

# The Influence of Phonological and Grammatical Awareness on EFL Students' Reading Performance

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**Abstract**—The purpose of the present research was to assess the influence of phonological and grammatical awareness on reading performance of EFL students at Azad Islamic University of Kerman. Based on such a purpose, a series of linguistic tasks were applied in order to find the relationship between phonological and grammatical awareness and reading performance. 50 EFL students participated in the present study through a qualitative and quantitative survey. Phonological awareness was measured by four tasks while grammatical awareness was measured by two tasks. A semi-structured interview was conducted among EFL students and their in order to obtain their feedback regarding the tests and the role of phonological and grammatical awareness in their reading performance. In addition, in order to measure reading performance, a two stage reading task (reading vocabulary and reading short sentences) was used. The results of the present study revealed that phonological and grammatical awareness had a significant role in reading performance of EFL students of the participants.

**Index Terms**—phonological awareness, grammatical awareness, EFL students, reading performance

## I. INTRODUCTION

English reading skill is considered as one of the most critical ability in the process of learning and teaching English for English students as well as their teachers (Wolff, 2000). Besides, important modifications can be identified in the process of teaching and learning English academic discipline started from 20 years ago which can be highlighted as *communicative language teaching* (CLT) (Chastain, 1988, p. 163). The focal point of the new approaches in the process of teaching and learning are to obtain which are focus of these new methods is to provide complete consideration of teachers and learners to the four classic skills of language learning procedures. On the other hand, the core of the new methods involves both teachers and learners inside the procedures language learning. According to the objectives of the new methods, the present study's concern is the effect of phonological and grammatical awareness on reading skill where several studies have conducted in order to find the influence of task-based strategies on reading (Yang, 1995; Cook, 2000). There is also evidence, which suggests that cognitive demands have significant influence on phonological and grammatical awareness.

From students' perspective, reading is considered as the most important and critical skill. The reason behind such demanding process, reading is a fundamental skill in the native language of English students which can be learnt from primary school directly and from the society indirectly. As a result, it is can be difficult to gain a reading skill in the target language. Another reason backs to the differences and similarities between the learning process of reading in the native language of students and English Language. However, previous studies highlighted that the process of learning reading skill in English Language is exhausting for EFL learners because of the use of classic reading methods such as understanding the sentences based on the structure. Such a traditional and classic method, force students to use dictionary frequently and spend lots of time during the reading process which causes a serious loss of concentration and motivation. A lot of dictionaries may interfere with them, and they eventually stay out of meaning. However, the results of comparison between consciousness phonological and grammatical and spoken language is vague. Some evidences approved that learners' ability and proficiency in their second language depends highly to their ability in native language as well as their fluency in reading skill (Cummins, 1979, 1991). Considering such an important issue, the present research intended to study the influence of phonological and grammatical consciousness on the English learners' results in English department at Azad University of Kerman, English department.

The implication of present research is that phonological and grammatical awareness are important for improving reading ability. Thus, reading skill is the focal point of the present research as well as the EFL students' outcome within the process of learning English, while there is are several theoretical justification to support the relationship between phonological and grammatical awareness and performance of EFL students (e.g., Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2000) and improvement in reading skills of EFL and ESL students (Horowitz, 1986; Walshe, 1987;

