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Exploring Arabic Emergent Literacy Instruction in Al Ain Private Schools: A Case Study of Two Teachers

Iman Nader Alamirah

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جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
United Arab Emirates University

United Arab Emirates University

College of Education

Department of Curriculum and Methods of Instruction

EXPLORING ARABIC EMERGENT LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN
AL AIN PRIVATE SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF TWO
TEACHERS

Iman Nader Alamirah

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (Curriculum and Instruction)

Under the Supervision of Dr. Mohamad Shaban

May 2018

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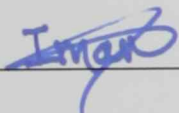
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Declaration of Original Work

I, Iman Nader Alamirah, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled "*Exploring Arabic Emergent Literacy Instruction in Al Ain Private Schools: A Case Study of Two Teachers*", hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is my own original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Mohamad Shaban, in the College of Education at UAEU. This work has not previously been presented or published, or formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from other sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this thesis.

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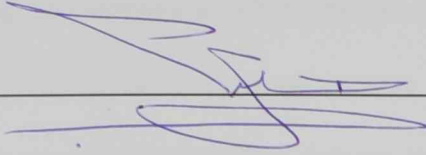
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Abstract

The concept of emergent literacy reflects a view of children's development and learning of language in which the emerging language skills gradually progress in alignment with the developmental aspects of children (Sandvik, van Daal, & Adèr, 2014). This case study aimed at delving into the nature of Arabic emergent literacy instruction by exploring the perceptions and practices of a case of two teachers in one private school in Al Ain city. The questions this study attempted to answer were: (a) What are the perceptions of private schools' teachers' in Al Ain regarding the Arabic emergent literacy instruction? (b) What are the practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction these teachers apply in the classroom? (c) Are there any differences between the teachers' perceptions and their actual practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction?

The qualitative methods of data collection included interviews and classroom observations and were followed by an analysis process of coding data into themes. The main findings described under each of the three research questions included the teachers' perceptions about the emergent literacy skills' learning and teaching with regards to the teachers' roles, materials, activities and the use of technology. It also highlights the challenges these teachers face in teaching Arabic language to young children. In the description of the practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction applied by the participant teachers in their lessons, the types of implemented activities, the targeted skills, the teaching strategies and the use of technology were thoroughly included. The differences found between the perceptions and practices were limited to two examples in a case of one teacher. This study presents

recommendations to the Ministry of Education, teacher education programs and implications for future research.

Keywords: Emergent Literacy, Arabic Language Teaching, Literacy Instruction, Teacher Perceptions, Private School, United Arab Emirates.

Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

استكشاف ممارسات تدريس القراءة و الكتابة العربية الناشئة في مدرسة خاصة
بمدينة العين: دراسة حالة لمعلمتين

المخلص

يجمع مفهوم القراءة و الكتابة الناشئة بين مبادئ التطور المبكر و اكتساب اللغة حيث يعبر عن النمو التدريجي لمهارات الأطفال. لقد هدفت دراسة الحالة في هذا البحث إلى استقصاء طبيعة تدريس القراءة و الكتابة العربية الناشئة عن طريق استكشاف تصورات معلمتين و ممارساتهنّ في إحدى المدراس الخاصة بمدينة العين. و عمدت هذه الدراسة إلى محاولة الإجابة عن ثلاثة أسئلة بحثية هي: (أ) ما هي تصورات معلمتي مدرسة خاصة في مدينة العين حول تدريس القراءة و الكتابة العربية الناشئة؟ (ب) ما هي ممارسات تدريس القراءة و الكتابة العربية الناشئة التي تطبقها هاتان المعلمتان في الصف؟ (ج) هل توجد اختلافات بين تصورات المعلمتين حول تدريس القراءة و الكتابة العربية الناشئة و ممارساتهما الفعلية؟

تضمّنت طرائق جمع البيانات في هذه الدراسة النوعية المقابلات و الملاحظات الصفية، و تلتها عملية تحليل البيانات عن طريق التحليل الموضوعي. و قد خلصت الإجابات التي توصلت إليها الباحثة حول أسئلة البحث إلى تصورات المعلمتين حول تعليم مهارات القراءة و الكتابة العربية الناشئة و تعلّمها في مواضيع أدوار المعلمة، و الوسائل و الأنشطة التعليمية، و استخدام التقنية. كما وصفت التحديات التي تواجهها المعلمتان في تدريس اللغة العربية للأطفال.

و ضمن وصف ممارسات تدريس القراءة و الكتابة العربية الناشئة، فصلت النتائج الأنشطة التدريسية، و المهارات المستهدفة، و طرق التدريس و دمج التقنية التي تطبقها المعلمتان خلال الدروس. و وضّح تحليل البيانات الخاصة بالإجابة عن السؤال البحثي الثالث حالتين من الاختلاف بين التصرّوات التي عبّرت عنها إحدى المعلمتين و ممارساتها التدريسية.

و بناء على مناقشة الاستنتاجات، قدّمت الدراسة توصيات حول تدريس القراءة و الكتابة العربية في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة لوزارة التربية و التعليم، و برامج إعداد المعلمات، و المعلمات، إضافة إلى اقتراحات لمشاريع بحثية مستقبلية.

مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية: تدريس اللغة العربية، تدريس القراءة و الكتابة، تدريس الأطفال، معلمات الروضة، تصورات المعلم، مدرسة خاصة، دولة الإمارات.

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I am indebted to many of my teachers at the college of education who generously helped me throughout the process of my study and my master's program as a whole. I express my gratitude for their time, support and encouragement. I would like to especially thank Prof. Hassan Tairab, the dean of the college of education, for his kind support and guidance throughout my master's studies and

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I am also grateful for the kindness and help of the school that was the setting and the teachers who participated in this study. I would like to thank them for allowing me access their classrooms and take some of their valuable time for interviews in order to understand the instruction of Arabic emergent literacy.

Dedication

*To my beloved parents and family, to my great teachers, to my supportive friends, to
the precious children who beautifully speak their native language and to their
awesome teachers*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This chapter of the thesis introduces the problem to be studied by explaining its statement, purposes and questions. Significance of the study and its limitations are presented by the end of this chapter.

The fields of language acquisition and literacy development have gained increasing attention of researchers and practitioners of education in recent years. Therefore, theories and models were established in an effort to provide a foundation for knowledge and practice.

Literacy in the early stages of life is described as "emergent" to imply that it originates from the child him/herself with the help of individual readiness and environmental circumstances, and it develops in a gradual manner (Hall, 1987). Children's early acquisition of language is described by Neuman and Roskos (1993) as constructive, interactive, and functional. With regard to children's construction of the language, they stated that "children create language on the basis of an innate set of rules or underlying concepts". Whereas with respect to interactive teaching, the authors stated that "language is mediated by adults through interactions designed to extend and elaborate its meaning". Finally, the authors described what is meant by functional as "it is through the relevant use of language that children learn it" (Neuman & Roskos, 1993, p.31).

Emergent Literacy is not only a fundamental area of learning in the preschool stage for its interrelation with early language, but also a cornerstone for achieving integration between different learning areas like Math, Science and Social Studies. Thus, a meaningful and purposeful instruction of emergent literacy serves as a

foundation of a strong early childhood education curriculum (Anderson & Fenty, 2013).

Although effective literacy teaching does not have a prescription or predefined manual of the perfect program, studies have found that teachers who used a joint approach of varied teaching methods to develop language skills were the most successful at achieving the best outcomes (Hall, 2003). According to Cunningham (2010), the learning environments which provide quality literacy education to children are correlated with higher scores in knowledge and abilities of literacy. Therefore, exploring the quality of experiences presented to kindergarten children can assist with identifying the levels of literacy awareness and establishing an effective practice for language development.

This study is an attempt to develop an understanding of the perceptions and practices that teachers follow during instruction to develop young learners' learning of Arabic.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study was initiated from the observations of kindergartens' teachers' practices of teaching Arabic literacy during the school day. Kindergarten and preschool education entails activities that equip children with the skills that are expected to assist their later learning of knowledge and skills at the school level (Gronlund, 2014). Children usually spend time in a typical preschool day in either teacher-directed or child-selected activities. The teacher-directed activities include the ones a teacher has designed for the whole group, small groups or individual children, where the teacher selects which children will take part. Whereas, in child-

selected activities, the child has free choice to decide the task that he/she would like to work on. A child's time in the preschool is also taken up by routine events such as meals and transitions between the different activities (Early et al., 2010).

Teachers are accountable for transforming established standards into achievable objectives by combining thoughtful pedagogy and activities which offer abundant experiences for children to engage and learn (Neuman & Roskos, 1993). The teachers' attempts to reflect their principles about teaching young children into their instruction of literacy is a topic of interest to study in order to build an image of what happens in real classrooms rather than what is formally stated of how children are introduced to their mother language. So, the analysis of activities created by teachers in the early learning settings is a means to track the structure of Arabic literacy education programs.

According to Almatoug (2008), the political, economic and social changes in the Arabian Gulf region during the 20th century had a negative effect on the Arabic language. The foreign workforce that entered the Gulf countries, including the UAE, occupied a variety of positions and thus obliged the use of English as a medium language. Children were not free from the influence of this phenomenon as the maids and drivers hired by their families were some of the main adults with whom they interacted extended periods of time since they lived in the same house. The consequence was a weak foundation of Arabic as a native language in the early years when the significant adults in the Arab child's life did not serve as proper models of language.

Moreover, many families do not promote their children's growth of language skills and rely on formal schooling to build the foundation of their mother language

as well as the second language (Morrow, 2012). Consequently, Teachers are responsible for developing the knowledge and skills of young children about language, and in order to do their role, they need to enhance their procedures aided by recommendations that will be provided by this study.

The perceptions of teachers combine the embodied ideas and principles regarding teaching and learning of which the practices are driven by. Such perceptions are formed by the interaction of gained knowledge, accumulated experiences and continuous reflections. So, the study of perceptions is a discovery of these all in the minds of teachers. It also contributes to the diagnosis of the current situation of the educational field; that is, the mindset of teachers' who are considered some of the major stakeholders in education. Because teachers take part in all elements of the educational process, their views and beliefs regarding the issues of teaching the Arabic language to young children and the ways their learning of language occurs are rather critical and worthy of investigation (Abdulkarim, 2003).

The private sector of education in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is monitored by the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) which describes its mission for the sector as to prepare students to be well-suited for excelling at international levels while conserving the Emirati national identity; of which the Arabic language is a key element. However, the reports of ADEK state the levels of Arabic language performance are below the prospects the Department has set and requires effort to comply with the standards (Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge, 2016).

Furthermore, the education of Arabic literacy does not receive a high appreciation from teachers and parents. In the study of UAE kindergarten curriculum

implemented by Al-Momani, Ihmeideh, & Momani (2008), 43% of teachers believed that the curriculum is highly academic and not appropriate for teaching children and the teaching strategies most used by them were the storytelling and lecturing with verbal discussion. Similarly, previous studies about the language instruction in early years have emphasized the study of literacy teaching elements. For example, researchers Alenezi (2014) and Ganey (2010) who studied early language teaching practices suggested conducting in-depth studies in the classrooms of kindergarten to add to a needed part of the literature.

The purpose of this study is, therefore to explore the nature of Arabic emergent literacy teaching in private schools in Al Ain as exhibited by teachers' perceptions of literacy teaching and learning and their classroom practices.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study is led by the following purposes:

- To explore the perceptions of private schools' teachers' in Al Ain regarding Arabic emergent literacy instruction.
- To explore the practices of Arabic emergent literacy instructions these teachers apply in the classroom.
- To discover if there are any differences between the teachers' perceptions and their actual practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the perceptions of private schools' teachers' in Al Ain regarding the Arabic emergent literacy instruction?

2. What are the practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction these teachers apply in the classroom?
3. Are there any differences between the teachers' perceptions and their actual practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The researcher's interest in the development of the mother tongue among young learners; particularly the ways Arab children learn the Arabic language in an educational context, led the motivation towards initiating the study. With a focus on teachers' perceptions and practices of teaching Arabic language to young children, the study is a scientific method to arrive at an understanding of what educators of young children conceptualize the development of literacy in the minds of children, their roles in this development through intended teaching and the actual relation between their conceptualization and their application in planning and instruction of literacy.

The study's setting is located within the Emirati context, and its purpose complies with the National Agenda the nation has developed to achieve the vision of 2021; that is, the target of a first-rate education system. The agenda describes the aspired education system as one which prepares students for occupying top ranks in reading, math and science on international levels and results with knowledge of Arabic language that is well-founded. Furthermore, the improvement of the field of early childhood education is pursued by the agenda through promoting children's admission to preschools for building their characters and nurturing their foundation for the future (UAE Government, 2014). Consequently, the answers to be found through this study will attempt to grasp the current approaches to language teaching

and learning in private schools in the UAE and add to the implementation of conscious language education programs in early childhood. Such contribution is proposed to supporting the efforts of creating plans for achieving the National Agenda's aims in the areas of reading, Arabic language and early childhood education.

In addition, this study gleans significance from featuring language as the tool for thinking and making sense of the world, self-expression of thoughts and feelings, and communication with others (Lindfors, 2002), and thus is investigating a critical base for life and school success. An understanding of the teacher's language and literacy instruction practices in kindergarten and its effectiveness in building the first blocks of language in children is worthy to seek through research.

Furthermore, because of the lack of studies in the area of Arabic literacy teaching in Early Childhood Education settings, and the absence of published studies on the topic in the Emirati context, this study will be a way to provide an understanding of teachers' approaches toward emergent literacy instruction as well as the structure of the curriculum targeting building language skills of young learners in the UAE and improvements can be proposed.

1.6 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study delved into the experiences of teachers of Arabic language in preschool level at a private school. The unique ideas and events related to each of the participants are not representative of the Arabic teachers in private schools. Also, the data collection method of observing the teachers may have possibly caused them to behave in a different manner than in their natural unobserved setting. Another

limitation would be that generalization of the findings of the study will not be applicable for the sake of seeking an in-depth understanding of the context of a small sized sample.

Only Arabic teachers from private schools were chosen to take part in this study, and exploring these teachers' perceptions and practices of emergent literacy instruction was attempted without investigating children's development or learning as a result of these factors. The design of this study is qualitative, which means that instruments that collect qualitative data will be exclusively used.

Summary

Emergent literacy is a concept that connects principles of early development and language acquisition of children. Because teachers are key contributors to children learning and growth, understanding how they view and practice emergent literacy instruction can add to the knowledge of early childhood education curricula in the studied context. This chapter has provided an overview of the problem as it has introduced the topic of literacy education in kindergarten and related theoretical background. The statement of the problem and the study purposes were discussed to initiate the drive for conducting the research study of which questions about the teachers' perceptions of emergent literacy teaching and nature of teaching practices are aimed to be answered. The chapter was concluded with an explanation of the study significance in the practical and theoretical domains and a description of the limitations and delimitations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The study of language acquisition and its educational applications generates the discussion of concepts and principles that are related to early learning stages in language domain. The interest of educators and psychologists in researching about language emergence and development is part of their pursuit to arrive at the approaches to teaching language.

Aiming to provide a review on literacy learning and instruction, this chapter begins with presenting theoretical foundation of language acquisition and emergent literacy learning followed by discussing the Arabic language literacy as the language under study. Emergent literacy instruction in early childhood and the role of the teacher will then be explored, followed by the emergent literacy instruction in the classroom.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Language Acquisition and Learning

Language can be generally defined as a system of symbols used for communication (Foley & Thompson, 2003). This statement does not exclude the structural components of language as they are the building blocks of the communicative forms.

Language emerges gradually as the maturation of the young child evolves, and his/her abilities grow up to the age of two to three years when meaningful speech takes place (Riley, 2006). Although motor skills aid in articulation, Lenneberg

(2004) explains that they are perceived as determinants of language acquisition as much as cognitive development is.

The knowledge base of research and educational practice in recent times are based upon the work of theorists in the fields of psychology, biology, linguistics and education. The two main theories that explain language acquisition in relation to early education and form the base of this study are the cognitive processes theories and the sociocultural theories.

The Cognitive Processes Theories

Rather than delineating the existence of an internal system for language acquisition, the theories of cognitive processes describe the procedures of thinking a child's brain conducts to construct knowledge as a result of interaction with the surrounding environment. Language is one of the major development domains that progress with the intellectual abilities as young children make sense of the aspects of communication and rules of speech as they acquire language (Riley, 2006). Cognitive psychologists attempt to explain how children construct language as a domain of their cognitive development. According to Solbin (2004), language is observed as an expression of the outcomes of intellectual processes that a child engages in as he/she interacts with the surrounding environment. Without a level of cognitive development that permits comprehension of meanings received, different forms of language can't be acquired.

The Sociocultural Theories

On the other hand, the sociocultural theories rely on the social and cultural features of language to explain the characteristics of language acquisition.

Communication receives a great deal of focus as a main factor in the acquisition of language. Parents and caretakers, siblings, peers and teachers as well as community member from the social context of which a child interacts and flourishes with are all factors in the language acquisition and development in young children (Harris, 2002).

Although each one of the theories presents the findings of intensive accumulated research work, Strickland and Morrow (1989) stated that a perspective that depends solely on one of them can cause a narrower view and practice of teaching literacy.

Other Theories on Language Acquisition and Emergent Literacy Learning

In addition to the primary principles elicited by the theories of cognitive processes and sociocultural theories, other major principles of early language acquisition were explained by the other theories like behaviorism and functionalism.

Behaviorism

The theory did not exclude language from all the behaviors which human beings are believed to learn by modelling. Skinner; the pioneer among behaviorists, suggested that the observations done by a young child result in imitating behaviors, which will mostly be repeated when reinforcement is made by the significant adults around him/her (Harris, 2002). In the field of language, such principles were presented to explain how children acquire the words and sounds of their native language as they model what they hear from their parents, caregivers and older family members and refer to praise and rewards to keep the most suitable or acceptable spoken symbols and avoid the neglected ones; the ones that usually do not

belong to parents' native language (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2010). Cattell (2007) points out that Behaviorists' explain the baby's acquisition of language as a result of imitating a model; which is usually a mother, and the model's reinforcement of the produced sounds through a respond pleasant for the child. Mothers tend to use a special form of language that is a melodic speech characterized with short sentences of easy words and a voice with a high pitch and slow speed; which is called 'Motherese'. Studies discuss the influence of 'Motherese' on babies' introduction to the basic concepts of language; such as language structure, phonemes, and vocabulary. However, other studies indicate that 'Motherese' is not necessarily an effective approach for teaching language like behaviorists argue. They explain that when adults don't use correct forms of language or don't commit to consistent reinforcement of a child's production of a language expression, and thus the educational value of 'Motherese' will not be high (Kargar, 2012).

Functionalism

The psychological side of development is the emphasis of the functionalism theory which states how the motivation behind the child's desire to learn and acquire language is its functions that serves him/her. Language serves as a means to managing behavior, organizing thinking and communicating the needs, desires and thoughts to others as well contributing to the development of additional domains (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2010).

2.2.2 Emergent Literacy Learning

The term "Emergent Literacy" was discussed by Mason and Allen (1986) as an invention of Marie Clay to describe the set of conceptions and actions in relation

to the skills of reading and writing that lead to the generally predicted and accepted literacy levels. Her study which aimed at defining early reading behaviors of 5-year-olds for exploring reading difficulties within young children resulted in important findings in the field of early reading and writing. The remarks she made on behaviors such as recognizing distinct features of print and making spontaneous writing attempts, in addition to children's engagement in the processes of reading and writing without necessarily showing accurate performance that resembles the specified language forms, were the first ideas behind the concept of Emergent Literacy.

However, the term used in our present days in literature and as part of early childhood education programs had been formulated later (Ihmeideh, 2011). Mason and Allen (1986) stated the roles of Teale and Sulzby as pioneers in introducing the concept that reflected an important new view of language acquisition process. Their conclusions regarding emergent literacy gave attention to the learning of language that children largely engage in before they join formal schooling.

The concept that consists of two terms reflects its underlying philosophy. In the functional dimension of language, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write, while emergent indicates the gradual progress of the emerging skills that align with the developmental aspects of children (Sandvik et al., 2014).

Tracking how the concept of "Emergent Literacy" has originated leads to the concepts of Piaget's developmental stages and maturation factor. Such stages determine the types of thinking children's brains engage in at different ages, and are the premise of expanded principles which include thinking processes and social

factors. The level of maturation at the cognitive development indicates the child's self-construction of concepts and skills with regard to language (Young, 2011).

In addition, Vygotsky's theory which emphasized the roles of social and cultural contexts in children's whole development had an influence on the formulation of the current perspectives on Emergent Literacy. As a result, social interaction is seen as a key concept that explains how literacy emerges and evolves in children's early years (Sénéchal, LeFevre, Smith-Chant, & Colton, 2001). Morrow (2012) highlighted how the use of this term contributes to the needed attention towards all the attempts the child makes from the very beginning of exposure to language, and the differences among children in development rates and learning paces.

The components of emergent literacy which children acquire as skills for language learning are phonological awareness; which is defined as the ability to think of and employ the language's sound system, alphabet knowledge, print awareness and metalinguistic awareness. Alphabet knowledge is characterized by the child's awareness of a language's letters and symbols; while print awareness entails the child understanding of the delivery feature of print. The metalinguistic awareness is related to the child's ability to label the concepts of a language (Kaderavek & Justice, 2000; Justice & Kaderavek, 2002).

The multiple skills embedded in Emergent Literacy learning requires gradual processes which differ in pace and quality from learner to learner and entail prerequisite readiness within the learner (Brock & Rankin, 2008).

AlBajja (2002) discussed the factors which impact this readiness in terms of cognitive readiness, affective readiness, educational readiness and physical readiness.

The cognitive readiness is identified by the level of cognitive maturation that enables a learner to process linguistic concepts and successfully comprehend. The affective readiness is described as the child's emotional traits and his/her character as a learner; whereas the quality and quantity of the experiences a child brings to the kindergarten is define the educational readiness. The preparedness of the organs of hearing, speech and sight for constructing the skills of reading and writing is entailed in the physical readiness.

2.2.3 Arabic Language Literacy

Arabic is one of the richest languages in terms of vocabulary and expressions (Mahfoudhi, Everatt, & Elbeheri, 2011), which makes it obligatory for all organizations and specialists involved in Arab children's education to pay attention to effective communication and applicable methods (AlAtasi, 2008).

The uniqueness of Arabic language literacy comes from a number of features which impact children's acquisition of their native language (Khamis-Dakwar, Froud, & Gordon, 2012). Among these factors identified by Mahfoudhi et al. (2011) are the various shapes which each letter has basing upon its position in the word and the slight differences among similar-shaped letters in the characteristic of its attached dots.

Jamjoom (2014) remarked that the use of multiple forms of Arabic Language, referred to as "Diglossic", in the way that the spoken dialect and the formal Arabic are distinct. This creates the situation of the different contexts children are exposed to each of the forms of the language; the dialect named "*Ammia*" and the formal

"*Fusha*" (Ibrahim, 2011). The dialect, which has different rules and structure, is the language of daily communication with people in the society.

Although children start the education of formal Arabic as they enter schools, they learn about it long before as it is the used language in most of the media shows they watch growing up at home. The duality of the language "Ammia" and "Fusha" may have impact of children Arabic literacy development. However, AlDabeeb (2008) argued that spoken Arabic has had this feature for centuries and elicited the need for recording the formal syntax rules in books for the aim of preserving the authentic Arabic language structures with the dominance of dialects across Arab countries. He calls for increasing the attention towards effective instruction practices of the formal language in early education years instead of overestimating the impact of dialects that are aspects of children and people's reality.

AlAskari (2008) pointed out the problem of the decrease in Arabs' exposure to Arabic alphabet and especially young children which makes it less familiar and harder to progress in learning and using. This is evident in the dominance of the use of English language in various areas such as media and technology devices people spend plenty of time using and even labels in streets. In addition, the dominant inclusion of English as a second language in kindergarten curriculum, even prior to children's mastery of their Arabic native tongue is a problem related to formal education.

A pioneer model that adopted the principles of children's development and the unique features of Arabic language was proposed by the linguistics scholar Abdulla AlDannan. His comprehensive educational model for teaching the standard Arabic to young learners was based on the founding blocks of innate abilities and

practice. The scientifically-based concepts he built his promising ideas upon were the development stages of children's cognitive abilities.

According to AlDannan (2000), the natural ability for making sense of language and acquiring the skills of listening and speaking while comprehending how language symbols are formed and used is at its prime at the first six years of life. The following years of life combines the cognitive levels of maturation that aids acquiring knowledge in different academic areas. Consequently, he emphasized the significance of early childhood years in language acquisition and learning, and he focused his efforts on composing a program that is based on numerous opportunities for conversations with learners in preschools and kindergartens.

AlDannan's theory; *Natural Teaching of Standard Arabic Language*, was based on the hypothesis of the state of the standard language as a second language to young Arabs who grow up in contexts where dialects are dominant. Arab children are suddenly exposed to this new form of language as they enter elementary school and involve in learning to read and write in standard Arabic with the educational decision makers' expectation that it is their first language. On the contrary, the findings on the levels of Arab school students' performance in reading and writing in Arabic show general weakness that disproves the high expectations and calls for solutions (AlDannan, 1999).

Before proposing the theory for educational practice, AlDannan implemented the principles of conduct on his first child; Basil, whom he spoke to in standard Arabic solely since his birth. His trial with his son, and his daughter later, exhibited impressive results. The two children became proficient in using both standard Arabic and Arabic dialect; which their mother and other family members spoke to them

with. The theory was then converted into a framework for kindergartens' curriculums in Kuwait and Syria, before being implemented in a large number of preschools and kindergartens in Arab and Muslim countries (AlDannan, 2000).

