



**UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES
PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**“SENSORY-BASED PHONICS INSTRUCTION IN EFL
READING”**

RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

**BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND
FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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ADVISOR'S APPROVAL

In my role as the research advisor of the research paper entitled "Sensory-Basic Phonics Instruction in EFL reading" prepared by Hermenejildo Suarez Fabiola Hermenejildo, an undergraduate student of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages major, at the School of Educational Sciences and Languages of Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, I certify that I have guided, supervised, and reviewed this research project. I hereby approve it in its entirety because it meets the academic and methodological requirements established by the University and is suitable for submission to the Academic Tribunal for evaluation.

Sincerely,

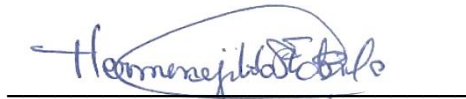


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Statement of Authorship

I, **Hermenejildo Suárez Fabiola Alexandra** with ID number **0919790139**, undergraduate student from Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, School of Education Science and Languages, as a prerequisite to obtaining a bachelor's degree in Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages, in my role as author of the research “**Sensory-Based Phonics Instructions in EFL Reading**”, certify that this work is of my authorship, except for the quotes and reflections in this research paper.

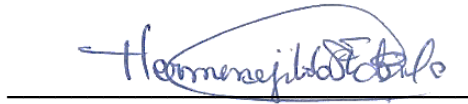
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Declaration

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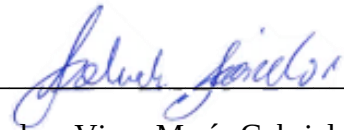
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Dedication

I want to dedicate this work to my family, who have supported me on this journey of learning. Their loving and generous gestures will always remain in my thoughts.

But above all, I want to dedicate this success to my beloved children, Joao and Keyla, whose spark of affection brought a smile to my face as I traveled this long road. They gave me strength when mine was failing and showed me what mature little people they are.

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With love

Fabiola Hermenejildo Suárez

Abstract

This study aimed to understand the inclusion of sensory-based phonics instruction for the development of reading skills in English as a foreign language (EFL) in children aged 8 to 12. This study focused on discerning which sensory-phonetic activities aid in reading development. It also highlighted the various difficulties students encounter when learning to read in English and investigated how teachers incorporate sensory-phonetic strategies into their lessons. The study adopted a qualitative and phenomenological approach. Data was collected through interviews with five English teachers experienced in teaching English and phonology. Data analysis revealed patterns related to the experiences and perceptions of the interviewed teachers.

The results revealed that most teachers employ multisensory strategies such as picture cards, songs, phonological games, body movements, and auditory activities to reinforce the relationship between phonemes and graphemes.

Furthermore, they deduced that multisensory strategies strengthen the development of phonological awareness, fluent reading, reading comprehension, word decoding, and vocabulary acquisition. Despite this, obstacles were also identified, such as the similarity of sounds in English words, a lack of phonological foundations for good phonological awareness, limited vocabulary, insufficient teacher training, limited time for teaching, and a lack of teaching resources. In conclusion, it was determined that sensory-based phonetic instruction is a pedagogical strategy that strengthens the development of reading in English, fostering meaningful learning through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic channels.

KEY WORDS: phonics instruction, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading development, multisensory learning, phonological awareness, reading fluency.

Resumen

El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo conocer la inclusión de la instrucción fonética basada en los sentidos para el desarrollo de las habilidades lectoras en inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en niños de 8 a 12 años. Se enfocó en discernir que actividades fonéticas sensoriales ayudan al desarrollo de la lectura, también destacan las diferentes dificultades a las que se exponen los estudiantes al momento de aprender a leer en inglés e investigar la manera en que los docentes incluyen estrategias fonéticas sensoriales para impartir sus clases. La investigación tomó como referencia el enfoque cualitativo y diseño descriptivo. Los datos para la investigación se realizaron a través de entrevistas dirigidas a cinco docentes de inglés con experiencia en la enseñanza de inglés y fonología.

Los resultados revelaron que la mayoría de los profesores emplean estrategias multisensoriales como tarjetas ilustradas, canciones, juegos fonológicos, movimientos corporales, actividades auditivas para reforzar la relación entre fonemas y grafemas.

Por otro lado, dedujeron que las estrategias multisensoriales, fortalecen el desarrollo de la conciencia fonológica, la lectura fluida, la comprensión lectora, decodificación de palabras y el requerimiento de vocabulario. A pesar de esto también se identificó, obstáculos, como palabras que suenan iguales, la carencia de bases de fonológicas, falta de conciencia fonológica, capacitación de los docentes, poco tiempo para impartir sus clases y la falta de recursos didácticos. Para finalizar, se determina que la instrucción fonética basada en los sentidos es una estrategia pedagógica que fortalece el desarrollo de la lectura en inglés el mismo que proyecta un aprendizaje significativo mediante canales visuales, auditivo y kinestésicos.

PALABRAS CLAVES: fonética, desarrollo de la lectura, aprendizaje multisensorial, conciencia fonológica, fluidez lectora.

Index

ADVISOR'S APPROVAL.....	2
Statement of Authorship	3
Declaration.....	4
Board of Examiners	5
Acknowledgment	6
Dedication	7
Abstract.....	8
Resumen.....	9
Introduction.....	13
Chapter I.....	15
Problem Statement.....	15
Specific Problem Statement.....	17
Justification	17
Problem Formulation	19
Problem Question.....	20
Main Question.....	20
Specific Questions	20
Objectives	20
General Objective	20
Specific Objectives	20
Chapter II	21
Theoretical Framework.....	21

Background	21
Pedagogical basis	23
Theoretical basis	25
Legal basis	27
Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador	27
Ministerio de Educación	28
Chapter III.....	29
Methodological Framework.....	29
Research Method	29
Qualitative Methodology	29
Type of Research	29
Phenomenological Studies	30
Data Collection Techniques	30
Interview	30
Type of questions.....	31
Data Collection Processing and Resources.....	31
Population and Sample	32
Chapter IV.....	33
Analysis of Findings	33
Interpretation of data from the One-on-one Interviews.	33
Chapter V	40
Conclusions and recommendations.....	40
Conclusions.....	40

Recommendations	41
References	43
Annexes.....	49
Annex A: Certified Anti-Plagiarism System	49
Annex B. Antiplagiarism Report	50
Annex C. Interview Model for Teachers	51
Annex D. Interviewing teachers via Zoom and in person.	51

Introduction

English reading skills are essential for the academic development of learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Through reading, one accesses knowledge, develops critical thinking, expands vocabulary, and learns about different cultural contexts. Despite this, learning to read in English is a challenge, due to the variety of phonemes in its phonological alphabet, and the difficulty in relating phonemes and graphemes; these obstacles affect word decoding, fluency, and reading comprehension.

Phonics instruction plays a crucial role in learning English; it is an indispensable tool that helps students understand the relationship between sounds and letters, identify words, and develop reading skills. Several studies have demonstrated that learning phonics early and systematically strengthens phonological awareness. However, when students learn phonics through repetition and memorization alone, students encounter various problems when reading because they are faced with sounds different from those of their native language.

Faced with this problem, sensory-based phonetics instruction emerges as a strategy that changes teaching standards because it integrates different sensory channels into learning. This benefits students because they receive meaningful knowledge through their visual, auditory, and kinesthetic senses. Through this approach, students can integrate a new language by manipulating, listening, seeing, and feeling through games, interactive activities, illustrated cards, and motor exercises. Connecting multiple senses strengthens the cognitive area related to reading and aids in the retention of new phonological knowledge.

Even with all the positive aspects this approach offers, there are shortcomings in identifying similar sounds and even in applying phonetics rules and developing adequate reading skills. Furthermore, the lack of resources and teaching materials, the different learning paces, and

the lack of teacher training prevent them from effectively teaching new multisensory methodologies. Given these circumstances, it is necessary to observe and find ways to implement sensory-based phonics instruction and to understand the experiences teachers gain while teaching.

The most important aspect of this research is that it outlines several reasons why teaching multisensory phonics instruction as a pedagogical approach to developing reading skills in English as a foreign language is beneficial. The results of this study will serve as a guide for other teachers and educational institutions to incorporate the necessary methodologies that meet the needs and contribute to improving English language teaching in different educational contexts.

This study was conducted using an interview approach, gathering input from five teachers who have dedicated their careers to the field. They answered a questionnaire of eight open-ended questions, some conducted via Zoom and others in person, providing vital information for this research.

Chapter I

Problem Statement

Several studies indicate that using phonics instruction in early literacy is important for mastering academic, social, and personal skills from childhood onward. This is achieved in both the home and educational settings; it has been proven that school-age children who receive adequate literacy instruction consistently achieve good results in reading and writing tasks, unlike those with limited literacy, who experience difficulties in early school years, as indicated by De La Peña (2025).

