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ARABIC READING FOR BEGINNERS

By

AMAL AYYUB FRAYJI

Submitted In Partial Fulfillment For The  
Requirement Of The Degree Master Of  
Arts In The Education Department  
Of The American University Of  
Beirut. Beirut - Lebanon

June - 1967

TO MY FIRST EDUCATORS MY FATHER AND MOTHER.

## PREFACE

Three lines of interest are behind the choice of "Arabic reading for beginners" as the subject of my thesis. The first has grown from the need to provide the Lebanese children with more stimulating enjoyable and well rounded childhood experiences. The second has grown from the need to develop in Lebanese children right from the earliest stages a better control of their mother language. The third has grown from the need to establish for these children, at all levels, a rich and expanding modern Arabic library. I have lived through these needs as a child, a teacher and a mother; and now they are to me, as they are to many Lebanese parents and educators, the needs of the moment.

One of the most immediate projects to be undertaken in trying to cater to these needs is the development of beginning reading activities and reading materials that apply, to the teaching of Arabic language, modern principles of education and recent theories in reading instruction. A good start in Arabic reading, through appropriate reading matter, would lay the foundations for the development of skillful, enjoyable and growing Arabic reading experiences and would play a vital role in enriching our children's lives and developing their personalities.

Before setting the plan for a new Arabic reading program and reading matter, certain basic considerations had to be studied carefully. These considerations branched into four main chapters, the first one dealt with the beginners themselves, their characteristics, development and their readiness to read. The second dealt with the nature of the reading process with the basic principles of learning reading. The third took up the language problems that face the Lebanese Arab children in learning to read their mother language. The fourth presents a general appraisal of the conditions of learning Arabic reading as they are at present in Lebanese schools, with a closer look at the beginning readers now current in Lebanon.

In view of the fundamentals established in the first two chapters and the educational needs and problems brought up in the following two, the study arrived at certain basic recommendations, in the light of which the new program is to be planned and the new reading materials written. They can be summed up briefly as follows:

A developmental approach is to be adapted in teaching our beginners how to read Arabic. This means that the program should be geared to the children's differentiated needs interests and patterns of growth, in such a way as to ensure their optimum growth in reading and through reading. Reading must be given to the child only after he has been actively and systematically prepared

to profit from the experience. This involves the maturation of certain capacities the learning of certain habits and skills and the development of a positive motivation to learn the task.

To devise a language related reading program is another major recommendation of the study. Efficient reading instruction builds on the concept that reading is an extension of general language development in function as well as in nature. Arabic reading should be constantly interwoven with the children's oral language on the one hand and with writing on the other hand. A systematic effort should be made to bridge the gap existing between the language the child uses in his everyday life and the language he is asked to read.

An experience-centered reading program is another major recommendation of this study. Arabic reading should build on the children's own experiences and their on-going activities. Effective and enjoyable learning results only when the child is able to perceive the purposes reading serves in his little world.

A flexible eclectic method that benefits from the various techniques and methods applied already in both the Arab world and the west, is a logical corollary to the above - A variety of activities approaches material and equipment are used to cater to the children's various needs and abilities

on the one hand, and to take care of the many skills involved in reading on the other hand. However, no matter what shape reading may take, it should always carry meaning and purpose to the child.

Last but not least the study recommended the preparation of modern Arabic readers and reading material that take into full consideration all the facts and principles that were brought up. These readers and reading materials are characterized by the studied choice, gradation and systematic repetition of vocabulary and language patterns. They are also characterized by interesting illustration clear and legible print. It is the hypothesis of the writer that a lot can be accomplished, by way of meeting our educational needs and solving the Arabic reading instruction problems, if we improve the reading content and apply modern standards of readability; and if we prepare modern Arabic books reading materials and teaching aids and distribute them widely among the elementary schools of Lebanon.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Dr. Matta Akrawi, my adviser, for his guidance, encouragement and interest in my work, to Dr. Gertrude Hildreth for her inspiring ideas and up-to-date facts in the field of reading, to Dr. Anis Frayha for his scientific approach to the problems of the Arabic language and their solutions. And to Mrs. Juanita Soghikian for her practical suggestions and kind help.

I also wish to express my gratitude to the members of my family whose understanding, patience and help made this work possible.

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PART I

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS  
IN TEACHING ARABIC READING TO BEGINNERS

## CHAPTER I

### BEGINNERS AND THEIR READINESS FOR READING

In studying the possibilities of a modern Arabic reading program for beginners, it would be wise to start with the children themselves, and to consider at the same time the main factors and principles, in child development that prepare them for a successful and happy experience.

Studies in the field of reading, to find out the factors behind the success or failure of teaching reading in general, and at the initial stage in particular, came out with the basic principle that the success of teaching reading is highly dependent on whether the child is ready for this experience or not,

#### What Does "Readiness" Mean ?

A child is ready for reading when he is as a whole prepared to start learning this process, to grow steadily in it, and through it. This involves the development of certain native capacities, the acquirement of certain basic skills, habits and concepts, together with a positive motivation to learn. Readiness for any situation is as explained by Cronbach, "The pupil's equipment, his needs and goals, and his learned ideas and skills . . . The sum of all his characteristics which make him more likely to respond in one way or another."<sup>1</sup> Or, as described by Jersild as,

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1. Lee J. Cronbach, Educational Psychology (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1954), p. 74.

"Raising questions regarding the appropriateness of what is to be taught in terms of the child's ability to profit from it - his maturity, his background of experiences and his possession of needed related skills."<sup>1</sup>

Underlying the concept of readiness, are basic principles of development, that give it its educational significance. Studying these principles, would not only serve to justify the prominent role that readiness plays in modern instruction, but it would also, disclose more clearly its nature, considering at the same time, the various factors, that should be attended to, in teaching beginners how to read.

#### The Related Principles of Development

##### Both Maturation and Learning Establish Readiness

Readiness results from the constant interaction between maturation and learning. "Readiness changes day by day as a result of the person's biological development and his many experiences."<sup>2</sup> The emphasis in modern schools on reading readiness activities is grounded in the fact that a proper balance should be kept between these two lines of growth.

##### Reading Readiness is a Continuing Process

Reading readiness starts early in a child's life and continues as long as he reads. "It is not restricted

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1. Margaret G. Mckim, Guiding Growth In Reading, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1958), p. 36, citing Arthur T. Jersild et al., Child Development and the Curriculum (New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1946. p. 31.

2. Cronbach, Op. Cit. p. 74.

to the first steps in reading, but involves every step in the child's progress, from simple reading tasks, to those that are more complicated."<sup>1</sup> It is therefore the concern of every teacher at every level of instruction.

#### Reading Readiness Passes Through Orderly Stages

"In learning to read, the typical child passes through a series of orderly steps, not unlike other aspects of childhood development, with each new step related to, dependent upon, and evolving from the preceding ones and preparing for the next!"<sup>2</sup> A modern school takes care that a child develops through each stage successfully. For success in one step, enhances the readiness for the next step, thus leading to more success, whereas failure suppresses readiness and tends to cause more failure.

#### Reading is a Developmental Task

Very closely related to the above principle, is that of timing. This principle states that there is an optimum time for learning, and that it is important to strike when the iron is hot. "Efforts at teaching which would have been largely wasted, if they had come earlier, give gratifying results, when they come at the teachable moment when the

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1. Mckim, Op. Cit. p. 36.

2. Gertrude H. Hildreth, Teaching Reading (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965, p. 84.

task should be learned."<sup>1</sup> Not only would we save time and effort, but we would also save the child the unnecessary frustrations and the harmful psychological after-effects, caused by exposing him too early to the reading task. Yet harm may also result, if we are unduly late in offering the child a training for which he has been ready. "It is possible, indeed likely, that a person who comes late to his training, will never realize the full measure of his potential."<sup>2</sup> This brings to focus the importance of considering reading, a developmental task that a child has to master early in his life if his total development is to follow a normal path. It also highlights the vital role, that the prereading as well as the initial program of teaching reading, plays in the children's educational growth.

The formative period for the child's attitude regarding his intellectual abilities, reading work with numbers and school work in general, is the first year or so of schooling; success, failure, challenge or conflict at that time modifies his reaction to all later schooling.<sup>3</sup>

### The Principle of Individual Differences

Although all normal children follow a general sequence of growth, a predictable pattern, yet they differ

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1. Elizabeth B. Hurlock, Child Development, (New York: McGraw-Hill and Co., 1964), p. 18, citing R.J. Havighurst, Human Development and Education, (New York: Longman's, 1953.)

2. Ibid.

3. Cronbach, Op. Cit., p. 75.

widely in their readiness to read. Each child entering first grade is a unique pattern of combinations of hereditary and environmental factors. The strengths and weaknesses, abilities, interests, attitudes and problems. The same child may have certain aspects of his development proceed at different rates. This brings us to another main characteristic of modern reading instruction, namely, differentiated or individualized instruction- a logical corollary of the readiness concept. It involves the pacing and timing aspects referred to, above, plus capitalizing on the particular potentials of each child as he is now to the full, for "Although inner capacities are gifts of God yet few children ever reach their limits."<sup>1</sup>

#### Complexity of the Concept of Readiness

Complexity refers to the variety of factors underlying readiness, on the one hand, and their close inter-relatedness on the other hand. To say that a child is ready to learn reading means much more than ability in certain language skills. It pre-supposes a certain degree of physiological and neurological maturity, a certain degree of mental, emotional and social development, a relatively good experiential background in general and in language in particular and above all it presupposes the interest, the

1. Hurlock, Op. Cit., p. 17, citing D. B. Harris: The development of potentiality., (Teacher's Coll. Rec.), 1960.



right attitudes and approach to reading. The growth of one aspect has significant effects on the growth of the other - although they may vary in their rate of development as was mentioned above. There is, for instance, a positive correlation between physical and mental growth, physical and emotional development, social and mental development etc.. This explains the fact that growth in reading depends upon growth of the whole child, and presents an important justification of the modern emphasis on the well rounded development of each child.

In establishing a modern Arabic reading program, the above principles of development and readiness, namely those of balance, continuity, pacing, timing, differentiation and interrelation, constitute one of its basic corner stones. Keeping these principles in mind, we will now discuss some of the school beginners' traits and characteristics as they affect their readiness to read.

### A Look At The School Beginners

#### Physical Characteristics and Readiness

It takes maturity, a general state of physical health, and the acquirement of certain physical habits and skills for the children to be considered physically ready for reading. All three points will be taken up as we consider briefly the general physical characteristics of the Fives and Sixes.

Physical growth at ages Five and Six enters a comparatively slow stage, thus enabling the child to learn new skills, as well as to perfect the skills that have already developed. For this reason, and for others that will be mentioned below, these two ages are good ages to start reading readiness and beginning reading activities, together with the various activities offered by the modern kindergarten and primary school.

#### The Children's Vitality and Continuous Motion.

"A healthy five, six or seven year old, has bright eyes, color in his face, straight legs and great vitality . . . The child stands straight and sits well at his work table without leaning or slumping. While at work he may rest by changing from sitting to standing. . . He has an urge to action and is still for only a short time. . . He is interested in the activity, not in the result. . . He has a sense of equilibrium. He can stand on one foot, hop and skip, keep time to music and bounce and catch a ball . . . He likes to climb and jump from heights. . ." <sup>1</sup>.

"Children of these ages cannot tolerate immobilization for any length of time. . ." <sup>2</sup> They are continuously running, jumping. . . handling things, making things -

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1. G. Max Wingo and Raleigh Schooling, Elementary School Student Teaching, (New York: Mc Graw Hill, 1955.), pp. 81-85.

2. Hildreth, Op. Cit., p. 162

playing all day long with boundless energy. . ."1.

The Five year olds are comparatively in a period of more physiological stability. . . Their energetic play begins to take a more regulated shape. "Yet they have not acquired the maturity necessary for a controlled quiet activity like reading."<sup>2</sup> Six year olds turn to more structured games and learn game rules enthusiastically. . . They are more ready to settle down to a voluntary task and follow simple instructions. . . But, they work best and accomplish most when they are free to express their natural impulses to move about, twist and wriggle. The greatest strides in reading are made in the later half of first grade when children ordinarily acquire better control of their movements."<sup>3</sup> Before six and a half reading activities need to be brief, repetitive and of high interest value, in order to catch and hold the attention of the youngsters. Until then the teachers should tolerate the children's wiggling.

A good general state of health is the first thing a teacher should make sure of before starting the beginners on any learning experience. Regular physical check up by the school physician is a necessity. Hygienic school conditions, cleanliness, ventilation, and provision for vigorous

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1. Ibid.

2. Marion Monroe, Growing Into Reading, (New York: Scott Foresman, 1951), pp. 26-27.

3. Ibid., p. 48.

out-door exercise, active running and jumping are specially needed at this age, because it is one of frequent illness, highly susceptible to respiratory infections.<sup>1</sup>

Specially prepared educational games, interesting seat work, of all kinds, are provided in both the prereading, as well as in the early stages of reading, to help the children develop habits of staying still, of concentration, and following directions, in quiet brief tasks.

#### Large Muscular Activity is Predominant

The muscular coordination needed by the activity of reading, necessitates again, maturity, health, and special exercises. The five year olds and the six year olds, are known for their use, of large muscle coordinations, and their clumsiness when attempting tasks that require tinier coordinations. A gradual transition from the use of large muscles to the use of smaller muscles is effected during the readiness stage and the early years. It should never be forced on the child. Large paint brushes, crayons, large pencils, blunt scissors, paste, large needles, and hammers are given to the children in kindergarten. Later, smaller equipment will be introduced gradually, to develop smaller muscular coordinations.

#### Visual Characteristics and Readiness

"Far-sighted vision is a normal condition of childhood. Few children of beginning school age are accustomed

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1. Wingo and Schorling, Op. Cit., pp. 81-85.

to converging their eyes at near vision such as the reading task requires.<sup>1</sup>

Eye strain can be caused by:

1. Fixation on tiny objects or small print that are held close to their eyes.

2. Rapid shifting of eye focus from far to near.

Perhaps there is nothing so tiring as shifting from near to far areas of vision. During the pre-reading period and later, children should not be required to compare word forms from the blackboard, or charts in the front of the room, with those in their books.<sup>2</sup>

3. Forcing the near work too rapidly on unaccustomed eyes. "Beginners have limited visual adaptation."<sup>3</sup>

The use of books and printed material with large clear type. . . brief periods of reading. . . frequent rest, good posture, adequate lighting etc., can guard against unnecessary eye strain, and help the teacher adjust to the children's natural visual immaturity. . .

Various activities are provided in kindergarten and grade one to develop the eye-hand muscle coordination. Steadiness, speed, and accuracy, are three hand-motor skills that help the development of hand-eye coordinations and the

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1. Hildereth, Op. cit., p. 162.

2. Monroe, Op. Cit., p. 5

3. Ibid

necessary visual skills for reading. Handedness is definitely established and should not be changed.<sup>1</sup>

It goes without saying that the teacher should be continuously alert to any symptoms of visual weakness or fatigue - Regular check up by the school physician is recommended.

#### Auditory Characteristics

By the time that the children reach kindergarten and first grade they would have had many experiences with sounds of nature, of the environment, of musical instruments of human voices etc. . . The ability to hear these sounds and voices depends largely upon the proper functioning of ears, brain, and coordinating nervous pathways, again necessitating maturity and general health conditions. "But what the child does with the sounds he hears - whether he imitates them, differentiates them, or rejects them - and just what meaning he associates with them are largely the results of experience."<sup>2</sup> It is the role of kindergarten and the readiness program, to supply him with rich and systematic listening experiences and to develop in him the auditory discriminations and skills demanded by reading.

Again the teacher should be alert to detect any symptoms of hearing deficiency, should refer the child for appropriate

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1. Ibid., pp. 49 - 50.

2. Ibid., p. 110

treatment and should adjust the class procedure to help him overcome his difficulty.

### Emotional - Social Characteristics and Readiness

Among the fundamental studies that have been done in the field of reading, are those proving that failure in reading can both<sup>be</sup> a result as well as a cause of emotional disturbance and social maladjustment. The first fact implies that reading should not be started unless the child is emotionally and socially prepared for this elaborate experience. A child's emotional balance or imbalance has a very definite effect upon his ability to learn and to retain what he has learned. Emotionally disturbed children who are placed in reading situations with pressure to learn, when attitudes are not ready for learning, may embroil reading into their general emotional disturbance. . .<sup>1</sup> With relation to the second fact that failure in reading can be a cause of emotional disturbance and social maladjustment, it is important that once reading is started in the right climate, it should keep growing in such a climate. How to plan and work for favourable psychological aftereffects of successful and enjoyable reading experiences, will be discussed more explicitly in part three of this thesis. Here however, we must pause a little to discuss the factors behind the emotional-social balance, or lack of balance that beginners

may experience

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1. Ibid., p. 22

may experience as they enter school.

To say that a five or six year old child is emotionally and socially ready for learning, presupposes first, competence in solving his unique problems, second, adequacy in mastering his developmental tasks. These presuppose in turn that his basic needs are being satisfied. These basic needs are the mainspring of human behaviour in general, and they play their most determining role in the child's early formative years. They are: "The needs for affection, for adult approval, for peer approval, for independence and, for self respect."<sup>1</sup>

Beginners in reading and schooling need close affectional ties at home and a warm accepting atmosphere in school, where they feel "they belong." By five, a child must have learned to relate himself emotionally to parents, siblings and other people. He should be free of the emotional threat of having to rival brothers and sisters at home and classmates in school, to earn the acceptance of his parents or teachers.

Beginners also face the task of establishing a good interrelationship with adults, with authority figures. They need adult approval on the one hand, and to experience the constructive feelings of respect and conformity to social demands and regulations. Around the age of five, children usually learn to distinguish right and wrong, and form a conscience. They also learn to accept frustration of desires,

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1. Cronbach, Op. Cit., p. 100.



and home regulations. This prepares the six year old to understand more fully the school purposes and procedures, to learn to make judgments on basis of what is right and to control their emotions.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp 99-112.

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS IN RELATION TO CONTINUING  
NEEDS<sup>1</sup>

	<u>Preschool 2-5</u>	<u>Middle-Childhood(6-9)</u>
Characterization	Energetic Play, More regulated activity.	Establishing self in social groups.
Physical Landmarks	Able to talk and walk by 2.	
Social surround- ings	Home, preschool.	School neighbourhood.
Need for affection	Accept new born brother or sister.	
Need for approval by authority figures	Accept frustra- tion of desires. Accept home regu- lations.	Accept school purposes and procedures, make judgments on basis of right. Control emotions.
Need for approval by peers	Pays attention to others feelings. Social skills: share, take turns, inhibit aggressions ..Learn to respect property rights.	Develop social skills, play skills, attain acceptable social status. Care for own appearance.
Need for indepen- dence	Accept separation from parents, choose among acti- vies. Make sugges- tions to group.	Increase self direction.
Need for self respect	Develop physical skill, drawing. Accept own impulses with guilt.	Master school work. Master physical skills for games - Accept own physical characteristics. Aptitude for school.

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1. Ibid., p. 94-95.

Equally important is the need for peer approval, the five-year olds start paying more attention to others' feelings and to develop the social skills of sharing, taking turns, inhibiting aggression, and learning to respect property rights. . . Again, this paves the way for age six which is characteristically more aggressive and competitive and needs more guidance in self-direction and self-control.

The need for self-respect is closely linked to the general feeling of adequacy. The child, early in his schooling should develop a good balance, between what he aims to do, what he thinks he can do, and what he can actually do. This balanced picture about himself fulfills his need for self acceptance for self respect.

The five year olds are in a period of comparative calm. They display more physiological stability and more regulated energy, and like to practise what they can do. They favour simple routines to stabilize their self-confidence and nourish their self-esteem. They feel more secure in a structured routine because they do not yet know the limitations of their environment and cannot see the goals of their activities. Yet within the structure routine they constantly demand periods of freedom, to run about and talk and play noisily enjoying large muscle activities.<sup>1</sup> This involves their need of independence which is as vital for their

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1. Monroe, Op Cit., pp. 26-27.

development as the other basic needs. Five-year olds cannot afford a prolonged demanding activity like reading, although they are very much interested in stories or pictures. They would like to read if they could magically acquire the skill.<sup>1</sup>

By six, children would have acquired enough confidence to "look for new fields to conquer."<sup>2</sup> "This is an expansive age, and the six year old is ready for almost any thing. His appetite for new experience is prodigious."<sup>3</sup> Being more prepared for adventuresome activities both physical skills and school work becomes a more imperative need at this age which yearns to prove itself and dominate others. The need to keep a good balance between the children's drive for independence and at the same time their need for self acceptance and confidence is a delicate task that the teachers of this age group face. Teachers should avoid for instance the use of too much competition with beginners because they have not yet learned how to lose. They have to be right, to win, to be praised.<sup>4</sup> Due to their impulsive nature to make a lot of mistakes. The teacher should treat the mistakes as good attempts for fear of making mistakes is very destructive to the child's readiness to read and to his development of thinking.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 27.

2. Ibid., p. 28.

3. Frances L. Ilg, and Louise Bates Ames, Child Behavior (New York: Dell Publishing Co. 1955) p. 46

4. Ibid.

5. Monroe Op. Cit. p. 29.

In teaching beginners how to read much care should be given to provide the child with warm and constructive human relationship. This can be done directly and actually through the teacher's attitudes and methods or indirectly and imaginatively through the human relations revealed by the symbolic characters he reads about in his readers. The leaflets of his little readers should carry to him patterns of healthy attitudes and examples of happy interrelationships with parents, adults and peers. Also much care should be given to develop in the child the free thinking the expressiveness and resourcefulness on the one hand, and the adequacy and confidence on the other hand, through constant stimulation, recognition and praise.

#### Intellectual Characteristics and Readiness

Children in typical beginning classes differ widely in mental age and their intellectual readiness to read. Children of the chronological age six, may range in mental age between three to nine or ten years. The middle 50% ranges between a mental age of five years, seven months to six years, eleven months.<sup>1</sup> These differences must be tested in both the prereading and beginning reading years, and the educational program must be adjusted to the children's varying capacities. Studies have shown that progress in reading correlates highly with mental ability. "Other things

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit., p. 163.

being equal, which they seldom are, in situations involving human beings, children with high I. Q. s are more likely to learn rapidly, than children with low I.Q. s. Correlations of scores of intelligence tests with measures of reading progress, tend to fall between. 45 and. 65.<sup>1</sup>

Methods of teaching, and the learning situation, have however proved to play a vital role in adjusting the reading activity to the child's intellectual capacity. Gates, among others studying this problem, came to the conclusion, that it is, "...impossible to establish any single mental age as a crucial point, before which, instruction in reading should not be given. The determining factor, within limits, seems to be the way children are taught."<sup>2</sup> Hilgard in studying the effect of the learning situation, on insightful learning, has demonstrated that, "with proper materials and with proper levels of difficulty, the five year old can learn to read; with less well prepared materials, even the seven year old may not learn. Children can be put in situations in which they can show only trial and error learning."<sup>3</sup>

It is generally agreed that the mental age of six to six and a half, is necessary to the development of the various mental tasks like reading. A child of this age can give better voluntary attention to abstract symbols like words,

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1. Mckim, Op. Cit., p.39.

2. Ibid.

3. Emerald V. Dechant, Improving The Teaching of Reading-  
(Englewood Cliff, N.J. Prentive Hall, 1964) p. 501.

can make meaningful associations with print, can understand concepts, relate facts discriminate among the various sounds and words and is generally in better command of the language skills

"In general, studies of intellectual ability as a factor in reading readiness seem to support the proposal that the prereading program should be a program of active teaching, not a waiting period. They suggest also that this teaching needs to be paced to the individual child's capacity for growth."<sup>1</sup>

#### The Beginners' Language

School beginners love to talk.<sup>2</sup> Their language output, ideas, sentence structure, levels of defining, qualities of speech, vary greatly from child to child, but are on the average growing remarkably during the ages of five and six. The reading readiness program and early primary years play a very vital role in promoting the growth of the various language skills, that are in turn, very highly linked to the child's readiness to read.

By five, a child has made rapid strides in using oral language. He speaks more fluently, uses around 2,000 words listens, and interprets language with less confusion. His oral language grows, through direct experience, the use of

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1. Mc Kim, Op. Cit., p. 40.

2. Monroe, Op. Cit., pp. 73-87.

pictures, story telling and story reading. He has fun trying out strange new words with interesting sounds.<sup>1</sup>

By six, the child is plentifully supplied with vocabulary, using on the average 2,500 to 2,600 words. He is able to express ideas, in simple but complete sentences that are easily understood, even when he gets his words mixed up in speaking. His average sentence length is 5 to 7 words. "By the time he enters school (a child) can make a simple statement concerning his wants, or describing an experience, relate incidents about family, home, pets, toys, a trip, events at school, and little items, of personal interest. He can carry a simple oral message, report specific information, make simple explanations, and briefly describe something that is familiar to him. He asks and answers questions and links several sentences together, to express related consecutive ideas."<sup>2</sup>

Ability to enunciate and pronounce words correctly are generally well developed by this age, although correct enunciation may not be complete until ages seven to eight. Stuttering may be caused by psychological as well as physiological factors, it affects the development of reading indirectly, by affecting the child's language development

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1. Hildreth, Op. cit., p. 51.

2. Ibid., pp. 51-52.



and more directly, by hindering his oral reading skills. Again the teacher has to adjust his teaching procedures to help the child get over his difficulty.

Maturation of sentence structure parallels the child's mental growth with the use of words with concrete meaning more frequently, than those with abstract meaning, independent words (nouns) coming ahead of relational and subordinate words.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Five and Six Year Old's Interest in Reading

Interest in books and a positive motivation to learn reading, play a vital role in preparing the child for a successful and enjoyable reading experience. A child who shows genuine interest in books, and eagerness to begin reading has usually reached, a certain degree of physical, intellectual and emotional-social maturity. All of these, reflect in turn, another very significant factor in the development of reading readiness, namely, a stimulating home background.

In a stimulating home atmosphere, with lots of books and printed material used by the different members of the family, a child's interest in reading grows spontaneously and orderly. Beginning at home the child's relation to books tends to follow certain stages. Growing in a reading atmosphere, he approaches books as early as one year of age, motivated by his general exploratory interests. His interest in books begins with "manipulation", then "pointing", then

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1. Ibid., p. 53.

"naming", - at eighteen months; "simple narrative", at two years; "Interpretation", at two and a half; "story telling" and "notice of print", at three, then "differentiation of real and fantastic", and more "awareness of the printed symbols", at four. And at last, "developing the basic reading readiness skills in kindergarten, at five."<sup>1</sup>

Hildreth equally refers to the same principles of spontaneity and orderliness, and describes, how interest in reading starts by observing persons in the family, by story telling, and by picture book reading.

She refers to the children's "pretend" reading, and their imitation of adults, which indicates the importance of reading in their minds, and the fact that it is looked upon as an adult privilege, and identified with growing up.<sup>2</sup>

As can be gathered from the discussion of the various characteristics of the five and six year olds, other things being equal, children of these age groups are interested in books and are eager to learn reading - the six year olds, being more mature in many respects are more equipped and interested in learning the task.