2.2.4 Emergent Literacy Instruction in Early Childhood

Although children's engagement in literacy learning initiates long before starting formal education, the importance of instruction for developing emergent literacy cannot be undervalued. Reutzel and Cooter (1992) have set principles for supporting literacy development for teachers to put in mind when planning, conducting and assessing emergent literacy instruction. They suggested involving children in multiple forms of literacy experiences through formal and informal lively situations in the classroom. In addition, they stated that the teacher should benefit from the storage of incidents and conceptions in a child's mind to relate the topics of language teaching to promote meaningful learning of different literacy characteristics and increase understanding of the content. In an emotional dimension of teaching, reassuring children while they take risk with their growing self-confidence as they try new missions is a key to help them approximate the targeted level of performance in any skill. Such positive practices and promoting collaboration among young learners in accomplishing tasks lead to children's feeling of belonging to the kindergarten.

Scott and Ytreberg (1990) stressed the power of choice that drives children's curiosity and love of exploration toward better learning. When the teacher allows children to select the learning materials they would like to practice with and the nature of activities they prefer to engage in, intrinsic motivation to learn and sense of independence are more likely to be raised. They have also emphasized the role of

routine in the classroom where procedures and activities which are familiar to children are used. For example, the strategy of reading the same texts of storybooks or other reading materials does not only avail children's pleasure, but also aids in encouraging thinking skills like inference and celebrating self-view of competence.

Moreover, Scott and Ytreberg (1990) called for making reading and language learning more relatable to children by engaging families and community members as an avoidable component of schooling. With language education, many strategies to achieve such engagement can be applied. Examples include inviting parents and guest speakers to read for and with children, incorporating texts and learning material that represents elements of families and familiar community elements in the activities and layout of the classroom and arranging purposeful field trips to destinations that can aid in supporting the learning of language. Also, the reading contexts provided in the classroom and in learning-relevant situation should be highly reflective of the students' cultural background and other cultures they be might exposed to. The holistic view of reading indicates its relationship to real life, and thus real people's traditions, customs, cuisines and lifestyles must be part of the content of a curriculum that promotes supporting children's understanding of others' different perspectives while fulfilling their sense curiosity (Brock & Rankin, 2008).

In addition, Reutzel and Cooter (1992) pointed out that the two important skills of reading and writing cannot be separated in teaching. In fact, the experiences of teaching and learning either major language parts lead to developing the other dramatically. They stated that although elements of text are important to be known by children, it is inappropriate to begin teaching about reading with specifics that scatters children's understanding of the picture as a whole. Teachers can follow steps

of reading for comprehension of a story or a text then emphasizing concepts and skills that are embedded in reading practice and finally reapplying the learnt specific elements to the read text and to other texts as well. An approach they called 'Teaching from whole to parts to whole' (p. 9).

Finally, Reutzel and Cooter (1992) stated that rather than the assessment of performance of language learning for judging levels and awarding grades, it is more beneficial for both teachers and learners to assess for supporting learning. That is, involving learners in all the steps of their assessment while pointing out the areas they need to improve and the ways they can do it without necessarily assigning grades. Such constructive form of assessment builds learners' confidence and keeps the teacher informed of each learner's progress.

2.2.5 Language Instruction Models

Instruction models present practical applications of educational theories and principles. The teachers' choice of the models to implement are influenced by a variety of factors; such as children's home background and family traits, teachers' preparation and trustworthiness of the instructional program, cultural aspects of the society and social characteristics of learners (Moughamian, Rivera & Francis, 2009). The main models for teaching early language include; The Whole Language instructional model, The Skills Instructional Model, The Subskills Instructional Model, The Transitional Model and The Autonomous Model.

The Whole Language instructional model

Although the whole language approach does not originally demonstrate practices, it presents perspectives on language and children's acquisition of language.

It is based upon the beliefs of constructivism; the educational philosophy that puts the learner at the center as the builder of his/her knowledge, and linguistic principles. This model puts the spotlight on the learners' construction of understanding and practices of language components and skills as they are provided with texts to explore and generate. The language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are viewed as an integrated unit that reflects how language functions in real life.

Views of authentic learning are evident in the model of whole language as the teacher prepares the environment to appeal to children's interests and needs through learning materials, story books, pictures, newspapers, posters and many more print resources while encouraging them to make efforts to read and write. The structured, systematic approaches to teach language in some early childhood education settings are opposed by the advocates of this model (Botzakis, Burns & Hall, 2014).

The Skills Instructional Model

As its name implies, this model highlights the separate skills attached to each of the language arts; listening, speaking, reading and writing, which are not subordinates one to another. With reading, the elements of vocabulary, comprehension and decoding as well as their sub-components are taught discretely, and the meanings of distinct units of language are stressed instead of holistic entities. Teachers who follow the skills model often teach the targeted vocabulary prior to introducing the text to children rather than promoting natural learning, and they specify lessons for teaching each of the reading elements followed by reviewing and assessing them. The act of reading is conceived as a summation

consisting of its components of which instruction aims to teach orderly (Reutzel & Cooter, 1992).

The Subskills Instructional Model

A hierarchical system of reading acquisition is proposed by this model. Because phonics is the base of the pyramid where three stages present the order of literacy instruction, this model is often called the 'Phonics Model'.

The first and founding stage is the sounds' symbols relationships where young learners have to be introduced to language phonics while making connections to the symbols representing the phonics. This significant stage involves teachers' endeavor to develop children's knowledge of alphabet letters and their sounds as well as their decoding skills for letters in order to arrive at established abilities to read and write. The second stage is teaching words with focus on the ones that make the best relation and support to the early decoding abilities young learners have developed. Third and final stage is reaching the whole meaning of texts as a consequent to learning the most specific and progressing to the more general (Tompkins, 2005).

The Transitional Model

The educators who don't adopt the previously discussed models of whole language, skills and subskills believe in the effectiveness of particular elements in each model, and thus need to make transitions from the discrete-parts models to more holistic models. The transitional model as proposed by Reutzel and Cooter (1992) includes the six elements of instructional convictions, learning materials, curriculum layout, assessment, learning environments and engagement of the community. At

each one of these elements, several steps can be taken by the teacher in a flexible pace towards an integration of language curriculum sections and different subject areas. The first and foremost step is the modification of beliefs regarding the teaching and learning of literacy that has to drive the transition by teacher and learners.

The Autonomous Model

From the idea of unified skills' instruction for all learners, this model was suggested for the implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) adopted in education of a number of states in the United States of America. It features deriving objectives from specifically-stated statements of what students need to know and do in each grade level as well as standardized testing for consistency and accountability. This has led to teaching and assessment that focuses on checklists of concepts and behaviors with regard to language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing rather than emphasizing students' language learning in various forms (Botzakis et al., 2014).

2.2.6 Teacher's Role in Literacy Instruction

The significant people in a child's life have a great influence on his/her development and learning. Wasik (2010) states that after parents and caregivers; the teacher gains an increasing value in the eyes of the young learner. Therefore, defining the roles of a teacher that promotes the optimum levels of growth and gains is critical. In the area of language acquisition, teacher is a means to students' learning of a curriculum that presents the framework of concepts and skills and resources to teaching language. The interaction she/he plans to engage children in with purposes

of developing their gains of vocabulary and its uses determine their progress in the area of language learning (Harris, 2002).

Morrow (2012) comments that facilitating the acquisition of language and development of literacy is one of the most important aspects of the early childhood teachers' role. In addition, preparing the learning environment to be secure, safe, welcoming and learning-oriented is the first and foremost step in teaching. She expresses that the climate of love, trust and encouragement can be created with warm relationships between the teacher and her/his learners and among the learners themselves so that each individual endeavors to make efforts to learn and grow with minimal restrictions and no fear of undesired reactions or failure.

Another aspect of the environment to pay attention to is the physical arrangement and provision of effective learning material of which print-rich ones are set up for the development of emergent literacy. The focus on abundant conversations and prolonged positive interaction is crucial for all language skills to flourish, and so the teacher has to be aware of the teaching moments she/he can have away from planned instruction. One notable significant role of the teacher is being a 'language model', that is, the demonstration of accurate clear performance of language skills for children to observe and copy. This puts a pressure on teachers to strive to be as competent as possible at all times with her speaking, listening, reading and writing for her/his audience of excellent observers (Morrow, 2012).

2.2.7 Emergent Literacy in the Classroom

The preschool or kindergarten settings is described by AlBajja (2002) as a setting that prepares a child to learn emergent literacy rather than the sole formal

learning setting where a child acquires the skills of reading and writing. He explained that the practice of several subskills which qualify a learner for acquiring the skills of reading and writing is part of the early childhood education activities. These subskills include the visual recognition, sensory-motor coordination, fine-motor control and making connections between shapes. Furthermore, the social, art and motor experiences in such settings have an influence on developing the child's language, and the teacher's encouragement aids a child when he/she faces difficulties (Mobaydeen, 2003).

John Dewey's child-centered philosophy of education is given credit for the appearance of such an aspect of the kindergarten. The American classrooms that represented his views consisted of learning centers such as; art, science, music and reading centers, where children engaged in a variety of activities. In addition, a 'rug' occupied a space of the room for children to gather and sing next to a piano. This rug was also place where children sat around the teacher as she called them to start the day with social conversation and simple information about the day, the weather and attendance of all members, before discussing some topics with relation to the learning theme (Morrow, 2012).

The term "reading rug" was used by Massey (2013) to refers to the circle time specified for shared reading activities, a practice Tompkins (2005) defines as a teacher's introduction of a new book before incorporating it in individual or group activities. The teacher reads the book; which is often large in kindergarten classrooms, while pointing at certain words or features and children proceed according to her/his pace. The special context of interactive language instruction provides a means for effective teaching of language skills. In this setting, teachers

read stories for children with targets of developing emergent literacy via asking questions and creating dialogues that are knowledgeably planned.

2.3 Previous Research Studies

A large number of studies were reviewed for the purpose of exploring the research conducted on the topic of emergent literacy instruction and arriving at the main ideas found from the recurrent patterns in order to contribute to the collection and analysis of this study's data. These ideas will be discussed in chapter five for explaining, connecting and building on the findings of this study.

The previous studies are organized into subsections according to their similar purposes. The first subsection includes studies which have looked at the teachers' perceptions of emergent literacy. In the second subsection, the literature related to studies on teachers' practices of emergent literacy instruction is explored. The third subsection discusses the details of the studies that associated teachers' perceptions of emergent literacy to their practices.

Similar to the design of this study, several studies with a case study design are explored in terms of their purposes, instruments and main findings. Finally, a study that was conducted in the UAE context to investigate emergent literacy instruction is discussed. Studies will be analyzed to shed light on the comparable findings and limitations, as well as the gaps found in order to elaborate on the significance of this study (Webster & Watson, 2002). The explanation of the literature reviewed will be followed by portraying how this study is related to the previous studies and how it is proposed to be different.

2.3.1 Studies Related to Teachers' Perceptions in Relation to Emergent Literacy

The reviewed studies on teachers' perceptions of emergent literacy teaching and learning generate the themes of factors influencing emergent literacy teaching and learning, obstacles facing emergent literacy teaching and learning, concepts and skills of emergent literacy and the teacher's role in emergent literacy instruction.

Factors influencing Emergent Literacy Teaching and Learning

Research into the factors which impact the teaching and learning of emergent literacy has discussed several ideas, which include the external and internal categories of factors (Lim & Torr, 2007; Ihmeideh, 2006), the impact of the teachers' teaching experience (Giles & Tunks, 2015), teachers' training (Ihmeideh, 2006; Lim & Torr, 2007), their knowledge and philosophy (Browning, 1995; Shedd, 2011), Children's age and abilities (Lim & Torr, 2007; Lim & Torr, 2008), children's home environments and parents (Lim & Torr, 2008) and the school's environment and curriculum (Browning, 1995; Ihmeideh, 2006).

The influential factors in formulating beliefs of early childhood teachers with regards to literacy were investigated by Lim and Torr (2007) in terms of external and internal factors. They found that the teachers' training and teaching experiences, as well as the taught grade level, were internal factors that were more influential than the external pressure from children's parents. Giles and Tunks's (2015) study shows similar results as the teacher's years of experience in teaching was found to be correlated with the teaching perceptions in the way that teachers with more teaching experience tended to believe in the significance of the emergent literacy perspective; whereas less teaching experience was correlated with perspective of skills-based

reading readiness. These two quantitative studies based their conclusions on the beliefs teachers reported and not on the actual practices in literacy classes.

Browning's (1995) qualitative descriptive study, on the other hand, used interviews and observations of literacy classes as the sources of data about the characteristics of literacy instruction and influential factors on instruction. The teachers' personal philosophy had an influence on their practices along with time and curriculum. Another study that utilized qualitative methods of data collection is Ihmeideh's (2006) study which examined the factors which have an impact on literacy development and teaching in kindergartens in Jordan. The factors he found were internal factors like the learning spaces and materials, the teacher-children ratio, non-existence of an obligatory national curriculum for kindergartens and the teacher training programs. Shedd (2011), on the other hand, found in his study on early childhood teachers' perceptions of themselves as educators of literacy that the teachers' literacy content knowledge and the teachers' perceptions were directly related to their classroom practices. However, the perceptions were more influential on the practices than the content knowledge.

In contrast to the findings of Lim and Torr's (2007) study, Sandvik et al. (2014) indicated that the participation in a training program for literacy awareness did not influence the reported results of the teachers' beliefs and practices as no significant differences were found between the answers of the two groups the teachers who took part in the training program and the ones who did not.

Lim and Torr's study (2008) about teachers of multilingual children in the kindergarten level investigated their perceptions about the effective instruction practices of teaching English literacy. In the discussion about children's learning, the

teachers expressed the role of children's home environment and the support of parents on the abilities and comprehension of literacy skills children learn at school. They also pointed out the diversity in children's abilities as a factor that impacts the learning pace of each child.

Obstacles Facing Emergent Literacy Teaching and Learning

Teachers of young children express a variety of obstacles they face with regards to emergent literacy teaching and learning. Campbell (2015) examined the pressures that 115 early childhood teachers reported facing in the educational settings. The teachers' answers to the survey questions indicated that parents' unrealistic expectations and misconceptions about the ways children learn phonics in the preschool level were major sources of pressure to them. Pressure from parents of children was also stated by the Jordanian teachers in Ihmeideh's (2006) study in addition to the pressure from administrators, the inappropriate equipment and the lack of congruence between home and school in the forms of literacy learning.

Concepts and skills of Emergent Literacy

In the topic of concepts and skills of emergent literacy, researchers found common points in the perceptions of teachers in different settings. The constituting skills of emergent literacy which include phonological awareness and print awareness (Tafa, 2004; Stellakis, 2012; Abdulkaim, 2003), alphabet knowledge (Abdulkarim, 2003; Girard, Girolametto, Weitzman & Greenberg, 2013) and emergent reading and writing (Tafa, 2004; Ganey, 2010) were explored. In addition, some studies investigated the emergent literacy concepts as part of teaching models

(Sénéchal, LeFevre, Smith-Chant, and Colton, 2001; Elliott and Olliff, 2008), such as the outside-in and inside-out processes model (Girard et al., 2013; Norling, 2014).

Sénéchal et al. (2001) proposed a view of emergent literacy that is based on the two components of conceptual knowledge of the text functions and early procedural knowledge in relation to reading and writing. Their thorough study of previous literature on kindergartners' literacy indicated the nonequivalent roles of each component in the development of the other, that is, the way conceptual knowledge leads to procedural knowledge and oral language development while procedural knowledge results in the development of phonological awareness and learning conventional reading. Despite the in-depth analysis of the distinct components of the emergent literacy, the study overlooks the construction of alphabet letters knowledge as a whole active process which is hard to break up.

Such a limitation seems to be overcome by Elliott and Olliff's (2008) study that introduced developmentally appropriate activities in Early Literacy and Learning Model (ELLM) to 20 children of 3 to 4 years old in a program which relied on teachers' knowledge of emergent literacy and family engagement. The model targeted teaching six concepts of reading aloud, independent reading, oral language, phonological awareness, letter and sound knowledge and development of print concepts.

With regards to teachers' views about emergent literacy instruction approaches, Norling (2014) explored the perspectives that direct the emergent literacy environment of 188 teachers in 52 Swedish preschools. The answers generated were analyzed in light of the model of outside-in and inside-out created by Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998). The outside-in processes comprise language,

narrative, conventions of print, and emergent reading dimensions, whereas the dimensions of knowledge of graphemes, phonological awareness, syntactic awareness, phoneme-grapheme correspondence, emergent writing and phonological memory constitute the inside-out processes (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The findings indicated the dominance of the outside-in dimensions of over the inside-out domain in the reported practices of the staff. Such dimensions were described in the teachers' tendency to engage children in play activities, emergent reading of books, narrative activities, supportive communication with adults and language activities which focus on assisting children with, and modeling language, higher thinking skills and asking open-ended questions. The inside-out domain was also present in the approaches of the staff when promoting children's engagement in the activities of emergent reading and writing as well as children's initiation of writing-related behaviors and rapid naming of songs when children are offered objects associated to the songs' content.

Despite the comprehensive analysis that Norling's (2014) study has provided with its inclusion of all the dimensions of the outside-in and inside-out processes, its dependence on the reported practices solely is a limitation that is suggested to overcome by adding an investigation of the actual practices in relation to the skills incorporated in the model's process.

Girard et al. (2013) extended the study on the model of outside-in and inside-out by exploring the actual practices of literacy instruction in addition to the perceptions of early childhood teachers. They examined the content of two regular activities, story reading, and subsequent writing activities, in relation to the dimensions of outside-in and inside-out processes. The emergent literacy skills' of

oral development, print knowledge, and alphabet knowledge were selected from the model's dimensions to be the focus of the study.

Small group discussion was the source of data collected by Stellakis (2012) to explore the perceptions and beliefs that Greek kindergarten teachers hold about early literacy. The 19 participant teachers explained literacy in its communicative functions. They highlighted the significance of teaching phonics and acquainting children with decoding skills in kindergarten level. Even though reading is a pillar literacy instruction, the teachers did not mention reading in their statements about the skills and activities of literacy they view as important. Whereas the teachers of half-day and whole-day kindergarten classroom in Tafa's (2004) study included the emergent literacy components of phonological awareness, knowledge about print, writing and storybook reading the literacy activities of at both types of settings. These findings are similar to Abdulkaim's (2003) study on the early literacy curriculum applied a kindergarten teacher. The early literacy skills reported were found to be targeting the skills of alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, and print awareness.

Ganey (2010) added the skills of naming letters, knowing letter sounds, understanding vocabulary, understanding concepts of print, writing their names and recognizing letters in a text as fundamental emergent literacy skills in the findings of his study about self-reported beliefs and practices of teaching emergent literacy skills by 96 teachers. Within the findings of the descriptive and correlational study, teachers reported their belief in the benefit of the meaningful early reading and writing experiences for children. The teachers also stressed the importance of

teaching children the ability to identify words by sights and quest after the parts of words that have meanings.

The Teacher's Role in Emergent Literacy Instruction

The kindergarten teachers in Lim and Torr's (2008) study described their roles in literacy instruction in terms of creating enjoyable activities that engage children in using the language along with cooperating with parents to enhance the pace of children's learning.

Sandvik et al. (2014) compared the beliefs of teachers with regards to their instructional roles and the recent research on emergent literacy. The participant teachers agreed with the roles of preparing children for the skills of reading and writing, helping children become familiar to letters, facilitating children's engagement in literacy activities, introducing literacy activities to children, proposing ways for children to incorporate literacy activities in play, motivating children to learn reading and fostering parents' support of their children learning by reading with them. These roles of the teacher in relation to emergent literacy instruction were found to be consistent with recent research. On the contrary, Stellakis (2012) reported that the role of the teacher in literacy instruction was traditionally viewed as teaching the isolated skills that are related to letters rather than a facilitator in the perceptions of the 19 participant Greek kindergarten teachers.

2.3.2 Studies Related to Teachers' Practices of Emergent Literacy Instruction

In the review of literature on the emergent literacy instructional practices of teachers, the two themes: types of activities implemented for teaching emergent

literacy and using technology in emergent literacy instruction generated from analyzing the previous studies on the topic.

Using Technology in Emergent Literacy Instruction

Investigating the use of computer technology in teaching Arabic reading and writing was the purpose of a study by Ihmeideh (2010) in Jordanian kindergartens. He used questionnaires and interviews with 128 kindergarten teachers of both public and private kindergartens to explore their self-reported beliefs and their perceptions of practices with regards to using computer technology in teaching reading and writing. Teachers were found to moderately believe in the importance of utilizing the computer technology in literacy instruction, and they reported that they don't implement related activities in their classroom practices.

Such unimplemented activities include providing children with opportunities to use the internet or the word processing program for writing practice as well including activities that prepare children with reading and writing skill through technology. Nevertheless, teachers stated that they use computer technology to present games about language, offer home activities for literacy and prepare a computer center in the learning environment that is print rich. The beliefs and self-reported practices were found to be highly related with regards to the employment of computer technology in teaching literacy to young children.

Moreover, Alenezi (2014) explored their incorporation of technology in vocabulary instruction of 9 highly effective teachers of kindergarten. The teachers employed vocabulary instruction through a variety of methods on a daily basis, and she visually presented the vocabulary she taught using technology.

Types of Activities Implemented for Teaching Emergent Literacy

Alenezi (2014) selected 9 highly effective teachers of kindergarten to investigate their practices in vocabulary instruction. She utilized classroom observations, interviews and document analysis of the teacher's lesson plans to identify the ways these teachers choose the vocabulary deserving to be taught and the methods they used to teach vocabulary. The teachers employed vocabulary instruction through a variety of activities such as reading storybooks aloud, direct teaching of vocabulary by methods of discussion, explaining definition, presenting examples and repeating. Similarly, Lim and Torr (2008) report that storytelling is among the activities teachers mentioned as a method to enrich children's English vocabulary and improve their understanding.

On the other hand, Ganey (2010) found that the preferred type of emergent literacy activities to kindergarten teachers is working with children in small groups of the same level over whole group work. The majority of the teachers' instruction time is reported to be spent on naming letters, reciting rhymes and songs, talking about words' meanings and writing letters and words, however, some of the teachers stated that activities like sight words, story dictation and reading it aloud and comparing words and word parts in printed words.

The concept of developmentally appropriate practices was the focus of Ihmeideh's (2006) discussion of teachers' emergent literacy instruction. He found that a limited number of developmentally appropriate practices were applied by a few teachers as they tended to focus on reading readiness skills and teach letter recognition using strategies such as plenty of worksheets, spelling tasks, and follow the teachers' ways while refraining from forms of play when teaching literacy. The

skills of emergent literacy teaching and learning were taught in a structured separate manner, and the activity of reading aloud to children was not implemented by teachers.

2.3.3 Studies Associating Teachers' Perceptions of Emergent Literacy to Their Practices

Several studies examined the relationship between teachers' perception and practices in relation to emergent literacy. The results of these studies varied between finding a consistency between the beliefs and the actual practices (Girard et al., 2013; Brown, Scull, Nolan, Raban & Deans, 2012; Ihmeideh, 2006), finding no relationship between the two factors (Cash, Cabell, Hamre, DeCoster & Pianta, 2015) or finding a relationship between the perceptions and practices of certain skills instruction and not others (Schachter et al., 2016)

The topic of teachers' perceptions and practices of literacy instruction was investigated by Girard et al. (2013) who explored 20 early childhood teachers' perceptions and practices of literacy instruction with 76 preschool 6-year-old children. Questionnaires and videotaped observations displayed the daily use of story reading complemented with reflective, prediction and reading preparation questions. The story-reading sessions were followed by writing activities with rich content of letter concepts. The findings indicated a consistency between teachers' ratings of their instruction and the taped actual practices of providing two contexts of learning where distinct areas of focus appeared to associate story reading with challenging tasks of understanding and predicting whereas the writing activity was related to letter sounds and shapes.

Similarly, Brown et al. (2012) reported findings on the association between the theoretical knowledge and beliefs and the practices of early literacy instruction of a preschool teacher. Their study aimed at investigating the knowledge and beliefs of a preschool teacher with regards to early literacy in addition to the ways she transforms them into instructional practices. The use of a survey and self-assessment tools besides interviews and short small group events gathered data on the case of the teacher. In her point of view, children co-construct literacy learning when she engages them in activities that she designs with the strengths of children in mind. Her instruction comprises of both types, child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. Moreover, the critical roles of parents, family, and community are shown in the beliefs and practices of the teacher and thus she incorporated them into her literacy instruction planning and implementation.

In addition to investigating teachers' perceptions of their instruction, the portions of teaching each of the language skills was conducted by Scull, Nolan and Raban (2013) in an Australian study of the 19 preschool implementation of the 3D Language Learning Model. Among the three dimensions of language highlighted by the model; the operational dimension reflected by knowledge of concepts of language, the cultural dimension reflected by the meaning of language in social contexts, and the critical dimension reflected by the power of language in analyzing and making judgments, the teachers' practices emphasized the cultural feature of language through providing experiences of social use in authentic situations. Some clue of the operational aspect was demonstrated in teaching recognition of letters' concepts, but the critical dimension had prerequisites of teachers' professional development and thoughtful planning of children's constructing their own world. However, the study does not define the structure of activities in which each of the

aspects was exhibited leaving the need to learn the time, amount and type of experiences unrevealed.

