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Multisensory Phonics Instruction in a Nursery EFL Classroom: A Qualitative Classroom Observation

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abstract

Early phonics learning in nursery context is incredibly understood as a developmental process that benefits from sensory-rich instructional approaches. However, limited research has documented how multisensory phonics practices are enacted in everyday nursery classroom, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. This study aims to describe how visual, auditory, and tactile engagement are integrated into early phonics instruction in a nursery classroom.

Employing a qualitative classroom observation design, the study was conducted in a nursery class where English was introduced through exposure-based instruction. The researcher acted as a non-participant observer and collected data through detailed field notes across multi phonics sessions. Observations focus on instructional sequences, teaching modelling and children response to multisensory phonics activities. The data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns of engagement.

The findings indicate that phonics instruction was implemented through an integrated multisensory approach. Visual cues supported children 's attention to letter forms, auditory modelling enhanced sound awareness, and tactile and movement-based activities sustained engagement and supported sound-meaning associations. Activities combining multiple sensory modalities were associated with longer attention spans and more active participation among nursery-aged learners.

The findings suggest that multisensory phonics practices align with young learners' development characteristics and offer practical insight for early phonics instruction in nursery EFL classrooms.

1. Introduction

What first drew my attention in this nursery classroom was the way phonics instruction was deliberately designed as a sensory-rich experience rather than a purely verbal exercise. From the outset of each lesson, phonics was framed not simply as the production of letter sounds, but as an activity that required children to see, hear, and physically engage with language. Instead of beginning with collective repetition of sounds, the teacher consistently foregrounded the visual form of the target letter, articulated the sound slowly and clearly, and immediately connected it to a concrete physical action involving objects in the classroom. As a result, the phonics lesson unfolded as an integrated sequence of seeing, hearing, and moving, suggesting an intentional multisensory design rather than incidental variation. This integration aligns with research on multisensory learning, which highlights how combining sensory modalities

can enhance attention, perception, and learning, particularly for young learners (Shams & Seitz, 2008).

This approach contrasted noticeably with more conventional “repeat-after-me” phonics instruction that I had previously observed, in which children are often asked to echo letter sounds with limited contextual or physical support. In such settings, phonics learning tends to rely heavily on auditory repetition, with minimal engagement beyond vocal imitation. While these approaches may prioritize accuracy and drill, they frequently position children as passive recipients of sound input. In the observed classroom, however, repetition was embedded within meaningful action. For example, children were encouraged to push a toy truck across a tray of sand while attending to the articulation of the /t/ sound. Through this design, the instructional focus shifted from memorizing isolated sounds to experiencing sounds through interaction with objects, space, and movement.

The combination of visual, auditory, and tactile or kinesthetic engagement appeared particularly well suited to nursery-aged children because of their developmental characteristics. At this stage, learners are still developing sustained attention, symbolic abstraction, and self-regulation, and they often rely on sensory exploration and bodily action to construct meaning. Embodied accounts of cognition emphasize that learning is grounded in perception and action, rather than occurring solely through abstract mental processing (Glenberg, 2015). During the observed sessions, children responded more readily when they were allowed to touch materials, move their bodies, and manipulate objects linked to the target letter. These responses suggest that the phonics activities were closely aligned with how young children naturally explore and make sense of their environment.

Several characteristics of nursery-aged learners were consistently visible throughout the phonics sessions. The children demonstrated short attention spans, frequent shifts in focus, and a strong inclination toward movement. At the same time, they displayed high levels of sensory curiosity, particularly when objects with distinct textures or affordances were introduced. When activities required physical involvement - such as tracing letters in sand, moving toy vehicles, or pointing to visual representations - children appeared more engaged and sustained their attention for longer periods. In contrast, moments of purely verbal instruction were more often accompanied by restlessness or disengagement, suggesting that movement and tactile input played an important role in supporting focus and participation.

Documenting how phonics instruction is enacted in real classrooms is important because learning processes, especially in early childhood, are often embodied, dynamic, and context-dependent. Outcome-based measures can indicate whether children have learned specific letter-sound correspondences, but they rarely capture how learning unfolds moment by moment or how instruction responds to children’s immediate needs. Classroom observation enables researchers to examine instructional interactions, teacher decision-making, and children’s embodied responses in ways that standardized assessments cannot. Through close observation, it becomes possible to see not only what is taught, but how teaching and learning are co-constructed through interaction.