With children who have had favorable conditions of growth in preschool years, and who come from homes where readiness for reading develops naturally, the school has the responsibility to nourish, direct, and uplift the positive

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1. Monroe, Op. Cit., pp. 3-19.

2. Hildreth, Op. Cit., pp. 87-91.

attitudes they have to books and reading. To the children who come from less qualified, if not impoverished homes the school has a remedial function to provide them with the rich and enjoyable experiences they have missed with books, as well as with other interesting activities so as to bring them to the point where they show genuine interest and readiness to read. The basic prereading activities centering around skill with words, stories and pictures, will be discussed more explicitly in part two.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NATURE OF THE READING PROCESS WITH BASIC PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING READING

#### Reading Is One Phase Of General Language Development

Reading is in function, as well as in nature, one phase of general language development. In function it is like the other language arts, a tool of communication, a medium for giving and receiving ideas, a means of problem solving and a source of need satisfaction. In nature reading is one form of symbolical language. It constitutes with the other language arts, a single pattern of interrelated skills, where progress in one is influenced by, and in turn, influences the progress of the other.

#### Reading, an Extension in Function of the Child's Oral Language

Reading functions as an extension of the many-sided relations with oral language that a child has already experienced by the time he enters school.

#### The Role of Oral Language in a Child's Life

Oral language plays a vital role in the child's general development. Developing spontaneously in response to need satisfaction, and as a part of his interaction with his environment, a child's mother tongue functions as "an integral part of (his) personality, a reflection of the

self, symbolizing and summing up all the intimate relationships in his home life that the child has experienced from babyhood."<sup>1</sup>

Oral language plays a determining role in the child's development of thinking. It functions as, "the vehicle of the child's mental concepts. Words are tools for thinking, and sources of meaning, useful for generalizing and retaining knowledge".<sup>2</sup> Strickland brings out the importance of the role of oral language usage in the development of the child's thinking, as follows:

The little child is incapable of thinking before he speaks: to him thinking and speaking are simultaneous. The three-year old who accompanies his play with a running account of what he is doing is unable to think in any other way. He is in the process of acquiring speech and must use it orally if he is to use it at all. Children need a great deal of opportunity to talk all through elementary school. They need many opportunities to bring thought into being through expressing it.<sup>3</sup>

Experiments in studying the effect of oral language usage on the child's understanding, have shown that, the only sure test for a child's comprehension of language, words or sentences, is usage. "There is considerable evidence that tots and school children alike seldom have very clear

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit., p. 46.

2. Ibid.

3. Ruth Strickland, The Language Arts In The Elementary School. (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1951), p. 11.

understanding of words they themselves do not use."<sup>1</sup>

Above all, the child's oral language functions, as an effective means of social contact, as a tool of communication. As Jespersen put it, "The essence of language is human activity - activity on the part of one individual to make himself understood by another and the other, to understand what was in the mind of the first."<sup>2</sup>

The child learns early to use language to gain attention, describe objects and experiences, give directions, reason through problems, explain, criticise, dispute, express, produce feelings, enjoy rhythm, tune, word pictures and humour.<sup>3</sup>

The child as early as grade one should directly or indirectly be able to develop the idea that reading is "talk wrote down" and that it is there to serve as a rich medium of information, a means of problem solving and an enjoyable source of intellectual adventure, of aesthetic experience and relaxation.

#### Reading is one Form of Symbolical Language

Language as a communicative art involves expression or the ability to give ideas to others mainly through speaking, writing and oral reading. It also involves comprehension, or the ability to receive ideas from others mainly through

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit., p. 55.

2. David H. Russell. Children Learn to Read (New York: Gin and Co. 1949) p. 22. Citing Jespersen Language, Its Nature Development and Origin Holt 1922).

3. Strickland, Op. Cit., p. 5.

listening and silent reading. We say mainly, because the two processes are so closely interrelated that at the same time that a giving takes place, a taking is necessarily involved.

In both the giving and the receiving language utilizes symbols, the spoken words in the case of oral usage, and visual symbols, in the case of print. The mental processes required to interpret both kinds of symbols are, very similar and interrelated. Both involve forming meaningful association with arbitrary word symbols, oral or graphic, both require the interpretation of word units, in the context of varying phrases and sentences. Reading ahead is like listening ahead, both require anticipatory mind-set, both utilize clues to reach the meaning and require attention, concentration and distinction in word forms. "Listening to the voice of the author in a book proves to be not unlike listening to someone speak."<sup>1</sup> Learning reading according to Fries, specially in its early stages, is a matter of transfer from one to another medium, of the same language experience:

The first stage in learning the reading process is the transfer stage. It is the period during which the child is learning to transfer from the auditory signs for language signals, which he has already learnt, to a set of visual signs for the same signals.

... This first stage is complete when within his narrow linguistic experience the child can respond

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit., p. 55.

rapidly and accurately to the visual patterns that represent the language signals in his limited field as he does to the auditory patterns that they replace.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Role of First Hand Experience

Effective interpretation of printed symbols involves the ability to reach back to the reality or the ideas represented by these symbols. Verbalism results when the child is unable to reconstruct the ideas or facts, symbolized by the print. First hand experience, is an indispensable basis for the development and exchange of ideas and concepts. The broader and richer a first-hand experience is, the more meaning the child brings to the reading page as well as takes from it. "The older the child grows the more he can learn through the vicarious experience of books if he has first been well grounded in first-hand experience, with his own environment and its many interrelationships."<sup>2</sup> Each new experience adds new words or new and deeper meanings for old words.

#### The Reading Process

Reading is a dynamic and complex process involving the whole child, his motives, purposes, attitudes, and interests, his previous experience and language ability, on

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1. Charles C. Fries, Linguistics and Reading, (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc. - 1963), p. 132.

2. Strickland, Op. Cit., p. 10.



the one hand and the mastery of many skills, on the other hand. Hildreth likens the reading process to that of playing a musical instrument. "Both require formation of adaptable habits, associative symbol learning, complex motor coordination and intelligent interpretation."<sup>1</sup>

Reading as described above involves physiological-motor processes and interpretative processes. The following is a general brief review of the two:

### The Physiological-Motor Processes

#### Eye Movements in Reading

Studies of eye movements in various languages have revealed the same basic pattern of eye movements. During reading the eyes. . .

like a motion picture camera take a series of rapid snapshots. The eyes of the mature reader move rhythmically and involuntarily across the lines. . . Pauses following each successive jerk of the eyes serve to bring small blocks of print into clear vision. The image that is focused on the retina is transferred to the brain by the optic nerve. These sensory signals become meaningful percepts when interpreted by the mind of the reader.

The time elements in reading are two:- fixation time and movement time. The fixation time includes the pauses during which the reading actually occurs. They amount to about 92 to 94% of the reading time, while movements take 6 to 8%.

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit., p. 85.

The movements consist of, "interfixation movements" between one pause and the next, "return sweeps", or the quick movement from the end of the line to the beginning of the next, and the "regressions", or the return to a previously fixated letter or word for refixation. This last one may be due to inaccurate perception, interruption of the flow of thought or failure to comprehend the meaning on the one hand, eye deficiency, immature vision, or lack of confidence on the other hand. Regression movements are normal accompaniment of beginning reading, they largely disappear with mature reading. They become unfavourable signs when excessive.

#### Span of Perception

The amount of print seen during a single pause is called span of perception, or the distance between two fixation pauses. This distance "averages 13 to 14 letter spaces for good readers, 6 spaces, for poor readers, with an average of 9 to 10 letter spaces in clear vision plus one or two more letters in shadowy vision. The common belief that the eyes take in, several words or even a whole sentence at a glance is fallacious because this is visually impossible. Either the eyes have to move along or the head has to turn in order to bring the next batch of print into the visual field. . . The eyes cannot exceed their physical perceptual limit." <sup>1</sup>

Thought unit reading does not therefore, mean reading a phrase or three or four words per fixation. "Thought unit

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit., p. 67.

reading consists of a series of fixations".<sup>1</sup>

### The Interpretative Processes

Reading is more than seeing or calling out a series of sounds or words, "just as singing is more than vocalizing Do, re, mi, and tennis is more than a succession of strokes."<sup>2</sup>

Reading Involves:-

- Identifying the printed symbol and its meaning.
- Weaving together of related meanings and ideas.
- Anticipation, exploratory tries, inference.
- Imagery.
- Critical and appreciative reactions .
- Integration.

#### Identifying the Printed Symbol and its Meaning

Associating the printed word with its spoken counterpart, or with the real object it represents, helps the reader to identify the word as well as its meaning. "The printed word acts as a trigger that releases a meaning we already possess."<sup>3</sup>

#### Weaving Together of Related Meanings and Ideas

As our eyes move along the lines of print, a series of meaning associations is aroused. While reading continues, we at times find ourselves rejecting some meanings and selecting others that fit in with the total context.

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1. Ibid.

2. Hildreth, Op. Cit., p. 72.

3. Monroe, Op. Cit., p. 171.

Determining meaning, we fuse them into a chain of related ideas, which if we are successful readers, are usually those that the author had in mind. Our grasp of the meaning is extended toward total meaning as we associate with it everything we know that provides a clue to the ideas the author had expressed."<sup>1</sup>

Anticipation, Exploratory Tries, Inference. . .

Reading is a continuous puzzle because one can never anticipate precisely what word or combination of words will come next. Reading requires exploratory tries when new words or unusual meanings are encountered. . .

. . . Reading requires inference, weighing the relative importance of ideas and meanings and seeing the relationships among them; it is a process of forming tentative judgments then verifying and checking guesses. To solve the problems in a passage the reader must be continuously in an alert, anticipatory frame of mind, suspending judgment correcting and confirming his guesses as he goes along.<sup>2</sup>

### Imagery

Reading also involves imagery and a kind of sharing of the author's moods and emotions. The reader does not only learn about the desert as he reads, but he also experiences

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1. William Gray, On Their Own In Reading, (New York: Scott Foresman and Co., 1948), p. 172.

2. Hildreth, Op. Cit., pp. 72-73.

it imaginatively, projecting himself into the situation that the author writes about.<sup>1</sup>

#### Critical And Appreciative Reactions

The good reader not only shares the author's experiences but also reacts to the ideas and to the characters, intellectually and emotionally. Monroe explains this process as follows:

Intellectually (the reader) decides whether he has found the information he seeks, whether he approves or disapproves of the ideas. He judges the characters according to what they do and seeks to find in the personalities constructed by the author reasons for their actions. Emotionally he decides whether he likes or dislikes the actions and the characters that perform them. He also decides whether he likes the style and content of the story. . . In short he determines what the ideas in the story are worth to him.<sup>2</sup>

#### Integration of the ideas gained

As these ideas are accepted or rejected they become part of our vicarious experience. When the knowledge we acquire through reading is thoroughly integrated with what we already know, our total experience is broadened.<sup>3</sup>

Genuine integration involves a certain degree of transfer of what has been read to daily life resulting in

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1. Monroe, Op. Cit., p. 172.

2. Ibid., p. 173.

3. Gray, On Their Own <sup>in</sup> Reading, Op. Cit. p. 73.

a modification of the reader's attitudes, thinking and behaviour.

### The Thought Span in Reading

Mature reading, as explained above involves a problem solving approach in its "exploratory tries", inferences", "verifications", and "integrations". A mature reader does not interpret one eyeful of print at a time, "but waits to perceive enough material to grasp a thought unit. (He) retains the impressions of a series of words until he is ready to make the interpretation."<sup>1</sup> The forward sweep of the eyes ahead of the point of interpretation is eye-voice span, or anticipation span abbreviated as A-Span.<sup>2</sup>

The anticipation span or ability to pick up words before their interpretation permits "an uninterrupted stream of interpretation at a rapid rate with minimum error."<sup>3</sup> In good oral reading the A-Span enables the reader to grasp meanings in thought units and to read expressively as if he is speaking.

Good readers have/wider<sup>a</sup> A-Span than immature readers who interpret print a word at a time and do not think word meanings relationally.

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit., p. 75.

2. Ibid., pp. 75-81.

3. Ibid., p. 75, citing E.B. Huey, The Psychology and Pedagogy Of Reading. (New York: Macmillan, 1908).

The size of the A-Span of mature readers ranges between 15 to 20 letter spaces, two or three eye fulls of print.<sup>1</sup> It has its limits just as the size of the perception span has, but in the case of the A-Span it is a mental limitation - a matter of attention, experience, familiarity with the language and memory span. The size of the A-Span is also affected by line length and legibility of print.

### Rate of Reading

Speedy reading is determined by the length of the A-Span by the frequency of the fixations, by the length of the pauses and by the number of regressions. "They vary with the difficulty of the reading material, the reader's ability in word recognition, his vocabulary, level of his familiarity with the content, his purpose, his ability to assimilate ideas and the format of the reading page".<sup>2</sup>

Analytic studies of the reading process show: Half of the variability in speed is accounted for by the trainee's vocabulary and word attack skills, and 44% of the variations depend on motivational habit or desire for speed and 5% accounted for by the usual span and speed exercise.<sup>3</sup>

### Learning To Read

The last word in this statement of fundamentals consists of a brief review of the factors that make for efficient

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1. Ibid. p. 80.

2. Dechant, Op. Cit. p. 14.

3. George D. Spache, "Reading Rate Improvement," Education Digest, Vol. 29 N. 6 (Feb., 1964), pp. 44

learning of reading and serve as general guide posts to teaching beginners how to read.

Learning to Read Involves the Formation of Effective Associations

Of primary importance in learning words is the ability to associate the printed word forms with their spoken counterparts. The importance of the element of familiarity with the language read has been mentioned more than once already

In learning to read new words the beginner, according to Monroe,<sup>1</sup> tends to associate the word form with the sound of its spoken counterpart then to associate the spoken word with its meaning. She likens the child's thinking at this point with that of the student of a foreign language who tends to translate the new word he meets to its equivalent in English and then thinks the meaning in English. With appropriate reading matter and the use of language patterns close to those of the child's, the beginner learns to associate word forms directly with their meanings without lingering unnecessarily in the kind of translation described above.

The ability to associate the words with the real objects that they symbolize, plays a vital role in learning reading. The value of first hand experience and audiovisual aids in forming clear and lasting meaning associations can never be overestimated.

Subjective factors such as the reader's particular interests, moods, feelings or purposes etc. give the words emotional tones that affect the process of learning them. "The more favorable associations a child has with a word the easier it is for him

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1. Monroe - Op. Cit. p. 210.



to retain it and to remember it permanently."<sup>1</sup> Whereas unfavorable associations may cause emotional blocks and hinder learning.

Reading is best learnt when associated with meaningful activities. Learning language, according to John Dewey, takes place indirectly through interaction with an environment and never by "direct contagion."<sup>2</sup> The following quotation explains this principle as it explains how language is first learnt by the child:

In learning language the sounds take meaning as they are uttered in conjunction with an action participated in by a number of people. The child gets the idea of a hat by using it as other persons do. Hat is uttered as baby and mother go out. Mother and child not only go out physically but both are concerned in the going out ... By conjunction with the other factors in activity the sound "hat" soon gets the same meaning for the child as it has for the mother.<sup>3</sup>

Efficient communication with one another whether oral or through print means that the objects or ideas symbolized by the words have the same value for the parties concerned

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit. p. 130.

2. John Dewey, Democracy and Education, (New York: The Macmillan Co. 1963) pp. 11-16.

3. Ibid. p. 14.

with respect to carrying on a common pursuit. "When words do not enter as factors into a shared situation either overtly or imaginatively, they operate as pure physical stimuli."<sup>1</sup>

Learning to read through participating in purposeful meaningful activities will be discussed more explicitly in part II of this thesis. It should be mentioned here, however, that "words are easier for a child to learn and to remember if he can get the precise meaning in mind so that he can use the word in his thinking."<sup>2</sup> This as we have seen necessitates clear and effective associations.

#### Learning Reading Takes Practice

Reading as an elaborate skill necessitates a lot of practice and habit forming responses in both its types, the "varied" and the "repetitive". Dechant differentiates between the two kinds of practice as follows:

Varied practice permits the learner to reorganize his experiences at increasingly higher levels of abstractness and clarity. Through this type of practice, meanings are extended and refined. Repetitive practice implies a constant repetition of the same experience. It is most effective when a skill has been "learned" correctly and practice is initiated to make the skill habitual.<sup>3</sup>

#### Effective Learning Builds on Previous Experience

Weaving the new carefully and gradually with the old is a very significant factor in learning experience. It

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1. Ibid. p. 15

2. Hildreth, Op. Cit. p.128.

3. Dechant, Op. Cit. p. 503.

ensures insightful learning as well as transfer of learning.

The fact that previous experience plays a vital role in learning words is mentioned by Hildreth under the title, "Building the word Bank, a Cumulative Process." By "word bank" she means the stock of words that a child learns, through accumulated experience, to recognize instantaneously in print.<sup>1</sup>

A large accumulated "word bank" has many advantages in learning new words, as well as, in developing good reading habits.

The more words the reader can instantly recognize in the context of sentences and paragraphs, the more easily he can deal with unfamiliar or forgotten words . . . The more words in the known stock pile, the more easily reading context problems, involving new but related words, are solved.<sup>2</sup>

Accumulated experience with words in printed context also helps the development of good reading habits - good habits of eye movements, anticipation span, thoughtful silent reading, expressive oral reading and skillful word recognition.

#### Efficient Learning Takes Reinforcement

The common sense observation that "nothing succeeds like success" has been proved and established as a fundamental psychoeducational principle. This principle plays an important role in teaching and learning, reading, especially in the

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit. p. 124.

2. Ibid p. 125.

earlier stages. Hildreth refers to the importance of experiencing immediate success in the early reading efforts saying:

Printed words are abstract symbols, remote from the young child's normal way of learning things through concrete experiencing. School beginners are easily discouraged, unless they can experience immediate success from their efforts.<sup>1</sup>

Giving each individual child the chance of experiencing success in dealing with print would guarantee, if other things are equal, his continued growth along this line. This sense of success and the gratifying feelings of self confidence and adequacy are the most effective reinforcement for whatever task the child is learning. The best reward for any behavior is intrinsic reward or the child's feeling of satisfaction of his own successful achievements, realizing at the same time the intrinsic value of what he is learning and its significance to him.

#### Learning to Read Involves the Development of Word Recognition Skills

The ability to utilize various clues from word forms or meanings, in attacking new words or recognizing words already met, plays a vital role in developing efficient - independent as well as enjoyable reading experiences.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit. p. 163.

2. Gray, On Their Own in Reading Op. Cit. pp. 39-43.

Children, as early as grade one, can learn, gradually, to infer words from the context. They may utilize foregoing familiar words or sentences, key words, titles, illustrations, punctuation signs etc... as aids in attacking new words or remembering others.

Clues to word recognition can also be taken from striking features in a word, certain outstanding letters or letter groups, the length and general configuration.

Analysing words into their phonetic elements is an effective aid to learning them. Sounding strengthens retention of the visual forms of words and their distinctive features, as it reinforces aural and pronunciation associations and clues.

Analysing word relationships in forms and meanings helps their retention. Generalizing about Arabic words such as the following is an effective aid in learning them:

شون شوني جاب جابت معلم معلمة  
تعال تعالي راح راحت ابن ابنة

Dictionaries or any sources of information about words and their meaning, such as the various classified word lists, can be very helpful aids for the child in learning words.<sup>1</sup>

How to develop these various word recognition skills in learning how to read Arabic will be discussed in detail in part two, chapter seven.

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1. For a detailed discussion of word recognition skills review Hildreth Op. Cit. Chapter 8 pp. 142-158.

### The Question of Learning Words as Wholes

Studies and theories in the nature of perception point out that the human mind, in assimilating the incoming sensory data is in constant search for meaningful patterns. This search for patterns is highly helpful in meeting a new situation or facing a learning task. "Whenever materials to be learned can be organized into a pattern, the pattern makes the work easier to grasp. And even when no pattern is provided, the learner will try to establish one".<sup>1</sup>

Reading involves meaning and is never a purely mechanical process. The whole or the pattern that we perceive is more than the sum of its parts. The word "dog" is much more than the sum of d + o + g. To the child it stands out as a whole to represent a pet with an unlimited series of associations he has developed in relation to it. "Meaning then is the remarkable adhesive that holds the words together. The mind forces the letters together into patterns or schemas not present in the original series of letters. These patterns are perceived as wholes because meaning dominates and controls perception."<sup>2</sup>

Various experiments were done to find out what is simpler to perceive letters... combination of letters, meaningful words etc... One of them was mentioned by Gray:<sup>3</sup>

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1. Cronbach Op. Cit. p. 280. Also see pp 277-280.

2. Hildreth Op. Cit. p. 111

3. William Gray S. The Teaching of Reading and Writing, (Paris: U.N.E.S.C.O. 1956) p. 65.

"Through the use of a short exposure apparatus, letters words and sentences were exposed for very brief periods such as one tenth or one fiftieth of a second and it was found that:

(1) At one exposure four or five unrelated letters took equal time like words four or five times more in number.

(2) Increasingly large amounts were recognized at each exposure, the materials used consisting of unrelated letters, unfamiliar words, familiar words, short sentences or proverbs i.e. the amount perceived at each exposure depends in part on the extent to which the material presented has meaning or "makes sense" to the reader.

(3) The more unfamiliar a sequence of letters the more perception proceeded by letters. As the words read became increasingly familiar fewer and fewer clues were needed to ensure their recognition.<sup>1</sup>

Evidence that children learn words - and sometimes groups of words - as wholes is various and abundant. It has been observed for instance that a child responds to words as wholes when reading labels, signs, T.V. advertisements, words in picture books. One experiment was teaching a two-year old a hundred words and short sentences without the alphabet. Dr. Donald Durrell demonstrated the ease in which beginners could recognize words such as, merry go round-science corner - boy scout and many others in simple picture

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1. Gray: Ibid.

dictionaries. School beginners could respond to words met on charts, flash cards drill and games.<sup>1</sup>

More evidence is by analogy with other types of linguistic learning. Children tend to hear words as total blends of sounds as auditory patterns conveying specific meanings. A child's first efforts to express ideas in language, he uses or tries to use whole words because his attention is centered on the meaning he wishes to convey.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit. p. 135

2. Ibid.



## CHAPTER THREE

### BASIC LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES BEGINNERS FACE IN LEARNING HOW TO READ ARABIC

As was mentioned in the introduction, there are certain difficulties peculiar to Arabic that complicate the task of learning to read the language. These difficulties must be given due consideration in teaching and administering the Arabic language program, as well as, in preparing readers and reading materials, specially in the beginning stages.

These difficulties can be divided into three main groups, "The differences between the colloquial and the classical language", "The omission from words of the "short vowel letters" and "difficulties in legibility and orthography."

#### The Language Difficulties

##### The Differences Between the Colloquial and the Classical

The most important language difficulty that the Arab child and the learner of Arabic faces is, in my opinion, the wide gap between the language he learns to read and write and the oral language he uses in his every day life. This gap complicates the other language difficulties and renders them harder to overcome. Learning to read is easier and the various language problems—in grammar, alphabet, orthography—can be better controlled when the words read are part of the child's daily language. While this gap is especially noticeable by the teachers of Arab beginners and foreigners,

most Arab educators agree that it tends to complicate our whole program of instruction, and they acknowledge the fact that our Arab children are at a disadvantage when compared with children of other countries where there is less difference between the language they use and the language they learn to read and write.

The Lebanese colloquial Arabic differs from the classical Arabic in vocabulary, expression, pronunciation and grammar.

Vocabulary,

In many cases the difference between the colloquial and the classical is a matter of difference in structure of the same words.<sup>1</sup>

<u>Classical</u>		<u>Colloquial</u>	
٤	Ja'a	إِجَا	eja
أحد	ahad	حدا	hada
زوج	zawj	جوز	jawz
رجل	rajul	رِجَال	rejjal
يَد	yad	إيد	eed
إمرأة	imra ah	مره	marah
تعال	ta ala	تعا	ta a
جاء به	ja a be	جاب	jab (and becomes a new verb. Imperfect
بعد أن	Ba da an	بعدين	ba den )

1. Anis Freiha Nahwa Arabiyyaten Muyassarrah (Beirut Dar al-Thaqafah, 1955, p. 113.

There are in addition many colloquial words that are used very often by children and bear little or no resemblance to their counter parts in classical. Many are adapted from foreign languages. We have for instance nouns like:

شختوره	برنيطة	كراج	وسطه	يوسطجي	كربجة	طنجرة	شوي	ختيار
oldman	few	pot	cart	postman	bus	garage	hat	boat

Verbs like

ضَبَّ	زَت	شَاف	خَلَى	عَيْطَ	بَلَّشَ	خَرِشَ
packed	threw	saw	let	call	began	scratched

Adjectives like

ميسوط	منزوع
happy	spoilt

Adverbs like

هلق	هلااء	يس	بس	حـ
quickly	now	enough	when	near

Differences in Pronouns like

	<u>Classical</u>	<u>Colloquial</u>		
Huwa	هُوَ	هُوِّي	Huwwi	he
Antum	أَنْتُمْ	إِنْتُو	Intu	you(plural) (mas.)
Hadhihi	هَذِهِ	هَيْدِي	Haydi	this (fem.)
Alladhi	الَّذِي	يَلِّي	Yalli	who (mas.)

Differences in Pronouns

	<u>Classical</u>	<u>Colloquial</u>	
madha	مَاذَا؟	شُو؟	Shu? (what)?

	<u>Classical</u>	<u>Colloquial</u>
limadha	لماذا ؟	ليش؟ laysh (why?) ليه؟ laay

#### Other Relational Words

	<u>Classical</u>	<u>Colloquial</u>
	ليس laysa	مش mish (not)
	ايضا aydan	كمان kamen (also)

#### Expressions

The colloquial has also many expressions that bear little or no resemblance to their classical counterparts.

فوفو فوفو عندو بيساردي	روح من هون
Fufu is lucky, he has a gun	go away
هيدى الطابة مزالسي	حل عني
This ball is not for me	Leave me alone
هيدى بيح هاله	
This is for Hala	
هيديك تبعي	طالع على بالي آكل بوطة
That is for me	I feel like eating icecream <sup>2</sup>

#### Differences of Pronunciation

There is a clear difference between the vowel sounds of the classical Arabic and those of the colloquial. Classical Arabic has three basic vowel sounds, the short a, i, u, \_\_\_\_\_ which become long vowels if followed by ا و ي. Whereas the colloquial has more than these three.. It has e e oy ey o o etc. <sup>2</sup>

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1. Taken from children's conversation.

2. Freiha Nalwa Arabiyyaten Muyassarrah Op. Cit. p. 110.

The classical aw <sup>ا</sup> as in yawm <sup>يوم</sup> is changed by most colloquial dialects into o yom the classical <sup>ي</sup> as in <sup>بيت</sup> is changed by most colloquial dialects into e bet.(1)

Examples of the New Vowels Added by the Colloquial

e		ê		ê	
le beh	doll	lêsh	why	biscôt	biscuit
tabeh	ball	zêt	oil	khêd	take
deb	bear	khêt	thread	kôl	eat

Sometimes vowels get either shortened or lengthened in the colloquial as compared to the classical.

