

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis University - Mostaganem
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of English



**Disparities in Reading and Writing Proficiency: A Comparative Study of
First Grade Pupils at Bahi Abed Primary School, Relizane**

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of a Master's
Degree in Didactics and Applied Linguistics

Submitted by

Ms.SOLTANI Fatima

Supervised by

Dr.BENSTAALI Leila

Board of Examiners

Chairperson: Dr. CHENINE Amira Chahrazad

ENS KOUBA ALGEIRS

Supervisor: Dr.BENSTAALI Leila

University of Mostaganem

Examiner: Pr. ZIANI Melouka

University of Mostaganem

Academic year 2023-2024

DEDICATION

I dedicate this humble work

To my first teacher and supporter in my journey, my idol, my father.

To who prioritizes my happiness over hers, the symbol of giving and sacrifice, my mother.

To the source of prayers, blessings, and tenderness, my grandmother.

To my life partners, who extended a helping hand in my weak times, my siblings “Wahiba”, “Abdelrrezak”, and “Halima”.

To my nephew “Nidhal” and my niece “Nour”, who supported me with their little embraces and kisses.

To the one who believed in me when no one did, my friend “Wissam”.

To whom I shared with the best moments of my life, all my friends.

Acknowledgement

Foremost, but for Allah, who had provided me with the strength and patience, this work would never happen.

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr.BENSTAALI Leila for her invaluable guidance and the pieces of advice that she has given me since the first steps I have taken in this study. Also, I extend my thanks to members of the jury for reading and evaluating this work.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my father, “Soltani Oussama”, my uncle, “Soltani Abd-el-Kader”, and his wife for the valuable ideas, suggestions, assistance, and facilities they offered me with. Their expertise in teaching was one of the reasons that aided in the completion of this study.

Besides, I owe thanks to the first grade primary teachers who have taken part in this study as participants and preschool caregivers who have provided me with inspiration.

ABSTRACT

The significance of preschool is increasing due to the great effect it has on the child's life span. It contributes to the holistic development of children and readies them for the next phase of formal schooling. It focuses mainly on developing language and literacy skills through a series of activities that ensure the acquisition of pre-reading and pre-writing skills before they delve into the learning process of these skills. Having such early experiences cannot be gained in the first grade at a primary school if the child has not had the opportunity to attend preschool in public institutions or private sectors. Therefore, before starting academic schooling, there will be two groups of children: on the one hand, a well-equipped and prepared group, and on the other, an unprepared group. In case these two groups encounter each other in first grade, there will be an obvious divergence in the classroom in terms of reading and writing skills. Hence, this research aims at examining the disparities in these skills among the two groups in first grade at Bahi Abed Primary School, Relizane, and studying the potential effects that each group has over the other's academic progress. To answer the research questions, three qualitative data instruments were used in this study, including interviews with teachers, observation, and writing assessments that were conducted and evaluated on pupils. The results revealed a variety of reading and writing differences between the categories mentioned above, in which the prepared group had fluent and smooth reading along with organized, legible, and well-formed writing, whereas the second group exhibited a reduced level of competence compared to the other group in these skills. Concerning the effects, there were both positive and negative impacts on each other's academic development.

Key words: preschool, literacy skills, pre-reading skills, pre-writing skills, first grade primary school pupils

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1.1 : Reading Activity Curriculum for Preparatory Education..... | 19 |
| Table 1.2: Writing Activity Curriculum for Preparatory Education..... | 21 |
| Table 1.3: Literacy Skills Curriculum for First Grade Primary School..... | 24 |
| Table 2.4 Compliance with Principal Line in Prepared and Unprepared Groups | 36 |
| Table 2.5: Writing Compliance with Letter Measures in Prepared and Unprepared Groups | 37 |
| Table 2.6: Distance Maintenance in Prepared and Unprepared groups..... | 38 |

List of Graphs

| | |
|---|----|
| Graph 2.1: Comparison of Compliance with Principal Line between Prepared and Unprepared group | 36 |
| Graph 2.2: Comparison of Adherence to Letter Measures in Writing between Prepared and Unprepared groups..... | 38 |
| Graph 2.3: Comparison of Distance Maintenance between Prepared and Unprepared Groups. | 37 |

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

RQ: Research Question

H: Hypothesis

HLM: Home Learning Environment

SES: Socio-economic Status

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| DEDICATION | I |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENT..... | II |
| ABSTRACT | III |
| List of Tables..... | IV |
| List of Graphs | V |
| List of Abbreviations and Acronyms | VI |
| General introduction | 1 |
| Chapter One: Reading and Writing as Literacy Skills in Early Childhood | |
| 1.1 Introduction..... | 3 |
| 1.2 Writing: A Productive Skill..... | 3 |
| 1.3 Reading: A Receptive Skill | 4 |
| 1.4 The Connection of Reading and Writing as Literacy Skills..... | 5 |
| 1.5 Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Literacy Skills | 7 |
| 1.5.1 Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Writing | 7 |
| 1.5.2 Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Reading..... | 8 |
| 1.6 Preschool Education..... | 9 |
| 1.7 Early Exposure to Literacy Skills in Preschools..... | 10 |
| 1.8 Literacy Skills Readiness | 12 |
| 1.8.1 Writing Readiness..... | 12 |
| 1.8.2 Reading Readiness..... | 15 |
| 1.9 Curriculum: A Framework for Instruction and Learning..... | 16 |
| 1.9.1 Preparatory Education Curriculum | 16 |
| 1.9.1.1 Learning Activities..... | 17 |
| 1.9.1.2 The Weekly Hourly Volume..... | 20 |

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1.9.2 First Grade Primary School Curriculum | 20 |
| 1.10 Conclusion | 24 |

Chapter Two: Field Work and Data Analysis

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.1 Introduction | 25 |
| 2.2 Research Method | 25 |
| 2.3 Research Objectives | 25 |
| 2.4 The Participants | 26 |
| 2.5 The Procedure | 26 |
| 2.6 Data Collection Tools | 27 |
| 2.6.1 The Interview | 27 |
| 2.6.2 Classroom Observation | 28 |
| 2.6.3 Writing Assessment | 29 |
| 2.7 Data Analysis | 29 |
| 2.7.1 Interview Analysis | 29 |
| 2.7.2 Classroom Observation Analysis | 34 |
| 2.7.3 Analysis of the Writing Assessment | 35 |
| 2.8 Conclusion | 39 |

Chapter Three: Discussion of the Findings and Recommendations

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 3.1 | Introduction | 40 |
| 3.2 | Discussion of the Findings | 40 |
| 3.2.1 | Reading Differences | 41 |
| 3.2.2 | Writing Differences | 42 |
| 3.2.3 | The Influence of Pupils from both Groups on their Academic Progress | 43 |
| 3.3 | Suggestions and Recommendations | 44 |
| 3.3.1 | Pre-literacy Homemade Activities | 45 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| 3.3.1.1 Pre-writing Activities | 45 |
| 3.3.1.2 Pre-reading Activities..... | 49 |
| 3.4 Conclusion | 51 |
| General Conclusion..... | 52 |
| Bibliography | 54 |
| APPENDICES..... | 60 |

Table of Contents

General Introduction

General Introduction

General introduction

In the early years of childhood, children experience a critical period of extraordinary development in a variety of aspects, particularly cognitive abilities. A paramount importance and interest are given to this phase in both the home environment and formal education because, during this period, the foundations of the essential skills are laid. From the age range of 4 to 6 years, before formal schooling, parents tend to exploit this period by providing their children with the basic skills that are adequate for their age and cognitive abilities. This acquisition of skills mostly occurs in a semi-formal educational environment in which children enroll in preschools to pave the way to the next educational grade.

The purpose of preschool is far-reaching, as it aims to help children in establishing the fundamental building blocks and equip them for the school environment by introducing the habits, rules, and educational system they are not accustomed to. Concerning the Algerian preschool, its curriculum is carefully designed with the help of specialists to be implemented by educators and caregivers. It gives considerable attention to each developmental aspect that occurs for children in the age group of five to six years old, as they tend to develop children's sensory-motor, cognitive-intellectual and socio-emotional abilities.

Reading and writing have taken a special place in this curriculum due to their importance as basic abilities that should be acquired first. It endeavors to develop the needed competencies that should be improved before delving into the learning process of these literacy skills. This development process is done through the use of pre-literacy activities that aim at readying children for reading and writing. At the end of the preschool year, children become able to read some words and control the basics of writing, including body movements, hand movements, and writing words and sentences.

Before introducing the research problem, we have, on the one hand, a wide range of children who, when they reach the specified age (5-6 years), enroll in preschools, whether in public or private institutions, and, on the other hand, a segment of children who are unable to benefit from the latter. The reason behind the disability from enrolling in preschool can be traced to the

General Introduction

limited available pedagogical seats in public institutions or the low socioeconomic status children belong to that prevents their enrollment in private preschool. This situation will create a divergence between well-equipped and non-equipped groups of children in the learning process and academic achievement if they are encountered in the same first grade class. Therefore, our topic is going to examine the disparities in reading and writing proficiency that occur among pupils who undertook preparatory education and those who directly enroll in first grade when they encounter in one class.

The case mentioned above is an issue that raises questions:

RQ1- What are the reading and writing disparities that exist between enrolled and non-enrolled children in preparatory education when they encounter each other in first grade class?

RQ2- what are the effects that each group has over the other's academic progress?

This hypothesizes that:

H1- In reading, the prepared group is likely to have fluent and smooth reading, and in the second literacy skill, they may have a well-organized and clear writing so that they respect letter measures and following the criteria of writing. Whereas, the other group may have a slow pace of reading, inaccurate pronunciation, non-obvious and flaw writing.

H2- Probably, there are both positive and negative effects that each group has on the other's academic progress, whereby the prepared group may positively impact the second group through the motivation they give in the classroom, which leads the second group to raise their diligence in learning. Whereas, one of the negative effects is that in the first trimester, teachers of first grade treat all pupils as unprepared ones. Using this kind of treatment may decrease the academic development of pupils who attended preschool.

This research work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents the literature review of this topic. The second one deals with the description of the research methodology, including the procedures, the chosen sample, the data collection tools, as well as the analysis of the gathered data. In the end, the last chapter deals with the discussion of the findings along with a series of suggestions and recommendations.

Chapter One

Reading and Writing as literacy skills in early childhood

Chapter One: Reading and Writing as literacy skills in early childhood

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1.1 Introduction..... | 3 |
| 1.2 Writing: A Productive Skill..... | 3 |
| 1.3 Reading: A Receptive Skill | 4 |
| 1.4 The Connection of Reading and Writing as Literacy Skills..... | 5 |
| 1.5 Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Literacy Skills | 7 |
| 1.5.1 Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Writing | 7 |
| 1.5.2 Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Reading..... | 8 |
| 1.6 Preschool Education..... | 9 |
| 1.7 Early Exposure to Literacy Skills in Preschools..... | 10 |
| 1.8 Literacy Skills Readiness | 12 |
| 1.8.1 Writing Readiness..... | 12 |
| 1.8.2 Reading Readiness..... | 15. |
| 1.9 Curriculum: A Framework for Instruction and Learning..... | 16 |
| 1.9.1 Preparatory Education Curriculum..... | 16 |
| 1.9.1.1 Learning Activities..... | 17 |
| 1.9.1.2 The Weekly Hourly Volume..... | 20 |
| 1.9.2 First Grade Primary School Curriculum | 20 |
| 1.10 Conclusion..... | 24 |

1.1 Introduction

Literacy skills are incorporated from a range of abilities, including reading and writing, which are considered from the fundamental skills that act as the pillars of academic success, especially if they were acquired in the early years of childhood. Since both skills are complex competencies, a great deal of interest has been given to them in the educational system to be taught in preschool classes. A tailored program was designed to be well-suited to children's cognitive capabilities at that grade in order to prepare them for the next educational grades.

This chapter aims to provide the conducted studies and insights about the main concepts of the topic. It sheds light on the relationship that stands between reading and writing skills and the factors that affect their acquisition. Then, it delves into elucidating the term preschool education and focuses on the early exposure of literacy skills in the latter. This chapter endeavors to also explain how children can be ready for the acquisition of reading and writing skills. At the end, it provides an overview about the curriculum followed in Algerian preparatory education classes and first grade in primary school to teach literacy skills.

1.2 Writing: A Productive Skill

The status of thoughts that the human mind produces is always in an abstract form; to produce and articulate them on paper or any other instrument is generally done through writing, where those ideas can be read. Therefore, writing as a skill holds a paramount importance in one's own life, and this raises the need to learn it. In a general sense, this competency serves as a primary means through which the individual gathers data from different sources, such as by reading a variety of written materials. Along with this, it is used to modify information, which involves refining and organizing ideas and sentences. Also, in writing, the individual can recall back the knowledge he gathered before. Moreover, it can be used to convey messages, share ideas with others, and spread them globally. This description of writing is provided by Marcus (1992), where he states: "Writing is humankind's principal technology for collecting, manipulating, storing, retrieving, communicating, and disseminating information" (as cited in Schmandt-Besserat, 2014, p1).

Besides, this skill operates as a representational pattern that inevitably depends on various other symbolic norms, where language is the most significant one (Buccellati, 1981). In other words, the information one has will be transformed into symbols based on established conventions, and in here language acts as a medium that shapes the symbols and conveys data in a written form.

Many researchers see writing as one of the literacy skills that are divergent from oral ones, so that speaking and listening occur naturally and effortlessly, while writing is agreed to be one of the sophisticated competencies that should be acquired, as Dhanya & Alamelu (2019) state that it is “a difficult skill to be learned or taught due to the fact that it is not a simple cognitive activity” (p.259). Thus, it takes a place in formal education, whereby from the fundamental objectives of primary education is to mentor every child the ability to write (Snel et al., 2016). The latter should be broken down into core segments to unravel the steps involved for the sake of being instructed, comprehended, and learned (Dragomir & Niculescu, 2020).