This observation contributes to discussions of early literacy and phonics instruction by offering a practice-based account of how multisensory phonics learning is implemented in a nursery setting. In early childhood and EFL contexts, where children are simultaneously developing foundational literacy skills and encountering a new language, understanding how phonics instruction is mediated through sensory and

physical engagement is particularly valuable. Rather than treating phonics as a purely linguistic skill, the observed practices position phonics as a developmentally situated activity shaped by children's sensory, cognitive, and motor capacities.

Finally, this classroom-based observation addresses a gap in existing phonics research, which often prioritizes instructional effectiveness or learning outcomes while giving less attention to the micro-level practices through which early phonics learning is supported. There remains limited qualitative documentation of how multisensory phonics instruction is enacted in everyday nursery classrooms, particularly from the perspective of a non-participant observer. By focusing on naturally occurring instructional practices, this study seeks to enrich the literature with a detailed, contextualized account of how multisensory phonics learning is experienced by young learners in a real classroom setting.

1.1. Study Objective

This study aims to document multisensory phonics practices in a nursery classroom by describing how visual, auditory, and tactile engagement are integrated into early letter -sound instruction and how children respond to these instructional practices.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

1.2.1. Early Phonics Learning in Nursery Contexts

In the observed nursery classroom, letter-sound relationships were introduced through **repeated sensory exposure rather than explicit explanation**. The teacher consistently presented the visual form of the target letter, articulated its sound slowly and clearly, and embedded the sound within a simple physical action. This aligns with contemporary understandings of early phonics learning, which emphasize **phonological awareness as an emergent skill** that develops through exposure and interaction rather than formal instruction at early ages (Lonigan et al., 2018; Snow & Matthews, 2016).

Research on early literacy development suggests that very young learners benefit from **implicit phonics instruction**, where attention is directed toward sounds and symbols without requiring conscious analysis or metalinguistic labeling (Sénéchal et al., 2017). In nursery contexts, phonics learning is often intended to build **familiarity and sensitivity to sounds**, rather than mastery of decoding skills (Justice et al., 2015). The observed classroom practices reflect this orientation, as instruction focused on recognition and engagement rather than accuracy or assessment.

The approach also appears to be underpinned by assumptions about children's **cognitive and sensory development**. Developmental research indicates that nursery-aged children are still developing executive function, symbolic representation, and sustained attention, making abstract instruction less effective (Diamond, 2016). Consequently, early phonics instruction is most effective when grounded in **sensory-rich, concrete experiences** that allow children to learn through perception and action (Neumann, 2018).

1.2.2. Multisensory Learning in Early Childhood

Visual input was a prominent feature of the phonics sessions, particularly through the repeated display of letter forms, teacher pointing gestures, and the strategic placement of letters within children's visual focus. Visual support has been shown to be crucial in early phonics learning, as young learners rely heavily on visual cues to anchor attention and form initial symbol-sound associations (Ehri, 2020; Piasta et al., 2016).

Auditory input was modeled through **slow, exaggerated, and repeated articulation** of letter sounds. Research on phonological development highlights the importance of clear auditory modeling and repeated exposure for developing early sound awareness (Anthony & Francis, 2005). The teacher's pacing and repetition provided children with multiple opportunities to hear and internalize the target sound without pressure to perform, which is consistent with recommendations for early phonics instruction in preschool and nursery settings (Lonigan et al., 2018).

Tactile and kinesthetic engagement was integrated through activities that required children to touch, move, and manipulate objects associated with the target sound. This practice aligns with **multisensory learning theory**, which posits that learning is enhanced when multiple sensory modalities are activated simultaneously (Shams & Seitz, 2008); although foundational, this framework continues to inform recent early childhood studies such as Mavilidi (2018). More recent research in early literacy suggests that **movement-based and tactile activities** support memory and engagement, particularly for young learners who struggle with sustained attention (Donnelly et al., 2016; Mavilidi et al., 2018).

When visual, auditory, and tactile elements were combined, children appeared more engaged and focused. This observation resonates with studies showing that multisensory instruction can support **deeper engagement and longer attention spans** in early childhood classrooms (Neumann, 2018; Pinter, 2021). Multisensory engagement is particularly suitable for early phonics learning because it reflects how young children naturally learn through embodied interaction with their environment rather than through isolated cognitive processing (Glenberg, 2015; Skulmowski & Rey, 2018).

Nursery phonics learning therefore differs substantially from phonics instruction at primary or upper grades. While older learners are often taught phonics through explicit instruction, blending exercises, and print-based tasks, nursery learners are typically introduced to sounds and letters through **playful exposure, repetition, and interaction** (Castles et al., 2018). The observed classroom reflects this distinction, emphasizing engagement and experience over formal literacy outcomes.