Teaching has become a challenge over time, from shifting away from traditional teaching methods to innovating in the classroom by adapting strategies and methods so that students can learn effectively and their education is meaningful. Technology also plays a significant role, and for the above to truly take on importance, it is necessary to cultivate good reading habits, according to the newspaper Gestion (2015) and as stated by Romero Rita (2022) There are countries like India and China, two global powers that have made reading a central part of their educational systems, which has fueled the economic progress of their communities and led to greater opportunities and a peaceful, harmonious society.

In Ecuador, the issues surrounding the decline in reading skills and comprehension also became a tangible reality during and after the pandemic, but the students most affected were those living in rural areas because they lacked technological and educational resources due to limited access; this was a truly concerning situation, according to a study conducted by Gómez et al. (2022) found that 70% of students had experienced a decline in reading and comprehension skills, as mentioned in the scientific journal TESLA (2023).

Learning English involves four skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. In this study, we will focus on the skill of reading, as it enables the acquisition of diverse knowledge, develops cognitive, emotional, and social skills, and helps expand imagination and comprehension. Reading strengthens memory and knowledge, enriches vocabulary, and challenges the mind to engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and reading comprehension, this guarantees effective communication and open knowledge to refer to different topics.

This research provides insight into the reality of the classroom and highlights existing issues related to educational needs, such as a lack of educational resources and effective planning. (Moreno-Guano, 2024) mention in a study that certain students have serious difficulties understanding complex texts and developing critical thinking skills, which is reflected in their academic performance, especially when they have to analyze material and draw their own conclusions with sound reasoning.

This allows teachers to focus on new tools that enable students to meet the cognitive and learning needs of young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners by acquiring resources whether tangible or intangible to gain high-quality knowledge in the field of teaching.

In addition, teachers should develop curricula that ensure teaching based on objective knowledge, rather than relying on a standardized and outdated education system; innovate in accordance with the needs of the students' environment; equip classrooms with innovative resources and materials that capture the attention of elementary school children; and apply teaching strategies that provide knowledge based on reading comprehension to develop the senses of very young students in Santa Elena. Through this study, English teachers will have a guide for planning their lessons and accessing resources on reading instruction tailored to the

topics they will cover with students, taking into account their level of comprehension, since children do not learn at the same pace.

Specific Problem Statement

When students establish a connection between phonemes and graphemes using effective teaching strategies, they develop their reading skills more efficiently, according to Fernandes et al. (2024). Likewise, Anku (2024) emphasizes that students participate interactively because, with adequate phonetic knowledge, their reading comprehension and self-confidence improve when they want to express themselves in front of their classmates.

This study focuses on two main areas: first, the teacher's use of a multisensory approach to teaching phonetics; and second, the challenges faced by students learning English as a foreign language when developing their reading skills, including fluency, decoding, and reading comprehension (Fernandes et al., 2024; Anku, 2024).

Justification

Studies on the development of English as a Foreign Language reading indicate that more effective and original ideas should be implemented with students with learning difficulties to improve reading comprehension, fluency, and decoding.

Traditional teaching methods, such as memorization and repetition, have kept phonics instruction out of context, which limits students' active participation in class and consequently affects their mastery and development of reading skills in the language they are learning. Recent studies assert that the standard pedagogy needs to be replaced with more interactive and meaningful teaching practices (Fernandes et al., 2024).

In light of this issue, we should consider different strategies that engage students and integrate cognition and the senses into the reading learning process, a method known as

multisensory phonics. This is a technique that combines visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements to reinforce phonological awareness and decoding skills, allowing students to engage multiple senses simultaneously and making it easier to form connections between phonemes and graphemes. To achieve successful reading instruction, it is necessary to integrate effective multisensory techniques, as noted by Bora et al. (2024).

This methodology includes activities such as drawing letters, associating sounds with movements, and using technology (image projectors) to improve learning, comprehension, and deeper retention of phonemes and graphemes. According to Anku (2024), structured instruction in phonics and reading comprehension contributes to positive results.

In addition, phonics instruction through sensory activities from a very young age strengthens the development of intellectual and linguistic competencies, indispensable for reading. By promoting phonological awareness in children, they will recognize the relationship between phonemes and graphemes, thus demonstrating the ability to express themselves efficiently in writing. Multisensory approaches have been shown to help students with decoding, fluent reading, and literacy progress (Linder et al., 2023).

Several studies in the field of English and other languages highlight those students tend to point out the lack of phonics and multisensory instruction they receive; these studies focus on educators' perspectives when implementing such teaching methods, such as the strategies mentioned above, and the limited adaptation of these approaches in classrooms and educational settings. It is important to consider how educators apply these learning tools, as, according to opinions and research, they play a fundamental role in strengthening students' senses.

Data highlights that the correct use of these elements contributes to more efficient classes; furthermore, teachers' appreciation of them is a valuable contribution to innovative implementation (Frontiers in Education, 2026).

Therefore, this study is warranted because it aims to explore the effect of teaching phonics based on the senses of reading in the context of English as a foreign language, and to analyze teachers' contributions regarding its implementation. Furthermore, this study will provide important data for improving teaching practice, and most importantly, it will promote reading instruction in a more innovative, technical, inclusive, and effective manner in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

Problem Formulation

When students successfully connect phonemes with graphemes through effective teaching strategies, they develop their reading skills more efficiently. According to Fernandes et al. (2024), this connection strengthens decoding skills and supports reading development. Similarly, Anku (2024), states that adequate phonics instruction encourages students to participate more actively in the classroom because it improves both their reading comprehension and their confidence when communicating in English.

This study focuses on two main areas. The first is teachers' use of multisensory phonics instruction to support English reading development. The second is the challenges that students face when learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly in developing reading fluency, decoding skills, and reading comprehension (Fernandes et al., 2024; Anku, 2024).

Problem Question***Main Question***

- How does sensory-based phonics instruction influence EFL reading development in children aged 8 to 12?

Specific Questions

- ✓ How do sensory-based phonics activities help improve reading performance in children aged 8 to 12?
- ✓ What problems do students experience when learning to read in English through sensory-based phonics instruction?
- ✓ How do teachers incorporate sensory-based phonics strategies in EFL reading instruction?

Objectives***General Objective***

- To explore how sensory-based phonics instruction influences EFL reading development in children aged 8 to 12.

Specific Objectives

- ✓ To describe how sensory-based phonics activities support reading development in children.
- ✓ To analyze the challenges students experience when learning to read in English through sensory-based phonics instruction.
- ✓ To examine how teachers implement sensory-based phonics strategies in EFL reading instruction.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

Background

Reading is considered one of the most complex skills in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Its comprehension relies on knowledge of phonology, vocabulary, and fluency. Studies indicate that traditional teaching methods, such as rote memorization, are ineffective for developing strong EFL reading skills, particularly among elementary school students. However, researchers suggest that multisensory instructional approaches based on phonetics and delivered through kinesthetic, auditory, visual, and tactile experiences are the most effective way to achieve reading comprehension (Mohamed et al., 2025).

According to Salih and Omar (2025) English speech contains a variety of sounds, which can make pronunciation and spelling difficult in many cases. While grammar and vocabulary are essential for learning English, phonetics plays a crucial role in expressing oneself with confidence and, in some cases, speaking like a native speaker.

To understand this, it's important to note that phonetics is the study of how sounds are produced and perceived in a language, focusing on articulation, acoustics, and hearing. The results of effective phonetics include fluent and clear pronunciation, improved sound recognition, and the ability to avoid confusion with similar-sounding words. Most importantly, it fosters confidence in the learner (Rojas Miranda, 2025).

Early phonics instruction and activities such as teaching phoneme manipulation and blending at an early age help advance children's phonemic awareness and improve their reading productivity (Jensen, 2023).

To learn phonetics, it is necessary to recognize the explicit association between sounds and letters, thus achieving true decoding and word recognition. When it comes to learning English as a foreign language (EFL), phonetics plays a fundamental role because learners face a conflict between their native language and the one, they are learning. According to Valladolid and Estremera (2026), systematic phonetics training positively impacts decoding and spelling among English as a second language (ESL) and EFL students. Furthermore, it has been observed that learning phonetics improves literacy development when the teaching strategy is based on visual and motivational activities.

Without proper instruction on the relationship between phonemes and graphemes, reading cannot be mastered successfully. The necessary foundations must be built from the early years to successfully develop reading skills and ensure that students acquire a good reading awareness (Dixon, 2023).

Explicit phoneme instruction is a key element in developing reading skills in English language learners. Early phoneme instruction helps foster good phonemic awareness, leading to improved pronunciation, greater fluency, and more effective reading comprehension (Mora Elizalde & Ponce Veliz, 2026).

