Teachers' Beliefs and Teaching Practices in Teaching Phonics to Lower Primary Learners

Masturah Aimuni Mohd Zin
Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

Kim Hua Tan[*]
Taylor's University Lakeside Campus, Selangor, Malaysia

Syar Meeze Mohd Rashid
Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

Suziana Mat Saad
School of Language and Linguistics, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract. In English language education, it is essential for young students to demonstrate proficiency in macro skills. Phonics scaffolding leads to more proficient macro skills but the mastery of phonics is frequently overlooked in the process of acquiring language proficiency, as educators frequently emphasize practicality rather than the technical and fundamental aspects of the language. Relevant research has demonstrated the significance of phonological awareness in English language instruction. However, current studies that focus on teachers' beliefs and teaching practices' relationship in phonological instruction is limited. Hence, this research aims to examine teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching phonics to young learners. The research employed a survey design by distributing questionnaires to 150 lower primary teachers at suburban schools in Gua Musang, Kelantan, Malaysia. The findings indicated that there is a positive correlation between the teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices, which demonstrates that teachers' beliefs and teaching practises influence young students' phonics mastery. The significance of this study lies in its contribution of progressive and relevant approaches to the teaching and learning of English phonics.

Keywords: teaching phonics; English language teaching; teachers' beliefs; teaching practices

[*]Corresponding author: *Kim Hua Tan; KimHua.Tan@taylors.edu.my*

1. Introduction

The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013–2025 Policy (Ministry of Education, 2013) introduced phonics as a new mechanism to teach early reading in English as a second language (L2) to improve its literacy. These policy changes are significant since there is insufficient data to indicate that teaching L2 learners to read using the phonics method is considered the most effective method (Bowers, 2020). Malaysia's English language curriculum, that had long embraced the whole-language approach to reading and literacy development, then was superseded by this new method. Administration and teachers have employed various strategies and tools to facilitate the L2 acquisition of students (Stalin & Tan, 2020). However, the preponderance of research on the phonics approach to English reading instruction has been conducted in environments where English is the native tongue (Wise & Bradbury, 2022).

This study intends to examine the influence the existing practices and beliefs of Malaysian English teachers have on the instruction of reading English, as well as the extent they have integrated phonics into English instruction, considering the implementation of this new syllabus. Current research demonstrates that the explicit systematic phonics strategy supports young readers (Piasta & Hudson, 2022; Sanden et al., 2022; Castles et al., 2018). This study establishes the argument that pupils require a technique to decipher those written symbols since the English language's spelling is so complex. This technique is dependent on the language they are learning and, for English, they must understand how letters correspond to sounds.

Phonics integration into the new curriculum will be extremely difficult because Malaysia's English-reading pedagogy has never been exposed to the phonics approach previously (Noor et al., 2022). Some teachers have not really emphasized the phonics approach among the students, as these teachers have not utilized a commercial phonics program and their assumption is that children learn letters and sounds unintentionally (Campbell, 2020). The disregard of phonics teaching especially could be seen in the low proficiency in reading among the students (Clemens et al., 2021) The teachers believe that teaching phonics are not important in the acquisition of a second language. Therefore, it affects the teaching practices of the English language in Malaysian classroom (Nicholson & McIntosh, 2020).

There has been very limited researches performed on teachers' beliefs and teaching practices in teaching English language, especially in the area of teaching phonics. Since the teachers are the ones who put policy into practice, it is critical to take their duties and perspectives into account if curriculum reform is to be successful. Teachers possess unique pedagogical perspectives and have devised their distinctive approaches based on their experiences (Borg, 2019; Zhong & Kang, 2021).

There is scant research on language teachers' beliefs and teaching practices in Malaysian education, and when it does exist, it merely briefly describes what it entails and does not really address its underlying causes. Relevant research has

demonstrated the significance of phonological awareness (PA) in English language instruction. However, current studies that focuses on teachers' beliefs and teaching practices' relationship in phonological instruction are limited. Similarly, Graham et al. (2014) claimed that in the area of second language teaching, there is a lack of research on teachers' beliefs. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine teachers' beliefs and teaching practices in teaching of phonics to national primary school pupils.

This research is carried out:
1. To identify teachers' beliefs in teaching phonics.
2. To identify teachers' teaching practices in teaching phonics.
3. To analyze the correlation between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices in teaching phonics.
4.

This research aims to answer the research questions:
1. What are teachers' beliefs in teaching phonics?
2. What are teachers' teaching practices in teaching phonics?
3. Is there a correlation between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Phonological Awareness (PA)
Language literacy is a key issue that requires the prior development of particular skills and knowledge that are acquired through difficult and complex processes, like explicit phonological-based instructions and reading interventions. These processes include the processing of cognitive information, deciphering words in spoken and written formats and understanding written documents. In order to accomplish this goal, PA is essential. Metalinguistic, morphological, and print awareness have all been recognized in earlier research as cognitive components that lead to literacy. However, PA has the greatest predictive value of any of these factors. In phonics, children learn to read with a focus on letter-sound relationship rather than only digraphs and diphthongs (Yopp & Yopp, 2013; Gillon, 2018).
When children are processing advanced literacy tasks, a poor PA in language learning may cause literacy obstacles and impact children's long-term outcomes (Lerner & Lonigan, 2016).

PA is a shared feature of phonological processing abilities—a term that has been interchangeably used to explain the PA process—and metalinguistic awareness. A person's explicit and conscious capacity to break down sounds into distinct units and combine these units into a single word, as well as their understanding that verbal communication is made up of small structures (such as syllables and phonemes), are the sources of this multilevel linguistic ability (Gillon, 2018; Penaloza–Lopez et al., 2015; Yopp & Yopp, 2013; Bandini et al., 2013). In this form, PA can be divided into three categories: onset rime awareness, phoneme or phonemic awareness, and syllable awareness. Each of these categories can be developed differently and in a hierarchical order by language learners (Gillon, 2018). PA can be enhanced through an explicit and systematic regime of treatments (Huo & Wang, 2017) offered in phonological-based instruction (i.e.

phonics instruction and PA-based instruction) and reading interventions. In phonics, children are taught how to read with a specific focus on letter–sound correspondence instead of being limited to digraphs and diphthongs (Yopp & Yopp, 2013; Gillon, 2018).