Wolff, 2000), the investigation of these two factors is left rather much untouched. Furthermore, the use of task based methods in the process of teaching and learning English have several critics and impose some difficulties for both students and teachers since they highlighted various doubts about the significant role of phonological and grammatical awareness on EFL reading strategies. At the same time, reading as one of the most important skills for EFL students has received much attention from EFL researchers (e.g., Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2000). Considering such consequences, this research aims to visualize and clear the fundamental impacts of phonological and grammatical awareness on the development of EFL reading performance. Moreover, both students and English teachers will be informed that these two factors are supposed to facilitate the teaching and learning of EFL reading skills due to their significant role in this matter.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted to assess the direct association between phonological and grammatical awareness toward reading comprehension among ESL and EFL learners. Phonological and grammatical awareness in English language learning referred to the proficiency of learners to apply and use words and their related sounds as a phonemic tool in order to improve the skill and identify the relationship between those words with the written sentences in the understandable sequence (Gleitman & Rozin, 1977; Liberman, Shankweiler, Liberman, Fowler & Fischer, 1977). A study by Goswami and Bryant (1990) showed that there are three different methods for analyzing a word into its constituent sounds, and consequently, there are more than three possible levels of phonological and grammatical awareness. Liberman et al. (1974) highlighted that students have the ability to segment words by syllables and phonemes. Furthermore, different studies suggested that grammatical awareness had a significant role in reading development; however, the influence is seen in advanced stages of language learning (Carlisle & Nomanbhoy, 1993).

Besides, they suggested that phonological and grammatical awareness contributed in improving reading performance. Several researches in this context provided strong proof for the significant influence of phonological and grammatical awareness in the process of teaching and learning English (Elbro, 1996) as well as a being considered as the most important success factor of EFL learners (Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1989; Chall, 1967; Muter, Hulme, Snowling & Taylor, 1998; Treiman & Baron 1983). Wagner and Torgesen (1987) proposed three different views to study the influence of phonological and grammatical awareness on reading ability. First, of all, reading ability and the development the related skills depends on the phonological and grammatical awareness. Secondly, improvement in the reading ability is a significant influence of phonological and grammatical awareness on the process of learning. Thirdly, there is a mutual relationship between phonological and grammatical awareness and the development of reading skill among EFL learners.

Adams (1990) established five levels of difficulty in English phonological and grammatical awareness. Adams (1990) proposed and classified the task based on the difficulty of them. According to the classification, the most difficult task is identifying similar rims, followed by groping and identifying sentences and related words into rims, pronunciation and considering the concordant consequences from the words, differentiation between phoneme and tasks, and finally, ignoring the to identify and explore the words. Several studies have suggested that phonological awareness is a necessary component of reading (Gillet & Temple, 1990). Some studies postulated that the use of phonological awareness as well as grammatical awareness simultaneously have significant impact of reading proficiency of EFL learners (Blachman, 2000; Kame'enui & Simmons, 2001). In addition, several studies provided notable support for the critical and fundamental role of phonological awareness and grammatical awareness in the process of word reading as well as word learning among EFL learners (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987). However, other factors in conjunction with the phonological awareness and grammatical awareness are highlighted as influential factors in the process of learning and improving reading skill. According to Swanson, Trainin, Necochea and Hammill (2003) who conducted a comprehensive study on the relationship between phonological and grammatical awareness and learning skills of reading such as swift understanding of words or identifying related words in the text. Besides, they stated that in terms of regression analysis result (correlation coefficient) the differences between cognitive approached of reading skill such as memorizing the vocabulary and recognition approach can be waived. While, the strong relationship between phonological and grammatical awareness and ability of reading English texts and the process of learning reading skills is unneglectable. In line with the mentioned relationship, vocabulary learning techniques is considered as another important factor in the proficiency of EFL learners in reading skill (e.g., Catts, Fey, Zhang & Tomblin, 1999; Demire, 2008, Cao, 2012).

## III. METHODOLOGY

### A. *Survey Instruments*

Since this is a cross-sectional study which aimed at taking a preliminary look at the phonological and grammatical awareness of English students, several tasks according to the Muter, Hulme, Snowling and Stevenson's study (2004) were proposed in order to examine the role of phonological and grammatical awareness of English students' reading skills in Islamic Azad University of Kerman. Accordingly, feedback forms and semi-structured interview were conducted in order to obtain the students' viewpoint about the used task. Thus, in this research, descriptive data analysis technique was applied to demonstrate the features of sample of the study and describe the facts based on their nature and characteristics

which provide precise perspective about the population of the study (Isaac & Michael, 1997, p. 18; Demire, 2008, Cao, 2012).

