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Do second language children learn to read English differently from first language children?

by

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ABSTRACT

This present study compared the differences in approaches to reading aloud, of two English native speakers to that of two native Arabic speakers, with English as their second language. Even though two of the subjects were native English speakers, the spoken English language of all the subjects was on an equal par. The subjects all attend an international American school, where the entire curriculum is taught in English. The subjects were tested from the end of their kindergarten year and into the beginning of the time in grade 1. The instruction in the school for beginning readers is through phonics and whole word recognition. The subjects' miscues were recorded as either errors in whole word, vowel or consonant, onset / rime, semantics and also their approach to decoding an unknown word. Results showed that one of the second language subjects had an advanced level of reading ability than the other three subjects. The two native English subjects showed a heightened level of phonic awareness than the two non-native subjects. This study found that there were no differences between first language and second language children when learning to read English.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my Granddad,

Herbert John Pack

who fell asleep earlier this year.

This is for you Granddad.

All my love,

Layla xx

Acknowledgments

First and foremost I want to thank my mum, because without her support and faith in me, I would not have been able to complete this work. I would also like to thank my sister for her words of wisdom and admiration that kept me going.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction to reading

Children learn to walk and talk naturally and mostly by themselves. Learning to read is one of the first major skills they acquire which needs the direct and planned help of an adult. The child at first can deal only with a few words, and then gradually there is a steep increase in the speed of learning as the child gains a wider vocabulary at a faster and faster rate. The burning questions asked by teacher and parents are; when is a child ready to read, and how do we recognise that moment? (Thompson, 1970). The great challenge for reading educators is one of understanding the parts of the system and the interrelations. Only such understanding enables methodical reflection on the needs and progress of each student (Adams, 1990).

A belief that reading is a generic skill has predominated for many years. We see it in materials used for reading instruction in schools, and in radio and television commercials for programs that claim to teach reading – "There are only forty-seven sounds in the English language. Learn these sounds and you can read anything" (Feathers, 2004). However, Feathers then goes onto explain that no skill is a generic skill, because although you may be able to read, some adults who are able to read and comprehend novels cannot necessarily comprehend tax bills or computer manuals. Reading always takes place within a context and is specific to the context that surrounds the act of reading. Three factors - the text, the reader, and the context of the reading situation - influence reading (Feathers, 2004). Reading is an active and complex process which draws on the application of a number of skills and knowledge about language and print. The skills that are needed include the ability to recognize letters and words, to match letters with sounds and to combine a series of sounds to create words. Reading also relies on the reader's ability to predict words in a text using knowledge about language such as sentence structure, word meanings and the meaning of the text. In applying skills and knowledge the reader is guided by the expectation that what is read should make sense (Browne, 2001)

The current pressure on English schools to promote basic literacy through intensive daily one-hour sessions is leading to an unhealthy concentration on the surface of pronunciation, phonics, word lists and reading aloud in groups. The real basics of literacy must include purposes, motives and understanding. Children learn literacy skills in the process of using writing and reading for their own purposes; similarly the pleasures and advantages of communicating that first launched them into talking.

Reading can be defined loosely as the ability to make sense of written or printed symbols, as the reader uses the symbols to guide the recovery of information from his or her memory and subsequently uses this information to construct a plausible interpretation of the writer's message (Mitchell, 1982). In a book written by Croft (1980), a writer by the name of B.W. Robinett uses a description of 'reading' by Ronald Wardhaugh (p355): 'When a person reads a text, he is attempting to discover the meaning of what he is reading by using the visual clues of spelling, his knowledge of probabilities of occurrence, his contextual-pragmatic knowledge, and his syntactic and semantic competence to give a meaningful interpretation to the text. Reading is not a passive process, in which a reader takes something out of the text without any effort or merely recognises what is on the page and then interprets it, but a process in which a stage of decoding precedes a stage of involvement with meaning. There is little reason to suppose that there are two such discrete, non-overlapping stages. Reading is instead an active process, in which the reader must make an active contribution by drawing upon and using concurrently various abilities that he has acquired.'

One motive for studying reading is to discover principles that can be used as a basis for improving techniques of teaching reading. The main concern is with the process by which children learn the skills required for fluent reading. However, it is not easy to discover how these skills are learned unless we have a clear idea of *what* is learned, which means we have to understand the nature of the definitions, rules and procedures which are eventually used by accomplished readers to extract the meaning of the text (Mitchell, 1982).

Frank Smith (1988) has used the figure of speech of 'joining the literacy club' to distinguish the social nature of literacy learning. He argues that children develop literacy by joining a community of readers and writers who use literacy to accomplish real purposes. The established members of the club draw the new members into their activities and as they do not expect children to learn everything at once, they help them with things they cannot do in the confident expectation that eventually they will be able to join in all club activities. Smith suggests that this is the only way children can learn effectively - there being 'no evidence that any child ever learned to read by simply being subjected to a program of systematic instruction'. The metaphor is persuasive and Smith urges teachers to ensure that clubs exist and that no child is excluded from them by providing a wider range of classroom activities. This points to an appropriate form of interaction between teacher and child being closer to the expert-apprentice relationship rather than the instructor-pupil relationship.

Thompson (1972) believes that it is a good idea to begin to read at the earliest possible age, since a child's general education is mostly dependent on his ability to read and write. A great deal of his general knowledge will be derived from books as there is a strict limit to what he or she can be told by a teacher. Today in most primary schools, there is much more emphasis on finding out and recording than on sitting and listening to a teacher's lecturing. All children learn things at different speeds and with the classes in schools being so overcrowded these days, it is becoming more and more important for a child to be able to read alone in order to get on.

Perhaps the most important single factor which decides the age at which a child will read is the ability to concentrate (Thompson, 1972). Some children will find sitting quietly and reading or writing, a great strain in the beginning as they are used to playing and not having to focus on a particular task for any longer than they wish too.

1.2   Phonics and phonological awareness

Teaching children to manipulate the sounds in language helps all types of readers learn to read. Phonological awareness is the understanding that the streams of sounds that are contained in words can be separated into distinct sounds and that language contains units of sound that are smaller than the word (Browne, 2001). Children's phonological development follows a clear pattern, from an awareness of syllables, to an awareness of onsets and rimes within syllables, to an awareness of individual sounds or phonemes (Treiman and Zukowski, 1996, cited in Browne, 2001).

The phonics approach was used from the middle of the nineteenth century and has continued to influence practice in schools. In this process the relationship between letter shapes and letter sounds is used to teach children to read. There are forty-four sounds in the English language that are represented by twenty-six letters (Browne, 2001) for the reason that there are more sounds (phonemes) than symbols (graphemes) and one grapheme may represent more than one phoneme, that is for example; the letter C may be sounded as /c/, /s/ or it may be silent, as in 'science'. The actual number of sounds that any one person uses is dependent on their accent or regional dialect. This is one of the difficulties with teaching phonics, as many irregular or different grapho-phonic correspondences occur in words which readers encounter in early texts, such as the sound represented by the symbol 'a' is different in 'all', 'hat' and 'make'. In spite of the inconsistencies in sound symbol correspondences, there are links between letter symbols and sounds and when used in combination with other reading strategies, phonic knowledge can be helpful to readers (Browne, 2001).

Another part of reading instruction that goes hand in hand with phonics, is decoding. Decoding is being able to use visual, syntactic, or semantic cues to make meaning from words and sentences. Visual cues are how the word looks, the letters themselves, and the letter combinations or groupings and their associated sounds. Syntactic cues are how the sentences are structured and how the words are ordered. Semantic cues are how the word

fits into the context of the sentence as in the part of speech, the association with pictures, or the meaning cues in the sentence (Tankersley, 2003). Visual cues are usually associated with sight words which are words that are taught as the whole word, rather than breaking it down into sounds. Words taught in this manner help children build their vocabulary at a faster rate and helps those who are still having difficulty in phonetically sounding out a word. A lot of beginner readers rely heavily on semantic clues such as the pictures, as these help them deduce what the sentence is about. If the child was to come across the word 'mother' but was not able to read it phonetically, they should be able to decode what the word says by looking at the character on the page. However, semantic cues can often lead to errors in the child's reading. For example, a child might read the sentence, 'The man was feeding the chicks' as 'The man was feeding the chickens', as they are probably more familiar with the word 'chickens'.

A lot of the time, the reason for a child's difficulty in learning to read is that they may be using a less effective decoding strategy than children who learn to read characteristically. When encountering an unfamiliar word, there are a number of strategies that children can use in order to decode the word. These decoding strategies are part-word decoding, whole-word decoding, phonological analysis, and analogical decoding (McGuinness 1997, cited in Laing, 2002). A part-word decoding strategy arises when the reader searches for familiar letters, letter strings and/or small words within the text. The reader then tries to arrange them into something that looks a lot like a word they know. For example, the reader might focus on the letters *h, l* and *d*, in the word *helped* and come up with the word *held* (Laing, 2002). A whole-word decoding strategy is when the reader identifies and processes the initial and/or final letter of the word and then guesses what the word is, for example, the reader would focus on the letters *f* and *l* in the *fail* and come up with the word *fall.*

Both these two strategies are less successful for word recognition and they both require the use of context, such as the pictures or the rest of the sentence, to guess the unfamiliar words. Stanovich (1980, cited in Laing, 2002) states that the use of context is not a very

effective strategy for reading unfamiliar words because most words cannot be guessed accurately without using other processes such as phonological analysis and/or orthographic knowledge. In analogic decoding the reader learns, through their experience with print, to focus on common orthographic patterns in the development of sight word recovery approaches or direct access to the word's pronunciation and meaning in the lexicon (Laing, 2002). Instead of processing each of the individual letters in the word *mat*, the reader visually recognizes the letter sequence through analogy as the word *mat*, which has been stored as a unit in the word lexicon. Using an analogic decoding strategy, the reader may use the pronunciation of the orthographic sequence *ight* as in *light* and then use this knowledge to decode the word *sight* because of its orthographic similarity. While this strategy is a valuable and difficult way to recognize words, research proposes that even beginning readers are capable of using orthographic knowledge to read by analogy (Goswami 1986, cited in Laing, 2002).

A cognitive process involved in word reading and spelling is verbal working memory and the activity of reading requires the simultaneous processing, retention, and retrieval of information and it therefore places a considerable demand on the individual's working memory (Siegel 2002, cited in Jongejan & Verhoeven, 2007). There are a range of perspectives about how reading should be taught and the bottom-up perspective is built on the basis that learning to read is a process of breaking the code in an organized way - good readers are good decoders. The main approach for the teaching of phonics connected with a bottom up perspective is synthetic phonics (Schumm, 2006).