<u>Classical</u>		<u>Leb. Colloquial</u>	
kum	كُم	kuum	كُوم
nam	نَام	nem	نِيم
uktub	اكتب or اکتب	ktobe	کتوب
ilعاب	العاب	lعاب	لعاب

+++++

There are also differences in pronouncing the consonants.

Colloquial

th ت (is changed) t ت or س s  
to

thalj	تلج	talj	تلج
thiyab	تياب	tyab	تياب
thaعاب	تعاب	taعاب	تعاب

	ق		أ
(heart) Kalb	قلب	ib	ألب
(moon) Kamar	قمر	amar	أمر
(piaster) Kersh	قرش	rsh	ارش

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1. Ibid.

dh =	ذ	d =	د
ذنب	dhanab	دنب	danab
هذا	hadah	هدا	heda
ذهب	dhahab	دهب	dahab

ظ	_____	ض	or	ظ	ز
ظهور		ضهر		نظرو	
انتظر					زريف
ظريف					

As for the initial <sup>هـ</sup>ا, it is dropped in many cases from colloquial words

أبريق	أبريق
أنتبه	نتبه
أبتسم	بتسم

#### Differences in Grammar

The differences in vocabulary and pronunciation remarkable as they seem, are still less significant than the differences in syntax and grammar.

We shall see below some of the various grammatical differences between the two languages, but in my opinion the most remarkable differences that widens the gap between the two languages, is the fact that the classical Arabic is highly inflected, with a difficult system of I'rab whereas the colloquial is not.

The Inflected Classical Language.- The Lebanese colloquial, like any other Arabic dialect, has dropped the inflectional signs at the end of words. They are the signs that come in sentences to denote the functions (the cases) of the various words in grammatical context. The classical language has retained these inflections since the days when the Qur'an was first recorded. Dr. Frayha thinks, along with Ibn Khaldun and many other Arab thinkers, that linguistically speaking, these signs serve only a decorative purpose, and as he puts it, "they have lost their survival value."<sup>1</sup> He also thinks that a language as elaborate as our classical Arabic could never have been a spoken language rather a language of literature and poetry.<sup>2</sup> As the Qur'an was recorded in that language it was preserved, with its inflections, unchanged until our days. But popular usage cannot accept unnecessary restrictions in its daily communications. So, following the laws of linguistic change, inflection was dropped from all Arabic colloquial languages and dialects as it was dropped from all the semitic languages, and the old Latin, Greek and Sanskrit.<sup>3</sup>

With inflection goes a highly elaborate grammar, in the case of classical Arabic, in contrast with, a simpler

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1. Frayha, Nahwa Arabiyyaten Muyassarah Op. Cit. pp. 124-127.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

more economic grammar, in case of the colloquial. Here are some samples illustrating the various cases showing the word "book" in different context in both the classical and the colloquial. Notice the two sets of endings depending on whether or not the word كتاب is indefinite or definite.

Nominative Case  
Clas.

هذا كتابٌ  
هذ الكتابُ

Colloquial

هيدا كتاب  
هاد كتاب

Accusative Case  
Clas.

اشتريت كتاباً  
اشتريت الكتابُ

Colloquial

اشتريت كتاب  
اشتريت الكتاب

Genetive Case

قرأت في كتابٍ  
قرأت في الكتابِ

قرأت في كتاب  
قرأت بالكتاب

Differences in Gender and Number.- In accordance, again, with the law of linguistic change: "From the difficult to the easy, from the coarse to the smooth, from the complicated to the simple and from the decorative to the plain;"<sup>1</sup> the colloquial differs from the classical in gender and number which can best be illustrated by comparing and contrasting between the conjugation in the two languages. The number of personal pronouns in classical Arabic is Fourteen and in colloquial Arabic is only eight. Note how both المثنى "the dual" and the feminine plural are dropped.

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1. Ibid. p. 115.



Nominative Case

Classical		Colloquial	
1. Huwa	Darasa	1. Huwwi	Daras
2. Huma	Darasa	2. Hum or Hunni	Darasu
3. Hum D	Darasu	3. Hiyyi	Darasit
4. Hiya	Darasat	4. Hinni	(Darasu)
5. Huma	Darasataa	5. Inta	Darast
6. Hunna	Darasna	6. Intu	Darastu
7. Anta	Darasta	7. Ana	(Darast)
8. Antuna	Darastuma	8. Nihna	Darasna
9. Antun	Darastum	9. Inti	Darasti
10. Anti	Darasti	10. Intu	Darastu
11. Antuna	Darastuma		
12. Antunna	Darastu		
13. Ana	Darastu		
14. Nahnu	Darasna		

The Pronouns Accusative and Genitive

<u>Classical</u>		<u>Colloquial</u>	
أنا	ك	أنا	ك
هنا	كنا	هنا	كنا
هنا	كنا		كنا
هن			
ك		ك	
كا			
كم		كم	

The colloquial is also more economical in its plural forms..  
Here is a sample illustrating the regular masculine plural  
of teacher in both languages in the three cases.

	<u>Classical</u>	<u>Dual</u> (Plural of two)	
	<u>Nominative Case</u>	<u>Colloquial</u>	
1.	راح المُعَلِّمَانِ	راحو المُعَلِّمَيْنِ	- ,
2.	راح مُعَلِّمًا الصَّفِّ	راحو المُعَلِّمِينَ تَبَعِ الصَّفِّ راحو مُعَلِّمِينَ الصَّفِّ	   
<u>Accusative</u>			
3.	رايت المُعَلِّمِينَ	شفت المُعَلِّمِينَ	
4.	رايت مُعَلِّمِي الصَّفِّ	شفت المُعَلِّمِينَ تَبَعِ الصَّفِّ	-
<u>More than Three</u>			
	<u>Nominative</u>		
5.	راح المُعَلِّمُونَ	راحو المُعَلِّمِينَ	- ,
6.	راح معلمو الصَّفِّ	راحو مُعَلِّمِينَ الصَّفِّ	
7.	راح معلمو الصَّفِّ	راحو مُعَلِّمِينَ الصَّفِّ	
8.	رايت المُعَلِّمِينَ	شفت المُعَلِّمِينَ	
	رايت مُعَلِّمِي الصَّفِّ	شفت مُعَلِّمِينَ الصَّفِّ	-

So we have two forms in the colloquial instead of eight in the classical.

Other Grammatical Differences.- Taking the first two sentences in the illustrations above راح المُعَلِّمَانِ in contrast with راحو المُعَلِّمِينَ :. We notice that in the colloquial we can use the pronoun و and the noun المُعَلِّمِينَ to signify the

subject of the verb whereas in the classical it has to be either one or the other either راحا or راحَ المعلمان

One other difference is in the use of the present continuous tense in the case of the Lebanese colloquial and its absence from the classical Arabic which uses the same form as that of the simple present...

<u>Classical</u>	<u>Colloquial</u>
He plays هو يلعبُ	هوي يلعبُ
he is playing هو يلعبُ	هوي (عم) يلعبُ

This great number of variations in gender, case number etc., of which we have mentioned some, and which have no spoken counterparts in the child's daily language, necessitate intensive attention to details in reading, speaking or writing the classical Arabic. This would complicate, even at grade one level, the development of a language-related, experience-centered, modern Arabic reading program, unless systematic effort is taken to obviate these difficulties.

Disadvantages of the "Language Gap" in Teaching Beginners How to Read Arabic.

In his book "Toward a Simplified Arabic" Dr. Anis Frayha discusses the various drawbacks of this kind of "bilingualism". Under five subtopics he states that the fact that we read and write one language and speak another has complicating if not harmful effects on the development of thought, on education, on personality development, on

character and on literature.<sup>1</sup> Our main concern, in this report is to consider the specific drawbacks and handicaps in relation to teaching Arabic reading to beginners.

The child's growing oral language is the indispensable foundation to the development of good reading. This fact was justified by the various principles and facts about reading readiness, the reading process and the learning reading process. The following is a brief review of the handicaps facing our children, when they speak one language and read another.

1. The two principles of spontaneity and orderliness that characterize the development of language in general, as well as, the children's growing interest in books and reading in particular, can hardly be made use of, when the language through which the child develops his "reading readiness", differs from the language he is asked to learn as he begins to read.<sup>(i)</sup>

2. By asking the Arab child to learn to speak one language and to read and write another we run the risk of complicating the process of establishing reading as a natural extension, in function, of general language development. Reading, in this case can hardly continue to play the vital intimate role that the child's oral mother language plays

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1. Ibid. pp. 134-166.

(i) See Chapter One. pp. 22-23.

in his life. Considering language as a vehicle of thought, we run the risk of failing to provide the child with a unified and efficient stream of Arabic, through which, he will learn to think, to interpret, to express and communicate. The situation may hinder the full development of either one of the two aspects of his language, as well as the growth of the child's free and creative thinking.<sup>(i)</sup>

3. The natural linguistic transfer from "auditory signs" - spoken words - for the language "signals", to visual or graphic signs - printed words - for the same "signals" is rendered unnecessarily complicated when the child is asked to read words he has not used in his spoken language. He is, at this point required not only to shift "media" but also to change the "signals".<sup>(ii)</sup> Fries objects firmly to any teaching of new oral words or language structures involved with the teaching of reading in the early stages. "The process of learning to read or that of teaching a child to read becomes confused and inefficient if it is mixed with a variety of efforts to develop at the same time and with the same material an increased language control."<sup>1</sup>

4. When we require a child to read a new set of language symbols, we would be requiring double work and committing him to the needless endless processes of translation

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(i) See pp. 25-27.

(ii) See pp. 28-29.

1. Fries Op. Cit. p. 187.

mentioned by Monroe.<sup>(i)</sup> Gray refers to this fact saying:

When we ask children to learn a new word form with whose spoken counterpart they are not familiar we are asking them to associate an unknown sound and meaning with an unknown form. It is a difficult task to remember and associate three unknowns.<sup>1</sup>

This situation also requires intensive awareness of the details in reading - letters, syllables, words etc.. Thus making the whole processes of perception, association and interpretation unnecessarily complicated for our Arab speaking children. The mechanics of reading or the development of good habits of "eye movements", "speedy reading", "wide anticipation span", "whole word" perception, "instantaneous word recognition", "using reduced clues in word attack", all demand familiarity with the spoken counterparts of the words read.<sup>(ii)</sup>

5. Then finally the fact that we ask a child to read one language and to use for his daily life another complicates the process of motivating him to learn reading and to continue to be interested in it. Genuine motivation results when the child is able to link, to associate, what he is learning with his own daily life and activities... So the whole "learning situation" gets confusing when the child is bombarded with a strange stream of language. The principles

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1. Gray, On Their Own, Op. Cit. p. 42.

(i) See p. 37.

(ii) See Chapter Two, pp. 29-36, 41-45.

of practice .. previous experience and transfer of learning are ignored. Equally disregarded is the success principle, the success that comes without unnecessary strain and external incentives. The success that is reinforced by the child's, own sense of achievement and his favorable attitude toward reading.<sup>(i)</sup>

### The Omission From Words of the Short Vowels

The Arabic alphabet has no letters for the short vowel sounds. Instead these are represented by diacritical marks that prove tedious for beginners to perceive, thus complicating the process of learning reading. They are a َ, u ُ, i ِ. These short vowel signs combined with silent "ns" form what is called nanation and are used with indefinite nouns and adjectives, an َ, un ُ, ِ in ِ. A fully voweled text for children, would look like this:

يَلْعَبُ كَلْبٌ سَهْبٌ بِالطَّائِفِ

Added to this is the fact that one word undergoes various changes of these short vowels depending on the particular derivation or particular case, the word represents. So more and more the child is asked to pay intensive attention to each letter or syllable when attempting to read. This threatens to hinder the development of good reading habits as the child's eyes tend to move up and down as he attempts to perceive the little vowel signs above and below the words he reads.



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(i) See pp. 36-41.

These short vowel signs are however, dropped from upper grade books and various publications for adults. So the short vowel sounds are then supposed to be supplied by the reader. This necessitates intensive constant inference from the context of what the particular word may be. The form كتب combined of the consonants ktb may be any of the three following words:

Kataba	<u>كُتِبَ</u>	(He wrote)
Kutiba	<u>كُتِبَ</u>	(it was written)
Kattaba	<u>كَتَبَ</u>	( he made someone write)
Kutubun	<u>كُتُبُ</u>	(books)

And this last word can be any of the following depending on the particular grammatical context in which it is used:

كُتِبَ كُتِبَ كُتِبَ ، كُتِبَ كُتِبَ

If we go, on to mention the various derivations conjugational variations and verb forms etc.. that are derived from the root kataba, with the changes of gender number and case we will end up with a full page of derivations and combinations, that look so similar to the child that they are hard to discriminate. These are a sample that children of grade one may be required to read.

عاد سامي الى البيت ومعه كتبه الجديدة . . . قال لاسمه اشترت كتاباً  
جديدة يا ماما . . . قالت الام : دعني ارى الكتاب يا سامي . . . ما ثمن هذه الكتاب  
يا عزيزي . . . هل معك كتاب حساب . . . اعطني كتابك الاحمر . . . ما اجمل الصور  
في كتاب القراءة . . . انتبه للكتاب يا حبيبي . . . انها حقا كتاب جميلة .



Difficulties in Legibility and Orthography of the Language

Multiplicity of A.B.C. Forms.

Arabic letters have various shapes for the same letters depending on their position in the word. The letter b, for instance is printed in beginners' books in four shapes

ب ب ب ب the letter g, ج ج ج ج is printed  
the letter m, م م م م is printed

In chapter 8 of this thesis it will be shown that only two forms can be used the "full" and the initial and in many cases only the "full" ر ر ط, as is the case in the type writer and lino type.<sup>(i)</sup>

Sharing Similar Forms.-

A considerable number of the letters share the same forms with little dots above or below as the only discriminating factors:

ب ت ث ج ح خ و ن ر س ش ص ض ط ظ ي  
ل ل ف ق

When n, y, th, t, b, occur at the beginning or the middle of the word they become like little "teeth"<sup>1</sup> that necessitate accurate perception of small dots which are the only discriminating factor and which prove quite confusing to the beginner. Look at the word بيتنا in this sentence for instance I like our house احب بيتنا and see the letters

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(i) See p. 190.

1. Anis Frayha, Al-Khat al-Arabi (Junih - Lebnan: F. Beban & Co. 1961) pp. 76-83.

by t n how detailed and confusing they must look to a  
ب ت ن

Little beginner. This same beginner will also see the same  
word in different cases and need to discriminate the tiny  
differences in vowel signs at the end of the word بيت

In the same page the child may read

احب بيتنا  
هذا بيتنا  
في بيتنا

Ligatures

Added to the fact that the letters are small, similar  
and occur in a multiplicity of forms, we tend to complicate  
them further with ligatures, that is two or more letters  
combined together as if they're single letters. Children  
have difficulty with the following ligatures. Notice how  
both letters lose their individuality

تحت الشجرة •• جميل يحب اللون الاحمر •• غنى الطير بين الزهر جلسا يستريحان  
تحت الشجرة •• كلبنا يحمي الدار •• جميل يحب اللون الاحمر •• غنى الطير بين الزهر جلسا يستريحان  
يحت الشجرة •• كلبنا يحمي الدار •• جميل يحب اللون الاحمر •• غنى الطير بين الزهر جلسا يستريحان

Children even find their own family name confusing to  
read and write because they are taught to write it this way:

فريجي instead of فريجي

Orthographic Signs.<sup>1</sup>

o/, The sukuun is a symbol that indicates that the  
consonant it is written over, is silent. قرأت الصحف

س Sadda, indicates that the consonant it is written  
over is doubled. Originally it comes from the full word

1. For a detailed discussion of the Problems of the  
Arabic writing system review, Dr. Anis Frayha's book ...  
pp. 63-97, Ibid.

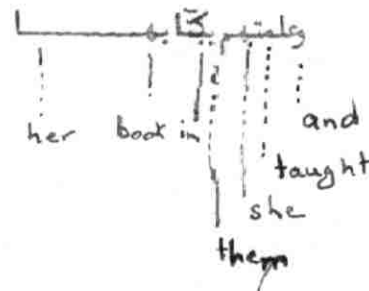
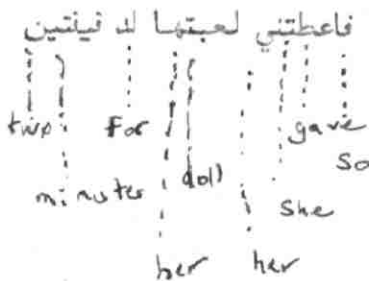


or prefixes thus complicating the perception of words as individual unchangeable items and the development of instantaneous word recognition. Take for instance the following two sentences:

and she taught them in her book

or

So, she gave me her doll for two minutes



So what look like two words in Arabic stand actually for 7 and what look like three stand for 9. This is one of the reasons why the Arabic writing system is considered a kind of shorthand - the other reason being the fact that short vowels are dropped from words in upper grade books.

### Some Features That May Facilitate Learning to Read Arabic

In spite of these complications. Arabic has some features that may facilitate learning if they are made good use of. In the first place, the Arabic spelling system inspite of the few difficulties mentioned above is phonetically consistent. Each sound or phoneme has one special letter to represent it, we don not have two or three letters to represent

one phoneme as it is the case in the English sh or th or

ش      ز  
or  
ث

the french ou or eau. As compared to these two languages

و      ة

classical Arabic has fewer vowel sounds that are more con-

sistent a َ u ُ i ِ and the long vowels (اَ اِ اُ) (إِ اِي اِي)

In the second place, the other feature that can be capitalized upon is that there is and/or can be one set of form for printing and handwriting and unlike English and French there are no capital letters to differentiate from the lower case. This encourages the method of teaching Arabic writing alongside reading, as we shall see in part II.

Finally, as the Arabic letters tend to run together with little room for the individual letters to stand out as separate characters of a word, the Arabic word forms a cohesive pattern or gestalt which may facilitate learning reading by whole words. How well can we capitalize on this feature for better reading instruction is left for future research to study and find out.

In concluding this chapter we can say that Arabic like any other language has its own peculiarities and difficulties. The fact that a wide gap exists between the spoken language and the written language presents a source of difficulty of its own and tends to make the other difficulties harder

to overcome. Further complications are however caused by the methods used in elementary schools and by the Arabic readers and reading materials prepared for Lebanese children. This will be discussed presently in the next chapter, leaving it to part two of this thesis to attempt new ways and means that would help obviate these difficulties as much as possible and develop efficient and enjoyable Arabic reading experiences.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ARABIC READING FOR BEGINNERS, AS IT IS, AT PRESENT IN LEBANESE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The beginners' Arabic reading program is a basic part of the general Lebanese elementary program that reflects the same philosophy, the same principles of learning the same style, the same errors and drawbacks.<sup>1</sup> The following discussion can be considered an indirect evaluation of the general educational situation in Lebanese elementary schools, at the same time that it focusses on the status of teaching Arabic reading to beginners. The discussion will take up briefly the weaknesses of the content and method in general to be followed by a description of the present teaching materials and readers.

#### The Content

A look at the Arabic language program for beginners can soon bring out the following weaknesses:

##### Lack of Developmental Approach

The concept of readiness and the related principles of child development are unfortunately not fully applied to the planning and administering of the Arabic reading program for beginners.

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1. For a detailed theoretical study of the Lebanese elementary education review: Yvone Sayigh, A Critique of the Elementary Public Schools in Lebanon, (A.U.B.: 1957 Education Department Unpublished Thesis).

Little Attention is Given to the Principle of Maturity.

The great majority of the Lebanese children are sent to school as early as four - if not three - and are, in most cases, expected to start reading right away. A three years old girl, whose command of everyday Arabic was not yet well developed, was supposed to learn to read Arabic, French and numbers in a nun's school in Zahleh, early last October. While this may not be true of all Lebanese schools, there seems to be a general faulty belief that the earlier you start the better. The wrong assumption is that learning is an external, moulding force to be applied as early as possible on the child to obtain favorable results. The modern concept, that education is a process of growth that takes place as the developing child interacts at his own rate, with a stimulating environment, is not yet a part of the Lebanese school practices, in general, and Arabic reading instruction, in particular.

Reading is introduced before the child reaches the neuromuscular audiovisual maturity, the relative emotional social stability the standard of reasoning and conceptual thinking the necessary background of first hand experience and a good control of oral language - all demanded by modern reading instruction.<sup>i</sup>

Lack of Reading Readiness Activities

Not only are the children started too early but little

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i. See Chapter One pp. 6-24.



is done to provide them with preparatory activities to pave the way for a successful start in reading. The reading readiness activities disregarded at the beginners' stage are equally neglected all through the program. That "readiness is a continuing process", that it is the concern of every teacher, at every level of instruction, to start where the child is and guide him up to optimum development, is practically nonexistent in the Lebanese elementary system of education.

Little Attention is Given to the Principle of Orderly Development.

The Arabic reading program for beginners equally neglects the fact that child development as well as language development passes through orderly stages. Child development, for instance, states that a child of five or six is more capable, of understanding concrete, first hand experiences than abstractions, of associative learning than of the synthetic or analytic kinds of learning. What we do in most of the cases, as we shall soon see under "Method" is to burden the child with "details", he is not mature enough to be able to put them together. Principles of language development on the other hand demand that the child's oral language skills be developed before reading and writing. What we do in most of the cases is to teach the child to read Arabic words and foreign words before giving him enough experience to listen comprehend and speak these words in natural conversation.

The Beginner's Arabic Language Program Suffers From Rigidity and Uniformity.

The starting point in planning the Arabic reading program is the subject matter. The target is uniform mastery of the content rather than the optimum well-rounded development of the individual child. The modern tendency toward individualization or differentiation of instruction is still not applied in the Lebanese elementary school. Little effort is made in most of our schools to adjust the learning material to the child's particular stage of maturity, intellectual capacity interests and needs. Diagnostic, remedial, intelligence<sup>i</sup> and aptitude tests are nonexistent. If a child fails to learn reading the usual explanation is quick and simple: he is either not endowed for learning or he is lazy or nonconforming.

Pacing, timing and gradation are vital principles of curriculum development. Unfortunately the content we burden our children with, reflects little consideration of these principles.

#### Lack Of Interrelatedness And Continuity

Looking closer at the Arabic language program we find it suffering from what we call "atomism" or lack of connectedness among its various aspects. Taking the content of the

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i. One valuable attempt to construct intelligente tests for Lebanese children is that of Dr. Naim Attiyeh, Education Department, A.U.B.

program, we find it divided into separate periods of dictation, conversation, reading handwriting and later in grade two grammar and composition. Little planning is done to link all these activities together from one class period to another and from year to year. Sami may learn in the reading period to read the following:

عروس زرع راع كوس زود

In the handwriting period he practices the following line in imitation of the teacher's:

زز ز ع ع م م م

In the dictation period he may be asked to write the following:

رزم ك ر ز ر ك ز م م

In the poetry period he learns a poem that may or may not be in a language that he understands and bears in most of the cases no relation to the other language activities. Very few schools include oral language development sessions where the child learns to listen and think, to tell, retell and dramatize stories.. This lack of attention given to develop the child's oral language on the one hand and to link his spoken language with the language he reads and vice versa, adds to the disconnectedness that the curriculum suffers from and tends to widen the language gap already existing between the Classical and Colloquial Arabic.<sup>i</sup>

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i. For a review of the disadvantages of the language gap in teaching reading to beginners see pp. 57-61.

An immeasurable wastage of time, effort and interest results as an outcome of the lack of systematic planning of one phase of the language program in purposeful relation to the other.

#### The Beginners' Arabic Reading Program is Non-Functional

All the above "pigeon-holed" language activities are offered to the child with little, if any, linking with his own daily experiences in or out of school. So while there is too much quantity given to the child in terms of words, syllables and isolated sentences or phrases, too little is given to him about his every day intimate aspects of life. Our children are unable to see the value of the activity of reading, because it is presented in a highly formalized and restricted shape and it does not serve real purposes in their little world.

#### The Method

On looking at the methods of instruction a modern educator directly detects the following weaknesses which are at the same time very closely related to those mentioned under "The Content".

#### The Classroom Method Follows the Logical Rather Than the Psychological Order.

The method followed in our classrooms is again "subject matter centered" rather than "child centered," or as Mrs.

Sayigh puts it:

As regards content, it consists chiefly of subject matter, organized according to the inherent logic of the content itself. Consequently as regards methods of instruction it tends to stress a logical analytic deductive approach and reduces behavior and concrete experiences to a minimum.<sup>1</sup>

Most of our Arabic reading classes begin by cutting down language into its smaller particles or units, these could be letters, sounds or words - introduced for the sake of bringing out the sounds and letters and are in many cases meaningless to the child. All these are given in isolation on the assumption that it is easier and better to learn elements first and then the wholes or the more meaningful structures would come as a by product. What happens in practice is the child may get immersed in a sea of little details that delay him from acquiring the independence in reading sought in the first place, or at best he may learn well the mechanics of reading at the expense of interest, motivation and comprehension.

In one of the classes observed by the writer in a local Jesuit school the method of "silent dictation" "dictee muette" was followed. Letters of the Arabic alphabet, in the three or four different shapes that they have depending on their positions in the word, are distributed in separate boxes for

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1. Ibid. p. 7.

each child with pictures taken from the vocabulary of their primer, "Sami wa Hind".<sup>1</sup> The child is then asked to read the picture and build the word that stands for it on his desk. The teacher, helped by an assistant walks around to correct for every child. When the child finishes his pictures, which are usually nine in number, he takes his copybook and writes down the nine words. This method is followed every time the teacher has to introduce a new lesson, i.e. the words that the child is asked to build are words he has not experienced as complete wholes before he<sup>is</sup> asked to start building them up from their separate parts. Added to this is the fact that the pictures that the words stand for are often not clear or are unknown to the children. As a result they keep asking the teacher to pronounce the words for them and so the main purpose of such an activity which is independent recognition of words, is lost. The procedure usually takes two full hours and the children seem to like the game. Perfect mechanics! ! But one doubts whether this intensive occupation with the details of isolated words that children do not even know, can serve the main purposes of teaching reading and language namely Comprehension and Expression. The following is a sample of the vocabulary learnt in Sami wa Hind part one =

دوری	زرد	سور	شاری	شرشور	زانہ
زاد	زوزو	سوار	سر	شرد	


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1. Sami Wa Hind.

ناعورة	سراج	طرطور	ساطور	يزيد
هودج	هاون	زهر	هدف	هدهد

Another class of Arabic beginner's in one of the most famous elementary schools in Beirut Lebanon Constituted of:

- 10 minutes of drilling with the help of flash cards to review previously learnt vocabulary - individual words that have no logical link one with the other.


