

The Exploration of Immersion Language Learning and Methods to Children's Preliminary Words Acquisition

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Abstract: This paper respectively pinpoints on the most EFFECTIVE and the most NATURAL approach for children to learn. In my paper, scientific experiments in four different ways of gaining basic vocabulary will be carried out and an interview with preschool teachers focusing on pronunciation will be conducted in this study. Moreover, Phonological Awareness Quick Assessment is utilized in the research to examine the standard level of each kid before the initiation of the experiment. This study reveals that the mix of regular letter-oriented word memorization and immersion English learning is the most natural way for preschoolers to learn English words while the combination of immersion and phonics-oriented word memorization method is the most effective one. As for its significance, apart from being helpful for teachers to realize whether they should change approaches to teaching preschoolers to memorize words the paper also gives directions to parents to understand whether they are supposed to adjust their strategies to assist and guide their kids to learn better for themselves.

Keywords: Immersion Language Learning, Phonics, Second Language Acquisition, Children

1. Introduction

This paper aims to find out whether immersive language learning has a profound influence on the acquisition of English vocabulary in terms of 0~6-year-old Chinese preschoolers' English education. To this end, the literature is to be reviewed extensively, scientific experiments are to be carried out and an interview with preschool teachers focusing on pronunciation will be conducted.

1.1. Research Topic

Does Immersion Language Learning Exert Significant Influence on Acquisition of English Vocabulary for 0~6-year-old Preschoolers in Chinese Context?

1.2. Research Question

Immersion learning environment provides preschoolers with phonics instruction, it teaches the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language, and it is what the author shows interest in and tends to integrate in the research question. It can be utilized to memorize words, but there is insufficient research to find its effect till now. Consequently, the author will make a comparison between two different vocabulary memorization methods. The author desires

to investigate which is superior - immersion language learning and non-immersion language learning, phonics words memorization method and the regular letter-oriented words memorization method concerning the effect, motivation, interest, passion, and children's developmental psychology. Detailed questions are as below.

1. What is the most effective method for Chinese preschoolers to memorize words?
2. What is the most natural method that can foster interest, motivation, and passion for Chinese preschoolers to memorize words?
3. What are the detailed differences in teaching methods between regular letter-oriented word memorization and phonics-oriented word memorization methods?

1.3. Significance

The broad aim of this research is to provide a helpful resource for teachers and schools in providing effective support for children with English as another language [1]. Specifically, my research can be helpful for teachers to find out whether they should change their approaches to teaching preschoolers to memorize words and for parents to understand whether they ought to adjust their strategies to assist and guide their kids to learn better for themselves. Moreover, immersion learning has been under heated debate for a long time. After understanding whether immersion learning is effective or not, more effective ways, and more or less immersive environments can be selected to guide kids to learn. Furthermore, immersion learning towards phonics-oriented vocabulary acquisition will be beneficial to teachers to switch their methods which are seemingly outdated but practical, making it more natural and scientific for kids to learn.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Immersion Language Learning

It turned out that French immersion (IMM) programs had strong academic outcomes and more advanced English proficiency for learners in Canada in the 1960s. Moreover, studies showed that bilingual children had more advanced metalinguistic concepts than their monolingual peers for word awareness. Additionally, nonverbal executive tasks and studies of metalinguistic awareness by Bialystock showed increments in metalinguistic development for children in immersion education programs [2].

2.2. Phonics

Phonics is a way of teaching children how to read and write. It helps children hear, identify, and use different sounds that distinguish one word from another in the English language. Written language can be compared to a code, so knowing the sounds of individual letters and how those letters sound when they're combined will help children decode words as they read. Understanding phonics will also help children know which letters to use when they are writing words [3]. Phonics and phonemic awareness are foundational skills that play a vital role in early literacy development. Phonemic Awareness (PA) is: the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words and the understanding that spoken words and syllables are made up of sequences of speech sounds are essential to learning to read in an alphabetic writing system, because letters represent sounds or phonemes. Phonics instruction focuses on teaching the relationship between sounds and letters, enabling children to decode words and read fluently. Phonemic awareness, on the other hand, focuses on developing children's ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in words, laying the groundwork for phonics instruction. By combining the power of phonics and phonemic awareness, children develop strong language skills, enhancing their reading, writing, and spelling abilities. These

skills serve as building blocks for future academic success and create a solid foundation for lifelong literacy [4].

