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Phonological Awareness as a Predictor of Reading Fluency and Oral Proficiency among Senior High School Students: Basis for an Intervention Program

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ABSTRACT

This study examined whether phonological awareness predicted reading fluency and oral proficiency among Grade 12 Strengthened Senior High School students and used the findings to develop a proposed intervention program. A quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive-correlational design with comparative and predictive components was employed among 196 students selected through stratified random sampling from Las Piñas City National Senior High School–Doña Josefa Campus. Researcher-developed assessments measured phonological awareness, oral reading, and speaking performance; data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, group comparisons, Pearson correlation, and separate simple linear regressions. Phonological awareness was rated high (M = 20.79), although phoneme segmentation was the weakest component. Reading accuracy was strong (M = 96.39%), whereas prosodic reading remained developing (M = 2.29). Overall oral proficiency was developing (M = 2.24), with communicative strategies scoring lowest. Significant differences emerged across sex, section, track, and elective cluster. Phonological awareness correlated positively with reading fluency (r = .4425) and oral proficiency (r = .4642), explaining approximately 20% and 22% of their respective variance in separate regression models ($p < .001$). These results identify phonological awareness as a significant but noncausal statistical predictor of both outcomes. A pilot of the proposed SOUND TO SPEECH program is recommended to address phoneme segmentation, prosody, interaction, coherence, and communication strategies. The single-school, non-experimental design and researcher-developed instruments limit generalizability and causal inference. By identifying interconnected language-learning needs, the study offers school-based evidence for targeted instruction and advances SDG 4 through its potential contribution to equitable, sustainable literacy and communication development.

Keywords: *Grade 12, Intervention Program, Oral Proficiency, Phoneme Segmentation, Phonological Awareness, Reading Fluency*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading fluency and oral proficiency are essential language competencies that enable senior high school students to comprehend academic texts, communicate ideas, and participate effectively in educational activities. However, reading difficulties may persist into adolescence, particularly when learners experience limitations in phonological processing, automatic word recognition, and expressive reading. In the Philippines, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 reported that only 24% of Filipino 15-year-old learners achieved at least Level 2 proficiency in reading, highlighting broader concerns about adolescent literacy (OECD, 2023). Phonological awareness is a foundational language skill involving the recognition and manipulation of spoken sounds. Ehri (2022) emphasized the importance of phonemic awareness in establishing connections between speech sounds and written words, while Rice et al. (2022) demonstrated the effectiveness of phonemic-awareness instruction in developing foundational reading skills. Jiang et al. (2023) further established that phonological-awareness training contributes to improvements in English reading performance. More recent evidence suggests that phonological processing remains relevant during adolescence, although its contribution to reading performance may differ from patterns observed among beginning readers (Eremicheva et al., 2025). Reading fluency involves accuracy, rate, automaticity, and prosodic reading, whereas oral proficiency encompasses the broader ability to produce, organize, and communicate spoken language effectively. Quadri et al. (2024) demonstrated the importance of examining reading rate and prosody as distinct aspects of oral reading. Meanwhile, de Jong (2023) emphasized the multidimensional nature of second-language speaking proficiency, including linguistic and strategic competencies and interactional performance. Despite these developments, limited evidence directly examines phonological awareness as a predictor of both reading fluency and broader oral proficiency among Filipino senior high school learners. Accordingly, this study investigated these relationships among Grade 12 Strengthened Senior High School students at Las Piñas City National Senior High School–Doña Josefa Campus. The findings served as the basis for developing a school-based intervention program addressing identified language-learning needs.

Research Problem

Phonological awareness supports reading development through the recognition and manipulation of speech sounds. Ehri (2022) emphasized its role in word recognition, while Jiang et al. (2024) demonstrated its contribution to reading performance. Although Eremicheva et al. (2025) confirmed its relevance among adolescents, research involving Filipino senior high school students remains limited. Reading fluency also requires prosodic competence beyond accuracy and speed (Quadri et al., 2024), while oral proficiency involves linguistic, interactional, and communicative skills (de Jong, 2023; Tsunemoto & Trofimovich, 2024). At Las Piñas City National Senior High School–Doña Josefa Campus, informal classroom observations indicated difficulties in oral reading, pronunciation, and speaking participation. These concerns highlighted the need to determine whether phonological awareness significantly relates to and predicts reading fluency and oral proficiency among Grade 12 students, providing an empirical basis for a targeted intervention program.