1.3 Reading: A Receptive Skill

The concept of reading has been defined by many scholars, and each provides a distinct description of this skill. According to Patel and Jain (2008), reading is understanding the meaning of printed words, i.e., written symbols (cited in Hijril et al., 2017, p.126). In such a way that the printed words serve as a medium for conveying meaning, which the individual can deduce through his interaction with the written text.

Brown (2004) clarifies that reading is an act of exchanging meaning. What the reader uses as schemata to comprehend the text is the outcome of his interaction with it (cited in Hijril et al., 2017, p.126). In simpler terms, it is an active process where the reader not only absorbs the words but also makes sense of them based on his existing knowledge and experiences. This schema influences the way the reader understands the text.

Additionally, Yetta M. Goodman and Kenneth S. Goodman (1994) provide a well detailed understanding of reading concept, according to them:

”Reading is not simply knowing sounds, words, sentences, and the abstract parts of language that can be studied by linguists. Reading, like listening,

consists of processing language and constructing meaning. The reader brings a great deal of information to this complex and active process. [...] As readers make use of their knowledge of all the language cues, they predict, make inferences, select significant features, confirm, and constantly work toward constructing a meaningful text. Not only are they constructing meaning. They are constructing themselves as readers. (Cited in Tønnessen & Uppstad, 2015, p. 59).

Reading goes beyond merely comprehending language components; it involves assimilating text and generating meaning. In this sophisticated and complex process, readers use their understandings of linguistic clues to anticipate, draw conclusions, identify important details, validate, and continuously strive to create a meaningful text.

Furthermore, there is another definition provided by Hijril et al. (2017) that asserts the necessity of this skill, which says: “Reading is a tool of communication in written language through the texts form. It is the most efficient way to gain information about many aspects of life [...]. Reading has a very important role and becomes a daily necessity for every person who wants to acquire whatever information which is required” (p.125). In short, it is a crucial life skill for individuals who seek to remain informed and involved in the community around them, as it is an essential ability that enables access to a wealth of knowledge.

Due to the complexity of reading skill and its significance in one’s life, it is taught in formal settings. Watkins & Thornbury confirm that learning to read typically occurs at the commencement of formal education through the use of the first language. This skill requires a mindful effort to be learned (Watkins & Thornbury, 2017), and it acts as an essential skill for school success and academic learning (Küçükoğlu, 2013).

1.4 The Connection of Reading and Writing as Literacy Skills

Many scholars have provided different definitions of the literacy skills concept. On one hand, some provided a comprehensive understanding of this concept, where they included other capacities besides reading and writing, as Sukma et al (2017) defined it; according to them, literacy can be understood as the competence of reading, writing, and comprehending the alphabets and written characters. It represents the capacity to utilize language skills (listening,

speaking, reading, and writing) to effectively express oneself in various ways based on specific purposes.

On the other hand, some authors offered a more concise understanding about literacy skills, like Sulzby (1986), who describes it as the capacity to read and write (as cited in Sukma et al., 2017). Similarly, the Department of Higher Education and Training (2020) delineates literacy as being capable of writing in various situations and reading diverse forms of written material.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (2020) also illustrates the connection that occurs among reading and writing skills; in which the primary purpose of reading is to understand the obtained message through printed text, whether it is handwritten or electronic, while writing encodes that message so that it can be comprehensible to others. This means reading stands as a reception of the information provided through the written text, whereas writing is the expression of information in a way that enables people to comprehend it through reading.

One of the shared similarities between reading and writing that researchers have agreed on is that both of them require instruction because they will not evolve naturally (Sukma et al., 2017). Moreover, these literacy skills are characterized by the parallel acquisition (Morison, 1998 as cited in Şeno1, 2021) and this is exemplified during the learning process, while the student learns how to read he is simultaneously learning the formation of each letter (Sukma et al, 2017) that enables him to write.

In former times, reading and writing were mentored separately as independent language skills (Nelson & Calfee, 1998), but the changes to be taught in parallel have been shown in recent literature in both Berninger (2000) and Shanahan (2006). Berninger emphasized that the four skills should be integrated and developed simultaneously. Similarly, Shanahan validated that writing has a great deal of influence on reading skill, which should be taught in a concurrent way. Within the study of the relationship between reading and writing, three broad areas were identified by Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000): (a) the shared knowledge approach; (b) the procedural connections approach; and (c) the rhetorical relations approach.

In the approach based on shared knowledge, some studies have suggested that reading and writing have an analogous theoretical basis and cognitive processes that make them intimately

connected to one another. For instance, if a reader or a writer wants to outperform, one must possess certain elements that are fundamental in both writing and reading skills, which are phonemic knowledge, orthographic knowledge, semantic knowledge, and syntactic knowledge; hence, Tierney & Pearson (1983) and Fitzgerald & Shanahan (2000) argue that reading and writing should be instructed because of the conceptual commonalities they share, in which one informs and the other reinforces.

When it comes to the perspective of the procedural connection approach, it believes that reading and writing processes are intimately interconnected because both are used to achieve external objectives, such as in educational settings or real-life aims. About the third approach that is centered on rhetorical relations, proposes that both reading and writing skills are profoundly rooted in communication. From a communicative stance, reading and writing are seen as acts of receiving and conveying knowledge (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Nelson & Calfee, 1998; Berninger, 2000; Shanahan, 2006; Tierney & Pearson, 1983; cited in Moran & Billen, 2014).

1.5 Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Literacy Skills

The acquisition of literacy skills frequently takes place in formal education, especially in elementary schools, where children start to learn these basic skills. Yet, they may encounter either challenges or facilities in learning reading and writing due to various factors.

1.5.1 Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Writing

The acquisition of writing skill is a complex process that can take place in both home and school environments. Concerning the home learning environment, it influences how socio-economic factor affect early literacy (Fikrat-Wevers et al., 2021). To elucidate, “Socioeconomic status (SES) encompasses not just income but also educational attainment, occupational prestige, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class” (American Psychology Association, 2010). Hence, families from higher SES are marked by having a good income and an advanced educational level; this status will help them to provide their children with the necessary parents’ involvement, educational games, and access to resources, which creates a rich home learning environment that contributes to the proper acquisition of literacy skills.

However, it is commonly recognized that children who belong to families with low SES tend to perform less in school-based writing (Askov, 2004; Juel, 2006; as cited in Lynch, 2007); Kim et al (2015) agreed with this idea, in which they state that “SES had a negative effect on writing quality and productivity” (p.593).

In formal education, Dhanya and Alamelu (2019) have set a range of factors that greatly impact the acquisition of this skill, including motivation, a positive environment, and the teacher-student relationship, which help in shaping the individual’s ability to write effectively.

Both Dhanya and Alamelu (2019) see that motivation stands out as an essential key to acquiring writing skill. Learners who are motivated show more interest in writing and feel encouraged to write. Since they have a high level of motivation, they will excel at writing and achieve good outcomes; however, learners who have a lack of motivation will find it complex and challenging, as they may experience the feel of failure. They add that a positive learning environment plays a crucial role in language acquisition, where the emphasis on writing becomes obvious, accurate, and acute.

Moreover, a good established relationship between teacher and student is paramount in the acquisition of any new skill, as it helps in removing the obstacles of language acquisition and writing so that when the gap is minimized, effective writing occurs (Dhanya & Alamelu, 2019).

1.5.2 Factors Influencing the Acquisition of Reading

Regarding reading skill, its acquisition process is also influenced by certain factors, whether they help children become proficient readers or obstacle their learning process, in here, both of the home environment and socioeconomic status play significant roles in this matter.

Chansa-Kabali et al (2014) describe a home learning environment as an ecological environment that offers literacy tools to foster reading acquisition. These tools consist of “scripts (conventional and non-conventional reading materials), local games, plays, and songs” (p.411). Furthermore, people who are found in the surroundings of a child are considered contributors in

reading acquisition process; as Chansa-Kabali et al (2014) mention, the child receives knowledge from them. To delineate further, children gain skills and information when they interact with people around them, whether they are their parents or other family members, peers, friends, and teachers. Each individual from children' environment aids in their overall literacy development.

Various studies demonstrate that there is a strong connection between reading and socioeconomic status, whereby children who live in poverty have a significantly lower level of literacy compared with their peers from higher socioeconomic background (Buckingham et al, 2013; Hart & Risley, 1995; Pan et al., 2005; Sirin, 2005, as cited in Dolean et al., 2019). This illustrates that children from families with privileged socioeconomic status are marked by an advanced level of reading as a result of their ability to access resources such as books and educational tools, parental involvement, the provided educational support and a rich learning environment. Whereas, those from low SES exhibit certain challenges that affect their ability to excel in reading due to the limited resources, poor language environment, and low educational level of the child's family.

1.6 Preschool Education

Preschool education, or pre-primary education, refers to the initial stage of formal schooling provided to children from the age range of 3 to 6 years old (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2020). It can take place either in private sectors as nursery schools that may use regular preschool programs or a refined one depending on specific needs, or it can occur in public sectors as in some elementary schools provided with preparatory grades, as the Research Institute of Education Prague (2004) states: "Institution providing the pre-school education is the nursery school, or it is carried out in the preparatory grades of the basic schools" (p. 6).

Regardless of the socioeconomic status that children belong to, they can profit from preschool education, but those who seem to benefit the most are children from families that have lower levels of income and educational background. (Barnett et al, 1995, as referenced in the International Reading Association, 2005), in which children from high SES have access to a variety of educational resources at home, as well as their parents having an advanced educational

level, which allows them to provide their children with the needed support that aids in their learning and development.

Preschool education aims to provide children from the age group of three to six years old with enjoyable, fair, comprehensive, global, and tailored learning opportunities to promote their overall development (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2020) and also readying the child for the next educational grades (The International Reading Association, 2005).

Preparing children in a deliberate manner requires well-tailored programs to their ages, developmental stages, needs, and interests. As one of the crucial qualities should be found in any preschool program is adopting a play-based learning approach, whereby refers to the type of activities that allow the child to explore, learn, and develop basic skills through play, which is a natural desire of any kid. Additionally, they should give a paramount interest in improving the emotional, social, and motor aspects, as well as focusing on developing language abilities that are key to academic success, as Barnett et al (1995) state, having such high quality preschool programs that effectively improve the language and literacy skills of children plays a significant role in their achievement later in life (as referenced in the International Reading Association, 2005).

Since the obtained knowledge and capabilities throughout preschool phase have a lasting impact on people's lifespan, the interest and awareness about preschool education have been increasing every day because it shapes individual's identity that society requires (Polat Unutkan, 2006; Oktay, 2010; as cited in Şenol, 2021).

1.7 Early Exposure to Literacy Skills in Preschools

An influential report on the early years issued by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) concludes: "From birth to age 5, children rapidly develop foundational capabilities on which subsequent development builds. In addition to their remarkable linguistic and cognitive gains, they exhibit dramatic progress in their emotional, social, regulatory, and moral capacities. All of these critical dimensions of early development are intertwined, and each requires focused attention" (as referenced in Powell, 2001, p.31). The quote demonstrates that during the early five years of childhood, children experience a rapid

acquisition of the core skills that act as the building blocks for their development. Besides, they exhibit other improvements in certain fundamental aspects, including linguistic abilities, developing mental skills, together with learning how to manage their emotions, interact with other people, to be self-regulated, and start to differentiate between right and wrong. These aspects are interwoven and influence each other in the development process; along with each one entails a specific interest, focus, and a careful nurturing.

When it comes to the acquisition of literacy skills, these early years of childhood are the right place and time for them because reading and writing are believed to be the most essential competencies required for the student's success in subsequent education (Shufelt, 2008). Therefore, these literacy skills take place in preschool classes to be taught, where children gain the basics of reading and writing before they enroll in formal schools.

According to Elimelech & Aram (2020), the process of improving children's reading and writing skills before formal literacy education starts is known as readiness for literacy skills in the preschool phase, whereby it has the goal of facilitating the shift of children to primary school (cited in Şenol, 2021). To ready children for these literacy skills, well-tailored activities are oriented to them that allow their acquisition of the basic skills needed before delving into the process of learning reading and writing.

Research suggests that during the preschool period, children will gain various literacy skills, but the following are the most significant (National Reading Panel, 2000; Neuman & Dickinson, 2001; Snow, 2006):

- a. Oral language: involves responsive and communicative vocabulary, besides auditory comprehension competencies.
- b. The alphabetic principle: encompasses phonological awareness (the capacity to identify and manage the sounds within words) and familiarity with the alphabet.
- c. Print awareness: involves the ability to identify and comprehend print and textual materials found in the environment (as cited in Kelly, 2021).

In order to make children adopt effective and adequate early literacy experiences, they should be provided by informed, qualified, and compassionate teachers in high-quality preschools

(International Reading Association, 2005). Besides, the supplies and equipment should be used to help pupils improve their literacy skills (Sukma et al., 2017). Consequently, providing an effective literacy program to children in preschool decreases the retention rates in later elementary school (Meloy et al., 2019; Yoshikawa et al., 2013; as cited in Kelly, 2021).

1.8 Literacy Skills Readiness

In preschool education, extravagant importance is given to developing specific aspects in children before they tend to write or read. Therefore, most preschool curricula all over the world strive to prepare children and improve a range of their abilities through the use of carefully planned activities, enabling them to excel in reading and writing easily. This kind of preparation is commonly known as pre-literacy skills or literacy readiness.

1.8.1 Writing Readiness

One of the crucial writing forms needed for the acquisition of this skill is handwriting, particularly in the early years of childhood, when children use their hands to start the creation of written materials. Lamme (1979) states that handwriting is increasingly instructed in a significant number of preschools; however, some children are exposed to it without developing the necessary pre-handwriting skills. These children may face challenges in writing and experience feelings of discouragement. They may try to make up for the pre-handwriting skill absence, but it results in a bad formation of writing, so that becomes extremely challenging to be corrected later. Accordingly, Lamme has set six essential skill areas needed for writing, comprising : fine motor development, eye-hand coordination, holding a writing utensil, basic strokes, letter perception, and orientation to printed language.

