006; Baker 2013; Butler 2014a; Niklas and Schneider 2015; Pinter 2017; Li et al. 2019).

5.3.1. Parents' Lack of Knowledge and Experience

This research highlights the gap between parents and children in early English reading experiences and its impact on motivation and the children's learning at home. Many researchers have noted that differences in the family's SES and the parents' education have considerable effects on the children's English learning in the L1 (see Hoff 2006 for a review) and the L2 or FL (Carhill et al. 2008; Hu 2009; Gao 2012; Fernald et al. 2013; Butler 2015b; Butler and Le 2018; Murphy 2018; Li et al. 2019). In the Korean context, English learning motivation and achievement can be attributable to differences between the SES of parents (Park and Abelman 2004; Paik 2008; Kim and Seo 2012; Shin and So 2018; Lee 2019).

However, little has been known about Korean parents' English learning backgrounds, particularly those who learned to read in English before 1997, when the 7th NC officially instituted English education in all primary schools.

According to the findings of this research, English word reading back then was mostly guided by memorizing phonemic symbols and looking up the English-Korean dictionary for the symbols for decoding as well as meaning in Korean. Phonics did not exist and thus parents probably may have little prior experiences or knowledge to rely on when they help their children to learn phonics. It is noticeable that parental lack of knowledge and hands-on experience in early English literacy development constitute a common problem regardless of the differences in the family's SES and the parents' educational levels (RQ2).

5.3.2. Parental Involvement

This research study suggests that parental involvement does not always contribute to the enhancement of the Korean ELLs' learning and motivation if parents are unable to help or do not feel confident in their own learning. Parental involvement is widely acknowledged to help children foster positive learning attitudes and strengthening self-efficacy beliefs and motivation (Gottfried et al. 1998; Duncan et al. 2007; Mady 2010; Gao 2012; Butler 2015b; Li et al. 2019). Besides, parent homework involvement is one of the best examples to enhance the connection between home and school (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2001; Daza and Garavito 2009). In this study, however, immediate parental support was not readily available when the children found difficulty with the homework tasks, since the parents did not have specific pedagogical knowledge and strategies. Rather, the children either remained confused until the subsequent lesson and parents only checked whether the homework had been completed (RQ2).

In fact, little research has been done on how parents are actually involved in their children's FL learning, though a small amount of research has examined parents' roles with reference to FL development in Europe (Enever 2011) or of very young children before school entry (Rokita 2007, 2019). This research is in line with Rokita (2019) in the sense that parents have little knowledge of the FL acquisition process and tend to resort to the strategies learned from their own educational experiences. Indeed, Spider had to memorize spellings and pronunciations mechanically in the way that his mother had been taught in

school. Ryan and Tina were forced to adapt themselves to the predetermined syllabus and learning approaches that certain commercial programs had set. Nari, Ryan and Tina were often criticized by their parents for poor performance without understanding what they had done wrong.

Korean parents struggle not only with the provision of scaffolding carefully adjusted to the needs of their children but also with contact and communication with English teachers. The access to English teachers in school, private academies or/and tutors had not been comfortable for the parents, and the teacher-parent contacts and communications had not been easy or efficient because of the formality of the setting and the parents' perceived difficulty in understanding the teachers. For this reason, when the children's learning fell behind and did not improve over time, no proper action was taken by teachers or parents, since they had not identified the children's specific learning difficulties. Consequently, these experiences caused the children to have low self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and confidence, and even led to deliberate rejection of English learning (RQ2).

5.3.3. Parental Beliefs and Behaviors

This research highlights the fact that parental involvement is also influenced by individual parenting styles and parent-child relationships, which then affect the children's motivation and attitude to learning. Maternal influences are particularly significant in Korea, since mothers make educational decisions on behalf of their children and get involved in educational practices both in school and at home (Kim and Bang 2017). On the whole, the findings of this research are consistent with previous studies that mothers' supportive and adaptive parenting styles generally have a positive relation to their children's English learning motivation, while controlling, coercive and nonchalant attitudes have a negative impact (Jeong 2004; Park and Kim 2006; Park and Kim 2015).

It is worthwhile to note three aspects of parental attitudes and behaviors from this research. First, parenting styles can change with the availability of professional support and the individual parents' self-driven initiatives and deliberate efforts to change previous regulating behavior into that of support,

understanding and adaptation. When this occurs, the learning experiences grow enjoyable for the children and their parents alike (RQ1). Second, parental awareness of the urgent need to alter their coercive style does not always lead to immediate changes of attitude and behavior towards their children's English learning. Their long-standing parenting style does not dissipate easily, since the attitudes are so deeply entrenched that they outweigh the parents' determination to alter their behavior (RQ2). Finally, a nonchalant parental attitude can reflect a reality of busy mothers who are not able to afford the time and energy to be actively involved in their children's learning. Given the lengthy and complex journey of English decoding acquisition, the children may lose interest and become helpless without this parental support (RQ2).

The multifaceted nature of parenting styles makes it difficult to establish a direct link between parents' behaviors and their children's ultimate academic achievement, since contextual variables such as race, ethnicity, culture, education, and social situation should also be considered (Arnett 2010). In Confucian cultures, for example, children with parents of controlling and regulating behaviors often achieve high academic results, since the children wish to study harder in order to meet the expectations of their parents and gain their approval (Park and Kim 2004, 2006; Cheung and Pomerantz 2012; Gao 2012; Li et al. 2019). In Ryan's case, such extrinsic motivation pushed him to continue with his efforts (Yoon and Kim 2012; Li et al. 2019).

5.3.4. Sibling Tuition

This study shows ways in which older siblings tutor younger children through natural dialogue, modeling, play or direct teaching (Rogoff 1990; Gregory 1996, 1998; 2001, 2004, 2008; Gregory et al. 2004; Volk and de Acosta 2004; Howe et al. 2015; Segal et al. 2018). As in Gregory, both examples of Nari and Spider show 'scaffolding, guided participation and synergy taking' (2008: 71), whereby older and younger children learn from each other (RQ1). In the case of Spider's explicit teaching, his instructional style was closely modeled on his teacher's teaching style (Gregory et al. 2004), but there was some level of linguistic responsiveness as Spider adapted his teaching to the younger brothers' levels of literacy competency (Gregory 1998; Dunn 2015; Segal et al. 2018).

Whereas young children's learning with siblings has been well documented, the influence of first-born children on younger siblings' FL language development has not been widely explored. Some research has examined bilingual children in immigrant families in English-speaking countries such as Bangladeshi families in the United Kingdom (Gregory and Williams 2000), and Korean families (Shin 2002) and Latino families (Kibler et al. 2014) in the United States. Even rarer are studies in the field of early English literacy development in the Korean EFL context, where parents have difficulty in scaffolding their children's English learning at home due to their lack of professional knowledge and experience. In this case, the role of oldest siblings, who have learned to read in English, can be significant as they act with parents in the care and education of young children, boosting their learning interest and confidence (Weisner 1989; Volk and de Acosta 2004; Gregory 2008).

5.3.5. Peer Influence

It is important that teachers cultivate a supportive, nurturing classroom atmosphere to foster their students' learning motivation. (Gardner 1985; Dörnyei 2000; Tam 2009; Enever 2011; Dewaele and MacIntyre 2014; Astuti 2016; Pinter 2017). This research contributes to the English teacher's classroom management strategies by proposing immediate intervention in the case of peer pressure and the establishment of trust between teachers and vulnerable students. When a child is teased and laughed at by close friends, the experience can be doubly painful for the child. Ryan's case showed how severely a young child could suffer when he felt hurt by close friends because of his lack of language proficiency and how negatively such behavior could influence his subsequent learning (RQ2). As a teacher, I made efforts to create a supportive environment, but this did not stop students' abrupt responses to their peers' errors and blunders. Nevertheless, my immediate intervention and expression of disapproval helped Ryan and his parents to feel that he was being cared for and protected by the teacher and therefore assisted him in getting over a difficult time (RQ1).

The lack of timely intervention can imply tacit approval of inappropriate behavior among peers (Mishna and Alaggia 2005). This in turn may prevent the

vulnerable learner from becoming active in the subsequent lessons (Zulkefly and Razali 2019). The teacher's awareness and prompt addressing of peer pressure in class is particularly significant in the Korean context, where a majority of schools have specialist English teachers (Ko 2005; Garton 2014). Since only a small number of English specialist teachers give English lessons to students in all grades, it can be difficult for them to acquire sufficient knowledge of individual students and their relational backgrounds. As a result, the teachers may not be able to identify and deal with hurtful student-student interactions, particularly in a large class where discipline maintenance is a big challenge (Garton 2014). For some students, as shown in this research, the pain of such negative incidences has an immediate negative impact on their subsequent English learning.

While the specialist English teacher system in primary education is widely investigated in terms of teacher professionalism and efficiency of the system (Kim 1992; Park 1998; Kim 2000; Ko 2005; Yim 2014; Kim and Ahn 2018), little has been known about peer pressure norms in primary English classes. Therefore, the special English teachers' strategies in response to hurtful peer pressure and the learners' perceptions are worthy of further examination and research.

5.3.6. Individualized Teacher Feedback

Previous studies on individual teacher feedback in L2 and FL learning have largely been limited to corrective feedback to adult learners in English writing (Ellis et al. 2008; Sheen 2011; Zareekbatani 2015; Han 2017, 2019; Han and Hyland 2019) and oral communication or pronunciation tasks (Waniek-Klimczak and Pawlak 2014; Martin and Valdivia 2017). Despite the complexity of early English literacy acquisition for FL learners, this topic has not been well documented. In this regard, this research notes that learners (and parents) perceive teacher feedback as substantial and helpful when it is tailored to the learners' individual needs.

Weekly lessons in this research study were less frequent than in other English learning contexts such as schools and private academies, where lessons take

place up to five times a week. This shortcoming was partially offset by online contact, which was available regardless of time and place. The feedback that I offered via mobile phone communication received strong parental appreciation, since this feedback was seen as not only fast and responsive but also tailor-made to the learners' individual needs. In addition, one-on-one interviews with the learners provided rare opportunities for them to comment on their English learning experiences, as in Erica's case. Her direct contact and talks with me helped her to develop a strong bond of trust with me, which in turn fostered a positive learning attitude (RQ1).

As a prerequisite to the provision of individual feedback, each learner's learning progress and difficulties need to be identified and analyzed. One effective way of doing this is for teachers to have one-on-one interviews with individual students in a comfortable setting. Child interviews are often considered as an ethical and methodological concern for research (Cameron 2005; Christensen and James 2008; Kuchah and Pinter 2012; Farrell 2016), and this study suggests that they can be a useful instrument for teachers, with which to identify specific learning needs. Furthermore, parent interviews are desirable either as a complementary option or an alternative, whereby the connection between school and home can be fostered and ideas for parental support can be developed.