Synthetic phonics emphasizes part-to whole instruction, because children are taught sounds in isolation and are then asked to blend these sounds together to form words. A teacher following a synthetic phonics program may ask children who have mastered certain letter sounds to blend or synthesize them to form words. For example, if children are familiar with the sounds /b/, /a/, and /t/, they can blend them to form the word bat. According to the top-down perspective, reading is primarily meaning making fueled by the reader's growing knowledge of the spoken word. Good readers are good meaning

makers. Top-down advocates rely on an analytic phonics approach. Analytic phonics emphasizes whole-to-part-to-whole instruction. This means that children are given whole words with similar patterns, and they make a generalized guess about the parts of the words that are similar. Therefore, when introducing the word bat, the teacher would remind the students about words they already know, such as the word boy, and the word cat. If they were to take the beginning of the word boy, and the ending of the word cat, then they have produced the word 'bat'.

With the analytic approach, words are introduced in context and the context cues are considered vitally important. Naturally occurring text is important as well and as the children become more comfortable with word parts, they are able to form other words with the same information. The idea that oral errors provide a window into how a child processes text originated with the work of Kenneth Goodman, and in a key study, Goodman (1965, cited in McKenna & Picard, 2006) found that children identified words more accurately in context than in isolation. Miscues are a window on the reading process, a way to understand how and why readers respond to text as they do (Martens, 1997).

Goodman (1969) observed that all readers, from capable to not capable, arrange cues from two bodies in the context of the background knowledge and experience: (a) the language cues systems in the text – the graphophonic system (spelling, sound, and phonic relationships), the syntactic system (the grammar or structure of the language) and the semantic/pragmatic system (the personal and social meaning in the situational context; (b) general cognitive strategies – readers initiate (making the decision to read), sample (selecting the most productive and useful cues based on what they know about reading, the text and the particular situational context) infer (guessing information needed based on the partial information they have), predict (anticipating information is coming that they do not already know) confirm or disconfirm (self-monitoring their

reading so they are constructing meaning), correct (reconstructing the text and recovering meaning) and terminate (deciding to stop reading).

One of the major components that establish a child's readiness to learn to read is his or her understanding of how the sounds work together. Children learn that words are made up of individual phonemes that help to make one word distinguishable from another word. For example, the words cat, sat, and rat have the same phoneme sound 'at' at the end of the word but because of the initial phoneme difference, a listener interprets very different meanings for each word. Phonemic awareness is this ability to take words apart, to put them back together again, and to change them to something else. It is a foundational skill around which the rest of the threads of reading are woven (Tankersley, 2003). Children should also understand the concept of a word and that the position of a word makes a difference in a sentence and also that words are made up of letters and their position in that word changes how the word is read and how many syllables a word contains.

1.3   The bi-lingual child

For the first time in the history of the English language, second language speakers outnumber those for whom it is the mother tongue, and interaction in English increasingly involves no first language speakers whatsoever (Jenkins, 2000). In turn, the need to understand English is growing rapidly as people from all over the world are required to have some form of understanding of the English language in order to work in better paying jobs or to be able to communicate with other international speakers of languages other than their own. Second language learners follow a predictable path in their acquisition of a new language, irrespective of their first language, aptitude and context of acquisition and language learners vary in the efficiency with which they go through these stages (Sanz, 2005). A second language learner is anyone who uses

another language than his or her first language, that is, the language that they first learnt as a child. These learners are often called an L2 user.

Language permeates school life. Boys and girls in their attempts to master the school curriculum and in the process of growing up have to call upon their language resources. They are expected to increase these resources by making the language encountered in their school learning a living part of their thinking and communication. In children's encounters with reading, there is a confrontation between their comfortably acquired mother-tongue and the varieties of language which have grown up around institutionalised areas of learning.

The L2 user often differs considerably from monolingual speakers, which usually implies that the L2 user's first language (L1) and L2 systems differ from those of a monolingual native speaker of both languages. The L2 user's L2 system in turn affects the L1 system as well. Studying this idea from one viewpoint could lead to the understanding that L2 users are native speakers of neither L1 nor L2, because their systems are different from monolingual native speakers of both languages (Cook, 2002). However, looking at this from another perspective, these speakers have competence in two languages, even though it may be of a different type of competency from monolingual speakers of these two languages.

Mayo and del Pilar (2003) state that speakers of two or more languages develop and maintain a separate phonological system for each language. However, there is evidence that in the process of multiple acquisition, the several languages may interact so that the acquisition of each is qualitatively different from that of the monolingual speaker (Holm & Dodd, 1999, cited in Mayo & del Pilar, 2003). As this study is looking at the differences in learning to read English by first language and second language learners of English, it is interesting to first examine the second language that is the non-native speakers' first language – Arabic.

Arabic ranks sixth in the world's league table of languages, English being the fourth, with an estimated 186 million native speakers and it belongs to the Semitic group of languages which also includes Hebrew and Amharic, the main language of Ethiopia. The term "Arabic" may refer to either literary Arabic (*(al-)fuṣḥā*) or the many localized varieties of Arabic commonly called colloquial Arabic. Arabs consider literary Arabic as the standard language and tend to view everything else as mere dialects. Literary Arabic (translated: al-luġatu l-arabiyyatu l-fuṣḥā "the most eloquent Arabic language"), refers both to the language of present-day media, practically all written matter including books, newspapers, magazines, documents of every kind, and reading primers for small children across North Africa and the Middle East and to the language of the Qur'an (Arabic Language, 2008).

Literary Arabic or classical Arabic is the official language of all Arab countries and is the only form of Arabic taught in schools at all stages. Arabic has lent many words to other languages of the Islamic world, as Latin has contributed to most European languages. It has also borrowed from those languages, as well as Persian and Sanskrit from early contacts with their affiliated regions. During the Middle Ages, Arabic was a major vehicle of culture, especially in science, mathematics and philosophy, with the result that many European languages have also borrowed numerous words from it (Arabic Language, 2008).

Most Arabic letters have more than one written form, depending on whether the letter is placed at the beginning, middle or end of a word. The essential shape of the letter is still maintained in all three cases. In addition, the letters are divided into categories according to basic letter shapes, and the difference between them is the number of dots on, in or under the letter, although not all the letters contain such dots (Abu-Rabia & Awwad, 2004). As Arabic is made up of words that are a combination of consonants and vowels, skilled and adult readers are expected to read texts without short vowels, which in turn leads to heavy reliance on context and other resources. Reading accuracy in Arabic requires vowelising word endings according to their grammatical function in the

sentence, which is an advanced phonological and syntactical ability (Abu-Rabia & Awwad, 2004).

In schools in a large number of Middle Eastern countries, Arabic is a compulsory part of the school curriculum and is taught from pre-school through to grade 12. In the United Arab Emirates, children must attend an Arabic lesson every day for the same amount of instructional time as any other period in the school day. During Arabic time in most schools in Abu Dhabi, from grade 1 and up, the children are separated into different classrooms, with one classroom being first language Arabic speakers and the other class for non-native speakers. Younger children stay together as a class and are taught Arabic on the same level regardless of whether they are first or second language learners.

One of the most obvious difficulties in using spelling clues for reading appears when the student's native language is not alphabetically represented (Croft, 1980). The Arabic alphabet has no similar representations to the English alphabet and it is read from right to left as opposed to the English way of left to right. If this is not already enough of a difficulty to overcome, it does not help that there is a relatively poor fit between the sound and the graphic symbol of the English language. English spelling patterns do not conform to the one-to-one relationship between symbol and sound which is characteristic of other languages with better 'fit', such as Finnish or Spanish (Croft, 1980).

In a differentiated classroom, assessment is ongoing and diagnostic. Its goal is to provide teachers with day-to-day data on students' readiness for particular ideas and skills, their interests, and their learning profiles. Teachers who teach in differentiated classrooms do not see assessment as something that comes at the end of a unit to find out what students have learned but rather, assessment to them is today's means of understanding how to modify tomorrow's instruction (Tomlinson, 1999). Teaching children to read can also be looked at as an ongoing form of assessment. Listening to children read, informs the listener of the students current ability and whether he/she can increase the level of the reading book, or if they are in need of reading intervention by school ELL teachers.

This research project will look at the errors (miscues) that children who are learning to read are making when reading aloud. Children with English as their first language and children with Arabic as their first and English as their second language will read aloud a series of books, while information is recorded in order to investigate the differences in their attempts to decode words in the English language.

Chapter 2 – Methodology

2.1   Data Sample

Subjects for this study all came from the same elementary school in an international community in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. Their elementary school was part of a kindergarten through grade 12 American International School. The participants chosen for this investigation made up a total of four females, and were chosen in order to represent the cross-section of school-age children in their year level who (1) were non-native speakers of English and (2) who had English as their first and only language. Two of the girls were from an Emirati background, one was from Belgium and the other from America. The two Emirati children had Arabic as their first language and English as their second, whereas the other two both had English as their first and only language. Subject 1 was a native English speaker of the age 5.10. Subject 2 was also a native English speaker with an age of 5.9. Subjects 3 and 4 were native Arabic speakers with English as their second language and were of the ages 5.3 and 5.9 respectively.

One of the central objectives of the overall investigation, which guided the selection of the subjects, was the complete difference in their cultural backgrounds and the languages spoken at home, that may therefore show whether learning to read in a non-native language has any sort of effect on how they learn to read. While an ethnography is a complete account of a particular culture, a case study such as this one, examines a facet or particular aspect of the culture or subculture under investigation. Despite this more limited reach of case studies, many case studies share certain features with ethnographies (Nunan, 1992), and both attempt to provide a representation of what is going on in a particular setting. Another reason for choosing to research these particular individuals is that in applied linguistics, the case study has been used principally as a tool to trace the language development of first and second language learners (Nunan, 1992).

2.2   Phonics and teaching in the classroom

All of the four children had been taught to read through the use phonics. Literacy time in the classroom was focused on learning the sounds of letters and sounding out letters in order to read a word. The class was taught a new letter of the alphabet each week, and worked on the sounds of this letter and also words that began with the letter. The weekly letter order was chosen by the teacher based on the formation of the letter, first 'c', then 'a' then 'd' for example. This way may prove to be beneficial to the child's handwriting skills, but I feel that in order to enhance their reading at an earlier stage, it would have made more sense to teach them letters that they could link together to form words, for example 'c', then, 'a', 't', then either 'h' or 'b'.

As well as this way of teaching, children were also given whole words on a regular basis that they had to memorise by sight in order for them to be able to recognise the formation of the word and build their reading skills along with their confidence. This was especially important for the children who had not yet grasped an understanding of the letter sounds and could therefore not sound them out in order to form words.

2.3   Task

The subjects began their testing during the second semester of kindergarten 2 (with the class average of ages being between 5 and 6) and were further tested in the first semester of their following school year in grade 1. The subjects were recorded reading each week on a series of books that increased in difficulty as the weeks progressed. The initial books used for reading were from the Scott Foresman Reading collection, a copyright of Pearson Education. The books used when the children entered grade one were from the Rigby Literacy Series and published by Rigby, a division of Reed Elsevier.