### B. *Data Collection Procedures*

The participants of the study were the preparatory EFL class students at Azad University of Kerman. Both males and females took part in the study. In the study, the students were given various reading tasks (i.e., listing, ordering and sorting, matching, comparing, problem solving, word-reading, sentence-reading), phonological measured tasks (i.e., rhyme detection, rhyme production, phoneme completion, phoneme deletion) and grammatical tasks (i.e., word orders correction, morphological generation). Each task required students to deal with a specific reading skill (Demire, 2008).

After the tasks were conducted, the participants were given the feedback forms by which they were asked to comment on each of the tasks conducted. Finally, they were asked to write about their general views about the tasks. This procedure enabled the researcher to have a deeper understanding of how the students perceived the use of these tasks in the reading lessons and how phonological and grammatical awareness assisted students to complete the tasks. Moreover, for each of the tasks some students were randomly selected. Elliot (1991) referred to the semi-structured interview as a valuable research tool as they can include "observations, feelings, reactions, interpretations, reflections, hunches, explanations" of the students and the teachers (McDonough, 1994, p. 6). During the semi-structured interview, the participants were asked to talk about their attitudes toward the tasks and share their ideas. A semi-structured interview was used since 'it is useful to keep a record of their research progress because a research interview is a personal rather than a formal document, which enables respondents to be honest as they like' (McDonough, 1994, p. 6; Demire, 2008).

In addition, 15 of the total 50 participants were selected based on their phonological and grammatical awareness for the semi-structured interview. Their age, gender, social and cultural backgrounds are not taken into consideration. These 15 students were interviewed at the end of the term. They were asked for their views on the tasks, and also the problems they encountered. Besides, they were asked what they learned by the help of tasks (Demire, 2008).

### C. *Data Analysis*

After the data were collected (the participants' feedback forms and semi-structured interviews), the data were analyzed by the use of content analysis. Content analysis is a method to analyze text (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 310). This method is a practical method as it make a core concepts inside the text through a systematic approach and make the sentence to interpret easily (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Demire, 2008). In the present study, academic justification for the use of content analysis. The first one is that content analysis assists the researcher to have precise perspective about the descriptive information of the study. second reason is that the interviews can be analyzed through the content analysis more accurately and easily. And the third reason is that to test hypotheses and compare their results with the other study in practical manner (Bryman, 2001, p. 19; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 3; Demire, 2008, Cao, 2012).

Data analysis started from the analysis of the feedback forms, while the most frequently cited views were identified. As the second step, all the feedback forms were reread and the parts reflecting the students' statements about the tasks and the learning that resulted from these tasks were underlined. The third step was to code the data gained from the feedback forms according to given comments for each task. After coding and decoding, categories were made. The last phase of the analysis was concerned with the semi-structured interviews. The process of a semi-structured interview involved the interviewer presenting the context of the study and its objectives to the interviewee. As the aim was to capture as much as possible the participant's thoughts about a particular topic or a practical task, the interviewer followed in depth the process of thinking posing new questions after the first answers given by the subject. The proposed questions were simple with a logical sequence to help the discussion flow. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The analysis was consisted of three steps. The first step was to listen to the interview cassette and to write down the opinions stated for each question one by one, whereas in the second step all the statements were analyzed, categories/labels were generated, and a list of statements was used to classify the answers of each interviewee in terms of reading performance. In the third step, the incident was put onto a qualitative data category table after reading and focusing on all the answers given to each question. Finally, the Pearson's inter-correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the relationships between phonological and grammatical awareness and reading skills of EFL students (Demire, 2008; Cao, 2012).

## IV. RESULTS

In this section, the results of data analysis for semi-structured interviews, descriptive analysis results for phonological and grammatical tasks and correlation analysis results between reading, phonological and grammatical tasks are presented in the following tables.

### A. *Analysis of Semi-structured Interviews*

In this section, the results of data analysis for semi-structured interviews are shown. The analysis of semi-structured interviews starts with students' attitude toward tasks-used, followed by students learning from tasks-used, students' attitude toward efficiency of tasks-used, students' attitude toward task-related problems and comments on tasks.