5.4. Suggestions for Instruction in Korea

The issue of when and how to implement written language instruction in an EFL context depends on many variables. Learner factors include age, schooling, exposure to English, L1 literacy acquisition, and interest in learning to read in a foreign language. Teacher qualifications and parental support are also important contextual factors. There is no one dominant formula to follow when it comes to teaching English reading to primary-aged Korean children whose English literacy acquisition is sequential as opposed to simultaneous biliteracy acquisition. Nevertheless, this research suggests effective ways of assisting these particular target students develop their English reading skills by addressing the results of the investigation and the consequent implications of these results.

5.4.1. Understanding of Learners

This research consistently claims that good FL instruction should begin by clearly identifying the learners' cognitive-linguistic and contextual backgrounds in language learning and appreciating their perspectives on what can be easy or difficult during the process. Until now, to my knowledge, the national policy on English education in Korea has been made by top-down government initiatives in pursuit of popular global trends in the ELT world. Also, much research has been conducted from the teachers' perspectives in terms of how they have managed to respond to the fast-changing classroom environments. However, little research attention has drawn on what these particular learners in this particular Korean context have already known or experienced before they come to the early English reading class and how the instruction should adapt to meet their specific needs.

Hayes pointed out that ideal language instruction involves teachers to prepare materials and implement teaching practices 'to respond to the specific needs of their own classes' (2014: 2). There is no question about this, but it may still seem to be ideal and hard to achieve in reality. In the field of early English literacy instruction, it is essential to understand how the learners have become literate in Korean. It is equally important to identify the family characteristics of the learners so that prompt and effective responses can be provided by schools whenever needed. This research therefore recommends that teachers, researchers and policy makers in Korea have a clear understanding of young Korean ELLs. Only then can this promote the identification of effective educational provisions and practices that support their English decoding.

5.4.2. Syllabus Design

In the field of beginning English reading, research indicates that students should first acquire the foundational word recognition skills before the instructional focus shifts to higher level skills including fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (Otto 2008). Effective reading instruction should examine the efficacy of a broader set of instructional approaches. This research maintains that students need an integrated approach that includes instruction in a mixture

of English decoding components: receptive vocabulary, PA, letter-sound knowledge, sight words and unknown words.

While the balanced approach is promoted as the most effective instructional model to English decoding acquisition (Fitzgerald 1999; Reutzel and Cooter 2004; Hudson et al. 2009; Slavin et al. 2011; Snyder and Golightly 2017), existing programs in Korea for basic English reading skills predominantly provide phonics-based instruction both at public and private sectors. Even the phonics instruction tends to neglect unfamiliar word reading, whereby it cannot be ensured whether the learners read words by using phonics skills or memorizing them by sight.

This research therefore proposes that English decoding instruction for Korean learners in primary school should provide a well-defined comprehensive syllabus. As such, all the components should be clearly represented in the syllabus or the table of contents. Prior to the full-scale English reading instruction, the focus of the program needs to be placed on oral vocabulary and English PA at basic levels. Then, it is recommended that reading lessons begin with the teacher's short storytelling using pictures to illustrate the story (Carroll et al. 2011), when the target vocabulary and its meaning are presented in a context. This activity serves a springboard for subsequent instruction on oral vocabulary, letter-sound knowledge and sight word recognition.

The introduction of sound-spelling patterns should be in a clearly defined, incremental sequence. *Letters and Sounds* (DfES 2007) can be a useful reference, in which letter-sound knowledge is systematically introduced, practiced and consolidated over four phases according to its frequency and difficulty. Letter sounds can be introduced either with the common letters sounds first, like *Letters and Sounds* (DfES 2007), or in an alphabetic order, like most commercial phonics textbooks in Korea. In either case, the syllabus should make sure to give full coverage of English phonemes (Rixon 2011: 55) so that the 'speaking out' element of early reading can be effectively addressed. It is imperative for Korean learners to articulate the entire English phoneme inventory, particularly vowels, and the syllabus should incorporate comparing and contrasting English phonemes that are difficult and confusing to Korean ELLs, and cycle of review

(Jones and Reutzel 2013). It is equally important that certain time should be dedicated to unknown word reading during the GPCs instruction.

Sight words are either selected from the story that has been introduced at the beginning of the lesson or carefully chosen for addition if necessary. The number of sight words taught in one lesson depends on the learners' age and English literacy competency levels. Teaching of sight words should be explicit through various multisensory activities (Carroll et al. 2011). After this, the learners are given a list of words or the story text according to their levels, when they reinforce the target vocabulary, letter-sound knowledge and sight words by reading the words or the text aloud. Given that the various decoding elements are to be taught in an integrative manner, learning will be more effective when the program is delivered on a daily basis. Frequency of instruction is crucial for young learners in FL teaching and learning (Pinter 2011), and elementary level FL programs work best if instructions are scheduled for three to five days per week for no less than 30-40 minutes per class (Swender and Duncan 1998).

5.4.3. Teaching Materials and Practice

Ideally, the best teaching materials are designed by teachers themselves to meet the specific needs of their own students (Hayes 2014). Given the variety and complexity of knowledge and strategies for English decoding, however, it does not seem to be practically possible for English teachers to prepare teaching materials from scratch. Indeed, Garton (2014) noted that public English teachers in Korea follow the NC closely by using one of the textbooks that are prescribed by the government. According to the survey (ibid), many English teachers perceived the textbook packs as useful for lesson planning and implementation, with a clear syllabus, structured lesson plans, rich content, fancy digital components and a comprehensive teacher's guide, and spend their teaching hours following the textbook materials.

While public English education in Korea is strongly controlled by the NC, actual classroom teaching should involve the teachers in finding 'an optimal balance between central initiatives and local autonomy' (Butler 2015a: 310) in terms of

material selection, adaptation and implementation. This can apply to the private sector as well, since mass-produced teaching materials too frequently rely on a one-size-fits-all philosophy and fail to cater fully for the needs of individual students and teachers in different contexts (Ottley 2016). In this respect, Thornbury (2013) claimed that teaching materials need to be mediated by the teachers so they can attune to the lives and needs of the students.

The material selection process varies among institutions, but it is not uncommon that English teachers participate in the selection process (Arnold and Rixon 2008). Teachers should select the most appropriate materials for English decoding acquisition among such a wide array of sources, depending on whom and what to teach. Not only that, adaptation is necessary to take into account learners' cognitive-linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This research recommends that story texts need to be modified to enhance their decodability and predictability and the exposure of high frequency words (Mesmer 2010). However, this does not only mean highly decodable short texts with strictly controlled vocabulary and simple storylines. For the learners of this age, dull texts may turn their English reading experiences into a tedious and awkward mechanical drill practice (Adams 2009). Another important consideration for text modification is cultural appropriateness (McGrath 2002). Authentic texts written for native speakers of English are sometimes in need of adaptation due to cultural barriers, since young Korean ELLs may have difficulty understanding the cultural aspects of the texts (Gregory 1998; Ghosn 2019; Shin and Crandall 2019). As an alternative, Pinter (2017) suggests that teachers can write materials themselves and also encourage advanced readers to write texts for younger or initial readers.

Even when teaching with the predetermined syllabus and materials, teachers need to mediate them to accommodate the particular students in terms of sequencing and time allocation. Teachers should identify what their students already know and can do, since a lot of elementary school students in Korea have already mastered Korean literacy and received English instruction before school entry (Park et al. 2007). When introducing the concept of English phonemes, it is a good idea to use basic Korean PA as a starting point to spark their interest in the concept of phonemes and activate any relevant knowledge.

Given the varying levels of difficulty in the acquisition and application of the alphabetic principle, the findings of this study offer certain broad parameters for more efficient teaching practice that suit these particular learners. Teachers should note that some GPCs may already be known by many children, while others take more time and instruction to master. The 'divide-and-conquer' strategy (Vanniarajan 2012: 74) can be effective, in which the GPCs acquisition task is divided into multiple sub-tasks according to the difficulty level. Thereby learners put their attention first on easier relationships as a good starting point for instruction and then address more difficult and confusing correspondences in an incremental fashion. It can also be helpful to encourage learners to sort letters according to iconicity as they are presented with exemplary words. For more ambiguous relationships including vowels, longer instruction time and more explicit distinctions will help learners work on them and retain them in their working memories. It is important to note that Korean learners in this age group are not blank slates but are capable of finding out rules or comparing and contrasting for themselves through self-discovery and trial and error.

The use of online materials is recommended since young children react positively to e-based reading programs. According to the surveys in Im's (2009) study, both students and English teachers viewed the use of multimedia components of the textbook packs such as electronic textbook and CD-ROMs as helpful in teaching and learning. Apart from the multimedia materials that were prescribed by the government, this research suggests that YouTube videos with three to five minutes such as *Alphablocks* on Cbeebies are valuable additions in support of the classroom curriculum. These videos are free, easily accessible, short, animated, fun and visual. Such digital resources are available not only on YouTube but on TV and other websites. If the program implementation is easy and feasible to follow, teachers will not face challenges in incorporating technology to show those programs in class (Schryer et al. 2015).

5.4.4. Teacher Education

Teachers should play a key role in material selection, adaptation and implementation in giving effective English decoding instruction to Korean ELLs. The Ministry of Education in Korea is cited to hold beliefs that 'the quality of

education cannot exceed the quality of teachers' (Jo 2008: 376). However, securing qualified teachers is a major issue in Korea both in terms of how to train LETs (Min and Park 2013; Butler 2015a; Woo 2016) and how best to utilize NESTs (Jin and Cortazzi 2019; Yim and Hwang 2019). The lack of English instructional professionalism and pedagogical knowledge has made it difficult for the teachers to not only undertake relevant tasks regarding materials but also provide the students with substantial meaningful feedback at the right time (Johnstone 2019). So far, English teacher education in Korea has been theory-based or for the enhancement of the teachers' English proficiency (Hayes 2008; Kim and Ahn 2011; Min and Park 2013; Lee 2019). Now there is a need for more targeted training regardless of LETs or NESTs (Garton 2014).

In terms of the kinds of qualifications and pedagogical knowledge necessary for the teachers, this research reiterates its claim that Korean learners' perspectives should be taken into account in teacher recruitment and training, in order to ensure that the challenges of the particular learners when learning to read in the EFL context are efficiently, effectively, and sympathetically addressed. In this light, some specific comments and recommendations for teacher education are offered below:

- 1) English PA activities are very important for early reading, though not necessarily involving print;
- 2) There are varying levels of difficulty in the letter-sound relationships, and the process should not necessarily be alphabetical from A to Z;
- 3) Intelligible pronunciation is very important, although it does not need to be native-like;
- 4) Unfamiliar word reading should accompany familiar word reading;
- 5) Phonics has limitations. A phonics program alone is insufficient as a way into reading, since it cannot cover everything due to the frequency of irregularly spelled words;

- 6) It is good to select sight words from story texts and teach them within contexts; and
- 7) NESTs need to understand the learners' linguistic backgrounds, particularly regarding their Korean literacy acquisition.

Regarding early English reading instruction, the role of LETs is more important than NESTs, since teachers must understand how their learners have become literate in their L1 (Copland and Yonetsugi 2016; Shin and Crandall 2019). Close communication among LETs and NESTs is crucial in that NESTs can also identify areas of difficulty and address them effectively when the challenges come from L1 interference.