1.2.3. Phonics as Meaningful and Play-Based Learning

The phonics activities observed closely resembled **play-based learning**, a widely endorsed approach in early childhood education. Rather than positioning phonics as a formal academic task, the teacher framed learning as exploration and interaction, allowing children to engage freely with materials. Play-based approaches have been shown to support early literacy development by reducing anxiety and increasing motivation, particularly in language learning contexts (Pyle et al., 2017; Weisberg et al., 2016).

Concrete objects such as toys, textured materials, and letter cards played a mediating role in supporting sound recognition. From a sociocultural perspective, these objects function as **mediational tools** that help children bridge abstract linguistic concepts and tangible experience (Vygotskian theory as applied in recent early literacy research; see Fleer (2019) ;Neumann (2018)). By linking sounds to objects children can see and touch, phonics learning becomes meaningful rather than symbolic.

Movement-based tasks further supported sustained attention and participation. Research in embodied cognition suggests that physical movement can enhance learning by engaging sensorimotor systems that support memory and understanding (Mavilidi et

al., 2018; Skulmowski & Rey, 2018). In early childhood settings, allowing children to move while learning has been found to support both engagement and self-regulation (Diamond & Ling, 2016). The observed phonics activities reflect these principles by integrating movement as an essential component of learning rather than a distraction.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

A qualitative classroom observation approach was considered appropriate for this study because the research aimed to **document and describe naturally occurring phonics practices** in a nursery classroom rather than to measure learning outcomes or instructional effectiveness. This design allowed for close attention to how phonics instruction unfolded in real time, capturing the interactions, materials, and sensory modalities involved in early phonics learning as they occurred in an authentic classroom context.

Observation was particularly suitable for examining aspects of phonics learning that are **process-oriented and interactional**, such as teacher modeling, children's engagement, and the integration of visual, auditory, and tactile elements. These aspects are difficult to capture through formal testing, especially with nursery-aged children whose emerging literacy skills and limited verbal abilities make standardized assessment less reliable. Through observation, the study was able to focus on **how phonics learning was enacted**, rather than on quantifiable outcomes.

2.2. Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in 2023 at Lentera Kasih Primary School, a nursery classroom serving children aged 3–4 years. The class consisted of 5 students and was designed to support early childhood literacy through sensory-rich activities. The class size was small, allowing for close teacher–student interaction. The learning environment was designed to support early childhood learning, featuring open floor space, child-sized furniture, and a range of manipulatives and learning materials accessible to the children.

English was positioned in the classroom as an **exposure-based and routine-based language**, consistent with an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Rather than being treated as a subject with explicit instruction or assessment, English was introduced through daily routines, songs, and short instructional activities, including phonics sessions. The focus was on familiarization and engagement rather than formal language production.

During the phonics activities, the teacher played a central role as a **facilitator and model**. The teacher introduced the target letter, modeled its sound through clear and repeated articulation, guided children's attention to visual cues, and invited them to participate in tactile or movement-based activities. The teacher did not explicitly correct children's responses, but instead reinforced learning through repetition and encouragement.

2.3. Researcher's Role

The researcher assumed the role of a **non-participant observer** throughout the study. This role involved observing classroom activities without intervening in instruction, interacting minimally with the children, and refraining from influencing the flow of the phonics lessons. The researcher's position allowed for a focus on documentation rather than instruction.

To ensure minimal disruption to classroom routines, the researcher remained in a fixed position during observations, avoided direct engagement with the children, and followed the classroom's established schedule. Observations were conducted in a manner that was familiar to the teacher and students, reducing the likelihood that the presence of the researcher altered typical classroom behavior.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed, particularly given the involvement of young children. Permission to observe was obtained from the school and the classroom teacher, and all data were anonymized to protect the identities of participants. No identifying information about the children was recorded, and observations focused on instructional practices and general patterns of engagement rather than on individual children's performance.

2.4. Data Collection

Data were collected primarily through **detailed field notes** taken during classroom observations. These notes documented the sequence of phonics activities, teacher instructions, children's responses, and notable interaction patterns. The researcher also recorded descriptions of materials used, classroom layout, and transitions between activities.

Multisensory elements were documented by explicitly noting instances of **visual engagement** (e.g. letter display, pointing gestures), **auditory input** (e.g. articulation, repetition, pacing), and **tactile or kinesthetic engagement** (e.g. touching objects, moving materials, physical actions). These elements were recorded as they occurred, allowing for later categorization during analysis.