The preliminary ability that should be developed in children is fine muscle coordination because the ones who struggle to properly grasp a pencil often exhibit a lack of control over their small muscles; therefore, motor growth is essential before holding any writing tool. The kinds of activities used to improve fine motor skills are manipulative tasks (e.g., puzzles), manipulative toys (e.g., Legos), and practicing molding activities that play a crucial role (e.g., play dough or clay). In the curriculum, coloring, drawing, sketching, painting, folding, and tearing papers are

considered from the activities that contribute to developing those tiny muscles, as also all listed activities aid children in establishing their hand dominance (Lamme, 1979).

She also adds that, in a quality early childhood curriculum, the next pre-handwriting skill is eye-hand coordination. This ability is highly connected with the fine motor one since an individual has control over his muscles to perform brain and eyes actions. Hence, various exercises involved in developing tiny muscles help to improve hand-eye coordination, like engaging in manipulative activities that demand the use of tools along with paper-utilizing tasks such as coloring, painting, and drawing, which are frequently part of the early childhood curriculum, help in improving eye-hand coordination too. Also, activities like copying and matching dots can develop these kinds of skills. Through time, as Bhalerao & Patnam (2013) state, when children become older, they gain control over their arms, muscles, and fingers, as well as their eye-hand coordination, which enables them to advance from sketching basic forms such as circles and symbols to ultimately learning writing.

The third prerequisite skill of handwriting, according to Lamme (1979), is holding writing utensils. It is paramount for children to learn the correct way of grasping the writing tool from the start to prevent the occurrence of bad habits that can be challenging to change later in life. “Tool use among children typically begins in the preschool years with the introduction of crayons, pencils, markers, and other graphomotor tools” (McCleskey, 2013, p.1). After developing the other skills, children become ready to grasp any writing tool. However, they should start holding the triangular type of pen. This ability permits the index, thumb, and middle finger to function as a tripod to hold the writing utensil (Huffman & Fortenberry, 2011). Lamme (1979) indicates that there is a scale of difficulty concerning the use of writing tools. Pencils should be the last introduced tool for children due to their hard effective manipulation.

The fourth skill needed for building the basics of writing is the capacity to form basic strokes proficiently in an adequate direction and with obvious crossings. There are various activities that provide opportunities to practice these essential strokes, in particular drawing, painting, sand play, and stirring.

In order to write, it is not necessary for children to have knowledge about the alphabet; however, for the ones who need assistance with spelling to write words, they must be able to

recognize and identify the alphabet (not necessarily in sequence); this is considered as the fifth pre-writing skill (Lamme, 1979).

The final pre-handwriting skill is orientation to printed language, which involves a set of abilities aligned with readiness reading skills, including how to pay attention and become engaged with written language, how to organize one's exploration of printed forms, how to identify the left from the right, and how to examine letters and words visually (clay, 1975; cited in Lamme, 1979).

After acquiring the pre-writing skills and developing the needed abilities, children become ready to write and produce small written materials, such as letters, words, phrases, sentences, and small paragraphs. This readiness for writing enables children to learn the basics of the skill, notably letter formation, through a variety of activities. Niedermeyer (1973) explains this point and states that letter formation exercises were developed to provide basic education for children on each letter, where they trace dotted representations of letters and then copy them. He adds that in a handwriting program, those activities are arranged in order according to the difficulty of letter formation.

When children grasp certain basics of writing, they move on to acquire a more advanced one; hence, the writing process that they pass through is characterized by shifts. Each of Morrow (1997), Schickedanz, and Casbergue (2004) describe these transitions that occur in the early years of childhood. According to Morrow (1997), kids move from randomly creating lines on paper, through conveying messages on paper, to writing texts. While Schickedanz and Casbergue (2004) describe it as a progression from scrawl to script, from chains of letters to real words, and from basic, uncomplicated messages to complex and organized ones (Morrow, 1997; Schickedanz and Casbergue, 2004; as cited in Shufelt, 2008).

1.8.2 Reading Readiness

In preschool, priority must be given to the child's growth in various aspects, including physical, psychological, and social capabilities, rather than focusing on reading instruction. Yet preschoolers are getting ready for reading, even though they are not engaged in activities devoted to developing this skill. This readiness for reading develops indirectly, gradually, and progressively through a child's daily activities (Bursuk, 1976).

Concerning physical capabilities, Bursuk (1976) argues that reading relies heavily on the visual aspect, so that children should have adequate visual acuity to see clearly and distinctly the printed symbols. Besides, there are other crucial visual skills, such as visual discrimination, which refers to the ability to identify the commonalities and differences between written symbols; visual blending that stands as the ability to combine letters into words; visual memory, which represents retaining the visual image in memory; and visual tracking, which serves as the correct eye movement from left to right direction. He suggested structured reading readiness activities in the visual aspect, which could be developed by giving opportunities for children to arrange a series of objects from left to right, match dots, complete the missing parts, and find identical objects.

In the early stages of reading, when a child starts to learn to link specific graphical elements (letters and letter clusters) with their corresponding sounds, the auditory component plays a paramount role in the reading process. This physical factor requires same traits as the visual ones, including auditory acuity (the capacity to hear clearly), auditory blending (the ability to combine distinct sounds into words), auditory memory (the ability to store auditory images), along with auditory discrimination (the ability to identify commonalities and differences between sounds). The improvement of a child's auditory perception occurs through certain activities such as making comparisons between tunes, recalling the listed spoken words, and identifying phonemes and rhymes in words (Bursuk, 1976).

Furthermore, Bursuk (1976) conveys that an associated speech element is required in the initial stage of reading because articulation requires converting the printed symbol into its corresponding oral form, whether it is a letter, a letter cluster, or a word. This clarifies the relationship that occurs between speaking and reading; to elucidate, speaking acts as the building block of a child's reading skill, whereby the latter's development is correlated with the tier's development of the other one. This idea has been asserted by Wildová and Kropáčková (2015), who declare: "Reading development is closely linked to the level of child's speaking development" (p.880). For oral language development, Bursuk (1976) suggests activities for children that promote the use of vocabulary, such as discussing pictures, expressing feelings, and describing and comparing between objects.

Additionally, Bursuk (1976) considers motor coordination and eye-hand coordination as crucial physical factors that influence child's learning process of the reading skill. Besides developing children's physical facets needed for reading through pre-reading activities, Wildová and Kropáčková (2015) add that both fostering intrinsic motivation for reading and a positive relationship towards it are essential parts of pre-reading instruction.

1.9 Curriculum: A Framework for Instruction and Learning

The Algerian curriculum of preparatory education, which has been developed by the Directorate of Basic Education (National Curriculum Committee), along with the Arabic language curriculum for the first grade of primary school by the Algerian Ministry of National Education, serve as comprehensive frameworks for directing instruction and learning in both early childhood education and the first grade of primary school. They aim at reaching certain determined goals, such as developing pupils' abilities in different aspects and ensuring their acquisition of a range of competencies in each educational phase.

1.9.1 Preparatory Education Curriculum

The curriculum is an educational project that determines the aims of the educational action and activities, means, and resources to reach those aims, in addition to tools and methods to evaluate the outcomes of the educational action (The Curriculum of Preparatory Education, 2008). It is designed for children in the age range of five to six years old, as it mentions that is it oriented toward teachers and caregivers who work in preparatory education classes and preschools in public and private sectors, along with civil society associations.

It sees the extended developmental period between four and six years old as a critical period in child personality growth and development. In this phase, the first basics of personality should be built, and it is characterized by the existence of a wide range of learning capabilities if they are exploited effectively, especially through the use of the dominant play activity in child's life, whereby they are simultaneously learning, growing, and playing.

According to the curriculum (2008), the comparative research results showed that children who have benefited from preparatory education services develop and grow faster quantitatively

and qualitatively than those who have not enrolled, in terms of mental abilities, communication, and interaction with others, along with emotional stability. Another result of the same research revealed that undertaking preparatory education makes children more capable than others in adapting to learning and teaching activities, particularly in basic learning tools.

This curriculum has many reasons to be adopted, such as:

- It ensures the child's growth in terms of socio-emotional, cognitive-intellectual, and sensory-motor aspects.
- The content of this curriculum is characterized by its functionality and feasibility of implementation.
- The approaches of achieving this curriculum are marked by their adaptability to various situations.
- It permits the evaluation of a child's activities with the aim of enhancing their learning.

1.9.1.1 Learning Activities

The experts agree on using the term « activity » instead of the term « subject » because the term subject refers to the learning process based on contents, whereas the term activity indicates that the child is the core of the learning process, as it aims at building competencies based on structured and purposeful play (Preparatory Education Curriculum, 2008).

A. Reading Activity

This schedule reveals the competencies that the child gains in each stage, the indicators that show the child is learning, the contents used, and the contexts in which the child learns. According to the curriculum (2008), the child is supposed to acquire as a final competence the ability to read certain words.

| Phase competencies | learning indicators | Contents | Learning contexts |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| | _ Showing curiosity about the written | _ Utilizing all the written documents. | _ Utilizing the library corner under the |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Identifying the written documents</p> | <p>material.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Recognizing the system of pages. _ Conserving the library corner. _ Classifying and ordering books based on topics. _ Respecting writing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Child’s books and copybooks. _ Stories. _ Journals. _ Magazines. _ Letters. | <p>supervision of a caregiver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Assigning children to sequence books based on topics _ Assigning a group of children to present stories and books. _ Assigning a group of children to read a letter of specific occasion. |
| <p>Identifying words and distinguishing between them.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Identifying certain familiar words. _ Matching between the word and the picture. _ Reading aesthetically. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Simple words. _ Familiar words. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Playing with cards contains words or sentences. _ Decomposing and reconstructing sentences. _ Comparing between similar sentences. _ Comparing between similar words. |

Table 1.1: Reading Activity Curriculum for Preparatory Education

B. Writing Activity

Concerning the writing activity, the curriculum has set as a final competence that the child should gain is being able to control the basics of writing. This schedule contains the same elements as the previously provided reading schedule.

| Phase competencies | learning indicators | Contents | Learning contexts |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Controlling body movements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _Straight posture during sitting. _ Confirming laterality. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body position: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ The head. _The trunk (a combination of the chest, the back, and the abdominal area). _ The legs. _ The hands. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body position: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Trunk posture on the seat. _ Putting hands on the table. _ Joining legs together and placing them on the floor. |
| Controlling hand movements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Drawing coloring, painting, and tracing. _ Imitate, use the space. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free drawing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Circular, curved, and broken lines. _ Straight, horizontal, vertical, and slanted lines. • Oriented | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on exercises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Drawing lines in the space. _ Drawing on the whiteboard. _ Drawing on the |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | drawing: _Drawing the same lines with a tutor. _ Drawing shapes and curves. | board. _ Drawing on copybook ...etc. |
| Control over writing letters and words | _ Imitating words in form and writing. _ Writing letters in different positions and with different tools. | _Familiar words • The letters: (Children write Arabic letters in a specific sequence). | • Forming letters: _Through dough, scissoring, and painting...etc. • Writing letters : _In space, on the board, and on the copybook...etc. _Forming and writing words. |

Table 1.2: Writing Activity Curriculum for Preparatory Education

1.9.1.2 The Weekly Hourly Volume

The curriculum of preparatory year education determines 27 hours for teaching 17 activities per week, including rest time and devoted time for organizing, entering, and exiting. It specifies eight hours per week for scripting and reading activities, in addition to three activities included in this amount of time.

1.9.2 First Grade Primary School Curriculum

The Algerian Ministry of National Education (2016) sees that since Arabic is the official national language used to teach all the subjects taught in primary grades, it has a special place in

the educational framework. Teaching this language aims to help pupils acquire daily communication tool, correcting and reinforcing their already acquired linguistic competence through family and social environments.

The primary school curriculum of the Arabic language subject, the second generation version (2016), focuses on four main domains as in any other language, consisting of: oral comprehension (listening), oral expression, written comprehension (reading), written expression. Pupils should master these four fields to become proficient in the Arabic subject, and mastering this subject is the basis for mastering the other ones. Regarding the written comprehension field, after excelling in Arabic language letters, the Arabic subject focuses on reading diacritic medium-length texts properly. Whereas, in written production, the subject seeks to equip pupils with techniques in order to write a coherent text (Ministry of National Education, 2016).

The second-generation curriculum (2016) contains an annual program schedule of Arabic language subject for each primary school grade. This program enables the teacher to recognize the targeted competencies and their components, the type of learning situation used by the teacher, associated knowledge, along with the adopted standards in evaluation. The provided schedule presents a part of the first grade program (written comprehension and written expression).

| Field | Final competence | Competence components | Examples about learning situations | Assessment criteria model | Time |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| Written comprehension | -Pupils decode the symbols, read simple text easily from different types, and understand it by focusing on dialogue type (from 10 to 30 diacritic words). | - Understanding what they read. | -New reading situations to determine the letter, the word, and the sentence. - Reading situations involving similar letters. | -They answer questions related to text comprehension. -They identify the targeted letters in different situations. -They understand the meanings of the read words. | 144 hours allocated for the instruction of written comprehension per year. |
| | | -They rebuild the provided information in the written text. | -Reading situations to distinguish between vocational skills. | -They decipher symbols. - They pronounce sounds, syllables, and words properly. | |
| | | -They use the provided information in the written text. | -Reading situations to distinguish between similar letters. | -They distinguish between letters. -They employ punctuation | |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|
| | | -They use reading strategy and evaluate written text content. | - Reading situations for prose and poetic texts. | marks. -They extract the values of the read text. | |
| Written expression | -They draw letters, write words, produce simple and diacritical sentences and texts from different types (do not exceed 20 words), and achieve projects with social implications. | -They identify different letter forms and Arabic writing guidelines. | -Situations pave the way for writing. -Situations to write letters in different positions. | Writing control: -They emulate script models. -They draw letters properly in various positions. | 120 hour allocated for instructing written expression per year. |
| | | -They control written language levels. | -Writing situations for familiar words. -Situations for writing simple and short sentences. | - Respecting line. - Respecting word dimension. - Drawing punctuation marks. | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| | | -They produce short texts and written projects. | -Situations for producing short and meaningful written texts. -Interactive situations (teacher-learner/learner-learner). | -Respecting writing and line rules. -Respecting sentence elements sequence. -Respecting project achievement steps | |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|

Table 1.3: Literacy Skills Curriculum for First Grade Primary School

1.10 Conclusion

Reviewing this literature demonstrated the existing understanding of reading and writing skills and the factors that influence the acquisition of these literacy skills, as it shed light on the relationship that stands between them. Also, this chapter tackled with explaining the term preschool education and how early exposure to reading and writing skills takes place in the latter to prepare the child for the later educational journey. Then, it delved into the process of readying the child for literacy skills through structured activities done in preschools. Last, this chapter has provided a general overview of the Algerian curriculum of both preparatory education and first grade in primary school with focusing on the positions of reading and writing in these curriculums.