- 10 minutes of drill near a bulletin board where the letters are posted in their three shapes - initial, middle and final... and as the children read the letters they are asked to explain why , middle h, for instance has her arms stretched, the answer would be to take hold of the hands of her sisters etc..

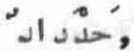
- Then children would go back to their places to take the new lesson. This is built up from its logical smallest elements up to the meaningful whole. "Listen children




what is this ? 

What is this ? 

Then this ? 

and this ? 

Let us put them together , who can read this word? ..... Now there is a better way of writing it ....

instead of writing two s near each other we use  a shaddah ... see  The teacher then goes through the

same explanation of

دَهَان نَجَار خَبَّاز

Again we may consider the above as good techniques but the approach is once more atomistic and reading whether oral or silent means much more than the mechanical ability to read separate sounds syllables or even whole disconnected words.

We must remember that the teachers in both classes were talented enthusiastic and experienced teachers and in good control of their children, and that the classes were spacious and fairly equipped with various teaching aids. These conditions are unfortunately lacking in most of the Lebanese classes where very little teaching aids are used to help fasten the multitude of details in the tiny brains.

#### Recitation and Drill Dominate Instruction

Since the logic, the value or the purpose are inherent in the content and the child is to be fitted to it, it follows that the more a child adheres to the prescribed subject matter the better. This is interpreted in practice in the form of the long repeated class recitation that children are supposed to go through. In most of our classes, recitation seems to dominate and the teacher finds herself under the obligation of making everybody in class recite everything in the lesson with as many as 35-45 little pupils. So most of the time is taken up by recitation of the same thing over and over again resulting in a dull atmosphere and bad discipline. The new lesson coming at the end of the period is left for the parents to explain and teach.



Method is Considered as "Tricks of the Trade"

In an interesting discussion of the methods used in Lebanese Elementary Classes Mrs. Sayigh says:

When learning is acquisition of the race experiences logically constructed and expressed in subject-matter foreign to the mentality and experience of the elementary school child, method would be conceived, in a narrow sense as a set of mechanical devices to induce response on the part of the child. In fact teachers with whom the writer has been associated conceive method as tricks of the trade and as a set of formulas to serve as guides in classroom teaching.<sup>1</sup>

The concept that method is there to bring the reading experience in direct relation to the experience of the children in a way that the latter can understand the purpose and feel the value behind learning to read, is unknown in our schools.

The activity method and the unit plan are not yet applied in our elementary program of instruction in general and to the Arabic reading program in particular.

The Classroom Procedures Are Teacher Centered

The Lebanese classes are teacher-centered. The students sit in regimented rows with eyes fixed on the teacher and receive passively what she has to explain. In general, the explanation following the deductive method, in most of the

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1. Ibid. p. 7.

the cases, is done for the child. Even in the rare cases, when the inductive method is used, it is offered with little room for the child to think independently, spontaneously and creatively and to draw his own conclusions. As teaching becomes a matter of "pouring in" of ready made information and as the latter are most of the time external to the child's interests and needs, the teacher resorts to extrinsic rewards, to grades individual competition and the like to motivate the child to work and maintain discipline at the same time.

#### The Child's Reading Achievement is Evaluated in Terms of the "Quantity" Covered

Appraising the child's reading achievement is in terms of the quantity of words he can call out in comparison with his classmates. Little attention is paid to the quality of work and to the child's progress in relation to his own abilities and effort. A grade of 60% put in front of Arabic reading does not explain the child's particular points of strength or weakness and his progress along the various lines of the reading process such as, comprehension, control of vocabulary, rate of reading, phonetic analysis, oral expression etc.. Our system of evaluation is neither development in relation to the child nor functional in relation to the subject matter proper.

#### The Learning Materials

It can be said with certainty that the majority of schools in Lebanon are not only "book-centered" but also

"text book-centered". In practically all classes of Arabic beginners, the teachers rely on "readers" usually one kind of a reader. It is a source of pride to a teacher to be able to cover all that is required in a text book, as quickly as possible and take over another before the end of the year. "Outside reading," "supplementary readers", good Arabic "story books" "work books" "picture dictionaries" etc.. fit for beginners' are practically nonexistent.

The teaching aid most commonly used in Lebanese beginners' classes is the chalkboard, which in my opinion, could be used far more effectively than at present. Flash cards are beginning to spread also the use of pictures and real objects in conjunction, with reading lessons. Yet all of these are mainly used in kindergarten classes and remarkably less in grade one Upper elementary classes are almost barren of all aids - excluding the chalkboard and some geographical maps.

#### A Closer Look At The Readers

As the teaching of reading is highly reader-centered, it can be said that the contents of a beginners' reader constitute most if not all of the reading matter planned for the first year. As a matter of fact both the content and the method used by the author are but reflections of the general curriculum and method used in school. We have now reached a point in our study where a closer look at the readers is needed.

In front of me are readers for beginners that are used at present in Lebanese schools. Most of them reveal certain

efforts at improvement in one aspect or another. One reader may show improvement in illustration, another in choice of vocabulary another in the choice of print, another in its method. But all of them unfortunately have not reached the standards of legibility, readability and suitability to sound method needed for sound reading instruction.

### Legibility

If we take a quick glance at the general appearance of the readers the pages immediately strike us as being too crowded for a beginner's standard of perception. Some even look confusing to grown ups. This is caused by the fact that:

1 - Most readers, if not all, have too many words per page.

2 - Many syllables, sounds and various shapes of various letters are lined up in a page.

3 - In most cases, especially in recent editions, the reader includes with the reading page drawing, tracing or coloring and handwriting exercises plus numbers to learn along with the reading lesson. In one page we have the work of three pages, of three different books, a reader, a work book, a colouring book, not to mention arithmetic drill.

4 - Some readers even include directions for the teacher intermingled with the lesson.

5 - Illustration is often crowded and made up of various small pictures intermingling with the print.

We also notice directly that both the illustration and the print are not clear nor attractive for:

- 1- Most illustrations are too small for the child to discriminate.
- 2- Many are remote from the child's daily experience and thus difficult to interpret. Most of them are dull and do not depict movement and action. Many are not even colored.
- 3- According to tested standards, many readers use smaller than a beginner can perceive easily. One clear big word such as (baba) with one attractive illustration is better than a dozen small ones, in a page.
- 4- Many readers use heavy or complicated print that is equally illegible.
- 5- The colours used are, in many cases unattractive, sometimes used haphazardly and nonfunctionally.
- 6- Some books use red colour to make certain words, parts of words or letters stand out clearly. But when this is used too often in a page it defeats its purpose.
- 7- The kind of paper and binding used are cheap and unattractive.

### Readability

A closer look at the language content to determine its readability, or the relative difficulty of the vocabulary and sentence structure would also prove that these are not up to modern standards of language instruction.<sup>1</sup>

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1. For a full discussion of the concept of readability see Hildreth Op. Cit. Chapter 16, pp. 369-395.

The Vocabulary

Little Attention is Paid to Word Meanings.- In nine out of the ten readers in front of me we find many words that carry no meaning to the child. He either does not understand them, or feels indifferent to the meaning they carry. Some even carry no meaning to adults as well. Let us take some examples:

حدايق القراءة ( ١ للاطفال )

ساد ماع ساد هي هذي  
داس دال شاع عادى ساح  
باح داح

الطريقة المفيدة ( ج ١ )

برع عبر زوب  
نبح بدر نذب  
باع ساب راب

( ص ١٥ )

مراحل الالقاء ( ١ )

ريط طرد يرد طار  
نبت مطر بيم ردم  
( ص ١١ )

قرايتى الطلونة ( روضة الاطفال )

دفر شفق صقر رفق  
حفر ففر فسد دنق  
( ص ٢١ )

القراءة التمرودية ( ١ للاطفال )

جا ثبت حجب حوني باح  
بوحى داخ باه داب حدث  
جاه جودى رجد يرد راح

Little Effort is Made to Choose Words Closest to the Colloquial-

As shown in the illustrations above there is practically no effort to choose words close to the colloquial vocabulary a child uses. Sometimes the writer has two alternatives of words starting even with the same initial sound and having the same meaning, one of them is a classical Arabic word, the other is common to the two, and the writer chooses the strictly classical word. He would for instance use صديق instead of صاحب , for friend., ذيل instead of ذنب , for tail., كوب instead of كأس or كباية , for cup. There are numerous other examples where the writer chooses the more complicated set of vocabulary on the assumption that the child does not need to learn the simpler ones, كرة is used instead of طابطة دمية instead of لعبة for doll., نطة instead of بئنة for cat.

The concept that the writer should choose not only the words that the child knows but those that he most frequently uses, those that are part of his every day experience that express concretely his interests and needs, is still unfortunately unknown to our writers. The word جارى , my neighbor, so often used in the readers may or may not be understood by a four or five years old learner yet if understood by him, it is not part of his every day language and so carries to him very few, if any, meaningful associations.

What applies to the word جارى applies to most of the words used in these readers., even to the names of the many

characters used, in some recent readers, in the many stories included in the text. Such uncommon names as the following.

لميس لوني بلال تام هاوي صادر غالب رافب رافب ظاهر نظمية  
( القراءه النموذجية )  
واصف ياسر ثابت كوثر تاسم نظيره حافظ صافي لبيب ( المشوق )

Words are Presented in Isolation.- As shown above words in most of the cases are presented in isolation and not in a clear context of picture or story. Even in some of the recent books that have a better choice of vocabulary that is often repeated or that may be presented in a story context, there are many words that are not needed and could be eliminated. The development of word recognition skills through the help of context clues is thus hindered.

Developing word form clues is equally hindered by the choice of words and their presentation. Children find it difficult to discriminate among the forms of such words:

زرد درز ردر دج جرد رجد فرع رفح

Too Many Words Are Used In A Book.- The sum total of the different words used in each reader is in most of the cases very big. They exceed five hundred words to a primer and in many cases may reach a thousand. In some recent books too many names of too many characters are included in a book.

Words Are Not Repeated Systematically.- Not only are there too many words in a book, but vocabulary is not often repeated systematically to ensure retention and familiarity. Even in some books that start early with whole words which have to



be learnt by sight, these are little repeated if at all. When a page or two of review come every month, it is not usually the whole words or main words that are reviewed but the sounds. The review page is very uninteresting for a boy of five, who dislikes to read syllables sounds or words out of context.

الجديد في القراءة الحربية ( ١ للاطفال )

مراحل الألفباء ( ١ )

دا	دا	دا	دا
ف	ف	ف	ف
ف	ف	ف	ف
س	س	س	س
ج	ج	ج	ج
ق	ق	ق	ق

ورد راعي شرب شادي  
 وجد راجي زك دادا  
 قدر برع شرق  
 عج شرد طرب  
 درز زود جوش ( ص ٢١ )

Sentences And Stories

In most of the recent readers we find an effort to use sentences as soon as the child is taught some sounds and syllables to construct words and sentences. Some recent readers start right away with sentences. Some of these sentences are linked to particular stories offered by the author (printed in small print under the picture) and some are added hap-hazardly in shape of isolated news or pieces of news. As the starting point, in both cases, is the teaching of sounds rather than the communication of meaningful ideas, the result is artificial long lists of sentences and stories that are below modern standards of readability in style, as well as, in language.

The various weaknesses of the sentences and stories can be summarized as follows:

1 - Most of the sentences carry little meaning to the beginner.

2 - Most of the sentences and stories are not stimulating and many times not uplifting.

3 - Too many sentences are used in a page. Too many stories and too many characters in a book.

4 - These many stories and sentences suffer from lack of continuity in thought. The ideas communicated in both cases can represent any experience or piece of experience at all.

5 - Repetition of sentences is often not functional and not planned systematically.

6 - Stories suffer from lack of plot, excitement and humour so much liked by children of 4 - 6.

7 - Sentences are not related to the language patterns frequently used by children. They lack naturalness and variety.

8 - Sentences are often not presented in a distinct meaningful setting. They are often merged with lines of isolated words - specially in the early parts of the books - with no space or punctuation to bring them into focus.

القراءة النموذجية ج ٢ للاطفال

هرب هاني من هر هنا

هاني هرب من هر هنا

هرب هاني من زاهي وخاف هاوي  
عرف ابوه جاء اخوه سهر عنده  
(ص ٦)

يوسف يذبح يمامة يسرى

يذبح يوسف يمامة يسرى

يبس ياسمين خالي • يدي بيد يوسف  
بيت اختي • يداي هما يميني ويساري  
(ص ٦٤)

مراحل الالفباء ( ١ )

درس سامي يوم راسي

حسب بابا حسايح

( ص ١٥ )

ثوب اختي ظوف نظيف

كسر ظاهر عظام ظهره

المشوق ( روضة الاطفال )

ث ث ث ث ث ث ث

و و و و و و و

ورث ثار حرث

حرث ابي بور كوثر

لوث سامي اناث داري

( ص ٤٥ )

حدايق القراءة النموذجية ( ج ١ )

صخ خالد خوقا من الخروف

صخ خالد خوقا

صخ خالد

خالد

( ص ٦٩ )

كوثر فتاة ثرناوة تتحدث كثيرا

كوثر فتاة ثرناوة

كوثر فتاة

( ص ٨٢ )

الطريقة المفيدة ج ١

اسك الجندي بحلم

هذا جندي

هذا جندي شجاع

هذا جندي شجاع يحمل علما

يسير حامل العلم امام الجنود • ويتبعه الجنود

بخطوات منظمة واجسام متنصبة

الجندي حارس امين • يحمي الوطن من الاعداء

( ص ٤٦ )

سلي و هند ( الكراسي الازل )

غدا يوسف في داري

غدا فرس جاري خالد

صوف خروف داود حرير

حافر فرس فاروق حد يد

الجديد في القراءة العربية ( للاطفال )

( ص ٦١ )

اخي سمير

مرض اخي سمير مرضا شديدا

جاء الطبيب وفحصه فحسا دقيقا • خان سمير منه

فقال له امي : لا تخف يا بنتي فسوف نشفي عسن

قريب قال الطبيب : ان مرض سمير بسيط تم اعطاه

الدواء وانصرف • شرب اخي الدواء نشفي وذهبنا

معا الى المدرسة • ( ص ٦١ )

الجديد في القراءة العربية

يا راجي

راجي جاري

شرب راجي

يا جاري عطش راجي وشرب

مراحل الالفباء - الجزء الاول ص ١٦

جرس جرس

جات دجاج جاري راجي في داري

القراءة النموذجية :

ج ج ج ج ج ج ج

دج جرد جرد جاري وجد جرس

### The Method

In most of the readers reviewed whole words, sentences and, in some cases, stories are used yet, as shown above, we cannot consider any of them to have followed the modern, meaningful, language - related approach we aim at in this study. The approach in these readers is still a phonetic - alphabetic. The words, sentences and stories presented in the readers are there to fasten in the minds of the children the sounds and letters rather than to communicate to them interesting ideas and experiences (i).

The overemphasis on the phonetic approach followed in our schools and readers is based on the wrong assumption that once the sounds, elements, are learnt well, reading the wholes would follow automatically. This tends to oversimplify the reading process that requires the mastery of various skills, including phonetic analysis. (ii) These skills take their time and special attention to grow, or as Hildreth puts it, "There is no such thing as learning all of sounding in grade one or grade two, because this skill can be mastered only as fast as all the other components of the reading process."<sup>1</sup>

This oversimplification of the processes involved in reading is reflected in the huge "quantity" given to the child

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(i) See pp. 74-78.

(ii) For a review of the various skills involved in reading see pp. 29-36, 41-45.

1. Hildreth Op. Cit. p. 147.

to master in his first year of reading with little reference to the quality.

Almost all of the readers reviewed are organized as follows: All consonants are given successively, one every lesson, in conjunction with 3-6 vowels. Review pages come at intervals - with emphasis on sounds already learnt - "Nunation" "shaddah" the articles  $\text{أ}$  and  $\text{إ}$  follow then maddah". After that the book turns suddenly into regular reading text, which is always above the children's readership at this stage. A few poems are added which are again beyond the children's understanding.

Two main criticisms (must be mentioned), of the phonetic approach used in our schools.

First. Most of the readers, and teachers impose the phonetic analysis and discrimination on the child. The red color, used frequently in the recent readers and on chalk boards, to bring out the sounds to be studied in a lesson, is one example. Little room is left for the child to discover the sounds for himself and to do his own word analysis and draw his own conclusions. This tends to defeat the purpose of phonetic analysis in the first place namely - independent word attack and reading.

Second. Undue emphasis on phonetic analysis tends to develop piecemeal observation of words and interferes with the development of proper habits of word perception and

reading. Calling out sounds and fusing them into words becomes the over all purpose of the first stage in reading.

### Drawbacks Of The Present Readers And Learning Conditions

The present standards of legibility and readability of the Arabic readers for beginners, together with the general Arabic language curriculum and the classroom methods and procedures applied at this stage, present the following drawbacks in teaching Lebanese beginners how to read Arabic.

#### The Present Readers and Learning Conditions Stimulate Little Interest in Reading.

To stimulate right from the earliest stages a growing interest in reading. The readers and the learning conditions discussed above render the realization of such an aim very complicated. For one thing the child is not motivated to read a content unrelated to him in both its language and the experience it communicates. He cannot see the purpose behind learning to read a page full with strange shapes and sounds that carry to him little if any meaningful associations. He cannot be genuinely motivated to learn a task of which he gets little true sense of success, the kind of success that he himself aims at, that is achieved without unnecessary toil and that is reinforced by a personal sense of accomplishment and true satisfaction with the experience learnt.

The Present Readers and Learning Conditions Contribute Very Little to the Children's Personal-Social Growth.

Growing through reading is as important as growing in reading. What the child learns indirectly through the kind of readers and under the learning atmosphere described above offers little stimulation to his reasoning powers and fable nourishment to his feelings. His general knowledge of the world around him is little expanded. He is allowed very few opportunities to develop the social skills highly needed in our growing society, namely the ability to communicate with others, to share experiences, to take responsibility and to participate in a purposeful activity in a group. There is no room for the child under the present classroom conditions to talk, to think, to read and write, freely, spontaneously and independently. Arabic Reading to our Lebanese youngsters is far from being a valuable source of information, a means of problem solving, a source of intellectual and aesthetic adventure and an enjoyable medium of recreation.

The Present Readers and Learning Conditions Widen the Gap Between the Child's Colloquial Language and the Classical Language he is Asked to Read.

As was mentioned in more than one place above there is practically no effort at developing the child's oral language on the one hand and at linking his oral language with the language he reads and vice versa, on the other hand.

This discontinuity in the child's language development results with an educational gap very harmful in teaching beginners how to read, and widens the differences already existing between the two sets of Arabic languages. (i)

The Present Readers and Learning Conditions Complicate The Development of Good Habits of Reading.

The present standards of legibility and readability in Arabic readers together with the general learning reading conditions, hamper the development of speedy reading, thoughtful silent reading and expressive oral reading. These, as we have seen in chapter two, are characterized by:

Rythmical Eye Movements, with short pauses and few regressions.

Good Habits of Word Perception, with a wide anticipation span, whole word perception, instantaneous word recognition through the help of partial clues, word recognition through clues from the context, through clues from word form, phonetic and structural analysis.

Good Habits of Interpretation which involve, skill in identifying printed symbols and their meanings, ability of weaving together related meanings and ideas, anticipation, exploratory tries and inference imagery, critical and appreciative reactions, and integration. (ii)

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(i) For a full discussion of the disadvantages of the language gap our children face, see pp. 57-61.

(ii) For a full review of these processes, see pp.2936 and pp. 41-45.



All of the above demand familiarity with the language of the text, gradation and "systematic repetition of a limited number of vocabulary and language patterns" and interest in the stories and activities depicted in the reading content. All of which are not provided for in our readers and learning atmosphere that take little consideration of the modern principles of learning namely: "Readiness", "Learning Through Purposeful Activity" "Building on previous Experience" "Practice in a Variety of Situations" and "Reinforcement"<sup>(i)</sup>

#### Conclusion

To provide the Lebanese children with successful enjoyable and meaningful Arabic reading experiences right from the earliest stages is the overall purpose of this study. Various educational and language problems, as shown in the last two chapters, complicate the way to the realization of this purpose. The inevitable solution to these problems is to improve the present conditions of learning by improving the reading content, language and style, on the one hand, the methods and classroom procedures on the other hand. This necessitates the joint persistent efforts of many specialists, teachers and educators. What this study will attempt to do now, after having set the theoretical grounds and raised the various problems existing at present, is to

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(i) See pages 36-41.

devise a general plan for an Arabic reading program for beginners that apply modern theories on the one hand and takes into consideration these various difficulties, on the other hand. Part of the plan would be the construction of modern Arabic reading materials that apply modern standards of legibility and readability.

PART TWO

TOWARDS A MODERN ARABIC READING  
PROGRAM FOR BEGINNERS

Towards A Modern Arabic Reading  
Program For Beginners

In this part an attempt will be made to answer the three fundamental groups of questions underlying the planning and administering of a modern Arabic reading for Lebanese Arab beginners that were mentioned in the last part of the previous chapter.

First. How would the Arabic reading program contribute best to the happy personal growth of the children? How would it cater to the child's particular rate of growth, needs abilities and interests, paying constant attention to the principles of balance, continuity, pacing timing, differentiation and interrelation mentioned in chapter one.

Second. How would the Arabic reading program contribute best to the effective social growth of the learners?  
A - How would it contribute to development of the modern social values, skills and ways of living, such as ability to express oneself freely and effectively, ability to think creatively and critically, ability to share with others ideas as well as possessions. Ability to cooperate in a common activity for the rights of others and wise utilization of time. B - How would the program bring the child into close contact with aspects of the Lebanese life around him.

Third. How would the Arabic Reading Program develop in the child a growing continuous interest in reading Arabic

together with the basic language skills demanded by such an activity?

- How would the program effectively bridge the gap between the two languages the classical and colloquial moving towards a good control of the classical together with careful attention to the other difficulties peculiar to the Arabic language and writing system.

- How would it constantly keep the child's interest and attention on the purposes that reading serves, on the experiences that it communicates to him. I.e. how would the program effectively present reading as a process of thinking and interpreting meaning?

Last but not least when and how to teach children the various skills involved in the reading process in such a way as to serve best the two important purposes from teaching such skills, namely continuous interest and a growing independence in reading.

An Arabic - Reading - Program for beginners that would cater to the variety of needs raised above, from all the three angles, that of the developing child, of the community he lives in and of the Arabic reading process itself, entails an extensive as well as an intensive renewal of the present conditions of instruction in our schools.

The following discussion aiming at the highly needed renewal of conditions will be divided into four main parts.

The first part or chapter discusses the general characteristics of such a program, the second deals with the various functions and activities of the reading readiness program. The third part or chapter suggests the activities and skills to be developed in the "Beginning Reading Program." The last part deals with planning and preparing Beginning Arabic Readers and Reading Materials.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A SOUND BEGINNING-ARABIC READING PROGRAM

#### The New Program is Based on a Rich Reading Readiness Program.

A successful beginning in Arabic reading along sound educational lines can only grow in a rich kindergarten and reading readiness program. The spread of the reading readiness activities in western schools marks one of the most important trends in the twentieth century educational development. It embodies the constant efforts on the part of the educators in these countries to make use of the latest studies and principles in the fields of child development, language development and learning. In seeking out similar reformation in our system of education, we too have to start with the very foundation - the kindergarten, making consistent and constant efforts to adapt the new principles to our particular language and educational needs.

A child should be provided with a rich background of activities taking care of all aspects of his development, and enabling him to grow at his own pace into beginning reading. Activities at this stage should therefore be planned in close interrelation with those of the reading readiness program, and vice versa the reading readiness program should be correlated with the child's normal activities.

A closer look at the reading readiness activities will follow this general discussion and as the principles governing the two programs are much the same and their activities differ more in degree than in kind. The following characteristics taken broadly are true of both.

The New Program is Characterized By Variety in Content.

Varied needs necessitate a varied program. This is the first principle that comes to mind in trying to answer the three groups of questions.

The suggested program should therefore provide a wide range of activities and experiences that would cater to the child's various needs at the same time that it nourishes his language-reading interests and skills. The child's reading curriculum according to the modern concept, encircles all the situations in which he reads that the school is responsible for. The child is stimulated to read a variety of appropriate story books, classroom records, all kinds of charts posters and notices spread around his classroom together with a series of basic readers and accompanying work books. Activities such as trips, plays, drawing, painting, music, poetry and all kinds of projects can all be parts of the child's reading program.

The New Reading Program is Characterized by its Purposefulness

To stimulate genuine interest in reading, a child should be able to see that every little reading experience serves



a purpose. Variety will lose its value if not accompanied by functionality. Starting with the reading readiness program, as we shall see later, the child should experience words in action serving various purposes and needs in his little world. Our Lebanese children should be able to develop the concept that reading and writing are there to record interesting events, to tell nice stories, to send nice messages, to inform, to communicate ideas, feelings and beautiful language expressions. The teacher can bring out these purposes informally through her daily approach as she requests children to read.

"Is there anything we have forgotten to record from our visit to the grocer's? Let's read again"...

"Let's see what Sami finds in the box he got for his birthday."

"Isn't this beautiful? Can we hear it again? Instead of "Sami please stand and read page 12" or "open your books to ..." "Hala continue or repeat again.."

Even when the aim of the reading activity is the practice of certain skills it is always better to request in terms of purposes.

"How did you like the way Hala read? Let's see if we can still improve.."

"These words will help you read the new story... what about writing them down?"

Incidental reading around the room should equally serve real purposes. Notices and the various charts are there to

keep the various day's activities running smoothly and not decorative purposes. "Notices are taken down when they are no longer needed, plans once made are actually used, lists of rules are re-read as needed, and experience records serve a purpose after they are originally composed".<sup>1</sup>

Method in the new program is much more than a set of prescribed techniques that the teacher should use to lighten the burden of learning experiences or to fasten the information in the tiny brains. Its main function is to bring the child's life into school and to bring the school activities to bear on his daily life making out of the reading experience from the earliest stage a living experience. "Lessons should be related to the things young children know, enjoy, play and talk about, to on-going activities. So that reading becomes a tool from the outset."<sup>2</sup>

#### A Flexible Eclectic Method is Used.

Many arguments and controversies have been going on in the world as to what method to use in beginning reading. A lot of research was done, books and articles were written, in the United States and Europe defending one method or the other. Ample experience was gained for the last fifty years through actual try out, in beginning classrooms, of the

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1. Mckim, Op. Cit. p. 25.

2. Hildreth, Op. Cit. p. 186.

various methods and techniques devised in the field of reading.<sup>1</sup>

In reviewing the experiments done to prove the relative merits of specific methods of teaching reading Gray came to the conclusion that these studies "do not show conclusively which method is best. They indicate that some methods further progress in certain aspects of reading and other methods in still different aspects".<sup>2</sup> Each method has its contributions and limitations.

Another important finding of research equally mentioned by Gray is that, different children need different approaches. "Even in studies that indicate some degree of superiority of one method over another, the impressive fact is not the difference between the average scores of schools using different methods, but the wide range of average scores made by schools using the same method and of individual scores within each group...".<sup>3</sup> The question is no more what method to choose, it is when? what for? and with whom?