Observations were conducted over **several phonics sessions** within a defined observation period. Each session focused on a specific letter or sound and followed a similar instructional structure, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns across sessions.

3. Finding

This section presents the findings of the classroom observation, organized thematically to illustrate how **visual, auditory, and tactile engagement** were integrated into early phonics instruction and how nursery-aged children responded to these practices.

3.1. Theme 1: Visual Engagement in Early Phonics Learning

The target letter was visually presented to the children in a clear and consistent manner throughout the phonics session. The teacher introduced a single large letter card and positioned it deliberately within the children's direct line of sight. By maintaining a fixed visual reference point, the teacher ensured that the letter remained salient during the activity. This consistent visual exposure appeared to support children's initial familiarity with the letter form, allowing them to attend to its shape without competing visual stimuli.

Rather than displaying multiple letters or rotating visual materials, the teacher sustained focus on one target letter for the duration of the session. This instructional choice reduced cognitive and visual overload, which is particularly important for nursery-aged learners who are still developing attentional control and symbolic awareness. Prolonged exposure to a single letter allowed children to visually process the letter's shape gradually, supporting early stages of letter recognition (Ehri, 2020).

The teacher further directed children's visual attention through repeated pointing gestures, slow tracing movements, and sustained eye contact with the letter card. At

several points, the teacher physically pointed to the letter while simultaneously articulating the corresponding sound, reinforcing the connection between visual form and auditory input. These gestures were not incidental but strategically repeated across different moments of the activity, particularly when signs of reduced attention began to emerge. Such multimodal signaling appeared to function as a cue to reorient children's focus toward the learning target.

Children's responses to visual cues were observable through changes in gaze direction, body orientation, and physical proximity to the letter card. Several children leaned forward or adjusted their sitting positions when the teacher pointed to the letter, indicating renewed attention. Others closely followed the teacher's finger movements with their eyes, suggesting active visual tracking. These behaviors demonstrate that children were not passively observing but actively responding to visual prompts provided during the lesson.

Overall, the observed behaviors indicate that visual salience played a crucial role in anchoring children's attention during early phonics instruction. The consistent use of clear visual stimuli, combined with intentional gestures, supported children's engagement and early symbol recognition. These findings align with previous research highlighting the importance of visually salient input in early literacy development, particularly for young learners who are still developing sustained attention and symbolic understanding (Ehri, 2020; Neumann, 2018).

3.2. Theme 2: Auditory Modeling and Repetition

Auditory input was modeled through slow, deliberate, and repetitive articulation of the target letter sound throughout the phonics session. The teacher pronounced the sound clearly and consistently, often exaggerating mouth movements to make the articulation visually noticeable to the children. Pauses were deliberately inserted between repetitions, allowing children sufficient time to attend to the sound before being expected to respond. This controlled pacing appeared intentional and developmentally appropriate for nursery-aged learners, who require extended processing time when attending to unfamiliar phonological input.

The teacher maintained a steady rhythm of sound production rather than increasing speed or complexity. This repetition created a predictable auditory environment in which children could anticipate and recognize the target sound. By avoiding rapid transitions or multiple sounds within a short period, the teacher appeared to prioritize sound familiarity over immediate production. Such an approach reflects understandings of early phonological awareness as a gradual process supported by repeated exposure rather than explicit explanation or correction (Lonigan et al., 2018).

Children responded to the auditory modeling in varied and individualized ways. Some children attempted to imitate the sound immediately following the teacher's articulation, producing clear or approximate repetitions. Others vocalized the sound softly, partially, or with noticeable hesitation, while a number of children remained silent but attentive. These differences suggest that children engaged with the auditory input at varying levels of readiness. Importantly, the teacher accepted all forms of participation without signaling error or insufficiency, thereby maintaining a low-pressure learning environment.

Rather than requiring uniform repetition, the teacher continued to model the sound consistently, allowing children to participate when ready. This approach emphasized exposure and auditory familiarity rather than performance accuracy. Research on early phonological development highlights that repeated auditory input,

even without immediate vocal production, plays a crucial role in building sound awareness and phonological sensitivity in young learners (Anthony & Francis, 2005; Lonigan et al., 2018). The absence of corrective feedback appeared to encourage continued listening and gradual engagement.