3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling Frame

In our research, Chinese preschoolers (0-6-year native Chinese speakers) with poor or no English and standard Chinese are served as the population, among which 40 participants with similar phonological awareness are to be selected as a sample, for the reason that preschoolers' diverse intrinsic language abilities are likely to make an impact on the results, leading to inaccuracy. They are to acquire different types of English lessons while learning Chinese starter lessons.

3.2. Ethical Consideration

Obtaining permission from the guardians of the participants and signing agreements on what will be done to their kids in detail is to be put into the first before the official start of the experiment.

3.3. Participants and Research Design

3.3.1. Allocation

Table 1: Staffing in the experiment.

Supervisor	1 person
Preschoolers	40 people
Teachers	4 people
Psychologists	12 people

3.3.2. Detailed Process

Pretests allow teachers to see the levels of proficiency for each student. They should assess the degree to which students meet expectations using just prior knowledge. For example, a geography pretest can assess understanding of the concepts of latitude and longitude. Students who demonstrate mastery of this topic either meet or exceed expectations, students somewhat familiar with approach expectations, and students demonstrating little to no understanding do not meet expectations [5]. In our research, 100 3~6-year-old Chinese preschoolers were chosen randomly to have Phonological and Phonemic Awareness: Pre-Test (see Appendix 1). Specifically, we will have a random selection among different provinces, guaranteeing that each province will own certain participants, including different degrees of wealth, cultural diatheses of the whole civil, and degrees of emphasis on English subjects. The 40 participants with the closest test scores will be selected.

Selected participants are divided into four groups, each of which is composed of 10 people. Chinese starter program, including literacy, ancient poetry, etc., is taught throughout the process. Simultaneously, participants will receive English lessons, with diverse teaching methods according to different groups.

Participants in group A and group C will both receive regular letter-oriented word teaching while the only difference is that those in group A enjoy immersion learning and B do not. Similarly, group B and D participants are both taught phonics-oriented word memorization. Nevertheless, group B will be under immersion learning while group D not (see Table 2).

Table 2: Variables.

Chinese Native Speakers & Chinese Learners	Regular Letter-oriented Words Memorization(RL)	Phonics-oriented Words Memorization(P)
Immersion English Learning(IEL)	Group A (IEL+RL)	Group B (IEL+P)
Non-immersion English Learning(NEL)	Group C (NEL+RL)	Group D (NEL+P)

Specifically speaking, on one hand, group A and B participants will be put in a relatively cozy environment suitable for studying English for approximately 10 hours a day. For instance, they will listen to English songs, have conversations in English, acquire situational teaching, watch films and videos, engage in group discussions, and attend online courses in English [6]. By contrast, participants in groups C and D will acquire classes with regular teaching mode in China. To be more exact, the lasting time of each class is fixed as well and conventional parts in classes like dictations, Q & A sessions, quizzes are to be utilized, etc. Besides, subjects tend to accomplish daily assignments after the day at school.

On the other hand, phonics-oriented word memorization methods are to be implemented in groups B and D participants. During their learning, participants will learn to memorize words using explicit, systematic instruction as well as practice. Subjects must learn to match a unit of sound (a phoneme) to the letter or letters that make the sound (a grapheme) in this, separating the written word into its sounds and blending the individual sounds of letters to make words. Take the word “apple” as an example, subjects will memorize it according to its phonemes, [æ]-a,[p]-pp,[(ə)l]-le. Apart from that, they will be involved in a wide range of phonological activities, language comprehension activities, syllable activities, onset and rime, rhyming, and phonemic awareness activities (Phonological and Phonemic Awareness: In Practice | Reading Rockets, n.d.) [7], etc. In comparison, participants in groups A and C are taught in an entirely different way, spelling. Tapes playing A-P-P-L-E are to be played over and over again or teachers will not cease spelling until every subject remembers it.

After 30 days of learning, each participant will receive a test called Phonological Awareness Quick Assessment (see Appendix 2) by an examiner. Scores of participants in the same group will be recorded on a sheet. Shortly afterward, the average value will be calculated and acquired. By comparing the average values of the four groups, we tend to conclude.