The association of literacy instruction with the teacher's knowledge, beliefs, education and experience with instruction was investigated by Schachter, Spear, Piasta, Justice, and Logan (2016). Classroom observations and a number of measures to collect data about the knowledge (Teacher Knowledge Assessment of Early Language and Literacy Development and Teacher Knowledge Assessment) and beliefs (Preschool Teacher Literacy Beliefs Measure) were utilized with 202 teachers. The findings indicate that the association found between the teachers' beliefs in relation to the skills of decoding and oral language development and the instruction of these skills was negative. Moreover, the instruction of reading skills was not associated with the teachers' beliefs about the skills.

Cash et al. (2015) added on to the topic by conducting a study to discover the relationship between the beliefs and knowledge of preschool teachers in the domain of language and literacy and their learners' language and literacy development. 262 teachers in 10 different U.S districts answered questionnaires for assessing beliefs regarding the importance of each literacy skill to children's learning and for getting the measure of knowledge of early literacy via classifying different skills by the areas of language or literacy. The researchers have found that a significant relation between preschool teachers' beliefs about literacy skills and learning those skills by children was absent. As a result, they proposed that early childhood teachers' beliefs about literacy learning might be of less noteworthiness when compared to teacher's knowledge about it. This is reflected in practice by the teachers' effective evaluation

of children literacy skills for indicating the learning that leads to literacy development and then fostering for learning.

Finally, Ihmeideh (2006); who was one of the first specialists to present the concept of 'Emergent Literacy' in the Arabic literature of early literacy instruction, conducted a mixed method study with a purpose of investigating the beliefs and practices of early literacy instruction among Jordanian teachers as well as the connection between the beliefs and practices. In the findings of the study, teachers' beliefs were highly associated with their actual classroom practices. The teachers prepared their learning environments following aspects of traditional instruction where whole class activities were given spaces in place of learning corners.

2.3.4 Case Studies on Emergent Literacy Instruction

Brown et al. (2012) gathered data on the case of a preschool teacher to explore her knowledge and beliefs of a preschool teacher with regards to early literacy in addition to the ways she transforms them into instructional practices. The findings report her view of children's co-construction of literacy learning when she engages them in activities that she designs with the strengths of children in mind. Her instruction comprises of both types, child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. Moreover, the critical roles of parents, family, and community are shown in the beliefs and practices of the teacher and thus she incorporated them into her literacy instruction planning and implementation.

The case of three Head Start teachers was studied by Friesen and Butera (2012) to explore the types of experiences that influenced the beliefs these teachers have about literacy instruction as well as the ways their beliefs relate to the decisions

they make in classroom instruction. The findings from the questionnaire, the interviews, and the classroom observations showed that the teachers aim to prepare children for learning to read by providing plenty of opportunities for play along with limited instruction. To achieve that, the teachers mentioned that the time they spent in the deliberate teaching of literacy skills was less than an hour a day. Natural teaching is their approach instead of planned instructional activities for every lesson. Moreover, the instruction decisions they make were highly influenced by the practical knowledge they obtained from their experiences in teaching. In the participant teachers' views, letter recognition skill is instrumental in teaching reading to children, and they depend on the shared book reading activity to offer opportunities for conversation and presenting concepts of letters and words.

In addition, Abdulkaim (2003) conducted a case study of one kindergarten teacher to explore her practices of early literacy instruction in a kindergarten in a Middle Eastern country. She had summarized the explored practices of early literacy instruction into categories according to the skills it targeted. The categories included alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, and print awareness, and it encompassed the activities of reading to and by children, response to literature and writing with and by children. The observations and interviews the researcher had utilized indicated that the participant teacher focuses on discovering the abilities of children and working accordingly to achieve their literacy development.

The design of her curriculum followed a thematic units' approach where the concepts and skills of literacy were incorporated besides a variety of learning experiences. In addition, her curriculum includes time for whole group instruction, in which she directly applies the formal teaching of literacy, whereas comprehensive

embedded instruction is given time in other parts of the school day. The researcher proposed the emergent literacy instruction as a teaching model to provide the literacy experiences in the early childhood education programs in the Middle East. Abdulkarim (2013) had also recommended conducting case studies related to early literacy instruction in the Middle East.

2.3.5 Studies Related to Emergent Literacy Instruction in the UAE Context

In a study conducted in the Emirati context, Al-Qaryouti, Ihmeideh, Albustami & Homidi (2016) investigated the use of evidence-based strategies for teaching emergent literacy in 4 countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). A total of 644 preschool teachers in Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and UAE participated in the quantitative study to describe their use of teaching strategies that are proven to develop emergent literacy skills by theory and research. The researchers included the factors of context; expressed by the country and the taught preschool level, and teachers' qualifications and experiences in the data collection and analysis. Teachers were asked to answer the survey questionnaire that was particularly designed by the researchers to describe early childhood education in the unique Arab setting.

Constructed from thorough analysis of research on emergent literacy, The Evidence-Based Emergent Literacy Strategies (EBELS) combined five elements of emergent literacy; that is, knowledge of letters and words, print awareness, early writing abilities and knowledge and understanding of books and texts which included six questions for each element, and phonological awareness that included five questions. The study findings indicated the positive relation between a higher number of teaching experience years and general education or early childhood

education academic qualification, on one hand, the use of evidence-based strategies for teaching emergent literacy on the other hand. In addition, the preschool level had an impact on emergent literacy teaching strategies as teachers of level two reported more emphasis element of early writing ability than teachers of level one.

One of the findings that were worthy of highlighting was related to the differences between GCC countries in teaching emergent literacy at the preschool level. In that domain, UAE was ranked first in the use of evidence-based strategies for teaching emergent literacy as reported by 190 teachers. Al-Qaryouti et al. (2016) referred this conclusion to the reality of current policies by the Emirati educational authorities to support and develop practices of early childhood education with an emphasis on early literacy skills. Qatar, Oman and Saudi Arabia were ranked at lower levels, respectively, in results that reflected the attention paid to early learning by policymakers in these countries. A recommendation for further research was to conduct a qualitative study to portray an in-depth picture of the reality of emergent literacy development from the perspectives of teachers in similar or different contexts.

Summary

The theories which guide perceptions of teaching and learning language for young children are indicators of the significance of language domain in their education and life. Various studies have explored different approaches to teaching emergent literacy. Models of instruction were based on different views on the ways children learn the language and thus concentrate on developing numerous skills and knowledge areas. However, the acquisition of language concepts is an exceptional process when it comes to the Arabic language. This study will investigate the

practices targeting teaching Arabic literacy to kindergarten children within a grounding of cognitive processes and sociocultural theories of early learning and development.

This chapter comprehensively reviewed the literature on the perceptions of teachers in relation to emergent literacy teaching and learning besides their instructional practices. Several studies have introduced the concept of emergent literacy (Mason & Allen, 1986; Ihmeideh, 2011; Sandvik et al., 2014), its theoretical foundations (Sénéchal et al., 2001; Morrow, 2012; Young, 2011), and its components (Kaderavek & Justice, 2000; Justice & Kaderavek, 2002). In addition, issues of the child's readiness to learn emergent literacy were mentioned by AlBajja (2002). The principles of teaching emergent literacy (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990; Reutzel & Cooter, 1992) and models of language instruction in relation to emergent literacy (Reutzel & Cooter, 1992; Tompkins, 2005; Botzakis et al., 2014) were explained.

Furthermore, current research on perceptions and practices that were reviewed in this chapter have looked at the teachers' perceptions of emergent literacy in terms of the factors which impact the teaching and learning of emergent literacy (Browning, 1995; Ihmeideh, 2006; Lim & Torr, 2007; Lim & Torr, 2008; Shedd, 2011; Giles & Tunks, 2015), obstacles facing emergent literacy teaching and learning (Ihmeideh, 2006; Campbell, 2015), concepts and skills of emergent literacy (Sénéchal et al., 2001; Abdulkaim, 2003; Tafa, 2004; Elliott & Olliff, 2008; Ganey, 2010; Stellakis, 2012; Girard et al., 2013; Norling, 2014), and the teacher's role in emergent literacy instruction (Lim & Torr, 2008; Sandvik et al., 2014).

The literature about teachers' practices of emergent literacy instruction was found in studies about the types of activities implemented for teaching emergent

literacy (Ihmeideh, 2006; Ganey, 2010; Alenezi, 2014) and using technology in emergent literacy instruction (Ihmeideh, 2010; Alenezi, 2014). In addition, the studies that associated teachers' perceptions of emergent literacy to their practices (Ihmeideh, 2006; Girard et al., 2013; Brown et al., 2012; Cash et al., 2015; Schachter et al., 2016) were discussed.

In addition, the studies that associated teachers' perceptions of emergent literacy to their practices (Ihmeideh, 2006; Girard et al., 2013; Brown et al., 2012; Cash et al., 2015; Schachter et al., 2016) were discussed and followed by the case studies of Abdulkaim (2003), Brown et al. (2012) and Friesen and Butera (2012). Finally, the study of Al-Qaryouti et al. (2016), which was conducted in a similar setting to this study, was presented.

This study will expand on the findings of current studies to provide data on the nature of teachers' perceptions and practices in relation to emergent literacy, and the differences between these perceptions and practices. In contrary to specific answers found in previous quantitative studies, the qualitative design of this study provides rich descriptions of the concepts of emergent literacy as found in the reported perception of Arabic teachers of young children and in observed actual practices. Also, the scarce of studies about Arabic emergent literacy instruction adds to the significance of this study as its findings can contribute to better understanding of the educational contexts of Arab children's literacy learning.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Overview

This study will be conducted to thoroughly describe a picture of two teachers' perceptions of teaching Arabic emergent literacy and their related practices at one of Al Ain's private schools.

There are three purposes that guided this study, identifying teachers' perceptions about emergent literacy teaching, the emergent literacy teaching practices they tend to apply and the degree of difference between the perceptions and the practices will guide this study.

This chapter will discuss the methodology to be used by the researcher to define the research design and direct the processes of selecting and managing participants, instrumentation, and procedures, as well as data collection and data analysis.

3.2 Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the perceptions of private schools' teachers' in Al Ain regarding the Arabic emergent literacy instruction?
2. What are the practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction these teachers apply in the classroom?
3. Are there any differences between the teachers' perceptions and their actual practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction?

3.3 Research Design

The study used a qualitative design to gain a thorough understanding of the nature of kindergarten teachers' perceptions and practices in relation to emergent literacy instruction. Because an abundance of data is considered to be essential in qualitative research, the findings it elicits are rich and detailed (Creswell, Hanson, ClarkPlano & Morales, 2007). Also, the inference of the research answers into broad conclusions follows an inductive method of reasoning. On the other hand, a deductive method that is followed by the quantitative research begins with a hypothesis statement to arrive at specific answers that either approve the statement or disapprove it. Selecting the qualitative design gives the researcher an active role starting with initiating the general ideas and tools of gathering data in accordance with his/her interest, being present in the context and interacting with participants and weaving her individual insights into the data analysis and discussion (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008).

The case study approach will be undertaken in order to investigate the phenomenon of the context which is literacy instruction in early education classrooms. According to Creswell (2009), the case study is "a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" p.g. 13.

Although a case study might seem narrow and exceptionally focused, it is significant for the amount of data it discloses about the topic under investigation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). Cresswell et al. (2007) describe the case study as a design qualitative research that conducts an inquiry into a defined system using multiple instruments to collect thorough and comprehensive data.

For this study, the case which generated data about emergent literacy instruction involved Arabic teachers who provide instrumental case study subjects. This type of case study utilizes the exploration of specific participants in comprehending a wider view of a topic (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). With the general goal of understanding the nature of Arabic emergent literacy instruction for young learners, specific teachers took part in this case study. The factors to be investigated were the teachers' perceptions about teaching Arabic emergent literacy, their actual practices during literacy classes and the differences between perceptions and practice.

3.4 Setting

The school selected for this study is a private school which applies a British system of education. Its branch in Al Ain city was opened in 2013, and its purpose-built campus comprises three sections, a junior school, a girls' senior school and a boys' senior school. In addition to the five buildings, the school contains, a new building for the junior school is being constructed and is expected to be ready before the end of 2018.

While the senior school targets students from age 10 to age 18 in grade levels of Year 5 to Year 13, the junior school focuses on students from age 3 to age 9 in Foundation Stages (FS), Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory levels. The Pre-Preparatory level includes Year 1 and Year 2 and occupies ten classrooms, and the Preparatory level includes Year 3 and Year 4 and occupies eight classrooms. The Foundation Stage; on the other hand, includes four classrooms for Foundation Stage 1 (FS1) and three classrooms for Foundation Stage 2 (FS2).

During the academic year 2017-2018, 900 students are enrolled in the school of which 530 are in the junior school. Students come from different nationalities, and Arabs are approximately 50% of the total number of students, with a majority of Emirati students. The school has 105 teachers of whom 75 work in the junior school. The junior school teachers include 25 English class teachers, 6 Arabic teachers, 31 academic subjects' teachers and 13 teacher assistants.

The subjects taught in the junior school include English, Math, Science, Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies. Arabic is the language of instruction of Islamic studies and social studies for native Arabic speaking students, whereas Science and Math are taught in English. The classroom teachers at all levels in the junior school are native English speakers, and they spend approximately 5 hours with children a day. Each of the Arabic teachers has a workload of 19 classes per week to teach Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies. The time specified for the two weekly Arabic classes in FS is 40 minutes, whereas the time goes up to 60 minutes in Years 1 to 5 in junior school.

The assistant teachers are a vital part of the education system in the school due to the multiple roles they have. In the Foundation Stages (FS), at least one assistant teacher who is classroom-based often supports the teacher with a set learning task and takes time to observe and interact. Two additional teacher assistants are shared between all the classrooms, one works in the outside area and the other in the corridor. They focus on interactions with children in these areas.

The curriculum applied in the junior school is based on the standards and learning materials of the English national curriculum except for the subjects taught in Arabic and follow the curriculum of the Ministry of Education in the UAE. Whereas

the Foundation Stages follow the guidelines of the English Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for all the educational experiences of children, in addition to general guidelines developed by the department of Arabic in the school and followed for teaching Arabic literacy. The junior school applies a system of separation for native Arabic-speaking children and non-native ones for teaching the native speakers the subjects of Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies. The system groups students from the classrooms they are originally placed in and then divides them to groups of up to 22 students with consideration of the student level, a particular teacher's experience with a student, and the parents' choice of the preferred Arabic teacher. Each group is then given instruction in one of the classrooms and assigned to the Arabic-speaking teachers to study Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies, each taught by a different teacher. The non-native speaking children are also grouped together and take part in either learning Arabic, specified for non-native speakers, or other educational activities.

The school was chosen from 59 private schools in Al Ain city (Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge, 2018) for its high score in the inspection reports conducted by The Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) and the accessibility for the researcher. The school which is well known for the high quality of education it offers was recommended by a professor at UAEU as a suitable setting for the study. The process of selecting teachers to work at the school is rigorous, as the qualifications, the experience and the teacher's philosophy and character are all taken into consideration before making the decision of hiring a teacher. Therefore, the probability of finding Arabic teachers who can enrich the study with their knowledge and experience is higher.

3.4.1 Classroom 1

The Foundation Stage 2 (FS2) classroom which was the context of the study for four-year-old children was the one where the first participant taught out of the three FS2 classrooms. It accommodates 20 native Arabic-speaking children who are all local Emiratis and of which whom 12 are boys and 8 are girls. The classroom contains four activity tables of which two are kidney-shaped near the back wall and two are round tables in the center. In addition, there is a large carpet near the front wall and is close to the classroom door. A smart board is affixed to the front wall next to a large whiteboard, and the teacher's desk holding a PC is in the right corner of the classroom next to the smart board. On the back wall, 2 bulletin boards hold displays of children's work.

Main class teaching is cross-curricular and follows children's interests rather than looking for set outcomes, however, children also attend specialist lessons for Music, PE and Arabic. Teachers follow the learning journey children take, using their knowledge of the curriculum to guide and enhance children's progress. Assessment for learning is essential to the smooth running of classes and to ensure the children's progress as it is this information that is used to build up and update areas of learning.

A large part of the focus of FS class teachers is based on setting up the environment according to the belief that the various activities set up as stimuli can act as the third teacher for the children.

3.4.2 Classroom 2

The Year 1 classroom, in which the second participant was assigned the teaching of Arabic, contains 18 native speaking children of age five. 14 of the students are local Emirati children and the rest are citizens from other Arab citizens, and the number of girls in the group is eight with ten boys.

The spaces for activities in the classroom include two kidney-shaped activity tables, each placed next to one of the side walls, two round tables in the center, a large carpet placed near the front wall which is close to the classroom door and corners of blocks and individual play at the back. The teacher's desk holding a PC is in the right corner of the classroom, and there is a smartboard on the front wall next to a large whiteboard. A display of whole class projects related to the monthly topics is displayed above the boards.

3.5 EYFS: The British Standards for Early Childhood Education

The British system of early childhood education is founded on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which serves as a skeleton for the practices of educators and caregivers of children from age 0 to 5 in England. Its standards oblige teachers, administrators and childminders to adhere to principles of childcare and education that foster children's health and safety, their sound development and learning and their acquisition of prerequisite skills and knowledge for school. The EYFS outlines the requirements of seven learning areas of which three are prime areas and four are specific areas, and it states the types of activities to include in educational programs in relation to each of the learning areas. The prime areas include language and communication, physical development, and personal, social

and emotional development whereas the specific areas are comprised of literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design. The communication and language area emphasizes the provision of an environment that is rich in language and enabling children to listen, speak and express themselves well, including the support of the child's native language if it is not English. Children's literacy development is fostered by building their phonic awareness, word decoding skills, and the ability to write common words and simple sentences, as well as making a comprehensive collection of reading materials available for children (Department for Education - UK Government, 2017).

3.6 Participants

Two Arabic teachers who were selected to participate in the study as a result of the school's Head of Arabic Department nomination of teachers' with experience, high performance in teaching and willingness to be part of research work. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2008), qualitative research requires purposive sampling in most cases for the need to ensure conducting the studies with persons who can help answer the research's particular questions. The social characteristics of the teachers were also taken into consideration when asking for the nomination of teachers, because the narrative data this qualitative study aims to collect requires participants to be informative about the concepts and activities of emergent literacy and provide numerous data as they talk during interviews. For the purpose of protecting the participants' confidentiality and assuring their anonymity, the names of the two teachers were withheld. Instead, the names T1 and T2 were used for the first participant and the second participant; respectively, in the data analysis and discussion.

3.6.1 Participant 1

T1 is a 44-year old Egyptian citizen who has practiced teaching for 11 years in the UAE after teaching in Egypt for three years. Her educational background includes a bachelor's degree in Humanities and Education of Arabic and Islamic Studies from an Egyptian government university, a professional diploma in school leadership and a diploma of Graphology. Her work experience includes; working as a class teacher who taught subjects of Arabic, Islamic studies, Social Studies, Math, Science, Agricultural Education, Housekeeping, Art Education and Physical Education for three years at a government school in Egypt and working as a class teacher who taught Arabic, Islamic studies, Social Studies, Science and Math for five years at a government school in UAE. She has also worked as a teacher of Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies for two years at a private school that adopts an American curriculum in Al Ain city, and her most recent position was working as a Head of the Arabic Department for seven years at the same school. She had started to work as a teacher of Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies in this school four years ago. After teaching primary school years from grades 1 to 4 in Egypt and grades 1 to 6 in the UAE, she has been teaching only native Arabic-speaking children in grade levels of FS2 and Years 1 to 4 in this school.

3.6.2 Participant 2

T2 is a 37-year old Egyptian citizen with eight years of experience in teaching, of which two years were in Egypt and six years were in the UAE. She holds a bachelor's degree in Arabic Language from the College of Humanities in an Egyptian government university, and she is a Cambridge University International Baccalaureate (IB) examiner. She started as a teacher of Arabic in a government

school in Egypt, before moving to the UAE and working as Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies teacher at a British school in Al Ain city. She started working at this school in 2016, and has been working as a teacher of Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies for all grade levels in the Junior School; the FS, the Pre-prep and the Prep levels. She teaches Arabic for native-speaking and non-native speaking children.

3.7 Instrumentation

This qualitative study collected data using two tools. These tools included classroom observations from which field notes were taken and interviews with teachers.

3.7.1 Observations

The method of recording naturally-occurring events was used through semi-structured observations. Such a method is best at defining studied factors authentically and providing in-depth description of the context; with questions to answer in mind (Creswell, 2009). The observations took place at the class time specified for Arabic literacy teaching any time of the school day; with an approximate period of 40 minutes for FS2 and 60 minutes for Year 1. The researcher conducted 4 classroom observations in 4 weeks during the first academic semester and took detailed notes of all the events related to the teachers' practices. Following the teachers' schedule and their preferred day for observation, one class per week was observed. In addition, descriptions of the activities' content of materials and worksheets were recorded in the field notes of the observations (See an example of a lesson observation in Appendix A and an example of a worksheet in Appendix B).

3.7.2 Interviews

After finishing the observation, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore teachers' understanding of emergent literacy and their perceptions of the roles they engage in to nurture children's learning and development of emergent literacy. The interviews started in the second half of the first academic semester in October, as a schedule of interviews was planned with each teacher in relation to the schedule of classroom observations. The interviews were held in accordance with the classroom observations conducted by the researcher, and the teachers were asked questions about their knowledge, educational philosophy, plans and teaching practices in relation of Arabic emergent literacy. The questions were open-ended and some of them were established from the domains of the theatrical framework and literature review (See Appendix C) whereas most of the questions were formulated from the practices the researcher has observed in the classrooms. From the total of four interviews planned for the study, each interview was conducted after finishing the one of the four classroom observations. The average time of each interview was 25 minutes to allow for elaboration in answers (See a sample of an interview transcript in Appendix D).

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

After purposefully selecting the private school, the researcher contacted the Head of the Arabic Department in the school via email and explained the topic of the study and her desire to conduct the study in the school, and she asked for a meeting. After meeting the head of the Arabic department and receiving the school's consent to allowing the study to be conducted at the junior school, an agreement to start the study the following week was made. Moreover, the researcher asked for a

nomination of two Arabic teachers in the early stages. In addition to recommending the names of the two teachers, the Head of the Arabic Department recommended the classrooms to be observed to be in levels FS2 and Year 1. The researcher explained that the study targets teachers of children of ages four and five, and the recommended grade levels include children of the same ages as the ones in KG1 and KG2 in other schools with different educational systems.

The teachers who were recommended for participating were contacted via email for explaining and discussing their participation. At the first meeting with the teachers, they were asked to sign an official consent form that included approval to voluntarily participate while preserving their rights to decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study.

Before starting the data collection, the researcher piloted a sample of the interview questions with two kindergarten teachers to test the duration, the form and sequence of questions and her skills in interviewing. This step has resulted in modifying some of the questions because of ambiguity, the use of jargon and the unrelated answers they generated. After visiting the school a week later, the researcher started with official interviews by meeting the two teachers and explaining the study's purposes, procedures and the contribution of the participants. The teachers were also given the informed consent forms to read, and the researcher asked them to sign it if they agree with all the details it contains. After the teachers signed the forms, the in-class observations were planned with the researcher to be once a week and as they preferred. Interviews were planned in accordance with the classroom observations schedule in a way that offered chances for interviews after observations (See observations and interviews schedule in Appendix E). The

researcher personally attended the classes of the two teachers and wrote detailed notes, and then she interviewed the teachers and asked semi-structured questions concentrating on their conceptual knowledge of emergent literacy, the teaching methods they used and the language skills they focused on through their instructional activities.

This data collection process was followed by data analysis as the researcher attempted to interpret the data and initiate the codes to form themes before arriving at a thorough discussion of findings of which the experiences of the two teachers were to be compared and contrasted.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research includes summarizing and making a meaning out of the collected data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). It depends on the following steps: writing and identifying data, description and thorough explanation of the context, coding data and categorizing into themes.

After finishing the collection of data, the process of data analysis proceeded as the researcher coded the data by labeling the concepts of emergent literacy, teaching methods and language skills and categorizing them into themes according to similar patterns. Miles and Huberman (1984) define codes as symbols of numbers or words that categorize a part of the notes written by the researcher. Because qualitative research tends to produce massive amounts of data that requires arranging and grouping, coding gives the researcher a practical tool to utilize while making sense of the collected observation notes and interview transcripts.

The codes were established from recurrent patterns of data on the perceptions and practices of teachers; that is, the ideas about emergent literacy development, teaching strategies and learning activities of each teacher or the ones commonly-used among teachers. This process allowed for comparing and contrasting perceptions and practices. The establishment of themes was initially done on the paper copies of the collected data from interview transcripts and observation field notes and then the qualitative software package Nvivo 11.

The frequency of themes was used for discussion of findings at the end the observation period. Furthermore, experts in qualitative data research have looked at the raw data for the discrepancy in order to ensure the reliability of data collection. That is, professional educators have compared the actual recording of a sample of the interviews with the written transcript the researcher has prepared.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

Checking validity and reliability was done in parallel with data collection and data analysis. In order to achieve validity, data trustworthiness was ensured by the application of the triangulation. According to Reeves, Peller, Goldman and Kitto (2013), triangulation is the use of multiple data sources and collection method with the aim of drawing a richly detailed picture of the context. Thus, the researcher depended on the synthesis of data from field note and teachers' responses collected through multiple instruments. In addition, interviews' questions were validated through presenting them to a committee of referees who are specialized in the area.

Reliability in qualitative research is not expressed by the consistency of data collected in different times or by different researchers, rather, Bogdan and Biklen (1998) express it as the “accuracy and comprehensiveness of data.” p.36.

So, the researcher has checked reliability by ensuring the true reflection of the studied context in the collected data. This was achieved through external peer reviewers who have checked the correspondence between the transcripts of interviews and samples of the actual recording of the interviews.