The approach that we need to adapt in our Lebanese - Arab schools should therefore be a flexible well rounded, eclectic, approach that profits from the best methods and techniques ever applied, in both the west, as well as the

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1. For a good review of the development of methods of teaching reading see W.S. Gray, On Their Own in Reading Op. Cit., Chapter one.

2. Ibid p. 106.

3. Ibid. p. 107.

Arab world, and that establishes a Functional Arabic reading program characterized by its developmental experience - centered, language related perspective.

This eclectic flexible approach should have its roots down in the reading readiness program where the child's various skills abilities and lines of thinking should be stimulated and developed. These skills and abilities would grow as essential parts of the reading activity taking different shapes as the child's reading abilities mature and grow.<sup>1</sup>

In the program suggested we will then apply the "language-experience" method in starting our children to read. As early as kindergarten, the children learn to read experience records, classmate names, scrapbooks etc.. Yet at the same stage they are provided with auditory, manual and visual exercises and games in preparation for the word analysis skills that will come later in grade one. In the new program, children would have plenty of chances to experience words in meaningful context. Yet they would equally have the chance to see the alphabet, in A.B.C. books, A.B.C. blocks and written in order above the chalk board etc.. Incidental learning of letter names can be very helpful.

Later in grade one and when the teacher feels the need for it, structural analysis and syllabication are introduced

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1. See the Reading Readiness Program. pp.123-141.

and soon we would have all methods working together to develop an enjoyable and skillful reading experience.

The eclectic method takes also the shape of using a variety of media for learning reading. Both author-prepared as well as learner-teacher-prepared reading matter are used. Both the systematic methods as well as the informal activity methods are used. Again the aim is a balanced program that avoids running to the extreme of using one approach at the expense of the other.

The balanced new approach also demands that due emphasis be given to silent as well as to oral reading., to thoughtful and speedy reading as well as to expressive social reading. We would thus avoid one main weakness of the Lebanese program of reading instruction, namely, the overemphasis given to oral reading at the expense of nonvocalized thoughtful silent reading. The value and nature of both processes in relation to the first grader will be discussed under "Beginning Reading Skills and Habits" Part II.

#### Coordination and Interrelation.

Extensive planning is necessary to coordinate the various activities purposes and methods involved in a modern reading program.

One of the most effective ways of achieving this coordination is by preparing graded reading materials. These materials are characterized by the studied control of

vocabulary and language patterns. In these materials care is taken to choose the words and language patterns used most frequently by children of a certain age and to introduce them gradually and repeat them systematically. These basic vocabulary and language patterns function as a core around which other reading activities are woven.

A major characteristic of the new program which serves also to coordinate the various activities, purposes and skills involved, is the close interrelation of reading with oral language and writing, in such a way that the skills learnt in one serve to reinforce the skills learnt in the other.

Another characteristic that also makes for coordination is the "unit plan" where one theme is taken such as Our Family, Our Pets, Animals on the farm, Transportation etc.. and is developed through class discussions through trips and visits through the reader itself or through other books. This provides the child with opportunities to see the same vocabulary in various contexts. In the upper grades, the development of the reading skills is coordinated with other subject areas, i.e. social sciences natural sciences etc.. At all grades the reading experiences should supplement and reinforce each other.

The coordination of a child's reading activities needs to be planned not only for the class in which he now is, but from grade to grade and from teacher to teacher. Skills

stressed at one level should be picked up at the next when their need recurs. Practice is planned in situations similar to those in which they will actually be using them, in meaningful context. This ensures both interrelatedness as well as transfer of learning from stage to stage.

#### Beginning Reading Taught in Interrelation With Oral Language Development

While the principle of teaching reading as one aspect of general language development, is vital in all stages of learning reading, it has its special value in the initial stage. The child at this stage should be able to perceive a continuity, a natural transfer from the language he speaks to the one he reads. How to enable the Arab Lebanese child to perceive the printed language he is presented with as "talk written down," is one main theme of this study. Two facts render this question difficult and necessitating special planning and systematic effort, First, the big difference existing between the Arabic colloquial and classical languages - Second, the fact that the language content even of the earliest reading material has to be more a modified version of the classical than of the colloquial. The reasons are:

- 1 - The classical is a standardized language in syntax as well as in dialect.

- 2 - It is the language common to all Arab countries and the one universally known.

3 - It is the every day written and read language of thought, science, literature, business and administration spread widely through the mass media i.e. it is the language with which the child will be increasingly in contact, as he grows.

The logical answer to our question is to "colloquialize" the classical Arabic and use it orally with the children as early as possible and to continue to do so all through the language instruction program as well as in other fields of instruction that use the Arabic language i.e. natural sciences social sciences and arithmetic. Another answer will be to "classicize" the colloquial.

Beginning with the reading readiness program and K.G. the teacher can gradually start bridging the gap between the classical and the colloquial. She can use both formal as well as informal procedures. Formal procedures include the various planned discussions preceding the reading lessons, story telling, planned conversations, dramatizations and picture interpretations, poetry, songs, all of these should be as classical as possible. When the child is ready to prepare with the help of the teacher experience records, scrap books, as will be discussed presently, the written language should be as colloquial as possible. Care should be taken not to overload the child with classical vocabulary and expressions at the expense of the spontaneity, naturalness and interest in the language expressed.



Informally however, the teacher can enhance this shift from the local dialect to the more classical or "school Arabic" by using herself the latter as consistently as possible, and requesting the children to follow her example whenever possible. If in the first reader the child has to read:

تَعَالِ حِصَانُ لُعْبَةَ طَائِبَةٍ حَصْرَاءَ هَذَا قَطَارِ

The teacher must use them with their classical dialect, vowels and consonants and must insist that the children imitate her. This would train the child to think directly in classical without the laborious process of translation that our children are exposed to all through their, Arabic language program. This request will sound easier to apply when we remember that many of our good schools apply this method already in teaching a foreign language, so why not <sup>it</sup> apply/to our own language which is supposed to be our main vehicle of thought throughout our lives - One impressive observation in a simple public school, first grade, in Zahleh, proves that classical Arabic can be used in oral conversation with very young children. In specially assigned conversation periods, the teacher asked questions related to school equipment, to the food we eat etc.. in classical and the children answered in classical. After reading the new lesson over and over for the children and with the children she also asked questions related to the lesson and received their answers in classical. - One effective way of bringing the

two languages together is to drop the inflections from the end of the classical words.

راح الى السوق وجاب نتاج

- Another is to avoid the strictly classical expressions or the strictly colloquial and use those in between

Say	سمعت يا سامي ؟
instead of	هل سمعت يا سامي
The answer is	لا ما سمعت
instead of	كلا لم اسمع

On the other hand,

Say	سامع يا سامي
instead of	عم تسمع يا سامي
and the answer	نعم سامع
instead of	نعم عم اسمع

- At all times and even in the recess the teacher should not accept expressions like this:

ما بديش ليحبو معي  
سامي ما درسيش

She should correct

ما بدى لعبه معي  
او ما بريد  
او ما اريد

### Beginning Reading Taught in Interrelation with Writing.

As will be mentioned under "preparing to read", writing is started practically as early as reading. At first the teacher does the writing as the children watch suggesting their own ideas and words. There is nothing as stimulating

for a child as the chance to express his ideas to the teacher who is not only a good listener, but also an enthusiastic recorder of what is expressed. This would not only enable the child to perceive the functions of both writing and reading but also to sense the intimate relationship between the two processes.

Next, the teacher can capitalize on the child's interest in his own name to learn his first lessons in writing. As soon as he gathers a few basic vocabulary the teacher can have the child write his own ideas as freely as possible. Rereading what he has written himself gives the child double reinforcement in reading mechanics and the recognition of word forms.

The principle of linking reading with writing all through is of special value to Arabic being in the first place a phonetic language with a highly consistent vowel and consonant system; and in the second place because of the difficulties inherent in its writing system the small similar letters and the fact that they run together and the many little details added above or below the words.

As the teacher says a sentence she writes it slowly and carefully

بيتنا جميل وصغير

This would help the child to perceive not only the individual words but also that of the separate letters and sounds which would enhance the ability to discriminate among words and the careful scrutiny of details, leading to better word recognition .

The occasions to be capitalized upon for linking reading with writing can be as varied and rich as the program of activities presented. One example is for grade one to send letters of invitation, of thanks to another grade or to their parents or to the principal..

الصف الثاني العزيز

نشكرك على الحفلة الحلوة

الصف الاول

الى بابا وماما

او تفضلوا الى حفلتنا يوم الخميس

سامي

The letters will be composed by the group with the guidance of the teacher and each child making a copy of it.

Other examples will be mentioned under the Reading Materials.

What should be mentioned here however is First: The child must be able to write correctly all the basic words that he is supposed to read. And as there should not be a carry over of inability to read certain basic words from one stage to another, if not book to another, there should

not be a carry over of inability to write these same basic words correctly from one stage to another. This is ensured mainly by the systematic repetition of a limited vocabulary which is used in a variety of ways and activities. Special spelling or dictation exercises can be arranged such as giving the children on Monday a list of words to be paid attention to and studied during the week. On Friday the teacher passes papers to test the children's spelling ability. Care is taken that whatever form this test takes words are best tested out in meaningful context.

س --- تعال نركب في الس ---  
ح --- ن --- نا --- أ --- و ---  
ل --- نانا ح ---  
ها --- قلنا --- يا --- دي ---

Second It should be made clear that the writing activity discussed above differs from the handwriting or copying exercises that are used in our schools. It is more a composing creative kind of writing where the child is encouraged to express his ideas in print as freely as he is encouraged to express them orally. For as the ability to express words fluently in speech reflects comprehension and clarify of thinking, so does the ability to express fluently in writing reflect all these as well as ensures the thorough learning of the words written. The child should never be asked to write something he cannot comprehend or read.

One example of integrating writing with the reading activity is the exercise given to a grade one early in the year<sup>(1)</sup>. After discussing and reading the new lesson with one group of children the teacher wrote down on a big slip of paper the words run, help, here, come, Sally, Jane. She hung the paper on the board and asked the children to make sentences of their own "that make sense". This group took their seats and started enthusiastically to write as another group went to read.

Another example of integrating writing with reading is the one observed in another grade one in May when children were asked to write book reports about the stories that they read. Here is what the teacher asked the children to answer her<sup>2</sup>.

- 1 - Name of book.
- 2 - What is the story about.
- 3 - What person or animal did you like best? Why..
- 4 - What was your favourite part? Why?
- 5 - What did you learn that is new?
- 6 - New words.

Here is what one child wrote down :

- 1 - Baby Dear

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1. Taken from a class observation in American Community School of Beirut - October 1965.

2. Taken from a class observation in American Community School of Beirut - May 1966.

2 - The story's about a little girl who had a doll for a baby, because she want to copy off her mother because her mother had a real baby.

3 - I like the baby that wasn't real because it was cute and because I like baby.

4 - My favorite was when they took the babies for a walk on the street.

5 - I learned that baby are fun

6 - Special, hospital, mine, bottles, bubble, changes, bathes, toes, dress, bonnets, carriage, cradle, own."

The book report group had little dictionaries of their own where they wrote the new words they found in the books and where the teacher wrote for them words that they needed in writing their book reports which they didn't know how to spell.

One example of integrating Arabic writing with reading is that given in a public school -Grade one<sup>1</sup>. After giving the lesson the teacher wrote down the following questions for the children to answer at home on their copybooks. This, she said, is given daily to the children after making sure orally that they can pick the right answers =

ماذا اجابت الدجاجة ؟

اين تركض الصيضان  
اين تركض الصيضان ؟  
من رأت الدجاجة ؟  
اين جومت الدجاجة صيضانها ؟  
ماذا قال توتو للدجاجة ؟

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1. Observation Spring 1966, Elementary Public School Zahleh.

While this is not as creative as the exercises given in the American Community School, it does prove that Arabic writing can be integrated with the reading lesson and with good results.

Caution should be taken however in developing the children's writing ability not to overemphasize grammar and correct spelling at the expense of spontaneous free expression of thought. The writer was shown a beautiful piece of English composition by a grade one boy, but it was full of spelling mistakes. To correct every mistake the child did in this little composition would do more harm than good. It would discourage the child from giving free flow to his thoughts at the same time that it does not ensure correction of the mistakes for these would come by cumulative experience and with time. Many of these mistakes were due more to the inconsistency of the English spelling system than to the child's lack of phonetic discrimination.

What is said of grammar should also apply to handwriting and spelling. All of these skills should develop incidentally and gradually. Actual drill in handwriting should be given later in grade one.

Third Speaking of handwriting we must mention that the children's early attempt to writing must be done in big pencils on big papers with wide spacing between the lines and big clear letters is the other.



An Individualized - Socialized Classroom Procedure

Through teaching Arabic reading for beginners we should strive to develop wholesome personal and social traits that lay the foundations for the "democratic" ways of living - highly needed by our developing society - as it ensures the application of sound methods of learning and reading instruction. This can only be done in a classroom setting that applies both individualized as well as socialized procedures. A busy workshop atmosphere with wise distribution of labour, with plenty of chances for children to do independent work, to express themselves freely and at the same time to behave as parts of various groups working for various purposes sharing information and ideas with one another is the new learning reading atmosphere we recommend.

One of the main characteristics of this new set up is the responsibility given for children to read for meaning as early as possible. Independent reading an eventual goal is aimed at from the beginning. A teacher in such a learning atmosphere acts as a stimulator, as a guide, as a leader of a certain group of children. She does not teach as much as she presents and organizes the experiences for the children to learn. This is made possible by giving the child appropriate reading materials, simple, graded and systematic which ensure success, reinforce the child's early attempts at reading and gradually enable him to learn the habit of getting meaning from what he reads, As Mckim

puts it, "After children have learnt the first few words and phrases theirs is the major responsibility for finding what subsequent stories are about. The teacher is there to help them figure it out - by assisting with words that are not remembered, by introducing unfamiliar words, and by asking questions to direct their reading, but she no longer reads the material to them. The aim now is to help children develop ways of getting the meaning for themselves."<sup>1</sup>

Differentiated Instruction is another important characteristic of the new set up that ensures the success of the weak and the interest of all. With a warm and encouraging attitude the teacher strives to give each child the amount of help he needs and expects from him and evaluates his work in terms of what he can give. This can only be possible by dividing the children into various ability and interest groups depending on the purposes and activities of the moment. Grouping in modern classes applies both individualization as well as socialization of instruction. As Sami in Group B joins the teacher in the corner for a reading session appropriate to their level of ability to be followed by special written excersises, he has a good chance for an individualized attention. If next he joins another group to prepare illustrations for a class record about a visit to the village he gets a good chance for developing socialized behavior.

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1. Mckim Op. Cit. p. 119.

Another main characteristic of the new setting is the procedure followed in appraising the child's reading achievement. His progress in reading is not only judged in comparison with others, but more in relation to his own capacity. The reading achievement report is as many-sided as the skills and aims involved in reading instruction, which in turn is part of a more comprehensive record of the child's various lines of development that may include, intelligent tests, aptitude tests , reading readiness tests and results of various tests given by the teacher with various notes and observations recorded about the child's needs and interests... The new methods of appraisal are a good manifestation of the intensive attention given to the individual child in modern educational procedures.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE READING READINESS PROGRAM

After setting the general plan for a sound Arabic beginning reading program, we now proceed to discuss the activities, skills and equipment that should be included in the new reading readiness program.

We have seen that many Lebanese children are sent to school at age four, if not earlier, to do two years of kindergarten before grade one, and that in most of the cases reading is started right away with very little if any preparatory activities. The longer time spent in school before grade one, can be turned to the children's advantage with proper reorganization and redistribution of activities. This should allow for long range planning of prereading activities, hence more flexibility in administering the program. And on the other hand, should provide an atmosphere rich with stimulating activities which many Lebanese homes cannot yet do.

The necessity of starting the long process of educational reform in our country by improving the kindergarten and reading readiness program can never be overestimated. Monroe refers to the importance of the role that kindergarten plays in later reading and states that "studies of later reading achievements of kindergarten versus non kindergarten

children by the end of the first grade show that kindergartners as a group usually out strip non-kindergartners."<sup>1</sup>

Kindergarten one can start at four with the main aim of helping children make a healthy transition from home to school, to adjust to the new life and to learn to work happily in a group. This early year in school can indirectly but effectively contribute to reading readiness by developing the children's oral language, the various manual and sensory skills and his general background of experience. Kindergarten two, can further the program started in kindergarten one, with more attention given to those attitudes and skills most related to reading with games and activities at higher levels of difficulty. These activities would culminate in the transitional activities with books, printed words and charts that give a child a direct lead into reading."<sup>2</sup> The main aim of the activities at this stage is to stimulate awareness of the values of reading and whenever possible start actual reading with children who are ready and interested to learn.

Gradual but systematic and increasing attention must be given to bridge the gap between classical and colloquial Arabic. The language used, specially in kindergarten two, must turn into a good mixture of the two. The child must only be exposed to this kind of language whether orally or

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1. Monroe, Op. Cit. p.223.

2. Monroe, Ibid. p. 224.

through the early print. A foreign language must be postponed to Grade One where it is only orally introduced.

The two kindergarten programs are planned in close interrelation differing in most of the cases in degree rather than in kind. As space does not permit a detailed discussion of each program alone, we will discuss the two together under the general title "The Reading Readiness Program",

### The Reading Readiness Program

#### Helping the Child Adjust to School

Success in reading is closely interwoven with the child's emotional and social adjustment to school. This is highly dependent on whether or not his basic needs and the problems particular to this stage of development are taken care of.<sup>1</sup>

The first thing a kindergarten should do is to provide adequate space and equipment for the children to satisfy their basic need for movement and active play.. For climbing jumping sliding running bouncing and throwing balls etc..

The next thing to do is to provide the child with a healthy psychological atmosphere. This necessitates a cheerful homelike classroom arrangement, with enough space and good looking furniture where each child has a special place and equipment with his name or special sign on it. It also

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1. See Chapter One pp. 12-18.

necessitates a consistent warm and friendly attitude on the part of the teacher with an encouraging cheerful intonation of voice. Little ways like paying a timid child a compliment for her new dress, shaking hands with the children when they arrive or go home, introducing a new child and welcoming another who had been sick and absent etc.. help tremendously.

If mothering the child is one side of the coin, stimulating him through interesting work is the other. Occupation and purposeful activity, individually and in groups, difficult enough to challenge him and give him a sense of achievement and simple enough to enable him to succeed and enjoy the task is as imperative in kindergarten as it is in all stages of education. Care should be taken, at this stage, that the child's spontaneous ways of learning, are not thwarted but enriched and given full expression. A certain amount of routine and appropriate scheduling, to fit the child's nature, would help channel his activity and give him a sense of discipline and security that he needs.

In a period of transition, such as kindergarten, the child is apt to develop a certain degree of emotional tension. Many activities are provided to help the child release the tension and prevent it from accumulating. Make believe is one essential activity that enables the child to express his hidden feelings. A small room or corner partially screened with child sized furniture and various toys and dolls is a necessity in modern kindergarten. The child

must feel secure enough with the teacher to express his true feelings. Free artistic activities such as drawing, finger painting and modeling are good outlets for tension. Music has its power to soothe or excite. Marching, skipping and singing games would stimulate the withdrawn and release the nervous child.

Stories and poems have their value in releasing tension for "they give vicarious experiences in which the child relives emotionally the feelings of the characters. "Literature which is verbal expression is especially helpful. Not only does the child feel deeply the experiences of the characters, but he hears emotionally toned ideas expressed beautifully in language. He may gradually develop ability to verbalize his own feelings, and in verbal discussion obtain a greater intellectual clarification of his problems than is possible through any other means."<sup>1</sup> This brings to mind the sad deficiency in Arabic children's literature which we suffer from at the moment in Lebanon and the Arab world. This deficiency does not only affect the childrens' language development and interest in reading but, as we have just explained, deprives them of a valuable source of emotional growth.

A table full of interesting books for the children to experiment with, to look through their colourful pages, to watch and listen to the teacher reading aloud to them

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1. Monroe Op. Cit. p. 38.



and receiving their comments whole heartedly, promotes the child's adjustment to school and develops in him an emotional security with books that is crucial to reading readiness.

The teacher can follow more direct ways to help the child adjust to the new atmosphere. She can talk out with the children the problems of living and working together, how to do things in their time, how to take turns, how to take things back to their places, how to use the various equipment and material etc... "Time spent in the first few months helping children think through how to live together brings rich rewards later, when the teacher wishes to work with a reading group or to give help on some other special project assured that regular activities will continue as planned."<sup>1</sup>

#### Developing His Experiential Back-Ground

The vital role that first hand experience plays in developing the child's oral language and prepares him for a good start in reading was fully explained in chapter two. The two years in K.G. can develop and broaden the child's background of experience through:

##### Providing a Stimulating Classroom Environment

The classroom environment should stimulate new interests. Bulletin boards may carry various picture displays about any interesting subject for the youngsters, interesting pets,

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1. McKim Op. Cit. p. 78.

homes we live in, toys we like etc.. Window boxes with plants aquariums or a pet rabbit etc.. can encourage science interests. Building a store, a post office with blocks, displaying special objects the children bring to school on a little table, looking in picture books, doing all kinds of artistic work, even cooking something simple in class, can all be used to expand the child's knowledge and to stimulate his curiosity. A creative teacher can make use of various things that cost little money or practically nothing, e.g., remnants of cloth.. Discarded tin cans, old magazines etc..

A Wider Acquaintance with the Immediate Community.

"The immediate school neighborhood, whether it be the busy streets of a large city the farms of the rural district or the homes and gardens of the small town provides many opportunities for enriching experience background."<sup>1</sup> Such activities should be well planned, however, preceded, accompanied and followed with good questions, comments and follow-up activities.<sup>(i)</sup>

Tapping the Resources in Children's Homes.

As children come from different home backgrounds they can enrich one another's experience by telling about their particular resources and even bringing with them objects to show the class.<sup>(ii)</sup>

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1. Ibid. p. 80.

(i) See page 152.

(ii) See show and tell Activity, page 128.

### Making Appropriate Use of Audiovisual Aids.

Motion pictures, slides, exhibits, records, pictures, charts, class museums etc... can supplement experience with concrete objects, and contribute values of their own.

### Developing the Child's Oral Language Skills

One major function of the prereading program is to develop the child's oral communication skills. "Any experiences or training that develop a child's ability to understand and to use language prepares him for reading."<sup>1</sup> How to help the child express himself orally?? and How to help develop his ability to interpret what he hears? These are the two questions to be answered briefly now.

### Developing the Child's Ability to Express Himself

One of the first and major jobs that the teacher has to do in prereading years, is to constantly encourage the children to express themselves in small groups, in big groups, informally as well as in planned conversations, with her as well as with one another,

Sharing periods, where children are encouraged to exchange personal news, stories, or get objects and little possessions, even little pets, with them to class would not only broaden their experience but would improve their general output and expressiveness. This activity, called "show and tell", is a vital aspect of the program. Picture

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit. p. 178.

discussions poetry, rhymes, riddles and songs.. Any artistic activity that helps the child express ideas in one way or another, can help him indirectly to express himself in language. Dramatic play, as we have seen contributes more directly to help the child express himself in language.

"Children who find it difficult to express themselves before the group sometimes lose their self consciousness in these make believe situations."<sup>1</sup> Playing house or store, or bus adds to their knowledge and social experience as it adds to their language output. "Children can learn much about working and playing cooperatively, about taking turns and about explaining ideas to others as the dramatic play progresses."<sup>2</sup>

Dramatic activities contribute best to language output and expression when they are spontaneous and informal. A teacher can utilize familiar stories in developing various dramatizations. "Teacher and children talk over the story in order to become familiar with the characters and the plot.. then the children take turns acting the various parts.. At times the teacher or a narrator chosen by the group tells the story while the characters act the parts in pantomime., at others the characters speak for themselves expressing the general idea of the story in their own words. Each time the story is dramatized the conversation and the action

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1. Mckim Op. Cit. p. 87.

2. Ibid. p. 87.

are likely to be somewhat different - The aim is not a polished performance it is to enjoy making a favourite story come to life"<sup>1</sup>. Hand puppets can be used too.

#### Developing Sentence Structure

As the child takes part in the various oral language activities, he utilizes sentences and language patterns. Speech reveals these sentences and patterns as units of thought. The teacher should see to it that a child completes his thoughts or sentences. This is best done by stimulating him through encouraging questions and not by telling him directly what to say. A game like "Finish it" is also helpful. As the child describes class situations, discusses things and plays the various language games, the teacher can help him use the correct plural forms, tenses and prepositions etc..<sup>2</sup>

#### Growth in Vocabulary

When telling a story, the teacher must help the child feel the the individuality of a word and not blend the final sound of one word with the initial of another. Discussing the meanings of words and classifying them into groups can stimulate the awareness that they are separate units.<sup>(i)</sup>

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1. Ibid. p. 87.

2. For more details see Monroe Op. Cit. pp. 100.

(i) Ibid. pp. 104-107.

### Developing the Qualities of Speech

The best way of improving the children's quality of speech is by capitalizing on their tendency to imitate the teacher's speech. The teacher's enunciation and pronunciation must be clear. Special practice in form of rhymes and poems can be given to difficult sounds such as ط ق ث س ن  
A teacher should constantly encourage correct speech in all language activities. Small group discussions are better for children who stammer or stutter. (1)

### The Colloquial - Classical Question

All through the above and specially in the activities directed at developing and improving vocabulary, sentence structure, good pronunciation and enunciation, there should be an increasing tendency to bring the two language together. Right from the beginning the teacher must use a moderate dialect<sup>(i)</sup> avoiding the deviation of the local dialect. Gradually names of objects, animals, persons pronouns, prepositions, adjectives, are given in classical.

Objects in the room such as,

طاولة ، محفظة ، كتاب

Names of animals like

دجاجة ، بطة ، بقرة

Building Terms

غرفة ، شباك ، ملعب

Toys

قطار ، سيارة ، لعبة

Occupations

طبيب ، شرطي ، ساعي بريد ، إطفائي

etc..etc..etc..

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1. Ibid. pp. 104-107.

(i) See p. 108.

All these words and many others can be used with the classical dialect.. children will soon get used to them and use them in their daily talk.

Second: Developing the Child's Interpretative Skills.

At the prereading level, pictures and life experiences take the place of the printed text, but the thinking processes of interpretation are much the same as will be used later when the child actually reads.<sup>1</sup>

The chief interpretative skills and thinking processes that should be stimulated at the prereading level and that differ more in degree than in kind from those the child needs at the beginning reading level are:

Using and Creating Sensory Images in Relation to the Story Incidents...

Identifying the Characters and Actions in the Story.

Inferring Motives Feelings and Conversation of the Characters...

= Organizing the New ideas for the purpose of remembering them.

Integrating the New experiences with past ones through the process of reaction to and evaluation of ideas.<sup>2</sup>

The teacher can take care of all these thinking processes, in planning out with the children or in follow-up discussions of the various activities that they take part in.. in interpreting pictures, stories, poems, rhymes dramatizations etc..