In the same way, Agegnehu et al. (2023) focused on a phonics technique based on rhymes, applying this test to Ethiopian children learning English as a foreign language. The results were satisfactory, demonstrating significant improvements in phonetics comprehension compared to children using the traditional method. The researchers concluded that strengthening phonics instruction significantly improves word decoding skills, as children become more attuned to sounds, and most importantly, enhances their early reading comprehension.

Pedagogical basis

Throughout history, various scholars, including psychologists, linguists, and educational theorists, have contributed valuable research, theories, and discoveries about language and reading skills. This has led to the understanding that learning to read is not only systematic but also a complex process requiring cognitive aspects, phonological awareness, and other factors. These studies also indicate that the individual's environment is important for their cognitive development. Several researchers agree that the relationship between phonemes, sounds, letters, and the senses is essential for learning to read (Limprachan & Phusawisot, 2026).

The multisensory approach is important for the development of phonetics; this involves the simultaneous use of different senses during instruction, namely hearing, sight, kinesthetic, and touch. According to Flores Beltrán and González Del Pezo (2024), this approach is grounded in Jean Piaget's constructivist theory, which states that learning is an active process in which individuals construct their own knowledge through interaction with their environment, and that students actively engage through sensory channels.

To improve reading skills in English as a foreign language, multisensory strategies should be included, such as tracing letters, manipulating phonemes with physical objects, and incorporating songs, gestures, colors and interactive reading (Guamán Totoy, 2025).

Linguist Noam Chomsky, in his theory of language and human nature, argues that humans are innately capable of acquiring language, but he also gives credit to the individual's environment. Chomsky mentions that it is very important for language development in children, because to increase their knowledge they must grow up in varied environments, so the context in which they grow up is fundamental to their linguistic maturity (Akcem, 2023).

Many linguists, psychologists, and language scholars have focused their studies on language, as has the psychologist and theorist Lev Vygotsky, who argues that language not only allows individuals to communicate with each other but is also a crucial step in cognitive development and communication within society. Vygotsky bases his ideas on the transformative influence of language on cognitive development, and he argues for the essential importance of language in constructing knowledge and developing cognitive skills. He understands language as a mediator between the individual and their environment, stating that inner speech helps people organize their ideas. Another of Vygotsky's observations is that conversations and the exchange of ideas are fundamental to cognitive development, even when referring to the zone of proximal development, which he explains can be undertaken independently or with assistance. Finally, he states that language facilitates learning through cooperation and conversation. (Akcem, 2023)

Furthermore, Sage Journals, in its article published in 2025, mentions that Lev Vygotsky contributed to the contemporary understanding of linguistic comprehension and production, highlighting: "meaning is the content of inner discourse that acts as a mediator of linguistic production and comprehension." This Vygotskian perception resembles the current situation of linguistic production and comprehension (Yu & Poehner, 2025).

Finally, according to behaviorism, language is acquired through imitation and operant conditioning. Children learn words and phrases by listening to and repeating what they hear from adults. In his work "Verbal Behavior," Skinner (1957) states that language development in children is based on different concepts (such as stimuli, responses, reinforcement, and repetition) (NeuroLaunch Editorial Team, 2024).

Theoretical basis

For the philosopher John Amos Comenius, considered the father of modern pedagogy, the development of society and humanity lies in education, which is characterized by its universality, since education is the key to progress and a fundamental element for the unity between individuals and their communities. In his seminal text, "The Play Class," Comenius argues that for a class to be engaging for students, it must be enjoyable and motivating, capturing their attention and creating a welcoming environment where respect, order, and classroom discipline prevail (Ter-Oganov, 2024).

Learning a second language requires applying new pedagogical strategies, demands a different way of thinking about teaching, and most importantly, a reevaluation of the educational space where classes are given; it is suggested to change the perception with which learning is studied, Mendoza (2024).

Gillingham and Stillman (1956, as cited in Ray, 2023) argue that to form words, one must first teach the relationship between phonemes and graphemes (letters and sounds) followed by the encoding of phonemes, which results in the word itself. Incorporating the senses into English language learning helps students distinguish sounds and see how words are spelled; however, through kinesthetic learning, students also learn to feel their vocal cords as they produce a sound.

According to Pedro González and Johan Méndez (2024) in their work called Juan Amos Comenius, they mention that he said that teaching should begin with the most basic things such as sounds and letters, and he also considered the correspondence of letters and the most well-known sounds important, as with the phonological principle in his work "Didactica Magna," he states that education should be accessible and universal, where he emphasizes that children learn

to read through phonemes, such as multisensory approaches, which are done through visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic support.

Agüero, M. F. D. V., & Francioni, A. (2023), indicate that the Department for Education and Skills in England, in its report "The Importance of Phonics: Ensuring Confident Reading" (2011), states that students must learn essential literacy skills because: "those who do not learn to read cannot read to learn."

Anyone who decides to learn a new language, especially when it comes to reading, should consider that the relationship between grapheme and phoneme in the alphabetic writing system will allow them to decode different words. This leads to developing certain skills, such as identifying and perceiving sounds and their corresponding graphemes, as well as segmenting or blending, which later will help them pronounce the written word correctly (Di Agustini & Maluf, 2026).

Reading instruction programs in Australian schools initially required comprehensive pedagogical approaches that included phonological awareness, instruction, and strategies to support students' reading development (Creely et al., 2026).

A study of Australian schools emphasized the importance of addressing student diversity and recognizing the multilingual reality of their students. Phonics screening tests are currently being administered in Australian public schools (introduced in 2018), and this decision has led to improved student performance. This approach is now being implemented in other parts of Australia through a more sophisticated program that continues to emphasize the importance of decodable texts that engage students in phonics, intonation, fluency, and grammar skills. (Creely et al., 2026).

Legal basis

Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador

Based on the understanding that Ecuador does not implement the systematic teaching of phonetics in public institutions, it is important to highlight the rights of young students to receive a quality education.

La educación es un derecho de las personas a lo largo de su vida y un deber ineludible e inexcusable del Estado. Constituye un área prioritaria de la política pública y de la inversión estatal, garantía de la igualdad e inclusión social y condición indispensable para el buen vivir. Las personas, las familias y la sociedad tienen el derecho y la responsabilidad de participar en el proceso educativo. (Constitución de la República del Ecuador, 2021, p. 17, art. 26).

Taking into account the right to a bilingual education, it states the following:

Desarrollar, fortalecer y potenciar el sistema de educación intercultural bilingüe, con criterios de calidad, desde la estimulación temprana hasta el nivel superior, conforme a la diversidad cultural, para el cuidado y preservación de las identidades en consonancia con sus metodologías de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Se garantizará una carrera docente digna. La administración de este sistema será colectiva y participativa, con alternancia temporal y espacial, basada en veeduría comunitaria y rendición de cuentas (Constitución de la República del Ecuador, 2021, p. 29, art. 57, para. 14).

Since this research focuses on the teaching of phonology, the primary method for improving reading skills, it is worth analyzing its application in the Ecuadorian educational system; therefore, the following point should be taken into account:

El sistema nacional de educación tendrá como finalidad el desarrollo de capacidades y potencialidades individuales y colectivas de la población, que posibiliten el aprendizaje, y la generación y utilización de conocimientos, técnicas, saberes, artes y cultura. El sistema tendrá como centro al sujeto que aprende, y funcionará de manera flexible y dinámica, incluyente, eficaz y eficiente. El sistema nacional de educación integrará una visión intercultural acorde con la diversidad geográfica, cultural y lingüística del país, y el respeto a los derechos de las comunidades, pueblos y nacionalidades (Constitución de la República del Ecuador, 2021, p. 168, art. 343).

Ministerio de Educación

Ministerial Agreement No. 0016-13 (Training Program for English Teachers)

As the most significant regulatory document issued by the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) that aligns with the requirements and standards for quality education, the English language subject cannot be an exception; therefore, teachers of this subject must follow certain guidelines to continue their professional development. In light of this, the Ministry of Education establishes the following:

To foster a culture of continuous professional development for English teachers; to expand professional development opportunities in the field of English; to align training with teacher performance standards; and to prepare teachers to implement the new English curriculum guidelines.

In addition, the agreement established an intensive training program for teachers in the public school system aimed at developing language proficiency in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), with the goal of helping teachers progressively reach levels A2, B1, and B2.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

Research Method

Qualitative Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding the use of sensory-based phonics instruction to improve EFL students reading skills.

A qualitative methodology was selected because it allows the researcher to collect detailed information through interviews. This approach helps participants express their opinions, ideas, and experiences in their own words, providing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Type of Research

This study follows a qualitative research design because it focuses on understanding teachers' perceptions and experiences with sensory-based phonics instruction in English language learning.

According to Arbulu (2023), qualitative research collects non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, to understand people's opinions, experiences, and social realities and their natural context.

This type of research makes it possible to obtain detailed information about how teachers use sensory-based phonics strategies and how these strategies support students' reading development.