This research also highlights the importance of special English teachers' awareness of discipline regarding hurtful student-to-student interactions and timely intervention, whereby the importance of respect and peer collaboration should be promoted through task implementation and classroom management (Mishna and Alaggia 2005; Garton 2014; Sun 2016; Pinter 2017). Further, this research suggests that teachers should help the students evaluate these incidents in a constructive way. The teacher's role is important in persuading the vulnerable students to remind themselves that they are fully capable of learning a new language with their own strengths (Pinter 2017). Through the development of self-motivation, they can use the negative experiences as a catalyst to improve themselves, turning rocks into shining diamonds (Ushioda 2012; Pinter 2017; Zulkefly and Razali 2019).

5.4.5. Parental Support

This research emphasizes the connection between school and home (McBride-Chang 2016; Pinter 2017), which is particularly significant in the Korean TEYL context with the growth of parental accountability in educational practices (Lee 2006; Paik 2008; Hu and McKay 2012; Kim 2017; Kim and Bang 2017). The school-family partnership can be strengthened through close communication between teachers and parents to support each other in enhancing children's FL reading acquisition. Given the lack of knowledge and hands-on experience of many parents, this research suggests that a series of parent workshops should

be organized on a small scale and the need for active parental involvement should be strongly promoted. During the workshops, parents would familiarize themselves with the terms and key concepts related to English decoding and understand the general learning process. Also, they would be encouraged to ask questions and discuss issues in a comfortable environment.

In order to provide more substantial support for parents, specific pedagogical knowledge, tips and strategies for parental homework involvement should be offered not only in the form of generic guidelines but also on a case-by-case basis (Ariës and Cabus 2015). This opportunity can also serve as a nurturing ground for educators to promote the importance of supportive and adaptive types of parental involvement rather than controlling or nonchalant attitudes. From the parents' perspectives, they can learn about their children's English reading progress and how to ask relevant questions about this progress to the English teachers. Furthermore, they can become well equipped to evaluate the educational qualities of English programs. In order for this to happen, teacher-parent communication should be easy and frequent, employing such channels as communal online space or mobile chat.

This research also highlights parental satisfaction with the teachers' prompt feedback to their children's videotaped oral reading and custom-tailored learning materials such as YouTube videos. In the choice of online materials, it is important that teachers carefully select the most appropriate resources for the students, rather than simply telling their parents to find the materials themselves, since these vary greatly in length, audio-visual quality, pedagogical appropriateness, acquisition level, and the variety of English (Blake 2008; Ghasemi et al. 2011). It is recommended that language teachers provide access to online materials that are well suited and relevant to the particular learner's needs. As suggested by Fogg, online information will be 'more persuasive if it is tailored to the individual needs, interests, personality, usage context, or other factors relevant to the individual' (2003: 38).

5.4.6. National English Education Policy

Early English reading development in public primary school in Korea is generally insufficient and ineffective. While the introduction of written language instruction depends on many factors, it does not seem fair that Korean learners are deprived of chances to develop reading skills. Many young children are curious about reading in a new language when they start learning it (Pinter 2017) and are cognitively capable of developing reading and writing skills in the foreign language (Cummins 1999; Proctor et al. 2006; Shin and Crandall 2019). The findings of this study show that English reading instruction can be well received by Korean ELLs as young as second graders, who can improve rapidly thanks to their cognitive-linguistic backgrounds. Further, once young Korean language learners become literate in English and feel a sense of accomplishment in accurate word reading, they will voluntarily explore and expand their English learning skills.

In view of the complex and lengthy process of English reading development, this research proposes that written language instruction in English should begin early in primary public education. To better implement the English reading instruction, the centralized vocabulary control should be alleviated, while spoken language instruction should incorporate English PA as a prerequisite to early English reading development. Also, the top-down educational policy of TETE should be modified in a way that the role of L1 should be acknowledged as a scaffolding tool in the EFL reading instruction. As indicated by this research, L1 can be used by the teacher as a pedagogical strategy to enhance the young students' understanding of new concepts and words (Copland and Ni 2019; Johnstone 2019; Shin and Crandall 2019).

In reality, many Korean parents are not satisfied with the delay in English reading instruction in public English education and rely heavily on the private sectors, which put strong emphasis on early English literacy development. This phenomenon has increasingly placed a burden on the family in terms of high expenditure and parental accountability in children's learning attitudes and achievement. While the Korean government disapproves of the dominance of private English practices in the field of early childhood English education,

parents are not likely to stop sending their children to private institutes, since the children would suffer a dramatic transition from elementary to secondary school without extra instruction. This research therefore suggests that the NC, textbook design and teacher training programs in formal English education should be comprehensively reviewed and revised so that Korean learners can enjoy learning to read in English in a systematic and incremental fashion over a sufficient period of time, without having to rely on private instruction.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to describe the significance of the findings of this research in relation to the previous literature in terms of the two research questions. I have also referred to the results of the investigation and made suggestions for instruction in Korea. I now pass to the final chapter, Conclusion, in which I summarize the research and its possible contribution, and take account of issues, dilemmas and limitations of the study as a whole. In addition, I attempt to identify areas for future research.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

In this final chapter, I summarize the contents of preceding chapters of the thesis, followed by a discussion of possible contributions of the study to primary English education in Korea, other similar EYL contexts, and child-centered research. I then examine the issues, dilemmas and limitations that have arisen during the study, and offer recommendations for further research, before providing some concluding remarks.

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

- 6.2. Summary of the Thesis
- 6.3. Contributions of the Study
- 6.4. Reflection on Issues, Dilemmas and Limitations
- 6.5. Suggestions for Further Research
- 6.6. Concluding Remarks

6.2. Summary of the Thesis

Chapter 1 provided a theoretical and contextual backdrop for this research, delineating a significant gap in EYL research and the reasons for attempting to address that gap, as outlined in the two research questions. While an increasing number of young Korean children learn to read in English at an early age, scant research attention has been paid to the associated learning progress and challenges. Based on my experience in this field, I considered this topic worthy of close investigation, since young Korean ELLs encounter double hardship when acquiring English reading skills: one is the insufficient and ineffective instruction in this area received in public primary school, and the other is the huge pressure arising from the 'English frenzy' (Seth 2002; Park 2009) phenomenon in Korean society. This research therefore aimed to identify and document the progress and challenges experienced by a representative group of primary-school-aged Korean young children when taking English decoding instruction, and to make recommendations concerning ways of alleviating their

concerns and facilitating effective uptake of the relevant skills and learning content.

Chapter 2 presented a comprehensive review of previous studies and empirical findings relevant to the field of reading in FL learning and English decoding acquisition. English is an alphabetic language but the associations between letters and sounds are more opaque than in other languages. Given the existence of a universal framework for language learning, it is generally considered beneficial to examine L1 English decoding processes before shifting attention to those of Korean ELLs. Having duly examined such L1 processes, this chapter addressed various cognitive-linguistic factors affecting Korean ELLs. These included learners' age, schooling, limited oral language competency, positive cross-language transfer, and L1 interference. The latter factor proved significant, since Korean, being an alpha-syllabic language, has a highly consistent letter-sound correspondence, and areas of interlanguage transfer have been identified in previous studies. Other contextual factors such as parents, siblings, teachers and peers were also examined, since young children are strongly influenced by their immediate environments. Finally, in view of the fact that children were the primary participants of this study, this chapter described and discussed the characteristics of child-focused research, including the benefits and limitations, both for the children and the teacher-researcher.

Chapter 3 described the methodological approach of this study, along with a rationale for the content analysis of a research journal for data analysis purposes, serving to triangulate the otherwise qualitative data. Given the qualitative nature of the study and the absence of appropriate learning materials, I took the multiple roles of researcher, teacher and materials developer, immediately recognizing the need to embed the participant children in the actual learning context, and therefore employing an exploratory intervention approach over the four months from January to April 2017. The 14 participants were in Grades 2 to 4 at the start of the research, and attended the same primary school in Seoul. It was found that contextualization empowered the young participants to identify content-specific issues more effectively by carrying out tasks, so that the research took on a task-based format in terms of classwork, homework, and tests. A wide array of instruments (as described in

this chapter) were used to collect data to enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the research. Care was also taken to ensure that these research instruments were tailored to suit the child respondents. Data were also collected from the parents, since the home environment is an important contextual factor affecting children's FL learning.

Chapter 4 analyzed data from both the numeric and qualitative sources. Undertaking a hybrid process of deductive and inductive approach for coding, this research referred to priori themes that were chosen from the analysis of the numeric data. Four themes emerged: strong basic English PA, discrepancy between regular and unknown word reading, significant improvement in the weaker English readers' deciphering skills, and cross-linguistic transfer for complex English PA.

Analysis of the data collected from qualitative sources shows that the participants who had experienced schooling and had already mastered L1 literacy were already well-equipped with phonemic sensitivity and the ability to identify spelling-sound rules through self-discovery and trial and error. However, they faced challenges in other areas, such as complex English PA, L1 sound articulation interference, the acquisition of letter sounds whose names have little iconicity, and the reading of irregularly spelled words. In the home environment, the children's motivation was affected by certain parenting styles and the gap between the early English reading experiences of the parents and their children. On the other hand, sibling tutoring by the older participants benefited not only the learners themselves, but also their younger siblings and parents. In terms of homework, the use of short YouTube videos was welcomed by both the children and their parents, especially when these videos were selected by the teacher/researcher to respond to the specific needs of individual children. In the classroom, the negative impact of hurtful peer pressure on a vulnerable learner's subsequent English learning was alleviated by the teacher's timely intervention and expression of disapproval regarding disrespectful behavior among peers.

Open-ended interviews with parents and children also provided an important source of qualitative data and helped to identify and confirm individual reading

progress as well as the challenges being faced and the methods of addressing these challenges that were being employed. Interviews before and after the research period provided important data relevant to the research questions, but also helped in identifying and addressing unexpected problems as they arose, as well as the 'aha' moments of success and recognition. Comments from the interviews therefore enabled me to modify course content and teaching methodology on an ongoing basis, suiting these to the perceived and expressed needs of the participants and their parents. For this reason, it is recommended that such interviews be considered in course design, as a means of ongoing needs analysis involving the participants and their parents.

Chapter 5 discussed the significance of the research findings in relation to previous studies and answered the two research questions by highlighting aspects that the young Korean ELLs found easy or challenging during the English decoding acquisition process in terms of the cognitive-linguistic and socio-contextual foundations. It also identified research areas worthy of further investigation, such as the young learner's rejection of unfamiliar and novel teaching methods and the special English teachers' strategies in response to hurtful peer pressure and the learners' perceptions.

The identification of the Korean ELL's progress and challenges from their own perspectives has led to suggestions for more effective early English reading instruction in Korea. In addition to considerations of syllabus design, teaching materials and practice, teacher qualification, school-family connection and policy-making, it was found that the most important factor in decoding acquisition teaching is to identify what the learners already know and what they are likely to struggle with, so that a program of meaningful and effective instruction can be devised.