Assumptions of the Study

The study was guided by the assumption that phonological awareness, reading fluency, and oral proficiency are related but conceptually distinct language competencies that can be assessed through appropriate performance-based instruments. Phonological awareness was operationalized through phoneme isolation, blending, segmentation, and manipulation, consistent with contemporary explanations of phoneme-level language processing (Ehri, 2022; Rice et al., 2022). Reading fluency was considered a multidimensional competency involving

accuracy, rate, automaticity, and prosodic reading, while oral proficiency was conceptualized through oral production, oral interaction, coherence of spoken response, and communicative strategies (Quadri et al., 2024; de Jong, 2023). The study further assumed that differences in these competencies could be examined across demographic groups and that their statistical relationships could be measured using correlational and predictive analyses. However, no causal relationship was presumed between phonological awareness and either outcome. The proposed intervention program was intended to address needs identified through the findings rather than represent an experimentally established instructional solution.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine whether phonological awareness significantly predicted reading fluency and oral proficiency among Grade 12 Strengthened Senior High School students of Las Piñas City National Senior High School–Doña Josefa Campus. Specifically, it sought to describe the respondents' demographic characteristics in terms of sex, grade section, track, and elective cluster; assess their phonological awareness through phoneme isolation, blending, segmentation, and manipulation; determine their reading fluency in terms of accuracy, reading rate, automaticity, and prosodic reading; and evaluate their oral proficiency through oral production, oral interaction, coherence of spoken response, and communicative strategies. The study also examined significant differences in these competencies across demographic groups, determined the relationships between phonological awareness and each language outcome, and assessed its predictive significance using separate simple linear regression analyses. Finally, it aimed to develop SOUND TO SPEECH: An Integrated Phonological Awareness, Reading Fluency, and Oral Proficiency Intervention Program based on the identified learning needs.

Theoretical or Conceptual Basis

The study was anchored in three complementary perspectives: Ehri's Orthographic Mapping Theory, the Active View of Reading, and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Companion Volume and its Action-Oriented Approach. Ehri's Orthographic Mapping Theory explains how phonemic segmentation, grapheme–phoneme knowledge, and decoding facilitate the formation of stable connections between written words, pronunciations, and meanings. These processes support increasingly accurate and automatic word recognition (Ehri, 2022). This perspective provided the principal theoretical explanation for examining phonological awareness as a predictor of reading fluency. The Active View of Reading situates reading within an interconnected system involving word recognition, language comprehension, bridging processes, and active self-regulation. Burns et al. (2023) provided additional empirical support for this framework by examining the effects of interventions targeting its components. Within the present study, the framework supported the interpretation of reading fluency as a multidimensional aspect of reading development rather than simply a measure of reading speed. The CEFR Companion Volume and its Action-Oriented Approach provided the conceptual basis for assessing meaningful spoken-language performance. North (2023) emphasized language use through communicative tasks, learner agency, and social interaction. Similarly, de Jong (2023) identified linguistic, strategic, and interactional competencies as important components of second-language speaking proficiency. These perspectives supported the study's assessment of oral production, oral interaction, coherence, and communicative strategies without treating its researcher-developed rubric as a standardized CEFR assessment. Conceptually, phonological awareness served as the independent and predictor variable, while reading fluency and oral proficiency were treated as two separate dependent variables. The respondents' sex, grade section, track, and elective cluster served as grouping variables for comparative analyses. The framework examined two distinct predictive relationships rather than assuming a sequential

or causal relationship among the three competencies. The resulting evidence provided the foundation for the proposed intervention program.