Phenomenological Studies

This research adopts a phenomenological approach because it seeks to understand teachers' lives experiences with sensory-based phonics instruction in English as a Foreign Language classrooms.

Phenomenology focuses on exploring how participants experience and interpret a particular phenomenon. According to Lim (2025), the main purpose of phenomenological research is to describe and understand participants' experiences from their own perspectives.

Similarly, Cheeli (2024) states that phenomenological research examines real-life experiences to understand the meaning that individuals give to a phenomenon. Therefore, this approach is appropriate because it allows the researcher to explore teachers' experiences, perceptions, and reflections about using sensory-based phonics instruction to support EFL reading.

Data Collection Techniques

Interview

The interview is one of the most common data collection techniques in qualitative research. It allows researchers to obtain detailed information about participants' experiences, opinions, and perceptions.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to explore teachers' experiences with sensory-based phonics instruction and its contribution to students' reading development in English as a Foreign Language.

The intervention underscores the importance of data collection in qualitative studies because it connects directly with the participants' perspectives, thus helping to efficiently

determine whether research on sensory-based phonics instruction for English as a foreign language learner to improve reading skills is appropriate.

Type of questions.

The interview includes eight open-ended questions that allow participants to express their ideas freely and describe their teaching experiences in detail.

The interviews were conducted either face to face or through Zoom, depending on each teacher's availability. This flexibility helped ensure participants could comfortably share their experiences and opinions.

Data Collection Processing and Resources

Table 1

Data Collection Processing

Question	Justification
What?	To collect information regarding teachers' experiences on the use Sensory-Based Phonics Instruction in EFL Reading
Where?	Via Zoom meetings or in person
When?	July, 2026
How?	Questionnaire, with 8 open-ended questions
What did you collect information for?	To analyze the enhancement of reading skills through Sensory-Based Phonics Instruction in EFL Reading.

Note. Created by Fabiola Hermenejildo Suárez

Population and Sample

The population for this research will consist of five English teachers from the province of Santa Elena who currently work or have worked with the methodology of this study, including the use of phonics for reading instruction.

It is important that the teachers included in this sample have implemented phonics programs related to the senses to develop reading skills.

For this study, which takes a qualitative phenomenological approach, a sample of five teachers was selected with the aim of exploring their experiences and perceptions in depth, rather than obtaining statistical results. This small sample allows the researcher to gather more detailed and meaningful information on the use of sensory-based phonics instruction in teaching English as a foreign language.

Chapter IV

Analysis of Findings

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected through interviews with five English teachers from various educational institutions in the Province of Santa Elena. The objective of this research was to explore how teaching sensory phonics to children learning English as a foreign language helps them develop their reading skills.

By examining the experiences of the interviewees through this study, we seek to understand the effectiveness of teaching sensory phonics through specific instructions to improve reading ability.

Interpretation of data from the One-on-one Interviews.

The results of the interview on sensory phonics instruction are presented below. The interview consists of 8 open-ended questions and was administered to 5 teachers; the results are interpreted as follows:

1. How do you implement sensory-based phonics activities in your classes to reinforce reading skills?

The finding suggests that engaging in phonics activities during the early years of education helps children develop reading skills, furthermore, through this technique, students can recognize symbols and sound using their senses. Through multisensory activities, students learn in a deep and lasting way. By using touch, sight, hearing, and body movements, learners feel more motivated and engage in active learning. Another observation from the interviewees was the benefit gained from using different materials to apply phonology through the senses. This aligns with the findings of Mohamed et al. (2025), who state that multisensory teaching

approaches based on phonetics and delivered through kinesthetic, auditory, visual, and tactile experiences are the most effective way to achieve reading comprehension.

2. What experiences have you had teaching phonemes to improve reading skills?

According to the information gathered, teaching phonics is most important in the early years. They noted improvements in reading comprehension thanks to various sensory activities. Others stated that students become frustrated when trying to match phonemes and graphemes, especially when they encounter similar sounds in words. The teachers explained that phonetic rules are not only memorized visually but also incorporate hand movements and textures through kinesthetic learning. In addition, they suggest using multisensory activities to accelerate the integration of the relationship between phonemes and graphemes.

This thesis is supported by Dixon (2023), who argues that learning phonetics is fundamental from early childhood to establish a solid foundation in reading and should begin in the earliest years.

3. What is the best sensory-based phonics strategy you have used to improve reading skills?

Participants noted that the use of multisensory materials is a good strategy for reinforcing reading. They suggested that children recognize and associate words with their respective sounds. Children combine writing with verbalization, and simultaneously learn what sounds are and how they are formed. Songs also serve as motivation for learning. Another sensory phonics strategy to reinforce reading skills is the use of audiovisual materials. The use of videos builds students' confidence and assurance, as they hear pronunciation of English sounds with greater accuracy.

Definitely, to improve reading skills in English as a foreign language, multisensory strategies should be included, such as tracing letters, manipulating phonemes with physical objects and incorporating songs, gestures, colors and interactive reading (Guamán Totoy, 2025).

4. How do phonics-based activities help develop reading skills?

According to the interviewed teachers, sensory-based phonics activities play an important role in developing EFL students reading skills. They explained that these activities helps students understand the relationship between phonemes and graphemes, strengthen decoding and phonological awareness, and improve reading comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and reading fluency. They also highlighted those activities such as tongue twisters, rhymes, and the use of technology increase students' motivation and contribute to more effective reading development. Like Agegnehu et al. (2023), they focused on a rhyming-based phonetic technique, a method specifically designed for children, through which the researchers demonstrated satisfactory results, such as improved word decoding and early reading comprehension.

5. How do sensory activities influence word recognition?

The interviewees agreed that when all the senses are used in word learning, the brain recognizes words because it associates them with different sensory channels. They suggested that the environment is also very important, as it allows for easier recall, orthographic recognition, improved accuracy, speed, and fluency in reading, and aids in pronunciation. The various activities allow memory, through the senses, to recall the graphemes and phonemes used in each learned word.

This thesis aligns with what Flores Beltrán and González Del Pezo (2024) state when they refer to learning as an active process in which individuals construct their own knowledge

through interaction with their environment, and that students actively participate through sensory channels.

6. Why do you think sensory-based phonics is important for developing reading skills?

The teachers interviewed said that the study of sensory phonetics is fundamental to word recognition because it allows students to read by applying rules to their vocabulary. Reading becomes active, motivating, and accessible when the senses are involved; the association between letter and sound is easier, and therefore, reading comprehension improves. This is important because students with language difficulties engage in this learning process since it works with different senses, including the kinesthetic sense.

Other teachers interviewed mentioned that if phonemes are not studied, some students will read as they are spelled, this aligns with Mora Elizalde y Ponce Veliz (2026), who found that phonetic instruction is a fundamental element for developing reading skills in English. Furthermore, it promotes word decoding and the understanding of the relationship between phonemes and graphemes, leading to improved reading comprehension.

7. What challenges do students face when learning to read in English through sensory-based phonics instruction?

The interviewees argue that the native language, similarities in sounds, and the number of phonemes are the most difficult challenges faced by English learners, since the brain is already adapted to a certain way of processing phonemes, therefore, trying to incorporate other ways of speaking, listening, and writing causes confusion.

This perspective aligns with the findings of Salih and Omar (2025), who argue that the variety of sounds in the English language can cause some difficulty when expressing oneself.

While grammar and vocabulary are essential for learning English, phonetics plays a crucial role in speaking with confidence and, in some cases, speaking like a native speaker.

8. Which sensory-based activities are the most difficult for students to perform?

Teachers indicated that the sensory activities that present certain difficulties are: listening and writing, understanding what is heard, decoding similar sounds, and coordinating auditory perception with motor response when only audio is presented.

Teachers suggested that phonics be taught through the senses starting at an early age, because young children learn faster and with the right activities will develop their various senses (auditory, visual and kinesthetic) to improve their English reading skills.

This discussion aligns with Jensen's (2023) work, which recognizes that teaching phoneme manipulation and combination at an early age helps children develop phonemic awareness and improves their reading productivity.

Table 2***Analysis of the Interviewees.***

Summarizes the results found in the interviews, regarding the importance of including phoneme teaching to improve reading skills.