Apart from that, the author’s team will closely track the psychological changes of participants while learning to research children’s psychological development while receiving different types of vocabulary learning. By checking the behavior, a countenance of three pre-selected participants of each group through a settled monitor in the classroom, 12 educational psychologists are requested to complete a record sheet (in Table 3) during each lesson, including marking and description. After the whole session, as shown in Figure 1, the average values of 3 subjects of each group in each lesson will be calculated and demonstrated in a line graph by information technology, presenting data of each lesson and its overall trend, which is likely to reflect children’s psychological development. Below is a detailed sheet and a sample line graph.

Table 3: Sample of the record sheet.

Registrar No.				Participant No.				
Evaluation (Please circle)				Group				
Interest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1-minimum
Passion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Motivation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7-maximum
Description of Behaviour (Please be concise and accurate)								
Date				Lesson No.				
Signature of Supervisor								
Record Sheet				No.				

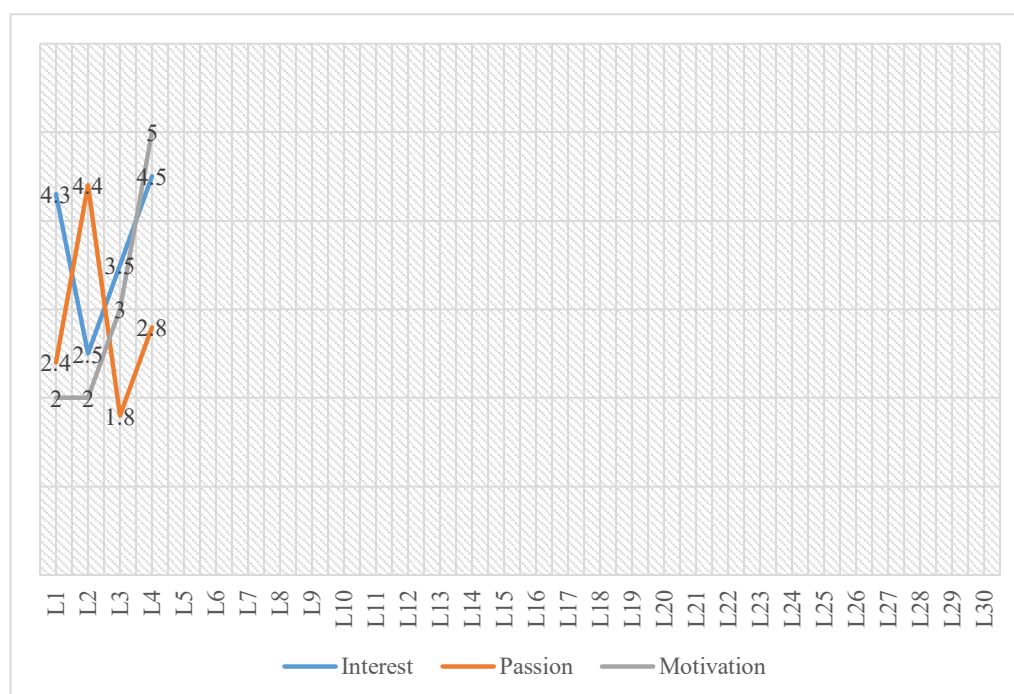


Figure 1: Line Graph of Group A: Changes of Various Indicators with the Progress of Courses.

In addition, an interview with an English teacher focusing on pronunciation teaching is to be held. Participant Joy has been involved in child's phonics teaching for more than a decade, working for a Chinese company of holds extra-curricular activities for profit. Moreover, the classroom she utilizes the most will be the place for interviewing, for the reason that loads of auxiliary teaching tools (flashcards, smart board, touch and talk pen, etc.) can be used throughout the whole process, making it easier for interviewers to understand. Below are preliminary interview questions for the work:

(i) What do you do in teaching English to help children develop pronunciation?

(ii) How to teach and shape kids' pronunciations effectively, scientifically with minimized harm to vocal organs like the vocal cord and the glottis?

(iii) How to correct certain pronunciations that are easy to vocalize wrongly and avoid similar situations for young children?

To grasp the different teaching methods of phonics teachers and traditional teachers, we tend to make a comparison between the two methods. Therefore, an interview with a teacher using a regular

letter-oriented word memorization method will be conducted. Similar questions are to be asked as above.