2.4   Method of collection

The children's reading was recorded using an mp3 player. In order to be able to transcribe what was going on during reading assessment, I recorded their reading and also any prompts that I had to give them at any time, pauses they made and words that they placed more stress on when pronouncing them. I also especially noted the errors they made and whether or not it was a whole word error or an error made in part of the word. Also recorded, was whether they used the picture as a clue to the words (semantics), any vowel or consonant that was misidentified and their approach to decoding an unknown word.   Audio recording is an unobtrusive method of collecting data and easy to undertake in the classroom. It has proved successful in mainstream classrooms (Elliot and Adelman, 1976, cited in Tilstone, 1998) and although Wragg (1994) mentions that the loss of important visual cues and variable sound quality as being some of the disadvantages of audio recording, this was not the case during the time of this particular data collection, and all recordings made of the four subjects were clearly audible and carefully referenced to the recording number on the mp3 device.

2.5   Reasons for method of data analysis

Effective readers can use world knowledge and background information to draw valid interferences and conclusions from texts, use comprehension monitoring strategies and repair strategies while reading, and use their knowledge of spelling patterns to assist with possible pronunciations of words they encounter while reading to increase comprehension (Tankersley, 2003). In order to interpret the recorded data of the children reading, the errors made by the readers were divided into different sections in order to look at where the majority of mistakes were coming from and any patterns that showed in the errors.

Miscue analysis analyses the mistakes readers make when reading aloud, and is one method of investigating the reading-aloud process, and even though reading-aloud is not the 'normal' way in which people read as it may be a process that is very different from reading silently, it was the way in which the subjects were tested in this research project. Miscues are experienced when, in reading aloud, the observed response is different from the expected response that is the actual word or words on the page (Wallace, 1992, cited in Alderson, 2000). Goodman (1969) is a strong believer that the analysis of miscues, including omissions, is a tool in analyzing and diagnosing how readers make sense of what they struggle to read. As part of analyzing the reading ability of these four subjects, miscue analysis was used and recorded in the 'error' column of the data analysis section (see Appendix 2 and 3). Although Alderson (2000) states that because miscues focus on word-level information and that much information relevant to an understanding of reading remains unexplored, such as text exploration, it has been chosen as a tool in this research as it has been shown to be limited to early readers in its usefulness, and where the case here is to analyze the whole procedure of oral reading, where the readers are not reading for comprehension but for performance.

2.6   Interview data showing effect of Arabic influence

As the Arabic language is read from right to left as opposed to left to right as in English, subsequent to the testing of the children after a few weeks, I felt it was necessary to also interview the children's Arabic teacher in order to compare the ways in which they are teaching the children to read in Arabic and whether or not learning to read in English affects the Arabic reading as the Arabic influence also appears to do when the child is trying to read English. The oral interview has been widely used as a research tool in applied linguistics and in addition to its use in survey research it has been used by second language acquisition researchers seeking data on stages and processes of acquisition (Nunan, 1992). The type of interview that was chosen in this instance was a formal type of interview, known as a structured interview, where the agenda is totally predetermined

by the researcher, who works through a list of set questions in a predetermined order. This interview is available in Appendix 4 (Nunan, 1992).

Chapter 3 – Review of the Literature

3.1   Reading and phonological skills.

Goswami and Bryant (1990) have considered what happens while young children are actually in the process of reading. They question whether or not the children use their knowledge of sounds in order to read real words, or if they convert letters into sounds and then work out that these sounds adds up to a particular word? One of their hypotheses is that if reading leads to phonological awareness, then we would not expect young children who are just beginning to learn to read to use a phonological code at the very beginning stages of reading. Their other hypothesis that phonological awareness causes reading, however, suggests that if children are sensitive to sounds before they begin reading and if this sensitivity in turn affects the way that they read, they will probably take advantage of the phonological code as soon as they begin to learn to read. Reading phonologically is when words are read by converting the letters into sounds. Goswami and Bryant (1990), state that these children are using at least two possible phonological codes; grapheme-phoneme relations and intra-syllabic units.

These two strategies may work for a majority of words in the English language, but there are also certain words that children learn simply by recognition and having repeatedly come into contact with them. These are often called visual strategies or global strategies, and involve the 'whole word' method (Goswami & Bryant, 1990). This teaches beginning readers to recognise words as complete units rather than to use letter-sound association.

When teaching in my classroom, I started with this particular method of teaching due to the fact that some of my students still had not learned all the letter sounds and this method does not require that knowledge. I would send home six sight words a week, and during circle time, would revise these words with the class using flash cards. However, once I began to send basic reading books home, I started to notice the importance for the child to be phonologically aware before he/she could start to read.

George Marsh (1980) conducted research on children's attempts to read and spell words that are entirely new to them. Marsh thought that the form of children's reading must be heavily influenced by the stage of intellectual development that they happen to be at (Goswami & Bryant, 1990). He turned to Piaget's (1958) theory of intellectual development and suggested that there are distinct stages in children's reading, just as there are distinct stages of intellectual development according to Piaget. Marsh then went on to suggest that there are four main stages in the development of reading: stage 1 – linguistic substitution; stage 2 – discrimination, net substitution; stage 3 – sequential decoding; stage 4 – hierarchical decoding.

Stage one explains how children read words as logograms, which in turn means that that they then have no rational way of working out what an unfamiliar word means (Goswami & Bryant, 1990). In this stage, Marsh again is in agreement with Piaget, who argues that one of the main difficulties for children of this age was that they tend to focus their attention on prominent details and cannot analyse patterns into separate parts. Stage two is where two big changes occur. Children begin to notice that the picture context will help them to decipher unfamiliar words, by either the help of linguistic cues, or from spotting similarities from familiar words. In stage 3, and according to Piaget, by the time the child has reached the age of about eight, they are in the concrete operations period of their life. Marsh claims that they are now at the stage where they use grapheme-phoneme correspondences to figure out new regular words. Stage 4 is when the children begin to make proper analogies when they read (Goswami & Bryant, 1990). Piaget supports Marsh's fourth stage in stating that a reason why analogies come so late is because analogies involve a kind of reasoning which children cannot master until after the age of ten years (Piaget & Inhelder, 1958, cited in Goswami & Bryant, 1990).

It is felt that one of the subjects of this current study is already approaching stage 3 of reading development, and this will be discussed later in further detail.

Revising Marsh's account on reading, Frith (1985) devised a three-stage theory of reading. The three stages were; 1 – logographic, 2 – alphabetic and 3 – orthographic. In the first stage, children read words as logograms, in the second they also apply grapheme-phoneme rules, and in the third they begin as well to analyse words 'into orthographic units without phonological conversion' (Goswami & Bryant, 1990). The claim made by both Marsh and Frith, that children read logographically first and alphabetically later, has been justified by later research (Goswami & Bryant, 1990). However, Goswami and Bryant (1990), state that the Marsh and Frith's claim that children spell logographically before they spell alphabetically, does not fit any of the facts. Marsh and Frith also ignored rhyme and awareness of onset and rime, which may also be the reason that they do not suggest that children recognise sequences of letters and relate them to sounds at a relatively early stage in reading.

Testing the subjects in this study did not involve seeing whether or not they could spell, but onset and rime is further looked at later on.

Goswami and Bryant (1990) also discuss the problems between regular and irregular (exception and ambiguous) words, (regular for example –save, exception for example – have). So if it is said that children improve in reading by using a phonological code, then this would mean that they would make more mistakes when they come across irregular words (Goswami & Bryant, 1990). The other irregular words known as ambiguous words, are words that also contain sequences of letters which signify different sounds in different words (clown vs. blown). A study conducted by Backman, Bruck and Seidenberg (1984) found that both of these two types of irregularity do make it harder for children to read, which must mean that they are to some extent dependent on letter-sound relationships when they read (Goswami & Bryant, 1990).

When listening to children read, I have come across many incidents where they are trying to sound out the word phonetically as they already know their letter sounds, but are not able to decode that particular word due to its irregularity. I agree strongly with Backman

et al, that these types of words do make it much harder for children to understand how to read.

Gough (1983) examined the nature of the decoding errors in skilled and non-skilled decoders. A sequence of experiments was conducted to examine the presumption that oral-reading errors made by skilled decoders were due to a failure to process a letter or to apply a rule, or to the inaccurate application of a rule. They predicted that the resulting miscues would be conventional to the phonological rules of English but might or might not form a recognizable word. As a result, many of the decoding errors made by skilled readers were expected to result in the creation of nonsense words. This evidence would indicate that the skilled readers were using phonological analysis and/or analogic strategies to decode unfamiliar words. The contrasting prediction was that non-skilled decoders would create oral-reading errors that would result in real-word substitutions rather than nonsense words. This evidence would indicate that the non-skilled decoders go back to using whole-word strategies for decoding, which is less effective than using part-word strategies. Although this study does not look at whether the subjects are comprehending what they are reading, it is interesting to point out that Laing (2002) continues this section by stating that due to the fact that nonsense words have no semantic content, it may be predicted that errors of this type would interfere with ongoing comprehension of text and although the production of a nonsense word shows good decoding strategies, it may in due course be counterproductive to the construction of meaning.

Some of the books that the children had to read throughout the study had new and difficult words that they had to decode and as a result, they produced nonsense words. For example, one of the first language speakers decoded the word 'stretch' into the word 'stary', and another one read the words 'man' as 'manee' and 'him' as 'heem'. However, the second language subjects also produced some nonsense words such as 'strish' instead of 'stretch' and 'bas' instead of 'bus'.

Mitchell (1982) mentions in his work that the study done on individual differences in the reading skills of children, suggests that the ability to decode or pronounce words may be a significant determinant of following achievement in reading. It was suggested that the reason for this may be that that it equips readers to work out the identity of words which they do not yet know by sight. He states that if this argument is correct, then training in phonic skills should facilitate the process of learning to read.

Mitchell then goes on to say that the most methodical and organized review of the relevant research is that carried out by Chall (1996) who feels that although it becomes apparent that the hypothesis is impossible to test as it stands because all reading programs dedicate some time to phonic skills, she was able to provide a partial answer to the question by considering the results of nine studies which compared programs that place strong importance on phonics with others that allocate a less important role to this aspect of training. Chall used different tests of performance in each of the studies, but several of them included some kind of test of oral word recognition and a test of comprehension. She found that in the case of the word recognition, the majority of the studies showed that the advantage lay with phonic training, but when it came to the comprehension tests, the results were less straightforward. She found that at the beginning of the first grade, the children who received phonic training tended to obtain lower comprehension scores than others, but the position was reversed by the end of grade two. Chall suggested that the early disadvantage of phonic training schemes could be due to the fact that the children obtain a habit of concentrating on the pronunciation of words instead of on their meaning. By the time these children were in grade two and they had become more fluent at these decoding skills, they were then able to pay more attention to the meaning of the passage that they had read. As these children were eventually able to do better than the children who received little phonics training, Chall states that an emphasis on decoding skills aids the process of learning to read.