Questions	<i>How do you implement sensory-based phonics activities in your classes to reinforce reading skills?</i>	<i>What experiences have you had teaching phonemes to improve reading skills?</i>	<i>What is the best sensory-based phonics strategy you have used to improve reading skills?</i>	<i>How do phonics-based activities help develop reading skills?</i>
Answers	The teachers consider multisensory phonics activities a key strategy for strengthening reading in the early years of schooling. Furthermore, the use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic resources and activities promotes phoneme recognition and maintains students' attention.	Teachers indicate that early instruction in phonics, supported by multisensory activities, facilitates reading comprehension, decoding, and strengthens the connection between phonemes and graphemes. However, confusion with similar sounds persists, and they suggest consistent, interactive, and multisensory practice.	Teachers believe that using multisensory resources, such as flashcards, songs, videos, and hands-on activities, is the best strategy for strengthening phoneme learning and improving reading. In addition, using native pronunciation models improves phonological accuracy and increases students' confidence when reading in English.	Sensory phonetics activities strengthen phonological awareness and improve the connection between phonemes, graphemes, and decoding, enhancing English reading development. Furthermore, strategies such as rhymes, tongue twisters, and technological resources contribute to more effective pronunciation, fluency, and reading comprehension.
Authors	Multisensory teaching approaches that are delivered through the senses are effective in achieving reading comprehension. (Mohamed et al., 2025).	Learning phonemes from early childhood is fundamental for developing good reading skills (Dixon, 2023).	To achieve good progress in reading skills while learning English, multisensory strategies should be implemented, integrating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic stimuli (Guamán Totoy, 2025).	The rhyming-based phonetic technique was shown to significantly improve phonetic comprehension and word decoding for children learning English as a foreign language, and to promote the development of early reading comprehension (Agegnehu et al., 2023).

Table 3***Analysis of the Interviewees.***

Summarizes the results found in the interviews, regarding the importance of including phoneme teaching to improve reading skills.

Questions	<i>How do sensory activities influence word recognition?</i>	<i>Why do you think sensory-based phonics is important for developing reading skills?</i>	<i>What challenges do students face when learning to read in English through sensory-based phonics instruction?</i>	<i>Which sensory-based activities are the most difficult for students to perform?</i>
Answers	Multisensory learning is shown to strengthen the recognition of graphemes and phonemes, improving word retention; moreover, a suitable environment and good strategies contribute to fluency and pronunciation during reading.	Sensory phonics strengthens word recognition and reading comprehension, facilitating the link between phonemes and graphemes through the use of multiple senses. It also promotes the association between letter and sound, is simpler, and therefore improves reading comprehension.	The phonological differences between English and Spanish make it difficult to recognize sounds and words. Therefore, a multisensory approach facilitates phoneme processing and reduces confusion during learning.	Auditory discrimination and the decoding of similar sounds are essential challenges in learning English phonics. Similarly, they emphasize that early instruction through multisensory activities promotes sensory development and strengthens reading skills.
Authors	Learning is a process where the individual constructs knowledge through their environment, and the use of sensory channels allows for the active participation of learners (Flores Beltrán and González Del Pezo, 2024).	Explicit phoneme instruction is a key element for the development of reading in English learners. Early phoneme instruction activates good phonemic awareness, leading to fluent pronunciation and more effective reading comprehension (Mora Elizalde & Ponce Veliz, 2026).	There are several phonemes in English, unlike in Spanish, which makes pronunciation and understanding phoneme-grapheme relationships difficult. Therefore, learning phonemes is essential for speaking confidently (Salih & Omar, 2025).	Early instruction in phonetics and activities such as teaching phoneme manipulation and combination at an early age help develop children's phonemic awareness and improve their reading productivity (Jensen, 2023).

The results presented in the tables above allow us to visualize the perspective of the interviewed teachers on phoneme instruction to improve reading skills and to analyze teaching strategies so that students can develop better phonological awareness throughout their preparation as learners of English as a foreign language.

Chapter V

Conclusions and recommendations

This final chapter presents the results of the analysis, conclusions, and recommendations regarding the research project entitled "Sensory-Based Phonics Instruction in EFL in reading". The data were collected through interviews with several teachers experienced in this field. This study is based on research by various authors, which aligns with the data obtained in the interviews. This qualitative research considers the diverse opinions and perspectives of the interviewees, with the purpose of strengthening the development of reading skills with the benefits offered by teaching phonemes at an early age.

Conclusions

The results of the surveys conducted in this research demonstrate that early phoneme learning through multisensory activities strengthens phonological awareness, facilitates word decoding, and improves reading fluency. Participants in this interview agreed that the inclusion of sensory activities, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic resources, along with technology, motivates students to be engaged and active, significantly complementing their reading learning.

It was determined that the main difficulties encountered when acquiring another language are related to the native language, where the brain already has an established form of expression; learning new phonemes causes confusion, as does the presence of words with similar sounds, the phoneme-grapheme relationship, and auditory comprehension. These difficulties arise when

individuals do not acquire phonological awareness at an early age, and when this awareness is not systematically implemented. Furthermore, those interviewed indicated that consistent practice is essential, coupled with multisensory strategies to strengthen phonological awareness, decoding, and word recognition. Therefore, utilizing visual, auditory, and kinesthetic channels leads to meaningful learning and improved reading skills.

As a result, the interviewees indicated that they use various multisensory activities such as picture cards, kinesthetic activities, songs, phonological exercises, grapheme manipulation, and audio activities. They also noted that the time allotted for their lessons is insufficient, they lack resources, and they need more training in multisensory phonics (public schools).

Those interviewed agreed that when these strategies are applied, students show interest in learning. Including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic channels increases motivation, which fosters lasting learning. The teachers recognize the importance of teaching these strategies and therefore try to incorporate them into their classes. They concluded that public institutions should implement ongoing professional development programs and provide materials to facilitate the application of sensory-based phonics instruction. This will contribute to the development of reading skills in students learning English as a foreign language.

Recommendations

According to the results presented in this research, the following recommendations are offered to improve phoneme teaching techniques and strategies in the early stages of schooling.

First, teachers must consistently incorporate phonics instruction strategies into their lesson plans, integrating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities. This will help strengthen phonological awareness and develop reading skills.

Teacher training programs should be offered on new methodologies for teaching phonics instruction based on sensory experiences to reinforce reading skills.

Furthermore, teachers should incorporate activities using technological tools that motivate students to be actively engaged in class. These activities, which can be visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, should be consistently included in English as a Foreign Language classes to achieve good results.

Provide teaching materials and resources that support the study of the grapheme-phoneme relationship through the multisensory experiences shared by teachers in their interviews.

Finally, it is recommended to conduct further studies on larger samples from other student groups, in order to detect the problem early and apply corrective measures in time.

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Annexes

Annex A: Certified Anti-Plagiarism System

CERTIFICADO SISTEMA ANTI PLAGIO

En calidad de tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado “SENSORY-BASIC PHONICS INSTRUCTION IN EFL READING.” elaborado por la estudiante HERMENEJILDO SUÁREZ FABIOLA ALEXANDRA de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas, de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, me permito declarar que una vez analizado en el sistema anti plagio COMPILATIO, luego de haber cumplido los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente trabajo de investigación, se encuentra con 7 % de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el informe.

Atentamente



MSc. Diana Terán Molina

TUTOR

Annex B. Antiplagiarism Report



Informe de análisis

Compilatio Magister+ | UPSE-ECU

PROJECT Fabiola Hermenejildo Compilatio

ID : 797d3239438d9112a2947423cd0490532cb615f6



7%
Textos sospechosos

Nombre del fichero : PROJECT Fabiola Hermenejildo Compilatio.txt
Tamaño del archivo original : 42,52 kB
Número de palabras : 7563

Depositante :
Fecha de depósito : 20 de julio de 2026
Tipo de carga : interface
fecha de fin de análisis : 20 de julio de 2026

Resumen (sección 1/3)

Localización de los textos sospechosos en el documento :



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Textos estilísticamente próximos a un texto generado por una IA.

Este índice es un indicador y no una prueba. Comprueba con el autor si domina los conocimientos mencionados en el documento.



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Annex C. Interview Model for Teachers

Sensory-Based Phonics Instruction in EFL Reading

1. How do you implement sensory-based phonics activities in your classes to reinforce reading skills?
2. What experiences have you had teaching phonemes to improve reading skills?
3. What is the best sensory-based phonics strategy you have used to improve reading skills?
4. How do phonics-based activities help develop reading skills?
5. How do sensory activities influence word recognition?
6. Why do you think sensory-based phonics is important for developing reading skills?
7. What challenges do students face when learning to read in English through sensory-based phonics instruction?
8. Which sensory-based activities are the most difficult for students to perform?

Annex D. Interviewing teachers via Zoom and in person.