Table 1 indicates the results of data analysis for students' attitude toward tasks-used. As it can be seen the attitude of the students were classified into four distinctive categories namely, contribution to language learning, personal attitude,

retention, and the nature of activities. The data analysis explanations for students' attitude toward tasks-used are presented in the following section.

TABLE 1  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD TASKS-USED

Attitude toward Tasks-Used			
Contribution to Language Learning	Personal Attitude	Retention	The Nature of Activities
Strengthened English(2)	Interest generating (7)	Memorable (9)	Real life like (1)
Instructive (2)	Enjoyable (6)	Useful (4)	Useful group work (1)
Contributed to students' participation (1)	Marvelous (5)	Led to retention (1)	
Related to the language usage (1)	Activating (4)		
Inspired me to read (1)	Fruitful (3)		
Assisted me to apply English Language outside the class (1)	Exciting (3)		
	Lesson outside was enjoyable (1)		

Table 1 displays students' attitude towards the tasks used. As it can be seen in the table, two students from fifteen students stated that the used task in the process of learning English assist them to enhance their proficiency in reading and in general English usage. Moreover, one students highlighted that from the used task in contribution to language learning were helpful for them to show better performance in reading skill. Also, seven students from fifteen students remarked that the used tasks were amazing and enjoyable for them in the way that they were more interested in using those tasks. Nine students in total believed that the used tasks in this section were marvelous and motivate them to be involved in the process of learning and made the active. From fifteen students, three mentioned that the used task in this section were thrilling. Besides, nine students stated that the tasks were useful in the process of memorizing the skills and were similar in the process of learning their native language skills which improved the interest, ability and capability of learning English as a second language.

Table 2 indicates the results of data analysis for students learning from tasks-used. As it can be seen the students learning from tasks-used were classified into three distinctive categories namely, personal gains, gains in reading skills, and language-learning gains. The data analysis explanations for students learning from tasks-used are presented in the following section.

TABLE 2  
STUDENTS LEARNING FROM TASKS-USED

Attitude toward Learning from Tasks-Used		
Personal Gains	Gains in Reading Skills	Language Learning Gains
Improved general / cultural knowledge (6)	Improved my reading strategies (i.e. scanning, skimming) that are parts of ' <i>selectively attend</i> ' process of meta-cognitive strategies (6)	Strengthened pronunciation(7)
Attracted my attention to language learning (4)	Reading comprehension (6)	Learnt vocabulary (5)
Helped me use English outside the class (3)	Learnt guessing the meaning of a word from context ' <i>inference</i> ' (5)	Learnt grammar (1)
Enhanced confidence (3)	Learnt Making use of dictionary ' <i>resourcing</i> ' (3)	
Learnt while enjoying (2)	Learnt getting the meaning without translation (3)	
Helped me to be successful in other English Courses (2)		
Enhanced my determination in learning English (2)		
Provided me to enlarge future goals in English (2)		

As shown in table 2, the results of analysis toward the attitude of students from the extent that learnt from the tasks represented. From total fifteen students, six mentioned that the used tasks in this section enhanced and flourished their knowledge toward the learning process based on the culture. In addition, four students from fifteen believed that the used strategy in the process of leaning and improving reading skills changed their attitude toward learning process and attracted their attention in which how one task caused significant changes in learning English. Besides, from total sample of the study, three students remarked that the used strategies and tasks encouraged them to apply and use English technique outside the class in order to examine their ability in real situations where the used task enhanced their confidence and proficiency. Form the sample of the study, two believed that the used task not only enhanced their ability in reading skills, but also improved their proficiency and ability in other skills as well as other courses. Further, they highlighted that the

tasks made them purposeful toward learning English and provided them the opportunity to expand their knowledge about reading skills.