Chapter Two
Field Work and Data Analysis

Chapter Two: Field Work and Data Analysis

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.1 Introduction | 25 |
| 2.2 Research Method | 25 |
| 2.3 Research Objectives..... | 25 |
| 2.4 The Participants | 26 |
| 2.5 The Procedure..... | 26 |
| 2.6 Data Collection Tools | 27 |
| 2.6.1 The Interview..... | 27 |
| 2.6.2. Classroom Observation..... | 28 |
| 2.6.3. Writing Assessment... .. | 29 |
| 2.7. Data Analysis..... | 29 |
| 2.7.1. Interview Analysis... .. | 29 |
| 2.7.2. Classroom Observation Analysis..... | 34 |
| 2.7.3. Analysis of the Writing Assessment..... | 35 |
| 2.8. Conclusion..... | 39 |

2.1 Introduction

Due to the occurrence of two kinds of groups in first grade, there will be disparities in literacy knowledge among them, as well as they will influence each other's scholastic development. The present research is designed to investigate and explore these disparities and effects. This chapter attempts to provide an overview of the research methodology followed in conducting the present study. More specifically, it presents the adopted research method and objective, the procedure taken throughout the study journey, the participants, and the instruments used to gather the needed data, along with the analysis of the results found.

2.2 Research Method

Since the qualitative approach investigates the “what” and the “how” to understand a phenomenon and give a detailed description of a specific situation, it has been adopted in this study. Based on the nature of this research, which examines the differences in reading and writing proficiency among first grade pupils (enrolled and non-enrolled pupils in preparatory education), qualitative methods will be implemented to affirm the existence of the disparities in these skills and provide a profound understanding about the influence that each group has on the other's academic development.

2.3 Research Objectives

The current study sheds light on the significance of early education that occurs before enrolling in formal schooling and how it contributes to preparing pupils for the first grade of primary school in terms of reading and writing skills. It also reveals the impact of this equipment on pupils' academic development in the first grade of primary school, in contrast to the pupils who did not have the chance to undergo preparatory education. The core aim of this inquiry is to examine the disparities among both situations in literacy skills and investigate the potential effects of pupils from both groups that may take place in the classroom on each other's academic progress.

2.4 The Participants

In this research, the targeted sample was selected from two classes of first graders. The first class is comprised of 43 pupils, while the other one is composed of 44 pupils. I have tried to take the possible number of children who have undertaken preparatory education; this possible number is estimated to be 12 pupils in each class, whereas those pupils who have enrolled directly in first grade were selected to match this number too. As a whole number of participants, 48 pupils around the age of six have been taken to be under study. Each class group contains 24 pupils (12 males and 12 females); this number is divided into 12 pupils (6 females and 6 males) who have undertaken preparatory education and the other half (6 females and 6 males) enrolled directly in the first grade of primary school. In addition to pupils, their teachers (02) of first grade classes in primary school took part in this study as participants to provide detailed information about the research problem.

2.5 The Procedure

The setting where the study took place was Bahi Abed primary school, Relizane, and the devoted time for it was almost two weeks. These primary school first grade pupils and teachers were examined through the use of three data collection tools. As a first step in conducting this study, an interview was carried out with the two teachers of first grade classes. It had well precise questions delivered to them to collect comprehensive information about the situation that occurs among the two kinds of groups in their classes.

Before using the second data collection instrument, I attended pre-observation sessions to note the possible behaviors and attitudes that pupils make during reading sessions to be listed on a checklist. Then, with the help of teachers, 12 pupils were chosen from the ones who had been enrolled in preparatory education and 12 pupils from those who were not enrolled in the latter. After this selection, three sessions of observation were specified for each first grade class. In each session, the number of pupils from both categories was qualitatively estimated for each behavior and attitude. Last, a writing test was implemented on pupils to evaluate the differences in writing proficiency that occur between the enrolled and non-enrolled pupils in preparatory education.

2.6 Data Collection Tools

To gather the needed information for this research, three main data collection instruments have been used, including semi-structured interviews with teachers, observation, and writing assessment with pupils. These tools provide an in-depth understanding and worthy data to be added to this study.

2.6.1 The Interview

The interview as a tool is described by Mathers et al (1998) as a significant technique for collecting data; it includes the verbal communication that occurs between the researcher and the subject. They add that in semi-structured interviews, the answers should be recorded cautiously. In this type, the interviewer, rather than attempting to write down everything on paper, would tape record the conversation. In the present study, we have used face-to-face interviews and adopted a semi-structured type of question, along with the answers of teachers were recorded too.

To gather comprehensive data from the teachers about the situation they have in their classes, a mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions were addressed. The open-ended questions permitted the teachers to express themselves freely, while the closed-ended ones limited their responses to being answered with only yes or no. This kind of questions is sometimes followed by a request to the teachers in order to provide examples or explanations for their answers.

The interview conducted with teachers consists of 15 questions. The first three questions aim to know the duration of teachers' experience in teaching, the number and average age of pupils as a whole, males and females each alone, and the number of pupils with eligible age exemptions. The fourth question aims at providing the main marks that make pupils differ in cognitive abilities. In question number 5; teachers were asked to name and number the subjects covered in the first grade. Then, the questions numbered from 6 to 10 are concerned with reading and writing skills; they include the devoted time for reading and writing per week and if it is enough (Q6), the teaching sequence of these skills with providing interpretation to their answers (Q7), the addressed topics and challenges that pupils face in these skills (Q 8 & Q10) in addition to how the priorities are given in teaching letters, words, and sentences (Q9).

The questions from 11 to 13 are related to preschool, in which teachers were asked if there are significant disparities among pupils in the skills taught, mentioning the reason behind this (Q 11), and they were also asked about the number of prepared pupils they have in their classes (Q 12). Regarding the question number 13, it is about the indicators that distinguish between enrolled and non-enrolled pupils in preschool in literacy skills and when these disparities start to emerge at this level.

Furthermore, question number 14 aims at exploring the kind of teaching method used to teach both groups under the existence of these differences. The last question in the interview aimed at investigating the potential effects that each group has on the other's academic development.

2.6.2 Classroom Observation

Observation is one of the most commonly used tools in qualitative research to collect in-depth information and have a closer look at the behaviors that occur to individuals in a specific environment. Fox (1998) sees observation as the use of all human senses, though hearing and sight are frequently used in research practice. Besides, the interpretation of sense data plays a crucial role in the observation process. He adds that the observation exceeds capturing and documenting data from the environment, and the observer is an active data accumulator whereby his brain, eyes, and ears are engaged all together.

In the current inquiry, observation was the appropriate instrument used to affirm certain pupils' behaviors that may exist in the classroom during the reading sessions. Therefore, this tool was equipped with a checklist to facilitate the process of gathering data.

For each classroom, three observation sessions were customized, but before delving into the observation process, I attended a pre-observation sessions to aid me in seeing what was going on in the classroom and predicting the possible behaviors that take place during reading. The prepared checklist has helped in qualitatively assessing pupils' proportions from both groups within each element; they were estimated if all, most, some, few or none of them exhibit the coming mentioned behaviors.

The first three listed elements were about the speed of understanding, grasping, and reading pace of the written text, and organizing the confused words to form a structured sentence.

Regarding the phonetic reading of letters (integration of letters with their corresponding sounds) and continuous reading (connecting letter to letter and word to word), both have taken place in this checklist.

The other statements dealt with the alignment of pupils' hands and eyes across the read line and reading mistakes they may exhibit during reading words, such as omitting, adding, and flipping letters. Also, distinguishing between similar letters was considered in the observation sessions.

Additionally, in the last listed elements, the checklist has dealt with the adherence of the pupils to their teacher's instructions and their engagement and participation during reading sessions. Moreover, pupils' proportions from both groups were estimated in terms of their speed of answering.

2.6.3 Writing Assessment

As a last implemented tool, a writing test was handed out to pupils from both situations to evaluate their writing in various facets. In this test, the pupils were asked to write the Arabic letter "س" in different forms along with a sentence and words included this letter too. The assessment will be based on respecting the correct measures of letters, maintaining distance between words, and respecting the principle line.

2.7 Data Analysis

The interview, observations, and writing test were the tools used in this study; they were an efficient way of gathering worthy data and an in-depth understanding of the conducted research. In the following sections, we analyze the collected data from the tools mentioned above.

2.7.1 Interview Analysis

In the first part of the interview that was conducted with the two teachers of a first grade primary school, I attempted to demonstrate their experience level in teaching. Both of them have a moderate and considerable amount of experience; the first teacher has been teaching for over eight years, and the second has been teaching for ten years. Choosing them based on their

experience in this field helped them gain the sense of differentiation between their pupils' abilities and acquire the expertise to deal with the most faced challenges in the classroom.

After revealing their years of experience in teaching, it was important to know the number of pupils, including males and females, and those eligible for age exemption. The first teacher has 43 pupils in his class, including 21 males and 22 females, while the second teacher has 44 pupils, divided into 20 males and 24 females. Concerning the last category, there were no pupils entered the first grade at Bahi Abed Primary School with the age of five and a half years old. Teachers confirmed that all their pupils were born in the year 2017, whereby they entered first grade around the age of six.

When it comes to pupils' cognitive abilities, teachers' responses show that there are pupils who grasp and understand quickly (high cognitive abilities) when delivering the lesson, and there are pupils who need explanation multiple times to gain the idea (average). In addition to the teacher's explanation, there are some pupils who need to be followed by their parents at home to grasp what has been studied in the class (low cognitive abilities). Furthermore, teachers have added extra information about the divergence in cognitive abilities between genders; they have seen that females are better than males in this matter, so girls are more focused and faster responders than boys. Yet, although boys have a chaotic nature in the classroom, they excel over girls in attentiveness.

To get a general idea about the subjects covered in the first grade, a question was addressed to the teachers accordingly. Based on the given responses, there are seven subjects taught at this level: mathematics, scientific and technological education, Islamic education, civic education, physical education, art education (drawing), and Arabic language. The latter branch out into oral production, oral expression, reading and writing, understanding the spoken, dictation, memorized songs, and linguistics applications.

To delve more in the Arabic language subject, specifically literacy skills, the weekly dedicated time for teaching reading and writing has taken place among interview questions. Regarding reading, there are three sessions devoted to instructing this skill in a week. About the exact duration of each session, 45 minutes are allocated, which amounts to a total of two hours and 15 minutes per week. Moreover, teachers have explained the aims of each reading class. As

per their statement, the first reading session of the week is called “Overall Reading”, where the teacher presents a sentence containing two new letters that pupils are going to learn that week. In the second session, teachers mentor pupils on how to pronounce the initial letter sound in different forms; this method is also followed to instruct the second letter in the remaining session.

For writing, the first teacher saw that there are two sessions allocated for writing skills per week. In these sessions, pupils are asked to practice this skill by writing on their own whiteboards or blackboards. While, the second teacher considered the two sessions of linguistics application as other writing sessions where pupils write in their books of activities or classroom copybooks to be evaluated later by the teacher, which makes it four sessions a week. Similar to reading, each writing session lasts for 45 minutes, thus making the hourly rate three hours a week.

This weekly schedule for reading and writing has been sufficient for teaching and learning them, especially after the recent changes that occurred in the devoted time for subjects. Last year, the weekly timetable gave a paramount interest to mathematics, but this year, reading has taken some additional time in this table. As a result, teachers report that all of their pupils had the chance to read sentences and small texts in each session, and sometimes they even had an extra time left from it. Similarly, in writing, pupils can be trained to write the newly learned letters in words during the devoted amount of time in a day.

Then, another question was delivered to reveal the order of teaching literacy skills and the reason behind it. When it comes to how they are planned in the schedule, always reading takes first place, then it is preceded by writing, Teachers have given a logical interpretation about this planning so that pupils always need to have a picture about how the letter is formed and how it is pronounced. Processing such a letter image and relating it to its corresponding sound in their minds will facilitate the process of writing later.

But, do the letters have a specific sequence in teaching too? Teachers have illustrated how priorities are given in teaching letters. Teaching letters is not based on the alphabetic sequence but rather on the initial letters that the child pronounces at an early age, such as the letters “م” (m) and “ب” (b). There is another interpretation about teaching these kinds of letters first is that they

are articulated from the lips (labial consonants) which make them easy to learn and voice. By contrast, the letters with different articulation places are difficult to sound out; therefore, teachers introduce easy-to-pronounce letters, and then move gradually to more challenging ones, and this sequence of letters is synchronized with pupils' development. In terms of the kind of words and sentences used, teachers tend to use easy words and short sentences that contain most of the already learned letters.

I have consulted both teachers about the topics tackled in reading and writing. Their responses demonstrated that all topics are inspired from child's personal and school life, such as family, school, sports, nature, library, etc. The latter is known by the textual approach, in which the provided text will not be far from the pupil's environment.

Concerns about the obstructions pupils face in literacy skills, both teachers insisted that according to individual differences, the challenges varied. For instance, in reading, there are who: have a difficulty in articulating letters correctly; distinguishing between letters during reading, particularly the similar ones; have problems with diacritize words; stuttering; and who have speech delay difficulties. In writing, pupils experience hardship in: holding the writing utensil due to a lack of finger growth; following the strokes; and respecting the principle line and letter measures.