1. How do you implement sensory-based phonics activities in your classes to reinforce reading skills?

a. Based on my experience, I believe that teaching phonetics is very important and relevant in a young person's early years, from kindergarten through the first years of school, like first, second, and third grade. Textbooks often include small segments on phonetics because there are different sounds between Spanish and English. If we teach phonetics both theoretically and practically, it will provide a good foundation for the children to use in the future and avoid the mistakes that we adults make when learning English. For example, I always emphasize the "schwa" sound because it doesn't exist in Spanish but it does in English. With young children, who aren't ashamed to do certain things that teenagers might, I used sandboxes where they could

trace the letters with their fingers. Since they don't have much ease with writing, as they are just learning to write, they could draw the letters and also the phonemes and pronounce them. We also used a mirror because, since I worked at a private school, these facilities were available, and the children could see themselves. as he pronounced certain sounds, certain phonemes, and they repeated them, but they also saw his image because you know that sometimes you have to raise your tongue, place it behind your teeth so that it is pronounced well.

b. First, we work with flashcards, always with basic or well-known words so that the students are already familiar with the sounds. Then we separate syllables. Sometimes the syllables are not only made up of three letters but up to four or even five. As you know, they are made up of a single sound, and here in English, it's not like in Spanish where they have two, a consonant and a vowel, and then they form the syllables. In English, it's not like that; it's by sounds. So, we always work with flashcards or we separate the syllables on the board so that they can pronounce the sounds correctly, more than anything else.

c. Okay, good afternoon. In this case, since I have a group of teenage students, I first try to get them to recognize a lot of vocabulary so they can understand what reading is. I've done exercises where they can apply that vocabulary in different exercises. For example, first, they listen to the vocabulary through audio recordings. I have a recorder that allows them to directly hear the pronunciation of a native speaker, so they not only recognize the Latin American pronunciation, which is a little different, but then they also apply that vocabulary in sentences and finally in a reading, in this case, through the audio recordings.

d. Well, in my case, what I do is combine sound with movement and touch. For example, I use cards with letters. When I have children who are extremely sensory, what I do is even use a sandy texture or something so that the students can trace their finger while pronouncing the

phoneme. Sometimes I even add gestures, gestures so that the sound isn't just auditory, but so they can also touch their face and learn the phoneme being studied. So, in that way, I combine sound, image, and even physical sensation, whether on the face or on a card, before moving on to the part where they are already pronouncing complete words. That's what I do.

e. Well, how are you, Fabiola? It might be worth mentioning before we begin this interview that the information shared here is confidential and will only be used for your research. Exactly, Miss, don't worry. Okay, regarding sensory phonetic activities, in my experience, I've taught linguistics, and one of the activities included in the curriculum is phonetics, specifically phonetics and phonology. So, one of the activities I've done with students is to use sound to recognize the sound with its symbol and letter. This involves discussing whether the sound is short or long. I've taught this subject online, so how do I implement it? With audio and presentations, obviously, so that students can see the visual aspect and recognize the phoneme as it's represented. Because we know that in English, phonemes are different from letters and graphemes. So, we use visual materials first, and then the sound itself, perhaps with gestures, exaggerating the sound a little, and of course, with supplementary materials such as English texts, phonetics texts, and the material available online, which is also very useful. Basically, the visual, auditory, and movement aspects, which would be gestures, have the most influence.

2. What experiences have you had teaching phonemes to improve reading skills?

a. As I mentioned before, the experience with the children was fantastic because they imitate everything they see. For example, when they have to place their lips forward, they would imitate it, and that's very important because they acquire good pronunciation from a young age. If in the future they see difficult words but remember how to pronounce those phonemes, they will do it without fear. However, with teenagers it's very different. If you tell them to pronounce

it this way, they are very embarrassed and don't want to do it, and it's difficult. So I believe that teaching phonemes and phonetics is relevant in the early years of a child's life.

b. Well, as you know, the Ministry of Education currently only grants three hours a week, and that has actually harmed student learning, unlike the five days or five hours a week that students used to have. That helped a lot, so at least for the student to progress. I've always had them learn songs, so they listen, they familiarize themselves with words they already know, so they start recording the sounds, and when they hear an audio recording, they can identify which word is being said. Obviously, it's not everything because we don't speak the language, but they do try to grasp what's being said or the words they already know.

c. Yes, ah, many experiences, well, in this case the kids sometimes do get a little frustrated because there are words that sound very similar, uh, but I try to relate them to real life, ah, let's say I tell them this one here, the "ph" sounds like "f", uh, for example, let's use it in some word, and then they try to make that differentiation, and so on, relating it to real life more than anything, so that it is a lasting learning experience, in this case.

d. From experience, I've noticed that students begin to participate in multisensory activities because they retain phonemes more quickly. This is because they're no longer just memorizing phonetic rules auditorily or visually. For example, if I've had a group of children with decoding difficulties, what I do is incorporate hand movements and textures. This helps the children finally see the difference between similar sounds. For instance, I always tell them that between "b" and "v," they begin to notice the difference because they can feel that "b" is just like this, while the other, "v," even feels a vibration. This improves their accuracy when reading correctly. I realize that this helps the students tremendously.

e. Well, speaking specifically about my experience teaching this linguistics course—and in this case, with teenage students or young adults—I have indeed noticed a change, an improvement, after the students review and integrate this aspect of phonetics and phonemes. At first, they try to memorize words, yes, but then they start to develop certain “codes” for phonemes and certain groups of words that, with practice, allow them to combine the sounds with words. So I think it’s very effective. As for children—I’ve also had experience working with them—I’ve found that they pick up phonemes much faster. Perhaps the integration of phonemes isn’t quite as challenging for them. One aspect that’s been a bit more difficult with them is linking the grapheme—the letter—to the sounds. However, with practice, through various classroom activities and different audio and group activities, children learn phonemes much faster than adult students—exactly, yes.

3. What is the best sensory-based phonics strategy you have used to improve reading skills?

a. Well, as we know that students learn in different ways, we used to, well in my case I used to make flashcards of the phonemes, put pictures of the object on them, and also have them cut up paper on a small sheet of paper and put it together, form it, so they were seeing, they were touching, which is the kinesthetic aspect, and they were listening, as the books also came with resources, there were even audios in which the phoneme was heard and then it was heard within a word.

b. I have used reading comprehension and also the songs, which has helped the students improve a little because it's only three hours, as I said.

c. I think the best strategy is auditory, because it's the way students recognize things, and as I said before, what better than an audio recording directly from someone whose native language

is English? Because let's remember that Latinos, in any case, have a different way of pronouncing things, and while we sometimes try to pronounce them similarly to a native speaker, in this case we don't always achieve it completely. So I think that providing an audio recording or a video, to make it audiovisual, will help a lot to reinforce the reading later.

d. The best sensory experience, the best sensory strategy, is when they trace it, whether in the air or form it with playdough. What I do there is combine the tracing with the verbalization. This makes them learn at the same time how it sounds and what it looks like. This is called multisensory letter formation. Let me remember, it's called multisensory letter formation because they won't only learn it orally, not only auditorily, not only by tracing it. They'll use different senses, so that's why it's multisensory. And what does this do? As a professor at the university says, the hand has memory, and believe me, it does. So the children are constantly reinforcing their muscle memory, their auditory memory, because they're always saying it, hearing it, doing it. This makes them like robots; they become super automated, they become super automated, knowing the grapheme, the phoneme. So they're writing it, saying it, By listening to it, you have grapheme and phoneme, and this makes everything more solid than just seeing it.

e. Right, with children, I've used flashcards and audio recordings a lot—yes, the audio recordings—there are some that are like semantic-phonological or phonetic maps that combine gestures with sounds. So, for example, especially with sounds like “s” and “z,” which in Spanish don't really have a difference—like “vela” and “bvv”—the gesture helps. I also compare the sounds to animal sounds, for example, and this is a technique that works with children and also with adults. So, for the difference between “s” sounds, for example, the comparison would be between “snake” and “la,” and comparing these sounds to animal sounds as well. So perhaps one

of the strategies that has been used is the use of flashcards, audio recordings, and also colors—associating words that have the same sound with a single color.

4. How do phonics-based activities help develop reading skills?

a. In this case, phonetic activities are very important because, as I said before, Spanish and English have certain problems that don't exist in Spanish. So, one of the activities I loved to do with the kids was tongue twisters, tongue tweaks, because apart from learning the word, they say it naturally and quickly. So, they listen and imitate, so this help is very important in that they listen, pronounce, repeat, and then do it at a normal speed, which for us is sometimes very fast, but that's how we speak in English. We speak normally in Spanish, right? Fluently in English too. So, if they learn to listen normally from a young age, they won't have problems when they are teenagers listening to a text or, in this case, reading. They'll do it naturally. You know that besides phonemes, intonation is also important.

b. This helps a lot in reading comprehension because once the student starts reading, they pronounce better and become familiar with what it's about, and obviously, this is accompanied by pronunciation, because through that, students already know what the reading is about. Reading with intonation, "the stress" in this case, is important, and that's what one tries to achieve when reading: for the student to know the correct way to read. And obviously, within reading, there are also punctuation marks, which also greatly determine reading comprehension.

c. Well, if I consider that human beings learn through "doing," then in this case, no, and that's important for a person who is in training, in this case my teenagers. It's important that they learn through some activity that represents their interest, their desire to learn. Sometimes the kids, I have the experience of my students, sometimes they tell me no, English is a little difficult, I don't like it, and especially when it comes to recognizing phonemes, well, no. But I believe that

by doing some of these activities, they will become a little more interested. Now, currently, this thing about multimedia systems, they take it very well and it has had good results.