The study primarily supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4): Quality Education, particularly Target 4.1, which emphasizes effective and equitable primary and secondary education, and Target 4.6, which promotes literacy competencies among young people and adults. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2024) identified persistent learning gaps and the need for improved educational outcomes, while OECD (2023) reported continuing reading-literacy challenges among Filipino learners. By identifying phonological-awareness, reading-fluency, and oral-proficiency needs, the study contributes to the evidence base for educational sustainability through targeted literacy instruction, improved communication learning, and responsive curriculum interventions. Its proposed SOUND TO SPEECH program also offers a potential mechanism for strengthening school-based instructional practices and institutional capacity to address persistent language difficulties. These contributions remain prospective until the program is implemented and evaluated for effectiveness.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive-correlational design with comparative and predictive components. This approach enabled the examination of naturally occurring differences, relationships, and statistical predictions without manipulating the study variables (Cooksey, 2020). The descriptive component determined the respondents' demographic characteristics and levels of phonological awareness, reading fluency, and oral proficiency, while the comparative component examined differences across demographic groups. Pearson's correlation coefficient assessed the relationships between phonological awareness and the two outcome variables (Chattamvelli, 2024). Two separate simple linear regression models determined the predictive significance of phonological awareness for reading fluency and oral proficiency. Consistent with non-experimental research principles, the findings were interpreted as statistical associations and predictions rather than causal relationships (Mugwe & Runo, 2026).

Research Locale or Study Setting

The study was conducted at Las Piñas City National Senior High School–Doña Josefa Campus, under the Schools Division Office of Las Piñas, during School Year 2026–2027. The institution was among the pioneer implementers of the Strengthened Senior High School Curriculum, offering Academic and Technical-Professional (Tech Pro) tracks. The research focused on Grade 12 students enrolled in five elective clusters: ASSH, B&E, STEM, ICT, and H&T. The setting provided an appropriate context for examining phonological awareness, reading fluency, and oral proficiency among learners engaged in academic, technical, and communication-related learning activities.

Participants or Data Sources

The study population consisted of 398 Grade 12 Strengthened Senior High School students. Using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator, a target sample of 196 respondents was determined based on a 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, and 50% response distribution (Raosoft, Inc., 2024). Stratified random sampling was employed according to track and elective cluster, with respondents selected through a draw-lots procedure using official enrollment records. The final sample comprised 196 valid respondents, including 88 Academic-track students distributed across ASSH (35), B&E (36), and STEM (17), and 108 Tech Pro-track students from ICT

(54) and H&T (54). Eligible participants were officially enrolled Grade 12 students who complied with the required consent or assent procedures and completed the research assessments. Their demographic characteristics and language-performance scores served as the primary data for the study.

Research Instruments or Materials

The study employed researcher-developed instruments covering respondent profiles, phonological awareness, reading fluency, and oral proficiency. Phonological awareness was measured using a 40-item test assessing phoneme isolation, blending, segmentation, and manipulation, with responses scored from 0 to 1 point. Reading fluency was evaluated through a 193-word oral-reading passage measuring accuracy, rate, automaticity, and prosody. Oral proficiency was assessed through individual and paired speaking tasks using a four-point rubric measuring oral production, interaction, coherence, and communicative strategies. Reading-fluency indicators were standardized and equally weighted, while oral-proficiency scores were averaged across four dimensions. The instruments underwent expert validation and pilot testing, yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .91 for phonological awareness, .88 for reading fluency, and .90 for oral proficiency, indicating good to excellent internal consistency.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering commenced after securing the necessary academic approval and permission from school authorities. The researcher first subjected the instruments to expert validation and incorporated recommended revisions before conducting pilot testing. Following instrument finalization, respondents were selected through stratified random sampling based on track and elective cluster. Eligible participants received an explanation of the research objectives, procedures, and participation requirements before completing the assessments. The researcher administered the respondent profile and phonological-awareness test, individually assessed reading fluency using the standardized passage, and evaluated oral proficiency through individual and paired speaking tasks. Standardized instructions, timing procedures, scoring guidelines, and analytic rubrics were consistently applied. Completed instruments and scoring records were retrieved, checked for completeness, coded, and encoded for statistical analysis. All 196 selected respondents satisfied the eligibility and data-completeness requirements and were retained in the final dataset. Respondent codes were used to protect identities, and collected records were securely maintained throughout data processing and reporting.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures at a .05 level of significance. Frequency and percentage described the respondents' demographic characteristics, while mean and standard deviation summarized phonological awareness, reading fluency, and oral proficiency. Reading-fluency indicators were standardized and combined into an equally weighted composite score, whereas oral-proficiency scores were obtained by averaging the four rubric dimensions. Independent-samples procedures, including Welch's t-test when equal-variance assumptions were not satisfied, examined differences according to sex and track. One-way analysis of variance assessed differences across grade sections and elective clusters, with post hoc comparisons for significant omnibus results. Cohen's d and eta squared were used to describe effect sizes. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient determined the strength and direction of the relationships between phonological awareness and each outcome variable. Two separate simple linear regression analyses examined whether the total phonological-awareness score significantly predicted composite reading fluency and overall oral proficiency. Statistical assumptions were examined through appropriate diagnostic procedures, and regression results were interpreted using