The question of whether there are disparities in literacy skills between pupils had a positive response from both teachers. This has raised my curiosity about the causes that led to this situation, which made me inquire about teachers' opinions regarding this matter. They confirmed that individual differences are the main reasons for the variations that exist between pupils. To make it more obvious, they gave some examples of individual differences, such as the home learning environment, which includes parents involvement and access to resources; the exposure to early education programs such as preschools and mosques; and the desire, which is the driving force for learning. The existence of these factors differs from one pupil to another; consequently, variations in literacy skills among them came to light. Since attending preschool plays a role in this divergence, teachers affirmed that they have pupils who undertook preschools; their number was estimated as follow: 25 prepared pupils out of 43 in the first class and 29 out of 44 in the second class.

The point I wanted to reach after these questions was to know the indicators that distinguish prepared pupils from the non-prepared ones, particularly in literacy skills. Among the observations recorded about prepared pupils, as reported by educators based on their experiences in teaching, are the ability to grasp and understand quickly the written material, bring kinds of difficult and new words, ease of memorization, have a rich linguistic repertoire, smooth and fluent reading, swift writing, and respect the principle line and letter measures.

These disparities in literacy skills among the two groups do not emerge at the beginning of the school year because the first months of first grade are considered as a preparatory period where pupils are not exposed to the subject taught yet. However, there are some other qualities, such as fluency in conversation, speed of response, type of vocabulary used, and habituation to the school system, that demonstrate that kind of pupil is prepared or not. After this period, especially in the second term, teacher B noted that the reading and writing abilities of each group started to be closer.

The problem that occurs after identifying the differences among pupils is how to teach both groups in such a situation. Teachers were inquired about this concern, and they answered that they were using a unified teaching method to take into consideration the level of the non-prepared group. If the teachers use a high-level teaching method, considering only the equipped group, the unequipped group will not grasp what the teacher is delivering; hence, they will take time to repeat what has been explained before.

The last question dealt with the impact of both groups on each other's academic progress. It revealed that implementing the unified teaching method, which is appropriate for the unprepared pupils' level, tends to reduce the prepared pupils' competencies and level of understanding. Also, their quick response to answering the teacher's question is considered a negative impact that the prepared group has on the scholastic development of the other group. Such behavior prevents the unprepared pupils thinking about the question and having a chance to answer it. Furthermore, the overestimation of prepared pupils to their abilities comparing themselves with the other group leads them to diminish their efforts in the classroom. Regarding the positive effects, the existence of the prepared pupils creates a motivational atmosphere that raises the competition of the second group over the first one.

2.7.2 Classroom Observation Analysis

During the three observation sessions that were conducted in each class, I was able to see the disparities in reading by estimating the outcomes of pupils from both groups based on a variety of behaviors. Initially, during reading sessions, the majority of prepared pupils showed their capability to grasp and understand the written text swiftly; this happened also in a portion of the unprepared group that could understand it at the same speed; however, the other portion of this group attained the idea after multiple explanations by the teachers, which made them slow learners. The same qualitative estimation was attained in both groups concerning reordering the confused words to form an organized sentence.

Moving on to analyze the reading pace, the data gathered from the observation has shown that a greater part of pupils who attended preschool could read the written material at the required speed. Also, all of them connected each sound to its written symbol and each letter and word to the other one, which made it a smooth reading since they had practiced this skill a lot of times before they entered first grade. In contrast, a selection of pupils who had not attended preschool had a very slow reading pace, as they frequently did not connect the letters with their sounds, the letter with another letter, and the word with another word. Their capacity in this literacy skill could be described as very low, disjointed, and disconnected reading.

In the first two reading sessions of the week that I attended, teachers instructed their pupils to read a small text that was written on the board. Due to the frequent reading of this written material, all pupils have memorized it. To confirm if pupils have really learned to read or are pretending to, the teacher has asked them to read the written text on the board through the use of a ruler in order to see if their hands and eyes move according to each word they read. The observation in such sessions demonstrated that the greater number of prepared pupils have aligned their eyes and hands with the read letter and word, whereas the other group is divided into those who have harmonized between their hands and eyes with the read written text and those who have not.

On the matter of the reading mistakes, there were just a few prepared pupils who omitted, flipped, and added letters while reading words. However, in the second group, the rate of pupils increased to be a half of them who made such mistakes, except in flipping letters they appeared

to be at the same estimation as the first group. Moreover, distinguishing between similar letters during reading was another behavior that a segment of the unprepared group failed in, in which they could not differentiate between letters that sound or formed somehow the same. For instance, instead of pronouncing the letter “ﻉ”, they voice it “ﺀ”. As usual, the vast majority of the prepared pupils have shown their competency in discriminating between them.

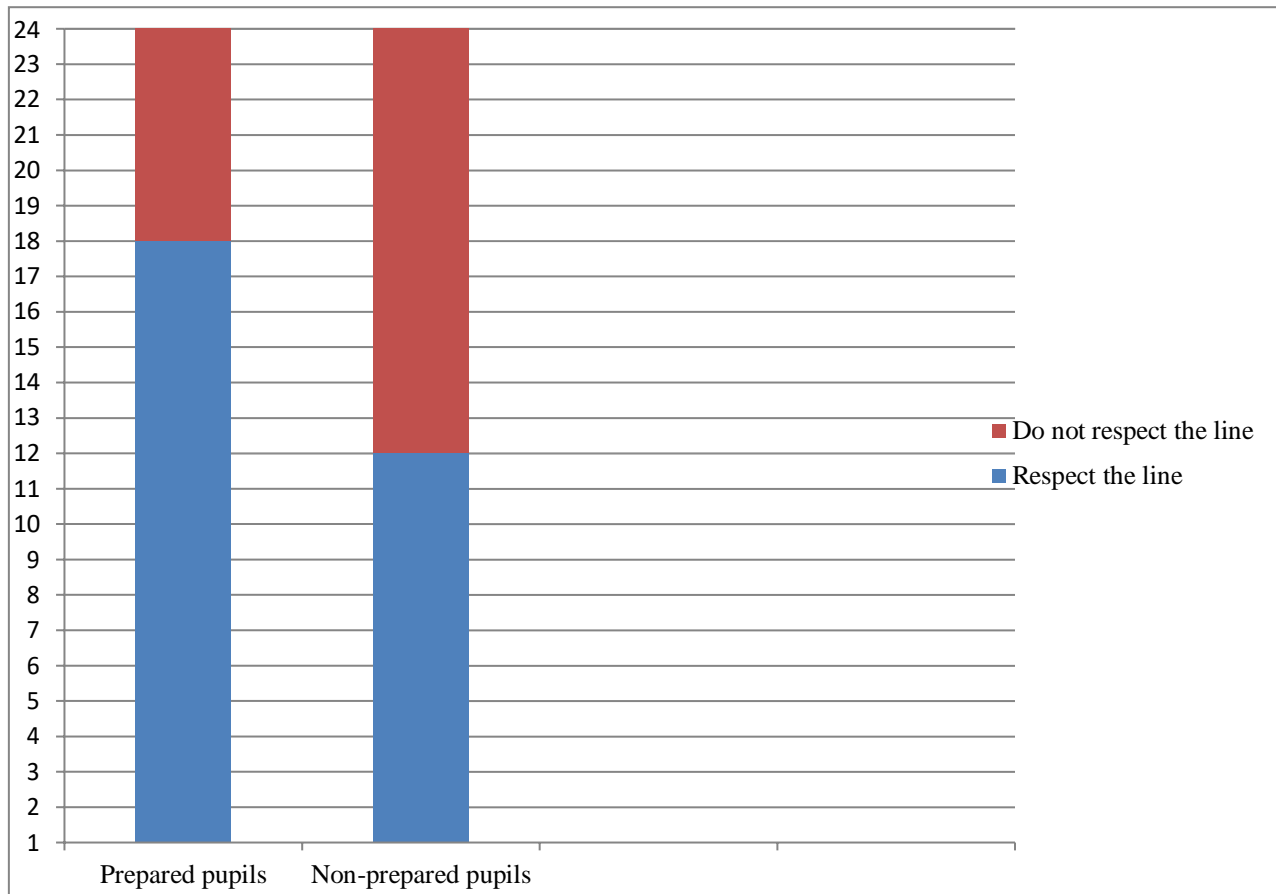
Pupils’ qualitative proportion of each group in participation, engagement, and adherence to the teacher’s instruction during reading activities differs from the other previous behaviors, whereby the observation has appeared kind of similar results in both groups. Most of the prepared and unprepared groups’ pupils tended to do such behaviors. Yet, a slight difference appeared between these results in the used expressions, so that the predominant majority (close to all) of prepared pupils and most of the unprepared pupils (more than half) have engaged, participated, and followed their teacher’s instructions. In speaking about participation, across the observation sessions, when the teachers asked their pupils a certain question, a greater number of pupils who attended preschool threw answers before they completed the question statement. Regarding the unprepared pupils, unless a few of them could answer simultaneously with the first group.

2.7.3 Analysis of the Writing Assessment

In the criteria taken to assess the writing proficiency of the already prepared children before they entered first grade and those who enrolled directly in the latter, we have three components, which include respecting the principle line, respecting the letter measures, and maintaining distances between words during writing.

Concerning the first criterion, “Respecting the principle line”, classifying the obtained data from the papers that were given to pupils from both situations shows as follows:

| | Respect the line | Do not respect the line | Total |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Prepared pupils | 18 | 6 | 24 |
| Non-prepared pupils | 12 | 12 | 24 |

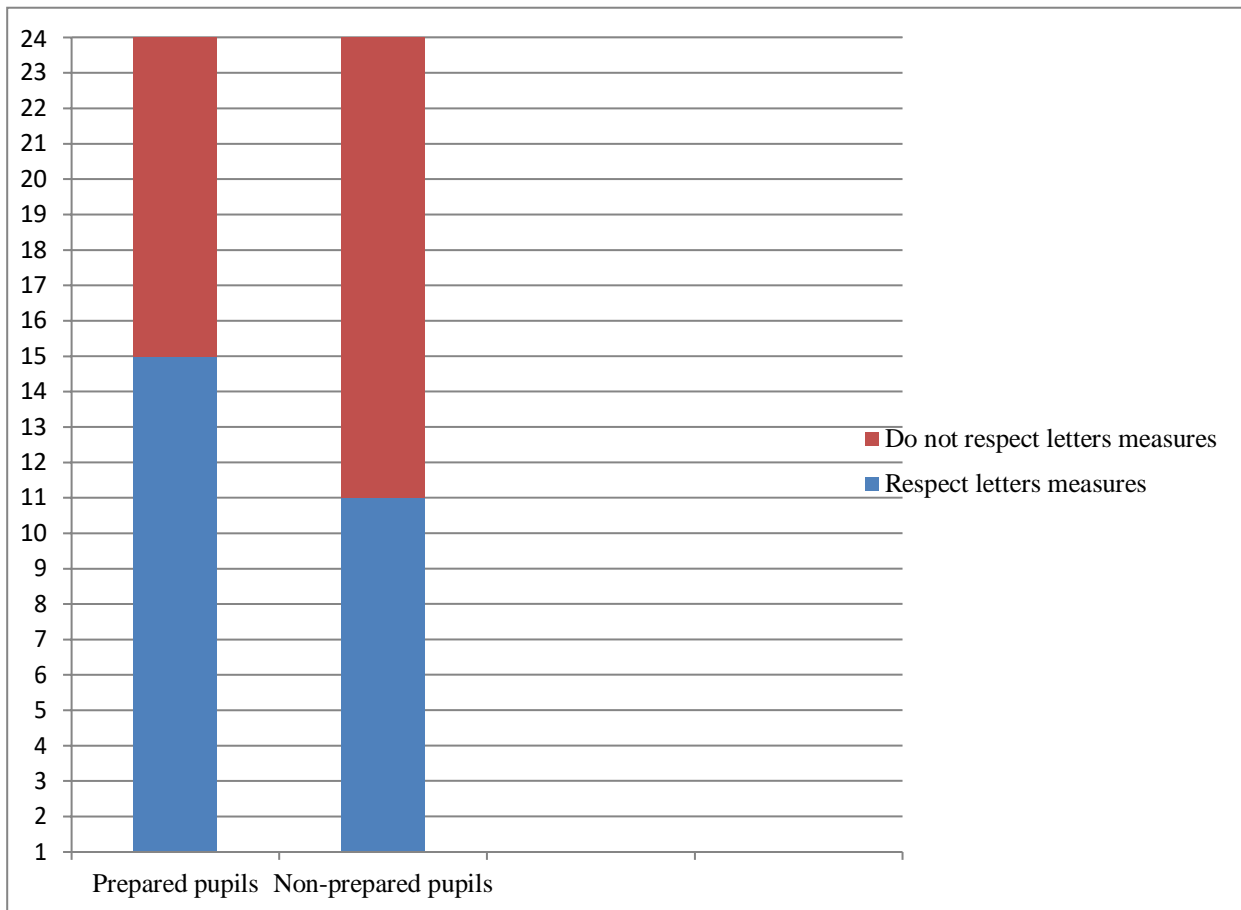
Table 2.4: Compliance with Principle Line in Prepared and Unprepared Groups**Graph 2.1: Comparison of Compliance with Principle Line between Prepared and unprepared group.**

A18 out of 24 prepared pupils have the ability to follow the principle line during writing, while the 7 remaining pupils still have problems following it and controlling their hands. The other 24 non-prepared pupils showed an equal result for those who could follow the line and those who could not, of which 12 pupils respected the line and the other 12 did not.