Alarmingly, nowadays, high illiteracy rates are observed amongst young learners, in particular pronunciation-related literacy. Early literacy (EL) is an important aspect that determines the capacity of children to achieve language and academic learning through reading, writing, listening and speaking. Apart from serving as an indicator of children's academic and communication successes, EL also encompasses the abilities and capabilities of learners to connect various linguistic components, including alphabets, PA, communication and symbolic representation (Rohde, 2015). According to Brown (2014), phonology, phonics and phonemic awareness are essential in EL. Other studies have also identified PA as one of the strongest precursors in language literacy (Saiegh-Haddad, 2019; Krenca et al., 2020; Farquharson et al., 2018). Conclusively, PA measures hold some predictive power over the later reading skills of children, whereas syllables and rimes only hold a low predictive power.

2.2 Teachers' Beliefs and Teaching Practices
Research has shown that instructors' beliefs are crucial since they shape their classroom behaviors and practices (Charles Spawa & Hassan, 2013; Aksoy, 2015; Kutálková, 2017; Farrell & Guz, 2019). In order to see positive changes in the classroom, it is vital to make teachers cognizant of their teaching beliefs regarding language learning (Utami, 2016). Teaching practices are among the most significant factors that are frequently linked to teaching beliefs. Analyzing teaching practice is considered a pivotal way in improving teaching and promoting student learning (Finkelstein et al., 2021).

A study investigating teachers' beliefs and teaching practices of teaching English second language (ESL) was conducted by Collin and Samuel (2017). The participants firmly believed that teachers should demonstrate the most successful problem-solving methods and emphasize their role as facilitators in students' learning. Participant teaching practices reflected these views and, hence, the participant's teaching beliefs and practices matched.

Alternatively, Karimi and Nazari (2017) examined instructors' beliefs and listening teaching practices. They examined bachelor's and master's degree qualified teachers' beliefs and practices. The study found that these teachers had similar listening and teaching beliefs but different teaching practices. In addition, there was also no correlation between their teaching beliefs and teaching practices. Then again, after the COVID-19 pandemic, children and young learners are particularly vulnerable to the psychological and physiological effects of the pandemic (Temban et al., 2021). Hence, teachers' beliefs and teaching practices varied in techniques, with Mandasari and Aminatun (2022) focusing on digital media for English learning and Nikolopoulou and Kousloglou (2022) and Gao et al. (2022) concentrating on online instruction.

2.3 Teachers' Beliefs and Teaching Practices in the Teaching of Reading/Phonics Approaches

Diverse areas of English language teaching have been the focus of research on language teachers' beliefs. These included teachers' beliefs and teaching practices in the instruction of various English language skills, including listening (Graham et al., 2014), speaking (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015), pronunciation (Baker, 2014) reading (Khalifa et al., 2020), writing (Crusan et al., 2016) and teaching of grammar (Benghezala, 2020).

Most research findings concern first language (L1) contexts, with less representation of reading research in second language (L2) contexts (Borg, 2006). Most L2 reading research focuses on language competence and language knowledge for reading development; the problems of L1 linguistic, strategic, and content knowledge transfer in L2 performance; and cultural and instructional factors that affect reading development. As a result, the reading research community devotes little attention to research on early reading and lower-level reading skills.

The majority of research on English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' cognitive abilities in reading focuses on reading comprehension (Atai & Fatahi-Majd, 2014; Kuzborska, 2011), reading strategies and skills (Bamanger & Gashan, 2014; Odo, 2017), and reading instruction (Ko, 2013). However, there has only been minimal research investigating EFL teachers' beliefs on reading instruction methods and pedagogy or their understanding of word recognition level constructions.

There is a wide range of opinions among EFL teachers regarding the best reading methodology. When Lim and Torr (2007) studied the reading strategies used in their EFL teacher participants' classrooms, they discovered that they adjusted these strategies depending on the lesson's adequacy. They came to the conclusion that this might be because teachers in English classes are trying to teach students how to communicate and express themselves freely in the target language. In a study by Fuchs et al. (2019), 167 Israeli teachers revealed that although they acknowledged the phonics method was beneficial for young learners, they still focused more on reading fluency exercises. Vaisman and Kahn-Horwaitz (2019) reached the same conclusion, revealing that teachers recognized the importance of word recognition abilities but were reluctant to employ them effectively in the classroom due to inadequate word recognition level expertise. Instead, in order to strengthen proficient reading and spelling abilities, teachers emphasized the whole-language approach. It is clear from the research that instructors' professed views and actual behaviors are frequently at odds, for the reasons listed.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative approach to answer the research questions as it assumed that cognition and behavior are highly predictable and explainable, and that it can help the researcher to identify the relationships that enable them to make probabilistic predictions and generalizations (Ary et al., 2010; Johnson & Christensen, 2017). This study employed a survey design to identify teachers'

beliefs and teaching practices in the teaching of phonics. The study was conducted at 39 primary schools in Gua Musang, Kelantan, Malaysia. The demographic is similar to suburban and rural teachers.

This study targeted lower primary English teachers as they are the only level that teaches phonics. The researcher used a systematic random sampling to choose the participants. The questionnaire was distributed to 150 chosen teachers. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the respective schools' English panels through the schools' administrators after permission was granted by the State and District Education Department.

The research instrument used in this research was a questionnaire. It was divided into three sections. Section A is the respondents' teaching beliefs and Section B is their teaching practices. The 'Background Information' section is the demographic data of the respondents. The printed questionnaire was distributed and collected within one month after being distributed; only 124 questionnaires were returned back.

