

The Complexity of Teaching English Language Phonics in a Typical Southern Kaduna (Nigeria) Context

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Abstract:

The teaching of English Language phonics is very crucial in the teaching and learning of English language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Phonics is primary in learning any language. For the English speaking nations, it is probably natural not to have any complexity in teaching English language phonics. However, in a typical Southern Kaduna context, with her multiplicity of languages and dialects, teaching English phonics is complex. The multiple languages spoken and heard interfere with the English sounds the learners hear and are taught almost only in school since learners learn English as a second or third language. The diverse curricula used, the area of specialisation of the teacher of English, the local language, the family and the pupil factor portray this complexity. This paper explored this complex nature of teaching English phonics in Kagoro, Southern Kaduna, Nigeria by presenting the Kagoro/Gworog language/sounds. The English Language sounds are highlighted with particular focus on the Jolly Phonics. Five teachers from two primary schools in Kagoro were interviewed who spoke extensively on the Jolly phonics and enumerated their observations and challenges (ordeals). Another person was interviewed who provided the information on the Kagoro (Gworog) language. The research brings out the fact that the teaching and learning of English phonics is very tasking in a typical southern Kaduna community. However the adoption of the Jolly phonics by the Kaduna State Universal Basic Education curriculum is helping to curb the difficulty and ineffective level at which reading and writing are learned. The use of the Jolly phonics probably help learners learn to read and write slightly easier and better. However, the researcher discovered that, there is a disparity in the presentation of English phonics by the Jolly phonics curriculum. Jolly phonics work with letter sounds (graphemes) instead of phonemes. The use of graphemes is probably not helpful to learners in the long run.

Keywords:

Phonics, Teaching, Learning, Vowels, Consonants, Monothongs, Complex Syllabus, School, Second Language, Learners, Interference, Curricula.