d. The truth is, I believe that when you use phonetic activities, it allows students to decode words more efficiently and effectively. Their pronunciation improves, their reading fluency increases, and it strengthens phonological awareness, which is an essential skill for learning to read. So, if you use phonetic activities, you know they'll develop phonological awareness. If they learn this, they'll read incredibly fast. What you're doing is reducing their reliance on visual memory. If you give them a tool like this to read texts aloud, it becomes much easier for them, which is fantastic because I consider it the most essential and important thing for achieving reading fluency in a foreign language, which is what you're really aiming for. One more thing: when you say "decode," what is the concept or what does "decode" refer to? Decoding is when students can discern between sounds; they can convert letters or groups of letters into sounds in order to read and recognize them. For example, when they have "cat," then you have decoding there. It's a process to begin with. When the student sees the word, they will first visually recognize it: "cat." Then they will pronounce the sounds of each letter. So, they have "cat." They won't say "ci ei ti," no, they will say "cat." Then they combine those sounds, and now they will have "cat." And then they recognize the word. When students decode, they first recognize the isolated letters, then they produce the isolated sounds, then they combine the sounds, and finally they recognize it as a word. That's what is called decoding. Thank you, I wasn't very clear on that. It's what is known as the relationship that exists between graphemes, which are the letters, and phonemes, which are the sounds. This is used so that students can see written words and read them accurately and, above all, fluently.

e. Well, in this case it helps a lot because in Spanish we're used to reading words exactly as they're written; however, when reading in English, if students don't have a grasp of phonetics, they'll also read words exactly as they're written. So phonetics is essentially the foundation—the starting point—where students begin to connect what they see written with how it's pronounced. Let's say this is also a process that our minds—our brains—go through, because at first it's very difficult to combine what I see with what I produce—with what I say. But then, “aha,” it really does improve a lot because they're no longer reading the words exactly as they're written; instead, they're already applying their knowledge of phonetics. So yes, it helps a great deal.

5. How do sensory activities influence word recognition?

a. Sensory activities help recognize words faster and connect written symbols with textures, sounds, and also with body movements. This action or activity activates several specific parts of the brain.

b. They have a significant influence because through charts or images, students can make connections. So, through this, they practically see, "Oh, this means this," or "This here means this." It's faster when there are images. It's very important to use text. We, as teachers in the teacher training program, haven't been given English books for a long time, so we teachers have been working, searching for materials. Thank God there's YouTube and the internet, which have helped us a lot during all this time, and preparing the student with what they need to know and leveling up to go to university. Because when students graduate and go to university, obviously they need to have at least the four language skills. Well, the way we've worked, we've managed to ensure that the students do succeed.

c. Yes, I do consider them important as well. Just the day before yesterday, I was telling the students—it's an experience—I was telling them that they didn't remember, even though they

were ten or eleven years old, what the color brown was like, for example. And I said to them, "Have you seen Peppa Pig?" and they said yes. "What's the doctor's name?" I asked them, "And what color is he?" That's why I say that sometimes these are things in life that are useful to us. And then I asked them, "Well, how do you say this color, 'coffee' or 'brown'?" And they answered me using those examples. They do manage to remember certain words or certain phonemes, in this case, which are important.

d. I think that when you are using everything related to the senses together, everything related to the sensory, which in this case is visual, we have the auditory part, the tactile part, yes, in this case you are going to create multiple or different memory routes for the same word. What this does to your brain is make it recognize the word faster so that when you read something in the future, you can recognize that word and you won't just have a stimulus, but you'll be able to associate it with your different sensory channels. What does this do? It makes it so that when students hear, see, touch, and even pronounce the sounds, they remember the words more easily. So, how does this help students recognize spelling? And that's the good thing about decoding, what you're researching right now: it makes students recognize spelling patterns. And this is great when I'm talking about English because, as I was saying, this improves the accuracy and speed at which they read. So you'll go from a student who reads slowly and understands little to a student who reads fluently, who reads at a good speed, but above all, who is reading with very good accuracy, that is, very good pronunciation. Well, something aside from my questions that just came to mind, for example, regarding phoneme learning, or what I'm looking into right now, is how... I mean, isn't there confusion for children when they already know, for example, certain sounds or words, like they're currently taught in public schools? They just give them a vocabulary list, but they have to see how to read them. Then they come and teach them

phonology and all that, and it doesn't confuse them. But look what happens there. What happens is that in the system being used to teach words and reading in certain public schools—because it's not in all of them, it's in certain schools—they're using the whole-word method. What is the whole-word method? The whole-word method aims for you to learn the word, to learn to read, but unfortunately, the whole-word method doesn't have phonological awareness. The student learns the word like when you were taught that when you were walking and saw a sign that said Coca-Cola, you read it, you saw it, then you said... Uh, Coca-Cola, even though you couldn't read, yes or no? So you didn't know how to read, stop, but they taught you that every time you saw that over there, it said stop. So you would see it and say stop, and you didn't know how to read. There was no phonological awareness, and that's what the whole-word method does. There's no phonological awareness. Actually, there's no confusion between the whole-word method and then going to phonology, since, by the way, our letters, our consonants, our vowels are similar to English. So, in reality, the student learning phonology in English will help that student so that when they read the word donkey, they'll read it the same way as cow, and they won't see the difference between donkey and cow. So, when they learn it in English, those who can learn it—and I'm not saying that not everyone can learn it, but when there's a teacher who wants to teach this part, to help the student develop their phonological awareness—the student will be able to read it and will say, even though they weren't taught it as such in Spanish, they did. It's going to be the difference between b and v, no no no no no don't create confusion, at least as far as I've seen I haven't found a case, unless you have a student with language problems then, there could be if it's not handled correctly.

e. Right, there are these sensory activities, and I've noticed that what has the greatest impact is color recognition, because then students can see the word and associate the sound with a color.

We've also worked on activities where they have to sort words or place words in the correct color based on the sound. So there, we're essentially combining three sensory activities: speech, audio, and listening, as well as color recognition. And yes, different areas of the brain are connected and, ultimately, the mind starts to program itself and recognize things. However, this recognition of sounds and words also depends a lot on practice; while in other cases it might also involve movement—making a certain movement for a specific sound, so that all words containing that sound correspond to a specific movement. We work on this more with children; with adults, we've focused more on colors, though we can also incorporate movement strategies—kinesthetic exercises—with adults as well.

6. Why do you think sensory-based phonics is important for developing reading skills?

a. Sensory phonetics is very important for reading development because it's a fundamental basis. If children are taught it correctly and effectively, they won't have problems in the future when they see an unfamiliar word and don't know how to pronounce it. For example, in the word "ant," the "a" sounds like "a," right? But if we look at the word "table," the "a" follows a consonant and no longer sounds like "a" but like "ei." So, if we teach children these basics, when they encounter or read new words, they won't be afraid of not being able to pronounce them because they'll be applying the rules and foundations to this new vocabulary.

b. It's important because, for example, sometimes readings come with images. Just by seeing the image, the student already knows what the reading is about, or what the reading might be about. By seeing these images, they already have an idea of what they're going to do, what the ending will be, right? So, through this, it is important. Besides that, they learn a lot of vocabulary, and that helps a lot. But it's important; just by seeing an image in a reading, they already know what the reading might be about. That is important.

c. Well, because it facilitates that lasting, meaningful learning, which, as I was saying before, means that students not only memorize those words, but also apply them in different situations, perhaps in a short sentence, perhaps by doing exercises in a book, but that makes them retain that information that was shared before.

d. Uf! It's extremely important because it makes learning super active and motivating, and it makes it super accessible for different learning styles. When you involve multiple senses, it helps students better understand the relationship, as I mentioned before, between sound and letter. This makes reading, pronunciation, and understanding English texts much easier. When you see this, you also realize that you're paying more attention to different learning styles because in the classroom you have visual students, auditory students, and kinesthetic students. If you only do a visual lesson, what happens to the others? They're left hanging. On the other hand, if you do different things—you do it visually, auditorily, kinesthetically, tactilely—you make the decoding process more concrete and meaningful. This is especially important for younger students because you'll apply it much more with students in grades two through four, which is when phonological awareness begins to develop, or even from first grade. This means you no longer have So many students have learning difficulties, and if you have students with learning difficulties, they have slow learning and sometimes even speech problems. This means that if you involve all the senses, your class will be more engaging. And if you have a class that incorporates various aspects and learning styles, your class will be super motivating. The students will be very interested because teaching a sound is quite complex; they see it as something boring, something for grown-ups, when in reality it's something for children. So that class becomes something they remember easily.

e. Okay, first of all, as I mentioned, it is important because the brain of a Spanish speaker doesn't need to differentiate between what's written and what's spoken—it goes straight to the sound. So, for a Spanish speaker, this is a major challenge because the brain is adapting to a new language, a new way of reading, speaking, and even writing—since the written form doesn't always match how the sound is produced. Therefore, being able to understand how letters or graphemes relate to sounds or phonemes really helps students gradually build models in their brains—models of sounds—so that later they can recognize how a “w” or a double “e” sounds, or how an “au” sounds, or how a “th” sounds, or how a “gh” sounds—or whether it's sometimes silent, so I think it's very important for them to develop their reading skills; otherwise, if they didn't study phonemes, we'd have students who are reading exactly as it's written—which also happens.