The data obtained were analyzed using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Software version 23. Descriptive analysis was used to answer research question 1 and 2. For the interpretation of mean score, this study adapted the interpretation by Nunally (1978) which uses four levels of interpretation. This type of data analysis was used to form an inference on the correlation between beliefs and teaching practices. The Pearson correlation is used to test for a relationship between two variables (Creswell, 2012). The value of Pearson correlation ($r = -1$ to $+1$) for this study employs the correlation classification by Davies (1971).

4. Findings and Discussions

This study was carried out in 39 primary schools in Gua Musang, Kelantan, Malaysia, and 124 teachers took part in the survey. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the 124 respondents of this study. As seen in Table 1, 103 of the respondents (83.1%) were female, while 21 respondents (16.9%) were male. Regarding ethnicity, 103 (83.1%) of them were Malay, 15 (12.1%) were Chinese and 2 (1.6%) were Indian. The rest of the 4 respondents (3.2%) were from other ethnic minorities.

Table 1: Respondents' gender and ethnicity

Demographic profile	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	21	16.9
Female	103	83.1
Ethnicity		
Malay	103	83.1
Chinese	15	12.1
Indian	2	1.6
Others	4	3.2

The results from the questionnaire were presented in frequency, mean score and standard deviation. For the interpretation of mean score, the interpretation by Nunally (1978) was employed, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of mean interpretation

Mean Value	Level of Interpretation
1.01 – 2.00	Low
2.01 – 3.00	Medium Low
3.01 – 4.00	Medium High
4.01 – 5.00	High

Table 3 shows the descriptive analysis of the teachers' beliefs in teaching of phonics. There are 19 items under this section, comprising language skills that are used during the teaching of phonics.

Table 3: Teachers' beliefs in teaching of phonics

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
B1	Learning to read should involve attending closely to the print on the page.	3.89	0.73	Medium High
B2	The beginning reader should be taught phonics skills.	4.27	0.77	High
B3	If teachers spend more time teaching phonics, pupils would be able to work in more advanced skills at an earlier age.	3.91	0.82	Medium High
B4	Pupils should do more listening and less reading to the teacher while learning phonics.	3.32	1.05	Medium High
B5	The teaching of phonics is the responsibility of every English teacher.	4.10	0.87	High
B6	Reading is the most important area among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in teaching of phonics.	3.51	0.72	Medium High
B7	Reading skills are lacking in my pupils.	3.75	0.83	Medium High
B8	I have explicit preparation for the teaching of phonics.	3.16	0.87	Medium High
B9	Reading is a skill that can be taught.	3.23	0.92	Medium High
B10	Sight vocabulary learnt in isolation does transfer to text reading.	3.91	0.77	Medium High
B11	To enhance reading skills and attitudes, more time should be devoted to discuss meaning.	3.78	0.81	Medium High
B12	The main difficulty for learners in reading arises from lack of basic knowledge in sounding and blending the sounds.	3.65	1.13	Medium High
B13	More emphasis needs to be placed on the role of reading in the learning process of phonics.	3.98	0.66	Medium High
B14	Raising the quality of children's reading skills affects their learning positively in all subject areas.	4.00	0.77	High
B15	The main difficulty for learners in reading arises from the lack of basic knowledge about the reading of phonics.	4.03	0.85	High

B16	For effective learning, literacy programs should be organized to allow for the specific study of separate skills such as comprehension, word recognition and phonics.	4.27	0.76	High
B17	It is important to decode words in a lesson.	4.25	0.58	High
B18	It is important to separate words into sounds.	4.07	0.66	High
B19	It is possible to teach learners how to read more effectively.	4.02	0.81	High

In analyzing the teacher's beliefs in teaching of phonics, item B2, 'The beginning reader should be taught phonics skills' (mean = 4.27, SD = 0.77) had the highest mean. This item had the respondents' highest belief. In general, the respondents agreed that teaching phonics skills to students is necessary for teaching beginner readers. Other experts concurred that mastering phonics is crucial to acquiring a language because it is a fundamental skill (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Vandergrift & Baker, 2015). Early literacy (EL) measures students' ability to connect alphabets, PA, communication, and symbolic representation (Rohde, 2015). Since phonology, phonics and phonemic awareness are essential in EL (Brown, 2014), it is vital for teachers to emphasize teaching of phonics methods in the classroom.

Nevertheless, since the English language has approximately 44 phonemes (25 consonants and 16 vowels) represented by 26 letters, some English language learners are required to perform letter–sounds mapping tasks. This process poses several challenges given that some of these letters or clusters of letters do not precisely correspond to one another, given the differences in the linguistic features of the English language (e.g. phonology and orthography). For instance, consonant clusters or digraphs in English (e.g. 'th'; /θ/ or 'ch'; /tʃ/), are completely absent from other languages, such as Indonesian and Malay. This orthographic element in English is perceived by some English language learners (ELL) and most EFL learners as a tumultuous task due to pronunciation inconsistencies (Ambalegin & Arianto, 2019). Hence, teachers ought to implement suitable approaches to enhance the EL of young English language learners and examine the applicability of these treatments in the specific educational contexts of these learners.

The item that had the lowest belief among the teachers was item B8, 'I have explicit preparation for the teaching of phonics' (mean = 3.16, SD = 0.87). The teachers' preparation for teaching phonics was a factor in how difficult it was for students to learn the skill, since teachers do not receive adequate phonics training. The teachers were more impacted by their periphery ideas and concentrated on phonics solely to follow the new curriculum, especially when they had to follow contextual demands (Fives & Buehl, 2012). In order to teach phonics concepts and abilities to beginning readers successfully, there are significant findings in the literature that point to gaps in instructors' pedagogical topic knowledge. These results apply to teachers whose primary language is English, as well as the ESL/EFL context (Bae et al., 2019; Lee, 2014; Vaisman & Kahn-Horwaitz, 2019; Zhao et al., 2016).