It is obvious from the research and from this current study that phonics instruction does play an enormous role on a child's ability to decode words and become skilled at word recognition.

In 1964, Bishop (cited in Mitchell, 1982) carried out an experiment in which college students learned to pronounce either a set of Arabic characters or a list of words that were printed in Arabic characters. For both cases there was a one-to-one correspondence between graphemes and phonemes and following the preliminary training, both groups of subjects were required to pronounce a new set of words that had been put together from the original characters. Bishop found that the level of performance on the new words was higher for the subjects who had learned to pronounce individual letters.

As Arabic is the first language of the two non-native speakers of English, it is interesting to see how a test that is somewhat similar to this current study results in similar findings.

Jeffrey and Samuels (1967, cited in Mitchell, 1982) carried out a similar study using kindergarten children and a specially constructed set of letters. As was the case for the study by Bishop, their results showed that the number or new words pronounced correctly was greater for the children who had learnt the sounds of the individual letters than for the children who had undergone training that had required them to pronounce whole words. These results suggest that detailed training on specific grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences may be one of the best ways of enabling a child to handle new words when he or she encounters them.

The children in this current study have all had training in both grapheme to phoneme connection and also sight word recognition (whole word). Since all four children had been taught by different teachers, the amount of emphasis on these two methods of teaching is not known. To be able to compare this study to that of Jeffrey and Samuels, is not entirely possible at this stage, without further investigation into the background of each child's education.

A study by Connelly (1994, cited in Owen & Pumfrey, 1995) compared pupils at two Scottish schools which varied in the extent to which phonics was taught. In one of the schools from the beginning of their first year at school, the children were taught the sounds of the letters using individual letter cards and then three months later they were

taught to sound out words and blend sounds together in order to pronounce unfamiliar words. By the end of their first year at school, the children had learned about consonant blends and vowel diagraphs. In the other school, the children were also taught the letter sounds at the beginning of the year and to look at the initial sound of an unfamiliar word, but were not taught to sound out letters or blend sounds together until February, six months of being at school as opposed to three months in first school. This study found that although the pupils in both schools were matched for vocabulary knowledge and of the same age, in March of that school year, the children in the first school had a reading age that was nine months ahead of their chronological age, whereas the children in the second school had a reading age that was only three months ahead of their chronological age. This study showed that the degree to which phonics was used to teach reading had a measurable impact on the development of the child's reading progress.

Subjects in this present study were not taught to blend sounds together until around January of their school year and as is discussed later, their reading ability was therefore not as good as it should have been by the time they entered the next year level of school.

Among some of the suggestions that McKenna and Picard (2006) state in their work is that teachers should view meaningful miscues (like substituting *pony* for *horse*) as evidence of insufficient decoding skills, and not as an end result to be encouraged. Due to the fact that beginning readers will try to make up for weak decoding by dependence on context, teachers should instruct them in how to use the graphophonic, semantic and syntactic cueing systems to support early reading. Instead of immediately telling a struggling reader the word that they are trying to read, McKenna and Picard (2006) suggest that the teacher should respond instead with prompts such as "What's the first sound?" or "Is there a part of the word you know?" or "You said ____, does that make sense to you?". They state that the context prompt should be the child's last resort, not the first.

It is felt that this method of data collection should have been taken into consideration prior the testing of the five subjects and is something that should be considered when analyzing the results.

McKenna and Picard (2006) summarize their findings by stating that analyzing oral reading miscues can be beneficial, but perspectives on how it should inform instruction have changed. Miscue analysis can help to monitor a child's inability to apply reading strategies such as decoding, analogy, word prediction from sight content and sight recognition, and it can also reveal whether the balance is shifting over time from context dependency and toward automatic decoding.

3.2   The effects of a second language.

The importance of both the linguistic and the semantic context are found in studies which analyzed the miscues produced during oral reading (Goodman, 1965). Lopez (1977, cited in Devine *et al,* 1987) examined the oral reading behavior in Spanish of Hispanic children, and found a difference in the miscues produced in reading words in lists and words in text. She found significant numbers of words that were mispronounced in reading lists were not mispronounced when they were read in a text. She also found that when the words in the text were misread, the miscues still tended to maintain the meaning of the word. This study basically supports the fact that background knowledge, such as the child's culture and what they have been previously exposed to in their lives, can have a facilitating effect on their comprehension of the text and reducing their reading miscues. Devine *et al* go on to state that there is a significant amount of research which shows that the cultural backgrounding of a text is a factor in both first and second language reading.

Stanovich (1980) proposed a model suggesting that poor decoders attempt to use context not only to decide among multiple meanings but also to locate a word in memory in the

first place. In other words, they rely on context to compensate for weak word recognition skills, but they soon discover that context is an unreliable crutch on which to lean.

The children of this current study often used the semantics of the story as a tool for decoding unfamiliar words. It is in agreement with Lopez that cultural background does play a role in helping the children with their reading, especially when they can rely on pictures or familiar story settings.

Children attending schools in which the instructional language is different from their native language are faced with the challenge of mastering academic skills in a language that they have yet to fully acquire. In some studies, an initially lower reading performance on the part of L2 learners relative to L1 learners has been found to recede after a longer period of reading instruction. When Verhoeven (1990) compared Dutch and Turkish children's Dutch word recognition abilities following 5, 10, and 20 months of reading instruction, for example, the Dutch children showed a better overall performance following 5 and 10 months of reading instruction but no significant differences from the Turkish children following 20 months of reading instruction.

The subjects of this current study did not display such results, as subjects 2 (L1) and 3 (L2) continued to get a similar amount of miscues throughout the testing period.

A number of studies have shown phonological awareness skills to transfer from one language to another and in a study of Spanish-speaking first-grade students, Durgunoğ˘lu et al (1993) showed children with high levels of phonological awareness in Spanish (L1) to be more likely than other children to be able to read English words and pseudowords. The possible transfer of phonological awareness between languages may thus constitute an advantage for L2 learners. There is evidence that children who are exposed to more than one phonological system, in addition, have heightened levels of phonological awareness, even in the early stages of L2 acquisition.

Again with contrasting evidence from this study, it was seen that subject 2, who does not have a second language, was the one with the most skill in using phonics. However, it is not possible to say if subject 4 has a heightened level of phonological awareness as her word recognition skills were so good that she did not pause often enough to tell if she was decoding phonetically or not. Therefore, in this case, there is not enough evidence to agree or disagree with Durgunog˘lu *et al* (1993) on whether or not children who are exposed to more than one phonological system have heightened levels of phonological awareness.

Jongejan and Verhoeven (2007) also stated that the differences in the phonological awareness of L1 and L2 children might depend on the type of task or grade, but different outcomes have still been found after the type of phonological awareness task and grade have been taken into account. So basically, it is not at all clear if being educated in a second language brings certain advantages or disadvantages for the development of phonological awareness in the second language and the contradictory findings by certain researchers, may certainly relate to the home language of the L2 children, the language of instruction, or the particular combination of such.

Oral skill in both languages is relevant to a comprehensive and evenhanded assessment. So are literacy and other academic capabilities in both languages. The effects of knowing and being educated in more than one language may be different depending upon the age at which the learning of a second language is initiated, the type of educational approach that is used, and the social background of the learner.

Phonological knowledge is clearly fundamental to linguistic abilities and is predictive of reading acquisition. The questions that Oller (2002) put forward was 'do bilingual speakers have special phonological knowledge that may play a role in reading?' Bryant *et al* (1989) reminds us that phonological awareness as apparent in tasks such as rhyming or pronunciation of individual segments is highly predictive of reading abilities in young children. It is also been made clear that productive reading, which is the kind of reading that makes it possible to sound out words that have never been encountered in written

form before, must include phonological decoding in languages where the written systems are alphabetical, which in the study by Oller (2002) is the case for both Spanish and English. The reader must be able to map letters to sounds (phonemes or phonemic syllables), and as a result must have at least some awareness of the structure of the phonemic units of the language along with their relationships with orthographic symbols.

It appears that even in languages where there is only a weak connection in the writing organization between phonological factors and graphological ones, such as in the languages of Chinese or Korean, Cho and Chen *et al* (1999, cited in Oller, 2002) states that there are still effects of phonological awareness on reading. They then go on to say that is also emerges that the more direct the mapping between phonological and graphological elements, the faster the children learn to read. In the end of this section, Oller states that there is growing evidence of cross-language transfer for bilinguals, such that phonological awareness for one language predicts word-decoding abilities in the other.

Arabic and English also have a weak connection in their writing organization and as two subjects of this particular study speak both languages it is interesting to see if this plays a part in their ability to learn to read.

Overall, the data collected in Oller's study offered encouragement for the speculation that bilingual children may have special abilities in learning to read owing to their common requirement to practice phonological translation. His correlation results are consistent with the idea that phonological translation practice may foster reading abilities.

Orthographic onsets and rimes emerge from the pattern of relationships between the orthographic and phonological structures of a language. Treiman *et al* (1992) stated that lexical-statistic data for English showed that the relationships between orthography and phonology are most consistent at the level of the orthographic rime, making this substring a useful decoding unit. These authors go on to state that the use of orthographic rime seems to increase with reading skill and experience with the writing system and children

begin to catch on to the advantages of grouping and classifying words on an onset-rime basis once they have built up an adequately extensive sight vocabulary.

This current study looks at the amount of time the subjects make an error when onset and rime are involved. Rhyming is very uncommon in the Arabic language so it is appealing to see whether or not that has an affect on the non-native English speaker's ability to decode words with onset and rime.

Stainthorp (1999) hypothesized that children who are good readers at a very early age prior to being taught would show much higher levels of phonological skill than children who are similar in vocabulary development but who are not yet able to read. It was also predicted that they would have greater alphabetic knowledge and goes on to state that since reading is more than decoding, they predicted that these children would not just be 'barking at print'. In addition to monitoring their subjects' phonological skills and knowledge of the alphabet, they also gave the children a series of nonsense words to read. It was stated that when people try to read a non-word, they have to use their decoding skills in order to construct a plausible phonological translation of the letters, and as this is a pure measure of a subjects decoding skills, it is in turn a good way of assessing how well the children were able to apply their letter-sound knowledge to reading.

The research literature sufficiently demonstrates that the processes involved in learning to read, and the possible explanations for unexpected difficulties in the acquisition of reading skills, are closely related to learning to use the correspondences between letters and sounds (Verhoeven, 2002)

All of the five subjects had been previously taught to read words by learning the connection between letter and sounds. Although the subjects were not given separate non-words to decode, being able to read a word such as 'frippet' is a good measure of their ability to apply letter-sound knowledge.

Chapter 4 – Results

4.1   Results

Out of the four subjects, only three of them were available to read all six books over a
period of six months. Four of these books were read whilst the children were in
kindergarten and the following three books were read in grade 1. The reading analysis
began with all four females reading to me once a week, however, after the school summer
holiday, only three of the subjects returned. It was then necessary to find another first
language English speaker to continue with the reading analysis. Unfortunately, there
were no such female candidates, so it was therefore necessary to choose a male subject
and he read the last two books that the children were being tested on. One of the reasons
that there was only one first language reader being tested in the first week of grade 1 was
because the male subject did not start school till a later date.