coefficients, model significance, and explained variance. All relationships and predictive findings were interpreted within the limitations of the non-experimental design.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed established ethical principles concerning informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, participant welfare, and research integrity. Required academic and institutional permissions were secured before data collection. Respondents of legal age provided informed consent, while parental or guardian consent and student assent were obtained for minors. Participants were informed of the study's objectives, procedures, and academic purposes, including their right to decline or withdraw without affecting their grades, school standing, or privileges. Confidentiality was maintained through respondent codes, restricted access to research records, secure data handling, and aggregate reporting. Individual assessment results were not publicly disclosed or used to label learners. Identifiable information was handled according to applicable institutional requirements and Philippine data-privacy principles. The researcher also ensured consistent scoring, accurate data processing, truthful reporting, and interpretations supported by the statistical findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

3.1.1 Distribution According to Sex, Grade Section, Track, and Elective Cluster

The study involved 196 respondents, comprising 130 males (66.3%) and 66 females (33.7%). All 11 Grade 12 sections were represented, with Courage having the largest number of participants (21) and Commitment the smallest (14). The Tech Pro track accounted for 108 respondents (55.1%), while the Academic track comprised 88 (44.9%). By elective cluster, ICT and H&T each contributed 54 respondents, followed by B&E (36), ASSH (35), and STEM (17). These distributions describe the composition of the study sample rather than differences in language ability. Demographic and curricular groupings may reflect different educational contexts, but their relationships with performance require separate statistical examination. Burns et al. (2023) emphasized that reading development involves interacting linguistic and cognitive processes, supporting the distinction between background characteristics and the skills underlying reading performance.

3.2 Phonological Awareness of the Respondents

3.2.1 Phoneme Isolation, Blending, Segmentation, and Manipulation

The respondents demonstrated varying levels of performance across the four phonological-awareness dimensions. Phoneme manipulation obtained the highest mean (M = 7.69, SD = 1.43), followed by phoneme blending (M = 5.99, SD = 2.05), phoneme isolation (M = 4.63, SD = 1.94), and phoneme segmentation (M = 2.49, SD = 2.55). Segmentation recorded the lowest performance and greatest variability, identifying it as the most prominent area of difficulty. The findings demonstrate that phonological-awareness skills were not uniformly developed among respondents. Ehri (2022) explained that phonemic awareness facilitates the formation of connections between speech sounds and written words. Similarly, Webber et al. (2024) found that phoneme-awareness tasks differ in difficulty and that blending-focused instruction may support aspects of decoding. Prabhu et al. (2024) also identified substantial difficulty in phoneme segmentation among English language learners. Although these studies involved younger populations, their findings reinforce the importance of assessing phoneme-level competencies separately.

3.2.2 Overall Phonological Awareness

The respondents obtained an overall phonological-awareness mean of 20.79 (SD = 5.57), interpreted as High under the study's researcher-developed scale. However, the mean was close to the lower boundary of this classification, and substantial differences were observed across the four dimensions. Phoneme manipulation emerged as the strongest competency, whereas segmentation remained considerably less developed. The findings suggest that an overall favorable classification may conceal specific phonological-processing difficulties. Rice et al. (2022) established that phonemic-awareness instruction addresses multiple related skills and that these skills are responsive to targeted instruction. Jiang et al. (2024) further emphasized that different phonological-awareness dimensions contribute differently to reading performance. These findings support the need to prioritize segmentation while reinforcing other phoneme-level competencies.

3.3 Reading Fluency of the Respondents

3.3.1 Reading Accuracy, Rate, and Automaticity

The respondents demonstrated relatively strong performance in reading accuracy, with a mean of 96.39% (SD = 2.24). Their mean reading rate was 114.63 words correct per minute (SD = 16.02), while automaticity obtained a mean of 3.35 (SD = 0.57), classified as Very Proficient under the study's scoring system. These findings indicate relatively accurate and efficient oral reading, although reading rates differed among respondents. The results suggest that accurate word recognition and efficient reading were relative strengths of the learners. Ehri (2022) explained that automatic word recognition develops through established connections among spellings, pronunciations, and meanings. Wilang et al. (2025) similarly identified a positive relationship between reading accuracy and fluency in second-language learning. However, Hwang (2025) emphasized that oral reading fluency comprises several interacting dimensions, indicating that accuracy and automaticity should not be interpreted as complete measures of fluent reading.