Given that teachers "must have a solid grasp of both the complexities of English orthography and the language systems that print represents in order to teach pupils recognition of written words," it can be inferred that this is a particular problem for teachers who must teach English as a second language. According to (Moats, 2009) teachers who lack this knowledge are "likely to promote guessing strategies" (e.g., "What might make sense here?"), "skip that and go on" strategies, the idea that precision is unimportant ("Nice try," or "Accuracy doesn't matter"), or "rote memorization of higher frequency words." Table 4 shows the descriptive analysis of the teachers' practices in teaching of phonics. There are 19 items under this section, comprising teacher's practices that are commonly applied during the teaching of phonics.

Table 4: Teachers' teaching practices in teaching of phonics

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Interpretation
P1	I point out rhyming patterns when I read stories.	3.85	0.73	Medium High
P2	I provide additional opportunities for pupils to practice pronunciation (e.g. pair work) without explicitly teaching phonics.	3.71	0.74	Medium High
P3	I demonstrate the sounds letters make.	4.02	0.72	High
P4	I focus on how well a pupil listens rather than his/her knowledge of reading skills and attitudes.	3.57	0.71	Medium High
P5	I use cue cards and visual aids to teach blending sounds.	3.41	0.91	Medium High
P6	Most phonics experience in my classroom involves the skill of listening and reading to acquire new information.	3.76	0.69	Medium High
P7	I read aloud to the children in the class.	3.32	0.84	Medium High
P8	Pupils in my classroom learn the role of the listener and reader in the learning process.	3.70	0.65	Medium High
P9	As pupils in my classroom develop phonics' reading skills, my overall classroom activities emphasize their use in everyday situations.	3.74	0.77	Medium High
P10	Auditory aids are used in my classroom when I teach phonics.	3.79	0.91	Medium High
P11	I create a classroom environment conducive for phonics reading activities.	3.64	0.76	Medium High
P12	I conduct lesson plans with activities that encourage the application of phonics.	3.67	0.77	Medium High
P13	I use teacher lecture-type explanation when teaching phonics.	3.34	0.81	Medium High
P14	I use learner-initiated activities when teaching phonics.	3.65	0.74	Medium High
P15	I use topics and activities selected by learners when teaching phonics.	3.09	0.94	Medium High
P16	I use activities among pupils when teaching phonics.	3.60	0.73	Medium High
P17	I use authentic audio materials in teaching phonics.	3.52	0.96	Medium High

| P18 | I help children sound out words (i.e. /buh/ + /oy/ = boy). | 3.86 | 0.76 | Medium High |
| P19 | I teach phonics by drilling (e.g. exercises from workbook). | 3.57 | 0.95 | Medium High |

In analyzing teachers' teaching practices in teaching of phonics, item P3, 'I demonstrate the sounds letters make' (mean = 4.02, SD = 0.72), scored the highest mean as the teaching practices being practiced by the teachers. This shows that teachers' lessons are more teacher-centered than student-centered. This finding shows how teachers rigidly remain with traditional teacher-centered practice in teaching. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the teachers abandoned a student-centered approach entirely, as item P2, 'I provide additional opportunities for pupils to practice pronunciation (e.g. pair work) without explicitly teaching phonics' and item P14, 'I use learner-initiated activities when teaching phonics', also scored high. This indicates that teachers do practice a student-centered approach, even if the value is lower that item P3. Indirectly, it indicates that even though they were comfortable to teach by direct instruction, teachers still attempt to cater to the 21st century teaching style by incorporating some student-centered activities in their lesson.

On the lowest end, item P15, 'I use topics and activities selected by learners when teaching phonics' (mean = 3.09, SD = 0.94), was the lowest scoring teaching practice adopted by teachers. This indicates that teachers do not frequently inquire about the students' favored activities while teaching phonics. If the students were given the opportunity to express their choices, this would indirectly allow them to be confident in learning. Given that the teachers were there to assist them, they would not be afraid to learn. This is also related to the affective-filter hypothesis by Krashen — that pupils learn better when they are less nervous or, put in another way, they are in low affective filter.

The findings of this research are equivalent with Xu's (2016) findings. According to Xu (2016), weak foundation and limited understanding to the content cause pupils to feel nervous and demotivated. Low levels of motivation and high levels of anxiety can cause a very negative impact on pupils' L2 acquisition. As motivation and anxiety are the affective variables mentioned by Krashen, teachers have to be aware of their pedagogy and materials so as to avoid the affective variables hindering pupils' learning.

An inferential analysis was then done to identify the relationship between two variables and to investigate the differences based on a factor given. In this research, the teachers' beliefs are the independent variable and their teaching practices is the dependent variable. Before inferential analysis can be done, the normality test of the data needed to be established to decide which type of t-test could be used (Creswell, 2012). Normal data are processed differently using parametric statistic, while abnormal data are processed using non-parametric statistic (Cohen et al., 2018). There are seven ways to determine the normality of data: looking at the histogram curve; through stem-and-leaf plot; variables that have nearly the same value of mode, mean and median; skewness and kurtosis value; Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z test; and Q-Q graphic plot (Ghazali & Sufean,