For the second criterion, “Respecting letter measures”, we have found the results below:

| | Respect letters measures | Do not respect letters measures | Total |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| Prepared pupils | 15 | 9 | 24 |
| Non-prepared pupils | 11 | 13 | 24 |

Table 2.5: Writing Compliance with Letter Measures in Prepared and Unprepared Groups



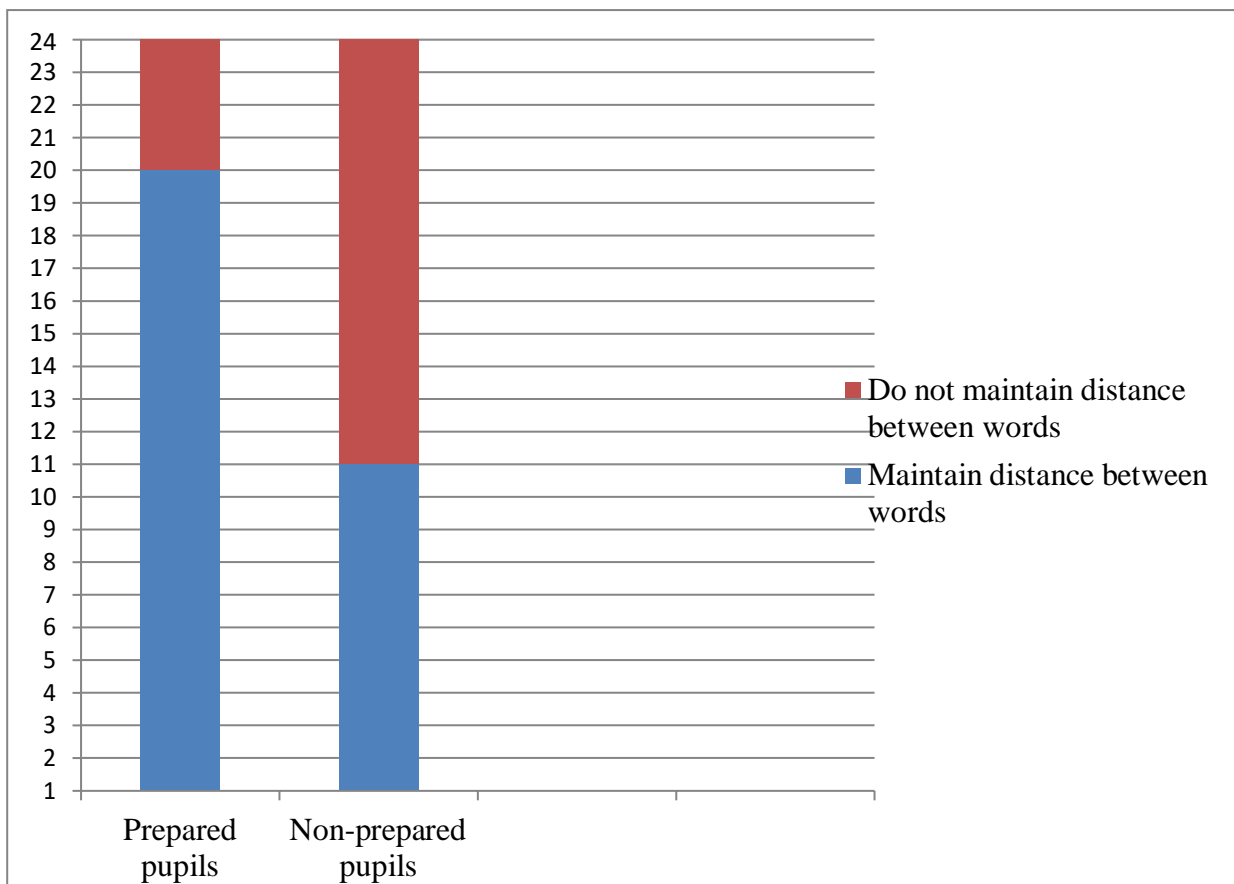
Graph 2.2: Comparison of Adherence to Letter Measures in Writing between Prepared and Unprepared groups

This second graph exhibits the disparity in writing letters, as it provides the number of pupils who respected and who did not respect the measures of these letters in each group. 15 pupils from the prepared group and 11 pupils from the unprepared one could write letters with their required measures, whereas what remains from total of 24 pupils in each group failed to write them correctly.

About the third criterion, “Maintaining distance between words”, the provided table gives the number of pupils who sustained gaps between words and who did not in each group:

| | Maintain distance between words | Do not maintain distance between words | Total |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|-------|
| Prepared pupils | 20 | 4 | 24 |
| Non-prepared pupils | 11 | 13 | 24 |

Table 2.6: Distance Maintenance in Prepared and Unprepared groups



Graph 2.3: Comparison of Distance Maintenance between Prepared and Unprepared Groups

The results show that the first group excelled over the second in maintaining distance between words in the sentence that they were asked to write, whereby 20 prepared pupils and 11 unprepared pupils could keep spaces between words during writing, while the remaining 4 prepared pupils and 13 of unprepared ones could not maintain it.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have illustrated the research methodology employed in this study. It started with the selection of the qualitative approach, which has helped a lot in gaining a whole-picture grasp of the situation under study. Then, the objective of this study has been explained to provide a roadmap for what is expected from this research. The chosen sample and the procedure taken from the beginning until the end of the research were also mentioned in this part. Concerning the data collection instruments and their results, they were described and analyzed individually.

Chapter Three
Discussion of the Findings and
Recommendations

Chapter Three: Discussion of the Findings and Recommendations

| | |
|--|----|
| 3.1 Introduction | 40 |
| 3.2 Discussion of the findings | 40 |
| 3.2.1 Reading Differences | 41 |
| 3.2.2 Writing Differences... .. | 42 |
| 3.2.3 The Influence of Pupils from both Groups on their Academic Progress..... | 43 |
| 3.3 Suggestions and Recommendations..... | 44 |
| 3.3.1 Pre-literacy Homemade Activities..... | 45 |
| 3.3.1.1 Pre-writing Activities | 45 |
| 3.3.1.2 Pre-reading Activities..... | 49 |
| 3.4 Conclusion | 51 |

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at providing interpretations of the gathered data and the results found through the use of observation, interview, and writing assessment. It is also devoted to offering some recommendations and suggestions to the first grade teachers and, most importantly, a series of activities with a home touch oriented toward children who have not had the chance to attend preschool.

3.2 Discussion of the Findings

At the beginning of each school year, in the first grade class at primary school, an amount of children about the age of six go to start formal schooling. Each one of them has a different educational background, whether it was developed before they entered first grade or neglected. The differences among pupils in such backgrounds will be encountered in one class; consequently, there will be two groups of pupils: a well-equipped group and a non-equipped one.

To talk about the main reason that leads to the disparities in the prior knowledge that first grade pupils have, preschool can take the first rank in this matter; it plays a crucial role in enriching children with the basic skills needed for learning, particularly in reading and writing. In addition to that, these children have considerable experience in semi-formal school settings that is going to ready them for the next phase they will pass through in the formal school, including the school environment, teachers, rules, and habits. However, in the first trimester of first grade, teachers have to prepare their pupils regardless of the prior knowledge they have, but those who seem to benefit from this preparation are children who neither attended preschool nor had any other factor to develop the fundamental skills, which they can recover in these months to be somehow close to the level of the prepared pupils.

Although the Algerian national ministry has put these preparatory months to ready pupils for the skills they will learn at this level, they will never be equal to the experience that preschoolers had during one year in terms of the basic competencies they have acquired that prepared them for first grade, particularly in reading and writing. Therefore, this divergence in experiences that exist between the two groups inside the class may have many effects touch both of them.

This kind of situation is a serious problem that any teacher in a first grade primary school may face. Hence, the focus of this study was to examine the variations that occur among these kinds of groups in reading and writing skills, as well as to explore the effects of pupils from both groups on each other's academic progress. To answer each aspect of the research questions, three data collection tools were used. Regarding reading, the observation with a checklist has aided in gathering the differences in reading skills between the two groups, and the test helped in gathering the ones of writing, while the responses of the interview have given a comprehensive understanding about both research questions.

3.2.1 Reading Differences

Based on the results gathered through the use of observation and interview, we validate that there are a variety of reading differences between pupils who have attended preschool and those who did not in first grade. To have more credible results, in the checklist, there were all the behaviors that happen frequently in the classroom during reading sessions. I was just required to confirm these disparities by estimating qualitatively the number of each group in each behavior.

The findings gathered from the observation have shown that the majority of prepared pupils have outperformed the other group in all the listed behaviors except in participation, engagement, and following instructions of the teacher during reading activities, which showed kind of similar results. The prepared pupils show their quick ability to respond, grasp, and understand the written text; their swift reading pace; and their capability of reading fluently through connecting letters with their sounds, letter with the next letter, and word with the next word without any interruptions. The competencies that the prepared pupils possess have made them outperform their peers from the unprepared group in such behaviors.

Also, they did not make many reading miscues, except for a small proportion of them who from time to time added an extra letter to the read word, or omitted one of its letters, or switched between them in the same word. Moreover, distinguishing between letters that resemble in sound or shape is an ability rare to be found in pupils at the beginning of their educational journey, but the prepared kind of pupils exhibited this competency. Among other characteristics this group has

are the ability to reorder the jumbled words to shape a well-organized sentence and the ability to synchronize their eyes and hands upon the written sentence on the board during reading.

According to teachers' responses, there are other features this group possesses, such as a wealthy linguistic knowledge, in which pupils use kind of challenging words and new terms that surpass their age, and they have the ability to easily memorize concepts.

Conversely, the unprepared group has been divided into two fractions: the first segment could perform as well as the prepared group to some level in reading skills, and the second one has a reduced level in this skill, as it sometimes enacts worse than the portion of the prepared group that makes reading errors. All the listed features and the comparison that are mentioned above demonstrate the variations in reading between the prepared group and the unprepared one in which they confirm and answer the first part of the first question.

3.2.2 Writing Differences

The second aim of this research was to examine the differences in writing among the two groups. Through the use of the writing assessment that was conducted on both of the studied cases, we could gather three writing variations from each of them. To assess pupils' writing, three criteria were taken into consideration by their teachers, including letters measures, maintaining distance between words, and following the principle line.

After collecting the papers and analyzing them, the findings revealed that the majority of prepared pupils always outperformed the other category of pupils in all the criteria mentioned. To be able to write the letters in their required measures is challenging for any pupil in first grade, especially when they do not have any experience in writing and learning this skill before, but practicing how to write letters before formal schooling makes pupils trained and ready for this grade, in which when they delve into learning it at this level, they will not take too much time to acquire it, unlike the unprepared group.

The findings have shown that the number of prepared pupils who respected the letter measures exceeded the number of the unprepared group, and then the roles were shifted between the groups concerning writing letters with incorrect measures. Moreover, it was very smooth to follow the principle line during writing according to the written papers by the prepared pupils

and half of the other group. Writing in this line seems easy; however, the second group portion could not write in a straight line, whether they write above or under it, but most of the time they tend to write below it. Furthermore, keeping distance between words in a sentence was another essential criterion to evaluate both groups. As usual, the results demonstrated that the predominant majority of the first group and a segment of the other one left space between each word, whereas the second segment of the second group wrote words intertwined with each other.

These results automatically show the differences in writing that occur among the two selected cases. Also, the disparities found led to the fact that the pupils who undertook preschool excelled over their peers who had not attended it in writing due to the profound experience they had. In addition, the criteria proved that the vast majority of the first group had organized, understandable, clear, and legible writing, as well as a selection of the second group but not at the same level as the prepared one, while the second selection of this group's writing did not possess like these characteristics, in which it was a chaotic, flawed, and illegible type of writing.

3.2.3 The Influence of Pupils from both Groups on their Academic Progress

From the question that was delivered to teachers in the interview, there was a question about the impact of each group on each other's academic progress. Based on teachers' experience in teaching these cases, the impact has been divided into positive and negative aspects. The adverse effects take place when the teacher implements the unified method. It is known to be a moderate level of teaching that takes into consideration both cases, but it is more appropriate for the level of an unprepared group. This approach makes the grasping and response of the prepared group deteriorate and recede instead of being developed because it is less than their level and makes their mind used to more simplified things than they used to deal with.

Besides, throwing answers by pupils who have attended preschool when teachers pose questions seems to be a positive thing that refers to the swift response of this kind of pupils; however, it prevents the other group of pupils from grasping and comprehending the question. In addition to, they will not have the chance or the time to think about it since the first group has already answered it; thus, the unprepared group is not going to gain the idea the teacher wants to reach, and their ability to understand will be reduced gradually.

Moreover, teachers have mentioned that sometimes the prepared pupils think they have more knowledge about the subject than the unprepared ones, which makes them decelerate from their diligence. This leads to the fact that starting to underestimate the ability of the second group in the classroom due to the lack of educational background they have will incite the first group to minimize their work and lose the feel of motivation, which has a negative impact on their academic achievement later.

Despite the occurrence of these mentioned kinds of effects, there is also a positive impact exists between the two groups. The prepared group has a paramount role in creating the atmosphere of the classroom, in which they create a competition vibe that leads the other group to heighten their efforts in order to participate and attain better marks. These interpretations of the results provided above can answer the second research question and validate the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the inquiry.

3.3 Suggestions and Recommendations

Any first grade teacher in primary school will meet a group of pupils who each have different educational background. The concern of this research was about the role of preschool equipment in creating disparities among pupils who had undertaken it and those who had not. To elucidate more, this work has focused on the differences in reading and writing proficiency between these two groups. This situation is a serious problem that should be treated through a set of recommendations oriented to teachers in order to minimize the adverse effects of both groups on each other's scholastic development and reduce the differences that take place in this classroom.

Concerning the physical layout of the classroom, teachers should apply mixed-ability grouping, which refers to the arrangement of each prepared pupil next to an unprepared pupil. These arrangements of different levels of readiness foster collaboration and support between the two kinds of pupils in learning and lead to the development of unprepared pupils' skills and competencies due to the positive influence the equipped pupils have over the ones who are sitting next to them.

Furthermore, teachers should implement a competency-based approach in collaborative activities, in which they are going to put pupils with different educational backgrounds in a group; this kind of activity helps pupils to learn from each other and allows for the acquisition of several abilities. About the moderate teaching level that teachers have adopted is considered the appropriate one for both groups; however, as the findings showed, it has a negative impact on the academic progress of prepared pupils. In this case, teachers should explain the lesson in a simple manner that ensures the comprehension of all kinds of pupils, and then they should raise the level of teaching slightly above the level of pupils to stimulate the intellectual abilities of prepared pupils and to develop the existing ones. This method takes into consideration both groups and validates to meet each pupil's needs and abilities.