3.4. Research Instruments and Materials

Phonological Awareness Quick Assessment (PAQA) and YOU & ME Ladder happy English online English textbooks for beginners will be utilized as the instrument and material in the research. Phonological awareness is of great significance, for the reason that A student's level of phonological awareness at the end of kindergarten is one of the strongest predictors of future reading success, in Grade 1 and beyond [8].

As for the PAQA tool, below is a detailed explanation. There are a variety of tests and screening protocols available for screening or assessing students' phonological awareness skills. These tools vary about the

length of administration and the specific tasks that are assessed. The PAQA tool was designed to obtain a quick overview of a student's phonological awareness skills. By administering this tool to an entire class or targeted group of students the scoring response form provides visualization of trends in performance, both within a specific student's skills, as well as across an entire class or group (Phonological Awareness Quick Assessment, 2023). In this research, investigators are eager to examine and grasp each participant's phonological and phonetic ability after a month's learning, and that is the reason why the PAQA tool was selected.

YOU & ME Ladder™ happy English online English textbooks for beginners (Ladder Digital Education® Crop.) are selected to guide teachers' teaching for group A and group B. This set of textbooks makes use of diversified multimedia audio-visual teaching methods, as well as lively and interesting cartoon animations to guide preschoolers to learn joyfully. The protagonist style of the plot development, anthropomorphic cartoons, close-to-life content, songs and rhythm verse, and game activity designs of the set of systematic textbooks tend to make participants of groups A and B immersed in a comfortable language learning environment. In the curriculum system of YOU & ME, 6 pedagogy are advocated: Phonics, Direct Mother Tongue Teaching Method, TPR Body Response Teaching Method, Overlapping Spiral Teaching Method, Diversified Multimedia Situational Teaching Method, and Left-right Brain Balance Potential Development Teaching Method. To encapsulate, this set of textbooks is likely to be second to none among all immersion learning materials from the author's point of view, for the reason that other immersion learning materials tend to have single advantages.

Table 4: A Conclusive Table of Methodology.

Question	Method	Data Analysis	Data Interpretation
What is the most effective method for Chinese preschoolers to memorize words?	Experiment. After a month's teaching, each participant is required to accomplish Phonological Awareness Quick Assessment	Having calculated the average value of each group, as below are results. <div> <div>Group Band</div> <div> <div>Group</div> <div>Band</div> </div> </div> A 30.8 B 36.8 C 26.5 D 32.4	Under the circumstance that initial phonological levels of subjects are guaranteed to be similar, group B participants own the highest score. That is to say, the mixing method of phonics-oriented words memorization and immersion learning tend to let learners harvest the most.

Table 4: (continued).

	the score of which is what the research need for data collection.	According to the table, it is easy to find that group B participants gain the highest average value, hitting the point of over 36. Participants in group D rank the second, approximately four fifths of overall band. However, subjects in group C have the least score, less than 27.	Compared to the result of group C, group D wins, illustrating that the effect of P beyond that of RL.
What is the most natural method which can foster interest, motivation and passion for Chinese preschoolers to memorize words?	Observation and Evaluation. The scale and description sheet is utilized to test interest, motivation and passion of participants.	From the line graph of group A(not yet), we tend to see upward trends of three dimensions though several fluctuations could be discovered. However, situations of other groups are not yet clear.	Three lines of escalating trend of group A demonstrates the method a great success on stimulating interest, motivation and passion of subjects, which is likely to illustrate NEL+RL method is the most natural way. Additionally, comparisons could be made among different groups.
What are detailed differences in terms of teaching methods between regular letter-oriented Words memorization and phonics-oriented words memorization?	Interview.		

4. Conclusion

4.1. Summary of research

In the research, quantitative studies and qualitative studies are both utilized. On one hand, we would use one experiment with two research directions, the most effective and the most natural ways to teach. On the other hand, an interview makes a detailed comparison between two completely separate

word memorization modes. Through two studies, the author holds the firm belief that he can reach an answer to the research question.

4.2. Limitations of the Study

First and foremost, it is unfortunate that the sample of the experiment is too small to represent the population of all Chinese preschoolers, making the results of the experiment deviant from reality, eventually leading to inaccuracy and the imprecision of the results and the conclusion. Moreover, another caveat of this research is that different standards of English vocabulary accumulation may exert influence on the abilities to memorize new words and their phonological awareness, which becomes an interference factor for us to explore the answer.