As we saw from the methodology, the children's reading errors were divided up into
different areas of 'error produced', 'approach to decoding', 'error type / word
misidentification 'semantic / syntactic error' (see Appendix 2).

Table 1: This table represents the number of errors made by each subject.

Subject	Total Errors	Vowel Errors	Consonant Errors	Onset / Rime Errors	Use of context / semantics	Used phonics correctly
S1 (L1)	17	4	1	0	6	2
S2 (L1)	68	12	3	1 (rime)	9	24
S3 (L2)	86	21	8	9 (rime) 2 (onset)	9	3
S4 (L2)	24	6	1	2 (rime) 1 (onset)	4	2
S5 (L1 male subject)	14	2	1	0	2	3

Figure 1: This graph represents the number of miscues per subject over the testing period.
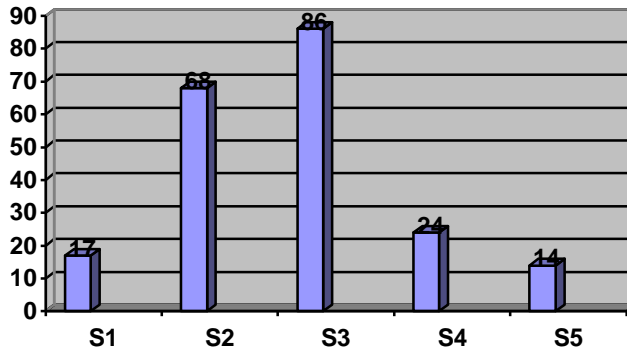
The next table shows the same information, but their errors are calculated by the number of books that the subjects were tested on, as not all read the same amount of books, as was discussed earlier.

Table 2: Table showing errors and use of phonics per book read.

Subject	Total errors / book	Use of phonics / book
S1 (L1)	17 / 5 = **3.4**	2 / 5 = 0.4
S2 (L1)	68 / 6 = **11.3**	24 / 6 = 4
S3 (L2)	86 / 7 = **12.3**	3 / 7 = 0.4
S4 (L2)	24 / 7 = **3.4**	2 / 7 = 0.3
S5 (L1 male subject)	14 / 2 = **7**	3 / 2 = 1.5

Figure 2: This graph shows the subject's errors per book read.
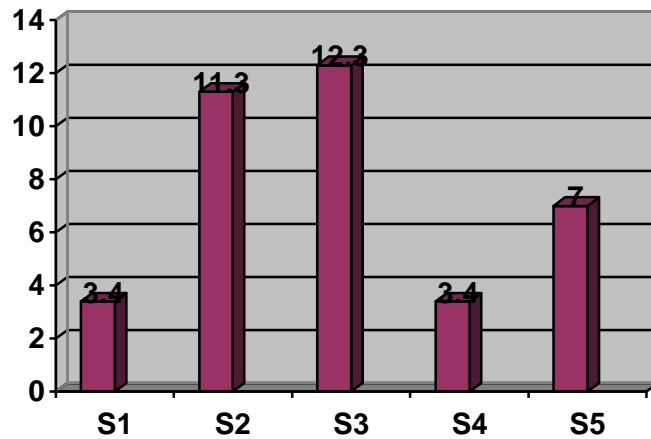
After going over the data results and seeing the area of weakness of the four subjects, it was remarkable to see that one of the second language learners of English (S4) was the most advanced in her reading than the rest of the group. The only slight problem that she had was correctly pronouncing some of the vowel sounds of the words. It appeared that the most confusion was with the sounds / I / as in two separate stories she pronounced it as / i; /. It was also interesting to see that this subject often used another word instead of reading the correct word that was written on the page. For example, she would say the word 'the' instead of the word 'a' or 'on'. Both of her mistakes still made sense in the context of the sentence, but because of her confidence in reading, her own language was influencing what she was orally producing. This is known as first language interference, which will be discussed again at a later stage.

From looking at Table 1, it can be seen that subject 4 had the lowest score in the use of phonics. This was not because she was not able to read a word phonetically, but was due to the fact that her word recognition was so good that she did not need to pause very often to sound out a word.

The other second language learner (S3) turned out to be the weakest of the subjects. Her error score was the highest and her phonetic ability was nearly non-existent. In spite of

this fact however, she did know her letter sounds because a majority of the time she was able to say the initial sound of the word, but her weakness lay in her ability to phonetically link the sounds of the words together. Her short term memory also caused her to have many errors, as she had difficulty in remembering the words that had been given to her earlier in the story, because when she would come across that same word again, she could not remember it. The results of this particular subjects reading ability came as quite a surprise. Although she comes from an Arabic speaking family, with Arabic being the language spoken at home, she is very fluent in English and converses on a day to day basis with her nanny in English. However, when looking back at her age, she was still at least four to five months younger than the rest of the subjects. It is felt that this may be the cause of her guessing the words quite randomly and assuming they will be the right ones.

Another interesting factor was the difficulty that subject 3 had with onset and rime. In this area, she made more mistakes than the rest of the subjects and whether or not this is related to her cultural background where rhyming does not play a part, will be referred to later in the discussion section.

The two subjects who had English as their first and only language both initially struggled with their phonic skills. However, even if it did not always prove successful, they both had a good understanding of how to go about sounding out the letters in order to read a word. It was not a case of them not knowing their letter sounds but the problem presented itself when they had to string the sounds together. The subject (S1) who was only present at the school during the kindergarten stage, showed some of her errors to be related to the tense of the word. For example, she would read the word 'run' as 'ran' and the word 'hid' as 'hide'. At her age she would not have any understanding that she was changing the tense of the word, so it is felt that these mistakes were based on vowel misidentification and the semantics of the story.

Although weak at first, the other first language subject (S2) showed great improvement in her phonic skills once she had entered grade one. It can be seen from her errors that she

had a good understanding of her sounds and most of the time, the errors that she produced, although incorrect, were still very near to what the actual word should have been. Both subjects 2 and 3 showed that a majority of their errors were due to misidentification of the vowel sound and they were still relying quite heavily on the semantics of the story to help them decode the print. Subject 2 relied more than the other subjects on the semantic content of the books and this shows clearly in the type of errors she made. Mistakes such as 'down' instead of 'bottom' and 'mum' instead of 'mother' are examples of her usage of semantics for decoding the word.

As the Arabic language does not consist of letters that are vowels, it appears that S3 found it very difficult to grasp the way that vowel sounds are made when reading. Subject 2 however, should not have had as much difficulty as she is a native English speaker.

The male subject, who arrived later in the beginning of his grade 1 year, scored the more errors per book than both subjects 1 and 4. His main area of error was when he came across words that were too difficult in the sense that they either completely unknown words (such as Frippet) or words that would only be taught at a grade 2 level of instruction. A lot of the words that the children had difficulty with were words with onset-rime such as 'stay' or 'shake'. As the testing was done in the first semester of their grade 1 year, blend words similar to these would not be taught until later in the year, so the subjects had had no exposure to sounding out such words.

It can be seen from the results that whether the child's native language is English or Arabic, does not have an affect on their reading skills. When looking at the results of 'total errors per book' it clearly shows that although subject 4 had twenty-four miscues in total, when looking at how many she had per book, it is only marginally more than subject 1. Subject's 2 and 3 were very close in the number of errors that they made in their reading, with subject 2 being only a slightly better than subject 3. The data also shows that subject 5 turned out to have a higher number of miscues per book than both

subject 1 and 4, whereas if only table one was taken into consideration, it would appear that he did a better job at reading than subjects 2, 3, and 4, which was not the case.

4.2   Information from interview

From reviewing the answers of the questionnaire that was given to the Arabic teacher that taught both kindergarten and grade 1, 2 and 3 students, it became evident that her method of teaching had some similarities to that of the English teachers. When learning Arabic, the children are taught the sounds of the letters, because the letter names are already pronounced as a sound. Throughout their time in kindergarten, the students are only taught letter sounds and words beginning with those sounds are also discussed. However, I was informed that the children are not given sight words, because some Arabic words, like English words, contain letters which are silent, but there are also words where a letter is pronounced, but not written.

The Arabic teacher has also observed the difficulty that some of the students have in remembering that Arabic is read from right to left as opposed to the English left to right. Although the Arabic teacher said that the children are taught to read using phonics, the method of teaching the students to read Arabic could be looked at as a form of 'parrot fashion', as first the teacher reads the sentence, then the students repeat the sentence aloud. This is in contrast to what was said about the sight words. With the children repeating the teacher in this manner as she reads the words, does seem to be teaching them to read the word as a whole, which is the case of learning to read sight words. So therefore are they or they not learning whole word recognition skills? However, the reason that the teacher may feel that she is teaching the children to reading phonetically, could be due to the way she reads the words aloud to them, for them to repeat back to her. For example, the word 'kataba' which means book, may be read to the students as 'ka-ta-ba' therefore showing them the breakdown of the word, rather than the word as a whole.

Unlike in the English language classroom, the students are not given a levelled reader until the reach grade 1. Therefore they are not exposed to reading a book from right to left or becoming familiar with the way the words are written on the page, and do not get a chance of attempting to read the words by themselves or with their parents.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1   Discussion

The objective of this study was to examine the miscues that children make when reading English. To address this question, kindergarten children were examined on their performance on reading aloud and their miscues were recorded (see Appendix A). This examination showed unexpected results. Prior to the study, it was hypothesized that the children with English as their first language would score at a higher level than the children with English as their second language. This was not the case. It can be seen from the results that the child with the lower number of errors while reading aloud was one of the second language learners. Although this may be the case however, all three native English speaking subjects were more efficient in their phonic ability of decoding the words.

When comparing the four subjects that were tested in this study it is important to remember that their overall oral language use of English was more or less the same. Having all been in an international school for 2-3 years prior to the testing, has brought them all to an overall similar proficiency when orally speaking English. From looking at the results of their reading miscues per book, subject 2 and subject 3 had nearly the same amount of errors as each other, so with that data alone, it can be said that first language does not have an effect on a child's ability to learn to read.

When comparing this data to the two hypotheses (1- reading causes phonological awareness and, 2- phonological awareness causes reading) made by Goswami and Bryant (1990) it is felt that reading may lead to phonological awareness for non-native speakers of English. Although subject 3 did know her letters and most of their sounds, she had not yet become familiar with the method of stringing these sounds together to form words. However, with time and further observation, it is felt that she would show evidence that reading practice does in turn lead her to become more phonologically aware. In regards to Goswami and Bryants' (1990) second hypothesis that if children are sensitive to the letter sounds before they begin reading, then they will be able to use the phonological

code as soon as they begin to read, which in this instance, proved to be the case of the first language learners. Both subjects one and two had a stronger grasp at phonics than the other two subjects.