2018). In this research, the normality of the data was tested through histogram, skewness and kurtosis value and Q-Q graphic plot. First of all, a set of data has a normal distribution when the curve of the histogram is in the perfect shape of a bell or, in other words, a bell curve.
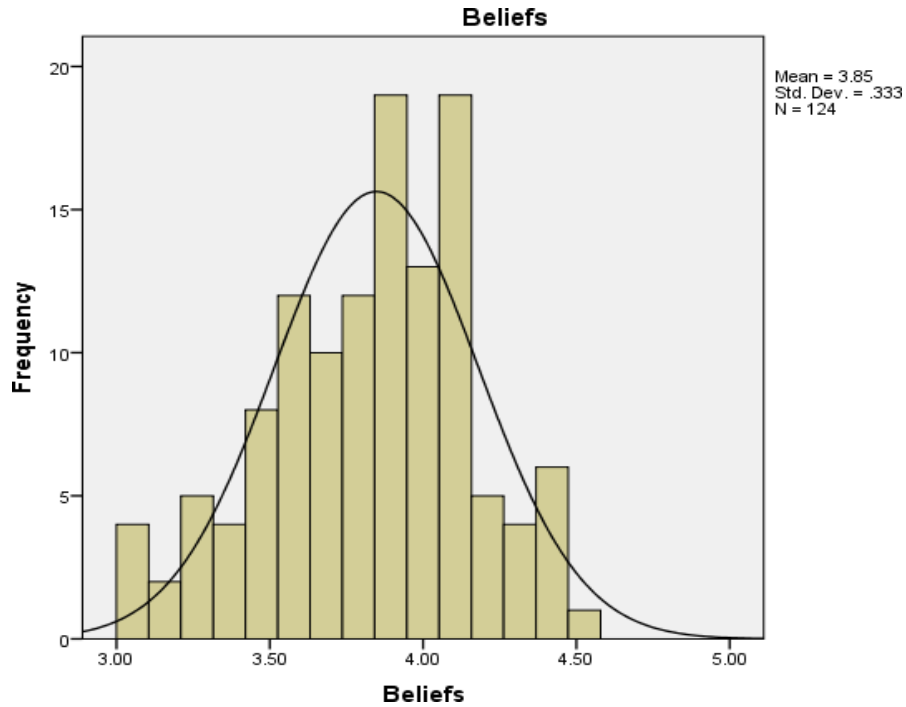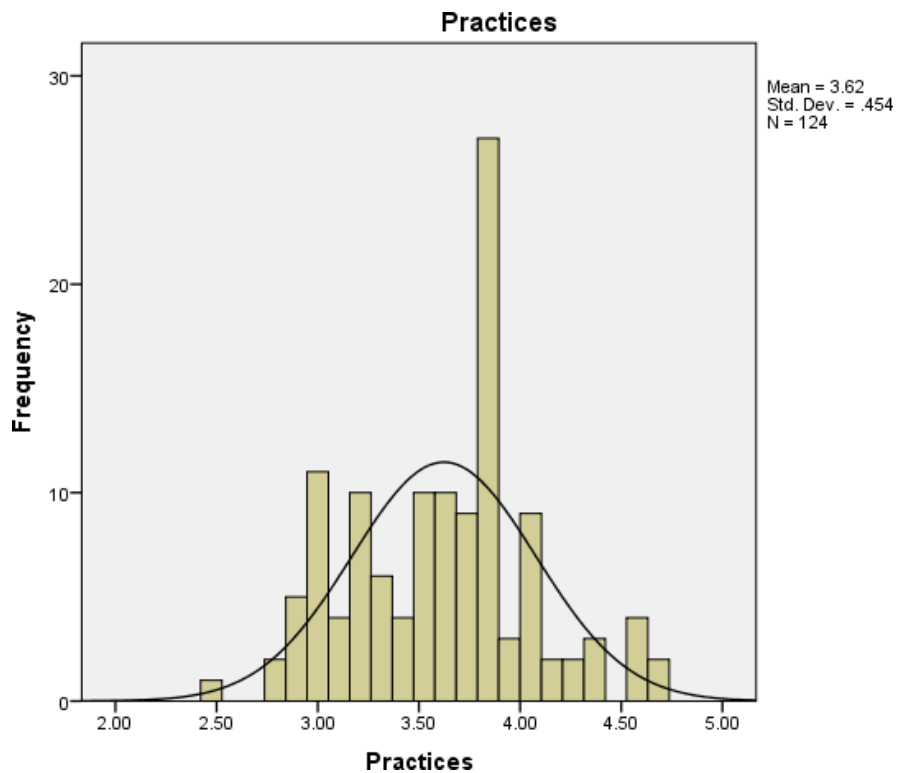
Figure 1: Teachers' beliefs

Figure 2: Teachers' teaching practices

According to Figure 1 and Figure 2, both histograms have a bell curve and, therefore, this fulfils the normality criteria where the histogram of a normal data has a bell curve. Next, the normality of data can be determined by observing the skewness and kurtosis value. The value must be between -1.7 and +1.7. for it to be considered as normal (Ghazali & Sufean, 2018).

Table 5: Variables' value of skewness and kurtosis

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Beliefs	-0.405	-0.054
Teaching Practices	0.145	-0.150