3.11 Ethical Issues

Because research studies must not cause any form of harm to participants, ethical considerations are ought to be followed in all steps of the research. The plan of this study was reviewed by a committee of specialists at UAE University to receive the initial approval. Then, the researcher contacted an administrator in the school to obtain the consent of the research department (see Appendix F). The consent was given after a meeting where all the details of the study were explained. Finally, the participants were asked to sign an informed consent form which included a description of the participants’ roles and contributions to the study, their rights of protecting their safety and anonymousness of their data and their freedom to withdraw from the study (see Appendix G).

3.12 Researcher Background

The researcher has received education at government schools in AlAin where the language of instruction was Arabic, and English was taught as a foreign language. The early childhood education experience the researcher had was in a private school with an Arabic curriculum during a time when Arab families did not

view pre-school education as influential to the child, and thus attending kindergarten was considered as a play time for a child to have away from home as well as a place to memorize the Arabic and English alphabet and some songs. The researcher perused undergraduate studies in the field of early childhood education due to her interest in learning about young children and starting a career in teaching. During the stage of her bachelor studies, the researcher conducted many classroom observations and interviews with kindergarten teachers as requirements for course work, and she had insights into the philosophy of teaching language which Arabic teachers spoke about in addition to their language teaching practices. With an admiration of Arabic language and awareness of its unique features and various functions, the researcher chose to continue studying in the field of children education with a focus on Arabic language teaching. The social experiences the researcher had in witnessing the Arab parents' growing interest in their young children's acquisition of English; with a decreasing attention to their first language, incited her choice of exploring teaching Arabic in a private schools where English is the language of instruction. Such private schools of which parents choose to register their children for a main purpose of mastering English language became the desired setting of the researcher's thesis study. Moreover, understanding how teachers of young children view teaching Arabic in early stages and how they apply these views in the activities they design for children in ways that align with the exceptional characteristics of young ones, were the motives behind the researcher's selection of the study's problem.

Summary

Emergent Literacy instruction is a topic that requires intensive investigation to explore the how teachers assist young learners' acquisition and development of emergent literacy. This chapter had discussed the methodology to be followed for conducting this study. The qualitative nature of data targeted by the researcher was collected from a case study of two early childhood teachers. Similarly, the validity and reliability of such qualitative data were ensured by establishing trustworthiness and credibility via triangulation and inter-rater reviews. Observations and interviews with the Arabic teachers provided the raw data of which analysis generated themes to aid discussion of findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Overview

This study was guided by three questions: (a) What are the perceptions of private schools' teachers' in Al Ain regarding Arabic emergent literacy instruction? (b) What are the practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction these teachers apply in the classroom? and (c) Are there any differences between the teachers' perceptions and their actual practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction?

This chapter will present the findings of the research questions that the researcher discovered as a result of analyzing the data collected from interviews and classroom observations of the two participant teachers. Each of the three sections of the chapter corresponds to the findings of one of the three research questions, and a number of themes comprise each section.

An introduction that presents the main constituting themes is presented at the beginning of each section. These themes include detailed description of the perceptions and practices of the teachers besides evidences from teachers' statements' quotations and activities examples.

Finally, a summary of the findings conclude each of the perceptions and practices sections, and a summary of the chapter is presented after discussing the findings of the research's third question.

4.2 Q1: What Are the Perceptions of Private Schools' Teachers' in Al Ain Regarding the Teaching of Arabic Emergent Literacy?

The first research question aimed at exploring the perceptions of the participants with regards to emergent literacy instruction. To answer this question, the researcher conducted four interviews with each of the two teachers following the classes observed. The semi-structured interview included open-ended questions of which conceptual knowledge and teacher's philosophy in relation to emergent literacy were asked. The result of analyzing the teachers' answers was creating three main themes which combined all the similar ideas into subthemes under the titles of emergent literacy learning, Arabic emergent literacy and emergent literacy instruction in early childhood.

4.2.1 Emergent Literacy Learning

The first theme of the interview's findings includes the seven subthemes of: the functions of language and emergent literacy learning, the essential emergent literacy skills, children's readiness to learn emergent literacy, factors that critically influence emergent literacy development, best activities to start with to introduce language to children, prerequisite skills to reading and writing and children's independence in learning emergent literacy.

4.2.1.1 The Functions of Language and Emergent Literacy Learning

T1 believes that the main function of learning language for children is operational in terms of acquiring vocabulary at school in order to build his ability to compose sentences. She also believes in the importance of language for its cultural aspects, that is, the child's utilizing the language he learns in communicating and

socializing. She points out how the child's native language facilitates his ability to express his emotions without barriers, especially when his language abilities support it.

T1: I think he should learn before the new vocabulary; and then with more practice, he can make.... like, take the joint, words like; like in English ones: where, whatever; like this, he can use the words in Arabic to make new sentences. A second role to use the language in their communication; in daily dialogues; in...communicate with others.

T1: this is a mother language, still a mother language. Still they can say, even if they speak with their local language, they can say what they want.

Similarly, T2 views language as a tool for communication and links the child's gain of vocabulary to better communication and higher thinking abilities. In addition to the operational, cultural and critical functions of the language, T2 sheds a light on the significance of learning to read a language as a step towards improving cognitive and social skills.

T2: language is very very important; will make you think, will make you How you communicate with the others, with a good way. if you have vocab, good vocab; you can choose the nice words to communicate with the others. Actually, language ; I think, it's the way to think, how to think, how to find solutions for many things. Also, for reading. If you don't.. If you don't learn any language, how you will read; how you will put.. how you will improve your culture, your information in your mind; if you not read.

4.2.1.2 The Essential Emergent Literacy Skills

In terms of the skills a child needs in order to learn reading and writing, T1 believes that a child's ability to recognize the shapes of letters and distinguish each letter from the others are the most important skills to focus on as they are part of the learning outcomes of FS2 stage. Moreover, she expresses the fact that children are still emergent readers who can only read letters written separately on different

learning materials such as cards before they construct the ability to blend multiple sounds later and obtain print awareness that enables them to understand that written words deliver meaning.

T1: All of this is helping me to achieve my target ‘to recognize the shapes of the letter’ or ‘to recognize the letter from the many letters.

Building a connection between a sound and a picture is a skill emphasized by T2. This matching between the letter’s sound and a picture of a thing which name begins with that sound is a step that leads eventually to children’s linking of sounds and words to create sentences. She also comments on the importance of children’s accurate pronunciation of letters and words which she aims to facilitate by presenting song and poem activities. In addition, children’s hand motor skills which she fosters by using activities which include materials like playdough can also perform as a way to help children memorize the shapes of the letters.

T2: the picture with the letter. Like “Aa” (أ); the sound is “Aa” (أ) (الأرنب) “AlArnab” (rabbit); like this. So, they match the sound with the picture.

T2: This is the next step; if you be with for the next step. Connect, they connect words and they make a sentence; build a sentence after that.

T2: So, I tried something to make sure how they pronounce the words, the letters or the songs, it is very important. They sing a song to repeat, the songs are very very important;

T2: For hands, they use clay, playdough, anything to design the letter. They will know the letter by design the letter.

4.2.1.3 Children’s Readiness to Learn Emergent Literacy

The readiness to learn emergent literacy is discussed by T1 and T2 in terms of children’s physical readiness, emotional readiness and cognitive readiness. T1 states that a child must be ready emotionally when his mood and thoughts help him

be prepared to engage in language learning activities. She points out the physical abilities that are related to motor and sight domains and have an impact on the child's learning, and T2 agrees on the idea of the child's physical readiness in terms of muscle growth and normal eye sight.

T1: he has to be emotionally ready..... you have to improve his abilities or his skills to be ready for writing. For reading, if he can't see well as others, you can choose the suitable place for him.

T2: of course Year1 is... around now they are very ready to use pen and use all muscles like you said, everything, eyes and everything. They are ready.

On the other hand, T2 indicates that the aspects of a child's sense of responsibility and values of learning and work as well as the child's interest in the language domain.

T2: he is understanding he has to learn; 'I have to finish my work. It is not just play time.' Yes, I have kids who can't... they feel the school is play time. They still can't learn that this is school; this is duty;

4.2.1.4 Factors that critically influence Emergent Literacy Development

In the discussion of the most influential factors on the child's emergent literacy development, T1 and T2 agree on the role of the home environment and the school environment on the child. They both state that the parents' support of a child's efforts to learn language facilitates his achievement at school. They also believe that if the school's setting attracts the child and the teacher creates an atmosphere of acceptance and love, a child is more likely to be actively engaged in activities for language learning.

T1: first step is.. should start form home. They should make the... to make like a warm up for him; to be ready for the school. Ok, second thing the environment around him in the school; if the environment attractive or no.

Then the teacher and curriculum; the teacher can make a curriculum easy, or the teacher can let him discover.

T2: Actually both; the parents, if they support their children, it will be good; they will help us.

T2: if you love the teacher, you will learn everything. If the teacher was; like, tough or ; like, angry; she is not smiling, they will never learn anything.

T1 expresses the idea of the difference in the language acquisition between children that is dependent on the child's ability rather than his age, which contradicts with T2's belief in the vital role of the child's age on his writing and reading abilities.

T1: The main idea is how they can catch the pencil; if they catch it well, it is okay; he is ready to follow the dots or write by himself. It is not dependent to the age and not dependent to the body. Maybe you find him in the beginning of 5 years, in the fifth year of his age, and he can catch the pencil and write. It is depending to the ability.

T2: yes, this age is a sensitive age; one month will make a difference. In my opinion; because I watched them.

T2 also believes that the mood of the child and his fondness of language are factors that determine the language acquisition and development of emergent literacy characteristics of an individual child. Time of the day in which the Arabic literacy class is given is also stated by T2 to have an impact of children's learning of language and as a result on the types of activities to choose for instruction. T2 also mentions the child's development of independence as one of the factors that influence his engagement in learning.

T2: it depends their mood or tired. Actually, they are tired or not. Also, the time of the lesson. It is important. In The morning lesson different, by the end of the day lesson they are always tired. But other time in the morning I

use.. I give them more information but it is nice way, because they are still fresh.

T2: Some of them they love language; I mean Arabic, French or English. And the others they are not interested, they interest about math, science.

T2: How he is in the house; he is dependent, independent; he will be here. it is not just teaching for Arabic. I talk about all attitude. if the teacher said something, they listen. If they....do have their table missed, they finish then wash it. Some of them they tidy up the table without asking. he will help us because he knows this is his duty, and he is understanding he has to learn; 'I have to finish my work. It is not just play time.'

4.2.1.5 Best Activities to Start with to Introduce Language to Children

The activities which are most effective to begin with to introduce language to children include common ideas between T1 and T2, that is, the use of songs to promote fun learning experience for young children and make it easier as well as the incorporation of stories.

T2: you have to be smart for this to use this matter, because if you use song, if you use games, automatically they will go to this language without they feel it is language. But if you force them; like you have to learn like this; they can't. because they are kids.

T2 advocates stories for their benefits enriching a child's vocabulary and improving his reading skills. T1 adds the benefits of widening the child's imagination, positively influencing his values and behaviors and meeting his learning style.

T1: The story is very important for them; for their imagination, for their play roles, for their improvement of language, improvement of cooperation, improve to be friendly with others, to manage time; everything in the story. And someone who likes pictures can find what he likes, someone who likes listening can find what he likes, and someone who wants to do something like craft activities can apply in the story.

Furthermore, T2 indicates that using games, puzzles, art activities for forming and decorating letters with materials like playdough and color pencils celebrates the child's desire in playing and presents knowledge and skills to him in a meaningful and interesting way.

T2: you have to use things to make them ready. Like games, like songs. different games; like puzzles for letters...There is many puzzles, and there is maze; you can use maze like this. Coloring; they love coloring, Playdough, clay. We have ... they create the letters or they decorate the letters different décor.. they love this.

T2 also talks about her experience in introducing children to poems that are written in standard Arabic and its impact on children's acquisition of vocabulary and accurate pronunciation. The use of sight words is an additional activity which T2 believes to be a significant practice for developing the concepts of reading and writing in children.

T2: Maybe if you come to my class, you say Why this teacher keeps to repeat this word? Aaaaaah.. I repeat three things; I prefer this. I prefer ... with the words it's "Kalemat Basariyya" (كلمات بصرية) (sight words).

4.2.1.6 Prerequisite Skills to Reading and Writing

T1 identifies the skills a child needs to acquire in order to be qualified for learning reading and writing by highlighting the physical domain skills of normal sight, small muscles development and eye-muscle coordination. She also discusses components of alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness; such as letter shape recognition, letter's sound recognition and blending sounds to form words. She mentions using puzzles to teach the skill of blending letters to children who don't prefer using the playdough or not ready to write yet.

T1: It is depending to the ability; or the muscles. If their muscles are good and ready to catch the pen and write, it is okay. If he is ready and can concentrate with his eyes, and find the dot he has to begin from; here, to write the letter. He has to have eye-muscle coordination in order to be able to follow the starting point and to be able to trace the dots you have put.

T1: the first skill is to recognize the letters' shapes and the second is to recognize the letters' sounds;They can say it in any way, but connect the sounds and make new words. . He can blend sounds by puzzle, but can't blend it by pencil. He can connect between the picture and the sound of letter, but if you ask him to make it by playdough, he refuses.

T2 states that the skill of blending and segmenting sounds and words is a prerequisite skill to reading and writing, and adds children's mastering of articulation of letters. Furthermore, she believes that the age of Year 1 children is associated with the development of the skills that are related to their muscles and sight, yet she states that she helps prepare children to hold the pencil by engaging them in activities of drawing and writing with brushes and markers.

T2: I teach them one letter, and we will go to match, to connect; yes, like "Tarkeeb and Tahleel" (تحليل و تركيب) (she says 'Analysis and Assemble' in Arabic)

T2: of course Year 1 is... around now they are very ready to use pen and use all muscles like you said, everything, eyes and everything.....for their muscles, they prepare them to use pencils. So I have a brush for painting and table; The marker, it is not pencil now, because a pencil needs a little bit strong using pencil, it is not for their age,

4.2.1.7 Children's Independence in Learning Emergent Literacy

In the topic of a child's independence in learning emergent literacy, T1 states that independence is a quality that evolves as the child takes part in experiences at school which involve him in individual and group work, sharing and taking turns, impulse control and making choices. Thus, the level of independence increases as the child spends more time in the school. She also indicates that an aspect of a child's

independence is his tendency to peruse working on additional learning activities after they finish working on the planned activity in a period of time that is less than estimated.

On the contrary, T2 believes that a child comes to school with characteristics of independency when his home environment promotes such characteristics. She points out that the aspects of keeping the space clean, following instructions and demonstrating confidence expressing his capabilities indicate the child's high level of independence. Moreover, teaching children to be independent is one of the roles T2 sates to be one of her roles.

T1: In the beginning, it is a little bit independent; until he learns the skills; how he can work alone, how he can work with his friends, how he can finish and stay on his chair and raise his hand, how he can share the resources with others without any noise, how he can choose the right colors for things if you ask him to color something. ...When they work independently, they finish before the time, and is looking for other activities.

T2: they are different. How he is in the house; he is dependent, independent; he will be here. if the teacher said something, they listen. If they...do have their table missed, they finish then wash it. Some of them they tidy up the table without asking; this is...now you know; at home, his mom teaches him this. It will not be hard for me to teach,... 'I handle everything myself.' And his way to talk; 'Miss, I can do this;' He is; like, more confident.

T2: actually, if I have this case, I have to teach him; start teach him; like, 'Now, you have to be responsible, You are Year 1 now. You are big now. You have to be more responsible,'

4.2.2 Arabic Emergent Literacy

Teachers answered questions that are related to emergent literacy of Arabic language. Their answers concentrated on three main topics, the unique features of

Arabic language that affects instruction, the factors that impact children's learning of Arabic literacy and the challenges of teaching Arabic literacy.

4.2.2.1 Unique Features of Arabic Language that affects instruction

Both teachers describe the features of Arabic language in terms of characteristics that are comparable to other language. T1 states that the multiple forms of every letter make it difficult for children to learn. In addition, she discusses the pronunciation of sounds in Arabic as a feature that makes some letters easier to acquire knowledge about and articulate than others and thus affect the teacher's preference in the order of letters to teach.

T1: every language the same structures, but you have to make something difficult like Arabic; is different has maybe 6 sounds for one letter and more shapes for one letter; not like English.... about the pronunciation; it will be good; like “ba” (ب), “da” (د); it is easy to say. But, “em. meem” (إم، ميم), need more effort to say “meem” (ميم); it is difficult in writing and difficult to say. So, I start with the easier letter, not with (ض) “Dhad” (The signature sound of Arabic language) in the beginning, not with (ث) “Tha”. (ث) “Tha” you can put it with the same shape; like (ب) “Ba” and (ت) “Ta”;

T1 talks about her previous experience in another school where she taught the 1st letter in the alphabet; “Alef”(ألف: أ), following other letters due to the difficulty of forming accurate connection between its many sounds and shapes.

T1: So, before in my previous school, we taught; like, “Alef”(ألف: أ) not in the beginning, because “Aa. Ao. Ae” (أ، أُ، آ) is difficult for Year3 now, to write “Ae. Aa. Ao” (أ، أُ، آ). They still now ask me: ‘Miss, How can I?’ ‘“Oo” in English, but “Ao” (أ) in Arabic, What is “Ao” (أ)?’

T2 agrees with the ideas T1 states as she describes Arabic to be a hard language for the reason that the articulation of its sounds requires the use of many

organs of speech and thus makes learning other languages later easier. She also mentions the multiple forms of each letter and adds that the different letters which have similar shapes are reason for children's confusion. As a result, she plans the instruction of such letters to be consecutive help children learn each of them and then distinguish between them. In addition, T2 indicates the richness of Arabic language as observable in the multiple meaning for a single word.

T2: Arabic is so hard; it's a hard language. If he wants to just be good in Arabic, he can be good in any language. Because Arabic uses all "Makharej AlHorooof" (مخارج الحروف) (Articulation of Sounds); everything; your muscles here in your voice (she points at her throat and mouth with the index finger); this is hard. You use "Kha" (خ), you use "Dhaa" (ظ), "Taa" (ط); this is very strong letters.

T2: I have to a way to define, Is it? "Tafreeq" (تفريق) (she says the word 'distinguishing' in Arabic, asking me if it is the right word she has used) between the letters. So, I go with the similar; like "Jeem" (جيم), "Hha" (حاء), "Kha" (حاء). But, actually in order it will be better. But how I give them; I give them like "Ba" (باء), "ta" (تاء), "Tha" (ثاء) individually, and the last lesson I put three of the similar together.

T2: in the Arabic language each letter has 3 forms. So, this makes them so confused. That is why we select one week for each letter, and still they are confused. the Arabic language is a big language. Same word, many meanings; for one word.

4.2.2.2 Factors that impact Children's Learning of Arabic Literacy

The two teachers state different aspects when speaking about the factors which influence learning Arabic literacy by children. T1 points out that a child's exposure to formal Arabic from an early age facilitates the development of his language. She mentions children's programs such as cartoons which are in standard Arabic as examples for this exposure in addition to practicing speaking about regular daily topics with their mothers. In addition, the fact that Arabic is children's native language results in children's excitement and finding no difficulties in expressing

themselves when learning Arabic According to T2, parents' support for learning is particularly significant in the early years of age. T2 believes that the relationship between her and children's parents has a positive impact on the young learners' attitude toward Arabic and their development in learning.

T1: sometimes listen to some movies or cartoon in Arabic. some cartoons speaking Arabic language, traditional. daily practice with everything around him at home. This is the mommy role in this age.

T2: the relationship between parents is very very important for this. If he feels; your kid, If he feels like you are a friend for mommy. they will love reading, they will be excited. You with him, he will love the part of the story because he is with mommy or with daddy.

4.2.2.3 Challenges of Teaching Arabic Literacy

As teachers at an English private school, T1 and T2 express the challenges they face in teaching Arabic literacy to young children. T1 stresses that because Arabic language is diglossic; meaning that it has a standard form and a spoken dialect (Ibrahim, 2011), it makes learning the language harder for children since they speak in their daily life a form that is different from the one they are required to acquire and develop at school. Children also come from different Arab countries of which they learn to speak in its dialects and thus come to classroom with different ways of pronouncing the same letters.

T1: I start with... (ج) "Ja" if their accent is okay. If they have different in accent, you can start with (ح) "Ha". If they have a problem with (ح) "Ha"; like (هـ) "Ha" like English, you can start with (ج) "Ja".

T1 and T2 pointed out that the community and home environments don't act as catalysts for the development of standard Arabic especially when parents

themselves are not in a level of knowledge of the language that qualifies them to help nurture their children's growth in that domain.

T1: The environment around him, or the society around him is not improve Arabic language. He has to find something to support his language. How we can support when the mommy and the daddy doesn't know anything about the Arabic traditional. So, they find difficulty to speak Arabic traditional and outside Arabic;

T2: The Daddy is Arab and the Mommy is Arab, and the kid; you will be surprised, he speaks English fluently; no Arabic.

The other challenges are related to the schools' curriculum and systems. According to both T1 and T2, children spend the school day speaking English whereas Arabic is practiced for one hour only when they have an Arabic class. This limited time makes planning for activities and implementing them a difficult task for teachers. T2 states that this creates a difference in expectations between teachers and parents who compare the learning outcomes of their children with their peers who are in the same grade level yet older in age at Arabic schools.

T1: The challenge to achieve my target during 1 hour (she laughs); Working to make my activities short and to concentrate. If I make the activities want long time, I will not achieve my target, they will not finish their work; So, we have a problem now. Make it short and easy and funny and academic in the same time. First I prepare some activities and then cancel one of them because of the time. Because, you know, our time is not like English time....it should be 3 hours. I want to give the kids more sounds, I want to start my blending early, I want to give them more activities.

T2: Children in the British schools actually... especially native kids, Arabic kids, the timing; we have problem with the timing for the Arabic. Because it is all the time in English and we have one hour Arabic during the day, four hours during a week. Arabic parents they want kids they know Arabic very well like the other schools; they compare with other school. Other schools teach Arabic, they have like 2 hours during the week; all the time they speak Arabic.

Furthermore, searching for teaching materials for Arabic language is not an easy job in T2's point of view because of the scarcity of Arabic teaching resources when compared to the ones of English in the web. This results in the need for more time and effort in looking and ideas, designing the materials and adjusting them with accordance to her students' characteristics. T2 adds that young age of children requires more work in planning and preparing because they are at a sensitive age where their attitudes towards learning and Arabic language are being built.

T2: because of their age, you can't push them to not hate the lesson; to not hate Arabic. It is a very very sensitive age. So, we have to be easy.

T2: we do not actually have resources, if you search in the computer net, everything booklet, booklet, booklet.. .and they are boring. so boring, booklet for letters, If you remember the flash card activity, I create this by myself. And the stories, I created them by myself.

4.2.3 Emergent Literacy Instruction in Early Childhood

In the questions which discussed the domains of emergent literacy instruction, the analysis of T1 and T2's responses generated issues of the order of teaching language skills to children, the daily routine and emergent literacy instruction, teaching and learning materials often used for emergent literacy, teacher's role in emergent literacy instruction: discovering children's levels, learning styles and interests, planning instruction according to children's levels, learning styles & interests, preparing children to learn emergent literacy, selecting activities to achieve certain learning outcomes and supporting and encouraging children to learn. In addition, the use of rewards in emergent literacy instruction, the learning environment and the use of technology in emergent literacy instruction were discussed.

4.2.3.1 The Order of Teaching Language Skills to Children

In the discussion of what order teachers believe is the appropriate to teach the language skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing, T1 states that listening should be the first skill targeted in instruction to facilitate children's' obtaining of the structure of the language and phonological awareness which is related to the sounds of letters. Speaking follows to apply what they have learned by listening in using the vocabulary in expressing their ideas, and then reading in which a child learns to blend the sounds and compose words. Lastly, the skills of writing in which the alphabet knowledge gains understanding of the concepts of the symbols of a language is taught in T1' viewpoint.

T1: So, listening is the first skill. They have to listen; carefully, to know the ways, to know the structures, to know the rules, to know the sounds of letters. So, the important is listening. And then, they will use their knowledge or their ability... to talk, speak. Using the new vocabulary, using the new sentences, using the right sentences;

T1: So, listening, talking... reading... reading because he can blend sounds easily to make new words; and then writing, because writing needs more ability; So they have to recognize the sound and the way to write it.

T2, on the other hand, puts emphasis on speaking first because it is the introduction to a language and a way for children to gain abilities that are related to communication and self-expression. She believes that the skill of listening follows speaking in the order of instruction. The following skills are reading and writing which are taught in conjunction with a slight precedence for reading over writing.

T2: Speaking in my opinion. so first few weeks, they have to do greeting, introducing themselves, how to be... there is shy kids; how to make them more confidence to introduce themselves or greeting, how to reply, how to say nice things; like 'thank you,' 'you are welcome'... Like this stuff. So speaking how if he wants something, how to make questions in Arabic Fusha,

how to try to make it, it is little bit hard but speaking actually is very important.

T2: So speaking, listening. Reading and writing both were together. So we will write, we will read just together. So we learn “Alef” (ألف: أ); we have “Aa, Ee, “Ao” (أ, إ). So, always reading and writing going together. Writing is a little bit at the end, but reading if you know ; in my opinion, if you know how to read you will know writing.

4.2.3.2 The Daily Routine and Emergent Literacy Instruction

T1 and T2 describe their plans and practices with regards to the daily routine in their classes of Arabic emergent literacy. T1 believes in the importance of a uniform structure of the lesson between different teachers who teach the same children. She emphasizes the need to follow a fixed routine with young children where the order of activities and classroom procedures are applied in the same ways throughout the school year. In her opinion, creativeness is a concept that should not be applied in the order of activities and procedures with young children as they tend to get confused, yet types of activities from the same category can be changed among the days of the week.