7. What challenges do students face when learning to read in English through sensory-based phonics instruction?

a. One of the barriers we as teachers have noticed is that Spanish doesn't have as many phonemes as English. We even have more letters in our alphabet than they do, so there are fewer sounds. It's difficult when they try to imitate English with Spanish and don't use the correct phonemes. But, as I've said before, if we teach them correctly as children, they won't make those mistakes as teenagers. One of the problems isn't so much with the students themselves, but with the resources. We know that private schools have countless resources that they can use to develop naturally through games because there are strategies and technology available. But in public schools or institutions, these resources aren't available, so we're limited. That would be a limitation because, as I said, when they're children, they learn through play, without shame or fear, but teenagers face a barrier.

b. Well, actually, the fear that all students have is the fear of making mistakes when pronouncing words, but as a teacher, before starting any class, or a new class, one has to start with some vocabulary, then through that vocabulary one is repeating, one is even separating the syllables and then they start to grasp it. Sometimes, their difficulty has been because, since they have been used to the Spanish language, they separate the syllables and then in English they don't know where the syllable begins and ends. That is the first fear they have, but when the teacher writes on the board and gives them the sounds, then they grasp it. Their first fear is the error, the fear of making a mistake.

c. What I was saying before is that some people find it difficult, uh, similar words that exist but ultimately have different meanings, and if we use them in sentences, they also have different meanings. So I also try to tell the students, "Okay, let's see, this word sounds like this, but let's also look at the meaning of the sentence." Yes, those are the kinds of difficulties that students always encounter with similar sounds or similar words.

d. No response was provided by the participant.

e. One of the main difficulties, we could say, is the native language. We've already mentioned that, in a way, in Spanish—for example—the sounds we write and the words have their own specific sounds that don't change. However, in English, we have 40 sounds for both consonants and vowels; there are roughly 20 vowel sounds in English, whereas in Spanish we have only five sounds, that's one of the main challenges. However, I could also say that the difference in similar sounds—for example, we've already talked about the "s" and "z" sounds, and the phoneme represented by the letters "th," which has two distinct sounds—these specific phonemes present much greater difficulty when learning to read. And, of course, practice is key;

it depends heavily on practice. A student can take a phonetics or phoneme class, but if there isn't enough practice—both in listening and reading—then it won't help them.

8. Which sensory-based activities are the most difficult for students to perform?

a. In my experience, it's when they hear and write the word. If they don't have a good foundation, they'll write the word, for example, in a dictation exercise, exactly as they hear it, thinking it's like Spanish. We see this problem quite often in schools because, as you know, not all schools teach English from second to seventh grade; some only start in eighth grade. And sometimes in eighth grade, you have to backtrack to get the group of students on the same level and start together. That's the disadvantage we and the kids in public schools have because in private schools, English is introduced in second grade, and they come with that foundation. That's where you see the difference. So, I think one of the barriers is not teaching children phonetics, reading comprehension, and the other strategies I've mentioned from a young age.

b. When they don't have the knowledge or idea, the crossword puzzle is a little difficult for them, but that's at the beginning, because once they get the hang of it quickly, they know which word goes, which ones go horizontally, which ones go vertically, so they try to find where the letters are, but at the beginning it is a little complicated for them, yes.

c. The audios, definitely the audios, because sometimes there are very difficult exercises and also the pronunciations of the people who recorded those audios are sometimes very fast, so I consider that the audios are one of the most difficult sensory activities or difficulties that they have had, and sometimes even we ourselves have.

d. I think the most complicated ones have been when they have to discriminate, when they have to auditorily decode sounds that are very, very similar to each other. For example, when they have to differentiate the 's' sound, like, let me think, when you have the word 'sink' or the

verb 'to sink' and 'think'. So, for them to be able to auditorily discriminate these sounds is an arduous task. If you're using the multisensory approach, you have to create very different gestures for each sound. This makes the class a bit challenging, since it will require not only coordination between auditory perception and a motor response. So, yes, it can be very challenging in a class. I believe that in this case, practice is what will make this difficult activity easier. If you, do it again and again and again, it can become more consistent. And as long as you have visual materials that the students can manipulate, obviously, with time, they will improve little by little. It's not that everything is difficult or impossible. It's just a matter of you putting in the effort and being consistent. If you're going to apply the multisensory approach to two or three letters, know that you'll have to apply it to all of them. That way, the student feels a sense of consistency and knows they're going to learn it in a different way, even a somewhat fun way, and it won't become a chore like, "Oh, here we go again with the sounds." It's great, it's great! I taught sounds to 5 or 6-year-olds, and it was incredible. In Spanish, they learn those sounds when they're little, but here now it's taught in whatever grade they're in. For example, in public schools, in many schools, they don't teach these things. They even have their English teacher in seventh grade, meaning they hardly have any before then. I'm telling you this because my sister is a teacher in a public school, but she's an early childhood teacher, and she's had to teach classes in English. So they give them all superficial instruction, everything they need to learn phonology. I think it has to start young because that's when they develop their ear, and she They learn, that's why my thesis was about the advantages of teaching phonemes to young EFL learners. I explored the advantages of teaching phonemes to children, not just young students, in this case, who are learning a foreign language like English. So I focused on students from second to fifth grade. That wasn't to say we closed the field there, but it was directed towards that, since

most of the teachers I interviewed had taught the subject, so they were already somewhat familiar with it. So, as you say, if you don't develop this phonological awareness from a young age, it's difficult, especially for older students, because they take it as a joke. And even more so, because, for example, this year I teach elementary school, and when I have this difference, as I was saying, "sink and think," I have students say, "Let's see, put your tongue between your teeth, 'No, Miss,'" and I tell them to exhale. I have them put a piece of paper in front of them, and it goes something like this: "Okay, move the paper." They're there, and they're already laughing because some of them are being too funny, just blowing on it, and I tell them no, blow, put your tongue in the middle and exhale. You should feel a little resistance on the paper, and that's how you'll realize you're making the correct sound. On the other hand, when you blow, the air goes down; when you blow, the air goes forward. And the problem is when you have teachers who aren't specialized in English, like in your sister's case. She's not an English teacher, but she's had to teach. That's where the problem comes in. That teacher does what they can, what's within their reach, and you really can't demand more than that. As teachers, we always try to give our best, but the kids don't learn, and they're always saying, "I wasn't taught English." You teach music called chants, which are little songs that have the sound you're studying. Practice over and over. That makes it easier. The auditory part is super good, the musical part is super good for this, but it has to be something that repeats the sound over and over again, with sounds that come from four lines and each a line with six, seven words and nothing more.

e. Well, sensory activities when we only have audio—and this happens, for example, with children—if, if we don't use other sensory activities—for example, visual ones like colors or flashcard images—then it would be very difficult for our minds to associate the sound with the letter. So, for adult learners, one of the biggest challenges arises when they have only audio

material—just audio—and aren't observing anything that helps them develop, sometimes having similar sounds—yes, sometimes in practice this happens—because the sounds are very similar, and when there isn't much practice, they tend to get the sounds mixed up. It will depend a lot on which strategies are applied in the classroom. And yes, phonetics is one of the, let's say, linguistic components that are important and, at the same time, represent a challenge for English learners. One more question—for example, about that last question—or maybe just a little bit more on that before moving on to another question. Maybe this also depends on the students' attitude sometimes, because not many of them are shy about practicing the sounds. That's what I was going to ask you—because, for example, when you play a song for them to listen to and you want them to perform it, they think they're going to sing and they'll mess it up, even the vocalization and the way to pronounce the words—so right there they already feel embarrassed and don't want to do it. So, this is a good activity, I think, but I also think you could add a video that shows what the song is saying. That way, I think they'll develop their understanding a little more. Yes, yes—it's all about practice; it takes a lot of practice. Yes, yes, it's all about practice, it takes a lot of practice because it's true—we also have to consider that when we're working with children, we're not just going to teach signs and phonemes; we really have to integrate other activities—songs, colors, flashcards—everything that has to do with activities the student can associate with sounds and letters, as well as collaborative activities with their classmates, where everyone has the opportunity to read a part of a story, sing a song, or practice together, and through repetition a lot of repetition—so those aspects are also very important.