Taking a broader view and looking at the heated discussion on when and how to introduce English reading instruction in public primary school, this discussion chapter advises against disregarding the reality of private-institution English learning practices and their effect on students, teachers, and policy makers in public education. It is instead proposed that the introduction of effective English reading instruction at the primary school level, along with

improved teacher training programs, will, in addition to making English reading more effective in public education, have a symbiotic effect on the curricula of private institutions and lessen the current test-driven emphasis.

6.3. Contributions of the Study

The pedagogical and instructional contributions of this research to early English reading education in Korea have been discussed in Chapter 5, Discussion. Other possible contributions are presented below in terms of the issue of underachievement of English readers in Korea, the relevance for other EYL contexts with similar cultures, and child-centered research methodology.

6.3.1. English Underachievers

One of the problems that have emerged in recent years in Korea is that there has been an increase in the underachievement of English readers. In Korea, the term 'English underachievers' refers to 'students who gain less than 60 percent on the National English Achievement Test' (Jeong and Kim 2012: 367). This underachievement is characterized by a marked discrepancy between expected and actual performance. According to the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (2011), the rate of English underachievement has risen sharply in the move from elementary to secondary school. It is imperative, therefore, to provide systematic scholastic assistance in primary school.

In this regard, this study can contribute to more effective program design and implementation to meet the specific needs of these particular learners in three ways. First, the syllabus and materials from this intervention can be used to design, pilot and implement a well-defined comprehensive ELL decoding skills development program. The English reading instruction approach in this research was well received by Korean ELLs as young as second graders, who improved rapidly thanks to their cognitive-linguistic backgrounds. While the proficiency level of the English underachievers may correspond to that of younger students in lower grades, their cognitive and intellectual content is much higher than their younger counterparts through child development and schooling.

Another contribution of this study is its relatively short duration of only nine lessons. Despite this short time, considerable enhancement of the weak English readers' deciphering skills and learning motivation occurred. For the underachieving and less motivated students, such immediate and recognizable improvement in their reading abilities motivates them not to give up but to carry on with learning, so that they can enjoy a sense of accomplishment and stronger motivation. One-on-one talks with the teacher provide the students with an opportunity to share their learning difficulties, and these discussions lead to the teacher's individualized feedback. This affective aspect is crucially important in addressing academic underachievement, since, due to academic failure, underachievers are likely to lose confidence and interest in further learning (Brown 2006).

The third contribution is the establishment of a school-family connection and the provision of family support in cultivating a supportive, nurturing home atmosphere to foster the children's learning motivation. Through close communication between teachers and parents, the latter can become actively involved in their children's learning by acquiring relevant pedagogical knowledge and promoting supportive behavior. Even if this degree of active involvement is not easy to realize for certain families, it can be beneficial if the parents understand the general process of English reading development and emotionally support their children with hard work and effort.

6.3.2. Other TEYL Contexts

This study has filled a number of gaps in previous research on what the Korean learners find easy and challenging when they take English decoding instruction in the EFL context. Since this study holds specific ramifications for Korea and the research on this topic is relatively new, I cannot claim that the findings are generalizable to all TEYL contexts in the world. Nevertheless, the research has the potential to have relevance for wider contexts in two ways. One of these is that the learners' backgrounds and perspectives should be explored and considered to address the identification of effective educational provisions and practices that best support their English decoding skills development. The other is the comprehensive approach to the design and implementation of an

early English reading program that incorporates a mixture of English decoding elements, rather than one or two components.

It is hoped that some of the research findings can be transferrable to other East Asian nations such as China, Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan. Although a large diversity exists within this region, these countries have a lot in common regarding history, culture, and the approach to education. For example, the regional entity of East Asia has been shaped by the proliferation and adaptation of Confucian culture (Williams 2017). In a number of East Asian countries, the hegemonic status of English is evident and English teachers' professionalism is often judged by Western foreign language teaching methodologies (Wang and Lin 2013; Williams 2017). It is therefore proposed that this study can act as a model for researchers and teachers in these similar contexts, who can follow my method and achieve their own results.

6.3.3. Child-Centered Methods

As child-centered research, this study took much care to ensure that the children's consent should be informed before they decided to participate in the research. In an attempt to seek fully informed consent by the children, I gave sample lessons and created a child-friendly leaflet, while organizing parental workshops to help the parents to explain at home if the children had further questions. While informed consent was obtained from the children, multiple opportunities were given to the children throughout the entire period of the research for them to reconsider and reassess their initial choices. All these considerations, procedures and the final products from this research can be applied to the design of other child-centered research. Not only that, my reflections and suggestions for more effective ways to ensure children's informed consent in Section 3.6.3. (Informed Consent from Children, p. 97) will have practical implications for other child researchers.

It is also worthwhile to note that the exploratory intervention format of this research was intended to embed the children in the actual learning context so that they could directly experience the issue or problem under study (Creswell and Creswell 2018). When young children's backgrounds, experiences and

perceptions are explored and investigated, questionnaires and interviews can be adapted to make them more child-friendly in the way that participatory activities are included and interviews are undertaken in friendship groups. However, if the topics are difficult for the young children to understand, such as the ones in this study, data collection mainly based on their recall and retrospection may not be sufficient or even valid. However, if a meaningful context is created, the participants can identify content-specific issues more effectively by carrying out tasks. This research therefore proposes that contextualization is crucially important for the young children as a child-friendly communication strategy, since they perform better when given a meaningful context (Zandian 2015; Pinter 2017).

6.4. Reflection on Issues, Dilemmas and Limitations

Issues, dilemmas and limitations of the study as a whole are explained below. These research challenges and limitations are mostly in contextual and procedural areas. I intend to describe them here in a manner that clarifies links with the identification of areas of further research in the next section.

6.4.1. Researcher-Participant Relationships

Ideally, I would have preferred to conduct this research in public schools or private language institutes. However, this was not possible due to my failure to gain access to any such sites. The setting of this research is unique in that prior relationships existed between researcher and participants, since subject recruiting relied on my close network of friends (mothers) that I had personally developed as the mother of a young daughter myself. Consequently, all the child participants were the sons and daughters of my friends or neighbors, and some children were my daughter's friends. From the children's perspectives, I was perceived as either their mother's friend or their friend's (my daughter's) mother as well as a researcher and teacher.

These unique researcher-participant relationships had an impact on the research in terms of rapport building, interactions, data generation and interpretation. On a positive side, I could capitalize on various advantages, which would not be readily available to researchers who have no such

relationships with the participants. My role as a friend and neighbor to the parents allowed me to easily enter into their world without strong restrictions. My home visits for individual interviews or tests and various informal talks on the street, therefore, enabled me to closely examine the lived experiences of the children's FL learning.

The children were not completely unfamiliar with my presence and some children even seemed to have fun with our interesting diverse roles, as if we were doing role-plays. Communication with the parents was fairly easy and convenient. I used a mobile app, SNS and online platforms that were popular among Korean mothers, and I used language and style of speech and writing that ordinary Korean mothers would feel comfortable with. The parents were also very generous about my timing in certain tasks and consistently supportive of my research, since they understood me as a busy mother, who was doing PhD research and giving free lessons to their children as well.

With regard to interview data in particular, its generation and interpretation was much richer than it might otherwise have been. Interview research data are not simply generated through the production of interviewees' accounts but co-constructed through the interactions of both parties (Block 2000; Baker 2004; Rapley 2004). In this research, there was already a history of shared experiences among us, which was used as a resource to co-construct the interview and to interpret what the responses really meant. I was in a better position to catch even simple words or phrases as cues for exploring and extending further relevant issues. Children were more likely to express themselves, since they knew that I knew about their school lives, basic family backgrounds and peer relations. Mothers were more likely to open their minds and share deep concerns in a more informal way, since they knew that I was also a mother like themselves, who lived in the same community and shared the same educational concerns.

However, this role-fused situation had the potential to challenge the research by creating methodological and ethical problems. Methodologically, my 'lifeworld' role could be stronger than the researcher role. This could prompt me as researcher and analyst to distort data analysis and findings due to personal

involvement, jeopardizing the researcher's need to maintain an objectified and uncontrived view. Indeed, it was difficult for me to maintain a distance if certain responses from either children or parents strongly resonated in me as a parent.

Ethically, in research into the personal lives of children, the issue of the participants' right to privacy and the need for autonomy was more pronounced when the parents were my friends. Throughout the entire period of the research, I tried to maintain my sensitivity to the children's autonomy and confidentiality as much as possible. When sensitive issues emerged during the child interviews, I listened sincerely and cautiously asked them if I could share their stories with their parents, which I carried out when needed with the utmost care. However, I have to admit that some of the information that the children asked to be kept confidential might have been unintentionally delivered to their parents during our informal chats. Indeed, it was very difficult for me to stick to the ethical guidelines regarding the children's privacy, when their parents could not fully understand my explanations and continued to question me.

The other ethical challenge revolved around the children's participation in and withdrawal from the research. Ideally, I would have preferred to have the subjects purposefully selected to suit the nature of the study. However, I was not able to turn down those families whose children's English decoding level was far beyond the intended level. As explained in Section 3.2.1 (Exploratory Intervention, p. 64), I was afraid that doing so could negatively affect our friendship. Similarly, when three children had to drop out of the research in the first three weeks, I was concerned whether the children and/or their parents would be hurt from this experience despite our mutual agreement and understanding. The decision to drop the students was difficult in each case, and involved issues regarding voluntary participation, classroom behavior, or peer relations. I spent a good deal of time paying individual visits to each family and had long talks with the parents. These follow-up actions were important in order to maintain our relationships regardless of the completion of the research.

6.4.2. Voluntary Participation

As mentioned above, one participant decided to withdraw from the research over the issue of voluntary participation. The boy in Grade 3 had consistently expressed strong refusal to participate to his mother and he did not check on the voluntary participation box on the consent form. However, his mother was very keen and wanted her son to try out the course. She highly appreciated this opportunity of free lessons with a well-qualified teacher. Individual talks followed and the boy accepted my suggestion to delay his final decision for three lessons. After three weeks, however, his reluctance was obvious, and his mother had to respect his opinion. This case provided a good example of what can actually happen in the research process when the child-centered researcher wishes to ensure voluntary participation.

The other case, however, was even more complex and challenging for me to deal with, since the child's participation was apparently voluntary, but his motivation for research participation was not directly related to the purpose of the study. When opportunities were offered repeatedly to ensure voluntary participation, he persistently expressed his firm intention to stay in the project to the end. However, it transpired that the child had been induced by his mother to be given sizable rewards on condition that he did not withdraw. Due to this extrinsic 'deal' with his mother, the child was determined to stay on despite his lack of interest in learning as an integral part of the research process.

His classroom behavior was not totally disruptive, but he remained indifferent and unmotivated. During data collection, his attitude towards the interviews was neither sincere nor truthful, and I once had to stop the interview because of his disrespectful remarks and behavior. In Section 4.5.7 (Video Homework, p. 163), I explained about the negativity that swept through one friendship interview, when a few learners strongly expressed discomfort, while the majority of the children remained silent. It was this boy who initiated complaints about every single question and disrupted a balanced discussion.