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1. Monroe, Op. Cit. p. 174.

2. For a detailed discussion of the development of these various skills, see Monroe - Growing Into Reading, Chapter Seven, pp. 175-205.

..... Try to hear again in your mind the sound of the running river ..... the neighing of the horse.....

..... Close your eyes and try to imagine little Leila's house... Try to remember what you saw in the garden etc...

What do you think happens next?? Can you see in your mind Sami walking on the village road??

Who did this .... or Do you think baby Nana can do such a thing.... ??

Why was Fadi so happy at the end of the story? What would you feel if you were in his place??

What would you have done if you were in Hala's place... Can you think of a better way for her to have acted when she lost her little purse? Do you think this is a true story...

Thought provoking questions of all kinds rising naturally out of telling and retelling stories and true incidents.. planning and discussing activities etc... Contribute tremendously to the child's interpretative powers and to his abilities to reason as he communicates with others.

Three lines of development should constantly reinforce the child's growing interpretative powers.

1. A growing experiential background that enables the child to bring to mind relevant and rich associations as he interprets words....

2. A growing ability to express himself orally ... to verbalize thought, to utilize spoken symbols, which would



develop into effective interpretation of printed symbols.

3. A growing ability to give and maintain attention...

The teacher has to adjust the program to the distractibility of the four, five and six year olds and at the same time, foster growth, in attentiveness without pressure. This can be done through wise scheduling, variety in activities attractive equipment, and pictures, a relaxed happy relation with the teacher, praise and explanation of the value of paying attention, and good example of attentiveness by the teacher herself.

Developing the Children's Auditory Discriminations

In the two kindergarten years and extending through grade one, the children must be provided with a rich background of enjoyable musical activities, a variety of experiences and games with sounds and voices, rhymes, jingles, simple poetry and songs that would help the child develop the ability to listen with discrimination and interest. These activities that are part and parcel of the modern kindergarten daily program, bring to mind again, the sad deficiency, in the Arab children's "literature" and "music", that we suffer from at present.

In her book "Growing into Reading", M. Monroe recommends specific games and exercises to drill children in the various aspects of their auditory skills.<sup>1</sup> She starts by developing the childrens' ability to discriminate, compare

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1. M. Monroe Op. Cit. Chapter 5 pp. 118-139.

and contrast nonvocal sounds, then proceeds to vocal sounds, in "pitch, intensity, duration, and sequence," then gross to finer word discriminations. Many of her suggestions can be adapted profitably by the Lebanese kindergarten. Two warnings should however be given in this direction:

First: Avoid the tendency to formalize these exercises and games remembering constantly that most of the auditory training at this level must grow incidentally to spontaneous and enjoyable child-like activities. Artificial drills should not be used frequently...

Second: Avoid the tendency to impose the various discriminations on the child... Always encourage the children's own efforts.. The readiness program would defeat its purpose if it falls back again to the same faults of the traditional education namely doing things for the child.

Here are some suggestions of games and exercises that help develop the children's auditory discriminations..

"Do what the Music Tells you"

"Hide the Thimble"<sup>(i)</sup>

"Rhythm band"

Rhythmical games of all kinds....

Exercises in identifying the instrument or sound or voice.. studying "animal sounds.. sounds people make..

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(i) An object is hidden and one child is asked to find it as he follows the music his friends make.. the higher it gets the nearer he is to the object.

everyday and strange sounds, noisy sounds and quiet sounds and even their own voices".

Imitation games and various dramatizations

### Developing the Visual Readiness to Read

In chapter one, it was shown that beginners need to make many new visual adjustments in their early attempts to read. The prereading program should provide the child with a rich variety of experiences that can develop his visual skills and prepare him for an effective start in reading.

The first concern of the teacher is to develop in the child "Eye Control at Reading Distance. Manual activities offered in both kindergartens can contribute a lot. "All the many preschool activities that require hand-and-eye coordination at near vision are especially valuable in developing readiness for the close eyework of reading."<sup>1</sup>

Activities like drawing.. sewing.. coloring. Cutting out pictures playing with plasticine or clay etc... all help develop the eye-hand coordination needed.. As the child participates in these activities he is encouraged to use visual terms that he would be using later when he is required to do finer visual discriminations and word analysis comments such as, which color, what shape - like a ball, an egg.. up, down, taller, smaller square, rectangle, circle etc...

Counting objects in a row helps children develop eye-

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1. Ibid. p. 147.

hand coordinations. As the hand points at the various pictures in picture books or magazines, the child is able to progress toward the kind of eye control needed in reading.

Experience with picture stories in sequence has its vital effect in learning to direct and control visual attention. Pictures following the right to left direction can be included in the reading readiness work book and can be of special value to our Lebanese children who are exposed to a foreign language with opposite direction. Left-to-right, early in school. It is the opinion of the writer that not until the child has developed well the habit of proceeding from right to left should the program include a foreign language with left-to-right orientation.

A rich experience with pictures can never be over-estimated in developing the child's visual discriminations. Cutting out and mounting pictures informal discussion of pictures picture-sorting games... comparing, matching, contrasting pictures ... all help develop habits of visual scrutiny. Reading Readiness work books should be full of interesting exercises with pictures.

Developing good habits of visual scrutiny at the prereading level is of special value in preparing for Arabic reading that entails fine discriminations of the details in the Arabic writing system. Many ideas can be learnt from Monroe's book, "Growing into reading," remembering always to keep the exercises followed in good perspective avoiding artificiality and premature imposing of skills on the children.

### Developing Interest in Learning to Read

K.G. One, as described above marks the initiation of a rich program of first hand experiences, language development, manual, visual auditory and interpretative experiences.

K.G. Two, continues to develop all the above bringing the child at the same time into closer and increasing contact with print. K.G. two, functions therefore as a period of transition from the more prereading activities to actual beginning reading in grade one.

The aim of the transitory activities in K.G. 2 is to enable the child to understand the relationship between printed and spoken language. Exercises and activities such as the following help the child develop this understanding.

#### Book Titles Help To Show The Relationship

The teacher asks a child to get her the book "Three Little Goats", the teacher points to the title and lets the children guess what it could be.. then asks which is "three" which is "little" which is "goats". The aim is not to teach the children how to read the words but to show the point-by-point correspondence of one printed word to one spoken word. This activity can also orient the children to the right to left direction and develop their awareness that when they learn to read book titles they will not need pictures on the cover to know what the book is about.

### Making Individual Books

Making a book of his own helps a child to understand that printed language is a permanent record of experience, what books are and why we have them.

After hearing from the children various comments about a certain experience, the teacher invites them to record some of the nice things they said and heard. These she writes on the chalkboard, keeping as close as possible to the children's words and style.

Then the teacher asks the children to draw good pictures to go with the stories. Stories are read and reread several times again for the purpose of enjoying reading and sensing its values and not for that of learning how to read.

The teacher can help each child make his own individual book instead of just a copy of the text created by the group. After a child draws a picture the teacher sits by him and in two minutes prints two or three lines of his own story under his picture.

### Making a "Big Book"

Children make large pictures building on the most worthy event in class. Then they evaluate the pictures and choose the best one to be pasted at the top of a big sheet of cardboard. The teacher prints the story under the picture and puts it on the easle for discussion. A big book is made out of various similar pictures.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Other media of introducing print to children, are discussed under "the reading materials" page 197.

### Developing the Meaning of the Child's Own Name <sup>1</sup>

One of the child's earliest possessions in K.G. should be his own name printed on a card. Teacher should help child recognize his name by carefully observing its significant features. Letters in one's name are recognized earlier than any other letters. Casual mention of the letter names, in a child's name as a teacher points to it can be helpful.

Various games can be used by the teacher to help the child associate meaning and sound with his own name.

While the children are looking at their name cards, the teacher asks them to imagine their mothers calling them.

The teacher calls three children and ask the class to look at their name cards compare them and discuss size shape in association with sound.

To help the child associate meaning with his printed name, the teacher asks the child to think about himself as he looks at his name card. Who are you Bob? And the teacher tells a brief discription of Bob's age, address interests etc.. and encourages Bob and the children to think of all this as they look at the printed name Bob. This develops in the children the habit of thinking of the various meanings and associations of any word that they look at.

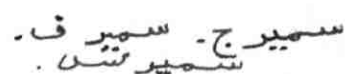
### Using Name Cards and Directions Purposefully For Roll-Call <sup>2</sup>

A large loose leaf note book with a child's name printed on each. Ask each child to stand when he sees his name.

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1. Ibid. pp. 214-216.

2. Ibid. pp. 216-217.

Children match their own name cards with names in the big note book at first. The initial letter of the child's family name can be added to discriminate among three Samir in class,  has also incidental values for it helps the child learn letters and letter name purposefully.

#### For Assignment of Duties

In the elaborate and modern classroom we are dreaming of, children are asked to do little daily duties. Directions for the duties may be printed on the bulletin board with illustrative pictures. "Feed the Fish.." Water the plants etc.. Children would eagerly watch for their names to appear.

Card names can be used in various ways. Shuffling the cards and picking one to see who is next, is one example.

#### Reading Readiness Equipment and Materials

One of the main reasons, why most of the Lebanese kindergarten children are forced into formal reading lessons before they are ready, is lack of basic equipment materials and guide books needed for planning sound kindergarten and reading readiness programs. Mrs. Juanita Soghikian wrote an interesting study about the reading readiness basic materials for Armenian kindergartens.<sup>1</sup> As the Armenians meant in the study were those living in Lebanon and Syria, most of what

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1. Juanita Soghikian "A Guide Book for the preparation and Use of Reading Readiness Materials For Armenian Kindergartens, And Report as to Approximate Costs, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Beirut, 1961.



was recommended in the study is applicable to Lebanese children and kindergartens. The most important immediate needs that she recommended are: A reading-readiness picture work book.

A series of simple story books.

A well illustrated attractive poem book.

A well illustrated music book.

A Beginning reader's dictionary.

A picture file.<sup>1</sup>

#### A Reading Readiness Picture Work Book

There is a controversy at present about whether or not reading readiness books should be used. It is the personal opinion of the writer that Arabic reading readiness books should be prepared and accompanied by teachers' guide books, that give detailed instructions of how to use each page of the workbook with suggestions for additional activities to enrich and supplement the lesson. These books, organized in a sequence from easy to difficult, should then be widely distributed among Lebanese kindergartens aiming at a unified program of pre-reading activities. They serve as an inservice training aid for all Lebanese kindergarten teachers. Their availability will help wean the Lebanese teacher from using the old readers with four and five years old (if not three). They will also help parents and principals - brought up in

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1. Ibid. see page 6.

a highly text book centered system of instruction - to accept the new ideas.

The recommendations given by Mrs. Soghikian in preparing Armenian workbooks can be adapted with little change and the substitution of the word, Arabic - Lebanese instead of Armenian. She first emphasizes the fact that the writer of the workbook should consult with kindergarten teachers in order "to incorporate the best of the existing practices as they are found. The workbook should not be a mere copy of any one western prereading book but a new book with illustrations using the Lebanese Near East environment and objects seen in here. With Lebanese children portrayed."<sup>1</sup> She also recommends using more pre-writing exercises than are present in American pre-reading workbooks,

As for the organization of lesson plans in the workbook, "Mrs. Soghikian suggests dividing it up to four or six main centers of valuable interest to children "so that the other fields of the kindergarten curriculum such as music, art, health, simple nature study, or social learning about the environment at home, in school and in the city and country can be coordinated with the pre-reading program."<sup>2</sup>

The Centers of Interests May be:

- Work and play at home - family life includes babies, brothers and sisters, grand parents; preparing food cleaning, preparing for the summer (with such distinctly Middle East

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1. Ibid. p. 9.

2. Ibid.

habits as cleaning and putting away window drapes and rugs as is not practiced in the West) preparing for special feast days, visits to the mountains on Sundays or in Summer etc.

2 - The seasons: Fall, winter, spring, summer divided for study at the appropriate times (include planting and plant life in the spring baby animals, rain and value of rain and sunshine, etc..)

3 - Animal Life: The study can be divided into pets, farms animals, zoo and wild animals birds and fish.

4 - Transportation: The-way-we ride and carry things is of major interest to every child. We may include boats, the port of Beirut, airplanes and the Beirut airport, trains... safety precautions in crossing streets and getting on and off busses or cars. Other means of transport are donkeys, camels, kerosene carts, services, cars, porters and trucks on the main highways to Tripoli, Damascus and Sidon.

5 - Workers of our environment may be more a subject of interest and value to the 5 to 6 and 6 to 7 year old group, but may be included here as part of the subject of kindergarten curriculum. This would include developing understandings about bakeries, grocery shops, building workers, nurses, doctors, teachers, farmers pottery workers, workers in transportation, the fire department, etc. and the contributions each makes to our lives. Some of the picture stories in the workbooks should provide a means of opening discussions

and expanding interest and knowledge of these areas of the child's environment."<sup>1</sup>

The Types of Activities and Skills to be  
Included in the Workbook.

Pictures to be used for interpretation and narration..

Learning to handle a book...

Learning right to left front to back directions

Pages to develop the ability to coordinate eye and hand movements.

Pages to practice discriminating likenesses and differences

Pages to learn various terminology necessary to follow  
the teacher's directions.

Exercises to test the child's ability to hear and  
articulate certain consonant sounds.

Pages of pictures to develop the ability to make  
generalizations.

Pages of pictures to develop the ability to classify  
objects.

Pages to develop the ability to recognise rhyming words.

Pages to promote ability to scrutinize details<sup>2</sup>.

The last pages of the book may have simple pictures with a  
word or name printed in large print..

Related activities to all these pages should be given  
in the teachers direction book to go with each lesson.

Children who show any special difficulties in the workbook

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1. Ibid. pp. 9-10.

2. See p. 11.

could be given additional exercises on the chalkboard, on extra teacher-made work sheets, or through other reading readiness aids, such as some special games available in Beirut."<sup>1</sup>

#### A Series of Simple Story Books

The Lebanese library suffers badly of lack of Arabic story books fit for children ages 3-6. Children of these age groups are deprived of the many values that story books can offer to them not only that of entertainment but as vital aids in developing the child's personality, in expanding his interests and understandings of the world around him and serving as reading readiness materials.

In writing suggestions for the future story writers for the ages 3-6, Mrs. Soghikian insists that they be of the "Here and Now". She is against using subjects distant in time or interest from the children concerned. Reference to the themes that she recommends for these stories will be made again in part four of this chapter when discussing "Preparing Readers". The illustrations in these books should be big and clear and should carry and explain most of the story, a brief text in large clear print appropriate to the child's understanding.

#### A Well Illustrated Attractive Poem Book

Poems with subject and vocabulary appealing to 3-6

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1. Ibid.

Lebanese children should be collected and written.

D. A well Illustrated Music book, simple Lebanese Folktunes, new tunes, and well known international tunes fit for kindergarten should be compiled.

E. A beginning reader's dictionary. To be used both in the kindergarten and beginning reading stages. It should contain around 300 Arabic most-used nouns with simple interesting definitions and pictures to illustrate the words.

F. A Picture File

Pictures of interest to children should be collected and arranged alphabetically in cardboard boxes, into a file, according to subject, birds, foods, family, plants, seasons<sup>1</sup> sea etc.

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1. Ibid pages 6 & 7

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## BEGINNING READING ACTIVITIES

Children entering grade one, at six years of age, would inevitably differ in their readiness to learn reading. Some may have started already, some are farther along in the preparatory stages., a third group may be neither advanced nor slow and may be able to start reading right away.

Taking the children from where they are the teacher continues to develop the experiences, skills and interests started in the preceeding years, introducing at the same time all the basic skills, attitudes and habits needed for independent and enjoyable reading.

The controversies concerning the sequence to be followed in teaching beginners how to read, namely, the "whole word or parts" question was refered to under "an eclectic method."<sup>(i)</sup> A language - related experience - centered method is recommended where the child is consistently presented with meaningful total ideas or wholes and where the best of all practices is capitalized upon. This necessitates modification of old concepts and a reorganization of the practices now applied in our schools.

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(i) See pp. 103-105.

A Recommended Sequence of Steps For  
Beginning Arabic Reading

Step 1 - The child is asked to respond to total ideas - words, phrases or sentences - that represent on-going experiences and familiar language patterns. These may take the form of the children's own names, notices, captions, short bulletins and class records or scrap books.<sup>1</sup> The teacher must capitalize on the children's desire "to tell" and to "find out" about little happenings in their own world. The children's own ideas and more or less their own language expressions make the most interesting and motivating initial reading content.

Step 2 - Gradually the children are asked to concentrate on separate words. They are helped through checks and drills, to use clues from the context, and clues from the general configuration of the words to store the new words in mind. As they are encouraged to "talk naturally, to the print", they are at the same time encouraged to read to themselves, silent look and think. "In this case the pupil is instructed not to make audible oral response". Show the part that tells what the pumpkin looked like, but without naming the words aloud. This is the essence of reading for meaning."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit. p. 196.

2. Ibid. p. 197.



Step 3 - As soon as children start discovering for themselves recurring sounds in words, phonetic analysis is started and sounds are then introduced gradually and slowly as the child continues growing in his reading experiences.

Learning and working with the alphabet - the letter names, may accompany any of these steps or may even be well started in the reading readiness program.

Step 4 - When the child is ready to generalize about word structures and gramatical variants, structural analysis is started but with very few elements at the grade one level.

The question is now how to start developing these various reading skills, attitudes and habits as we present the children with meaningful reading experiences.

#### Developing Word Perception Skills.

Word perception or the ability to attach sound and meaning to the written symbols that stand for spoken words, is the indispensable first step in interpreting<sup>print</sup>.<sup>1</sup> Children must grow continuously in their word recognition ability if they are to enjoy their reading and learn through it. This takes systematic continuous training extending from the reading readiness program, until the child masters all the word perception techniques necessary for independent and intelligent reading.

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1. William S. Gray et.al. Developing Children's Word Perception Power, (Chicago: Scott Foresman and Co. 1965) p.3.

Associating Meanings With Words and Sentences

Two basic factors are needed to enable the child to associate meaning with the words and sentences that he is asked to read. First, familiarity with the language that he reads, Second, interest in the content.

Starting informally, as was mentioned above, with materials, developed naturally from the children's conversations and daily experiences and prepared by both teacher and children, the children can begin reading "right off". They are encouraged to talk to the print, naming the words in short easy sentences, in a "conversational" tone. This "Look and Say", method is not only simpler and more interesting to the children but it also enables them to practise all the skills they would use as mature readers from the very start.<sup>1</sup> Reading habits are best established when the pupil starts out by responding like an actual reader, just as in learning to skate he starts out by trying to perform like a real skater, not by putting on one skate and learning to use that one, then the second skate, then both feet together."<sup>2</sup>

The skills aimed at, at this particular stage are however, the ability to perceive a continuity between the language talked and print, the ability to associate meaning

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1. Hildreth, Op.Cit, p. 194

2. Ibid. p. 184

and purpose with words and sentences, to perceive that one written word stands for one spoken word and that a sentence is a unit of meaning made up of separate words. In discussing an experience record of a visit to the grocer, questions such as the following can be asked, to center the child's attention on what the words say and on the fun of finding out:

Where is the line that tells us where we went??

Which sentence tells us what the grocer said?

What does this big word say?

Who said this little sentence?

No intensive effort should be made at this stage for every child to recognize every word, "For learning words like learning names and faces comes gradually as a result of cumulative experience."<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say that re-reading and a variety of related activities, discussions or dramatizations, preceding and following the reading activity, play a vital role at this early stage. Meaningful repetition gives the child a feeling of success as it confirms habits and skills.

#### Developing Sight Words.

Gradually the child starts building up a basic stock of sight words which he learns to recognize as wholes. Mastery

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1. Ibid. p. 196.

of certain basic sight words is imperative for the child's early success in reading. Recognizing words at sight is also important all through the reading program. "The development of an ever increasing body of sight words remains an important task throughout primary grades."<sup>1</sup> For they serve as a necessary foundation on which other word attack skills are built. "Sight words are the 'known' with which teachers work to help pupils learn techniques that will aid them in attacking 'unknown' words independently."<sup>2</sup>

The main skills to be developed at this stage are: the children's ability to recognize words through the help of context clues and word form clues. At first, as is the case in other reading skills, learning takes place incidentally as a result of interesting lessons, and the teacher's casual comments and questions. Gradually instruction in techniques becomes more direct and systematic.

It should be emphasized at the outset that in all the various practices to be given. We must encourage the children's own efforts. "Never give more help than needed or help ahead of the time it is needed."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Gray, On Their Own in Reading, Op. Cit. p. 44.

2. Gray et.al. Developing Children's Word Perception Power. Op. Cit. p.

3. Hildreth Op. Cit. p. 223.

New words should be introduced slowly, used in a variety of media and repeated frequently. When a series of readers are used, the teacher should not take up the next reader before making sure that the children have mastered the basic words in the first.

#### Developing the Child's Ability to Use Context Clues.

A meaningful setting of language or picture is a basic prerequisite in developing the child's ability to infer the sound and meaning of a new word from the context. It is equally necessary for developing all other word recognition skills. "For regardless of the method a child uses to derive the sound and meaning of a new word he must always check to see if the word he derives "makes sense" in the sentence"<sup>1</sup>

#### A Meaningful Language Setting Necessitates

First: Careful choice of vocabulary, sentence patterns and expressions. In oral language activities, as well as in reading and writing, the children should only be exposed to a language they use frequently.

Second: Careful distribution of new words among surrounding familiar words helps the child to infer their meaning.

Third: Variety of contextual setting lest the children memorize the whole sentence and fail to recognize separate words.

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1. Gray - On Their Own in Reading Op. Cit. p. 56.

Fourth: Repetition. Frequency plays a vital role in developing accurate and instant recognition of words regardless of the word perception method that may be used.

Fifth: Good choice of pictures that attract the children and they can understand. Pictures can be used in a variety of ways as we shall see presently. They can help a lot all processes of association, inference and recognition of words.

Sixth: Last but not least is the element of interest in the reading content. "Skill in the use of context clues becomes functional in the total reading act only if there is the compelling motive of personal interest - hence a demand for meaning"<sup>1</sup>.

The following are some suggestions stated briefly on how to develop the child's ability to use context clues in recognizing or inferring words:

Utilizing Oral Discussion.- A new word should always be introduced in a vivid context of oral discussion. As the teacher pronounces the word she writes it on the chalkboard, so the child is able to associate sound and meaning with the printed word.

Utilizing the Story as a Context.- As the teacher tells a story she can flash word cards, of certain vocabulary in

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1. Ibid.

the story, that she wishes the children to learn.

As she reads the story aloud the teacher should always encourage the children to infer the new word for themselves. On reaching a new word she may ask the child to read on to identify the word form from the total context. Skillful questioning of all kinds fosters the habit of inferring words and anticipating meanings.

Utilizing Pictures and Illustrations.- The teacher may help the child recognize words through pictorial clues. As she discusses pictures in books, on charts, in illustrated dictionaries, etc... She helps him associate words with picture and infer new words for himself.

Various kinds of "picture-word device"<sup>1</sup> can be prepared by the teacher and children to learn words in pictorial contexts. A large chart of the commonest words or of words being studied with pictures is one idea. Making their own picture dictionary or picture word cards is another.

The teacher may keep a collection of large envelopes in a file-box, each one containing word cards belonging in a different category, e.g. toy words, fruit words, color names, how-we-feel words, sound words, time words and so on. From time to time a set of words is taken out and dramatized or explained...<sup>2</sup>

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1. Hildreth Op. Cit. p. 237

2. Ibid.

Utilizing Workbooks.- The workbook accompanying the reader that a child is reading should provide him with exercises where he is asked to infer the meaning from a pictured context or from a combination of picture and verbal context:

The picture of Jane	Jane said, "look, Dick, look.
on the swing and Dick	This is _____."
standing by looking at	run fun
her	...

The picture of father	"Look, Sally," said father.
pointing to a flying	"Look _____."
aeroplane while Sally	is up <sup>1</sup>
is playing with the	...
grass.	

Utilizing Word Cards.- The teacher can place on the chalk ledge several word cards for want, see, for, go, look. She then writes the sentence Dick and Jane \_\_\_\_\_ something and asks "which word I left out?" When someone answers "want" or see ask him to find that word on the chalk ledge and show where it belongs in the sentence. Is there another word that would fit in this sentence"<sup>2</sup> etc..... Many

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1. William S. Gray et.al. Think-and-Do Book to accompany The New Fun with Dick and Jane. (Chicago: Scott Foresman and Co. 1956) p. 2.

2. Gray et. al. Developing Children's word perception Powers. Op. Cit. pp. 18-19.



similar exercises utilizing cards and sentence completions can be used to strengthen the ability to perceive a sentence as a meaning unit, as well as promote the ability to use context clues as an aid in word recognition<sup>1</sup>.

#### Developing Ability to Use Word Form Clues.

In identifying words, specially in the beginning stages of reading the child relies rather heavily on word form clues, the length, the general appearance and any special distinguishing characteristics. Starting with kindergarten the child must be given various exercises to develop careful visual scrutiny. In grade one systematic as well as incidental guidance should be given to the child in discriminating between words, comparing, contrasting, observing visual details and developing a visual memory. Habits of visual scrutiny and a good visual memory should be developed at all levels for they become a useful aid in attacking new words through phonetic or structural analysis.

Various games with charts and cards can be used in class to help the child discriminate among words. "Duplicate copies of experience charts are cut up for use in drill on words, phrases and separate sentences. Chart sentences, words and phrases are shuffled and the pupil must put them back in order. Word recognition games are played with a duplicate set of the chart words."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Hildreth Op. Cit. p. 234.

All kinds of word discussion which the teacher may use with difficult or confusing words serve to focus the child's attention on their forms.

Careful observation of detail in right to left serial order and clear visual imagery are specially essential to memory of Arabic word forms. Arabic words, as was discussed above, need careful scrutiny to discriminate among the many small and similar letters with the many little details added on top or below the letters. The teacher can write the word شوف on the chalkboard and as she is writing it she can point to the letter ش then و then ف saying this is the way it begins..this is the middle part this is the end.. She then asks the children to look at it carefully and then to close their eyes. She asks them if they can see the word look just the way it is on the chalkboard, if they can see the beginning, the middle.. the end.. The same procedure is repeated with another word. Then the children are asked to imagine the two words as the teacher pronounces them slowly.. The words are then erased and the teacher writes ش and asks the children in which word they saw it. When they answer correctly the teacher adds the remaining letters. Then repeats with the other word. Next the teacher writes the middle part و asks in what word they saw this letter and then completes the word. She continues with various combinations of letters <sup>1</sup>.

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1. Gray et. al. Developing Children's Word Perception  
Power. Op. Cit. p. 20.