Over time, patterns of vocal participation became more evident. Vocal responses, which were initially sporadic and individual, increased in frequency as the session progressed. Children who were initially silent began to produce sounds after multiple exposures, suggesting that repeated auditory modeling supported increased confidence and participation. Notably, vocal engagement occurred most naturally when auditory input was accompanied by visual cues, such as pointing to the letter, or physical movement involving related objects. This pattern indicates that auditory modeling was most effective when embedded within a multisensory learning context rather than delivered in isolation, supporting research that emphasizes the interdependence of sensory modalities in early phonics learning (Neumann, 2018)

3.3. Theme 3: Tactile and Kinesthetic Engagement

Children were invited to physically interact with objects associated with the target letter sound through hands-on and movement-based activities. These activities were designed to engage children's sense of touch and movement while maintaining focus on the target phoneme. By incorporating physical interaction into phonics instruction, the teacher created opportunities for children to experience letter-sound relationships through direct action rather than through visual or auditory input alone.

One example of this approach was observed during the introduction of the letter /t/. The teacher provided a toy truck and placed a tray of sand in front of the children. Children were encouraged to push and guide the truck across the sand surface while attending to the target sound. This activity required coordinated hand movements, tactile exploration, and sustained attention, as children manipulated the object while remaining engaged with the phonics task. The concrete nature of the materials appeared to make the learning experience more accessible to young learners.

Movement appeared to support sound-meaning association by linking the abstract letter sound to a recognizable object and purposeful action. As children pushed the toy truck, the teacher repeatedly articulated the /t/ sound, synchronizing auditory input with physical movement. This simultaneous engagement of motor action and sound production appeared to reinforce the association between the phoneme and its referent. Such embodied experiences align with principles of multisensory and embodied learning, which emphasize that physical interaction can strengthen memory formation and conceptual understanding (Mavilidi et al., 2018; Skulmowski & Rey, 2018).

Changes in children's engagement were particularly noticeable during tactile and kinesthetic activities. Children who had previously displayed signs of restlessness, such as fidgeting or shifting attention away from the task, became more focused once movement was incorporated. Their physical involvement appeared to channel energy into the learning activity, resulting in longer periods of sustained attention. These observations suggest that tactile engagement may serve as a regulatory mechanism that supports concentration during early phonics instruction.

Overall, the inclusion of tactile and kinesthetic elements played a key role in sustaining engagement and supporting participation in phonics learning. Instances of off-task behavior decreased, and children appeared more attentive and involved throughout the activity. These findings are consistent with early childhood research highlighting the

importance of movement for self-regulation, attention control, and engagement in learning contexts (Diamond & Ling, 2016). The observed practices suggest that integrating physical interaction into early phonics instruction can effectively support young learners' engagement and emerging letter-sound awareness.

3.4. Theme 4: Integrated Multisensory

Elements of visual, auditory, and tactile engagement were consistently combined within single phonics activities rather than presented as isolated instructional components. During the observed sessions, children were not asked to first look, then listen, or then move in separate stages. Instead, these sensory elements co-occurred naturally within the same activity. For example, while children visually attended to a letter card placed within their line of sight, they simultaneously listened to the teacher's articulation of the target sound and engaged in movement-based tasks using objects associated with that sound. This integration created a cohesive learning environment in which multiple sensory modalities reinforced one another.

The simultaneous activation of sensory modalities appeared to support children's engagement by reducing the cognitive effort required to shift between different types of tasks. Rather than processing visual, auditory, and physical information separately, children experienced phonics learning as a unified activity. This cohesion is particularly important in nursery contexts, where young learners benefit from learning experiences that are holistic rather than segmented (Neumann, 2018). The integration of modalities allowed children to remain focused on the target sound while engaging in varied forms of interaction.

Children transitioned fluidly between seeing, hearing, and moving throughout the activities. Visual attention often preceded physical action, as children looked at the letter card or object before initiating movement. Auditory input accompanied both visual and tactile engagement, functioning as a continuous thread that linked sensory experiences together. These transitions occurred spontaneously and without explicit instructional prompts, suggesting that multisensory engagement supported intuitive participation rather than requiring conscious regulation or direction.

Several observable patterns indicated that integrated multisensory engagement supported sustained attention and active participation. Children remained engaged for longer periods during activities that involved visual, auditory, and tactile elements compared to moments of purely verbal instruction. Instances of distraction decreased, and children appeared more consistently focused on the learning task. These patterns suggest that multisensory integration may reduce attentional fatigue by offering multiple entry points for engagement.