In relation to Frith's (1985) three-stages of reading theory, subjects one and two appear to be in the second stage, as they have are beginning to apply grapheme-phoneme rules. Subject 3 however, being the weakest of the subjects, is still only in stage one, as she is reading the words as logograms which are graphemes that represent a word or a meaningful unit of language. Subject 4, on the other hand, would be placed in Frith's third stage, as she can analyse words into orthographic units without phonological conversion. With regards to Marsh's (1980) four-stage theory of reading development, subject 4 is in stage 3 as she is analyzing words into phonemes and is using grapheme-phoneme correspondences to decode new words. From looking at the data in the appendices, she was able to decode new words such as 'truck' and 'someone', without any help.

Whilst reading aloud, the subjects naturally made several miscues due to not applying a rule in order to read the word, or the inability to process a letter sound. When considering Hannon's (2002) research, it would be expected that the first language subjects in this study, who should theoretically be more skilled decoders than the second language learners, would make errors in their reading that in turn produced nonsense words. In contrast, it should be seen from the data that the second language learners' miscues would result in real-word substitutions rather than nonsense words. However, in this study, it was found that real word substitutions were made by both the skilled and non-skilled decoders, and in contrast to what was found by Hannon, this study showed that on several occasions the weaker of the two non-native subjects would produce errors that were nonsense words such as 'joise' for the word 'jaws' and 'strish' for the word 'stretch'. Based on the collected data and logical reasoning, I am in disagreement with what is stated by Hannon, and feel that second language learners are more likely to make errors that result in nonsense words than first language subjects, as they are less likely to

realize that they have pronounced a word that does not exist, as can be seen in the examples above.

Although one of the more skilled-decoders did produce one or two nonsense words, I do not feel that this is enough evidence to support that part of Hannon's theory as this subjects' miscues only resulted in letter misidentification such as reading the letter 'b' as the letter 'd'. It would have been interesting to have taken this study a step further and followed the progress of the subjects further, to discover whether or not their production of nonsense words that have no semantic meaning, would in fact hinder their comprehension of the text, as suggested by Laing (cited in Hannon, 2002).

Phonics instruction definitely plays a role in allowing children to read new words. In this study, words such as 'Bud' and 'Frippet' have never been read by the subjects before, yet those with a better handle on reading phonetically, were able to either read the words when they were seen for the first time, or were able to sound them out using their knowledge of phonics. This data collected is consistent with the work done by Jeffrey and Samuels (1967, cited in Mitchell, 1982) who also found that children with more understanding of the letter sounds were better equipped when reading new words for the first time. It may prove interesting to take this current study further and see how a group of similar subjects would do if they were given Arabic books to read instead of English ones. Would the subjects that had learned to pronounce individual letters in Arabic also perform higher as was the case in the study by Bishop (1964, cited in Mitchell, 1982)? According to the information given by the Arabic teacher during the interview, it seems that this would indeed be the case as she feels that the children who do have a superior understanding of one-to-one correspondence between graphemes and phonemes would perform better when introduced to new words.

The data collected from this study shows that with time, the subjects made more errors in reading the story than they did at the beginning of the testing period. Although research

by Verhoeven (1990) showed that his subjects performed better in their reading skills over time, it is felt that the reason the subjects of this current study did not follow the same trend was due to the books becoming longer in length and the difficulty level of the book was gradually increasing. More research into the methods that Verhoeven used in his study would be needed in order to be able to accurately compare the two studies further. In agreement with Durgunoğ̆lu *et al* (1993) who stated that children with higher levels of phonological awareness are more likely to perform better when reading English words and pseudowords, is shown to be the case with subject 2. Although she made a number of errors in her reading performance, her ability to phonically decode the words that she did not know was much greater than the rest of the subjects, therefore showing evidence that her phonological awareness was more enhanced than the rest of the subjects.

The subjects of this research would sometimes rely on the context of the story in order to decode unfamiliar words, for example, the word 'chicks' as 'chickens' and the word 'claws' as 'hands'. This finding is in conjunction with that of McKenna and Picard (2006), who stated that children with weak decoding skills will rely heavily on the context and semantics of the story so as to be able to decode what they are reading. Having now completed the data collection for this research, it is felt that more time and prompts should have been given to the children when they came across a word that they could not read. Instead of immediately giving the word to the subjects, the approach suggested by McKenna and Picard of asking the children more questions around the word and showing them their error, would in turn allow them time to practice their phonic skills and could then result in a more accurate analysis of whether or not these subjects had a more significant understanding of phonics than now shown from this current method of data collection.

The semantic context of a text plays an important role in reducing the amount of miscues that a reader makes. In this study, the children relied heavily on the pictures that accompanied the story in order to decode words that they did not know. As was stated

previously by Lopez (1977), some of the miscues that the children make still sustain the meaning of the word. Some of the evidence supporting this fact were miscues by the subjects such as 'chickens' instead of 'chicks', 'pan' instead of 'bake', and 'car' for 'truck' and 'mum' for 'mother, to name a few. From the results of the subjects use of semantics, no significant difference can be seen between the first language and second language speakers, and it is felt that as the books used in the testing are typical English language books, the first language speakers were more able to use their background knowledge to assist them in decoding unknown words with the help of the semantics of the story.

With such a weak connection between the English and Arabic writing systems, the harder it should be for children with Arabic as their native language to learn to read English and to be able to map their own phonological and graphological elements over to English. According to Oller (2002), if this mapping of these two elements was closer, then the phonological skills needed for decoding the English words for the first language Arabic speakers should be easier for them to acquire. Therefore, as Arabic and English are different, we may expect Arab children to use phonics less which is exactly what I feel to be the case. With further testing, it may be shown that the relationship between the phonological and graphological elements of these two languages does lead to an improvement in the reading of English as a second language.

From teaching bi-lingual children with Arabic as their first language and English as their second, it has become apparent that some have a great difficulty in hearing the rhyme in words. If for example they were asked to rhyme with the word 'truck' they would say 'train' showing that they are only matching the onset of the words rather than the rime part. They also choose a word that is related to the word that they have been asked to rhyme with, as both truck and train for example are both forms of transport. Bryant *et al* (1989) stated that this inability to rhyme may have an effect on the child's phonological ability, causing their reading performance to suffer. This proved to be true in the case of subject 3. Her rhyming skills were very poor and this could therefore be one of the

reasons that her phonic ability was affected which in turn led to her low performance in reading.

5.2   Comprehension

As previously mentioned, this study did not look at whether or not the subjects had comprehended what they were reading. However, it is in agreement with Chall (1996, cited in Mitchell, 1982), when I state that the fact that although phonics instruction may not be helping the children to comprehend what it is that they are reading as they are too busy focusing on the pronunciation of the word, they are however, more skilled at word recognition due the phonics training. Chall stated that although the first graders in her study scored poorly on the comprehension part of reading, by the time that they had reached grade 2 they had become more skilled at reading and were therefore able to focus on the comprehension part of their reading.

In this current study, the children never stopped to ask what a particular word meant, even a word as unfamiliar as 'Frippet' or 'jaws', because they were only focusing on how to read the word without making a mistake. Numerous researchers have proposed that word recognition processes are an important determinant of reading skill (Daneman, cited in Barr *et al,* 1996). Slow and effortful word recognition processes will lead to slow, non-fluent reading, in turn leading to poorer comprehension. The reasoning is that slow and effortful word recognition processes will consume so much of the reader's limited attentional resources that there may not be sufficient resources left to carry out the high-level comprehension processes (Perfetti, 1985, cited in Barr *et al,* 1996).

In regards to Chall's findings, I feel however, that one of the reasons that the children were not asking about the meaning of the words, was not only due to concentration on the pronunciation, but also due to their age and the fact that they were not yet that interested in comprehending the story, but more interested on finishing reading it and moving on to something they found less tedious. I am confident that by the time they were in grade 2,

they would be more enthusiastic about their reading and their increased maturity would find them reading books for understanding and pleasure, rather than reading them because they had been instructed to do so.

In a second language learning situation, language transfer depends on the kind of language contact. Its intensity and type depends on which L1 is in contact with which L2, and how distant generically are L1 and L2. Language transfer appears with greater intensity when the two systems are generically closer and consequently when there are more points of reference for the transfer to occur (Arabski, 2006). The intensity of language transfer also depends on the stage of interlanguage development. Selinker (1972, cited in Bachman & Cohen, 1998) defines *interlanguage* as the linguistic system evidenced when adult second language learners attempt to express meaning in the language being learned.

When reading aloud, subject 4 had some miscues that were related to first language interference. Due to her confidence and good reading skills, she would often misread a word due to the context of the story and the misread word would be replaced by a word that would be otherwise correct if she were reading the text in her own language. For example, she replaced the word 'the' for the word 'a'. As the word 'a' is not present in the Arabic language and the word 'the' is, this is further evidence of language transfer. Another mistake was in reading the following sentence: 'He liked all the animals in the woods'. Subject 4 read the word 'woods' as 'world'. Again showing that her confidence and understanding of the semantics of the story, led her to read the word differently but maintaining the structure of the sentence.

Subject 4 had a low score in the use of phonics throughout the testing, and due to her word recognition skills, she did not bother to phonically spell out a word that she did not know, but saw the word as a whole which in turn caused the onset to be correct, but the rime part of the word to be read incorrectly. In the Arabic language, there is no such thing as adding an 's' to a word to make it plural, which was the reason that she read the word as 'world' instead of 'worlds'. The letter 's' is not as salient as it is in the English

language. One of the reasons for subject 4's lack of phonic use, could be that although phonics are used in Arabic, the actual relationship between graphemes and phonemes are so much more complicated in English, that it leads children to not use them.

Along with these subjects, a majority of the bi-lingual children learning to read both Arabic and English would often make the mistake of reading the languages from the wrong end of the page. Having listened to many children read and following the interview with a member of the school's Arabic staff, several children are struggling with remembering which end of the page they should start at. This often transfers over to their writing and has occurred several times when writing their name. The confusion will undoubtedly pass with time and maturity, but it is interesting to see that the children make a common mistake in both languages.

5.3   Problems with the research

There are several factors that should have been taken in to consideration before and during this research project. Unfortunately, they always present themselves during the time of reflection and not prior to starting the research. One such factor is the number of subjects that was used in the data collection. If more students could have been heard reading, then it would make the findings from the data much more valid and reliable. For example, subject 4 was the highest reader, but would this have necessarily been the case had there been more subjects to compare her with. Theoretically, she should not have been a better reader than a first language student, and without more subjects, it is difficult to pin point her reading ability to a strong understanding of phonics or to an overall intelligent child.

Although it would bring a whole other focus to the research, it would have been interesting to include four male subjects into the testing and compare the differences between male and female approaches when reading. The fact that the replacement

subject was a male did not play a part in this particular research other than to record the miscues in his reading.