Various games can be used to help the child remember, compare and contrast the length, general configuration beginnings and endings of words. "Close your eyes and think how the word big looks..." Is it long or short?? Does it begin like this? or end like that??<sup>1</sup>

Exercises in work books or prepared by the teacher combine word form clues with context clues. Exercises that require filling in sentences with words on the basis of meaning clues and one visual clue can be given.<sup>2</sup>

عند نادي أر ..... صغير .  
ركب سمير سيد ..... سودا .

Other exercises may combine word form with pictorial context.

Picture of a house بيت Picture of a tree شجرة  
بيت زيت شمس  
بيت بنت شجرة

All drill on separate words must be purposeful and supplied with interesting discussion. All individual words must be met first in meaningful context frequently enough to make them familiar to the child before they are studied out of context.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid. pp. 20-21.

2. Gray, On Their Own in Reading Op. Cit. p. 59.

3. Hildreth, Op. Cit. p. 237.

### Phonetic Analysis

As the child's reading grows, the need for independent attack on new words through phonetic and structural analysis grows too. "Phonetic analysis enables children to unlock many words by associating sounds with appropriate letter symbols and blending the series of sounds into a word whole"<sup>1</sup>.

Phonetic analysis demands the ability to identify separate "sounds within words for clues of pronunciation as the words are met in running text".<sup>2</sup> With this concept in mind it is recommended that phonetic elements should always be trained and sounded out in meaningful whole words. "Familiar sight words can be used to demonstrate phonetic analysis without detracting from word meanings or word wholes as perceptual units".<sup>3</sup> This is more in line with the nature of perception discussed in chapter two<sup>(i)</sup>. As the child reads interesting material, he does not perceive letters and sounds scattered over the pages, for these are always "embedded within the framework of actual words."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Gray et. al. Developing Children's Word Perception  
Power Op. Cit. p. 7.

2. Hildreth Op. Cit. p. 337.

3. Ibid.

(i) See pp. 43-45.

4. Ibid.

### Advantages of Whole Word Sounding <sup>1</sup>

1. The children are intrinsically more motivated in analysing words that are of interest to them because their main interest is in the meanings of words.

2. Whole word sounding encourages self-discovery of recurring sounds in new words by the children.

3. As the word is pronounced as a whole, piece-meal-spelling-like sounding is avoided and the child faces no problems in blending the various sounds in a word.

4. Whole word sounding provides for maximum practice in reading through a word from right to left.

5. Whole word sounding contributes to effective learning of more and more words.

### When Should Phonetic Analysis be Started?

As soon as the children start themselves discovering phonetic similarities among the various words they have learnt, they are considered ready to begin learning phonetic analysis skills. Phonics, as we have seen, should and can be prepared for during the reading readiness year, through the audiovisual games and exercises given to the child. In grade one, all drills in word recognition whether by context clues or word form clues prepare indirectly for the development of phonetic skills. Through the process of reading aloud children store up impressions of the connection between sight and sound in familiar words. Pronouncing words is the basis of sounding.

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1. Ibid.

The Arabic language with its highly consistent vowel and consonant systems lends itself easily to phonetic analysis. Yet, ability in phonics should grow gradually and should never be imposed on the child or given ready made by the teacher or texts as is the case in our schools.

A Suggested Sequence in Introducing the Arabic Phonetic Elements.

First. After the children have learnt to recognize a substantial number of common words as wholes and as they start to discover for themselves recurring sounds in these words we can start teaching them a certain number of initial consonants that are commonest in the commonest words they have learnt in charts, stories and reader selections.

Second. Always pronouncing the whole word as elements are sounded, the children learn to identify the same consonants in the middle of words and at the end. Initial consonants are taught in conjunction with the vowels that follow them. Silent consonants in the middle or end of words are taught in connection with the vowels that proceed them. This avoids blending and pronunciation difficulties.

كَيَاب      كَلْبَة

The largest pronounceable element is used to save time and effort.

Third. Again using whole word sounding with as natural blending and pronunciation as possible, the long

vowel "l" aa may be discovered by the child and then practised in a variety of common words with the consonants already studied, until the child learns to identify it easily in various positions in new words.

Fourth. Another number of consonants are added following the child's immediate needs.

Fifth. The long vowel "o" may be discovered and practised in whole words without exaggeration in pronunciation.

Sixth. More consonants practised at the initial middle or end..

Seventh. The third long vowel "e" "ee" is given blended with any of the consonants available in whole words.

Eighth. Short vowels by that time would have been used frequently enough for the child to notice or discover. They are introduced one at a time  $\leq \quad \underline{\quad}$  with a lot of practice given for each.. Natural blending and pronunciation of whole words is very vital in enabling the child to discriminate among the short and long vowels. Elongating long vowels or diminishing the value of the short ones is a kind of "crutch" that the children may learn to depend too much upon.

Ninth. Initial s is given with the three vowels  $\acute{e} \acute{i} \acute{u}$ , one at a time with a lot of practice given to each. This serves at the same time as a good review to the three short vowels.

Tenth. Syllabication grows gradually and naturally with the long vowels and with blends of a voweled letter and a silent letter following. Again it should not be exaggerated

سا مي	اط فا ئي
تعا لي	شو في
لعة	شر طي

Eleventh. <sup>و</sup> - Or the sign given for double letters is learnt incidentally as the words are pronounced. After learning many words that include <sup>و</sup> the teacher would draw the children's attention to it.

#### Some Advice to Keep in Mind In Teaching Phonetic Analysis

1- Phonetic analysis takes several years to mature. Beginning with early reading lessons, our schools should give more systematic training, functional and interesting exercises, in sounding at all primary levels, specially the first three years beyond the present "kindergartens".

2- Seeing the sounds repeated in various contexts is vital for their instantaneous recognition. "The young reader builds a phonics bank, an array of commonly recurring sounds that he recognizes within words comparable to the word bank - the stock of words he recognizes at sight."<sup>i</sup>

3- Youngsters should be always encouraged to try out for themselves. Mistakes should be considered as good attempts. The teacher should not expect perfect reponses

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(i) See p. 40.



too soon, neither should she anticipate difficulties far in advance and teach children phonetic sounds that they would only need later on.

4- Sounding in spelling is a reverse process than that of whole - word, reading - through sounding. Spelling follows a synthetic line of thought where the child thinks of the letter sounds and then puts them together to form words. Both processes if used wisely will reinforce one another.

Spelling is a distinct aid to reading because it concentrates the pupil's attention on word form, gives practice in word analysis, pronunciation and syllabication and gives training in word building.<sup>1</sup> To work on the same words simultaneously in spelling writing and reading is highly advisable.

Care should be taken however, not to develop in the child the habit of spelling out words in reading. Quick exposure of words through flash cards is one good way of breaking such a habit. The use of plenty of easy story material with few word difficulties is very helpful.

5- As important as the skill of sounding in attacking new words is, the aim will be towards as little use of it as possible. Partial sounding checked by other clues to word recognition is encouraged right from the beginning. The ability to do this, indicates that a child is reading

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1. Hildreth Op. Cit. pp. 148-133.

intelligently and this saves him errors and makes for more fluent interpretation. The role that easy narrative material plays can never be overestimated.

#### Samples of Phonetic Exercises and Drills.

Hildreth recommends highly the use of exercises and materials prepared by the teacher and children themselves.

Children may start lists of similar sounding words adding to them as new words come.

سيارة	دار	سير
طيارة	جار	صغير
عمارة	فار	كبير
ختيارة	طار	كثير

They enjoy lining up word cards according to the same initial or final sound.

ة	أ
لعبة	أخضر
طابة	احمر
سمكة	أصفر
خالقة	أرنب

They may arrange word picture cards or charts beginning with the same sound.

طبل	دار
طيارة	دج
طابة	دواء

The teacher makes a list of words containing a certain element then asks the pupils to mark the part alike.

جوس	شمعة	بقرة
جمل	شجرة	بندورة
خاتم	سكين	نار
	شرطي	بيض

The teacher can use various detective word games.

What is a word that begins the same as

Rhymes with

ends like

etc..

بالون

نام

سيارة

Word completion exercises may be included in work-books or on exercise sheets prepared by the teacher.

ط . . .	⓪
ثلا . . .	٣
ب . . .	Ⓜ

The teacher can capitalize on the children's names in the child's early phonetic practices.

س -	سامي	سمير	سوسو	سعاد	سليم
ه -	هاني	هند	هنا	هاله	

Various games with the children's names can be played to develop phonetic discriminations.

After a visit to the grocer: Let's write down names of all things beginning with

ب	خ	ع
بوظه	خس	علك
بندوره	خيار	عنب
بطيخ	خوخ	عرانيس
بومبون		
بصل الخ . . .		





initial are also helpful ه . ف . م . ن . أ . ش

When children learn to identify the separate letters efficiently they are then taught to them in order. The A.B.C. song so famous in western kindergartens can be just as well sung with the Arabic أ ب ت ث . The Arabic alphabet should be posted above the chalk board or on a bulletin board in order: ا ب ب ت ت ث ج ج ع ع ه ه و و ي ي

Letter cards can be shuffled and given to the child to arrange in order.

An alphabet picture chart can be prepared similar to the phonetic chart above.

Much of the work with A.B.C. can be done in K.G. "Here is a simple sort of learning that can be done as a game and gives a school beginner a feeling of accomplishment."<sup>1</sup>

As the Arabic sound system is very consistent the transfer from letter names to letter sounds will not be as difficult as it is in English. And soon we have the child's knowledge of the Arabic A.B.C. Functioning efficiently in his whole word sounding, word form analysis and spelling..

### Structural Analysis

The Arabic language as was discussed in chapter four is a highly inflected language. Nouns, verbs and adjectives take various forms depending on the number, case, tense gender etc.

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1. Hildreth Op. Cit. p. 244.

The Arabic structural variants that are mostly needed by the first grader, and are closest to the colloquial are the following:

1- The **و** and **ي** added to verbs in the imperative to denote the third person feminine and the third person plural. These may be the first ones needed in the conversational sentence patterns to be followed in the readers.<sup>1</sup>

ساعدو	ساعدى	ساعد	تعالو	تعالى	تعال
			شوفو	شوفى	شوف
				شوفى	

2- The silent pronoun **ت** added to the past tense to denote the feminine gender.

جابت	جاب	راحت	راح
		شافت	شاف

3- The little **ة** added to the nouns and adjectives to change them from masculine gender to feminine gender

شاطر	شاطرة	ضيفة	ضيف
حلو	حلوة	خالة	خال
مبسوط	مبسوطة	هرة	هر

4- The first person singular pronoun **ي** added to nouns to denote possession. The first person plural pronoun **نا**

Then the second person masculine **ك** Feminine **ك** plural **كم**

First they are introduced with the propositions **ل** or **ل**

meaning "for" **لنا .. لك لك لي**

can be given with words in grade one. The others need not because it will necessitate vocalizing the last part of

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1. See Appendix B.

these words, which should be avoided as much as possible in the first year.

هذا كتابي . هات لعبتي . سامي خذ السيارة . . . . . هُذِي لِيْ

5- The prefixes added to the past tense to change it to the present tense.

لعب	ساعد
ألعب	أساعد
تلعب	تساعد
يلعب	يساعد
كُعب	كُساعد

6- The article ال with silent آ at first and preferably all through grade one.

هات.....الطابة يا هاله  
هات.....اللعبة  
السيارة وقعت في البركة

Advice in Giving Structural Analysis to Grade One Children.

First. The word relationships mentioned above - which are only some of the many variations that the Arabic classical word is exposed to - should be taught to the child only after he has experienced them much in both reading and writing. And after the child himself starts noticing the differences and even applying them.

Second. Structural analysis in upper grades is highly neglected in our schools and should be used increasingly. Functional and wise use of these skills will not only help



the child to read quickly and independently but it would also reduce if not eliminate the need to study the tedious grammars given to children as early as the 2nd grade.

Third. The variants, mentioned above, enhance the children's phonetic analysis skills as well as their knowledge of the alphabet.

#### Samples of Exercises in Structural Analysis

1. One way is to list words in two columns and ask the children how they differ.

اكل	اكلت
راح	راحت
جاب	جابت

2. Then write a set of words and have children change them.

جد	جدة	خال	خالة
عم	عمة	ابن	ابنة

3. The children can match pictures with masculine and feminine nouns or adjectives.

طويل	طويلة	معلم	معلمة
صغير	صغيرة	طبيب	طبيبة

4. What would change 

ساعدى	ساعد	into
تفضلي	تفضل	into

5. Children can practise listing variations of one kind or the other.

هاله	هذى لى	سامى
تأكل	سيارتي	يركنى
تنام	طابتي	يقفر
تلعب	لعبتي	يسبح
تسبح	حصاني	يقول

6. By the end of the year children may be asked to fill in the blanks with the right word.

قالت نانا : لا لا يا سمير هاذى — .  
لعبتي لعبة طابة

Many similar exercises can be given in the work book accompanying the reader.

### Establishing Good Reading Habits

Good reading habits develop mainly as by products of intelligent and purposeful reading of appropriate and interesting reading matter. Yet special direct efforts must be taken by the teacher to establish the right attitudes and habits of reading right from the beginning.

### Habits of Book Care and Usage.

The teacher should explain to the child how to use book titles, story titles, page numbers, table of contents etc.. Right from the very first lesson they take in their reader. These skills are practised purposefully all through the year

whenever the need for them arises. Equal care is given to train the child to handle the books well, to use them to locate information, to recognize punctuation marks etc..

### Developing Correct Orientation of the Eye Movements

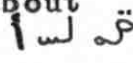
All through the experiences with words mentioned above and the word recognition games and exercises the teacher should see to it that the children learn the right orientation, specially if they are exposed to another language of opposite orientation, such as the case is with Lebanese children who learn Arabic and English or French right from the beginning<sup>(i)</sup>

Again good habits of orientation grow incidentally to sound reading instruction and appropriate content. Using experience records and the various script reading materials help to develop the right orientation and good reading habits. Utilizing markers can help children organize their progress in reading along the lines and develop correct eye movements, but they should be discarded later.

### Establishing Good Oral Reading Habits.

There is nothing as annoying as to hear our little Lebanese reading in a monotonous nonexpressive voice sentences

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(i) An intelligent 5 year and 6 months boy in K.G. two who has been reading very well English and Arabic for about two years writes his name in Arabic from left to right  and does similar other mistakes.

that they may or may not comprehend. Skillful oral reading means more than correct enunciation and pronunciation, it means expressive reading. A child right from the beginning must be encouraged to read naturally as if he is speaking. Appropriate language and illustration used in the readers play a very vital role in enabling the child to comprehend the content right away and read it expressively. Yet a teacher must constantly encourage the children to use the right intonation of voice.

How would Samia say these words?  
Please Samir help me.  
No! No! Nana you'll break the window.

Sleep little baby. Sleep.. Sleep

Dramatic reading is one of the most effective ways of developing good oral reading habits. The teacher can distribute the different parts in the story to the different children and ask them to read as if they are speaking. All kinds of dramatic activities whether related or not related to particular reading lessons can contribute to a child's ability to express himself naturally in language. Free oral language expression plays a vital role in laying the foundation of "talking to the print." Story telling plays an equally important role in this direction.

One has to mention that expressive reading grows also through imitation of the teacher. As she addresses the children, as she reads stories to them as she discusses the

new lesson etc. the teacher has to use an expressive varied intonation.

### Developing Effective Silent Reading Skills

Encouraging the child to read for himself to "look and think" is recommended as soon as he is able to "talk to the print" to "look and say".<sup>(i)</sup> Good habits of silent reading, and we might as well say, thoughtful reading must be started from the beginning., for all skills involved in thoughtful critical and creative reading are also part and parcel of good silent reading i.e. attention, concentration, inference, emotional and intellectual reaction etc..

As the children read the teacher uses various questions to stimulate and develop the above qualifications. Many of these questions may be answered by reading the text silently.

Work book exercises and other writing activities related to the reading lesson do not only serve to reinforce the learning of new words and to check up on comprehension and word knowledge, but they also contribute directly to the development of good habits of silent and independent reading.

The various reading activities discussed above are but a sample of what can be done to provide the Lebanese children with a meaningful, Arabic, beginning reading program. The need for more suggestions and new ideas in this direction

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(i) See p. 148.

is very pressing. This chapter, as well as the whole thesis is but one attempt at exploring this broad limitless field. Yet for this simple exploration to be fruitful, we still have to tackle the most immediate problem that Lebanese homes and schools suffer from at present, namely, the need for interesting good books for children. As mentioned in the preface, many of the problems raised in this study can be solved if the reading content, we provide our children with, is improved. How to construct readers and reading materials appropriate for grade one Lebanese children is the subject of the next and last chapter in this study.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF GRADE ONE READERS AND READING MATERIALS

As was mentioned in chapter five, the new program will use all kinds of reading matter provided they are interesting, purposeful and readable by the youngsters. In the suggested Arabic class we will find author - prepared readers, supplementary story books to go with them, other story books, work books together with a rich variety of informal reading material prepared by both the children and the teacher. In this chapter we will discuss generally all these with special attention given to the readers.

#### The Readers

Modern readers come in series characterized by continuity and systematic gradation, in language, in content and in characters. The vocabulary is chosen carefully to suit the ages interests and abilities of the children. It is added gradually and repeated systematically within one book with extensive overlap from book to book. For grade one we may have, two thin preprimers, one or two primers and a first reader. Our children should grow through more than one book per year. The differences between one book and the other will be brought up as we discuss the following factors: Vocabulary control, Appropriate Sentence Patterns and Style,

Appropriate Stories, Good Illustration, Print and Other Factors of Legibility.

### Vocabulary Control

"The principle of vocabulary control in language study may be considered one of the chief educational discoveries of the twentieth century... Gradation is the secret of advancing power in reading as in any other complex learning, skiing, swimming or playing the piano."<sup>1</sup>

Vocabulary control or as Hildreth puts it "the single largest factor in readability" is a basic prerequisite to the development of both skillfull as well as enthusiastic reading. Graded reading material plays a vital role in promoting a growing interest in reading reinforced by the child's successful attempts, by his ability to read "right off" and by the progress he makes in covering a good amount of pages. It also plays a fundamental role in providing the child with systematic practice in all the skills and habits involved in reading mentioned extensively above. No short cut is possible. Common words have to predominate in sentences for the child to be able to infer the less common or new words and grasp the meaning communicated by the print.

- The Suggested Vocabulary for Grade One -

Number and Distribution

Pre-Primers 50 - 60

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1. Hildreth, Op. Cit. 381.



Primer	100 to 120
First Reader	150 to $\frac{170}{350}$

As "there can never be any fixed order in which words should be introduced"<sup>1</sup> and as there is no word study done on Lebanese.- Arab children's conversation and that if such a study was available modification would have to be done to bridge the gap between the child's language and that of the classical, I have followed in drawing the list<sup>(i)</sup> the following steps:

Investigated the vocabulary of some Arabic readers. (ii)  
Studied the Edgar Dale word list and translated it with necessary modification to Lebanese word equivalents.

Recorded samples of my children's conversations.  
Used my own judgement.

The list is only tentative and I hope to be able to verify it as I finish writing the readers and with future research.

Lengthy words were avoided and words carrying sad, repulsive and destructive meanings avoided or at least postponed:

بکی قتل ضرب ذبح خاف هرب  
Adjectives like: کسلان شیطان ترثار

Uncommon names like:

ظافر نظمیه

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1. Ibid. p. 385.

(i) See Appendix A

(ii) Three Arabic word lists were also revised. See Bibliography

Instead, colorful words expressions and exclamations were added:

جدو - ستو - مرجوحه عالية - طفلة حلوة - شكرا بابا  
عفاك يا حبيبي - ياى ما احلاه! - ما اعلاه !!

And as the shortest words are not always the easiest to recognize. No fear that the child will not recognize:

اطفائي .. مرجوحه .. مبسوطة .. 1

We should always remember, however, that even in grade one the vocabulary must not be restricted to the basic ones introduced in the readers and that it can be enriched by various means such as:

Multiple use of overlapping readers from different series.

Easy reading story books or textbooks in subject areas such as science and arithmetic.

The various kinds of script text or informal reading matter prepared by the teacher. Picture dictionaries word games etc..<sup>2</sup>

### Repetition Review and Carry Over

Systematic control of vocabulary does not only mean wise choice of vocabulary according to their frequency or interest value, it also involves planned repetition of certain vocabulary in varied context. This insures cumulative and thorough learning of the words and makes for their instantaneous recognition.

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1. See Appendix A  
2. Hildreth, Op. Cit. p. 389.

In earlier books the number of new words introduced should be very small starting with one word per page and developing very gradually into two, then three by the end of the year.

Repetition of the same words once introduced, should follow, as soon as possible, to confirm the word. There must not be later than 5 pages difference between first introduction and first repetition.. Other repetitions follow at close intervals. Frequent repetition in the same story and throughout other stories in the same book and a consistent carry over of these same words into other books in the series enables the child to form "the habit of expecting to meet the words again and will therefore be more likely to look with a view to remembering them."<sup>1</sup> Reading will be therefore done with more concentration, with more care to what came before and what will come next, more linkage, more seeing of relationships, more insight than if the child were to learn each word a new, piece by piece and to continue to do so until as late as grade four or five.

"The burden of steady introductions is lightened by the use of occasional absorption units or rest pages where the child meets no new word and reads without obstacle.. Breathing spaces enable the children to read with pride and satisfaction."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Rona Munroe, A Teacher's Manual For Use With The Janet and John Reading Course (Digswell Place, Welwyn: James Nisbet and Co. Ltd.) p. 15.

2. Ibid. p. 15.

### Sentence Patterns and Style

Simple but varied sentences are used. The conversational style is easier for the child to interpret specially at the preprimers and primer stages. It helps him "talk to the print" and develop good habit of oral as well as silent reading. Questions, requests exclamations, negative sentences etc.. should be used but as simple and near to the child's talk as possible. Again a study is needed to find out the sentence patterns used most frequently by the Lebanese children in their daily conversations. In writing the pre-primer included in Appendix B I used my own judgement based on a review of few of my children's recorded conversations together with a close look at the few samples of American. English readers that I have as models and some of the recent Arabic readers used in our schools nowadays.

ياى !! ما احدى سيارتي	ماما ماما تعالي
شكرا شكرا بابا .	تعالي يا ماما شونفي
ما هانى يا بابا ؟	لا لا لا تروح يا سمير
ما تعمل يانابى ؟	هانى لي وهانى لك
ليه راح جدو ؟	

### Stories

The readers should consist of a variety of little stories taken from the Lebanese children's daily activities. Every little story should communicate to the child a little interesting event, a problem to be solved, a little surprise,

something to be discovered or learnt. There should always be a plot to stimulate the child to think, to infer, to relate to himself and to read on. The characters are Lebanese children, their parents, close relatives and playmates with whom first graders can identify best.

Through the action and background of a story a child's knowledge of the Lebanese environment expands and is reinforced. Actions and subjects, in the stories may include, animals, pets, travel by car, bus, boat, train, children observing or partaking in the working world - stores bakery, post office farms vineyards.. Life at the sea shore, life in the Lebanese mountains, playing and getting along with friends....<sup>1</sup>

The same characters run through the whole series beginning with kindergarten and ending with grade one. Children should grow up with their heroes. In the first preprimer the family and their two pets, a cat and a dog are presented. The family consists of six members, a father, a mother, 2 girls and 2 boys. Activities take place in the house and in the garden. In the second preprimer grandpa and grand-ma are added. Activities begin to extend outdoors. In the primer, activities take place with friends and extend more outdoors. Aunts and uncles are added. Visiting the village or Beirut take place.. In the first book more activities in school and outdoors are added.

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1. Soghikian, Op. Cit. p. 14.

Both the themes and characters presented in the stories of these readers should help satisfy some of the child's basic personality needs such as security, belonging.. Loving and being loved, the child's love of change and excitement - at this age it should not be far removed from reality. The need to know and to have more insight into the life problems of the 5-6 age group, such as "sharing with friends" and being given some independent responsibility and "finding ways of being helpful to the family." Stories in the readers should help children face reality courageously, should help him see that difficulties are overcome by persistence... by their own efforts.<sup>1</sup>

The content should present indirectly to the child the Lebanese traditional values of hospitality, ambition, adventure, warm extended family relations and respect for the elders. The pages of the new readers should equally present to the children modern values of group life... punctuality and good use of time. All of which are presented through characters that live them and apply them daily in their homes and outdoors, preserving, at the same time the natural vitality, spontaneity and good humour of a healthy childhood atmosphere., that avoids the preaching approach so common in our books.

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1. Ibid. p. 14.

### Illustration

Attractive and clear illustration not only draws a child's interest to a book and capture his attention to its content, but it also functions as an indispensable pictorial context around which the basic sight vocabulary is woven or the foundation of the various word attack skills. A meaningful pictorial context is the corollary of vocabulary control and studied sentence patterns in establishing good reading habits. Special care should be taken in preparing the illustrations to fit the stories.

Mrs. Soghikian lists some of the basic principles that should be considered in illustrating children's books.<sup>1</sup>

1- Pictures must be clear and fully shown "the child expects a completely literary picture" specially in the early books where the child depends more on the picture to tell him the story.

2- "Action in a picture is important. Stiff ill-drawn figures are quickly noticed by children."

3- The picture must faithfully tell the story so the child may identify himself with the heroe .."

4- The illustrations should be in color. "However just color alone does not make a picture appealing. A good black and white clear drawing with lots of contrasts and action is better than a poorly drawn but colored page"...

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1. Ibid. pp. 20-21.

5- "The illustrator should have a feeling for all over design. Since the text and illustration should be "fused" as one complete whole the page should be planned in this manner".

6- "Background in the picture must give the child a real sense of the locality.."

7- "All the illustrations are in themselves good art. There is a living quality in them that tells us that the artist knows a child's way of seeing and feeling things."

8- "Drawings of children must look like children. If the story is of a six year old, the illustration cannot be of a child who looks eight or ten. The artist must be able to draw children moreover, who look happy or sad, excited or bored tired or gay as the case demands."

9- Children are attracted to brilliant colours. But they must be combined to make well planned and pleasing harmonies that give the children clear - cut pictorial patterns "children seem to require as concrete a pattern in their pictorial images as they do in word images."

The preprimer included in the Appendix<sup>1</sup> will be supplied with pictures from the Lebanese modern life. The setting is a Lebanese home with a typical garden growing apples cherries tomato.. parsley and mint etc. a big sarishi shades the gate way, a pool in the center. The roof is of

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1. Ibid. p. 22.



red brick. The house, as well as, the surrounding scenes are those of a Lebanese town. Scenes from both the Lebanese village and city life, will be included as the family visits relatives or friends in either one.

### Print

Clarity and suitability of print plays a vital role in determining the readability of a book. As was mentioned in chapter 5, both the size and style of print now used in the children's books are in appropriate almost invariably much too small.

Suggested Improvements in Arabic Print Used in Children's Books.

First. Reducing the number of letter forms to two and sometimes one.

ا ب پ ت تة ث ش ج ج ح ح خ خ د ذ ر ز  
س س ش ش ص ص ض ض ط ظ ع ع غ غ ف ف ق ق ك ك ل  
م م ن ن ه ه و و ی ی

The children should only be exposed to these forms in their reading and writing activities. Only one system of print should be used in both cases.