Participation during integrated activities was also more evenly distributed among children. Learners who had previously been less vocal or less attentive became more involved when movement and visual support were incorporated alongside auditory input. This suggests that multisensory instruction may create more inclusive learning opportunities by accommodating diverse sensory preferences and developmental readiness levels. Such findings align with multisensory learning theory, which posits that activating multiple sensory pathways can enhance engagement and learning, particularly in early childhood contexts (Shams & Seitz, 2008).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that early phonics instruction in the observed nursery classroom was enacted through an integrated multisensory approach that combined visual, auditory, and tactile engagement. Visual cues anchored children's

attention, auditory modeling supported emerging sound recognition, and tactile and kinesthetic activities sustained engagement while facilitating sound–meaning association. Children’s responses indicate that multisensory phonics practices were developmentally appropriate and effective in supporting early letter–sound awareness. These findings directly fulfill the study’s objective by documenting how multisensory phonics instruction was implemented and experienced in a nursery classroom setting (Neumann, 2018).

3.5. Summary of Findings in Relation to the Study Objective

Overall, the findings demonstrate that phonics instruction in the observed nursery classroom was enacted through a consistently integrated multisensory approach. Visual, auditory, and tactile elements were not treated as separate instructional techniques but were combined within single learning activities, creating a cohesive environment in which multiple sensory modalities worked together to support early phonics learning. This integration shaped how children attended to, interacted with, and participated in letter–sound instruction.

Visual engagement played a central role in anchoring children’s attention and supporting early symbol recognition. The sustained presentation of a single letter, combined with frequent pointing and tracing gestures, provided children with clear and repeated exposure to the visual form of the target letter. These visual cues appeared to help children maintain focus and orient their attention toward the learning target, which is particularly important for nursery-aged learners who are still developing sustained attention and symbolic awareness (Ehri, 2020; Neumann, 2018).

Auditory modeling complemented visual input by facilitating the gradual development of letter–sound awareness. Through slow, deliberate, and repeated articulation of the target sound, the teacher provided children with multiple opportunities to hear and internalize phonological information. Rather than emphasizing immediate accuracy, the instructional approach prioritized exposure and familiarity, allowing children to engage with the sound at their own pace. This aligns with research suggesting that early phonological awareness develops through repeated auditory input and meaningful listening experiences rather than explicit correction or assessment (Anthony & Francis, 2005; Lonigan et al., 2018).

Tactile and kinesthetic activities further enhanced engagement by linking abstract letter sounds to concrete actions and objects. Physical interaction with materials, such as pushing or guiding objects associated with the target sound, appeared to sustain attention and support sound–meaning associations. These embodied experiences allowed children to learn through movement and touch, which is consistent with research highlighting the role of physical activity in supporting engagement, self-regulation, and learning in early childhood settings (Diamond & Ling, 2016; Mavilidi et al., 2018).

Children’s responses across the session - manifested through gaze direction, body posture, movement, and vocalization - suggest that multisensory phonics practices were developmentally appropriate and responsive to the cognitive and sensory needs of nursery-aged learners. Increased focus, longer attention spans, and more evenly distributed participation were observed during multisensory activities, indicating that children were able to engage meaningfully with letter–sound instruction when multiple sensory pathways were activated (Neumann, 2018; Shams & Seitz, 2008).

By documenting how visual, auditory, and tactile engagement were integrated into early letter - sound instruction and how children experienced these practices, the findings

directly address the study objective. The observations provide empirical insight into how multisensory phonics learning is enacted in a nursery classroom context, illustrating how developmentally appropriate, sensory-rich instruction can support early phonological awareness and engagement among young EFL learners.

4. Conclusion

This study documented how multisensory phonics instruction was enacted in a nursery classroom and how young learners responded to visual, auditory, and tactile engagement during early letter–sound learning. The findings show that phonics instruction was not treated as a purely verbal or print-based activity, but as an embodied, interactive process grounded in children’s sensory and developmental needs. By integrating visual salience, repeated auditory modeling, and movement-based interaction within single learning activities, the teacher created a cohesive instructional environment that supported sustained attention, engagement, and emerging phonological awareness.

The observations highlight the pedagogical value of multisensory approaches in early childhood and EFL contexts, particularly for nursery-aged learners who rely heavily on perception and action to construct meaning. Rather than emphasizing accuracy or assessment, the observed practices prioritized exposure, experience, and participation, positioning phonics learning as a developmentally appropriate and meaningful activity. These findings contribute qualitative, classroom-based evidence to the early literacy literature and underscore the importance of examining how phonics instruction unfolds in real-world nursery settings.

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