The effectiveness of teaching synthetic phonics to EFL students

Abstract

The diploma considers the effectiveness of systematic and explicit Synthetic Phonics teaching methods in the EFL learning environment. The theoretical section examines foreign language methodology – the field of reading acquisition in young learners, especially English language pronunciation. It studies how systematic explicit Phonics approach can help in learning how to read and pronounce words correctly. It explores the similarities and differences between teaching Synthetic and Analytic Phonics, and compares them. Furthermore it discusses whether synthetic phonics is useful not only for native English speakers, but also for EFL students.

The practical part focuses on testing two groups of children who have different experiences of phonics. The data were collected in Prague and the Hradec Králové region. There were 62 students tested out of whom 33 were in a control group and 29 were taught using a systematic Phonics approach. A specially designed test consisting of two different activities was applied. It tested word reading, non-word pronouncing and sight word recognition. The aim of the research was to find out whether explicit Synthetic Phonics teaching instruction helps not only native English speakers, but also EFL learners in reading and pronouncing words correctly. The data analysis revealed that non-native speakers of English may benefit from learning how to read using Synthetic Phonics as well as students who have English as their mother tongue.

Key words:

synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, phonemes, graphemes, pronunciation and articulation, spelling, reading, writing