I held individual meetings with his mother to discuss this issue, when I cordially requested that her son's participation should be reconsidered. His mother

pleaded with me to allow her son to stay, since she did not want to lose me as a teacher and she was sure that her son would learn from my teaching. Our personal relationship made it impossible for me to turn her down. Ultimately, the child achieved his goal and received his rewards, whereas I struggled with his case throughout the entire research period. Regrettably, the data collected from this participant were scant in amount and do not figure in the responses to the research questions of this study. Rather, his case serves as an example of a reluctant learner motivated by extrinsic factors, consequently acting as a disruptive force in the classroom. Given that much of English education in Korea is test-driven and subject to forces such as the 'English frenzy', this could have been an opportunity to explore ways of modifying the extrinsically-motivated learners' attitude to learning. However, he remained intransigent to the end.

6.4.3. Contextual Factors

I had only one class with 14 students from 11 families, whom I personally knew from the same community. This particular small-scale context enabled me to pay special attention to individual children. Accordingly, I was able to make swift responses, with custom-tailored feedback to meet their specific needs. I was able to find time to talk with each child and parent and collect in-depth information about their English learning. Parents acknowledged that I was a well-qualified teacher, who had both theoretical knowledge and practical teaching experience, and they were extremely supportive.

In public schools, however, contexts are often very different in terms of the number of students that one English teacher has to care for and the diversity and intensity of teacher responsibilities in addition to teaching. Teacher qualifications may vary, and support from parents and the school for action research may not be as enthusiastic as I experienced in this research. When the school is located in an area where many parents cannot afford the time and energy to get involved in their children's English education, my suggestion for a home-school partnership may not be practical. It should be reiterated here that more comprehensive studies are required in this field in order to identify suitable solutions.

6.5. Suggestions for Further Research

Areas of further research are listed below. The following proposals, which are based on the findings, contributions, and issues, dilemmas and limitations of the study, are intended to make the research findings and outcomes available to teachers, parents and policy-makers, for the betterment of early English reading instruction in Korea.

- 1) In order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of Korean ELL's cognitive-linguistic backgrounds, I suggest the setting up of mixed-method studies with a large number of young children in different regions of Korea. Data collection should begin with the distribution of a child-friendly questionnaire. Semi-structured focus group interviews should follow in order to seek more in-depth data from the participants. The findings of these comprehensive studies would be used as important reference points for understanding young Korean FL learners in learning to read English.
- 2) The above research proposal would be especially meaningful for the increasing number of children from multicultural families in rural areas, whose mothers are 'married immigrant women'. In Korea, a surge of marriage migration of foreign brides from China and developing countries in Southeast Asia has become a big social issue (Lee and Park 2018). This phenomenon has educational ramifications, since many children from these family backgrounds have been shown to be delayed in literacy development in Korean due to their mothers' low proficiency in the Korean language (Woo et al. 2009). Little is known, however, regarding how these children develop English reading skills when their L1 acquisition has been delayed. It is therefore worthwhile to investigate the linguistic and contextual backgrounds of children in multicultural families in rural areas.
- 3) I further suggest the setting up of similar intervention studies with English underachievers being taught by Korean LETs and NESTs. Studies with a similar research focus would impact teacher education and explore the teachers' perspectives in terms of professional development and challenges.

- 4) Mixed-method studies could be designed to collect more comprehensive and in-depth data on the challenges that the Korean parents face when their children learn to read in English. In the present study, parental factors were considered as secondary compared to the focus that was placed on their children. In future research, the voices of not only mothers but also fathers would be listened to, since little is known about Korean fathers' involvement in their children's English language learning.
- 5) When this research was designed in 2016 and conducted in 2017, Korean public schools used English textbooks that adopted the 2009 NC revision, as explained in the Introduction. Since the spring term of 2018, however, new textbooks have been used adopting the 2015 revision. It is therefore worthwhile to compare the two most recent revisions in terms of early English reading instruction and explore the perspectives of English teachers regarding any substantial changes.
- 6) Considering the dilemmas regarding children's voluntary participation in the present research, I would encourage studies with the aim of exploring cultural values in the exercising of children's participation rights in Korea and the general beliefs about children's social and cultural autonomy. Furthermore, the perspectives of Korean child researchers regarding the prevalent norms of doing research with children in Korea and their perceptions about adopting child-centered methodologies in their own research would be worthy of investigation.

6.6. Concluding Remarks

While travelling on this journey of PhD research and thesis writing over the past four years, I have been approached by three different groups of people for help and advice. They learned of me by word of mouth and reached me by email or SNS. They were in desperation and 'clutching at a straw'.

First, I was approached by a group of primary LETs in a rural area. They had been struggling with an increasing number of English underachievers, particularly children from multicultural families. They asked for a series of workshops with a specific focus on these particular students in terms of early

English literacy program development and implementation and teacher education. I was tremendously impressed with the teachers' eagerness to address the problems in a proactive manner, and I replied positively about possible ways to find a collaborative solution.

Second, I was approached by a group of Korean parents, whose children had learned English for more than three years but still could not read English accurately. The parents seemed shocked by their children's low performance and frustrated with not having been able to identify what had gone so wrong for such a long time. I was worried not only about the parents but also their children, who must have been left hopeless and helpless. Some of the children stopped their private English lessons for a time since they were too demotivated, while the others continued despite their lack of comprehension and motivation. These children were taking intensive instruction on English vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension and even writing, although they were still struggling with English decoding. I responded with prospective individual meetings to address the problem, along with a word of caution that the parents should not hope for an immediate 'panacea'.

Third, I was approached by a group of local English publishers to design 'innovative' phonics materials and an accompanying graded readers series. I was more cautious this time, since I believe that early English reading instruction should move 'beyond' phonics. At the same time, I did not agree with the one-size-fits-all philosophy that the publishers were promoting and the fancy textbook packs that they believed could attract English teachers. Their inquiries, therefore, have not been replied to yet.

This series of contacts and inquiries signify that the end of the PhD journey will mark the beginning of many other journeys as a scholar, researcher and practitioner in the field of TEYL. At the same time, as a mother of a returnee child, I may have to confront the social and educational challenges faced by returnees, such as adaptation and the attrition of English fluency. Just as I have overcome various challenges during this journey and gained a better understanding and insight into my career and life, I will continue with the strong belief in hard work, resilience and the beauty of collaboration with

children, parents, educators, researchers, publishers, and policy-makers in applied linguistics and ELT world.

Finally, this PhD has been a formative learning process for me, in that it has enabled me to access related research, to learn more about the child-centered approach, to interact with parents and children regarding the learning process and current educational experiences in Korea, and to develop my teaching and materials development skills. I believe that this research is meaningful in the context of this part of Asia, and I intend to build upon it in order to make a positive contribution to education in this part of the world

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Storybooks

Books by Dr. Seuss (Random House Books for Young Readers):

- *Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?*
- *Hop on Pop*

Read It Yourself Series (Ladybird)

- *Little Red Hen*
- *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*
- *The Enormous Turnip*

Appendices

Appendix 1. IPA Symbols (captured from www.antimoon.com)

vowels		consonants	
IPA	examples	listen	
ʌ	C <u>U</u> P, L <u>U</u> CK	AM	
ɑ:	<u>A</u> RM, F <u>A</u> THER	AM BR	
æ	C <u>A</u> T, B <u>L</u> ACK	AM	
e	M <u>E</u> T, B <u>E</u> D	AM	1
ə	<u>A</u> WAY, C <u>I</u> N <u>E</u> M <u>A</u>	AM	2
ɜ:ʳ	T <u>U</u> RN, L <u>E</u> ARN	AM BR	2
ɪ	H <u>I</u> T, S <u>I</u> T <u>T</u> ING	AM	
i:	S <u>E</u> E, H <u>E</u> AT	AM	
ɒ	H <u>O</u> T, R <u>O</u> CK	AM BR	3
ɔ:	C <u>A</u> LL, F <u>O</u> UR	AM BR	4 5
ʊ	P <u>U</u> T, C <u>O</u> ULD	AM	
u:	B <u>L</u> UE, F <u>O</u> OD	AM	
aɪ	F <u>I</u> VE, <u>E</u> Y <u>E</u>	AM	
aʊ	N <u>O</u> W, <u>O</u> U <u>T</u>	AM	
eɪ	S <u>A</u> Y, <u>E</u> I <u>G</u> H <u>T</u>	AM	
oʊ	G <u>O</u> , H <u>O</u> ME	AM	6
ɔɪ	B <u>O</u> Y, J <u>O</u> IN	AM	
eəʳ	W <u>H</u> ERE, <u>A</u> IR	AM BR	1 7
ɪəʳ	N <u>E</u> AR, H <u>E</u> RE	AM BR	7
ʊəʳ	P <u>U</u> RE, T <u>O</u> UR <u>I</u> ST	AM BR	7
b	<u>B</u> AD, L <u>A</u> B	AM	
d	<u>D</u> ID, L <u>A</u> DY	AM	
f	<u>F</u> IND, <u>I</u> F	AM	
g	<u>G</u> IVE, F <u>L</u> AG	AM	
h	<u>H</u> OW, <u>H</u> ELLO	AM	
j	<u>Y</u> ES, <u>Y</u> ELLOW	AM	
k	C <u>A</u> T, B <u>A</u> CK	AM	
l	<u>L</u> EG, <u>L</u> IT <u>L</u> E	AM	
m	<u>M</u> AN, L <u>E</u> M <u>O</u> N	AM	
n	<u>N</u> O, T <u>E</u> N	AM	
ŋ	S <u>I</u> NG, F <u>I</u> NG <u>E</u> R	AM	
p	<u>P</u> ET, M <u>A</u> P	AM	
r	<u>R</u> ED, T <u>R</u> Y	AM	8
s	<u>S</u> UN, M <u>I</u> SS	AM	
ʃ	<u>S</u> HE, C <u>R</u> A <u>S</u> H	AM	
t	<u>T</u> EA, G <u>E</u> T <u>T</u> ING	AM	9
tʃ	<u>C</u> HECK, <u>C</u> HUR <u>CH</u>	AM	
θ	<u>T</u> HINK, B <u>O</u> TH	AM	
ð	<u>T</u> HIS, M <u>O</u> T <u>H</u> ER	AM	
v	<u>V</u> OICE, F <u>I</u> VE	AM	
w	<u>W</u> ET, <u>W</u> IND <u>O</u> W	AM	
z	<u>Z</u> OO, L <u>A</u> ZY	AM	
ʒ	P <u>L</u> EAS <u>U</u> RE, V <u>I</u> S <u>I</u> ON	AM	
dʒ	<u>J</u> UST, L <u>A</u> RGE	AM	

Appendix 2. Consonant Correspondence between Korean and English (Shin et al. 2013: 220)