3.3.2 Prosodic Reading

Prosodic reading obtained a mean of 2.29 (SD = 0.80), classified as Developing. This was lower than the respondents' automaticity performance, indicating less developed expression, intonation, phrasing, smoothness, and appropriate pacing during oral reading. Despite relatively strong accuracy and rate-based automaticity, expressive reading remained an instructional concern. The findings indicate that accurate and efficient reading does not necessarily correspond to equally developed prosodic performance. Quadri et al. (2024) demonstrated that reading rate and prosody may respond differently to instructional intervention. Shhub et al. (2023) likewise identified the value of reading interventions involving repeated reading, modeling, and feedback for developing prosody. Sáez et al. (2025) further emphasized that prosodic features provide information about the coordination of word recognition and comprehension processes. These findings support targeted instruction in expressive reading rather than relying exclusively on speed and accuracy.

3.4 Oral Proficiency of the Respondents

3.4.1 Oral Production

Oral production obtained the highest mean among the oral-proficiency dimensions (M = 2.64, SD = 0.81), classified as Proficient. This finding indicates that respondents performed relatively better in producing individual spoken responses than in the other speaking competencies assessed. The result suggests a relative strength in sustained individual speaking performance

but does not establish equivalent competence in interactive communication. de Jong (2023) emphasized that second-language speaking proficiency comprises linguistic, strategic, and interactional competencies. Abd Rahman (2024) likewise examined spoken production and interaction among pre-university learners and identified the instructional relevance of task-based speaking activities, although the overall between-group improvement in that study was not statistically significant. These findings support the separate assessment of oral production and interaction.

3.4.2 Oral Interaction, Coherence, and Communicative Strategies

Oral interaction obtained a mean of 2.13 (SD = 0.88), coherence of spoken response recorded 2.23 (SD = 0.88), and communicative strategies obtained 1.94 (SD = 0.91). All three dimensions were classified as Developing, with communicative strategies recording the lowest mean. The overall oral-proficiency score was 2.24 (SD = 0.79), likewise classified as Developing. These findings indicate that respondents performed better in individual speech production than in maintaining spoken exchanges, organizing connected discourse, and managing communication difficulties. Tsunemoto and Trofimovich (2024) demonstrated that coherence is closely associated with comprehensibility in second-language academic speaking. Azis et al. (2023) identified various communication strategies employed by English learners when experiencing speaking difficulties, while Chou (2024) found that strategy use was associated with language-learning contexts, speaking difficulties, and communicative confidence. Together, these studies support the instructional relevance of interactional practice, discourse organization, clarification, and communication-repair strategies.

3.5 Significant Differences in Language Performance According to Demographic Characteristics

3.5.1 Differences in Phonological Awareness

Significant differences in phonological-awareness scores were found according to sex ($t = -3.06$), grade section ($F = 7.02$), track ($t = 5.95$), and elective cluster ($F = 10.69$), with all comparisons significant at the .05 level. The null hypothesis was rejected for all four demographic characteristics. However, the available results did not establish which groups obtained higher mean scores or identify specific differences among sections and elective clusters. The findings demonstrate variability in phonological-awareness performance across demographic and curricular groups without establishing the reasons for these differences. Winarto and Aprianti (2023) reported sex-related variation in selected phonological-awareness tasks among primary school learners, although their findings cannot be generalized directly to the present Grade 12 population. Ehri (2022) emphasized the linguistic processes underlying phonemic awareness and word recognition rather than demographic characteristics as direct explanatory mechanisms. Accordingly, the observed differences should be interpreted as sample-specific associations rather than causal effects of group membership.

3.5.2 Differences in Reading Fluency

Reading fluency differed significantly according to sex ($t = -2.74$), grade section ($F = 6.57$), track ($t = 6.77$), and elective cluster ($F = 15.27$). The sex comparison was significant at $p = .01$, while the remaining comparisons were reported as significant at the .05 level. Significant differences across grade sections and elective clusters were established, but specific pairwise differences and the direction of the sex and track differences were not identified in the reported results.