Table 5 showed the skewness and kurtosis values for belief (-0.405, -0.054) and teaching practices (0.145, -0.150). The skewness and kurtosis values for both variables are between -1.7 and 1.7. Thus, the data distribution is normal. Lastly, this research uses the Q-Q graphic plot to test the normality of the data. In a Q-Q plot, if most of the data dots are on or very near the straight line, then the data can be considered as having a normal distribution (Ghazali & Sufean, 2018).
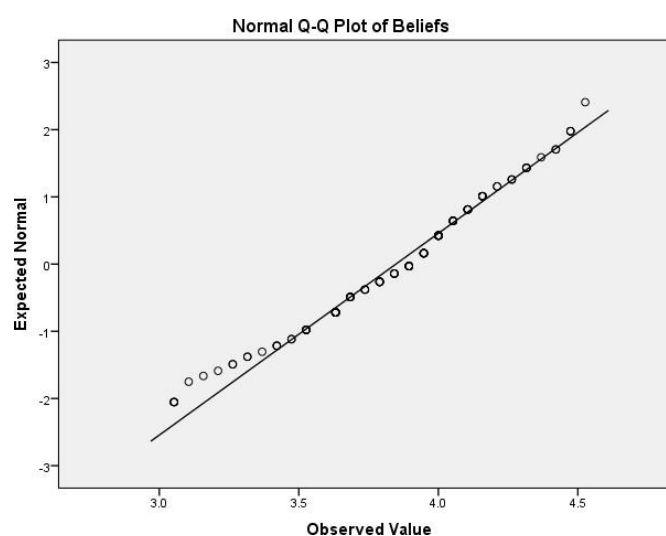
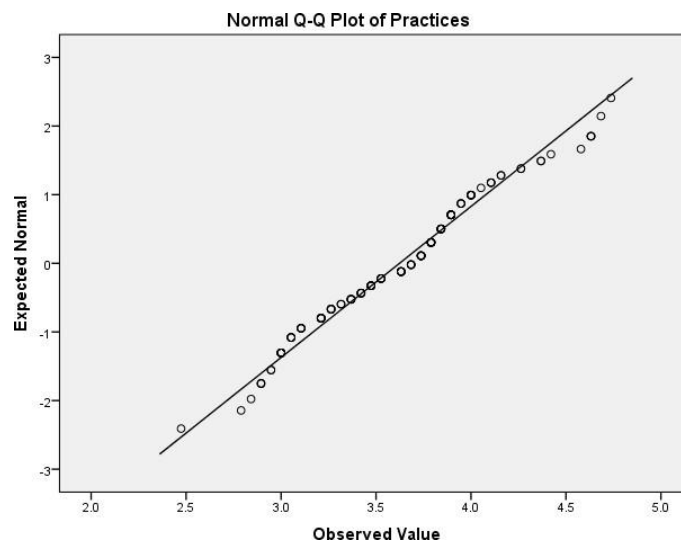**Figure 3: Q-Q graphic plot for beliefs**

Figure 4: Q-Q graphic plot for teaching practices

Figure 3 and Figure 4 show how the dots are either on the straight line or are located very near the straight line. Through the dots of these Q-Q plots, it can be concluded that the data distribution is normal. All three tests come to the result of data having a normal distribution. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data for this research has a normal distribution. Hence, parametric statistic can be used for inferential analysis.

In an attempt to answer this research question 3, 'Is there a correlation between teachers' beliefs and teachers' teaching practices?', a hypothesis was formed:

Ho1   There is no positive correlation between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices.

The findings in Table 3 and Table 4 and obtained from the survey were analyzed using the Pearson Correlation. Table 6 shows the relationship of the two variables mentioned.

Table 6: Pearson correlation relationship between beliefs and teaching

	Teaching Practices		
Correlation	Pearson Correlation	Sig	Interpretation
Beliefs	0.507	.000	Strong

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The result shows that a signification correlation exists between the teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices, where the value of Pearson's r is 0.507, and p is less than 0.05. Since r is bigger than the critical value, the hypothesis is rejected. According to the size of correlation coefficient suggested by Davies (1971), it describes that there is a strong correlation between teachers' beliefs and teachers' teaching practices. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is, in fact, a significant relationship between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices in teaching phonics (r = 0.507, p< 0.05). This shows how teachers' beliefs are reflected positively in their teaching practices. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

5. Conclusion

The research aimed to examine teachers' beliefs and teaching practices in teaching phonics to young learners. This research utilized the survey design of the quantitative method to examine teachers' belief and teaching practices in phonological instructions. According to the analyzed results, the majority of the teachers believed that learners who are at the beginner level of language learning should be taught phonic skills and participate in literacy programs. Teachers using a demonstration of sounds to teach phonics was the most popular teaching practice. This shows that both teachers' beliefs and teaching practices have an effect on the teaching process of phonics to younger learners. Furthermore, there was a positive correlation between teachers' belief and teaching practices in the teaching and learning of phonics. In this sense, the gaps in research of which the focus on teachers' beliefs and teaching practices relationship in phonological instructions are fulfilled.

The researcher did not include teachers of different teaching environments and geographical differences or teachers with students of various cultural background as this research only focused on a particular group of participants. For future research, the researcher can include qualitative research methods to study teachers' beliefs and teaching practices in depth.

This research is significant towards the development and the enhancement of teachers' teaching approaches in phonological instructions, whereby teachers have the awareness to inculcate appropriate teaching strategies to make the acquisition of the English language skill more meaningful.

6. References

Aksoy, K. (2015). What you think is not what you do in the classroom: Investigating teacher's beliefs for classroom management in an EFL classroom. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *199*, 675–683. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.597

Ambalegin & Arianto, T. (2019). "A Phonology-based Study: English Pronunciation Inconsistency" in *The Second Annual International Conference on Language and Literature*, KnE Social Sciences, pp. 106–124. https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i19.4834

Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C., & Sorensen, C.K. (2010). *Introduction to Research in Education.* 8th ed. Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Atai, M. R., & Fatahi-Majd, M. (2014). Exploring the practices and cognitions of Iranian ELT instructors and subject teachers in teaching EAP reading comprehension. *English for Specific Purposes*, *33*, 27-38. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2013.07.007

Bae, H. S., Yin, L., & Joshi, R. M. (2019). Knowledge about basic language constructs among teachers of English as a Foreign Language in China and South Korea. *Annals of dyslexia*, *69*(1), 136–152. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11881-018-00169-z

Baker, A. (2014). Exploring teachers' knowledge of second language pronunciation techniques: Teacher cognitions, observed classroom practices, and student perceptions. *Tesol Quarterly*, *48*(1), 136–163. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.99

Bamanger, E. M., & Gashan, A. K. (2014). In-Service EFL Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching Reading Strategies. *English Language Teaching*, *7*(8), 14–22. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n8p14

Bandini, H.H.M., Santos, F.H. & Souza, G.D.G.D. (2013). Levels of PA, Working Memory, and Lexical Knowledge in Elementary School Children. *Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto)*, *23*(56): 329–337. https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-43272356201307