In addition, it is seemingly plausible but somewhat unrealistic to find 12 educational psychologists to keep a trace of participants for 10 hours a day or so for one month, demonstrating superfluous time and manpower resource costs tend to be made in the research. Apart from that, the experiment is merely to be performed once which causes contingency, (neo-)investigators lack of relevant experience and ample background information on the topic, etc.

4.3. Potential Applications

After having found out that immersion learning in studying English and phonics through word memorization helps affect children's learning and their psychological development, some practical and vigorous actions could be taken and spread. We can popularize immersion environments for language learning or phonics to large extra-curricular institutions, which tend to make loads of similar institutions follow the example of, contributing to becoming well known in certain geographical areas with advanced education. At that time, a proposal can be made to local governments to help implement it and even ask them for financial support for new teaching methods that can balance direct instruction of the language with spontaneous immersive learning and ease the financial burden of relatively underprivileged families. In this manner, quality education is within the reach of every family [9].

4.4. Further Research

The author will probably do some further systematic explorations on how immersion language learning exerts a gradual and procedural impact on preschoolers with EAL and limitations even shortcomings of phonics in terms of SLA for young children.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1-Phonological and Phonemic Awareness: Pre-Test

- 1) Phonemic awareness is:
 - a strong predictor of future reading success
 - a sub skill of phonological awareness
 - a foundational reading skill
 - all of the above
- 2) There are _____ sounds in the English language:
 - exactly 26
 - more than 60
 - more than 40
 - exactly 52
- 3) Phoneme blending is:
 - easier than syllable blending
 - harder than onset and rime
 - easier than identifying rhyming words
 - more difficult than phoneme addition, deletion, and substitution
- 4) The onset sound(s) is the:
 - last sound in a syllable
 - the vowel and any following consonant sounds at the end of a syllable
 - the vowel sound in a syllable
 - sounds before the vowel in a syllable
- 5) The definition of phoneme is, "The smallest part of _____ language."
 - spoken
 - written
 - informal
 - formal
- 6) The word eight has how many phonemes?
 - 5
 - 4
 - 3
 - 2
- 7) Phonological awareness is:
 - a person's ability to hear sound structures of speech
 - a person's ability to manipulate sound structures of speech
 - a print-free skill set
 - all of the above
- 8) How are phonemes represented in writing to differentiate them from actual words?
 - by placing the letters between slashes /b/

by placing the letters between asterisks *b*

by placing the letters in parentheses (b)

by placing the letters between percent signs %b%

9)How many syllables do you hear in the word submerges?

1

2

3

4

10)Which of the following is an example of phoneme segmentation?

a child telling his teacher that the first sound in run is /r/

a child sounding out an unknown word ("/b/ /e/ /s/ /t/ ... best")

a child telling his teacher there are four sounds in truck, /t/ /r/ /u/ /ck/

a child telling his teacher that the last sound in cup is /p/

Appendix 2- Phonological Awareness Quick Assessment



Phonological Awareness Quick Assessment

Additional Training Items

Phonological Awareness

Children need phonological awareness in order to learn to read. Children with phonological awareness have the ability to break **oral language** into smaller units and to manipulate sounds. For example, sentences can be broken down into phonemes or individual sounds. Manipulating sounds involves substituting one sound for another, deleting sounds and adding sounds. Phonological awareness begins with rhyming and progresses through increasingly difficult tasks such as segmenting sentences, segmenting syllables, blending sounds, identifying the onset and rime in words and segmenting and blending phonemes to create words.

Phonological awareness precedes phonemic awareness, which is the awareness that phonemes are used to create words and can be changed to create new words. Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness is not the same as phonics. Phonics involves teaching students the correspondence between spoken sounds and written symbols.

The samples below may be utilized should the administrator feel that a student would benefit from additional training items during the trial phase of a question.