Another factor that was not considered until after the testing and data analysis had been carried out was the age of the subjects. It may have been due to subject 3's age that her performance was the lowest of all the subjects. To rule out this discrepancy, the subjects for this study should have been much closer in age, in turn allowing for their reading skills to be independent of any other factor.

I am in agreement with what was stated by Connelly (1994, cited in Owen & Pumfrey, 1995), when he discussed the need to know exactly how much phonic teaching was needed in the classroom. With regards to his findings, I feel that it would benefit the children in this particular study to have been taught phonics at an earlier stage in the year, rather than half way through. Out of the five kindergarten classes in the school, only one of the teachers taught her students to blend sounds together at an earlier stage in the year than the other four teachers did. Although none of the four subjects were in her class, I am confident that her children would have produced less reading miscues than the current subjects, as it was later seen from her class's mid and final year English language test results, that her children had a higher understanding of letter sounds, and consonant and vowel blends.

5.4   Conclusion

Children learn to talk because there is more often than not a powerful motive to do so, namely, the wish and the need to communicate with those around them. Speaker and listener roles take turn in most conversations, but that is not always the case for reader and writer roles. So although these roles do not take turns in the case of written communication, children still want to be able to read once they have realized that reading is part of the behavior of the other people all around them in their day to day lives.

It is unlikely that there will ever be total agreement about the best approaches to learning and teaching, particularly the teaching of reading. Teachers change their approach as they learn from their own experience, from colleagues and from courses. They are constantly looking for ways to make learning easier, more meaningful, more relevant and more enduring for pupils. This is particularly true in the area of reading and it is right that, as more is understood about the process of learning to read, reading practices are examined and adapted so that they are efficient and relevant to the immediate and future needs of young children. The majority of children do learn to read but teachers and researchers hope that a fuller understanding of reading and the use of teaching approaches that match this understanding will enable children to learn to read with ease and enthusiasm. Teachers need a reasoned understanding of the reading process and up-to-date information about the teaching of reading in order to teach children well. Every teacher needs to know what strategies readers need, why they need them and when to teach them if they are to succeed in teaching children to read easily, pleasurably and with lasting results (Browne, 2001).

In conclusion I feel that it is necessary to take into consideration what was written by Wallace (1988). She states that although children need to be encouraged to see reading as being associated with roles with which they can identify, most important of all is the need to see that reading is fun. Children need to be shown that reading jokes or comic strips in English or any other language that is spoken or read in the community, is to be counted as reading just as much as getting through the reading scheme at school. The school where this particular study took place incorporates what is known to the children and staff as DEAR time (drop everything and read). Children from pre-school to grade 12 begin the school day with 5-15 minutes, depending on the age group of the children, of DEAR time, so that the children not only benefit from reading silently and uninterrupted to themselves, but they also get to see their friends and teachers enjoying reading.

Chapter 6 – References

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Chapter 7 – Appendices

Appendix 1:

TRANSCRIBED DATA FROM MP3 RECORDING OF SUBJECTS READING ALOUD

Brackets = teacher prompt
/// = subject pause

A big blue box

Subject 1: (002)

(In) In a big, blue box, /// sat a big, /// big fox, /// and a big, yellow hat, /// and a big, yellow cat, and a big, red pen, and a big, big hen, /// (one more time, and) and a big big hen
And /// six little little chickens (chicks) chicks

Subject 2: (003)

On (in) in a big, blue box, /// sat a big, big fox, and a big, yellow hat, and a big, yellow cat, and a big, red (sound it out) /p/, /e/, /n/ /// pen, and a big, big hen, and six /// mm // /l/ /I /t/ lit /// little, little chicks.

Subject 3: (005)

In a big, blue box, /// sat a big, /// big /// fox, /// and big a big, yellow // hot (/h/ /&/) hat, and a big, yellow cat, and big a big, /// red pen, /// and a big, big /// hen, /// and /// /s/ /// (six) six /l/ /i/ /t/ /// (little) little, /// (chicks) chicks.

Subject 4: (004)

In a big, box blue box, sat a big, big fox, and a big, yellow hat, and a big, yellow cat, and a big, red pen, and a big, big hen, and six little chicks.

The man the pan and the egg

Subject 1: (006)

We see a big egg. What can we do?
We can not fix the egg. But the man can fix the egg.
/// Where is my pan? I can fix an egg in my pan.
The pan is yellow and big. But the pan is not /// hot.
I can /// (sound it out) /g/ get I can get the pan hot! Look at the hot pan!
Get a fan! /// Fan the hot pan.

We do not like the egg. The egg is not yellow.
We can fix a (sound it out) /h/ /a/ /m/ ham.

Subject 2: (007)

The /m/ /m/ /a/ /ni;/ (man) man the /// /p/ bake /// (pan) pan // and the /i;/ /// (egg) egg.
We see a big /i;/ /e/ egg. /w/ /w/ What can we do?
We can not rit (sound it out) /f/ /e/ /x/ /// (fix) fix the egg. But the man can /// fix the egg.
/w/ /e/ /r/ where is my pan? I can fix on (an) an egg in my pan.
The pan is yellow and big. // But the pan is not /// (sound it out) /h/ /o/ /t/ (hot) hot.
I can get the pan hot! Look at the hot pan! /g/ /e/ /t/ (get) get a /// /f/ /a/ /n/ fan. /// Fan the
hot pan. We don't (do) do not like the egg. The egg is not yellow.
We can fix /// (sound it out) /h/ /a/ /m/ ham.

Subject 3: (009)

We see a egg a /// (big) big egg /// what /// can /// we /// done (do) do
What (we) we can // not /// fix the /// egg bad (but) but /// that (the) the man can /// (fix)
fix the egg. /// (Where) where /// (is) is my pan. I can fix the (an) an egg /// in my /// pan.
The pan in (is) is yellow hand (and) and /// big /// /b/ /u/ but in (the) the man pan is /// not
/// hot. I can /// got (get) the pan hot like (look) look at /// the /h/ /o/ /// (hot) hot pan.
Geet (get) get a fan, fan the hot pan. We do not know (like) like egg (the) the egg (the)
the egg is not yellow. What (we) we can fix a ham.

Subject 4: (010)

We see a big egg. What can we do? We can not fix the egg. But the man can fix the egg.
Where is my pan I can /// fix an /// egg in my pan. The pan is yellow and big but the pan
is not hot. I can get the 'pen' pan hot. Look at the hot pan. Get a fan, fan the hot pan.
We do not like the egg. The egg is not yellow, we can fix the (a) a ham.

In the mud

Subject 1: (015)

Here is /// (sound it out) /b/ /u/ /d/ Bud. Here is the truck. The truck is stuck (no) is in
the mud. Look up the /// hi;l hill to the car. Here is /// Sam. Here is Pam. Here is the
bus. The bus is in the mud. Look up the hill to the car. Here is Dad (no not Dad). Here
is Dan. Here is Bod (Bob) Bob. Here is the car. The car is in the mud. Look up the hill.
Look I am up on the hill.   I am in the mud.

Subject 2: (013)

Ha here is /b/ /u/ /d/ mud (Bud) Bud. Here is the /t/ /r/ (truck) truck. The truck is in the /mVp@/ /d/ (mud) mud. Look up the hill to the /b/ /u/ /s/ bus. Here is Sam. Here is /p/ /a/ Pam. Here is the bus. The bus is in the mud. Look up the hill to the car. Here is /d/ /a/ /n/ Dan. Here is /b/ /u/ /b/ /// (Bob) Bob. Here is the car. The car is in mud. Look up the hill. Look I am up on the hill. I am in the mud.

Subject 3: (011)

Here is bad (Bud) Bud. Here is the car (truck) truck. The /// (truck) truck is in the mud. Look up the hill to the bus. Here is Sam. Here is Pam. Here is the bas (bus) bus. The bus is in the mud. Look up the hill to the car. Car (here) here is Dan. Here is Dod (Bob) Bob. Here is the car. The car is in the mud. Look up the hill. Look I am up on the hill. I am in the mud.

Subject 4: (012)

Here is Bud. Here is the /t/ /r/ truck. The truck is in the mud. Look up the hill to the // bus. Here is Sam. Here is Pam. Here is the bus. The bus is in the mud. Look up the heel (hill) hill to the car. Here is Dan. Here is Bob. Here is the car. The car is in the mud. Look up the hill. Look up (I) look I am up the (on) on the hill. I am the (in) in the mud.

Look

Subject 1: (016)

Look at you. You /// fit on that rug. Look at you. You got on /// top. Look at you. You ran (run) run you run up that hill. Look at you. One, two, three go. Look at you. You hide (hid) hid up here. Look at you. You can nap. Look at you. You go to bed.

Subject 3: (017)

Look at /// /y/ you. You (fit) fit on the (that) that rug. Ca (look) look at (you) you. (You) you go (got) got on the (/t/ /o/ /p/) /// (top). Look /// at you. You ran (run) /// up at (that) that hill. Look at you. On (one) one, /t/ /// (two), three, go. Look at you. You hid up (here). Look at you, you cat (can) can /// nap. Look at you. You go to bad (bed) bed.

Subject 4: (018)

Look at you. You fit on that rug. Look at you. You got on top. Look at you. You are (wait) you run up that hill. Look at you. One two three go. Look at you. You heed (hid) hid up here. Look at you. You can nap. Look at you. You good (go) go to bed.

Bud's Bug Hut

Subject 1: 020

Here is /b/ Bug Bud the bug. See bud go in the bug hut. The Bud (bug) bug hut has a /ba/ (/b/ /e/) (bed) bed. Bud can nap on that bed. The Bug hut /// has a rug. Bud can see sit on the rug (that) that rug. The Bug Hut has a table. Do you see that /m/ /a/ /g/ mag (mug) mug on the table? The bug hut has a mug. Bud can sip it. Hot. The Bug Hut has a (/ch/) chair. Bud has it in the // sun. See Bud sit. Bud has the mug. Bud you have a fun Bug Hut.

Subject 2: 019

Here is /b/ /u/ /d/ Bud the /b/ /u/ /g/ bug. See Bud go /// in the bug hut. The bug hut /// /h/ /a/ /s/ has a /b/ /e/ /d/ bed. Bug (bud) Bud can /n/ /u/ /p/ (nap) nap on that bed. The Bug /// hut has a rug. Bug (Bud) Bud can /s/ /e/ set (sit) sit on that rug. The /// Bug /// Hut has a table. Do you see that /m/ /u/ /g/ (mug) mug up the table? Bud can sip it. Hot. See Bug (Bud) Bud sat (si) sit. Bud had the mug. Bud, you /h/ /// (have) fun Bug Hut.