Benghezala, M. (2020). *Exploring teachers' beliefs and practices regarding grammar instruction in English classes.* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Algiers 2 Abou El Kacem Saadallah]. https://www.theses-algerie.com/1211242033128888/memoire-de-magister/universite-abou-el-kacem-saadallah---alger-2/exploring-teachers-beliefs-and-practices-regarding-grammar-instruction-in-english-classes

Borg, S. (2006). Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice. Continuum. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168808012003070

Borg, S. (2019). Language teacher cognition: Perspectives and debates. *Second handbook of English language teaching*, 1149–1170. https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-58542-0_59-1

Bowers, J. S. (2020). Reconsidering the Evidence That Systematic Phonics Is More Effective Than Alternative Methods of Reading Instruction. *Educational Psychology Review,* *32*(3), 681–705. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09515-y

Brown, C.S. (2014). Language and Literacy Development in the Early Years: Foundational Skills that Support Emergent Readers. *Language and Literacy Spectrum*, *24*(2014): 35-49. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1034914.pdf

Campbell, S. (2020). Teaching phonics without teaching phonics: Early childhood teachers' reported beliefs and practices. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *20*(4), 783–814. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798418791001

Castles, A., Rastle, K., & Nation, K. (2018). Ending the reading wars: Reading acquisition from novice to expert. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *19*(1), 5–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100618772271

Charles Spawa, C.M., & Hassan, F. (2013). "I doesn't know English": Beliefs and practices in the teaching of speaking in ESL classroom. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, *21*(2): 449–460. https://doi.org/10.35631/IJEPC.640026

Clemens, N. H., Solari, E. J., Kearns, D. M., Fien, H., Nelson, N. J., Stalega, M. V, Burns, M., St. Martin, K., & Heoft, F. (2021). *They Say You Can Do Phonemic Awareness Instruction "In the Dark", But Should You? A Critical Evaluation of the Trend Toward Advanced Phonemic Awareness Training.* https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/ajxbv

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education*. (8th ed.). Routledge.

Collin, J., & Samuel, M. S. G. (2017). Not Quite What It Seems: Rethinking the Way We View Teachers' Beliefs and Practices–A Case Study of a Malaysian ESL Teacher. *3L, Language, Linguistics, Literature*, *23*(4). https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2017-2304-01

Creswell, J.W. 2012. *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. Pearson.

Crusan, D., Plakans, L., & Gebril, A. (2016). Writing assessment literacy: Surveying second language teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices. *Assessing writing*, *28*, 43-56. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2016.03.001

Davies, I.K. (1971). *The Management of Learning*. McGraw-Hill.

Farrell, T. S., & Guz, M. (2019). 'If I Wanted to Survive I Had to Use It': The Power of Teacher Beliefs on Classroom Practices. *Tesl-Ej*, *22*(4), n4. https://tesl-ej.org/pdf/ej88/a4.pdf

Farquharson, K., Hogan, T. P., Hoffman, L., Wang, J., Green, K. F., & Green, J. R. (2018). A longitudinal study of infants' early speech production and later letter identification. *PLoS One*, *13*(10), e0204006. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0204006

Finkelstein, S., Sharma, U., & Furlonger, B. (2021). The inclusive practices of classroom teachers: a scoping review and thematic analysis. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *25*(6), 735–762. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1572232

Fives, H., & Buehl, M. M. (2012). Spring cleaning for the "messy" construct of teachers' beliefs: What are they? Which have been examined? What can they tell us? *APA educational psychology handbook*, *2*, 471-499. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2011-11778-019

Fuchs, S., Kahn-Horwitz, J., & Katzir, T. (2019). Theory and reported practice in EFL literacy instruction: EFL teachers' perceptions about classroom practices. *Annals of dyslexia*, *69*(1), 114–135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11881-018-00172-4

Gao, Y., Zeng, G., Wang, Y., Khan, A. A., & Wang, X. (2022). Exploring educational planning, teacher beliefs, and teacher practices during the pandemic: a study of science and technology-based universities in China. *Frontiers in psychology*, 2322. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.903244

Ghazali Darusalam, & Sufean Hussin. (2018). *Metodologi Penyelidikan dalam Pendidikan: Amalan dan Analisis Kajian* (2nd ed.). Penerbit Universiti Malaya.

Gilakjani, A.P. & Sabouri, N.B. (2016). The significance of listening comprehension in English language teaching. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies 6*(8): 1670–1677. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0608.22

Gillon, G.T. (2018). *PA From Research to Practice* (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Graham, S., Santos, D., & Francis-Brophy, E. (2014). Teacher beliefs about listening in a foreign language. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* *40*, 44–60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.01.007

Huo, S., & Wang, S. (2017, May). The effectiveness of phonological-based instruction in English as foreign language students at primary school level: A research synthesis. *Frontiers in Education*, *2*, 15. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2017.00015

Johnson, B. & Christensen, L. (2017). *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Karimi, M. N., & Nazari, M. (2017). The congruity/incongruity of EFL teachers' beliefs about listening instruction and their listening instructional practices. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *42*(2), 62–80. http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2017v42n2.5

Khalifa, A. A. H. A. S., Ahmed, A. O. A., & Ismael, E. A. A. (2020). EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Actual Classroom Practices of Teaching Reading Strategies. *Int. J. Sci. Eng. Technol. Res*, *9*, 53–59. https://ijals.usb.ac.ir/article_3547.html

Ko, M. Y. (2013). A case study of an EFL teacher's critical literacy teaching in a reading class in Taiwan. *Language teaching research*, *17*(1), 91–108. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168812457537

Krenca, K., Segers, E., Chen, X., Shakory, S., Steele, J., & Verhoeven, L. (2020). Phonological specificity relates to phonological awareness and reading ability in English–French bilingual children. *Reading and Writing*, *33*, 267–291. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-019-09959-2