		English consonants	Korean consonants	Examples
Stop	Voiceless	p t k	p ^h t ^h k ^h	paint: 페인트 [p ^h ɛint ^h u]
	Voiced	b d g	p/p* t/t* k/k*	ballad: 발라드 [palatu]; banana: 바나나 [p*anana]
Fricative	Voiceless	f	p ^h	foul: 파울 [p ^h aul]
		θ	s/s*/t ^h	thrill: 스릴 [sulil]; health: 헬스 [hɛls*u]; marathon: 마라톤 [malat ^h on]
		s	s/s*	sports: 스포츠 [sup ^h otɕ ^h u];
	Voiced	ʃ	s/s*+j	mask: 마스크 [mas*tuk ^h u] shower: 샤워 [sjawΛ]
		h	h	hall: 홀 [hol]
		v	p	virus: 바이러스 [pailas*u]
		ð	t	rhythm: 리듬 [litum]
Affricate	Voiceless	z	tɕ	zipper: 지퍼 [tɕip ^h Λ]
		ʒ	tɕ	massage: 마사지 [mas*atɕi]
Nasal	Voiced	tʃ	tɕ ^h	cheese: 치즈 [tɕ ^h itɕu]
		ʒ	tɕ	jelly: 젤리 [tɕɛlli]
Nasal		m n ŋ	m n ŋ	mouse: 마우스 [maus*u]
Approximant		r	l	radio: 라디오 [latio]
Lateral approximant		l	l	league: 리그 [liku]
Glide		j w	j w	yacht: 요트 [jot ^h u] quiz: 퀴즈 [k ^h witɕu]

Appendix 3. Vowel Correspondence between Korean and English (Shin et al. 2013: 225)

English vowels	English words	Corresponding Korean vowel	Loanword examples
ɪ	hit [hit]	i	히트 [hit ^h u]
e	dress [dres]	ɛ	드레스 [tuɾes [*] u]
æ	manner [mænə]	ɛ	매너 [menɾ]
ɒ	documentary [dɒkjumentəri]	ɑ	다큐멘터리 [tak ^h jument ^h ɾi]
ʌ	muffler [mʌflə]	ʌ	머플러 [mɾp ^h uɾɾɾ]
ʊ	cushion [kʊʃn]	u	쿠션 [k ^h us [*] jɾɾ]
i:	league [li:g]	i	리그 [liku]
u:	boomerang [bu:məɾæŋ]	u	부메랑 [pumɛɾɾŋ]
ɑ:	card [kɑ:d]	ɑ	카드 [k ^h atɾu]
ɔ:	fork [fɔ:k]	o	포크 [p ^h ok ^h u]
ɜ:	burner [bɜ:nə]	ʌ	버너 [pɾɾɾɾ]
eɪ	date [deɪt]	ɛi	데이트 [teɪt ^h u]
aɪ	guide [gaɪd]	ai	가이드 [kaitu]
ɔɪ	boiler [bɔɪlə]	oi	보일러 [poɪɾɾ]
əʊ	boat [bəʊt]	o	보트 [pɔt ^h u]
aʊ	out [aʊt]	au	아웃 [aut]
ɪə	earphone [ɪəfəʊn]	iʌ	이어폰 [iɾp ^h ɔn]
eə	hardware [hɑ:dweə]	ɛʌ	하드웨어 [hatuweɾɾ]
ʊə	tour [tuə]	uʌ	투어 [t ^h uʌ]

Appendix 4. Initial Child Interview Prompt Sheets (Korean and English)

• 이름 _____ 남 여
 • 생일 _____ 년 _____ 월 _____ 일
 • 학년 2 3 4 5

1. Aa 부터 Zz 까지 알파벳 소리를 얼마나 알고 있나요?
 전부 다 알아요 거의 다 알아요 반 정도 알아요
 조금 알아요 하나도 몰라요 기타 _____

2. 아래 알파벳 자음이 있어요. 소리를 확실히 아는 자음에는 동그라미를 하고(O), 헷갈리거나 잘 모르는 자음에는 세모를 하세요(Δ).

B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N
P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	

3. 아래 알파벳 모음이 있어요. 소리를 확실히 아는 모음에는 동그라미를 하고(O), 헷갈리거나 잘 모르는 모음에는 세모를 하세요(Δ).

Aa	Ee	Ii	Oo	Uu
----	----	----	----	----

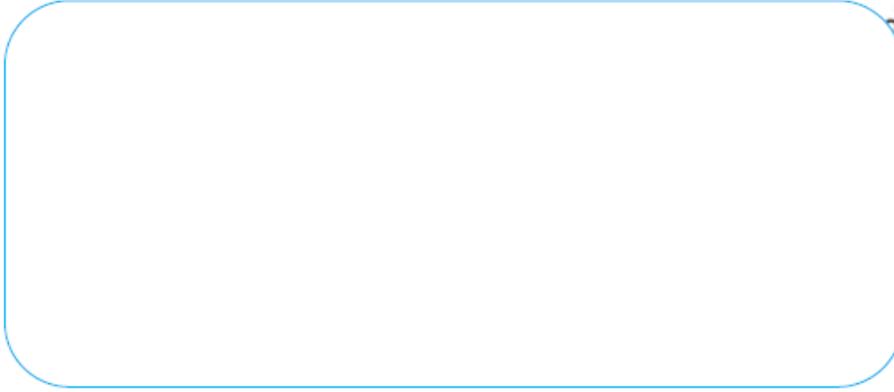
4. 각 영어단어를 읽어 보세요. 중간에 있는 모음소리를 소문자로 쓰세요.

					
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

5. 각 영어단어를 읽어보세요. 몇 개의 소리가 있는지 숫자로 쓰세요.

					
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

6. 학교(학원)에서 영어 공부하는 자신을 그려보세요. 누구와 무엇을 하고 있어요? 기분이 어때요?



7. 집에서 영어 공부하는 자신을 그려보세요. 누구와 무엇을 하고 있어요? 기분이 어때요?



8. 프로젝트에서 쓸 자신의 가짜 이름(가명)을 지어주세요. _____

9. 같은 그룹에서 공부하고 싶은 친구 이름을 쓰세요.

10. 중요한 수업규칙을 정하려고 해요. 세 가지 규칙을 긍정문으로 제안해 주세요.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

- Name _____ girl boy
- Birthday _____ / _____ / _____ (day / month / year)
- Grade 2 3 4 5

1. Do you know the alphabet sounds?

- all almost all about half
 a few none other _____

2. Look at the consonant sounds. If you can make correct sounds with confidence, draw a circle (O).
If the sounds are confusing to you, draw a triangle (Δ).

B C D F G H J K L M N
P Q R S T V W X Y Z

3. Look at the vowel sounds. If you can make correct sounds with confidence, draw a circle (O).
If the sounds are confusing to you, draw a triangle (Δ).

Aa Ee Ii Oo Uu

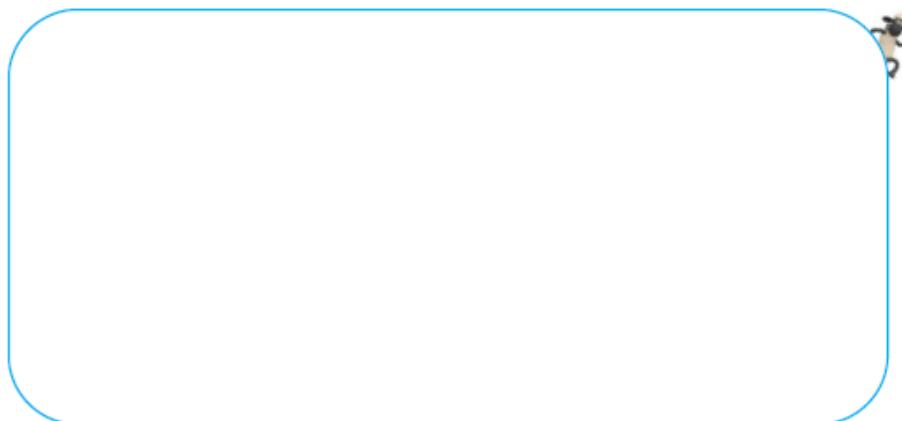
4. What is the vowel sound for each word?



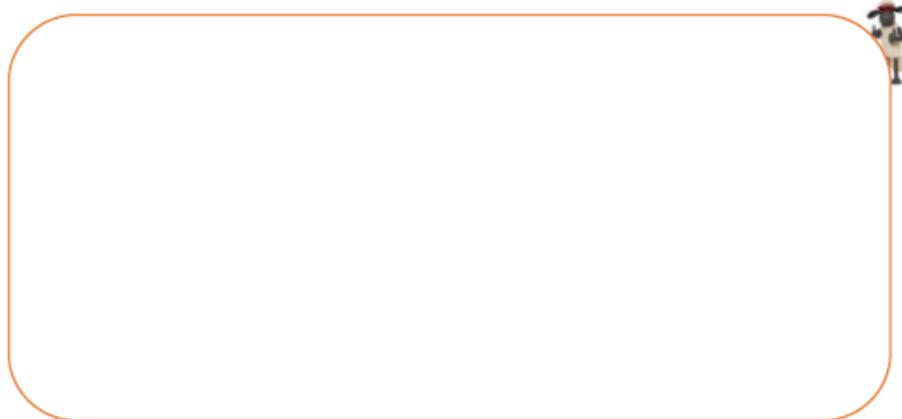
5. How many sounds are there in each word?



6. Draw yourself learning English in school. What are you doing? Who are you with? How do you feel?



7. Draw yourself learning English at home. What are you doing? Who are you with? How do you feel?



8. Write a new name for yourself. _____

9. Who do you want to have in your group? _____

10. Write three *DO* class rules.

(1)

(2)

(3)

Appendix 5. Final Child Interview Prompt Sheets (Korean and English)

• 이름 _____

• 학년 2 3 4 5

1. 아래 자음 중에서 정확한 소리를 내기가 어려운 자음에 동그라미 하세요.

b c d f g h j k l m n
 p q r s t v w x y z
 wh th(θ) th(ð) ch sh ng ph

2. 아래 모음 중에서 정확한 소리를 내기가 어려운 모음에 동그라미 하세요.

a e i o u ee
 a_e ea ou ay ow oo

3. 선생님이 말하는 단어를 잘 듣고 소리가 몇 개인지 숫자를 쓰세요.

(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)

4. 선생님이 말하는 단어를 잘 듣고 모음을 쓰세요 (a, e, i, ea, o, u).