As highlighted in the table 2, regarding the results of reading skills gain, from fifteen students, six students stated that the used tasks assisted them to use reading skills more efficiently. For instance they learnt how to use skimming technique more practically which is a key and focal point in Meta-cognitive process of learning. Furthermore, five students believed that the used tasks improved their knowledge about the technique of guessing the meaning of words while reading which helped them to have a better comprehension. At the final stage, the respondents highlighted that tasks-used assisted them making use of a dictionary 'resourcing', which is a 'resourcing' process of cognitive strategies. Besides, three students noted tasks-used enabled them to get the meaning without translation. In terms of language-learning gains, seven students remarked that tasks-used strengthened their pronunciation; five students remarked that tasks-used helped to learn vocabulary; and one student stated that tasks used assisted to learn grammar. Accordingly. It can be summarized that the tasks-used helped students to improve their intonation and enhance some basic technique on reading process such as scanning the text and skimming in the process of reading. Besides, majority of the students believed that the used task highly improved the ability of guessing the meaning of words in the texts rapidly. Besides, the tasks-used helped students to enhance not only their general knowledge but also their cultural information.

Table 3 indicates the results of data analysis for students' attitude toward efficiency of tasks-used. As it can be seen students' attitude toward efficiency-used were classified into three distinctive categories namely, change in personal attitude toward reading, contribution of tasks to reading, and nature of activities. The data analysis explanations for students' attitude toward efficiency of tasks-used are presented in the following section.

TABLE 3  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD EFFICIENCY OF TASK-USED

<b>Students' Attitude toward Efficiency of Tasks-Used</b>		
<b>Change in Personal Attitude Toward Reading</b>	<b>Contribution of Tasks to Reading</b>	<b>Nature of activities</b>
Lessons became more enjoyable (12)	Tasks made reading more fruitful (11)	Useful group works (8)
Lessons became easier (9)	The lessons were useful (3)	Real life like (3)
Improved students participation (5)	Tasks were enjoyable (1)	
Lessons became more exciting (4)	Strengthened pronunciation (2)	
Strengthened the learning desire (3)		
Learning process became more interesting (3)		

Table 3 shows that in terms of change in personal attitude toward reading, 12 students highlighted that lesson became more enjoyable when tasks were used; nine students indicated that lesson became easier when tasks were used. Besides, five students stated that tasks-used improved students' participation; whereas four students noted that lessons became more exciting when tasks were used. Moreover, from fifteen students, three believed that the used tasks motivated and enhanced the desire of learning and reading English. This is because by using the tasks, the process became more fascinating and interesting process for them. In addition, eleven students highlighted that the task was pleasant for them and three out of fifteen students the task was helpful to them, while one out of fifteen students remarked that the used that made the process of learning enjoyable. Besides, the result represented that eight students believed that the used task were valuable and beneficial in nature as the spirit of team working insured through the class leaning. The final result indicated that students believed that the used task helped students to ignore some unnecessary parts. As a conclusion the result showed that the used tasks was a desirable process which made the reading process easier and attractive for students.

Table 4 indicates the results of data analysis for students' attitude toward task- related problems. As it can be seen students' attitude toward task- related problems were classified into two distinctive categories namely, filling feedback forms were boring and Lessons took long. The data analysis explanations for students' attitude toward task- related problems are presented in the following section.

TABLE 4  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD TASK- RELATED PROBLEMS

<b>Students' Attitude toward Task- Related Problems</b>
Filling feedback forms were boring (6)
Lessons took long (4)

Table 4 displays students' attitude toward task- related problems. As it can be seen in the table, from fifteen students six of them remarked that answering the questions of feedback form was difficult and tedious problem process. In addition, four of them remarked that the process of learning the task was long and boring and the time of class was long. Thus, it can be stated the reported problems were more related with the nature of the lessons, not with the tasks-used.

Table five depicts that results of students' comments toward the used tasks. According to the students' attitude, the comments were grouped into five groups. These groups are personal attitude, contribution to language learning, retention, the nature of language, and reading skills according to the Demire's (2008) study. the five categories can be seen in the following tables.