As a last solution, teachers should give more homework to the unprepared group to practice and learn reading and writing skills, whereas they should give the other group some activities aim at developing the competencies they have in these literacy skills. It is essential to note that the role of parents is crucial in the acquisition of these basic skills by their children; therefore, providing support and an appropriate home learning environment is a must.

3.3.1 Pre-literacy Homemade Activities

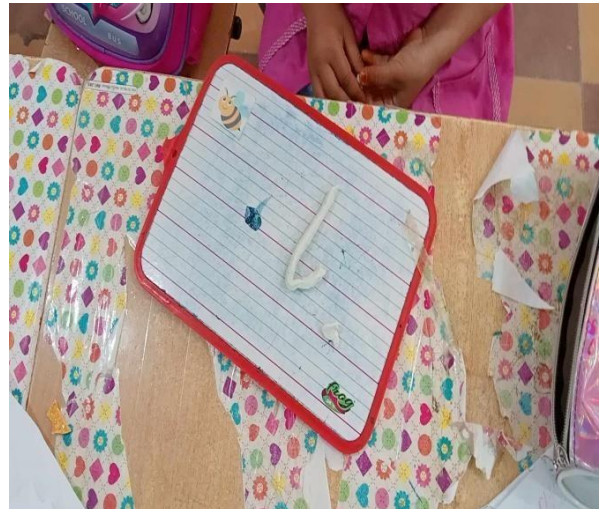
Although the specified preparatory period in the first months of first grade is made to prepare all pupils for literacy skills, it is not enough for unprepared pupils to recover and reach the competence level of the prepared pupils in these skills. Therefore, a series of activities were designed for the children who have not had the chance to enroll in public or private preschools to develop their basic skills before delving into learning reading and writing in formal schooling. The most important thing is that those activities are addressed to their parents with a homemade touch, which makes the materials low-cost and easier to use.

3.3.1.1 Pre-writing Activities

Before teaching children how to write, a set of aspects should be developed first to ready them for this skill. Each aspect is built upon the previous one, so they must be developed in sequence.

Fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination are the initial basic skills that should be improved to ready the child for the remaining unlearned abilities before writing. They are considered intertwined skills, whereby the same activities are going to improve them simultaneously. To have control over the small muscles that take place in hands and fingers and the ability of hands to implement the processed information through eyes, children should practice a wide range of manipulative, molding, scissoring, and painting activities. It is significant to note that any exercise that makes the child move and play with the use of his hands contributes to the development of these skills.

One of the well-known activities used to aid in the growth of small finger and hand muscles and eye-hand coordination is dough. Through the permanent play of this material, the child exerts the force each time by using his hands and fingers. Children can form letters, numbers, different line styles, and geometric shapes through the use of dough to develop eye-hand coordination. What is crucial to mention is that this material can be made at home by utilizing salt, water, flour, food coloring, and oil. These ingredients are mostly provided in each home and are considered economical for parents and safe for children.



Besides, parents can give their children colorful salt on a plate with a picture that contains certain letters, shapes, or lines, and then let the child draw it with his fingers. This is called with sensory writing, which helps the child memorize these drawn items easily through



touch sensor, strengthens the tiny finger muscles, and aligns between eyes and hands movements.

Parents can also let their children tear paper napkins into small pieces, paint them with different colors, and then roll them to form tiny balls. This activity can take place with different ideas, such as painting paper napkin pieces with colors of a specific country flag. The parents here are asked to provide their child with this flag without its colors, and then is going to place each colored piece in its required spot without exceeding the framework as demonstrated in the picture. Instead of a flag, they can give him a picture of a letter, animal, number...etc.



Concerning cutting, there are many homemade activities that require the use of scissors.



Caretakers should first ask children to cut thin papers until they get used to scissors in terms of how they are held and utilized, then gradually start giving more thicker papers. For instance, parents can draw different line styles and shapes on different kinds of papers, such as bond papers, construction papers, or cardboard papers.

Additionally, peg clips are used in such activities to develop pre-writing skills. Manipulating pins requires using fine motor muscles, and attaching them in different spots helps children enhance the alignment between their hands and eyes. Parents can ask them to hang clothes (made with paper) on the line using pins or to put balls of ice cream, as illustrated in the picture.

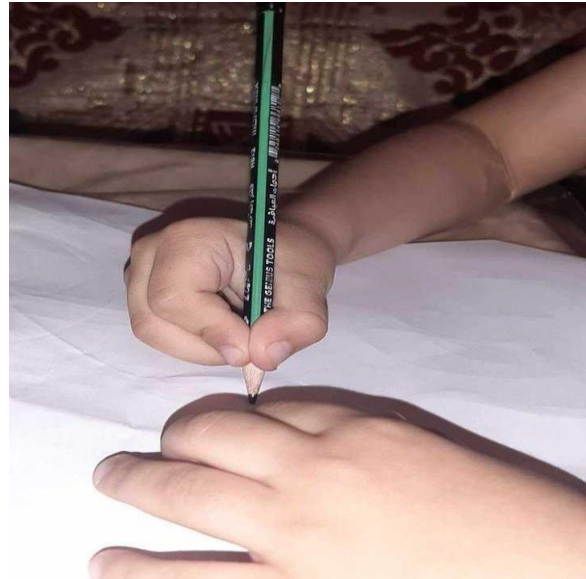


Moreover, they can be asked to categorize mixed legumes based on their colors and shapes. Due to their small size, it will be challenging for children to grasp them, but it is an effective way to develop the muscles and fingers needed for holding the writing utensil.

Jigsaw puzzles are also among the manipulative activities that can be made at home, in which parents can draw or print a picture on a paper and then cut it into square pieces. After randomizing these pieces, the child is required to assemble them to form the complete picture.

After developing the tiny muscles of the fingers and hands along with eye-hand coordination skills, children are ready to learn how to hold the writing tools. In this matter, several activities are concerned with helping the child use any kind of pen, but first, he should know which hand is going to be used in writing.

The role of the parents here is to notice the most used hand of their child in different activities, and based on that, they will discover which one is going to be utilized for writing. Then, it is important to give the child the most easy to use and to hold pen, particularly the one with a triangular grip, where the child can use their thumb, index, and middle finger in a more comfortable and appropriate way.



Once the child has undergone these steps, he can start coloring and drawing randomly on paper to get used to the pen. Then he will be provided with certain coloring and painting activities that ensure coloring a delimited area with boundaries. The core aim of this activity is to teach the child to respect boundaries and raise his spatial awareness, which is needed for writing.



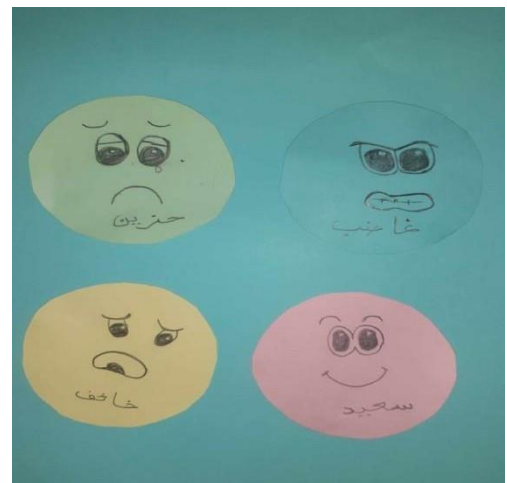
Afterwards, children should learn the basic strokes as straight, horizontal, vertical, circular, curved, and broken lines, and then gradually move to more challenging ones as shapes in order to prepare them for writing letters. To help the child in drawing these lines, parents can draw them on a paper, as shown in the picture, and put it inside a plastic folder. The child here can trace these lines with markers or through the use of their fingers. Also, to practice this kind of activity, children can scissor the inside of cardboard paper into different lines, and thereafter, they follow the space with a pen.



Before delving into writing letters, children will learn how to discriminate between directions as the last step. The latter also has certain activities that instruct the child which side is on the right and which one is on the left. Spoons or forks as kitchen tools can be used to help children in distinguishing between the right and the left, in which the caregivers can put the spoons in different directions and let the child predict to which side they are oriented.

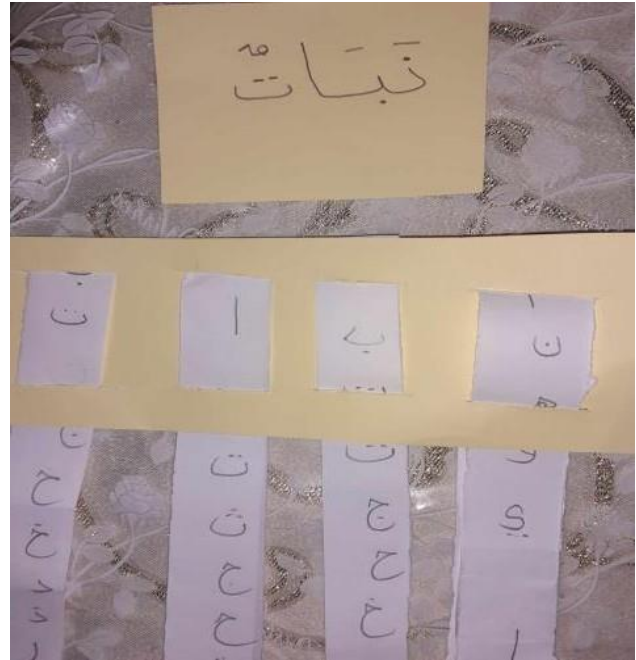
3.3.1.2 Pre-reading Activities

It is important to know that visual and auditory acuity are essential elements for the acquisition of reading skills; therefore, a series of activities are addressed for children to improve their perception of these senses. But the first competence children are required to improve before they delve into the reading learning process is their control over their facial muscles. This can be through inflating balloons or plastic bags, mimicking facial expressions contained within cards (such as smiley, laugh, angry, upset, sad faces),



distinguish between sounds resembling letters; for instance, children can be asked to read or formulate a word that includes the letters “ن” and “م”.

Last, following on from the development of the previous competencies, a child becomes ready to combine sounds and written symbols to form words. In this matter, a variety of activities are designed to aid the child in constructing more simple words and then gradually moving to more complex ones. Parents here can write the same word on two pieces of papers; one of them will be torn into pieces so that each letter alone to take the form of a puzzle. These letters will be jumbled and given to the child to reorder them for the sake of forming the complete word that is shown on the second piece of paper, or they can give them as shown in the picture.



3.4 Conclusion

This chapter endeavored to discuss the results and findings gathered through the three data instruments used, namely, interview, observation, and writing assessment. The interpretations of the collected data have answered both research questions and validate the hypotheses that were set at the beginning of the study. The findings provided several differences in reading and writing among the two categories and revealed the potential effects of these categories on each other's academic development. In considering the occurrence of this problem in any first grade class, the researcher has set some suggestions and recommendations oriented toward teachers in order to minimize the disparities and the adverse effects that may have both groups on their academic progress. As well, a series of pre-literacy homemade activities has been designed for the sake of preparing children who do not have the opportunity to enroll in preschool.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Developing language and literacy skills in the early years of childhood are extremely important in a child's life and future achievement; hence, preschools were put to exploit this period effectively in instructing the basic skills needed for learning reading and writing. To lay the groundwork for such skills, preschool provides a rich language environment and experiences for children, as it ensures the development of the fundamental skills required before the acquisition of these skills through the use of tailored pre-reading and pre-writing activities. After these learning experiences, children become ready for the next academic phase. However, due to a wide range of factors, many children do not have the possibility of getting enrolled in preschool, which implies that their educational backgrounds are not as developed as those who attended it.

In this respect, this study attempted to investigate the differences in literacy skills among these two cases when they were encountered in first grade class. Also, it endeavored to examine the influence of each group on the other's academic development. The first chapter of this work presented the literature review about reading and writing concepts, the relationship that stands between them as literacy skills, and their acquisition. Most importantly, this chapter introduced the previous research regarding preschool education and then integrated the exposure of literacy skills and their readiness in the latter. At the end of this chapter, both first grade and preparatory education curricula were introduced.

The second chapter of this work presented the methodology adopted in research in order to gather reliable data about this matter. It provided the objective of this research, the procedures taken, the sample chosen, and the data instruments used. The findings of the interview, observation, and writing assessment have been analyzed in this chapter.

In the last chapter, which validated the hypothesis and answered both research questions, the researcher discussed the findings that revealed the disparities in literacy skills among prepared and unprepared pupils and the influence of pupils from both groups on each other's academic development. Also, it provided some recommendations to teachers to address the shortcomings the unprepared group has and alleviate the unpleasant effects. Additionally, pre-literacy

General Conclusion

homemade activities were designed for children who do not have the ability to attend preschool have taken place in this chapter.

In the end, this tackled issue has many angles that have not been covered yet; hence, this opens the doors for further research to explore this problem and delve into it deeper.