(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)

(g) (h) (i) (j) (k) (l)

• Name _____

• Grade 2 3 4 5

1. (Consonants) Circle any sounds that are still difficult or confusing to make.

b c d f g h j k l m n
p q r s t v w x y z
wh th (θ) th (ð) ch sh ng ph

2. (Vowels) Circle any sounds that are still difficult or confusing to make.

a e i o u ee
a_e ea ou ay ow oo

3. Listen to words. Count the number of sounds in each word and write the number.

(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)

4. Listen to the words. Write the middle vowel sound (a, e, i, ea, o, u).

(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)

(g) (h) (i) (j) (k) (l)

Appendix 6. Parent Diary Template (Korean and English)

자녀이름 _____
 어머니이름 _____



WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

날짜	분류		구체적인 내용
1/7	성과	고충	한 단어 속에 있는 '파님'의 숫자를 세는 숙제가 있는데 나도 잘 모르겠다. 대충 '소리' 정도로 알고 있는데 숫자를 세라고 하니 나도 헛갈린다. (또는) 우리 애가 [th] 발음을 계속 어려워한다.
	성과	고충	우리 애가 [ai]는 파님이 하나라고 한다. 나도 하나 배웠다. (또는) 우리 애가 모음 [a]와 [e] 구별하는 걸 무척 어려워했었다. 그런데 이제 조금씩 그 소리가 어떻게 다른지 알 것 같다고 한다. 나는 여전히 헛갈리지만 아이가 알아가고 있으니 기쁘다.
	성과	고충	

Mother Diary

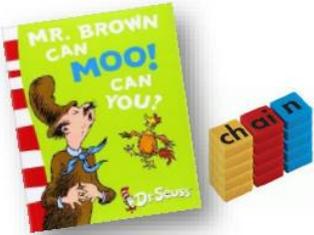
Child name _____

Mother name _____



Date	Category		Details
07/01	Pro- gress	Chall- enge	I myself don't know what to do with the counting of 'phonemes' in a word. What's phoneme? Is it a sound? Counting is hard, it's confusing to me too. (or) My child is still struggling in pronouncing [th] sound.
	Pro- gress	Chall- enge	My child told me that [ai] is one phoneme. It's something I learned as well. (or) My child had had difficulty in distinguishing [a] sound from [e] sound, but now she's beginning to tell their differences. It's still confusing to me but I'm happy that she's getting it.
	Pro- gress	Chall- enge	

Appendix 7. Child-Friendly Leaflets (Korean and English)



영어읽기와 친해지기

“선생님, 제 이야기
들어보실래요?”

프로젝트에 여러분을
초대합니다!





연구원/선생님: 박 희 양
영국 워릭대학교 어린이영어교육

1

무슨 프로젝트예요?



- ♣ 누가: 여러분과 선생님이.
- ♣ 언제: 2017년 1월~4월까지
매주 토요일 오전 10~12시에
- ♣ 어디서: 성민복지관 교실에서
- ♣ 무엇을: 영어단어읽기 수업을
- ♣ 어떻게: 재미있게 할 거예요.

2

제가 할 일은요?



- ♣ 선생님과 재미있게 수업하고
- ♣ 집에서 엄마랑 숙제도 하면서
- ♣ 선생님이랑 공부하면서 좋은 점, 힘든 점도 솔직하게 이야기하고
- ♣ 실력이 늘었나 퀴즈도 풀고
- ♣ 친구들이랑 선생님과 함께 영어읽기에 대해서 수다도 떨고
- ♣ 내가 잘 배우고 있나 곰곰이 생각도 해 볼 거예요.

프로젝트 하다가
중간에 힘들면
그만해도 돼요.



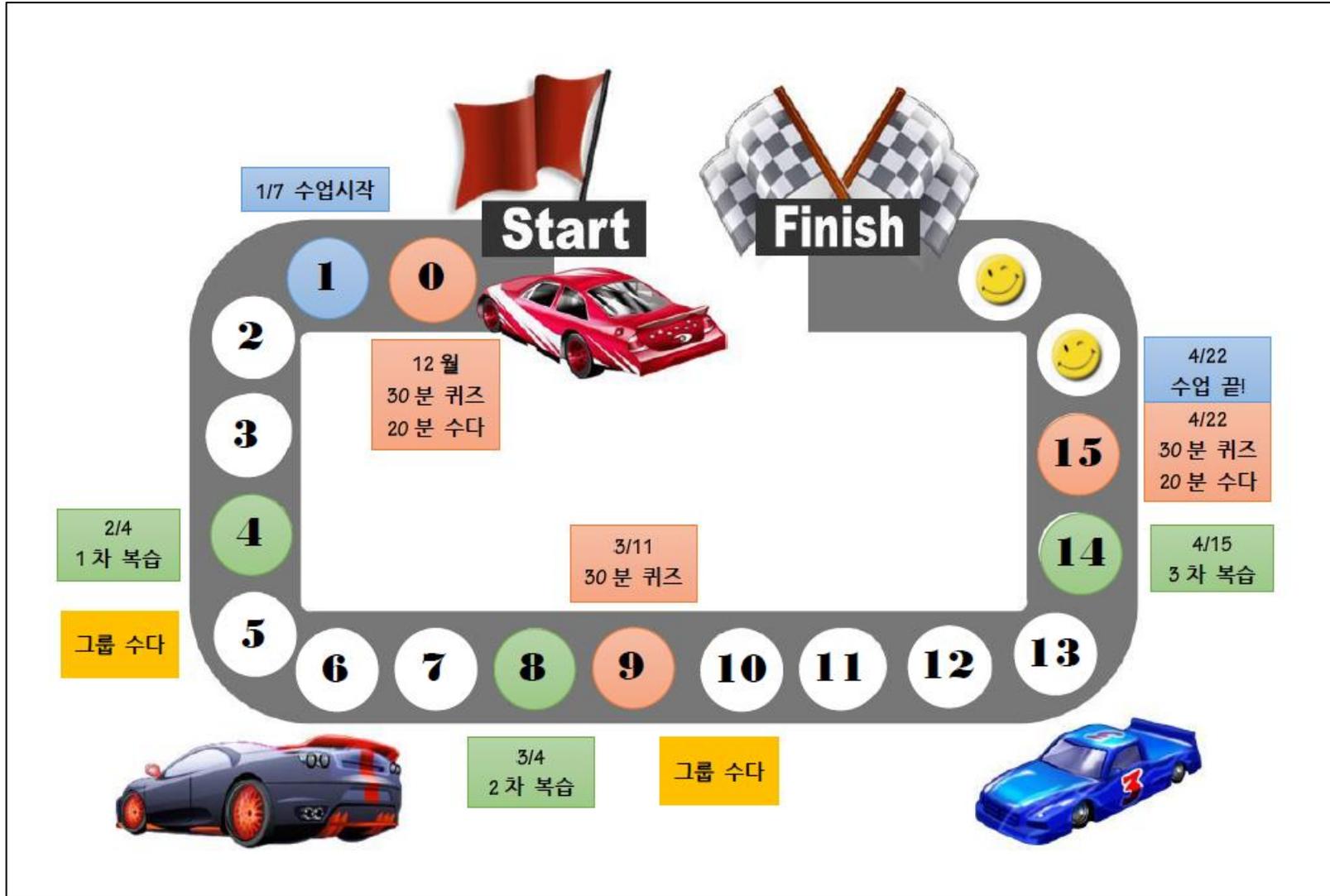
3

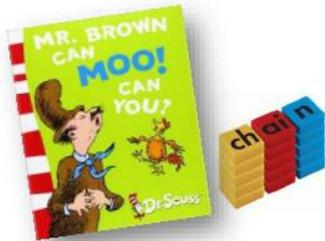
잘 끝내면요?



- ♣ 영어 스토리북 10권 완성!
- ♣ 영어책을 줄줄 읽고
- ♣ 영어 단어실력도 쑥쑥
- ♣ 여러분 이야기를 담은 선생님의 멋진 박사논문이 나오고
- ♣ 선생님 논문을 짧게 만든 '미니논문'을 만들어 여러분 이름을 담아 선물로 줘요.







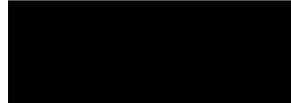
Getting Easy with English Reading

“Teacher, will you listen to me?”

I invite you to the project!



Teacher researcher: Heeyang Park
University of Warwick
Teaching English to Young Children



1 What is it about?

- ♣ Who: I will give you
- ♣ What: lessons on English word reading
- ♣ Where: at Seongmin community center
- ♣ When: every Saturday morning at 10am – 12pm in January to April, 2017
- ♣ How: in an easy and fun way.

2 What shall I do?

I hope you will

- ♣ Enjoy our lessons,
- ♣ Do your homework with Mom at home,
- ♣ Talk to me about good and difficult things about your learning,
- ♣ Take quizzes to see how well you're doing,
- ♣ Have a chat with me and friends about your English reading, and
- ♣ Stop to think if you're doing well.

If you don't want to take part, it's fine for you to stop participating.

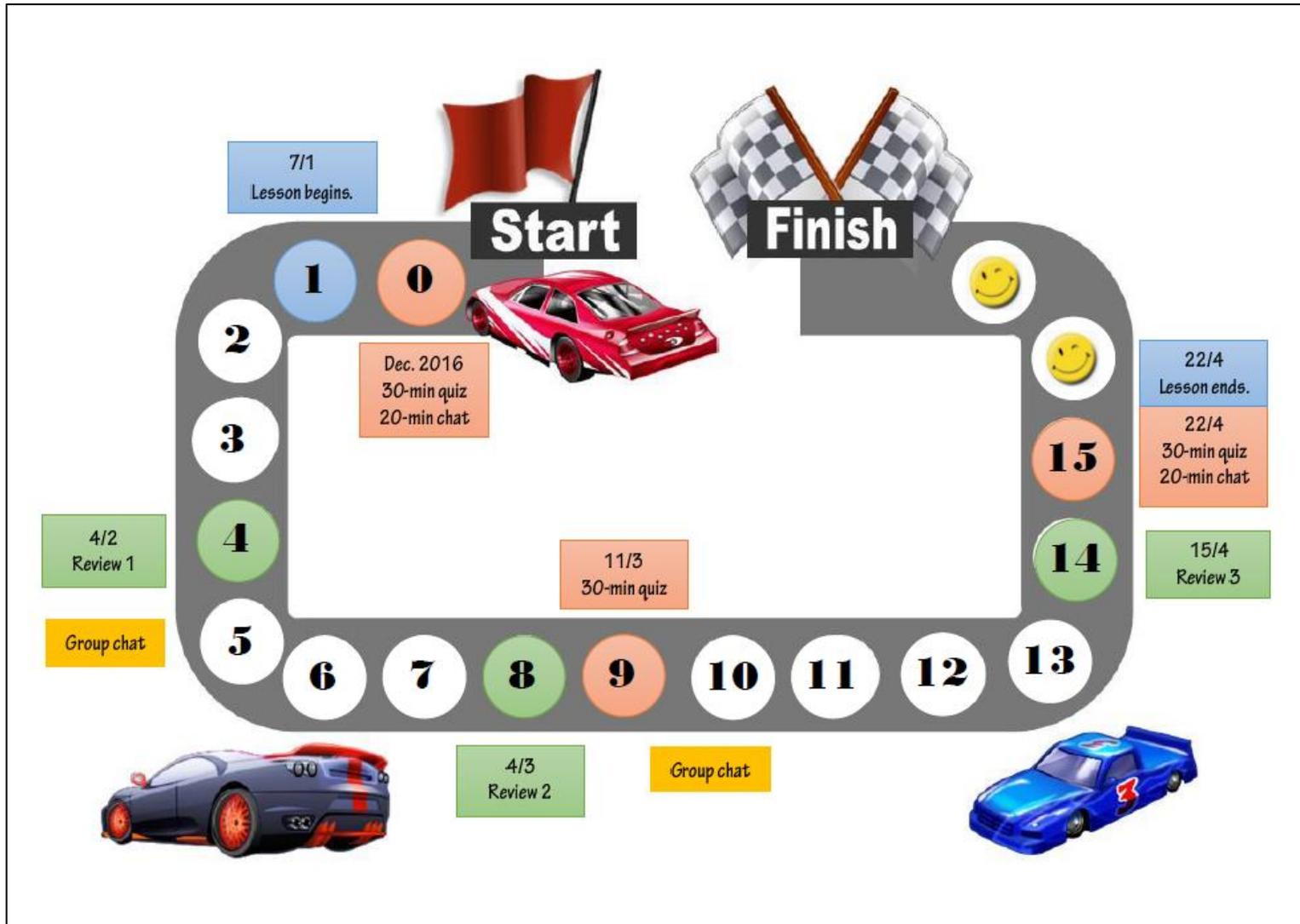


3 What if I'm done?

You will

- ♣ Read 10 English storybooks,
- ♣ Be able to read in English,
- ♣ Have a BIG pool of English vocabulary
- ♣ See my fantastic PhD thesis that have your stories
- ♣ Receive a 'mini thesis' with your name on it as a present.