Subject 3: 022

(Here) is Bud the Bug. (see) See Bud go /// in /// the Bug Hut. /// Here (the) Bug (hut) hut has /// (a) a /// (bed). Bud can nap on the (that) (bed) bed. The Bug /// Hut has a rug. Bud can // sit on the (that) that rug. The Bug Hut /// he (/h/) /h/ (has) a tay (table). Do ya (you) see a (that) that mag (mug) up on the /// (tay) table. The Bug Hut has a mug. But (Bud) Bud can (sip) sip it. Hot. The Bug Hut has a (ch) /// (chair) chair. Bud has it in the sun. Sit (see) see Bud sit. Bud /// has the mug. Bud, you have a fun Bug Hut.

Subject 4: 021

Here is Bud the Bug. See Bug (who?) Bud go in the Bug hut. The Bug Hut has a bed. /B/ (Bud) Bud can nap on that bed. The Bug Hut has a rug. Bud can sit on that rug. The Bug Hut has a table. Do you see that mug up on the table? The big (no) Bug Hut has a mug. Bud can sip it. Hot. The Bug Hut has a chair. Bud has it the sun. See Bud sit. Bud has the mug. Bud you have a fun Bug Hut.

Curlylocks and The Three Bears

Subject 2: 025

The three bears are in their (the) in the kitchen. I have (sound it out) /m/ /a/ /d/ /e/ (made) some pizza. I want some cake too. We can go and get some cake. The three bears go on (no) /o/ /u/ /t/ /// (out) out. Curly /// (Curlylocks) Curlylocks came (co) comes in my (mmm) mmm I want some pizza. Curlylocks has /s /o/ /// (some) some of father bears pizza. This is pizza is too cold. Then Curlylocks has mother bears pizza. This pizza is too hot. (**Jumped some pages….story very long)**
Some (what's the whole word, its two words together) some /// one has bin (been) been sleeping in my bed, so (som) someone has been sleeping in my bed. Someone has been sleeping in my bed and here she is. Help help. So Curlylocks runs home and the three bears have /// some cake. Mmm

Subject 3: 026

The three bears /// are in the car (kit) kitchen. I have mum (made) made some /pee/ pizza) pizza. I want some /// /c/ kitchen (cake) cake. We can go and get some cake. The this (three) three bears go out. Can (Curlylocks) Curlylocks comes in my (Mmm) Mmm. I want some pizza. Curlylocks has some of far (father) father but (bears) bears pizza. This pizza /// is /// too cold. (**Jumped some pages….story very long)**
Some on (two words together) some on (someone) someone has bin (been) been bears (no) sleep (sleeping) sleeping in my bed. Some on (someone) someone has bed (been) been sleeping in my bed and here she is. Help help. So /// (Curlylocks) Curlylocks runs home and the three /// bar (bears) bears have some cake. Mmm.

Subject 4: 027

The three bears are in the kitchen. I have some made some pizza. I want some cake too. We can go and get some cake. The three bears go out. /// (Curlylocks) Goldilocks (Curlylocks not Goldilocks this time) Curlylocks comes in. Mmm. I want some pizza. Curlylocks has father bears pizza. It (this) this pizza is too cold)
(**Jumped some pages….story very long)** /s/ /// someone has been sleeping in my bed. Someone has been sleeping in my bed. Someone has been sleeping in my bed and here she is. Help help. So Curlylocks runs home and the three bears have some cake. Mmmm.

Terrible Tiger

Male Subject 1: 032

There is a terrible tiger in (under) under my bed. I can see his (sound it out) /t/ /// (tail) tail. I can see his head. Terrible tiger go away. Terrible tiger /// (please) please don't /// (stay) stay. I can see his /// teeth in his /// terrible (jaws) jaws. I can see feet with terr (their) their /// (terrible) terrible claws. Terrible tiger go away. Terrible tiger please don't /// (stay) stay. Then I see him stary (stretch) stretch his jaws. Then I saw (see) see him stretch his claws. I see him shaking (shake) shake his terrible /h/ /a/ head. What is doing /// /un/ under my bed? The tiger says "I want to go. But I am stuck. The bed is too /l/ /// (low) low." I pull the tiger. I get him out. Then I hear my mother /sh/ shout. No (now) now there is on (no) no /// tiger under the bed. The tiger is under my /c/ /o/ /v/ /// (covers) covers instead.

Subject 2: 029

Tear /// /r/ /// (terrible) tim (tiger) tiger.

The (there) there is a tiger /// terrible tiger /u/ /n/ (under) under my bed. I can see his /teI/ (tail) tail. I can see his head. T // terrible tiger go away. Terrible tiger please don't /// stay. I can see his tail (tee) teeth in his tail // (tear) terrible jaws. I can see his feet /w/ with terrible (their) their terrible claws. Terrible tiger go away. Terrible tiger please don't stay. This then I see him /// (stretch) stretch his /// (jaws) jaws. Then I see him stretching (stretch) stretch his claws. Then I see him sh /// (shake) shake his tail (terrible) terrible head. What his he doing /u /n/ under my bed? The /tear/ (tiger) tiger says I want to go. /beh/ (but) but I am stuck. This then (the) the bed is too /// /li/ low. I play (pull) pull this tiger. And (no, I) I get him out. Then I hear my mum (mother) mother shout. No (now) now the (there) there is no tiger under the bed. This (the) the tiger is /// (under) under my (covers) covers (instead) instead.

Subject 3: 031

There is a /// (terrible) terrible (tiger) an (under) under my bed. I can see his /// (sound it out, /t/) tail. I can see his head. The (terrible) terrible tee (tiger) tiger go away. Terrible tiger pleas (please) please (don't) don't /// (/st/) stay. I can see his tee /// (teeth) teeth in his tee (terrible) joise (jaws) jaws. I can see his feet with the (Their) terrible hands (claws) claws. Terrible tiger go /// away. Terrible tiger please don't stay. I see him (stretch) stretch his jays (jaws) jaws. Terrible (then) then I see him stretch his /// (claws) claws. Then I see him /sh/ /// (shake) his terrible heed (head) head. Why (what) what is he doing and (under) under my bed? The terrible (no, tiger) tiger says 'I want to go but I am suck (stuck) stuck. The (bed) bed /// is too low." I play (pull) pull the terr (tiger) tiger. I ga (get) get him at (out) out. /// (then) then I hear my more (mother) mother

shaking (shout) shout. No now the (there) there is no tee (tiger) tiger and (under) under the bed. The tiger is under my (covers) inside (instead) instead.

Subject 4: 030

There is a terrible tiger under my bed. I can see his tail. I can see his hand (head) head. Terrible tiger go away. Terrible tiger please don't stay. I can see his teeth in his terrible tiger jews (jaws). I can see his feet with the terrible claws. Terrible tiger go away. Terrible tiger please don't stay. Then I see him strish (stretch) stretch his jaws. Then I see him stretch his claws. I see him shake his terrible hand (head) head. What his (is) is he doing under my bed? The tiger says "I want to go but I am stick (stuck) stuck. The bed is too low." I pull the tiger. I get him out. Then I hear my mother shout. Now there is no tiger under you're the bed. The tiger is under my covers inside (instead) instead.

The Giant and the Frippet

Male subject 1: 036

At the top of a tree lived a /// small (/br/) brown fribbet (Frippet). At the bottom of the tree lived a giant. The giant was a good giant. He liked all the animals in the woods. All the animals liked him.
(jumped text)
The giant /// (gave) gave the Frippet some food then he put the Frippet to bed and read him a story.
(jumped text) For (from) from that day on the giant and the Frippet were good friends.

Subject 2: 033

At the top of the tree (a tree) a tree lived a small, /b/ /r/ burn (brown) brown (Frippet). At the down (/b/ /o/) /b/ /o/ /t/ bottom of the tree lived a /gr/ (/gi/) giant. The giant was a good giant. He liked /// all the //// (animals) in the /w/ /o/ /// (woods) woods. All the animals liked him.
(jumped text)
The giant got (gave) gave the (Frippet) Frippet some food. The (then) then he put the Frippet to bed and read heem (him) him a stare (story) story.
(jumped text)
From that day now (on) on, that (the) the giant and the Frippet were good Frippet (friends) friends.

Subject 3: 034

At the /// top of a tree /l/ loved (lived) lived a smiley (small) small (/b/r/ brown) (Frippet) Frippet. At the bottom of the tree lived a great (giant) giant. The great (giant) giant was a good (giant) giant. He looked (liked) liked all the /an/ /// (animals) animals in the woods. All the ants (animals) animals licked (liked) liked him.
(jumped text)
The great (giant) giant give (gave) the frap (Frippet) Frippet some /// (food) food. Then he peet (put) put the freep (Frippet) Frippet into bed and he told (read him) read him a starly (story) story.
(jumped text)
Farm (from) that (day) day on the great (giant) giant and the Frippet was (were) were good /fer/ (friends) friends.

Subject 4: 035

At the top of a tree lived a small brown /fr/ /ap/ /// (Frippet). At the bottom of the tree lived a gent (giant) giant. The giant was a good giant. He liked all the animals in the world (woods) woods. All the animals lik-ed (liked) him.
(jumped text)
The giant give (gave) gave the Frippet some food. Then he put the Frippet to bed and reed (read) read him a story.
(jumped text)
From that day on, the giant and the Frippet were good friends

Appendix 4:

Interview Questions

1. As a KG2 teacher of Arabic, what is the main focus of your lessons throughout the school year?

Teaching the children the letter sounds as the alphabet are already pronounced as sounds.

2. What is the main focus of your lessons as these children progress onto grade 1?

- *Quick review of letters.*
- *Reading short sentences*
- *End of year they are reading about 4 lines*

3. Are the letters of the alphabet taught by their names or by their sounds? Why or why not?

See answer 1

4. Do you actually teach the children to read Arabic stories? What is the reason for this (following a yes/no answer)?

Only in Grade 1 and that includes comprehension.

5. Is there a reading series of book in Arabic, similar to what the kids have in English? If so, then why is it not being used?

In Grade 1 there are levelled reading books that are used.

6. Do the find that the children become confused due to learning to read English from left to right as opposed to right to left in Arabic?

Yes, especially in KG2

7. Are the students taught to phonetically sound out the words in order to read them?

Yes. (In her own way, the interviewee attempted to explain the need for the child to understand the one-to-one grapheme to phoneme correspondence. She did this through writing letters in both English and Arabic in order for me to understand her meaning.)

8. Do you give certain words to the students for them to learn as a sight word, words that should be recognised immediately in a text rather than being sounded out?

No sight words. In Arabic, some words have silent letters written, and some words do not have the letter, but the sound of that missing letter is still pronounced.

9. At what age do you feel that the children have a full understanding of how to read in Arabic?

When they are in Grade 2 at the age of about 7 years and some higher students by the age of 6 years.

10. What do you feel would be a better way to teach first and second language learners how to read Arabic?

We teach the children classical Arabic and for the non-native speakers, we use actions when saying a word whenever it is possible. For both native and non-native speakers, they are taught sounds and how to read. First the teacher will read the sentence, then the class repeats the sentence aloud together. For weaker students, more one on one time is spent.