Bibliography

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliography

- American Psychology Association .(2010). *Children, youth, families and socioeconomic status*. Retrieved February 22, 2024 from <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/children-families>
- Bhalerao, V., & Patnam, V.(2013). Influence of Pre reading And Pre writing Abilities of Pre school Students Intervention on Knowledge And Teaching Skills of Their Teachers. *International Journal of Advancements in Research & Technology* ,2(7), 322-327. Retrieved January 12, 2024 from https://www.academia.edu/4188352/Influence_of_Pre_reading_And_Pre_writing_Abilities_of_Pre_school_Students_Intervention_on_Knowledge_And_Teaching_Skills_of_Their_Teachers
- Buccellati, G. (1981). The origin of writing and the beginning of history. *The Shape of the Past: Studies in Honor of Franklin D. Murphy* (pp. 3-14). University of California, Los Angeles. Retrieved February 11, 2024 from <https://scholar.archive.org/work/lytufnkd7jhqjimpjgd2nj6badi/access/wayback/https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/pfigshare-u-files/15498893/Buccellati1981TheOriginofWritingandtheBeginningofHistory.pdf>
- Bursuk, L. (1976). *Reading and the Kindergarten Child* (pp.1-14). York College of the City University of New York. Retrieved January 10, 2024 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED138918.pdf>
- Chansa-Kabali, T., Serpell, R., & Lyytinen, H. (2014). Contextual analysis of home environment factors influencing the acquisition of early reading skills in Zambian families. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 24(5), 410-419. Retrieved January 22, 2024 from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2014.997008>
- Department of Higher Education and Training. (2020). *PrimTEd Teaching Reading Study Guides: Study guide 1: Introduction to teaching reading*. Retrieved January 15, 2024 from file:///C:/Users/Hamada%20Salim%20G%20Trd/Downloads/ptrsg-one-introduction%20(3).pdf
- Dhanya, M., & Alamelu, C. (2019). Factors influencing the acquisition of writing skills. *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering (IJITEE)*,

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 8(7C2), 259-263. ISSN: 2278-3075. Retrieved February 12, 2024 from <https://www.ijitee.org/wp-content/uploads/papers/v8i7c2/G10590587C219.pdf>
- Dolean, D., Melby-Lervåg, M., Tincas, I., Damsa, C., & Lervåg, A. (2019). Achievement gap: Socioeconomic status affects reading development beyond language and cognition in children facing poverty. *Learning and instruction*, 1-10. Elsevier. Retrieved January 14, 2024 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336183219_Achievement_gap_Socioeconomic_status_affects_reading_development_beyond_language_and_cognition_in_children_facing_poverty
 - Dragomir, I. A., & Niculescu, B.-O. (2020). Different Approaches to Developing Writing Skills. *Land Forces Academy Review*, 25(3), 201–206. Retrieved January 6, 2024 from <https://doi.org/10.2478/raft-2020-0024>
 - Fikrat-Wevers, S., Van Steensel, R., & Arends, L. (2021). Effects of Family Literacy Programs on the Emergent Literacy Skills of Children From Low-SES Families: A Meta-Analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 91(4), 577–613. Retrieved January 12, 2024 from <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654321998075>
 - Fox, N. (1998). How to use observations in a Research Project. *Trent Focus for Research and Development in Primary Health Care* (pp.1-24). Retrieved January 24, 2024 from <http://web.simmons.edu/~tang2/courses/CUAcourses/lsc745/sp06/observation.pdf>
 - Hijril, I., Syahrurah, J. K., & Basuki, B. (2017). Improving the students' reading skill through translation method. *Journal of English Education*, 2(2), 124–131. Retrieved December 31, 2023 from <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/268558-improving-the-students-reading-skill-thr-5d2fcf0e.pdf>
 - Huffman, J. M., & Fortenberry, C. (2011). Helping Preschoolers Prepare for Writing: Developing Fine Motor Skills. *YC Young Children*, 66(5), 100–103. Retrieved January 12, 2024 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42730785>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- International Reading Association. (2005). *Literacy development in the preschool years: A position statement of the International Reading Association*. In Morrow, L. M (Ed.). Retrieved January 25, 2024 from <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/literacy-development-preschool-position-statement.pdf?sfvrsn=6>
- Kelley, S. (2021). *Best Practices in Early Childhood Literacy*. Center for Education Policy Analysis and Research (CEPARE). Retrieved February 16, 2024 from <https://cepare.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3130/2021/10/CEPARE-Early-Childhood-Literacy-Oct-2021.pdf>
- Kim, Y., Al Otaiba, S., & Puranik, C. (2015). Developmental trajectories of writing skills in first grade. *The Elementary School Journal*, 115(4), 593–613. Retrieved January 4, 2024 from <https://doi.org/10.1086/681971><https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/681971>
- Küçükoğlu, H. (2013). Improving reading skills through effective reading strategies. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 709-714. Retrieved December 31, 2023 from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.113>
- Lamme, L. L. (1979). Handwriting: In an Early Childhood Curriculum. *Young Children*, 35(1), 20–27. Retrieved February 13, 2024 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42642746>
- Lynch, J. (2007). Learning about literacy: Social factors and reading acquisition. *Encyclopedia of Language and Literacy Development* (pp. 1-9). London, ON: Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network. Retrieved January 17, 2024 from https://edu.yorku.ca/files/2015/05/Lynch_2007.pdf
- Mathers, N., Fox, N., & Hunn, A. (1998). Using Interviews in a Research Project. *Trent Focus for Research and Development in Primary Health Care* (pp.1-24). Retrieved January 24, 2024 from <http://web.simmons.edu/~tang2/courses/CUACourses/lsc745/sp06/Interviews.pdf>
- McCleskey, J. (2013). *The Influence of Joint Laxity on the Development of Grasp on a Pencil*. The Handwriting Clinic. Retrieved January 12, 2024 from <https://www.thehandwritingclinic.com/FS/Research/The%20Influence%20of%20Joint%20Laxity%20on%20the%20Development%20of%20Grasp%20on%20a%20Pencil%20FINAL.pdf>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ministry of National Education. (2016). *The curriculum of Arabic language in primary education* (pp. 1-39). Retrieved February 1,2024 from [صهاج-اللغة-العربية-للبنين-الابتدائي-الجدل-الثاني.pdf](#)
- Moran, R., & Billen, M. (2014). The Reading and Writing Connection: Merging Two Reciprocal Content Areas. *Georgia Educational Researcher*, 11(1), 188-208. Retrieved January 29,2024 from [file:///C:/Users/Hamada%20Salim%20G%20Trd/Downloads/The_Reading_and_Writing_Connection_Merging_Two_Rec.pdf](#)
- National Council of Educational Research and Training. (2020). *Guidelines for Preschool Education*. Retrieved February 8, 2024 from <https://ncert.nic.in/dee/pdf/guidelines-for-preschool.pdf>
- Niedermeyer, F. C. (1973). Kindergarteners Learn to Write. *The Elementary School Journal*, 74(3), 130–135. Retrieved January 11, 2024 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1000834>
- Powell, D. R. (2001). *Early Childhood Education*. In Indiana Family Impact Seminars. Retrieved January 25, 2024 from <https://www.studocu.com/en-ca/document/concordia-university/kindergarten-teaching-seminar/early-childhood-education-by-douglas-r-powell/20420912>
- Research Institute of Education Prague (2004). *Framework Educational Programme for Pre-school Education*. Retrieved February 8, 2024 from https://www.edu.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/RVP-PV_ENGLISH-version.pdf
- Schmandt-Besserat, D. (2014). The evolution of writing. In J. Wright (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of social and behavioral sciences* (pp. 1_15). Elsevier. Retrieved February 12, 2024 from https://sites.utexas.edu/dsb/files/2014/01/evolution_writing.pdf
- Şenol, F. B. (2021). Readiness for reading and writing in pre-school period: evaluation of classroom environment and practices with teachers' views. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 8(1), 432-453. Retrieved January 25, 2024 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1286726.pdf>
- Shufelt, S. (2008). *Writing Instruction in Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms: Methods, Considerations, and Practices Capstone Experience* [Peabody College of Vanderbilt

BIBLIOGRAPHY

University]. Retrieved February 16, 2024, from

<https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/bitstream/handle/1803/477/ShufeltCapstone.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

- Snel, M., Aarnoutse, C., Terwel, J., Van Leeuwe, J., & Van Der Veld, W. M. (2016). Prediction of word recognition in the first half of grade 1. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 24(2), 229–238. Retrieved from January 3, 2024 from <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293x.2016.1143260>
- Sukma, E., Mahjuddin, R., & Amelia, R. (2017). Literacy Media Development in Improving Reading and Writing Skill of Early Class Students in Elementary School Padang Utara Padang. *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference for Science Educators and Teachers (ICSET 2017)*, 118, 145_150. Atlantis Press. Retrieved January 13, 2024 from <https://doi.org/10.2991/icset-17.2017.25>
- The Directorate of Basic Education (National Curriculum Committee).(2008). *The curriculum of preparatory education* (pp.1-32).
- Tønnessen, F. E., & Uppstad, P. H. (2015). *Can we read letters? : Reflections on fundamental issues in reading and dyslexia research*. Sense Publishers. Retrieved January 3, 2024 from <file:///C:/Users/Hamada%20Salim%20G%20Trd/Downloads/CanWeReadLetters.pdf>
- Watkins, P. A. (2017). *Teaching and developing reading skills*. In Thornbury, S (Ed.), Cambridge University Press. Retrieved January 2, 2024 from https://www.google.dz/books/edition/Teaching_and_Developing_Reading_Skill_G/w0xDwAAQBAJ?hl=1&gbpv=1
- Wildová, R., & Kropáčková, J. (2015). Early childhood pre-reading literacy development. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191, 878–883. Retrieved

BIBLIOGRAPHY

February 5, 2024 from

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282536477> Early Childhood Pre-reading Literacy Development

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Appendix –A-

FIRST GRADE TEACHERS’INTERVIEW

Dear teachers,

We would be very thankful if you specify an amount of time to answer a series of questions in response to a study that aims at examining the disparities in literacy skills among prepared and unprepared pupils of first grade in your school.

Interviewer: Hello how are you doing today?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: the question I am going to start with is: How long have you been teaching in primary school?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: nice, how many pupils, males and females, are enrolled in your class? And do you have any pupil entered first grade with age exemption?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: what is the age range of these pupils?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: What can you say about the pupils’ cognitive abilities?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: let us talk about the subjects covered at this level, how many are they? Can you list them?

APPENDICES

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: since the Arabic language brunch out into many sessions including reading and writing, this question is related to them, what is the weekly devoted timing for teaching reading and writing? Is it enough for teaching and learning these skills?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: how are both reading and writing sessions planned in the schedule? In your opinion, why this sequence?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: what are the topics tackled in teaching these skills?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: do the letters have specific teaching sequence, and what kind of words and sentences are used at this level?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: what are the main challenges that pupils encounter in these skills?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: Are there differences between pupils in literacy skills? What are the causes that led to this divergence?

Interviewee:
.....

Interviewer: As preschool is one of the reasons, how many pupils have undertook preschools before they enter first grade in your class?

APPENDICES

Interviewee:

.....

Interviewer: What are the indicators that characterize prepared pupils from the non-prepared ones in literacy skills? And when they start to emerge?

Interviewee:

.....

Interviewer: How could you teach both groups under the existence of these disparities?

Interviewee:

.....

Interviewer: what are the possible effects that both groups have on each other?

Interviewee:

.....

APPENDICES

Appendix -B-

The Arabic version of teachers' interview questions

إيها السانذة الالعزاء

سنكون ممنونين للغاية اذا خصصت بعضا من الوقت للإجابة على سلسلة من الأسئلة استجابة لدراسة تهدف الى فحص الفروقات في المهارات اللبوية ما بين التالمبذ المحضرين والغير محضرين في الصف الول في مدرستكم

1 كم نبلغ المدة التي درسها في الطور اللبدي؟

2- كم عدد التالمبذ، اللبث منهم واللبكور والمرخص سنهم المسجلين في صفك؟

3- كم نبلغ اعمار هؤلاء التالمبذ؟

4- كيف نصف الفترات اللبوية التي نملكها تالمبذك؟

5- كم عدد المواد المدرسة في هذا اللبوى؟ هل بإمكانك تسميهم؟

6- ما هو اللبج الساعي اللبوعي اللبمخصص لللبريس القراءة واللبكتابة؟ هل هو اللبف لللبريس اللبمهارين؟

7- ما هو ترتيب حصص القراءة واللبكتابة في اللبجدول اللبزمي؟ ني رأيك لماذا هذا اللبلسل؟

8- ما هي المواضيع التي يتم اللبعامل معها في اللبريس اللبمهارين؟

9- هل للبحروف ترتيب محدد و ما هو نوع اللبلمات واللبل اللبسعملة في هذا اللبسى؟

10- ما هي اللبم اللببنيات التي يواجها التالمبذ ني اللبمهارين؟

11- هل يوجد فروقات ما بين التالمبذ في مهارات القراءة واللبكتابة؟ ما هي اللبسباب التي أدت إلى هذا اللببب؟ 12-

بما أن رياض الأطفال اللبسباب، كم عدد التالمبذ اللبمواجهين ني صفك اللببن اللبحقوا إلى رياض الأطفال قبل دخولهم

لصف الول؟ -

13 ما هي اللبمشورات التي نمنبذ ما بين التالمبذ المحضرين والغير محضرين في مهارات القراءة واللبكتابة؟ ومتى نبدأ

بالظهور؟

14- كيف نقوم باللبريس اللببن اللببن مع تواجده الفروقات؟

15- ما هي اللبثار اللبسعملة التي تؤثر نبيها اللببن اللبعلى بعض اللبعض؟

APPENDICES

Appendix-C-

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

| Behaviors | Groups | Prepared pupils | | | | | Unprepared pupils | | | | |
|---|--------|-----------------|----------|----------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------|----------|---------|----------|
| | | A ll | Mo st | So me | Fe w | No ne | Al l | Mo st | So me | Fe w | No ne |
| Quick grasping and understanding of the written text | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Correct reordering of confused words | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Swift reading pace | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Continuous reading | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Phonetic reading | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The correct alignment of eyes and hand with the read text | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Adding letters during reading | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Omitting letters during reading | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Flipping letters during reading | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Distinguishing between similar letters | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Participating and engaging in reading activities | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Adhering teacher's instructions during reading activities | | | | | | | | | | | |

APPENDICES

Appendix_B_

WRITING TEST

The image displays two pages of handwritten musical notation on a grid background. The notation is written in black ink and includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and clefs. The notation is organized into two main sections, one on the left and one on the right, each containing several staves of music. The notation appears to be a form of musical shorthand or a specific dialect of musical notation. The left page shows a sequence of notes and rests, with some notes having stems and beams. The right page shows a similar sequence, with some notes having stems and beams. The notation is written in a consistent style throughout both pages.