The structure of T1’s lesson is built about 4 parts; warming children up for learning, presenting the content of knowledge, giving them opportunities to apply what they have learned and concluding the lesson with reviewing the content of the lesson and checking what children have learned before they clean up the space. She allocates a specific period of the lesson’ time to each of the 4 parts where the warm up and introducing knowledge in carpet time takes up to 10 minutes, the tables’ activities in 20 minutes and the conclusion and clean up in 10 minutes. In addition, T1 point out that story reading is an activity that she begins to apply in the second semester and allocates 10 minutes for once a week.

T1: If you have your routine, you will find a good result. So, not daily you create something new; and 'I'm creative;' you are not creative if you create for this age; especially. If you create something new, they will ... they will have confuse. So, the routine to enter the class, the routine to sit on the mat, the routine to be in the groups, the routine to line up, the routine to go outside and come back, the routine to tidy up after finishing, the routine to raise their hands when they want to answer, the routine to respect others when they are talking; this is a routine.

T1: So, one day we start with video, second day we start with song, third day we start with a bag of surprise, fourth day we start with a game, fifth day we start with making revision of sounds with cards. So, you can have a routine like this; to do something they are familiar with. Not something new, new,

T1: So, I put 5 to 7 or 10 minutes on the mat; or a video or a song or make a review about the letters. And then 20 minutes for activities on the tables, and then 5 or 10 minutes... and 5 minutes after working to tidy up the classroom and keep the resources in the right place;

The lesson structure is different in T2's classroom as she communicates with children in the carpet time for 5 to 6 minutes to greet them and introduce the content of the lesson to them. This short period is for the purpose of avoiding children's boredom. She follows that with teaching the whole group by instructional activities such as reading practice and songs in 15 minutes. She also applies different activities like word's segmenting and blending. Children are given tables' activities after that to practice writing for 10 minutes and do hands-on work for another 10 minutes. Story Reading is also one of the activities T2 believes in its impact on teaching children new vocabulary and language expressions as well as finding answers to questions, and thus she includes it in the her lessons once per week.

T2: In carpet time we have to say greeting; 'hi, how are you?' 'I miss you so much.' 'What we will do today;' you give them instructions. Carpet time is; like, six minutes; between five minutes and six minutes. So, carpet time is very very important; for us. I think, if all schools do like that, it will be good. Not go to the class; carpet time to see the teacher; contact, communicate with the teacher; will be good.

T2: Flash cards, songs and reading practicing. Yes; so, this is what I prefer to repeat. You will find in my lesson. Like; for fifteen minutes. And to put just 10 minutes for writing, 5 minutes for movies, 10 minutes for activities by hand, by flash cards so this is for one hour during the day, we have to do many things.

T2: Once a week. If I can use it every day, I will use it. It is not bad, so the books give us more expressions, Arabic expressions . I ask them questions about the story after I finish and I ask them to answer but in Arabic ‘Fusha.’

4.2.3.3 Teaching and Learning Materials often Used for Emergent Literacy

The teaching materials T1 uses often with FS2 are the tangible materials children can work with and sometimes communicate with like the case with puppets. She divides the types of materials and learning resources into three categories; songs and story videos for children to listen to in the introductory parts of FS2 lesson, board games, card games, playdough and art materials for crafts. She also emphasizes that the hands-on activities must be made by children. T1 does not believe in using storybooks as children are still 4 years old and the appropriate types of storybooks for that stage are the books that include only pictures or one word per page, whereas the levels starting with 5-year olds in Year 1 are engaged in a reading by levels program in which they read storybooks to read a home.

T1: my resources should be three types like I said; I’m doing like something to listen, videos and songs; they like it. And then you have to do some discussion with them. And something like cards, playdough, like do craft; something like art, something like play with cards, games, board games; this attracts all kids to do.... like story, like song in the beginning. Activities like cut and paste, like recognize by playing roles.

T1: our kids are still under age; 3 years and 4 years. I think it is better for 5 years. But in 4 years we can use a picture story only, without ... with like 1 word, 2 words only, and should be like ‘scholastic’; levels. But we can’t start form FS because already Year1 is KG2 outside, so already with Year1 we give Year1.

T2 uses materials like the small whiteboards because they give a sense of ownership and free choice to children, and they help the teacher check on the understanding of all children all at once to save time and thus provide further explanation when needed. She also put emphasis on the flash cards because they grab children's attention and help them make a connection between sounds and related pictures and symbols. Similar to T1, T2 uses songs and art materials to create and decorate letters as well as videos. She states that she selects the videos with conditions in mind.

T2: it is a useful board. They like actually; because, 'It is my own,' 'I can do, and I can draw anything on my board.' And the teacher can decide who gets the information and what, on the white board. So, something for the teacher also; I check if he understands. If he is not, I can repeat in a different. if you just have a look at the board for one minute; all boards, you will find who understands or not.

T2: Flash card is very very active with them. So, the picture with the letter. Like "Aa" (أ); the sound is "Aa" (أ) "AlArnab" (الأرنب) (rabbit); So, they match the sound with the picture.

Story reading is an essential part of Year 1 children's learning as she reads to them after selecting books with specific standards to achieve the learning outcomes and make it a joyful experience for young learners. In addition, the school's reading levels program is highly viewed by T2 as it is built according to children's reading development stage and improve children's reading abilities and present new knowledge to them. The books containing one word per page are the ones specified for children in level 1.

T2: because the stories is amazing thing to make you learn information, improve your reading, improve everything. The reading is very very important. We start with YEAR1. we will give them like one story every

week. They love the books. We go back to books again. Because the internet and iPads, it is nice things, but it is not that much. There is negative effects.

T2: In YEAR 1, levels from 1 to 5. What we do exactly, we arrange these books by level. So one word; story of one word in one page, you can check the library and you will find. Level 1 is like only one word, it is like colors or something about (هذا أبي، هذه أمي) “Hatha Abi, Hathihee Ommi” (This is my Father, this is my mother’)

T2: they lost the importance of the books, they do not feel it. That’s why we have to choose the good books. Something funny not boring. I choose story, it is little bit funny, nice, they will love. I choose a little big, not small; To show them.... I always choose there is a hook in the story so they all will always be excited.

Lastly, T2 points out that all the materials used for teaching and learning in the school are of high quality.

T2: Anything, because the kids take it, it is high quality. anything that will go home will be high quality, anything they will watch will be high quality.

4.2.3.4 Teacher’s Role in Emergent Literacy Instruction

To describe the roles T1 and T2 view as ones a teacher of emergent literacy for young children engages in, the answers of the participants in different interviews were analyzed and contrasted before grouping them into themes where similar ideas were placed. The generated themes include discovering children’s levels, learning styles and interests, planning instruction according to children’s levels, learning styles & interests, preparing children to learn emergent literacy, selecting activities to achieve certain learning outcomes and supporting and encouraging children to learn.

In general, T1 views her role as a one who presents knowledge to children, gives them opportunities to apply it in activities and ensures their understanding and achievement of the learning outcomes. She also thinks that supporting children’s

learning at home as one of the tasks she involves in by providing materials to help parents contribute to children's development of language. T2 rejects the teacher's role as a one who stands in front of the board or sits behind the table to instruct children according to the traditional method. She emphasizes creating a lesson children enjoy rather than a lesson that is perfect in other criteria. Therefore, she works on building a friendly relationship with children in order to facilitate the processes of teaching and learning.

4.2.3.4.1 Discovering Children's Levels, Learning Styles and Interests

Discovering interests by engaging children in different types of activities and learning about their preferences when they express their enjoyment or disliking of a certain activity is the practice of both T1 and T2. Unlike students in older grade levels who get to fill a survey to explore their interests and learning styles, T1 states that young children's characteristics are discovered by observation of their behaviors in the classroom. It is another way to explore children's learning styles when children are presented to activities with materials like videos and pictures, and audio materials and tangible materials, according to T1 and T2.

T1: in the beginning of the year, we did some activities or some...in grades we have like a survey, but here by observation. Which one is listening more than 3 minutes to the videos, this is audio. I showed them a big picture of a garden with some details, and then I ask them: 'Try to think what is in the pictures? Which one is playing there? a lot of questions and then I can remove the picture and then ask them about the same picture again; If they can remember the details, they are visual learners

T1: in the beginning I can ask them which one prefer this and which one prefers this activities . they will try. If they find it Okay, Miss I don't want. (she laughs) Ok, you can go to other station. Ok. They are kids. They are discovering their ability; like me.

T2: my new kids I give them two weeks to discover them. After two weeks, I decide..... You will find different levels. You can't find them in the same level. Because we are humans, we are different.... I have different types of kids; how they like to learn. Someone he likes watching videos; like "Dal" (دال: د) letter today; he is so excited. Another one he learns by songs, another one he just likes writing; Yes, and he shows me his neat handwriting

T1 also states that communicating with the English class teacher helps her gain more awareness about children's levels and attributes.

T1: I'm still asking the Class Teacher; English teacher: 'What about M (a boy's name)? What about A (a girl's name)? Is she good in saying the letters in correct way or no?' So I have an idea about the kids. If I have my idea about the kids, it is easy to prepare my lesson, it is easy to prepare my resources.

4.2.3.4.2 Planning Instruction According to Children's Levels, Learning Styles and Interests

T1 points out that after learning about children's abilities and learning styles, planning the activities to meet their different needs is the next step. Not only that learning materials are prepared to suit the styles of visual, auditory and tactile learners, but also support the teacher's efforts to accomplish the learning outcomes she has set in her plans. These learning outcomes can also be adjusted for specific children when specific targets are established for certain children who haven't attained the expected levels in certain skills. T1 states that she divides children into 4 to 5 groups who work on 3 different table activities which are built according to either the different levels or learning styles of children.

T1: you have to be sure about their abilities, about their intelligence, about if they are like to see, or they are like to listen, or they make it by hand. You put your activities like their abilities. You can't say: 'All of them will accept the skills in the same time.' So, say one group now work independently, so, the

second group needs you to have a look two times or three times. And one of them needs someone with them all the time

T1: It is depending to two things. First thing is the learning style; the learning styles like someone likes to listen, you have to prepare some songs or videos or roleplays; like this. Someone wants to see or has fun with seeing something or observing something, so you have to bring like pictures, like stories. Someone likes to do it, so you have to put; like, art...art activities or playing roles or playing activities with cards; And the second thing depends to your target. If you have a main target; like: 'recognize the sound "Za" (ز);' How you achieve your target with activities? You have to put something to see, something to cut, something to jump, something to draw, something to match.

T1: I make them levels; maybe is changing if I plan with the learning style, maybe they will stay the same levels, the same groups; now they are four groups. If they choose, you can't know how many will like it; so sometimes they will be five groups in the class, but working on 3 activities.

On the other hand, T2 benefits from her awareness of children's learning styles, interests and levels in making a variety of activities for diverse children to find the work they enjoy doing. According to her statement, she divides children to 3 groups according to levels and allocates 3 activities of different levels to be presented to the groups. She observes children while they work on activities, and when she notices that a child is struggling to follow the instructions of an activity, she modifies the activity to be easier.

T2: I always prepare extra work for him. Because he loves writing. So, in my lesson there is many things; you can write, you can watch a video, a song..... I have; like, five kids they want to play with materials; like hands-on.

T2: And for activities, if you find him struggling in reading or "Tarkeeb Kalamat" (تركيب كلمات) connect letters, don't give them... just give them one word to practice. If you feel he understands, give him one. The other kids, I give them five words;

T2: you prepare different level, at least three levels; three activities; three different. We have the low, the high and the medium....different tables. So,

we have the green table for the high level, the red table for medium, the orange table for the low.

4.2.3.4.3 Preparing Children to Learn Emergent Literacy

According to T1, the child is prepared physically by improving his eyes' concentration and developing his fine muscles in order to prepare him for writing and hold the pencil later. In addition, she emphasizes holding conversations with children in order to help them obtain new vocabulary, enrich their Arabic expressions and correct any mistakes they make with regards to language.

T1: some of them, my target is to keep his focusing; not to achieve the target. Sometimes my target is not to have results....We have special pencils here. The size and the "Samaka" (سماكة)(thickness); it is easy for them; to make the writing easy. And they can use the stones with the box of sand, or they can use the stone with the ... outside between trees; they can write on the sand outside. But we use the healthy ... the safety sand. And you can use; like, playdough; to make his muscles strong.

T1: Conversation is very important for kids, because you can fix their mistakes, you can improve his or her vocabulary, and you can put new words in his dictionary; you can help them to say some sentences.....Sometimes we replace some local words with Traditional Arabic words, sometimes we can help them to translate some sentences they know in English only.

T2 prepares children for writing by strengthening their muscles with activities such as coloring and playdough making as well as letter crafts in which decorating the letter helps them obtain knowledge of its shape. In addition, she uses songs and games to check children pronunciation and teach them the accurate ways to articulate Arabic sounds.

T2: They practice. Slowly slowly, they will not write anything but they will use coloring and painting. so now for their muscles, they prepare them to use pencils.... For hands, they use clay, playdough, anything to design the letter.

T2: you have to use things to make them ready. Like games, like songs. Different ways like coloring. I tried something to make sure how they pronounce the words, the letters or the songs, it is very important. They sing a song to repeat, the songs are very very important.

4.2.3.4.4 Selecting Activities to Achieve Certain Learning Outcomes

T1 states that setting the learning outcomes should be done in a manner that ascends from the easier to the harder for children. She depends on the targets, or learning outcomes, to plan the activities which assist with achieving them, and then she considers the three different learning styles of children to choose activities which appeal to all children. The targets T1 sets are similar to all children, yet the way each of them achieves is different because of the activity she selects for the child to work on with enjoyment. She also explains that she focuses on the skill of writing and ensures that all children write during the lesson, before they chooses another activity they like afterward.

T1: you have to start step by step; from the easier to the harder. If you find your way, you will be okay or you will improve your targets at the time....my activities should be related to my target. So, I put the target and then think about how I present or show the target, and how the kids can accept it. And if the kids like to listen, the kids like to play, the kids like to see; and then put my activities to achieve my target. Like; ‘to recognize the letter by jumping on the card’, ‘by Bingo cards to find letters,’ ‘by electronic activities; like touch the letter “Ba” (ب);’ like ‘Connect between “Ba” (ب) and the picture beginning with “Ba” (ب),’ like ‘Find “Ba” (ب) in the beginning or the middle or the end;’

T1: All of them they have to practice to write; group by group. All of them they have to give me new vocabulary which have the same sound. All of them have to recognize the previous letters. if you have a target that you need all the kids to achieve it; like how they can draw the letters, they have to start; when they finish, they can come and choose the activities they like.

In contrast, T2 describes the types of activities she chooses to be enjoyable for children and to give them a sense of freedom. When selecting activities for her lessons, she searches for ideas which are applicable for young children. She focuses on using activities she has noticed to be effective with children such as sight words and songs which enrich children's vocabulary gain and teach them concepts of reading. In addition, she states that the teacher's efforts to speak in standard Arabic are significant for children to acquire the way to speak. Art activities are another type of activities which T2 states that she includes in lessons when she aims at children's acquisition of alphabet knowledge about a certain letter.

T2: I do everything to make them love the lesson, love the atmosphere, love the thing that they learn... And you have to make them move in the classroom; not just sitting. Sometimes, they stand; no problem. They feel free in the classroom; they feel they can do anything; But, anything to learn. I do research to know how to do this age with good material. To make me down to their level.

T2: I prefer ... with the words it's "Kalemat Basariyya" (كلمات بصرية) (sight words)... Also, I prefer some songs, but with original Arabic, I mean; with grammar; perfect grammar.

4.2.3.4.5 Supporting and Encouraging Children to Learn

One of the teacher's roles T1 describes is offering encouragement to children while they learn. She explains that when children make efforts to work on activities or speak to her, she responds with reassuring words even when some of them don't succeed in achieving the target.

T1: In the beginning, you have a wide range of your... a big role; when they are still young. So, if they earned, you can make your role less, less. By the end of the first term, they can work, and they can use the language easily; almost.... if he can't, you can make it: 'Okay. Bravo. "Raaee" (رائع) (she says 'great' in Arabic). You can do it.'

T2 also uses praising with children and avoids pointing out that they are wrong whenever they fail to perform as desired. Children are capable of tasks in T2's point of view, yet she doesn't push them because she believes that enjoying activities will give children the motivation to work harder.

T2: If you are wrong, I never say: 'It is wrong. There is so many mistakes;' but, ...yes, I can't say: 'This is wrong;' No, 'This is good. It is good you try, but try more. You can do better.' But never tell him: 'No, this is a mistake;' he will feel: 'No, I can't. I'm a loser. I can't do anything.'

T2: Don't say they are in early years; they can't; No, but how to give them this; this is important. The way how to teach them; this is important. How they love this. This age really can. He can give you many things you can't expect. But because of their age, you can't push them to not hate the lesson; to not hate Arabic. It is a very very sensitive age. I'm never pushing them; 'You have to say this;' no. Maybe still the information will come. Maybe it will take time.

After presenting the knowledge content to children, T1 joins children while they apply the knowledge in tables' activities to assess whether they understood the concepts she taught them. The progress of children in either correcting mistakes they make in activities that include speaking, for example, or applying different activities next time. Her method of correcting mistakes starts from listening to children carefully to hear the sounds they utter, and then repeat the word for him if mispronounces it.

T1: I give them knowledge, and then when they are working on the table I need to be sure they are accepting it or I will make it again; in other ways, or other different activities. So, I'm looking for them when they are working.

T1: Sometimes, I just listen to them when they are talking; they are working and talking in the... and if he says; like (بيدل حرف مكان حرف فيصدر المعنى مختلفاً) (he substitutes letters so the meaning produced is different). So, you can tell him to say it more time, more time; like M (she says a boy's name) when he

said... said once; like “Bahr” (بحر) (sea) “Harb” (حرب) (war), like this. So, you have to say it many times until he says it good; he has to repeat after you.

When almost half of the number of children doesn't seem to achieve the learning target, T1 states that she tends to plan other activities to help children attain the desired outcomes with different approaches. It is the school system that obligates her and other teachers to ensure that all children have acquired the set targets before moving to next ones regardless of the time it takes.

T1: our policy here, I can't jump to other step without achieve this step. They have to be sure; here, they take two lesson, three lessons; don't jump to another step (she laughs) without achieving your target. Because you will come back to the beginning; when you finish, you will come back to the beginning. So, you lose your time and lose your effort; will be gone. If 18 of them okay, I can jump to a.. to second step, and improve the 2 kids during next lesson. But, if half-half; No, I can't. I can't go to another.

4.2.3.5 The Use of Rewards in Emergent Literacy Instruction

In the discussion of using rewards in teaching, the two teachers indicate incorporating various types of rewards in their lessons. T1 states that an additional learning activity of children's interest can make them work hard to finish their tasks and feel like they gained a chance to play. She usually includes an interactive activity that is related to the lessons' learning outcomes for children to play with using the smart board.

T1: I put my electronic activities by the end of my lesson, because all of them want to share; all of them want to touch and share. So, 'finish your target and then you can have this; like a gift.' So, if you put it in the beginning, all of will: 'Haa, Haa. Miss, me, me, me, me;' So, finish your knowledge, finish your target; achieve your target, finish your activities, and then it is okay, you can go and play with the electronic board.

On the contrary, T2 believes in the positive impact of the House Points, a school system of adding reward points to students on a shared website, and thus includes them in her encouraging statements to children at the beginning to motivate them to finish their tasks. She also uses stickers and gives them several minutes of play time at the end of the activity.

T2: Actually, I have tasks I can't finish without these things. Oh, because they are so excited. Oh, if I finish; they know, If I finish this thing nice, I will get like this. I give him; like, stickers, House Points... these things to encourage them to finish. So, to some of them; 'If you finish, I will give you 5 minutes to play,'....This is very very very nice program here in the school. Make all kids they try; I will be good. Because there is House Points.

4.2.3.6 The Learning Environment

The learning environment in the school is designed to bring a sense of home to children. T1 expresses how elements like personal pictures and various corners that resemble rooms in a house make children feel they belong to the classroom, whereas T2 states that having a carpet like the ones in children's houses creates this feeling in addition to the sense of freedom children get as they move around the classroom and choose their positions.

T1: Here in our school they believe in learning environment inside the classroom should be close with the kids' environment; like they have to get some families' pictures, some corners; like sleeping corner, like playing corner, like learning corner

T2: They have a carpet at home; yes, if you feel you are in my home; in your home, you feel comfortable. And they have the space; like, 10% for you can move anything, you can take anything. Because he is still a kid; he wants to learn, he wants to play, he wants fun. When they play, will it be tidy? No.

T1 describes the criteria she follows with selecting materials for activities for the display in the classroom to be sourced from the environment and made by

children. The English class teacher is the one responsible for preparing the learning environment for daily activities. T2, on the other hand, views the space where children learn as a one that should not be fully organized because they play in the process. However, the learning materials and supplies should always be reachable for children and in places they know. The materials she tends to display are the flash cards which contain letters, action verbs and numbers, and she plans hanging them during the time children learn about them.

T1: sometimes, the Class Teacher allows for her to put or hang or stick something for Arabic; but it should be matching with the topic. you can take your items and hang the letters; but the letters with conditions like you have to make the shapes with the environment resources... child-made not teachers-madeThe teacher is preparing her environment after the pupils leave; she has 1 hour and half I think daily, the teacher and the Assistant can prepare the second day activities and the corners

T2: like 90% organized. Because ; you know, I want to make them feel I'm not in the... you feel free. It is not that mess, it is not that tidy. But very very important; everything in front of them, like colors, pencils; sometimes they use some glitter to design some letters; so, this for decoration will be nice. So, this is very important to don't change the places of the supplies you set. Don't waste the time, and to they feel this is my class and I know everything in one class; it's like my home; like this.

T2: some flash cards with; like, some actions; "Amshi" (أمشي) (Means; I walk), "Ajri" (أجري) (I run); Everyday day they see this and; something related to the topic; I mean. I put some letters. When we learn numbers, I put some numbers. first, I was sticking everything; all, I felt they confuse. But, if you stick something by.. if you finish this we can stick it; is we finish this.

4.2.3.7 The Use of Technology in Emergent Literacy Instruction

Technology is integrated in the instruction of emergent literacy in the classrooms of T1 and T2. T1 views computer activities as a source of fun for children when they watch songs or play educational games such as matching. She prefers implementing such activities at the end of the lesson. T2 indicates the various

applications the smart board provides for her and for children. According to her, children who are accustomed to using digital devices such as tablets and mobile phones come with more experience than her in utilizing the smart board. Therefore, incorporating activities which involve using the smart board should be a practice of instruction to avoid alienating the learning experiences of Arabic from the enjoyable activities in the daily life of children.

T1: I put my electronic activities by the end of my lesson, because all of them want to share; all of them want to touch and share. So, 'finish your target and then you can have this; like a gift.'.... for fun. Touch and sing songs, touch and match; like this, it shows the pictures.

T2: The kids love the Smart Board. Because it is so nice, and you can watch anything; you can.. it actually has nice programs; you can color, you can color on the board. you will find some kids they know better than you in the class; 'Miss, we have to do this or this;' in the early years, yes. So, they are so smart. Because they actually use the laptop, iPads, tablets. So, I use it all the time at home, and I come here with marker and boring things; no. So, you have to go with them; their thinking and what they have; they will find it here.

Summary of Question 1 Findings

Teachers' Beliefs about Emergent Literacy Learning

- The operational and cultural functions of language are emphasized by T1 and T2 and impact their instruction by giving attention to children's acquisition of vocabulary and communication skills.
- T1 believes that letter shape recognition and distinguishing between letters are essential emergent literacy skills, whereas T2 points out associating letter sound to picture and children's accurate pronunciation of sounds.
- Children's readiness to learn emergent literacy is described by T1 and T2 in terms of physical readiness, emotional readiness and cognitive readiness.
- The home and school environments are viewed as main factors which influence children's development of emergent literacy because parents' support for children's learning and preparing a learning setting that fosters literacy development by teachers at school results with positive impact. In addition, T1 believes in the individual child's ability as an influential factor for such development, whereas T2 refers to the child's age, mood, interest in language and time of instruction when discussing his emergent literacy abilities.
- The activities which T1 and T2 view as the most effective to begin with to introduce language to children include the use of songs and stories to enrich children's vocabulary, improve their reading skills and meet their learning style. T2 adds sight words, games, puzzles, poems, art activities with materials like playdough and color pencils.
- Skills that are related to children's physical development such as small muscles development and eye-muscle coordination are expressed by T1 as prerequisite

skills to reading and writing in addition to components of alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness; such as letter shape recognition, letter's sound recognition and blending sounds to form words. The skill of blending and segmenting sounds and words mastering of articulation of letters, on the other hand are mentioned by T2.

- T1 believes that a child's independence is a quality that develops as a result of school experiences while T2 emphasizes that independence is initially promoted at home environment and then purposefully taught at school by the teacher.

Teachers' Beliefs about Arabic Emergent Literacy

- T1 and T2 explain the features of Arabic language that makes it unique and impact the instruction of its literacy. The richness of Arabic language as observable in the multiple meaning for a single word, the several forms of each letter, the similarity between the shapes of some different letters, the pronunciation of sounds in Arabic that makes some letters easier to acquire knowledge about and articulate than others and thus affect the teacher's preference in the order of letters to teach.
- Factors which influence learning Arabic literacy by children include early exposure to formal Arabic through children's programs and conversations with parents and the affective element that is explained by children's joy to use their native language in T1's view point. T2 believes in the importance of families' support and the relationship between the teacher and parents in forming positive attitudes within young learners' toward Arabic.