TABLE 5  
COMMENTS ON TASKS-USED

Commence on Tasks-Used				
Personal attitude	Contribution to Language Learning	Retention	The nature of language	Reading skills
Enjoyable (2)	Instructive (5)	Memorable (2)	Real life like (1)	Learnt many reading strategies (i.e. skimming, scanning) that are parts of 'selectively attend' process of meta-cognitive strategies (1)
Good (2)	Made students like English (2)			
Got pleasure from reading (1)	Made students love reading (1)			
Created a desire to learn English (1)				

Table 5 displays students' comments on the tasks-used. Two students remarked that tasks used were enjoyable and helpful for learning. One student stated that s/he got pleasure from reading; and indicated that tasks created a desire in her/him to learn English. In terms of contribution to language learning, five students stated that tasks were instructive. Two students remarked that tasks made them like English. Lastly, one student remarked that tasks made him/her love reading. Besides, two students found the tasks memorable in terms of retention. One student found the tasks real life like due to the nature of activities. Finally, one student indicated that s/he learnt many reading strategies (i.e. skimming, scanning) that are parts of selectively attend the process of meta-cognitive strategies.

*B. Descriptive Analysis Results for Phonological and Grammatical Tasks*

In the following tables, the results of mean analysis and standard deviation for phonological and grammatical tasks are presented.

Table 6 displays the results of descriptive analysis for all tasks-used in terms of sentence reading, word reading, phonological task, and grammatical task. The data analysis explanations for descriptive analysis of all tasks-used are presented in the following section.

TABLE 6  
MEAN RESULTS FOR ALL TASKS

Tasks	No of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sentence reading	20	15.50	1.90
Word reading	12	12.20	2.10
Phonological task	46	31.70	1.44
Grammatical task	48	41.60	1.72

As shown in table 6, EFL students showed better performance in terms of grammatical tasks, which represent that EFL students had better awareness in grammatical tasks compared to phonological tasks.

Table 7 displays the results of descriptive analysis for phonological tasks based on the sub-dimension in terms of rhyme detection, rhyme production, phonemic completion, and phonemic deletion. The data analysis explanations for descriptive analysis of phonological tasks based on the sub-dimension are presented in the following section.

TABLE 7  
MEAN RESULTS FOR PHONOLOGICAL TASKS BASED ON SUB-DIMENSION

Tasks	No of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Rhyme Detection	10	7.00	2.11
Rhyme Production	10	5.90	1.10
Phonemic Completion	10	9.25	2.04
Phonemic Deletion	16	9.85	0.72

Table 7 indicates EFL students' performance on each task for phonological awareness. According to the results of data analysis, it is clear that EFL students showed weak performance in rhyme production tasks whereas phonemic deletion was highlighted as the strongest task.

Table 8 displays the results of descriptive analysis for phonological tasks based on the sub-dimension in terms of word order correction, inflections (plurals), and inflections (past tense). The data analysis explanations for descriptive analysis of phonological tasks based on the sub-dimension are presented in the following section.

TABLE 8  
MEAN RESULTS FOR PHONOLOGICAL TASKS BASED ON SUB-DIMENSION

Tasks	No of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Word Order Correction	24	20.30	1.55
Inflections (plurals)	12	10.10	2.20
Inflections (past tense)	12	9.50	1.09

Table 8 indicates EFL students' performance on each task for grammatical awareness. Based on the results, inflection (past tense) was highlighted as the weakest performance of EFL students. However, word order was highlighted as the strongest task of EFL students.

As shown, EFL students showed weak performance in inflection tasks whereas word order correction was highlighted as the strongest task.

### C. Correlation Analysis Results between Reading, Phonological and Grammatical Tasks

In this section, the results of correlation analysis between reading, phonological and grammatical awareness are presented in order to show to what extent these variables are related. The correlation is conducted among both major variables and the sub-variables.

Table 9 displays the results of correlation analysis among major variables of the study namely, sentence reading, word reading, phonological awareness, and grammatical awareness. The data analysis explanations for correlation analysis among major variables of the study are presented in the following section.