Appendix 8. Vocabulary Preview Homework

Lesson 6 Little Red Hen (Preview Homework) – Vocabulary

- (1) How do you pronounce each word? If YES, check (√) in the 'Pronunciation Check' box.
- (2) Do you know its Korean meaning? Write it down in the 'Korean Meaning' box.
- (3) Think of THREE words of association. Any words are fine. Write them either in Korean or English. (E.g.) *hen* – Words of association: *egg, rooster, chicken*

	English Word	Pronunciation Check	Korean Meaning	3 Words of Association
1.	help			
2.	wheat			
3.	plant			
4.	busy			
5.	water			
6.	flour			
7.	mix			
8.	bake			
9.	bread			
10.	all by myself			

- Watch the English version of <Little Red Hen> on Youtube. There are various versions but any version is fine.

Lesson 4: (1) 소리 내어 읽고 동영상 촬영하기.
 (2) 1번~6번 글과 그림 매칭하기.



SNACK, SNACK. ①
 Eat a snack.
 Eat a snack with Brown and Black.

FAST. PAST. ②
 He went past fast.

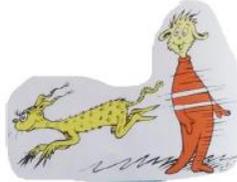
WENT. TENT. SENT. ③
 He went into the tent.
 I sent him out of the tent.

WET. GET. ④
 Two dogs get wet.

HELP. YELP. ⑤
 They yelp for help.

HILL. WILL. ⑥
 Will went up the hill.

WILL. HILL. STILL.
 Will is up the hill still.



Little Red Hen 대화문을 소리 내어 읽으세요.



- ① Little Red Hen: **Will you help me plant the wheat?**
Rat, Cat, Dog: **No, no, we are all busy. It's a play day today.**
Little Red Hen: **Then I will plant the wheat all by myself.**
- ② Little Red Hen: **Will you help me water the wheat?**
Rat, Cat, Dog: **No, no, we are all busy. It's a play day today.**
Little Red Hen: **Then I will water the wheat all by myself.**
- ③ Little Red Hen: **Will you help me cut the wheat?**
Rat, Cat, Dog: **No, no, we are all busy. It's a play day today.**
Little Red Hen: **Then I will cut the wheat all by myself.**
- ④ Little Red Hen: **Will you help me make the flour?**
Rat, Cat, Dog: **No, no, we are all busy. It's a play day today.**
Little Red Hen: **Then I will make the flour all by myself.**
- ⑤ Little Red Hen: **Will you help me mix the flour and eggs?**
Rat, Cat, Dog: **No, no, we are all busy. It's a play day today.**
Little Red Hen: **Then I will mix the flour and eggs all by myself.**
- ⑥ Little Red Hen: **Will you help me bake the bread?**
Rat, Cat, Dog: **No, no, we are all busy. It's a play day today.**
Little Red Hen: **Then I will bake the bread all by myself.**
- ⑦ Little Red Hen: **Will you help me eat the bread?**
Rat, Cat, Dog: **Yes, yes, we will! We are not busy.**
Little Red Hen: **No, I will eat the bread all by myself.**

Appendix 11. Deciphering Homework: <oo> (Lesson 7)

t	oo	
c	oo	
h	oo	
m	oo	
z	oo	
b	oo	t
b	oo	m
f	oo	d
f	oo	l
m	oo	n
n	oo	n
h	oo	d
h	oo	t
p	oo	l
m	oo	d
c	oo	l
r	oo	m
t	oo	th
w	oo	l
t	oo	l

oo

Alphablocks [oo] 영상
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDvdRiDe67M>



Band에 링크 연결하겠습니다.
수업 중에도 한 번 봤습니다.

[oo] 단어 중에서 하나를 골라
그림을 그리세요.



학부모 동의서

연구제목: 한국 초등학생의 영어단어읽기 능력개발에 따른 학생과 학부모의 인식탐구

안녕하세요. 저는 영국 워릭대학교 응용언어학부에서 응용언어학/영어교수법을 전공하는 박사과정 2년차 박 최양 입니다. 박사연구를 위해 2017년 1월부터 4월까지 총 15주에 걸쳐 17명의 초등학생, 13명의 어머님들과 함께 프로젝트를 진행합니다. 연구의 목적은 한국 초등학생이 영어단어읽기 능력을 개발함에 있어 학습성과와 고충에 대한 학생과 어머님들의 목소리를 직접 듣는 데 있습니다. 제가 교사로서 주 1회 수업을 하면서 자녀의 영어어휘 및 단어읽기 실력을 강화할 것이며, 동시에 설문지와 인터뷰, 그룹토론과 교육상담 등 다양한 방식으로 어머님과 자녀의 영어단어읽기 학습에 따른 성과와 고충에 대한 의견을 적극적으로 반영할 것입니다.

수업은 일반영어수업과 비슷하겠으나 필요할 경우 수업내용을 녹음/녹화할 수 있습니다. 인터뷰와 그룹토론 또한 녹음/녹화됩니다. 가명을 사용하는 본 자료는 기밀이 보장되며 연구목적으로만 사용됩니다.

저는 아이들이 즐겁게 수업에 참여할 수 있도록 교사로서 최선을 다할 것입니다. 만약 연구가 진행되는 도중에 어머님 또는 자녀가 지속적인 참여가 힘들 것으로 판단되면 언제든지 말씀해 주십시오. 중도탈퇴는 본인은 물론 본 연구에 어떠한 영향도 없습니다.

본 연구에 대한 질문이 있을 경우 제게 연락 주시면 최선을 다해 답해 드리겠습니다.

나는 본인 (이름) _____ 와/과 자녀 (이름) _____ 이/가
본 연구에 참석하는 것에 동의합니다.

날짜 2016년 12월 _____ 일 핸드폰 010 - _____

이메일 _____

학부모명 _____ 서명 _____

최대한 빠른 시일에 저에게 제출해 주시면 감사하겠습니다.

학생 동의서



영어읽기와 친해지기: "선생님, 제 이야기 들어보실래요?"

이 프로젝트는 영어 스토리북을 활용해서 선생님이 직접 수업을 하면서 여러분이 영어단어를 읽고 쓰는 것을 도와줘요. 여러분이 영어단어를 술술 읽을 수 있다면 영어책읽기에 흥미를 느낄 거예요. 가끔 만나서 이 수업에 대해서 선생님, 친구들과 함께 이야기도 나누고 여러분이 학교와 집에서는 영어읽기 공부를 어떻게 하는지 말해주면 돼요. 관심이 있으면 다음을 읽고 '예 (Yes)' 또는 '아니오 (No)'에 동그라미 해주세요.

• 부모님과 이 프로젝트에 대해 이야기를 나눠봤나요?



• 이 프로젝트에 참여하고 싶나요?

필요할 경우 선생님이 우리의 수업이나 대화를 녹음/녹화할 수도 있어요. 이렇게 하면 무슨 일이 일어났는지 선생님이 정확히 기억할 수 있어요. 녹음/녹화된 내용은 선생님만 볼 수 있고 선생님이 하고 있는 공부 목적으로만 쓰일 거예요. 여러분 이름은 밝히지 않을 거예요.

• 녹음/녹화에 대해서 동의하나요?



만약 중간에 프로젝트에 더 이상 참여하고 싶지 않다고 생각되면 언제든지 선생님이거나 부모님에게 말해 주세요. 언제든지 그만할 수 있어요.

• 프로젝트 참여 또는 불참에 대해 이해했나요?



프로젝트에 참여하고 싶다면 아래에 직접 적어 주세요.

이름 _____

학교 _____ 초등학교 학년 _____

날짜 2016 년 12 월 _____ 일

핸드폰 (있는 경우) 010 - _____

Informed Consent for Parents



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Project: Learning English Word Reading Skills through an Alternative Program: An Exploratory Study with Young Korean English Language Learners

My name is Heeyang Park and I am a PhD student at the Center for Applied Linguistics in the University of Warwick, UK. I am going to conduct the above project with a class of ## (number) young Korean learners, and their parents. The project is aimed at developing English word reading skills of young Korean learners and reading interest. Therefore, I will give the class free lessons on storybook-based English word reading and vocabulary learning as a teacher researcher. Besides, the project will involve questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions with children and parents respectively on English word reading education in Korea.

Most of the work will be just like normal English classes but sometimes I would like to tape-record/video-record what the children are doing or saying in class. Interviews and focus group discussions will also be recorded. The data will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. None of the participants will be identifiable.

I anticipate that the children will enjoy this work and I will carefully monitor their motivation to take part. You or your child can withdraw from the project during any period of the project, and it will not affect you and your child negatively.

If you would like to obtain more information about the project, please contact me at

I would like my daughter / son _____ (name), who is in Grade _____, and me _____ (name) to take part in the project.

Parent's / Guardian's signature _____

Print your name _____

Mobile. No. _____

010 - _____ - _____

Email address _____

Date _____

_____ December, 2016

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO ME ASAP.

Informed Consent for Children



This project is about helping you learn how to read and write English words. I will give you free lessons using storybooks. If you can read English words, then you can enjoy reading in English! Sometimes, we will talk about what you think about the project and how you do to improve your English reading in school and at home. If you are interested in this, please read the following and circle YES or NO.

Have you talked with your parent/guardian?



Would you like to take part?



I might sometimes tape-record or video-record you talking about the project or working on the project. This helps me remember exactly what happened. This data will be accessible only by me and will be used for research purposes only. Fake names will be used so that no individuals will be recognized.

Are you okay with this?



If you are not enjoying the project any more or for some reason do not want to participate, you can tell me or your parents. It is fine for you to stop participating at any time.

Do you understand you have a choice about participating in the project?



If you are happy to participate in the project, please write:

Name _____
School _____ Grade _____
Mobile. No. (if any) 010 - _____ - _____
Date _____ December, 2016