- The challenges that teachers face in teaching Arabic emergent literacy can be categorized into; challenges related to the nature of language, challenges related to the environment, challenges related to the curriculum and school system, challenges related to Arabic teaching materials and challenges related to the age of learners. T1 mentions the diglossic nature of Arabic language and the different Arabic dialects of children as well as the lack of support for children's learning of standard Arabic language from community and home due to incompetence of parents in some cases. T2 describes the difference in expectations between teachers and parents who compare the learning outcomes of their children with their peers in Arabic schools.
- Both teachers explain that the limited time children have for practicing Arabic students' characteristics because of the scarcity of Arabic teaching resources. She adds that young age of children must be put into consideration due to the impact of practices on attitudes towards learning and Arabic language.

Teachers' Beliefs about Emergent Literacy Instruction in Early Childhood

- The order of teaching language skills is viewed by T1 to start with listening to facilitate children's obtaining of the structure of the language and phonological awareness, and then speaking, reading in which a child learns to blend the sounds and compose words, and last writing in which the concepts of the symbols of a language is taught. T2, on the other hand, believes speaking form the introduction to a language and a way for children during a school day makes planning for activities and implementing them is a challenge for teachers. T2 expresses the need for more time and effort in looking and ideas, designing the materials and adjusting them with accordance to her to gain abilities that are related to

communication, and then the skill of listening follows before reading instruction that slightly precedes writing.

- T1 emphasizes the need to follow a fixed daily routine when teaching emergent literacy with young children where the order of activities and classroom procedures are applied in the same ways throughout the school year to avoid children's confusion. The structure of her FS2 lesson is built on 4 parts of which she spends a specific time period on each of them; warming up for learning, presenting the content of knowledge, giving opportunities to apply learning and concluding the lesson with reviewing the lesson content and assessing children's learning.
- T2's Year1 lesson structure consists of carpet time to introduce the lesson content children, whole group instruction that includes reading practice and songs, tables' activities for writing practice writing hands-on work and story reading that form as an conclusion of the lesson once per week.
- The teaching materials T1 uses for emergent literacy teaching and learning with FS2 is divided into three categories; songs and story videos for children to listen to, board games and card games, playdough and art materials for crafts in addition to hands-on materials. She does not believe in using storybooks for 4-years-old children unless they were picture books. Whereas T2 views Storybook reading is an essential part of Year 1 children's learning and thus she selects books to achieve the learning outcomes and engages children in the school's reading levels program She also uses materials like the small whiteboards, flash cards of pictures and words, videos, songs and art materials to create and decorate letters as well as videos.

- T1 and T2 state that the learning environment in the setting of the study is designed to bring a sense of home and belonging to children to the classroom. T2 fosters making children feel free to move around choose where to work. T1 selects materials for activities and for display to be related to the child's environment and made by him. T2 stresses arranging the learning supplies to be reachable for children as well as displaying learning materials that are related to current learning concepts like flash cards which contain letters, action verbs and numbers.
- Technology is integrated in the instruction of emergent literacy in the classrooms of T1 as a source of fun for children when they watch songs or play educational games, whereas T2 believes that the various applications of the smart board should be a practice of instruction to avoid alienating the learning experiences of Arabic from the enjoyable activities in the daily life of children.
- Teachers' Beliefs about their Roles in Emergent Literacy Instruction
- T1's view of her role can be described as traditional because she describes herself as one to deliver knowledge, set up learning application activities and ensures the achievement of specific learning outcomes. In contrast, T2 explains her role as the one creating an enjoyable lesson where children perceive their relationship with her as a friendly one.
- T1 and T2 discover interests and learning styles by engaging children in different types of activities and observing them to learn about their preferences when they express their enjoyment or disliking of a certain activity.
- Planning the activities to meet children's different needs after exploring their levels, learning styles and achieve the planned learning outcomes is a practice of both teachers. T1 divides children into 4 to 5 groups according to either the

different levels or learning styles of children. T2, on the other hand, divides children to 3 groups according to levels and allocates 3 activities of different levels to be presented to the groups

- Children are prepared physically by T1 to improve their eyes' concentration and develop fine muscles besides oral preparation by assisting his vocabulary gain and correcting mispronunciation through conversations with children. Whereas activities such as coloring and playdough making are applied by T2 to strengthen children's muscles and prepare them for writing as well as songs and games to teach them accurate articulation of Arabic sounds
- Depending on learning outcomes and the different learning styles, T1 plans enjoyable activities for children, and she also applies activities that focus on emergent writing skills with all children. Whereas the criteria of enjoyment and effectiveness besides accomplishing specific learning outcomes are followed by T2 when choosing activities for emergent literacy learning
- To support children's emergent literacy learning, T1 offers encouragement by reassuring words to children while they attempt to learn, and she applies a variety of activities to help children attain the desired outcomes with different approaches. T2 praises the young learners and avoids pushing them while working or pointing out their mistakes in negative ways.
- The two teachers incorporate verbal and symbolic rewards in their instruction. These include offering additional learning activity of children's interest using the smart board by T1 and giving stickers and reward points presented in the school's system by T2.

4.3 Q.2: What Are the Practices of Teaching Arabic Emergent Literacy These Teachers Apply in The Classroom?

To answer the second research question about the practices of teaching Arabic emergent literacy teachers at private schools apply in the classroom, classroom observations were conducted by the researcher to identify the types and characteristic of instruction activities T1 and T2 implement with children in Foundation Stage 2 and Year 1, respectively.

The field notes taken at 4 classes of each teacher were analyzed by reading and coding into themes which were generated from the recurrent topics and practices in the notes as well as the guidelines of Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation K-3 Tool – Research Edition (Smith, Brady & Clark-Chiarelli, 2008) (See Appendix H). The first theme unit of analysis focuses on the lesson structure which consists of the introduction, the starter, the main part, the tables' activities and concluding the lesson. These sections were created as a result of analyzing the features of the activities given by both T1 and T2 in terms of objectives, duration, and nature of the each activity. The common activities were then grouped and described in details under each section. Second, the general them of curriculum in includes opportunities for independent learning and recognizing diversity in the classroom. The language environment is the third theme unit and comprises opportunities for conversation and efforts to build vocabulary. Fourth, the books and reading are the topics of a theme unit, and following is the fifth theme unit of print and writing which describe the focused writing instruction.

4.3.1 Lesson Structure

The Arabic literacy lesson consists of five parts; the introduction, the starter, the main part, the tables' activities and the conclusion. These parts were generated as a result of reading the observation notes of both T1 and T2 and analyzing the order and types of instruction activities implemented in all lessons. The details under each part include the names of all the activities each of the teachers presented within it as well as descriptions and quotations related to each activity.

4.3.1.1 The Introduction

The introduction part is the beginning section of the lesson and comprises the teacher's greeting and activities for warming children up for the lesson.

Greeting

As soon as the teacher comes into the classroom, she often checks children's sitting arrangement and urges them to get in positions which allow them all to see the teacher clearly. Right after that, T1 stands in front of the carpet facing all children and says the Islamic greeting; the full Salam greeting; 'Assalamu Alykum wa Rahmatu Allahi wa Barakatuh,' and she asks children to reply with a full greeting. Then she asks children how they are doing with a smile while looking at each of them. In cases of arriving before the class time, T1 finds children sitting in line in front of the classroom door and receives them while standing at the door inside the classroom; 'Welcome, welcome my children. Come on sit on the carpet.' After that, she usually states the day and the date before introducing the lesson.

T2, on the other hand, rarely greets children after she enters the classroom. In the beginning of one out of the four observed classes, she looks at all children and then says: ‘Good morning,’ and children reply: ‘Good morning.’ The teacher asks: ‘How are you today?’ and children reply together loudly: ‘Good. “AlHamdulellah” (Thanks to Allah), and children complete: ‘and “La Illah Illa Alla; Mohammad Rasul Allah” (لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله) (and No God but Allah; Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah). A recurrent practice of T2 in the first minutes of the lesson is embracing some children who approach her and then asking children to put the folders of their reading homework on a specified place in the classroom. After that, she asks children to sit on the carpet and stands in front of them and encourages them all to sit in straight lines so that everyone can see her.

Warm-up activities

After greeting children, the teacher implements one or two of various activities to prepare children for the activities which are aimed to achieving the lesson’s learning outcomes.

Reviewing the letter

T1 tends to start with reviewing the letter children have learned with her the previous class. She either asks children directly to pronounce the letter they remember learning last time or writes all the letters children have learned in order since the beginning of the year using a marker on the white board. As she writes each of the letters, she asks children about its sound as she points at it and asks; ‘What is this?’ She has also used this way to create a link to the target letter of the lesson by

asking after reviewing the last learned letter; ‘What is the letter after?’ and then she writes the target letter.

The alphabet song

An activity that is a constant in T1 lessons for FS2 is the song played with an animated PowerPoint slide created by T1 in which the 28 Arabic alphabet letters are written in a table of cells in the slide. Though the cells are plain at before the song begins, the letters appear one after one as their names are stated in the song. The teacher sings along with the song while standing beside the smart board, and some children sing with her. Once the song ends, the teacher claps and tells children to clap with her.

The bag of surprises

T1 sets on the carpet with children around her in a circle and holds a fabric drawstring bag she has put 7 fabric puppets of animals or human characters in different sizes. T1 introduces the bag of surprises before she chooses children one after one to sit next to her and take one of the puppets, and then she asks them about its name before repeating the name with stressing the first sound.

Reading revision

T2, on the other hand, asks children to read words as one of the first instruction activities for children who are sitting on the carpet. In one of the lesson, she reviews some of the words children have learned in the last class. She holds an illuminated A3-sized sheet which contains a drawing of a fox surrounded by 3 circles. Each circle contains a word: Foxy “Thaaloub” (ثعلوب), skillful “Baarei” (بارع) and actor “Mumathel” (ممثل).” She asks students as she puts the sheet next to her

head and points at the picture: ‘What have we spoken about last time?’ some children answer: Foxy “Thaaloub” (تعلوب). ‘Good.’ She points at the word “Thaaloub” (تعلوب) in the circle; ‘What is this word? And several children answer; “Thaaloub” (تعلوب). ‘What letter does it start with?’ the teacher says, and several children answer: “Thaa” (ث). The teacher points at the word “Mumathel” (ممثل); ‘And this word?’ and when no child answers in a couple of seconds, she reads the first part of the word and then two children complete the word “Mumathel” (ممثل). Then the teacher points at the word “Baarei” (بارع) in the 3rd circle; ‘This words is...’ “Ba” (با), she says as she spells the first part of the word, and then a boy says the word; “Baarei” (بارع). ‘Well done,’ the teacher praises him and says; ‘the three words are sad because they want to be together in a sentence,’ and then she reads the three words in order and with ‘Tashkeel’: ‘Foxy is a skillful actor “Thaaloub Mumathel Baarei” (تعلوب ممثل بارع).

Picture cards to introduce the letter

In one of the lessons, T2 introduces vocabulary through showing 8 different picture cards of things that are usually familiar to children. T2 presents each of the picture cards with narrative while progressing with displaying the picture cards and asking children to say the names of the things, and after children answer, T2 stresses the 1st sound and says the word again. The teacher says as she sits on a child-sized chair next to the carpet holding A5-sized illuminated cards in a way that the plain side is shown to children. She shows a snail’s picture as she holds it higher than the other cards; ‘What is this?’ she asks, and a boy answers: ‘snail “Halazoan” (حلزون).’ The teacher replies: ‘Well done. It is a “Halazoan” (حلزون). “Ha. Ha. Halazoan” (ح، ح، حلزون). What is it?’ and children repeat the word the same

way the teacher spelled it. Then she hides the next card and says: ‘I walked and walked to the lake “Buhayra” (بُحَيْرَة) and saw something green there,’ and shows a picture of a crocodile. A boy answers quickly: ‘a crocodile “Temsah” (تَمْسَاح).’ The teacher smiles and praises him: ‘Excellent. “Te. Te. Temsah” (تَمْسَاح تَت).’ After saying the names of all the things in the picture cards, T2 gives the cards out to children. She selects the cards to give to specific children and states a reason or a related sentence while giving it. T2 also gives cards that contain words with the 1st letter highlighted in red.

4.3.1.2 The Starter

Following the introduction part, the starter is composed of an activity that presents the target letter to children.

Animated educational video

T1 often plays animated educational videos as a method to initiate questions about the letter and some other learning experiences. For example, the letter “Kha” (خ) was presented in the 3rd lesson observed with a short educational colorful animated video about the letter. It included a commentator voice and child’s voice that imitated him in reading words containing the letter in different positions; pictures and written letters are included. T1 was urging children to watch and asking them about the names of the things that appear in the video before saying them with the commentator. Moreover, an animated story video was used in the introductory of letter “da” (د) where T1 followed playing the story with simple comprehension questions and asking about the words children heard in the story.

Introducing the target letter

T1 directly introduces the target letter by asking children to read the letter coming after the previous letters in order in the alphabet table she had displayed in a slide of the PowerPoint presentation. She asks children: ‘What letter are we learning?’ and after children read it to answer, she reads all the letters with children again, and when they read the target letter, she says; ‘Let’s clap for letter (خ),’ and children clap with the teacher. In another lesson, she speaks to children: ‘We will take a new letter. The letter is “Kh..Kh..Kh..” (خخخ،خخخ),’ she says and makes the sound of the letter constantly, before several children say: “Kha” (خ).

The alphabet song

The song that is often played in the introduction part of the lesson, is sometimes presented as a starter when T1 points at the letters in the alphabet table: “Alef” (أ), “Ba” (ب), “Ta” (ت), “tha” (ث), “Jeem” (ج), “Hha” (ح) and “Kha” (خ) one at a time, and children spell their sounds together, before the teacher points at the target letter and asks children to read it as it is the letter they are learning this day.

The vowel marks song

T2 sings before moving to the activities of the main part. The lyrics of the vowel marks song describes the names of the vowel marks “Tashkeel or Harakat and Modood” and connects each of them to a hand movement. It contains two parts; the 1st part talks about short vowel marks and the 2nd part talks about the long vowel marks. When singing the song, T2 stands on the carpet in front of children and calls children to stand up and sing. ‘Let’s sing the “Harakat” (الحركات) song,’ she says and then starts singing with hand gestures, and then children follow her.

Words reading

T2 engages Year 1 children in reading new words after reviewing previously learned-words. She displays a PowerPoint presentation's slide that contains a drawing of a mouse surrounded by 3 circles. Each circle contains a word: Small "Sagheer" (صغير), Rat "Jorth" (جرذ) and Jonjol (جُنْجُل). She asks children; 'What is this?' and most of children answer; 'Mouse "Faar" (فأر).' The teacher replies; 'It is a mouse, but we also call it with another word in Arabic. It is Rat "Jorth" (جرذ).' She points at the word in the circle and repeats it, and children repeat after her; twice. She points at the word Small "Sagheer" (صغير) and 'read the next word,' she says. She reads the first part of the word, and then completes it when a boy reads it. She reads it once and children repeat after her; Then she reads the two words in sequence: 'A small rat "Jorth Sagheer" (صغير جرذ). She points at the word in the 3rd circle Jonjol (جُنْجُل), and says: 'The rat has a name. What is it? and then she reads the word: Jonjol (جُنْجُل). Some children repeat after her, and then she reads it again and all children repeat it after her.

Presenting the letter's shapes in different positions

T2 Writes the target letter in its shapes according to the 3 different positions in a word. She asks children to define the position of the letter according to its shape. After children say the position of the letter in a word, T2 writes a corresponding label defining the shape under each of the 3 forms. When she starts with the activity, she says: 'Now, let's write our letter,' and then she walks towards the white board on the left of the smart board. She holds a marker, 'let's draw the letter "Ja" (ج) on the board,' she says and then writes the letter in the three positions of the word: (→), (←) and (—), and she asks after she writes each shape; 'Where is this?' children

answer: ‘the beginning’, ‘the middle’, and the ‘end of the word’ and the teacher writes the words of positions under each shape of the letter respectively.

Presenting the letter’s shapes with vowel marks

T2 also writes the target letter with one of the short vowel marks (Tashkeel) and one of the long vowel marks (Modood). T2 asks children to read the sound of the letter with each of the vowel marks. Following the shapes of the letter in different positions, T2 writes the target letter’s “Ja” (جـ) with Tashkeel and asks: ‘How do we read this?’ some children read it as “Jaa” (جاء). The teacher writes “Jaa” (جاء) below it and asks: ‘No. Then what is this?’ some children read it as “Jaa” (جاء). She says: ‘Yes. This is “Jaa” (جاء);’ while she makes a high raise with her hand, ‘and the upper one is just “Ja” (جـ); and she makes a slight hand raise.

Presenting similar-shaped letters

When T2 presents a new letter, she reviews the learning of the previous letters which are similar in shape to that letter. In letter “Hha” (ح) lesson, T2 writes the similar-shaped letters "Ja" (ج) and "Hha" (ح), the target letter, and asks children to say each of their sounds. She begins with writing “Ha” (ح) on the whiteboard and asks: ‘Do I put a dot inside?’ a girl answers: ‘No,’ and then teacher asks: ‘What letter it becomes then?’ the girl says along with some children: “Ja” (ج).’ The teacher praises them and says: ‘Well done,’ and says the letter by repeating the sound: ‘that one is a “Ja. Ja” (ج ج), But this one;’ points at the letter “Ha” (ح) she wrote on the board, ‘This is “Ha. Ha” (ح ح).

Reading an electronic story

T2 reads a story that is written in a Word document and displayed on the smartboard. The displayed story is a text of 5 sentences of which some words are written inside clouds shapes, as well as white square shapes covering pictures of the words written inside the clouds shapes. A total of 7 clouds shapes are included in the text, and the same number of squares. All the words inside the clouds shapes start with target letter “da” that is written in red font. After T2 connects her laptop to the Smart Board, she switches the Smart Board on and says: ‘we have a story about a beautiful girl called Dalia;’ and she turns to her lap top and opens the story’s Word document that is displayed on the Smart Board. She starts reading the text in the Word document from the laptop and points at each word with the mouse pointer as she reads slowly. She makes gestures as she reads and repeats the events with questions. She makes a gesture of drawing a circular shape with her index finger as she reads the word “Daera” (دايرة) (a circle in Arabic), and children copy her. She repeats the first sound of ‘da’ when she reads each of the words starting with ‘da’ letter: ““da. Da. Daera,” (دايرة دا، دا، دا، دا) ‘ “da. Da. Darrajah,” (درّاجة دا، دا، دا، دا)”.’

The teacher continues reading while questioning about the events: ‘What happened to the hen?’ ‘What did Dalia do?’, and then comments the event after listening to students’ answers. She also asks about the letters the words start with, and stresses the 1st sound of “da” (د).

Lego assemble and disassemble game

T2 utilizes Lego plastic construction cubes in an activity for teaching the concepts of words’ segmenting and blending. She presents the game of "Segmenting

and Blending" by asking children to play with Lego cubes by assembling the ones they each have in their hands when she says: 'blending' and disassembling the cubes when she says 'segmenting' in the fastest pace. The teacher takes Lego cubes from a box she has previously put on the front table, 'I will give only 3 Lego cubes to each one;' she says and then starts giving 3 cubes to each child sitting on the carpet. She announces holding a competition between children, and then says: 'Go on, quickly, Assemble, Assemble.' Some children hold the Lego cubes combined. Then the teacher says: 'Good. Now, Analysis.' Then she looks at children and says: 'What have you done now?' a child answers: 'analysis.' Then the teacher says: 'Now, assemble.' She walks around the carpet and checks all children; she complements children who have combined their Lego cubes; 'Well done.' She uses the word 'break up' to explain the meaning of the word segmenting when a child seems not to understand the instructions of the game. Then the teacher stands on the front and says: 'Now, let's see. Everyone do...Analysis.' She makes hands gestures of pulling her hands away from each other and asks: 'Everyone is ready? Raise your hand and say 'We are ready.' She raises he both hands, and children copy her; she instructs two children who didn't raise their hands to do so.

4.3.1.3 The Main Part

The main part is formed by the whole group activities the teacher carries out after presenting the target letter in an aim to attain the learning outcomes she had set in relation to the target letter. Most of the observed activities in this part were constant in all of T1's lessons, yet T2's activities were varied.

Presenting pictures to teach the sound of the letter

T1 displays pictures of things which names begin with the target letter's as part of the PowerPoint presentation she uses. The things in the pictures are related to animals, food and objects from the child's environment child is expected to be familiar with most of. T1 asks children to say the name of each thing in a picture, and then she teacher confirms the answer and says the word after repeating the first sound. One picture is displayed in each slide of the presentation with the first letter written next to it, and the name of the thing in the picture appears after T1 clicks on the screen. The pictures are of clipart design and some of them are related to the local Emirati culture. For example, among the pictures T1 showed in letter "Kha" (خ) lesson is a picture of a tent (Khayma in Arabic) which is a part of the local Emirati culture yet is not recognized by children. T1 says the word once and repeats the first sound and lets children repeat after her. She asks children; 'What letter is that? Does it have a dot?' 'Where is the dot?' and then she says; "Tha" (ث), and some children repeat after her. In another lesson, T1 shows a picture of a character that has appeared earlier in the story video children watched as a starter of the lesson. A picture of a classroom is also displayed in the letter "Hha" (ح) lesson to ask children for words which begin with the target letter from the things they see in the picture which. She says: 'What other words you know that start with the letter (ح)?' A boy says; 'Hamad (حمد).' The teacher replies: 'Hamad (حمد). Well done. Hamad (حمد، ح، ح).'

Asking children for words containing target sound

In different parts of lessons, T1 asks children to think of and say words that contains the sound of the target letter. In the lesson of letter “da”(د), she teacher asks children: ‘Think and give me some words that begin with the letter “da” (د).

Presenting similar-shaped letters

By displaying the letters similar in shape to the target letter, T1 assesses whether children have constructed a connection between sound and shape of each letter and their ability to distinguish between these letters, and explains distinctive features of shape in a simple way. An example of this activity is evident in letter “da” (د) lesson when T1 displays a PowerPoint presentation slide where letter “Tha” (ث) appears to the left, and the teacher asks; ‘What letter is this?’ a girl answers; “Tha” (ث),’ then the teacher clicks and the letter “Da” (د) on the right. ‘Is there a dot on this letter?’ children answer; ‘No,’ and the teacher asks; ‘What letter is this?’ and several children answer; “Da” (د).’ The teacher praises and repeats the letter after them. When teaching children about letter “kha” (خ), T1 presents the letters "Hha" (ح) and "Ja" (ج) each at a time after she finishes introducing the targeted letter "kha" (خ). She asks children to say the sound of each letter once they see its shape, and she mentions the distinctive feature of each letter: “Kha. Kha. Kha” (خ، خ، خ),’ and says; ‘remember the dot over its head;’ while putting her finger on the top of her head. She repeats its sound before children repeat after her.

Distinguishing the target letter's shape among other letters

T1 applies activities which require children to distinguish between the shapes of letters and identify the target letter among them. In letter “Tha” (ث) lesson, T1 displays a PowerPoint presentation slide that contains a matrix of 15 differently-colored letters of which five are “Tha” (ث). The teacher holds a doll of a girl and starts speaking in a soft voice; ‘Hello children. Who can find letter “Tha” (ث)?’ after children raise their hands. ‘I will choose ...,’ in a soft voice, she chooses children to point at the letter “Tha” (ث) one after one; she praises them for the correct answers. She also mentions the distinct feature of letters when reviewing the similar-shaped “tha” (ث) and “ta” (ت) during the memory card game of letters. T1 shows a card of letter “ta” (ت) to a boy, and he answers; “Tha” (ث). She asks him; ‘Does it have two dots or three dots?’ the boy answers; ‘Two’, and the teacher replies; ‘Then it is a “Ta” (ت). “Tha” (ث) has three dots.’

Presenting the letter’s shapes with short vowel marks

The shapes of the target letter with one of the short vowel marks “Tashkeel or Harakat” are presented by T1 to teach children how the letter’s sound and shape differs when associated. When the shape of a letter with one of the short vowel marks, "Fatha", "Dhamma" or "Kasra" is shown, T1 connects the distinctive sound of the letter with each of the short vowel marks to a specific body movement. When reading the letter’s sound with "Fatha", she moves her hand upwards diagonally over her head. She clinches her fist and moving it in a circular motion in front of her body when reading the sound with “Damma”, while she clinches her fists and flexes her arms with a downward movement with the “Kasra”. In letter “kha” (خ) lesson, T1 displays the shape of the targeted letter "kha" with each of the short vowel marks and

reads it for children while making the specific body movement that is linked to the sound with this short vowel mark, and children copy the same movement while repeating the sound of the letter after the teacher.

Teaching letter writing steps

The final activity T1 implements during the main part of the lesson is teaching the steps of writing the target letter by showing children an animated picture of the target letter, such as letter "kha" (خ), being written slowly on the Smart board while she verbally describes the writing steps; 'We start from the top, draw a line to the right, stop, then go down, and then we draw a dot on the top,' with gestures. Some children imitate the writing way as the animated picture writes over and over. T1 follows that with asking children to draw the shape with their fingers on their bodies. She reminds them with drawing the dot as one of the distinctive features of the letter.)