TABLE 9  
CORRELATION ANALYSIS AMONG MAJOR VARIABLES

	Sentence reading	Word reading	Phonological awareness	Grammatical awareness
Sentence reading	1	.406	.801**	.799**
Word reading		1	.810**	.666**
Phonological awareness			1	.550
Grammatical awareness				1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

As shown in table 9, there is significant relationship between reading, phonological awareness, and grammatical awareness.

Table 10 displays the results of correlation analysis among sub-variables of the study namely, reading, phonological awareness, and grammatical awareness. The data analysis explanations for correlation analysis among sub-variables of the study are presented in the following section.

TABLE 10  
CORRELATION ANALYSIS AMONG SUB-VARIABLES OF READING, PHONOLOGICAL AND GRAMMATICAL AWARENESS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Sentence reading</b>	1	.367	.519**	.601**	.592**	.480**	.619**	.702**	.666**
<b>Word reading</b>		1	.399**	.494**	.508**	.622**	.629**	.540**	.673**
<b>Rhyme detection</b>			1	.596	.632	.510	.422	.357	.324
<b>Rhyme production</b>				1	.499	.370	.702	.698	.550
<b>Phonemic completion</b>					1	.502	.462	.319	.375
<b>Phonemic deletion</b>						1	.529	.613	.405
<b>Word order correction</b>							1	.399	.486
<b>Inflection (plurals)</b>								1	.644
<b>Inflection (past tense)</b>									1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

This table indicates the results of correlation analysis between readings and phonological and grammatical awareness in terms of their sub-variables. Based on the results, it is evident that there is a significant positive relationship between reading sub-variables (sentence reading and word reading) and phonological and grammatical awareness.

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the probable effects of phonological and grammatical awareness on the learner's learning outcomes as they perceive. The study was conducted between 50 EFL students who are studying at Azad University of Kerman. In order to find out the relationship between student's phonological and grammatical awareness and their reading performance.

One of the major inquiries of this study was to find out the relationship between students phonological awareness and reading performance. Analysis of feedback-forms, and interviews revealed that phonological awareness may create *high participation*, enhanced *student creativity* and *provide meaningful learning*, which is one of the main factors in enhancing reading performance. Further, when students were involved in the process of using reading skills, their progress significantly improved. The results of the present study were in line with the results of the study by Willis and Willis's (2007). They highlighted that phonological awareness may encourage student to participate in the related reading activities which improves their ability indirectly. At the same time, the study revealed that EFL learners who have better knowledge in terms of phonological awareness have higher motivation to apply reading skills. The reason is that the phonological awareness helps them to focus on meaning or outcome more efficiently. The most crucial effect of phonological awareness and the related task for improving phonological awareness which can be highlighted in the

present study refers to feelings of the students who engaged in the readings activities. The students mentioned that the reading activities and task were *enjoyable and fruitful*. Based on this results, it can be stated that these effects have the potential to increase EFL learners' motivation to learn and apply reading strategies. In addition, the results of the present study indicated that using tasks based had positive effects on learning outcomes of EFL students in terms of reading performance, phonological and grammatical awareness by involving them in the learning process. According to Skehan (1998), involving students in the learning process is one of the essential components of the reading activity which enables students to examine their performance and improve their weaknesses. As mentioned earlier in the data analysis results, the positive feedbacks were received from the diaries forms. As the results showed, majority of the participants highlighted that the diaries forms were useful and assisted them to monitor themselves through the process of learning English. However, in some tasks, negative responses were observed, the overall analysis was positive. The academic justification for such a negative result in some tasks is that *filling the feedback forms* is an exhausting process which impose additional tasks to the students in their free times. While it was not a serious issue for them. Considering these controversial issue for the feedbacks, the impacts of diaries forms of the reading performance of students was positive and those who followed the diaries forms showed better proficiency in reading tasks. In order to justify the negative perceptions about the diaries, the external factors can highlighted. One of these factors is personal problems. Moreover, some participants did not enjoy the task and some did not make mutual relationship with the teachers and showed negative response against teachers' mood. Additional reason backs to the nature of diaries in which in some cases drawing was the only way to convey their feelings. Drawing a picture to convey the feelings and information were difficult for some students and some have no idea about the task. Also, some students did not have enough confidence to draw a picture in the forms. According to these reasons it can be concluded that the task was enjoyable and the small critics can be ignored and consequently, EFL learners and students were involved in the process of learning reading skills in enjoyable manner.