Item	Task Instructions	Additional Trial Examples
1. Rhyming Recognition	"Tell me if these words rhyme..."	pit – mit; sand – sock, ship, hip
2. Rhyming Production	"Tell me a word that rhymes with..."	ask the student to make a rhyme with their own name, a pets name or the examiners name
3. Word Awareness	"How many words are in..."	happy birthday; its time to eat, hit the ball
4. Syllable Awareness	"Listen for each syllable or word part, how many syllables are in the word..."	how many syllables are in the student's name, the examiners name, the principals name?
5. Initial sound Identification	"Tell me the first (or beginning) sound in the word..."	tac (t); dog (d); teacher (t), us (uh)
6. Final Sound Identification	"Tell me the last (or ending) sound you hear in the word..."	dot (t); food (d); time (m)
7. Sound Segmentation	"Tell me all the sounds you hear in the word..."	dog (d-ah-g); fit (f-i-t); cool (k-oo-l)
8. Sound Blending	"Listen to these individual sounds and tell me what word you hear..."	I am going to tell you a secret word and only say the sounds in the word. Can you guess these words? (k-i-d) kid; (b-l-ā-k) black; (t-oo) two
9. Medial Sound Identification	"Tell me the middle sound you hear in the word..."	Pout (ow), put (uh), mitt (i)
10. Deletion Task	"I am going to ask you to say a word and then say it again without one of its parts..."	Say hotdog, say it again but don't say "hot" (dog) Say money, say it again but don't say "mon" (knee) Say chip, say it again but don't say "ch" (ip)



Phonological Awareness Quick Assessment

Kinder / First (Circle One)

Initial Assessment / Final Assessment (Circle One)

Name: _____		
School: _____	Examiner: _____	Test Date: _____

Use the lines to record student responses. This test shows a progression of skill development.

1. Rhyming Recognition

Teacher: "Tell me if these words rhyme: (can - man) (to - up.)" "Now tell me if these words rhyme..."

1. fat – sat _____ ☐
2. cake – shake _____ ☐
3. fin – map _____ ☐
4. look – book _____ ☐
5. play – stop _____ ☐

/5

2. Rhyming Production

Teacher: "Tell me a word that rhymes with pat" (nonsense words are ok). "Now tell me a word that rhymes with..."

1. toe _____ ☐
2. bake _____ ☐
3. more _____ ☐
4. top _____ ☐
5. star _____ ☐

/5

3. Word Awareness

Teacher: "Listen to each sentence. (Teacher provides blocks and moves them as she says each word for "I like puppies"). Say to the student: "Now you try" and say the sentence again. "Now you use the blocks and show me how many words are in..."

1. He is nice. _____ ☐
2. Sit down. _____ ☐
3. Please wash your hands. _____ ☐
4. Five boys and girls are reading books. _____ ☐
5. Apples are good for you. _____ ☐

/5

4. Syllable Awareness

Trial: "Listen for each syllable or word part you hear in the word "computer." "Now clap the word parts with me".

"Listen to each word and you try it by yourself."

1. rainbow (2) _____ ☐
2. fish (1) _____ ☐
3. sunflower (3) _____ ☐
4. caterpillar (4) _____ ☐
5. walking (2) _____ ☐ /5

5. Initial Sound Identification

Trial: "Tell me the first (or beginning) sound you hear in "soup". /sss/ is the beginning sound (if student answers with the letter name, then ask them to tell the letter sound). Tell me the first sound in..."

1. pin (p) _____ ☐
2. tank (t) _____ ☐
3. wipe (w) _____ ☐
4. apple (a) _____ ☐
5. kindergarten (k) _____ ☐ /5

6. Final Sound Identification

Trial: "Tell me the last (or ending) sound you hear in "soup". /puh/ is the last sound (if student answers with the letter name, then ask them to tell the letter sound). Tell me the last sound in..."

1. some (m) _____ ☐
2. tug (g) _____ ☐
3. laugh (f) _____ ☐
4. lip (p) _____ ☐
5. make (k) _____ ☐ /5

7. Sound Segmentation

Trial: "How many sounds do you hear in the word "cat"? (Pull 3 blocks down to demonstrate as you are saying the word. For example, k-a-t). "Now, tell me each sound in..." (The test administrator does not stretch out the test words. Only stretch out the word when giving the initial example).

1. sat(3) _____ ☐
2. game(3) _____ ☐
3. up(2) _____ ☐
4. shoe(2) _____ ☐
5. stop (4) _____ ☐ /5