These findings indicate that reading-fluency performance varied among the respondent groups. Burns et al. (2023) emphasized that reading development involves multiple components, including word recognition, language comprehension, bridging processes, and self-regulation. Consequently, demographic differences cannot independently explain variations in reading proficiency. The results establish differences in the measured outcomes but do not identify the instructional or contextual factors responsible for them.

3.5.3 Differences in Oral Proficiency

Significant differences in oral proficiency were found according to sex ($t = -2.93$), grade section ($F = 9.01$), track ($t = 7.90$), and elective cluster ($F = 19.37$), with all comparisons significant at the .05 level. Elective cluster produced the largest omnibus test statistic among the oral-proficiency group comparisons. Nevertheless, the reported findings did not identify the specific sections or elective clusters that differed significantly or establish the direction of the two-group differences. The results indicate that spoken-language performance varied across demographic and curricular groupings. de Jong (2023) emphasized that speaking performance reflects multiple linguistic and interactional competencies and may be influenced by assessment conditions. Chou (2024) similarly demonstrated differences in communication-strategy use across foreign-language learning contexts. These findings support the interpretation that group differences warrant further investigation rather than being attributed directly to sex, section, track, or elective-cluster membership.

3.6 Relationships Between Phonological Awareness and Language Performance

3.6.1 Relationship Between Phonological Awareness and Reading Fluency

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between phonological awareness and reading fluency ($r = .4425$, $p < .001$). The null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that respondents with higher phonological-awareness scores generally demonstrated higher reading-fluency performance. The finding supports the relevance of phoneme-level language processing to fluent reading. Ehri (2022) identified phonemic awareness as essential to the formation of sound–print connections and efficient word recognition. Alzahrani and Algethami (2023) likewise reported a significant relationship between phonological awareness and English word-reading fluency among young EFL learners. More directly relevant to adolescent reading, Eremicheva et al. (2025) identified a small but significant contribution of phonological processing to text-reading fluency. These studies support the observed association while indicating that its magnitude may differ across populations and reading tasks.

3.6.2 Relationship Between Phonological Awareness and Oral Proficiency

A statistically significant moderate positive relationship was observed between phonological awareness and oral proficiency ($r = .4642$, $p < .001$). The null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that respondents with higher phonological-awareness scores tended to demonstrate stronger overall spoken-language performance. The result suggests that phoneme-level processing is associated with broader oral-language performance, although the relationship does not establish causation. de Jong (2023) emphasized that speaking proficiency incorporates linguistic processing, strategic competence, and interactional ability. However, Fajar et al. (2023) found no significant relationship between phonological awareness and oral-language proficiency among adult EFL learners. This contrasting evidence indicates that the association may depend

on learner characteristics, language contexts, and assessment procedures. The present finding therefore contributes context-specific evidence rather than establishing a universal relationship.

3.7 Predictive Influence of Phonological Awareness

3.7.1 Phonological Awareness as a Predictor of Reading Fluency

Simple linear regression demonstrated that phonological awareness significantly predicted reading fluency ($R = .44$, $R^2 = .20$, $p < .001$). The model statistically accounted for approximately 20% of the observed variation in reading-fluency scores, while the remaining variation was not explained by the single-predictor model. The null hypothesis was rejected. The findings indicate that phonological awareness has meaningful statistical predictive value for reading fluency but does not independently account for all aspects of reading performance. Ehri (2022) explained that phonemic awareness contributes to word-recognition development, while Burns et al. (2023) emphasized the roles of additional cognitive and linguistic processes in reading. Eremicheva et al. (2025) likewise found that phonological processing predicted adolescent text-reading fluency, although its contribution was modest. These findings support the relevance of phonological awareness while reinforcing the need to consider other reading-related competencies.