Reading an electronic storybook

T2 displays an electronic version of a children storybook of which the majority of the words in the story begin with or contain the target letter "Ja" (ج) written in red color. Out of the 9 words which contain letter "Ja" (ج), T2 has introduced 3 words in the starter reading activity. T2 says: 'Let's read a story' and sits on a chair next to the laptop and the smart board. She opens a pdf document of a story book. The title says: Jonjol looks for his Jewel "Jonjol Yabhathu aan Jawharateh" (جنجل يبحث عن جوهرة). She asks children about the title written on the cover before starting and tells them to look at the cover picture and say the names of things they see. As T2 reads the events expressively, the words (جوهرة), (جمل),

Buffalo “Jamoos” (جاموس), Locust “Jaraada” (جرادة), Rock “Hajar” (حجر), Grandmother “Jaddateh” (جدته), Bravery “Shajaa’a” (شجاعة) appear in the story, and when each of them comes out, the teacher reads it with stress on the letter “Ja” (ج) and says: ‘This word includes the letter “Ja” (ج), or ‘This word starts with the letter “Ja” (ج’. After reading the last event she asks, T2 reviews all the events of the story after finishing by questioning children, and asking children if they have liked the story.

Distinguish and match worksheet

T2 asks children to cut pictures from an A4-sized sheet and stick them on the related place next to their written names on another sheet which is identical to the word document she read the story from as an introduction. To introduce the activity, T2 holds an A4-sized sheet that contains 9 clipart pictures which are the same as the pictures hidden behind the white squares in the Word document the teacher displayed earlier to read the story text from. She points at each of the pictures reviews the names of the things in the picture: ‘What is this?’ a girl answers: ‘a girl,’ the teacher replies: ‘a girl whose name is Dalia.’ She points at the bicycle’s picture and asks: ‘What is this?’ several children answer: “‘darraja” (دَرَّاجَة).’ Then the teacher points at the hen’s picture and asks: ‘What is this?’ and a boy answers: “‘dajaja” (دَجَاجَة).’ She also asks: ‘Which letter do they start with?’ and several children answer: “‘da. Da” (دَ دَ);’ the teacher praises them. After that, T2 explains the instructions of the activity and does an example with the 1st sentence. She reviews some words with children. Children are then asked to work in teams of two to three children.

Match and write worksheets

After the warm-up activity in which T2 introduces the cards which contain pictures of things which names include the target letter “Hha” (ح), She shows children cards which contain the things' names and asks them to match the picture cards with the corresponding word cards. Children are then asked the name of each thing next to its picture in a worksheet. The worksheet T2 displays includes four pictures of things that include the letter “Hha”: snail “Halazoan” (حلزون), swimming pool “Masbah” (مَسْبَح), bus “Haafela” (حافلة) and crocodile “Temsah” (تمساح), put in a box each, and boxes that include names to be written next to each picture.

The teacher puts four A5-sized word cards on each of the two tables; and then tells children to take the cards she gave them earlier with them; ‘Find the words for the pictures that you have from the cards on the tables,’ she says. She tells the girls to sit on the green table (to the left) and the boys to sit on the red table (to the right); ‘Let’s have a competition,’ she says. She gives each child an A5-sized sheet that contains eight pictures of things that include the letter “Ha” (ح): snail “Halazoan” (حلزون), sea “Bahar” (بحر), whale “Hoot” (حوت), swimming pool “Masbah” (مَسْبَح), crocodile “Temsah” (تمساح), horse “Hesan” (حصان), bus “Haafela” (حافلة) and cloud “Sahaaba” (سحابة), put in a box each, and boxes with spaces for their names to be written next to each picture.

Children show the teacher the pairs of cards they matched, and she praises each of them after checking their cards. She reads the words each child has aloud, and turns him to face his classmates then says: ‘Look at your friend, he found...’ and says the words. After children finish writing, T2 encourages children to share their answers with the class and reminds children who are still working.

The cards' chain

In a whole group activity, T2 asks children to work together to collect the picture cards and the word cards they worked with in the match and write activity and then match them. Then she places the matching pairs as a chain on the floor. When a child finds a picture card, T2 tells children to find the matching word card to put next to it. She calls children out: 'Now, make a circle around me,' as she kneels behind the carpet between the two tables while holding the A5-sized illuminated picture and word cards. 'I want you to help me make a carpet with these cards;' she says as she puts the cards on the floor.

After all children gather around her, she explains: 'Put the word card next to its picture's card. We will put them together starting from this line.' She asks two children to bring the rest of the cards from the tables, and they give them to her. Some children are engaged in looking for cards in a quick pace, and others are gathered around her as they help place the cards on the floor; matching and lining them while the teacher asks them to read the words aloud and praises them. T2 reviews the word as she asks children to read them from the cards placed in the chain. She asks children to say the sound of the first letter while she points at its symbol in the word, and she asks about the position in the word.

Reading segmented words

T2 applies an activity to assess children's recognition of letters' shapes and identifying their sounds when they see them. T2 writes letters on the whiteboard and asks children to read them then she writes the letters in syllabus according to the way it is read and asks children to read them as a whole word. She writes "Ja" (→) on the

whiteboard and asks: ‘How do we read this syllable?’ and a child reads it. The teacher praises him and then she writes “Ba” (بَ) next to the previous syllable leaving a space between them; she asks: ‘How do we read this syllable?’ Several children answer, and a couple of children read the syllable connected to the previous syllable: “Jaba” (جَبَ). Then the teacher writes a “Lon” (لَ) next to the previous two syllables leaving a space between them; she asks: ‘and how do we read this syllable?’ and most of children read it; a couple of children read the 3 syllables combined as “Jabalon” (جَبَلَنَ) (mountain).

The teacher praises them and reads the syllables separated one after one while pointing at each one as she reads it, and then she reads them combined as a word. After that, T2 writes the syllables of another word and says: ‘I will choose a word that is a little harder because you are heroes. Once I write the syllable, try to read.’ She writes “Aa” (أَ), and a child reads it immediately, then she writes a “R” (رَ) next to it leaving no space. A girl reads the syllables separately as: “Aa..Ro..Ro..Ro” (أَ...رَ...رَ...رَ), and then teacher says: ‘Read the two together.’ A boy reads the syllables together the correct way: “Aar” (أَرَّ), and the teacher praises and reads it again; 2 girls say: “Aarnab” (أَرْنَبَ) (rabbit). The teacher asks: ‘Why did I put 2 letters together?’ a boy answers: ‘Because “Aa” (أَ) doesn’t connect to anything.’ The teacher replies: ‘right. But in “Ja” (جَ) I put 1 letter. This is new. The excellent one will guess.’ After waiting for seconds, she asks: ‘What is on the “R” (رَ)?’ a child answers: ‘”Sokoon” (سكون) (a diacritic that marks the absence of a vowel).’ The teacher says: ‘Right. ”Sokoon” (سكون) is weak and pitiful. It is lonely and needs someone with it.’ then she repeats it and asks children again: ‘Why did we put the two letters together?’ and ‘Why did we put the letter which has a “Sokoon” (سكون) with another letter?’ and a couple of children reply. The teacher reads the 2 syllables together and

then asks children to read it together, children repeat. Furthermore, T2 tells children to read the "Tashkeel" and pay attention to it when reading. She makes a body movement connected to the sound of a vowel while reading the word.

Words segmenting and blending

An activity of segmenting and blending words is applied following the activity of reading syllables which combine a word and then blending them to be read as a word. T2 explains that it is the same as the "Lego assembling and disassembling" game Children played earlier; 'Now, we will play "segmenting and blending words" (تحليل و تركيب كلمات). You will help me?' Mrs. N (her name) will do 'segmenting', you will do 'blending'; like the Lego.' She follows the same instructions she used in that game by asking children to blend the syllables or word segments she wrote on the whiteboard and to write them as a whole word on their small boards. When a boy shows her the word he wrote on his board, the teacher asks him: 'What is this word?' he reads the word, and the teacher praises him and asks him to write it 3 times on his board in a nice handwriting. When T2 writes a "Na" (نـ) and "B" (بـ) with spaces between them, she asks children to blend and read them; several children read them, and the teacher praises them.

Children write the word on their boards, a boy raises his board and shows her. The teacher says: 'Well done. But "B" (بـ) must be written like this..' then writes ".b" (بـ) in its form at the end of a word connected to the letter before it, using a marker on the White Board. The teacher checks on children as they write on their boards and says: 'Don't forget the dots and the "Tanwin" (تنوين) (nunation: the suffix ("-n") in Arabic). In addition, T2 reviews the previous lesson's story by including a word from it and asking children about it. For example, she asks: 'Who is "Jonjol"'

(جُنْجُل)?) a boy replies: ‘the mouse.’ The teacher replies: ‘the little rat’s name was “Jonjol” (جُنْجُل),’ and a boy adds: ‘Looks for his jewel.’

Additional whole group activities

Following the Tables’ activities, T2 implements additional activities which target children as a whole group and usually comprises revision of the concepts presented in the previous activities of the lesson.

Words reading

In letter “Ja” (ج) lesson, T2 writes the word “Jabal” (جَبَل) (Mountain) and says: ‘I have a nice word. Who can read it?’ she says. A girl spells the letters then says the answer. The teacher praises her and reads the word again and some children repeat, and then she erases the word and writes “Jamal” (جَمَل) (Camel) and asks children to read. A boy answers: “Jamal” (جَمَل), and the teacher praises him and reads the word again.

Asking for words beginning with target letter

In the same lesson, T2 asks: ‘Who can give me a word starting with “Ja” (ج)?’ and when no child answers for several seconds, she asks: ‘It something we eat..’, and a girl answers: ‘Carrot “Jazar” (جَزْر).’. The teacher praises her and repeats the word: “Jazar” (جَزْر).

Target letter's sound in children's names

In letter “da” (د) lesson, T2 tells children whose names begin with or contain the target letter "da" (د) to stand up in front of the rest of the class on the carpet. Children initiate the participation by thinking of their own or their classmates'

names. The teacher loudly says the names of the children who stood beside her and holds them. Some of the children standing call the names of more children with the letter “da” (د) in them, and they tell them to stand beside them; the teacher praises them after repeating each of the names. Then the teacher tells the rest of children to sit front of them, and she sits with them. 7 boys and 2 girls are standing; the teacher asks: ‘Why did we let these children stand up?’ the teacher asks: ‘Are they good?’ and a boy answers: ‘Not good.’ The teacher replies: ‘No, they are good. They all have the letter....,’ and waits for children to answer. And when children don’t respond, she says: ‘Let’s hear your names.’ Children say their names one after one, and the teacher repeats the names after them with repeating the letter “da” (د) in them. She asks children about the position of letter “da” (د) in the names: ‘Is it in the beginning or the middle or the end?’ ‘Where is “da” in her/his name?’ then she tells the child whose name was mentioned to sit down.

Reading a storybook for children

In the last 10 minutes of a class, T2 selects a storybook and sits on a child-sized chair on the carpet where children are sitting in a circle around her. She starts with saying the instructions of story time: ‘In story time, what do we do? We listen to the teacher’ while pointing at her ear. She holds the storybook and points at the cover page; ‘What do you see in the picture?’ she asks, and a child answers: ‘a large egg.’ The teacher says: ‘a large egg,’ and a child says: ‘there is a bird,’ and the teacher replies: ‘There is a bird or a duck; a nice duck,’ and points at the duck in the picture. She introduces the story by reading the title explaining the meaning of an unfamiliar word: ‘the name of the story is (AlBaydatol Ajeeba) (العجيبة البيضاء) ‘The Bizarre Egg’,’ while exaggerating in her tone, and adds: ‘Bizarre means strange or different form

others.’ T2 opens the book, and a boy sitting near her asks her; the teacher points at him and says: ‘a nice question. What is inside the egg? Do you know?’ a boy replies: ‘I know. A duck,’ and he teacher replies: ‘We will see; the strange egg.’ T2 reads the events of the story with face expressions, body gestures and voice changing which relate to them. She points at the pictures in the story as she reads the related events. T2 integrates learning experiences for children by asking them about colors, sizes and feelings, and she uses the pictures to ask children questions about the story's events: ‘After hatching, the nicest baby in the world went out of it;’ she points at the picture and asks: ‘Is the egg that hatched the big one or the small one?’ T2 concludes the story reading by asking children if they have liked the story and to tell which part they like the most.

She closes the storybook and asks children: ‘Did you like the story?’ and then asks them to tell her their favorite part of the story. She reviews the events of the story before thanking children and leaving the classroom.

Revision of Lesson Content

A variety of activities is applied by T2 to review different learning areas children were presented to through the instruction activities of the lessons.

Story revision

After children finish working on their writing worksheets during tables's activities time, they sit on the carpet. T2 discusses the story she read to them in the main part and reviews the names of characters and the events.

Letter-sound recognition

T2 talks to children about the song “‘Snow. Snow’ ‘Thaljon. Thaljon’ (ثلج، ثلج) that is a constant part of all the observed lessons to review the target letter's sound. She asks children about the ending sound of the song's title as she repeats it. The word Snow’ ‘Thaljon’ (ثلج) contains which letter we studied?’ and she reads the word while stressing the letter “Ja” (ج) at the end and repeating it twice. Some children repeat the word the same way the teacher stresses and repeats it, and some say “Ja” (ج). ‘Well done,’ the teacher says, ‘It is “Ja” (ج).’

Revision of the target letter shapes with vowel marks

T2 reviews the letter “Ja” (ج) shapes with short and long vowel marks by writing them on the small whiteboard while seated close to children on the carpet. She uses the movements of hands she has used earlier in relation to the sound of the letter with each the vowel marks.

4.3.1.4 The Table’s Activities

The section of the lesson where children sit in groups yet work individually on the tables is fixed in all the lessons of T1 and T2. The nature of activities and the level of complexity vary between the activities of the two teachers. T1 applies a variety of activities which aim at achieving a limited number of learning outcomes, whereas T2 applies one type of tables’ activities, that is, the writing worksheets.

Recognition of the target Letter's Shape

The first set of these activities focus on children’s ability to make a connection between the shapes of the same letter as they differ according to the

letter's position in a word: beginning, middle or end. One of these activities is the puzzles combined of pairs of sheets that are cut in unique zigzag patterns to be combined. Each pair consists of a piece of the letter shape in the middle of a word and its shape at the end of word. The letters included in the puzzles are “Ba” (ب), “Hha” (ح), and the lesson’s target letter “Kha” (خ). Another activity which supported children’s recognition of the letter’s shape required children to read the contents of cards which included the letter “Tha” (ث) with the “fatha”; “Tha” (ث), with the “Damma”; “Tho” (ث) and with the with “Kasra”; “Thi” (ث) on the top of the word “Thora” (ثرة) (Corn) while T1 walk between children who are working on a hands-on activity.

Another table activity concentrated on the target letter's Sound Recognition and included asking children to cut the pictures of things which names contain the target letter’s “Hha” (ح) sound among 8 pictures of different things and then stick them in their spaces on the other sheet that contains the letter “Hha” (ح) written in a large font in the upper middle part and surrounded by five white squares.

Recognition of the letter's Sound and Shape

Children’s recognition of a letter’s sound and its shape is aimed at by a set of many table activities. Among these is an activity of puzzle that comprises an A3-sized sheet with the letter “Hha”(ح) outlined and small paper pieces of which each contains a word that includes the target letter “Hha” (ح) written above its clip art picture. T2 explains the instructions of the while questioning children about the words and whether they include the target letter’s sound as well as where should each one of the paper pieces be put on the other sheet. Children are asked to fill the large letter (ح) with the paper pieces by sticking them using glue.

In addition, a card game of letters and related words that is played by a small group of children is applied in letter “Kha” (خ) lesson. The teacher sits with children on the carpet and tells them that they will play the ‘Who has?’ game where each one will have a card of a letter, and will get a turn to say; ‘I have,’ mentioning the sound of the letter and the name of the thing in the picture, and then asking; ‘Who has...?’ mentioning the next letter. Each of the cards contains one letter written in a large font at the top, a picture of something which name starts with that letter and the name of the thing in the picture written.

Another activity in which T1 emphasized children’s recognition of the letter’s sound and shape is the cards of the letters’ shapes according to the position in a word. She stands up in front of a group of children and asks: ‘Now. Let’s see if you know your letters;’ she opens the cards one by one to show children. First, she opens a “Kha” (خ) letter card and asks; ‘What is this letter?’ a girl answers “Hha” (ح).’ The teacher says; “Kh,Kh,Kh” (خخخ),’ and several children answer; ‘ “Kha”(خ).’ The teacher replies: ‘It is “Kha. Kha, Kha” (خَ، خَ، خَ). Remember the dot. “Kha”(خَ) is “Hha”’s (ح) brother, but has a dot over his head.’ ‘Put a dot on your head,’ she tells children as she put her index finger over her head. Second, she opens a card of letter “Kha” (خ) in its shape in the beginning of the word and asks: ‘Where is this letter? Is it in the beginning or the end of the word?’ the teacher asks and several children answer: ‘In the beginning of the word.’ Then T2 opens 3 more cards; which include the letters “Ta” (ت) in its shape in the beginning of the word, “Ta” (ت) in its shape in the middle of the word and “Da” (د) in its original shape; consecutively, and children answer.

Cards' memory game

Children participating in the cards' memory game are asked to identify the sound of a letter written on each card and then memorize the number of the card it is written on its other side. While introducing the activity, T1 explains the game: 'As we saw, a letter is written under each number. Open your eyes and focus. Memorize the places of the letters,' she says and puts her fingers around her eyes and opens eyes widely. She flips the cards to the letters side. She adds; 'After a minute, I will flip the card and say a letter to ask you to choose a number of the card that has that letter. We will play a game.' The teacher flips the cards slowly one by one so that the number side is on the top. She asks; 'Did you memorize them? Are you ready?' and then she flips a card, and shows letter "Aa" (1) on its back. She asks; 'What number is on "Aa" (1) card?' and a boy answers; 'number 5'. The teacher praises him, and puts the card back on the number side on the top.

Writing boards

Writing boards is an activity of emergent writing that is implemented in several lessons and engages children in using which is about tracing over the target letter written in grey dots. Children are given laminated sheets which contain the letter written in a large font in the top right corner next to a picture of a thing which its name begins with the letter. Below the written letter are 9 cells in which each has the letter written in grey dots for children to trace over using a marker. T1 explains the activity before children leave the carpet: 'We will write the letter "da" (2).' 'Look; I see the red dot on the top here,' she says as she points at the dotted letter written on the sheet and continues; 'I put the marker on it and then draw on the dots;' she traces the dotted "da" (2) letter using a marker. T1 also offers an incorrect

example of the writing method and questions children if it is acceptable; She looks at children and asks while pointing at the bottom of the dotted letter; ‘If a boy started from the bottom, is it right?’ several children answer; ‘No.’

Making letter shape using playdough

Another activity of emergent writing T1 implements is using playdough to form the target letter. In letter “Kha” (خ) lesson, she puts three A4-sized sheets on the table of which each contains the letter “Kha” (خ) written in its original shape and in its different shapes according to positions in a word. Then she puts a small ball of mixed color playdough in front of each child and tells them to make the shapes of the letter by looking at the sheet. She also rolls the playdough piece and displays the way to shape it to represent the shape of the letter.

Art activities which are related to target letter

Art activities take part in the tables’ activities T1 presents to FS2 children. She builds the last lesson of the week on creating an art work which is related to the target letter and having children take it home to share with their learning with parents. The 4th observed lesson was presented on Thursday and involved teaching children to making corn; which name "thora" (ذرة) starts with the target letter "Tha" (ث), from colored paper and decorating it with different materials. As well as asking children to color a drawing of a corn. T1 explains the activity in steps of creating the work as she holds paper parts of a corn and shows children (a green-colored piece of paper shaped in two large leaves, a yellow-colored piece of paper shaped as a corn with black drawing of the corn parts) and opens a picture from the laptop and displays a picture of the final product on the smart board. She holds the pieces

together and puts them in the way displayed in the picture while explaining the way to put them together, then she holds a tray that contains different materials (beans, glittery randomly-cut paper pieces and glittery paper pieces shaped like crowns) and says; ‘put the thing you like from here on this to make it beautiful.’

Writing worksheets

Writing worksheets are part of all the lessons of T2. It usually follows a related activity that prepares children for writing. In letter "Ja" (ج) lesson, a 2-page worksheet is given to children who have finished working on the Writing Boards. It contains a question to copy the target letter "Ja" (ج) shape with different short and long vowel marks and its shape in different positions of a word, a question to circle letter "Ja" (ج) after distinguishing its shape of when written in 3 different words and a question to copy a sentence consisting of 3 words which contain letter "Ja" (ج) and is the title of the story T2 has read to children earlier in the main of the lesson.

In another lesson, a 1-page worksheet is given to children after they finish the cards matching activities. It contains 8 pictures of different things surrounding the target letter "Hha" (ح), and the question asks children to color the picture of things which names contain the target letter "Hha" (ح) among the pictures. The second question asks children to write over the highlighted target letter and then write it on the line below it 4 times. While children write, T2 walks between children groups and checks on them. She talks to children working on the worksheets, encourages and questions understanding; ‘why did you color this?’ ‘Is there a “Ha” (ح) in the word?’ ‘Where is the “Ha” (ح)?’

In the words' segmenting and blending lesson, T2 gives out a worksheet that contains a question to blend the segments written next to each other with a slash symbol separating them and write the blended word next to its segments. The question contains 11 words of which 3 are the words introduced to children in the words' segmenting and blending activity. When a boy shows his worksheet to the teacher; she asks him: 'Have you finished?' then asks him to read the words he has written. The boy reads the words slowly one after one while standing beside the teacher; she corrects the word he misreads and then asks children to clap for him.

4.3.1.5 Concluding the Lesson

Finalizing the lesson has some common features between the two teachers. This includes reminding children to clean up the spaces they worked in as well as playing videos.

At the last part of FS2 lesson, T1 sometimes presents a learning activity on the smart board for children who have finished working on the table's activities. For example, at the last 6 minutes of letter "Hha" (ح), T1 displays a slide of a matrix 15 Arabic letters; of which the letter (ح) is repeated 4 times in different places, and the similar-shaped letters (ح) and (خ) are included. T1 calls the name of a boy who is standing on the carpet after finishing his work on one of the activities and says: 'Point at the letter (ح) and show it to your friends.' The boy points at it and another boy points at another (ح) in another place, and the teacher praises them. In another lesson, T1 opens an interactive flash media folder where seven words which contains letter "Kha" (خ) in different positions are written under a statement asking to circle the letter "Kha" (خ) in each word, and a round red-outlined circle appears in the upper edge of the space. T1 chooses a child from the ones standing on the carpet

after completing their work and explains the instructions while standing next to the smart board, and then she chooses others in turns.

T1 has also played a video of a song that contains events and characters which contain words including the target letter "tha" in one of the observed lessons. The final section of the lessons presented by T1 also contains good behavior instruction as she asks children to clean the tables and the carpet after they finish working on them. She calls children's names and tells them to clean up in a rhyme; 'Clean our space, clean up, ' (the child's name), and the majority of children respond by cleaning the tables up and putting the materials they used in their specified containers or giving them to the teacher. The way T1 informs children that the time of working on the activities has finished is by clapping four times in rhyme. When T1 does it, children imitate her and stop working on the activity and walk towards the carpet before they all sit in a circle.

Furthermore, T1 concludes each lesson with praising all children. In two of the observed lessons, she looks at all children and says; 'Clap for yourself. You were great today,' as she claps her hands. She adds; 'Pat on your shoulder and say: 'I did well. I'm great,' as she pats on her shoulder and students do the same.

Similar to T1, T2 urges children to tidy the place up after they finish working on the last table activity by singing: 'Clean the space, quickly; Clean the space quickly, Mohamad; Clean the space quickly, Hala; Clean the space quickly,' She starts calling names of children as she collects the sheet from the ones who give her..

After children cleanup and organize the materials as they put pencils back in their containers, T2 stands up on the carpet and calls children to sing: 'Now, let's all

stand up to sing Snow, Snow “Thaljon, Thaljon” (ثلجٌ ثلجٌ), and children stand in a ‘U’ shape on the carpet. She displays a Word document that contains a poem’s lyrics with a picture next to it on the smart board. Then the teacher sings with body gestures that correspond to the lyrics, and children do them with her. Then she repeats the song while just doing the gestures and letting children sing the lyrics. She also presents an additional song at the end of one of the lessons. The YouTube video of an animated colorful story-lined song ‘When we walk’ “Endama Nmashi” (عندما نمشي) song is less than 2 minutes in duration and includes colors and other familiar vocabulary. All children sing excitedly with T2 once she plays it.

In one of the lessons, T2 concludes the lesson with 21-minute animated story video from an Arabic cartoon series. It tells the story of the “Wolf and the Seven Sheep” (السبعة الخراف و الذئب حكاية), and the animal characters speak in their own voices. The teacher stands next to the carpet and reacts to the events shown in the video. All children join the ones sitting on the carpet and watch the video before they leave as the school day ends and parents come to take them.

4.3.2 The Instructional Actions in Relation To Emergent Literacy

The following theme describes the practices of the two teachers under the subthemes of classroom management, guiding children in tables’ activities, offering opportunities for independent learning, integrating learning experiences with emergent literacy, efforts to build vocabulary, supporting children’s efforts to practice emergent literacy and the use of technology in the lesson.

4.3.2.1 Classroom Management

The practices which are directed towards preventing or dealing with behaviors that might cause disturbance to the class and impact learning are listed under the concept of classroom management (Cummings, 2000).

Some of these practices aim at grabbing children attention and calling them to stop the action they are doing. T1 and T2 use rhythmic clapping for that purpose by clapping 5 times in a certain rhythm of which children imitate and either become quiet while sitting on the carpet or finish their work in the tables' activities and submit it to the teacher. T1 also counts: 'One, Two,...Three,' in a singing rhythm during the introduction part on the carpet, and children sit silently while looking at her; whereas T2 sings: 'Cross your feet,.....Cross your feet,....' in a rhythm with the names of some of the children (رَبِّعْ قَدَمِيكَ يَا، رَبِّعْ قَدَمِيكَ يَا) to urge them to sit properly on the carpet.