Another strategy that used in the present study refers to the simplicity of the process and avoiding to make the tasks complicated. Therefore, the whole process of learning English specifically reading skill was simple and easy and the students were able to manipulate the inputs based on their preferences. Due to such a process, the students had adequate time to focus on the tasks and process and use their phonological awareness in the tasks. Based on the collected data from the interviews, the participants or students were interested in enhancing their ability in terms of grammatical as well as phonological. In order to justify such kind of result, two possible reason can be developed. The first reason is that, the task were in line with students' preferences and they liked the tasks and the procedures of improving the reading ability. However, the novelty of the process may influence the preference of the students and motivate them to show positive reaction to the test. According to the data analysis results, since the students were on self-study mode and they were able to finish the task after discovering the limits and using meta cognitive approaches, they believed that the task was novel and new. Besides, the ability of using the meta cognitive tasks of students were improved and they learnt to improve ability of reading without constant refer to the dictionary and use alternative techniques such as skimming which is derived and extracted from phonetical and grammatical awareness of students.

As highlighted in data analysis, regression analysis showed relationship between grammatical awareness and reading performance of the students. However, some difficulties were seen among the use of grammatical awareness and reading ability. Based on the pre-test results having ideas about the use of grammatical awareness was the major problem and difficulty of students. Hence, it can be concluded that students' grammatical awareness causes the variation in EFL reading performance. The results depicts that most of the EFL students had some difficulties regarding the use of grammatical awareness in the test. Therefore, EFL students with higher ability in grammatical awareness represented better performance in reading skills.

According to the results of data analysis, it can be stated that those students who had grammatical skills and were able to use their grammatical awareness more efficiently, paid much more consideration to the strategies for improvement of reading performance. Besides, EFL learners with higher grammatical awareness represented higher developments of reading task and strategies due to their clearer idea.

Thus, it can be concluded that both phonological and grammatical awareness give EFL learners and students chance of using their previous knowledge to improve reading skills based on the native language. It means that similar concepts such fluency, logic in understanding, creating relationship between sentences rhetorical organization can be applied from native language to English through applying grammatical and phonological awareness.

In addition, 'grammatical awareness shows significant influence on the improvement of EFL learners in terms of reading competence. Based on the systemic analysis of quantitative results, there is strong and the most direct evidence of EFL learners' reading competence improvement. Besides, the results showed that EFL learners' reading performance can be really enhanced in these grammatical tests. Students in grammatical tests were better in terms of comprehensive reading skills reflected. In addition, for reading analysis, subjects with higher knowledge in grammatical awareness had a much better performance than those with less knowledge in grammatical awareness. Accordingly, it can be inferred from the above findings that most of EFL students with proper grammatical awareness in the tests were more success to handle different words and cope with complex sentences. Also, the results confirmed that those students with proper knowledge of grammatical and phonological awareness were better in reading comprehending and understanding complete sentences.



The results of the study indicated that phonological and grammatical awareness directly enhanced interest of EFL students in order to attend in the classes and pay attention to the learning technique to improve their reading skills. This result, is one of the key point in the use of phonological and grammatical awareness as well as the aim of the treatment. Besides, the study results concluded that use of instructions and guidelines in the classroom constantly related with the grammatical and phonological awareness and giving students higher motivation in learning process. This study mostly underlines the fact that EFL reading should include learners as active participants whose phonological and grammatical awareness play an important role in EFL classes.

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