Second. In the two preprimers and all through first grade readers and informal material, short vowels are used only when necessary. The context of picture and meaningful text, the oral usage of the word before introducing it in

print would help the child read it correctly. This would reduce the amount of little signs above or below the Arabic words and leave the letters specially the dotted ones cleaner for recognition. Dr. M. Akrawi's reader printed in 1935<sup>1</sup> followed this principle and it was found much easier for the children. Baba Rashad, author of *بيوت وازهار* - the second attempt in writing readers along modern lines has also applied this principle and the print looks quite legible.

Third. The elaborate orthographical signs used in our books can also be reduced to the advantage of better legibility. First, the sign ◌̣ used on top of a silent letter can be omitted. Again familiarity with the spoken counterpart of a word, enough oral usage of it in its classical version plus a meaningful context would ensure the child's correct recognition of it. When the child starts phonetic and structural analysis he is taught indirectly at first and then directly that letters without vowel signs, short or long, are silent. These letters should be pronounced with the voweled letters that come before them

بي تي      اح مر      لع بيتي      ح وة

All through grade one the child will not be asked to vocalize the word endings except the past tense *رَكُضْ جَاءَ* and expressions like *شَكَرًا ، عَفْوًا ، لَطْفًا* and few other words

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١ متى عقراوي ورجل لله زغبى - مبادئ القراءة العربية

اسلوب الجملة والقصة ( بغداد : مطبعة الحكومة ١٩٣٥ ) الجزء الاول

٢ رشاد عريس بيوت وازهار . مبادئ المطالعة ( بيروت مطابع كريسو ١٩٥٧ )

Fourth. As there is no need for ء, to denote silence there is also no need for ء to denote liaison or the silent ا in the article ال

الكتاب جميل	a <sub>1</sub>	as differentiated from	قرأت الكتاب	a
الطيارة كبيرة	b <sub>1</sub>		شوف الطيارة	b

Gradually and incidentally the child would notice that when there is ء as in (a<sub>1</sub> b<sub>1</sub>) he would pronounce the ا and when there isn't as in (a b) it would just hide. When there is ء as in (b, b<sub>1</sub>) the ا hides.

This would again reduce a big amount of signs that do not serve a purpose in a printed page that applies good standards of legibility and readability, instead they hinder reading by asking the child every time he reaches اء to stop and figure out whether it is the vowel ء or not or whether he should pronounce the "ا" or not.

راح البابا الى السوق وجاب السيارة البيضاء

A good solution will be to postpone introducing the article ال with the pronounced ا till grade two until the child has experienced enough the silent ال. Many mistakes in reading "sun" letters or "mohān" letters, silent ا or pronounced ا are committed by pupils of all ages. My daughter in grade one - third year reading always gets confused in attacking words with ال or with اء because of the many decorations and explanations that are imposed on her.

Memorizing grammar rules in grade two about أ and آ about "sun letters and "moon" letters seem to be of little value. In fact they prove distracting and tend to prevent the child from getting a continuous flow of thought in reading and make him lose interest.

### Other Factors of Legibility

#### Quality of Paper

The kind of paper to be used should be white and clear and should not be of a low rag content that tears too easily. The bindings should be made either of cardboard or of buckrum (cloth). Paper bindings tear apart too quickly. Thinner book covers are used for preprimers while primers and first books use hard cover<sup>1</sup>

#### Size of Paper

Mrs. Soghikian recommends the size 17 c x 25 c to be used because this is the size of the paper would be required<sup>2</sup> Another good size is that used in Al Tariqah Al Mufidah i.e. 20 c x 27 c. The primers and first books would be smaller.

#### Size of Print

The print should be large and clear for beginners to perceive easily. However, the kind of print, appropriate

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1. Soghikian Op. Cit. p. 25.

2. Ibid.

for modern Arabic readers, has to be prepared by hand on special cliché's. Big clear letters are not available in the present publishing centers.

ثشوف سامي . تعال فادي

راح بابا إلى السوق . زرع

Line Length

In preprimers lines should be short, starting with one sentence in one line. Longer lines and longer sentences grow gradually. More white space per page is used in the preprimers than in the primer and first reader.<sup>1</sup>

#### Workbooks

Dr. Hildreth believes that practice, during the first year should be mostly oral .. with the teacher and through teacher - children prepared exercises. Yet as the modern principles and methods of reading instruction are not yet well known among our teachers and school principals, we recommend the preparation of work books to accompany every reader prepared for grade one. These books would serve again, if widely distributed as a kind of common in service training to teachers of Arabic in Lebanese schools.

Work books act as a means of reviewing and checking what is learnt in the particular reader. They can combine

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1. Ibid.

practice in reading with writing and spelling, all in a variety of meaningful and interesting contexts in form of illustrated little stories, events or scenes. They picture the same characters found in the readers in more of their interesting childhood activities.

Every exercise can have one or more specific contributions, in developing one or more of the many skills involved in the process of reading, such as seeing relationships, interpreting feelings, discriminating among word forms, letter sounds etc...

Clarence Stone recommends the use of workbooks to develop "versality in the combined use of context clues, visual clues structural analysis and phonetic knowledge."<sup>1</sup> Work books promote "intrinsic word learning" or "learning through an exercise in which the child connects symbol with meaning which is what reading is."<sup>2</sup> They help develop instantaneous recognition of the words learnt in the reader and they train the child in independent reading and work habits thus laying the foundations for good study habits right from the beginning.

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1. Clarence Stone, "Questionable Trends in Beginning Reading", Elementary School Journal (Jan. 1966), p. 219.

2. Ibid. p. 215.

### Supplementary Materials

As much as there is need for good readers there is also need for good stories, with local themes, to supplement these readers at the 5 - 6 age level. They may be individual stories or stories linked directly with the pre-primers, primers and first book and restricted to their vocabulary.

Stories can have tremendous effects on the children for their good or their detriment, that is why good care should be taken, in selecting the stories, that they fit the children's interests and level of language development. In her guide book, Mrs. Soghikian recommends stories of the "Here and now" for children between the ages 3 - 6:

Here and now stories, or the best of old and new in children's literature can serve to immunize children against the vulgarity and violence to which they are exposed in comics in T.V. stories, in history for older children which have adult settings incomprehensible and disturbing to little children. A child should find in his first books a world he can understand, problems he can solve, conclusions he can expect. Such books give him reassurance and a sense of confidence.<sup>1</sup>

In the same study referred to above Mrs. Soghikian insists that fairy tales, tales of cruelty and martyrdom,

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1. Soghikian, Op. Cit. p. 16.

tales of historic characters, obvious moralistic preaching, stories about adult concerns and problems, such as gaining gold or money, gaining social prestige, power, winning a husband or wife, are not appropriate for 3-6 children.<sup>1</sup> She then proceeds to discuss the characteristics of 3-6 children and their story interests at each level<sup>2</sup>.

#### Other Possibilities of Author Prepared Reading Material for Grade One

Poetry books, song books, dictionaries, various word cards, charts and a big book to accompany the preprimers. Several letter cards for consonants vowels and inflectional endings. Sheets of letters which can be cut apart and used to provide additional practice in phonetic analysis are also provided.

Every reader should be accompanied by a teacher's guide book that provides detailed suggestions on how to teach every single story in the book.

#### Teacher-Children Prepared Reading Materials

One of the most important characteristics of a modern reading program is the utilization of the various kinds of

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1. Ibid. p. 15.

2. Ibid. p.p. 17-19.



informal reading materials, so-called "script text".<sup>1</sup>

The use of "script text" can be introduced at the reading readiness level and early in grade one to give the child an informal start in reading.<sup>(i)</sup> Later it can be used to supplement the readers and to link reading with the children's other activities. All through it serves to link all language skills together, reading, speaking, listening, writing and spelling.

#### Samples of "Script" Text

1. News Bulletines, Notices, Class News Papers Daily Diaries, Letters, Weather bulletins.
2. Monitorial Service - Reminders, Instructions, assignments. Daily Log.
3. Records of Class Experiences.
4. Drill devices, word cards, pictured dictionaries word charts and all kinds of language charts.
5. The child's scrap book. Big class books..<sup>2</sup>
6. Children's Own Story Books.

This is One effective way of increasing the supply of story books, containing plenty of pictures appropriate language and with content related to children's on - going activities...

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1. The term is used by Dr. Hildreth in her book Teaching Reading Op. Cit.

(i) See pp. 138-139 and pp. 149-150.

2. Hildreth, Op. Cit. 218.

7. Riddles prepared by children of a class, for other children to guess.

Some of these materials are primarily for language development or social experiences. Others are more definitely for reading lessons, to give drill in word recognition or training in silent reading comprehension.

#### Advantages and Contributions of Script Text.

1- Script text can supply the children with diverse reading experiences, characterized by their timelines and linkage to current activities in class as well as outside class. "Script text lends itself to experiences in the arts, crafts music dramatizing and other interests in the beginner's school life."<sup>1</sup> It gives the youngster the idea that reading means interpreting print wherever it may be found.

2- These local reading materials provide a link among the child's growing linguistic powers, and interpretation of print, thus promoting the meaningful language related program recommended in this study. The child reads "right off" with understanding and interest.

3- The personal element in the material holds the child's interest and makes for easy reading. Participating in decorating the charts makes for another favourable association with reading.

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1. Ibid. p. 198.

4- Flexibility with informal material, the teacher is better able to cater to the individual differences in class.

5- Habits and skills of both oral reading and silent reading are practised effectively. The teacher can train the children to follow the right direction, to think, to read with good expression etc.. She can direct the children's progress in all these skills quickly and effectively.

Linking reading and writing is one very important function in preparing script text materials. The child is able to sense the intimate relation between reading and writing. As the teacher writes the children supply words and are motivated to write stories for themselves. Children are gradually invited to help write down charts. When they read what they have themselves written, double reinforcement in reading mechanics and recognition of word forms take place. Children's scrap books may be the most effective first readers. Mimiographed sheets taken from the charts are distributed to the children and are clipped in note books with the child's own illustrations.

6- The informal material written in big clear letters and hung in front of the class goes with the children's hyperactivity. They call for motor activity.. coming to the board.. pointing etc.. This holds the children's attention longer and goes more with the children's farsightedness.

With happy experiences in chart materials reading can turn to be truly a social activity.

Some Advice About Preparing and Using Arabic "Script" Text

First. All factors of readability and legibility discussed under "readers" must be taken into consideration.

Second. Script text can be prepared on chalkboards, on big loose sheets of paper, on more permanent hard paper charts, on strips, on various shapes and sizes.<sup>1</sup> The teacher can use her imagination and taste in producing various media for script text.

Third. As the children would inevitably be exposed to more print than they can learn to recognize independently, the teacher should remember the following facts.

1. The vocabulary of the script material intended for training in specific skills and word meaning must overlap to a very large extent with the vocabulary of the readers.

2. The vocabulary of those intended for general language development or for social experiences and sharing of information need not be highly restricted. The children are encouraged to read as much as they can "and helped as they would be during prereading experiences with words that are not for the moment important for them to recognize alone"<sup>1</sup>. A good balance must be made in choosing a light

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1. A colour train may be prepared.. May Calender can be written on flower shaped paper.

2. Mckim Op. Cit. pp. 120-126.

burden of vocabulary characterized at the same time by vitality and interest.

3. Long words like ساعي برید طیاره need not be feared for there is evidence عسکری that children sometimes remember long words with distinctive configurations more easily than they do small words with similar configurations.. Exclamations and words for sound effect such as

ح !! یای !! طاطا م م

can add interest to the text as well as help children in their word analysis skills.

4. Pictures can be drawn, painted or brought by children or teacher to illustrate the various script materials. Art work is not necessary.<sup>1</sup>

5. Sentences must be simple and repetitious when children suggest ideas for an experience record they themselves tend to use simple assertive sentences that follow a pattern. Several lines may begin with "we saw.. we want... The teacher helps shorten the long sentences and substitute simpler words. Phrases that children are expected to read as units must be kept on a single line and the letters should be distinct and big.<sup>2</sup>

6. Interesting review activities are necessary.

One effective way to ensure review of certain words is

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1. Ibid. pp. 120-126.

2. Ibid. pp. 120-126.

to focus on an activity that leads to a series of related charts and reading activities in which the same vocabulary is likely to recur. The teacher and children may decide to visit a nearby poultry farm. They write a plan before going and when they return they record the details of their trip. Later they may tell stories about the farmer, the hens and chicks, the incubators etc.. to be turned into charts. They may draw pictures and write captions or even use snap shots. They may find pictures of chicken and farms in their library books and identify some of the new words in the context. They can build a farm and write information and rules for playing in it. They may sing a song or compose a new one about chicks and chickens. They may invite another class and use their records to tell them the story of their trip<sup>1</sup>.

The aim in this chapter was to construct readable material for grade one children, or material that they can read for themselves with minimum help from the teacher. This is determined, as shown above by the interest that children take in the reading content, by the language structure, the vocabulary sentence pattern and style, by the appropriateness of the ideas and finally by the attractiveness and legibility of print.

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1. See Appendix C.

ملحق ( ١ )

لائحة مقترحة بالكلمات التي يمكن ان تستعمل في تحضير كتب

ومواد قرائية اخرى للمبتدئين

انعمال VERBS

احب	اخذ	اراد	اشترى	اشتغل	اعطى	اكل	باس باض (ت)	برد
بم	تسلى	تطلع	تعال	جا	جاب	جاع	حرك حزر	حكى
حمل	خبر	خبز	خلى	خل (خلينا)	دار	درس	دفع	دق
راح	رسم	رقص	ركب	ركض	رعى	زار	زرع	سال
سافر	سمع	شاف	شرب	شكر	صاد	ضحك	طار	طبخ
عاش	عجل	عرف	عطش	عوى	غسل	غنى	فات	فتح
فرح	فكر	فهم	فاق(ت)	قال	قام	قرا	قدر	قطع
قطف	قص	تعد	قفز	قفز	كان	كتب	لعب	مسك
نادى	نام	نط	هات	وقع	وقف			

اسماء NOUNS

أ - اسماء اشخاص : Persons

أب	آنة	ام	اخ	اخت	ابا	بنت	تاتا	جد	جدو
خال (ى)	خاله	خاله (ى)	رجل	رجل	رسام	ست	سيدة (ة) (ى)	صاحب (ة)	صاحب (ة)
صبي	ضيف (ة)	طفل (ة)			سامي (ة)	سمير (ة)		فادى (ة)	فادى (ة)
هاله	هانى الخ	.....							

ب - حيوانات : Animals

ارنب	بسة	بطة	بوي	بقرة	توتو	جرو	حيوان	حصان	حمار
حمام	خروف	دجاج	ديك	سمك	صوص	صيصان	طير	عصفور (ة)	غنم (ة)
عنزة	فار (ة)	فراشة	فروج	قرقرور (ة)	كلب (ة)	نحلة			

ج - اجزاء الجسم : Parts of the Body

راس رجل شعر عين وجه يد

د - طعام : Food

اكل بطاطا بوظه بونبون بيض تبوله تفاح حليب حلوى حلو  
خبز دبس زده عسل عنب قمح كبه كرز كحك كولا  
لبن لبنه ماء موز شوكولا

ه - طبيعة وامكنة : Nature and Places

ارض بحر بستان بيت بيروت تل ثلج جبل جنينة حشيش  
دار درج دكان زهر زريبة شجرة صف ضيعة ضوء غرفة  
غمم لبنان مدرسة مزرعة

و - ثياب - اناك - ادوات : Clothing, Furniture Equipment

ابريق ابرة باب ثوب ثياب جرس حذاء ساعة سرير سلة  
سيارة شاحنة طابة طبل طيارة عربة فستان فنجان قبعة قرش  
قطار ورقة قصص قلم كأس كباية كبوت كتاب كرسي ليرة  
مركب

ز - مناسبات ونشاطات : Activities and Occasions

حفلة عشاء عيد غذاء فطور قصة مفاجأة

ح - اسما اخرى : Other Nouns

دواء شمال شوى شىء صورة قطعة قليل كل يمين

ط - الوقت : Time

الاحد الاثنين الثلاثاء الاربعاء الخميس الجمعة السبت  
كانون الثاني شباط آذار نيسان ايار حزيران تموز آب  
ايلول تشرين الاول تشرين الثاني كانون الاول  
الربيع الصيف الخريف الشتاء ساعة وقت يوم شهر سنة





APPENDIX B  
A SAMPLE OF A PREPRIMER

ملحق ( ب )

نموذج للكتاب التمهيدي الاول

سامي ٧ سنوات مع ادوات النجارة يصنع  
طيارة من خشب في الحديقة قرب باب  
البيت  
يعرف ادى راكبا سيارته ويدور بها حول  
البركة

سامي شوف شوف

٢

سامي

١

صورة سامي يصلح دولا ب السيارة بالمطرقه  
وفادى يمسك السيارة مساعدا اوتوتو يرلاقب

يقع دولا ب سيارة فادى فينادى اخاه  
مرة اخرى يترك سامي طيارته متجهها  
نحو فادى ويده المطرقه

توتو

سامي تعال

تعال سامي شوف

تعال شوف

٤

:٣

يجلس توتو على مقدمة السيارة فينادى  
نادى اخاه مرة اخرى ضاحكا ومتعجبا  
بينما يترك سامي الطائرة ويدخل الى  
البيت

يركب نادى سيارته فرحا ويضع توتو قائمته  
على مقدمة السيارة محاولا الصعود

سامي تعال شوف  
تعال شوف توتو

شوف سامي  
شوف توتو  
شوف توتو

٦

٥

في مقدمة الصورة نادى راكبا سيارته  
من جديد وفي مؤخرة الصورة سامي  
مع طيارته وتوتو يأكل طعامه

يرجع سامي ويده صحن فيه طعام لتوتو  
يقفز توتو ويركض نحو سامي

نادى

توتو تعال تعال

٨

٧

تعلق الطيارة في العريشة بمحاذاة  
الحائط فينادى سامي مرة ثانية اخاه .  
تدخل هالة الحديقة ومعها لعبة

سامي ينهي صنع طيارته فينادى اخاه فادى  
ليرى . فادى يترك سيارته الان ليراقب  
سامي

ياى ياى  
فادى شوف  
ياى شوف

١٠

فادى يا فادى  
تعال تعال

٩

في مقدمة الصورة هالة تضع لعبتها في  
عربة صغيرة وتغطيها . في خلفية الصورة  
سامي وفادى حاملان السلم ومتوجهان نحو  
الشجرة .

يلمح سامي سلما على شجرة قريبة فيتوجه  
اليها مشيرا الى فادى وتلفت هالة  
ويلتفت فادى

هاله

١٢

شوف فادى  
تعال تعال

١١

يصل سامي الى الطيارة بينما يمسك له  
فادى السلم • تطل الاما من باب البيت  
ومعها سلة للتفاح • تتلفت هاله نحو الاما •

يضع سامي السلم ويبدأ بالصعود بينما يقف  
فادى قرب السلم هالة تكلم فادى بينما تجر  
لعبتها في العربة

هاله هاله  
تعالى يا هاله تعالى

١٤

يا فادى ساعد سامي  
ساعد سامي  
ساعد سامي يا فادى

١٣

تتوجه هاله وماما نحو الصبيان سامي  
موجود الان في الشجرة يعطيها الطياره

مقدمة الصورة هالة آخذة السلة بيد  
والماما بيد اخرى وتدلل على الصبيان

ماما تعالى تعالى  
ماما شوفى شوفى

١٦

ماما و هاله

١٥

سامي موجود على غصن شجرة وقد علق  
السله بينه وبين فادي الواقف على السلم  
بينما وقفت هاله تمسك لهما السله ضاحكة  
الماما تتامل الطائرة فرحة بها هاله تتكلم

يقطف فادي ثلاث تفاحات في عند واحد  
وينادي امه فرحا بينما تمد الماما يدها  
لاخذ التفاحات

فادي ساعد سامي  
ساعد ماما  
ساعد سامي وماما

سامي ماما شوفي  
يا ماما ماما شوفي

١٨

١٧

صورة نانا تنزل من سريرها

تمسك هاله بالتفاحات الثلاث وتقول

نانا

تفاحة ل فادي  
وتفاحة ل سامي  
وتفاحة ل هاله وماما

٢٠

١٩

تقعد نانا على الارض محاولة ربط حذائها  
تطلب ماما من هاله ان تساعد نانا بينما  
تتجه هاله نحو نانا

تقف نانا ( سنتان ) بباب المطبخ حاملة  
حذاءها بيدها ولعبة بيد اخرى بينما  
هاله تساعد ماما بتنظيف التفتاح المقطوف  
بالماء والصابون تلتفت هاله

هاله ساعدى نانا  
ساعدى نانا

تعالى نانا  
تعالى نانا  
ماما شوفى نانا  
شوفى نانا

٢١

٢٢

تحمل هاله السلة وتتجه نحو الجنينة  
تقترب نانا منها فتقول لها الماما  
مبتسمة :

الماما تضع التفتاح في سلة الفاكهة وتقول  
لهاله

نانا ساعدى هاله  
ساعدى هاله يا نانا

هاله شوفى  
تفاحة لغادى  
تفاحة ل سامي  
تفاحة ل نانا  
تفاحة ل هاله

٢٣

٢٤

ترمي نانا تفاحتها فتعم في البركة مع الطابطة والطائرة

مقدمة الصورة سامي قرب البركة يلعب بطائرته الخشبية  
العائمة في الماء . فادى بيده طابطة يلاعبها ايضا فوق الماء .  
الابنتان تراقبان - كل واحد معه تفاحة - سلة التفاح  
فارغة البركة توتو واقفا على قدميه وواضعا يديه على حافة  
البركة .

تفاحة نانا

ياى ياى  
سامي شوف  
شوف تفاحة نانا  
تفاحة نانا

توتو حاملا التفاحة والطيارة والطابطة في الماء  
والاولاد يضحكون بحماس . . تطل الماما  
ضاحكة من الباب هالة تتكلم

يقفز توتو في البركة ويطرطش الجميع ماء خاصة نانا  
سامي يتكلم

تعالى ماما  
شوفي توتو  
شوفي تفاحة نانا  
شوفي توتو وتفاحة نانا

ياى !! ياى !!  
هالة شوفي  
فادى شوف  
نانا شوفي توتو



تاتي الواما بمنشفتين

٣٠ - صورة بابا يدخل من باب المطبخ  
حاملًا بيده علبتين

با با

سامي تعال  
هاله تعالي  
يا سامي ساعد توتو  
يا هاله ساعدى ناننا

هاله مع الواما في المطبخ تتكلم مع امها

٣٢ - بابا يتكلم مع ماما

هديه ل سامي وفادى  
هديه ل هاله ونانا

ماما ماما شرفي  
شوفي بابا  
جاء بابا  
جاء بابا

هاله تظهر حماسها للموضوع

هاله تنادى من بابا المطبخ الاولاد  
يركضون من الجنينة الى المطبخ الصبيان في  
الاول ونانا والتوتوفي الاخر

جاء بابا  
جاء بابا  
سامي تعال شوف  
فادى تعال شوف  
نانا تعالي  
جاء بابا

ياي ياي  
شكرا بابا  
هديه هديّة  
شكرا شكرا

صورة الاولاد يفتحون العلب والبابا ينظر باسمها والماما  
تتكلم

- ٣٦ -  
قصص هذا الكتاب

١	سامي
٤	توتو
٨	فادى
١٢	هاله
١٥	ماما وهاله
٢٠	نانا
٢٥	تفاحة نانا
٣٠	بابا

هدية لسامي وفادى  
وهديه لهاله ونانا  
شكرا شكرا بابا

- ٣٧ -

١	سامي
٢	شوف
٣	تعال
٤	توتو
٨	نادى
٩	يا
١٠	ياى
١٢	هاله
١٣	ساعد
١٤	تعالى
١٥	ماما
١٦	شوفى
١٩	تفاحة
١٩	ل
٢١	نانا
٢٢	ساعدى
٣٠	بابا
٣١	جاء
٣٢	هدية
٣٣	شكرا

Appendix C

Samples of Arabic Script Text for Grade One Level.<sup>1</sup>

Children's Names

A big Attendance Chart

Names on Personal Possessions

Planning the Day

اليوم

نقرأ

نرسم

نروح مشوار

The Week's Calender

هذا الاسبوع

الاثنين : نزرورغرفة الموسيقى

الثلاثاء : نروح الى القاعة

الاربعاء : نجمع ثمن الحليب

الخميس : نحضر قلمنا

الجمعة : نروح الى المكتبة

Labels

Things in the room

طاولة كرسي اقلام تلوين

Interest centers

مكتبة العاب رسم

بيت اللعبة

Monitorial Duties

نحن نساعد

الحليب : سامي

الكتب : سمير

الالوان : منى

الزريعة : هاله

Weather Chart

اليوم الاثنين

شمس

الحرارة ٢٥°

اليوم الخميس

الطقس بارد

التلج يسقط

الحرارة ٢°

1. Adapted from Hildreth, Op. Cit. p. 219.

<sup>1</sup> The teacher keeps a log of an activity, such as "we play house". This log in simple language is entered on a chart day by day..."

• ابو سمير عمل سريرا لبيت اللعبة	: ١٤	١٦
• اسامة جاب حصانا وحمارا لبيت اللعبة	: ١٤	١٧
• وضعنا حشيشا في جنية البيت	: ١٤	١٨

Children coming back from the weekend may tell the teacher various stories or incidents that actually happen to them. The teacher may help them record in simple sentences what they tell her illustrate them themselves and make their own books.

---

1. Ibid. p. 220.

Puzzles and Acrostics  
Spring

الريـع  
ش للمشمس شع شععة  
ز لل \* زهور \* زاهية  
ع لل \* عصافير في الشجر  
ح لل \* حشيش الاخضر  
م لل \* مطر المنهمر

Notices and Bulletins

س نروح رحلة  
س نفتش عن علامات الربيع

Announcements

- عند سامي بطة  
- اليوم عيد رلى  
عمرها سبع سنين  
- صار عند سامية اخت صغيرة  
حلوة - مبروك -

A March Bulletin

تهب الريح  
تطير طياراتنا  
تكون احيانا باردة

Safety Rules

اقطع عند الزاوية  
قف

Reporting on a trip

رحنا مشوار  
شفنا زهور  
شفنا عصافير  
شفنا حشيش

رحلتنا الى المزرعة

رحنا الى مزرعة دجاج  
شفنا صاحب المزرعة  
شفنا الفقاسه  
شفنا الصيصان الصفر  
شفنا الدجاج الابيض

اشترينا بيضا

وجبنا معنا خمس صيصان

ورقة زيتون

هذي ورقة زيتون  
الجليد غير لونها  
الريح هزت الشجرة  
الورقة وقعت الى الارض

مركز البريد

كتبنا مكاتيب

اخذنا المكاتيب الى مركز البريد

اعطينا المكاتيب للسيد خليل

بعث السيد خليل المكاتيب الى ماما وبابا

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