3.7.2 Phonological Awareness as a Predictor of Oral Proficiency

Phonological awareness also significantly predicted oral proficiency ($R = .46$, $R^2 = .22$, $p < .001$). The regression model explained approximately 22% of the observed variation in oral-proficiency scores. The null hypothesis was rejected, establishing phonological awareness as a statistically significant predictor within the study sample. The finding indicates that phonological awareness contributed to the statistical prediction of oral proficiency, although most of the observed variation remained unexplained by the model. de Jong (2023) emphasized that second-language speaking proficiency is multidimensional, involving linguistic and strategic competencies as well as interaction. Fajar et al. (2023) reported a nonsignificant relationship between phonological awareness and oral proficiency in a different EFL population, demonstrating that the association is not consistent across educational contexts. The present findings therefore support phonological awareness as a relevant predictor for this sample but do not establish it as a causal determinant of broader spoken-language proficiency.

3.8 Proposed Intervention Program

3.8.1 SOUND TO SPEECH: An Integrated Phonological Awareness, Reading Fluency, and Oral Proficiency Intervention Program

The findings provided the basis for developing SOUND TO SPEECH, a proposed school-based language intervention program targeting the respondents' identified learning needs. The program prioritizes phoneme segmentation, prosodic reading, oral interaction, coherence of spoken responses, and communicative strategies while reinforcing stronger competencies in phoneme manipulation, reading accuracy, automaticity, and oral production. It incorporates sound-awareness activities, guided and repeated reading, expressive oral-reading practice, structured speaking tasks, communicative-strategy exercises, and formative progress monitoring. The proposed instructional cycle covers eight weeks, with two sessions per week, subject to school scheduling and instructional requirements. The proposed intervention is consistent with evidence supporting integrated and targeted language instruction. Rice et al. (2022) highlighted the instructional responsiveness of phonemic-awareness competencies, while Shhub et al.

(2023) identified approaches for strengthening reading prosody through modeling, repeated practice, and feedback. Abd Rahman (2024) examined task-based activities for developing spoken production and interaction, and Chou (2024) emphasized communication strategies and speaking tasks as relevant considerations in language instruction. These studies provide a basis for the proposed instructional components, although the program's effectiveness was not tested in the present research. Its practical value therefore remains prospective and requires school-based implementation, monitoring, and subsequent evaluation.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that phonological awareness remained relevant to reading fluency and oral proficiency among 196 Grade 12 Strengthened Senior High School students of Las Piñas City National Senior High School–Doña Josefa Campus. Although phonological awareness was generally classified as high, phoneme segmentation emerged as the weakest dimension. Reading accuracy and automaticity were relatively strong, whereas prosodic reading required improvement. Similarly, oral production was more developed than oral interaction, coherence, and communicative strategies. Significant differences in all three competencies were observed across sex, grade section, track, and elective cluster. Phonological awareness demonstrated significant moderate positive relationships with reading fluency and oral proficiency and significantly predicted both outcomes. However, these relationships did not establish causation. Overall, the findings emphasize that foundational sound-processing skills remain important during adolescence and provide empirical support for an integrated, school-based intervention addressing phonological awareness, expressive reading, and purposeful oral communication.

English teachers should prioritize phoneme-segmentation activities while reinforcing isolation, blending, and manipulation skills. Guided and repeated oral-reading exercises should strengthen phrasing, expression, intonation, and smoothness alongside reading accuracy and automaticity. Structured individual, paired, and small-group speaking activities should develop oral interaction, coherence, clarification, and communication-repair strategies. Teachers should periodically monitor learner progress through phonological-awareness assessments, oral-reading records, and standardized speaking rubrics. The English Department should conduct a feasibility pilot of the proposed SOUND TO SPEECH intervention program, evaluating instructional materials, implementation schedules, teacher workload, and learner participation before wider adoption. School administrators should provide appropriate resources and opportunities for collaborative instructional planning. Intervention decisions should prioritize individual assessment results rather than demographic characteristics alone. Future researchers should examine additional linguistic and instructional factors, replicate the investigation across different schools, and employ longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs to evaluate the proposed program's effectiveness.

The investigation involved 196 Grade 12 students from a single public senior high school during School Year 2026–2027, limiting the generalizability of its findings to other educational settings. Its non-experimental, descriptive-correlational design established statistical relationships and predictions but could not determine causation. The researcher-developed instruments and locally established proficiency classifications may also limit comparability with standardized assessments. Additionally, automaticity was closely related to reading rate, and the regression models did not examine other potential predictors of language performance. The proposed intervention program was not implemented or evaluated. Future studies may address these limitations through broader samples, additional variables, stronger instrument validation, and experimental or longitudinal approaches.

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