Kutálková, K. (2017). Teachers' beliefs in the Czech Republic: Review study. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* *237*(2017): 1352–1358. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2017.02.224

Kuzborska, I. (2011). Links between teachers' beliefs and practices and research on reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *23*(1), 102–128. https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/765898e1-72a2-4aaf-9846-392ba5da23f7/content

Lee, H. Y. (2014). Inquiry-based teaching in second and foreign language pedagogy. *Journal of language teaching and research*, *5*(6), 1236. https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.5.6.1236-1244

Lerner, M.D. & Lonigan, C.J. (2016). Bidirectional Relations between Phonological Awareness and Letter Knowledge in Preschool Revisited: A Growth Curve Analysis of the Relation between Two Code-Related Skills. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2015.09.023

Lim, C., & Torr, J. (2007). Singaporean early childhood teachers' beliefs about literacy development in a multilingual context. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *35*(4), 409–434. https://doi.org/10.1080/13598660701611412

Mandasari, B., & Aminatun, D. (2022). Investigating teachers' belief and practices toward digital media of English learning during covid-19 pandemic. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, *10*(2), 475–484. https://journal.uniku.ac.id/index.php/ERJEE/article/view/6248

Ministry of Education, M. (2013). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Preschool to post-secondary education).* Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. https://www.moe.gov.my/menumedia/media-cetak/penerbitan/dasar/1207-malaysia-education-blueprint-2013-2025/file

Moats, L. C. (2009). Knowledge foundations for teaching reading and spelling. *Journal of Reading and Writing*, *22*(4), 379–399. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-009-9162-1

Nicholson, T., & McIntosh, S. (2020). An exploration of the relationship between phonological and phonics knowledge, and self-efficacy for teaching. *Dyslexia*, *26*(3), 286–304. https://doi.org/10.1002/dys.1636

Nikolopoulou, K., & Kousloglou, M. (2022). Online teaching in COVID-19 pandemic: secondary school teachers' beliefs on teaching presence and school support. *Education Sciences*, *12*(3), 216. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12030216

Noor, V. H., Khairudin, R., Sulaiman, W. S. W., & Ng, L. O. (2022). The Effectiveness of Fluency Building Technique in Teaching Phonic and Vocabulary to Improve Reading Outcome in Slow Learner Children. *JURNAL PSIKOLOGI MALAYSIA*, *36*(2). http://journalarticle.ukm.my/20548/

Nunally, J.C. (1978). *Psychometric Theory.* McGraw Hill Book Company.

Odo, D. M. (2017). Korean EFL Teachers' Beliefs Regarding English Language Reading Instruction. 중등영어교육, *10*(1), 31–64. http://kate.bada.cc/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/kate_63_3_10.pdf

Penaloza-Lopez, Y., Herrera-Angel, A., Perez-Ruiz, S.J. & Poblano, A. (2015). Phonological awareness and sinusoidal amplitude modulation in phonological dyslexia. *Arq Neuropsiquiatr*, *74*(4):293–298. https://doi.org/10.1590/0004-282X20160026

Piasta, S. B., & Hudson, A. K. (2022). Key Knowledge to Support Phonological Awareness and Phonics Instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, *76*(2), 201–210. https://doi.org/10.1002/TRTR.2093

Rahimi, M., & Zhang, L. J. (2015). Exploring non-native English-speaking teachers' cognitions about corrective feedback in teaching English oral communication. *System*, *55*, 111–122. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2015.09.006

Rohde, L. (2015). The Comprehensive Emergent Literacy Model: Early Literacy in Context. *SAGE Open,* January-March 2015: 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015577664

Saiegh-Haddad, E. (2019). What is phonological awareness in L2? *Journal of Neurolinguistics*, *50*, 17–27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneuroling.2017.11.001

Sanden, S., MacPhee, D. A., Hartle, L., Poggendorf, S., & Zuiderveen, C. (2022). The Status of Phonics Instruction: Learning from the Teachers. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, *61* (1). https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol61/iss1/5

Stalin, L. T., & Tan, K. H. (2020). Use of snapchat to enhance primary school english as second language learners in the writing of personal information. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, *9*(4), 330-338.

Temban, M. M., Hua, T. K., & Said, N. E. M. (2021). Exploring informal learning opportunities via youtube kids among children during COVID-19. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, *10*(3).

Utami, D. N. (2016). The EFL teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices. *OKARA: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, *10*(2), 135–144. https://doi.org/10.19105/ojbs.v10i2.974

Vaisman, E. E., & Kahn-Horwitz, J. (2020). English foreign language teachers' linguistic knowledge, beliefs, and reported practices regarding reading and spelling instruction. *Dyslexia*, *26*(3), 305–322. https://doi.org/10.1002/dys.1608

Vandergrift, L., & Baker, S. (2015). Learner variables in second language listening comprehension: An exploratory path analysis. *Language Learning 65*(2): 390–416. https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12105

Xu, M. (2016). The application of input hypothesis and affective filter hypothesis in colleges English listening teaching. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Education Technology, Management and Humanities Science*, pp. 82–86. https://doi.org/10.2991/etmhs-16.2016.17

Yopp, H.K. & Yopp, R.H. (2013). *Purposeful Play for Early Childhood PA*. Shell Education.

Wyse, D., & Bradbury, A. (2022). Reading wars or reading reconciliation? A critical examination of robust research evidence, curriculum policy and teachers' practices for teaching phonics and reading. *Review of Education*, *10*, e3314. https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3314

Zhao, J., Joshi, R. M., Dixon, L. Q., & Huang, L. (2016). Chinese EFL teachers' knowledge of basic language constructs and their self-perceived teaching abilities. *Annals of dyslexia*, *66*(1), 127-146. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1007/s11881-015-0110-2

Zhong, B., & Kang, Y. (2021). Chinese EFL teachers' perception and practice of phonics instruction. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *12*(6), 990–999. https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1206.15