Another action T2 applies to ask children to stop working on an activity is saying: 'I Put my hands up (يَدَيَّ فَوْقَ),' as she raises her hands, and children copy her.

Both teachers abide by specific routine in their classrooms. Among the elements of the teacher's routines is the order of activities and having regular ones at the beginning and the end of the lessons. T2's routine, for instance, includes collecting Year 1 children's folders at the first minutes of the lesson. Children bring their Arabic reading folders from the lockers and show them to the teacher, and then she tells them to put them over the small sofa chair in the classroom corner. It also includes children putting their worksheets on T2's table after they show them worksheets to the teacher to check their answers. Sometimes, T2 asks children to help her to hand out materials to children after introducing an activity. She says:

‘Who will help me? We will give you markers now,’ and then a boy stands up and takes the markers from the teacher to give to his classmates. Both T1 and T2 allocate the last minutes of the tables’ activities time to urge children to clean up their space and put the materials they have used back in their places.

In the cases of children acting in an undesired behavior, T1 and T2 apply different strategies. For example, T1 uses conversation with a boy when he makes a strange sound during an introductory activity of asking children to spell a letter’s sound. She calls his name and tells him to come and stand beside her, and then she speaks to him: ‘What is this sound?’ ‘Is this my sweetheart E whom I taught manners last year?’, ‘Answer me. Is it him or someone else?’ The boy answers in a low voice with a shy look: ‘Someone else;’ the teacher smile and replies: ‘Then tell this E to leave and let my sweetheart E to come and sit there;’ while she points at the boy’s place on the carpet. The boy walks back to his place and sits. In other incidents, she uses ‘time-out’ strategy with a boy who hit his classmate. She tells him to sit on a chair that is place near her table for 2 minutes and then she speaks to him about his behavior and the reason she told him to sit away from the rest of children. She asks for his apology to his classmate and then tells him to sit back in his seat.

T1 also makes a change to activities when working on them cause conflicts between children. An example of that is when she takes an activity cards from a group of children because they were arguing and taking each other’s cards and gives them another activity.

Furthermore, T2 uses rewards to encourage children to work and behave well before she starts the instruction activities. She promises children with House Points at the beginning of the lesson. She also mentions some of the activities to motivate

children. For example, she calls the name of a boy in the introduction part of a lesson and speaks to him in English: 'I brought toys for you today. I want to give them to you if you are good today,' and then she talks to all children as she raises two boxes: 'Whoever is good will play games I brought today with me. This one is a puzzle of letters and the other is a box of stamps of letters.' She asks children: 'Who wants to play with me?' and most of children raise their hands excitedly.

Role play is another practice that T2 applies to grab children's attention at the beginning of a lesson. In one of her classes, she wears a paper crown and calls herself a queen. She stands in front of children who are sitting on the carpet wearing a paper crown she found on the table over her head. She says: 'I'm the queen today,' children laugh. The teacher smiles and says: 'Listen to me; I'm the queen today,' She sits on a chair and says: 'When the queen talks, everyone closes their mouths with a key and then throws it' while making a gesture of closing her lip with her index and thumb fingers and then throwing to the side. Several children copy her, and the class gets quieter.

4.3.2.2 Guiding Children in Tables' Activities

Tables' activities occupy a large portion of the lessons of the two teachers, and thus incorporate plenty of practices at which T1 and T2 guide children. T1 explains the instructions of tables' activities at end of the main part; however, she calls children as groups to sit on a certain table in one of the lessons and gives them the activity materials before explaining the instructions in a minute. To explain the 'Writing Boards' table activity in a couple of her lessons, she slowly displays the way to trace on the target letter over the board and questions children if a wrong way is correct. Similarly, T2 instructs children before working on the writing worksheet by

explaining the requirements for each question to a certain group and checking on their understanding before walking between all children. In her “Ha” (ح) lesson, she repeats the requirement of the 1st question of coloring pictures to a child, and she helps children spell the names of the things to decide whether the words include the letter “Ha” (ح). T2 tends to walk between children groups and check on them. She talks to children working on the worksheets, encourages and questions understanding; ‘why did you color this?’ ‘Is there a “Ha” (ح) in the word?’ ‘Where is the “Hha” (ح)?’

T2 also supports a child while she is writing by reading the part of the word the girl has written on her worksheet: Sahaa..’ and says: ‘Cloud “Sahaaba” (سحابة) will be upset with you. That is not how we write it,’ and then she holds the cloud word card and puts it on the girl’s worksheet. She says: ‘This is ‘Cloud “Sahaaba” (سحابة) let’s write it,’ as she points at the card and asks the girl to write it.

Another practice of T2 during Tables’ activities instruction is displaying the model answers of the writing worksheet. An example of that is when T2 opens the Word document to be displayed on the Smart Board for children refer to for guidance as they writing.

In addition, switching the groups working on different activities is a regular practice T1 does midway through the time of table activities. She also changes an activity’s instructions when children don't understand them and are unable to follow them. An example of that is asking children to say the name of the letter they see in their cards instead of following the game original instructions of saying: ‘I have letter..., What do you have?’

4.3.2.3 Offering opportunities for Independent Learning

Within the structured lessons of the two teachers, occasional opportunities for children to learn independently were observed in the tables' activities where children engage in reviewing the concepts and skills they have previously learned and apply them in activities specifically designed by T1 and T2. After giving children the activities to work on, the teachers let children work individually or in pairs to follow the instructions she explains while introducing each activity. Children are then supervised by the teachers, only guided by questions or reminders and supported by words of encouragement while they work until they finish.

In addition, some cases of allowing FS 2 children to choose to take part in an activity are viewed in T1's classroom after they finish working on the tables' activities. In letter "Kha" (خ) lesson, a boy walks towards the smartboard and follows the movement of writing the letter "Kha" (خ) in the animated picture with his finger, and T1 praises him. In another lesson, T1 uses an event where a couple of children are engaged in free play in during the conclusion to create an educational experience. She asks the ones scribbling on the easel to write the target letter "Da" (د). of the day, and then praises them once they write it accurately.

Furthermore, T1 gives choice to a child after explaining the three different tables activities children are to work on by asking: 'What do you want to do?' The girl points at one of the activities' materials the teacher put on the carpet, and then T1 tells her and three more children to go to the tables on the left to work on that activity.

4.3.2.4 Integrating Learning Experiences with Emergent Literacy

Incorporating concepts that do not explicitly belong to emergent literacy skills is implemented in many occasions in T1 and T2 lessons. Concepts that are related to math, art, health and culture are all mentioned by the two teachers in different activities. An example of that is T1's question about candy when showing its picture: 'Are candies healthy food or unhealthy food?' when no child responds, she repeats the question 'Are candies healthy food or unhealthy food?' several children answer; 'unhealthy food,' and the teacher replies; 'unhealthy food; well done.' In the warm up of another lesson, she holds a bird's puppet and says: 'it is (عصفور), "ع، ع، ع" (عصفور)' and then asks; 'What color is it?' and another boy answers; 'blue,' the teacher repeats, 'This is right, a blue bird.'

Math concepts are also integrated in the activities applied by T1 and T2. In letter "Kha" (خ) lesson, for example, T1 asks children after all the pictures have appeared in the PowerPoint slide; 'How many things contain the letter "Kha" (خ)? let's count together.' She points at each picture and counts with children; 'One, two, three, four, five, six, seven.' She raises her hand and says; 'Now, show me with your fingers;' children raise their hands like her. The teacher closes her fingers, and children imitate her. She opens a finger by finger as she counts, and children do the same. She teaches number concepts in another lesson when she writes numbers on the back side of cards and asks children to name each number after she writes its symbol.

T2, on the other hand, incorporates the concepts of shape and size in letter "Da" (د) lesson when she makes a gesture of drawing a circular shape with her index finger as she reads the word "Daera" (دايرة) (circle), and children copy her. In

addition, she questions children about the events of the story while reading: 'After hatching, the nicest baby in the world went out of it;' she points at the picture and asks: 'Is the egg that hatched the big one or the small one?'

Furthermore, the two teachers include ideas from children's daily life and culture in the emergent literacy lessons. For instance, after children read the word "Jabal" (جبل) (Mountain) T2 has written on the whiteboard, she asks: 'Do you see a mountain here in Al Ain?' a boy answers: 'Hafeet Mountain' (جبل حفيت). She replies: 'Well done. 'Hafeet Mountain' (جبل حفيت).' T1 has presented an object that is related to the Emirati culture in her presentation for "Da" (د) lesson. When a picture of a coffee pot appears next to "Da" (د), she asks: 'What is this?' most of children answer: 'a coffee pot "Dalla" (دالة), she praises and says: 'You put coffee in it and drink, right?'

4.3.2.5 Efforts to Build Vocabulary

Adding words to children's vocabulary is a theme of several observed practices of T1 and T2. During the starter and main parts of the lessons, T1 adheres to showing pictures to elicit children's naming of things which contain the target letter. She says the words afterwards, and children repeat after her. In one of the lessons, she shows a picture that contains many objects that might be familiar to the child and asks children to say the names of things in the picture that start with the targeted letter.

Another regular practice of both T1 and T2 is replacing a word a child uses with another word that is more accurate linguistically. For example, when a child uses a word that is used in the local Emirati dialect to name an object, T1 tells her the alternative formal Arabic word with the same meaning: A boy sees the displayed

picture of a hen and says: ‘hen “Diyaya” (دياية) (using the word used in the local Arabic accent; the “ja” sound” is altered to a “ya” sound in the word “Dajaja”). The teacher corrects him: “Dajaja” is the word in Arabic. “Da. Da. Dajaja” (دجاجة),’ and the boy repeats after her.

In another lesson, when a child uses an expression from the dialect to speak to the teacher, she tells him the alternative standard Arabic expression to use: after the story video finishes, a boy says: ‘put it again (using the English word ‘again’ with a word from the local dialect for ‘put it’ (حطّيهَا),’ and the teacher smiles and repeats his expression in a question form. The boy says: ‘Yes,’ and the teacher says: ‘This is English. Say ‘Put it again (using the word from the standard Arabic ‘put it’ (ضعيها) and a word closer to her dialect for again (ثاني).’ She tells the boy to repeat her sentence, and the boy repeats the sentence twice.

T2 also proposes alternative words for the ones children say when seeing pictures she shows in her lessons. For instance, when a child uses a name derived from English language and is often used in the local Emirati accent, the teacher tells her the alternative standard Arabic word with the same meaning: She hides the card and says: ‘I woke up in the morning. I saw a.., as she raises a picture of a bus. A boy says: ‘a bus “Baas” (باص) *using the English-derived word used in the local Arabic,’ and a girl simultaneously says: ‘a bus “Haafela” (حافلة).’ The teacher praises the girl and repeats: ‘a “Haafela. “Ha.Ha. Haafela.’

Moreover, T2 presents the synonym of a word which begins with the target letter when a child names a thing in a picture card she shows: She says as she holds the picture card: ‘I looked at the sky, and saw a....’ A girl answers: ‘a cloud “Ghayma” (غيمة)’ (using a synonym of the word in Arabic). The teacher replies:

“Ghayma” (غيمة) or “Sa..”,’ and a girl answers: ‘ “Sahaba” (سحابة).’ The teacher replies: ‘Yes. A cloud “Sahaaba” (سحابة). “Sa. Sa. Sahaaba”,’ and several children repeat after her.

She also questions children about things that are not familiar with when she shows its pictures in order to help them acquire the new vocabulary. As she reads an event of the electronic story that includes a bucket “dalwo” (دلو), she asks children: ‘Do you know what “dalwo” (دلو) is?’ and when children don’t answer, the teacher displays a bucket picture and says: ‘This is a “dalwo. Da. Da. dalwo” (دلو. دة، دة، دلو). What do we use it for?’ and a boy answers: ‘we put water in it.’ the teacher replies: ‘we put water or milk in it and carry it,’

4.3.2.6 Supporting Children’s Efforts to Practice Emergent Literacy

Actions aiming to support children while they practice different skills in relation to emergent literacy take part in the practices of both T1 and T2. Continuous encouragement and praise was observed in numerous occasions in all the lessons. For example, T1 praises children who say the sound of the letter when seeing its shape: When several children say after seeing its shape in the slide: “Kha” (خ),’ the teacher replies: ‘Good.’ A boy says: ‘I said “Kha” (خ),’ and the teacher says: ‘Mohamad is good’ and ‘Layla is good,’ when a girl says: ‘I said it, too.’ She also compliments children who work on table activities. T1 is also keen on ending the lesson by praising children and asking them to clap for themselves.

With regards to actions in which T1 directly assists children as they learn and apply their learning of emergent literacy, she usually questions children about the names of things in the pictures she displays first. When children don't know the name of one of the things, T1 says it after waiting for a couple of seconds, and then some

children repeat after her. In addition, she purposefully pronounces the first sound of a word incorrectly as she names the pictures, and she asks children to judge the right pronunciation.

In one of lessons, T1 helps a child who is slower than her peers in working at one of the table activities that requires cutting by holding scissors and telling the girl that she will help her cut more pictures. She states: “This girl usually takes so much time in activities, and she shouts if you tell her to be quick or finish next class. So, the teacher assistant and I have to be cautious and help her indirectly,”

In addition to praising children after they answer or show her their work in the tables’ activities, T2 uses a variety of methods to encourage them to complete their tasks. For example, she checks the board of a girl who has raised it during a writing activity in the main part and says: ‘Well done. Nice handwriting. Write it 3 times so that your handwriting will be nice.’ She walks between children as they work on the carpet and at the tables while guiding, instructing and encouraging to them work by singing: ‘Rabbit, rabbit. A pretty rabbit jumps here and here.’ She also proposes holding a competition between the boys’ group and the girls’ group to encourage children to engage in a writing activity.

Promising children with rewards of gaining House Points is one of the ways T2 encourages children to finish their tasks with accurate performance. When a child shows her his writing worksheet, she responds: ‘Well done,’ and she holds him from the back and turns him toward his classmates. She says: ‘Your friend Rami finished writing all the answers. Since he finished first, he will get house points.’ Even when a child makes a mistake in putting words of a sentence in order, she corrects his mistake while praising him for trying and guides him in the correct way: ‘You should

write it here in the beginning. Well done, just correct this.’ Another boy does the same in his sheet, and the teacher says: ‘Excellent for trying. Let’s read it.’ She reads the sentence slowly word by word as she points at each word. And then tells him to reorder correctly. T2 also encourages children who finished working on the worksheet to help their classmates who are still working.

4.3.2.7 Use of Technology in the Lesson

The smartboard is a tool that both of the two teachers utilize for instruction in all of the lessons. Starting with the introduction of the lesson for presenting songs, story books, story videos or reading documents, the smartboard is the displaying medium for most of the activities T1 and T2 implement at the starter part, the main part, the conclusion of lessons and the explanation of the tables’ activities.

While T1 depends mainly on PowerPoint presentations in which the activities are placed in order of instruction, T2 uses a variety of software programs to demonstrate the activities she prepares for a lesson. She uses word documents to display the worksheets children are to work on and an electronic story. She also uses images and pdf folders to show song lyrics and the electronic storybook. Both of the teachers displayed videos of stories, songs and animated educational narratives on YouTube website.

In addition, T1 uses interactive media in activities to invite children to apply the knowledge and skills they acquired after finishing the tasks they were in the tables’ activities, whereas Year 1 children are not given opportunities to engage in activities where they actively use the smartboard. No other tools or applications of technology were part of the lessons observed of both teachers.

Summary of Question 2 Findings

The Structure of Teachers' Emergent Literacy Lessons

- The structure of T1 and T2 lessons was found to consist of: (a) the introduction, (b) the starter, (c) the main part, (d) the table's activities, and (e) concluding the lesson.
- The introduction part includes greeting children that is followed by activities that T1 warms FS2 children up for learning by reviewing the previously learned letter, presenting the alphabet song or using the bag of surprises, whereas T2 begins by using picture cards to teach the target letter.
- The starter part is occupied by showing animated educational video and introducing the target letter by T1. T2, on the other hand, uses a variety of activities which were observed in different lessons and include singing the vowel marks song with children, engaging children in words reading, presenting the target letter's shapes in different positions and with vowel marks, presenting similar-shaped letters with the target letter, reading an electronic story and playing a Lego assemble and disassemble game with children
- The main part of T1's lesson comprises activities like presenting pictures to teach the sound of the target letter, asking children for words containing the target sound, presenting similar-shaped letters with the target letter and distinguishing the target letter's shape among other letters while T2 implements the activities of reading an electronic storybook, distinguish and match worksheet, match and write worksheets, the cards' chain, reading segmented words and words' segmenting and blending. T2 also adds whole group activities after the tables' activities, and examples of these activities are words reading, asking for words

beginning with the target letter, discussing the target letter's sound in children's names, reading a storybook for children, revision of lesson content by revising the story and the target letter shapes with vowel marks in addition to letter sound recognition activities.

- The table's activities of T1 has used in the observed lessons include target letter's shape recognition, target letter's sound recognition, recognition of both the letter's sound and shape, the letters' cards' memory game, the writing boards, making the letter shape using playdough and art activities which are related to the target letter, whereas T2 solely implements writing worksheets.
- Concluding the lessons of T1 and T2 is done by reminding children to clean up their spaces playing educational videos. However, T1 presents an interactive educational activity on the smart board, and T2 sings the same song with children every lesson after they finish working on all of the activities.

The Teachers' Instructional Actions in Relation to Emergent Literacy

- Classroom Management practices to grab children attention during instruction time and deal with misbehaviors are implemented by T1 and T2 using methods like committing to set routines, rhythmic clapping and songs, using rewards like House Points and punishments like short time-out time.
- The two teachers guide children in tables' activities by explaining the instructions at end of the main part, and also displaying the model answers of a writing worksheet sometimes.
- The opportunities for children's independent learning were observed in the teachers' implementation of tables' activities where the young learners work

individually or in pairs to follow the instructions under the support and limited supervision of teachers.

- Integrating Emergent Literacy concepts with learning experiences that are related to math, art, health and culture is implemented in T1 and T2 lessons.
- Both teachers make efforts to build vocabulary by practices like showing pictures for naming things and replacing a word a child uses with another word that is more accurate linguistically.
- T1 and T2 support children's efforts to practice emergent literacy by continuous encouragement and praise besides promising children with verbal and symbolic rewards.
- The smartboard is a technology tool that both of the two teachers utilize for lessons introduction by presenting songs, story books, story videos or reading documents as well as presenting activities at the starter part, the main part, the lessons' conclusion and explaining the tables' activities using a variety of software programs.

4.4 Q.3: Are There Any Differences between the Teachers' Perceptions and Their Actual Practices of Arabic Emergent Literacy Teaching?

To answer the third research question, the teachers' statements in their interviews' answers were compared to their instructional practices the researcher observed during the Arabic literacy classes. The majority of the ideas that are directly related to instruction and the two teachers have expressed during the interviews were observed in actions during the lessons according to the results of the analysis. Nevertheless, a few examples of differences between the perceptions and the practices were found.

The first difference can be found in the practices of T2 when they are compared to her statements about planning activities according to children's levels. According to her statement, she divides children to 3 groups according to levels and allocates 3 activities of different levels to be presented to the groups.

T2: you prepare different level, at least three levels; three activities; three different. We have the low, the high and the medium....different tables. So, we have the green table for the high level, the red table for medium, the orange table for the low.

However, during all the lessons observed, T2 either presented whole group activities or activities targeting individual children, and both kinds of activities were presented to all children in the same design and requiring the same instructions.

The second difference is related to the types of activities T2 chooses to implement in her emergent literacy lessons and the materials she prefers using. Whereas she listed the activities she focuses on as sight words, songs, story reading and art activities, she mentioned writing as part of her description of the daily routine

of her structure. She stated that children are given tables' activities to practice writing for 10 minutes and do hands-on work for another 10 minutes.

T2: Flash cards, songs and reading practicing. Yes; so, this is what I prefer to repeat. You will find in my lesson. Like; for fifteen minutes. And to put just 10 minutes for writing, 5 minutes for movies, 10 minutes for activities by hand, by flash cards so this is for one hour during the day, we have to do many things.

However, in practice, she implemented writing as part of all Year 1 lessons. It usually followed a related activity that prepares children for writing. In letter "Ja" (ج) lesson, a 2-page worksheet was given to children who have finished working on the Writing Boards activity. In another lesson, a 1-page worksheet was given to children after they have finished the cards matching activities. In the words' segmenting and blending lesson, T2 gave out a worksheet that contains a question to blend the segments and write the blended word next to its segments. All of these lessons occupied about 20 minutes of the lessons' time. Moreover, T2 mentioned using markers and other tools for writing when discussing the prerequisite skills for reading and writing. She stated that she helps prepare children to hold the pencil by engaging them in activities of drawing and writing with brushes and markers.

T2: of course Year1 is... around now they are very ready to use pen and use all muscles like you said, everything, eyes and everything.....for their muscles, they prepare them to use pencils. So I have a brush for painting and table; The marker, it is not pencil now, because a pencil needs a little bit strong using pencil, it is not for their age.

Nevertheless, the tools all children used for writing on the worksheets were regular pencils in the four observed lessons.

Summary of Chapter 4

Chapter 4 has presented an in-depth description of the collected data of interviews and classroom observations with two teachers of young children. The findings are written under themes which emerged as a result of data analysis and coding of data that is related to perception about Arabic emergent literacy and practices of its instruction. The following are the main findings of the three research questions that will be discussed in detail in chapter five:

Findings about teachers' Perceptions in Relation to Emergent Literacy Instruction

- The emergent literacy skills that are viewed as essential include letter shape recognition, distinguishing between letters, associating letter sound to picture and sounds articulation.
- The main factors which are viewed to influence children's emergent literacy development are parents' support for children's learning at home and the teachers' methods of instruction at school, in addition to the individual child's ability, age, mood and interest in language.
- Songs and stories, sight words, games, puzzles, poems and art activities are the activities viewed as the most effective to begin with for emergent literacy instruction.
- Factors which influence learning Arabic emergent literacy by children include early exposure to standard Arabic at home and parents' fostering positive attitudes within young learners' toward Arabic.
- The challenges teachers face in teaching Arabic emergent literacy comprise challenges related to the nature of language, challenges related to the

environment, challenges related to the curriculum and school system, challenges related to Arabic teaching materials and challenges related to the age of learners.

- The teaching materials T1 and T2 use for emergent literacy teaching and learning with FS2 and Year 1 children comprise songs and videos, playdough, art materials for crafts board games and card games and hands-on materials, in addition to small whiteboards, flash cards of pictures and words, and storybooks.
- T1 does not believe in using storybooks with text for 4-years-old children, whereas T2 views Storybook reading is an essential part of Year 1 children's learning and engages children in whole group story reading activities as well reading at home.
- T1's holds a traditional view of her role, whereas T2 explains her role as the one creating an enjoyable lesson within a friendly relationship with children.
- The teacher's roles in relation to emergent literacy instruction described by the participant teachers include discovering children's levels, learning styles and interests, planning instruction according to children's levels, learning styles & interests, preparing children to learn emergent literacy, selecting activities to achieve certain learning outcomes and supporting children's learning.
- T2's view of the learning environment includes giving children freedom to move around and sit where they choose to work, whereas T1 describes it in light of the school's curriculum.

- Technology is perceived by T1 as a source of joy for children when they watch songs or play games, whereas T2 believes that the various applications of the smart board should be integrated in various emergent literacy instruction activities.

Findings about teachers' Practices of Emergent Literacy Instruction

- The structure of T1 and T2 lessons was found to consist of: (a) the introduction, (b) the starter, (c) the main part, (d) the table's activities, and (e) concluding the lesson.
- The starter part is occupied by songs and educational videos, words reading, presenting the target letter's different shapes and the similar-shaped letters with the target letter, reading an electronic story and playing a Lego assemble and disassemble game with children.
- The main part of T1 and T2 lessons comprises whole group activities that aim at teaching the sounds of the target letter with different vowels, the shapes of the target letter in different positions in the word, distinguishing the target letter's shape among other letters. In addition, words' segmenting and blending, writing, and reading words are skills that are taught by T2.
- T1 implements a variety of activities during the table's activities' part which include skills like letter's shape and letter sound recognition, emergent writing using markers or playdough, whereas T2 solely implements writing worksheets.
- The two teachers tend to conclude the lessons with songs or interactive educational activities. However, T2 reads a storybook for children and revises of lesson content in some of the lessons

- Classroom Management are implemented by T1 and T2 using methods like committing to set routines, rhythmic clapping and songs, using rewards like House Points and punishments like short time-out time.
- The limited opportunities for children's independent learning were observed in the young learners' work under the support and supervision of teachers.
- Integrating Emergent Literacy concepts with learning experiences that are related to math, art, health and culture is implemented in T1 and T2 lessons.
- T1 and T2 guide children by instructions and support their efforts to practice emergent literacy by continuous encouragement and praise besides promising children with verbal and symbolic rewards.
- The smartboard is a technology tool that both of the two teachers utilize for lessons introduction by presenting songs, story books, story videos or reading documents as well as presenting activities at the starter part, the main part, the lessons' conclusion and explaining the tables' activities using a variety of software programs.

Findings about the differences between the teachers' Perceptions and Practices

- A few examples of differences between emergent literacy perceptions and practices were found in the case of T2. These include the differentiation of instructional activities in accordance with children's levels of abilities that was reported in T2's statements yet not observed in actual practices as well as the types of activities and materials of teaching and learning included in the class routine that is related to emergent literacy.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations and Implications

5.1 Overview

The methodology of this study intended to provide rich data on the nature of Arabic emergent literacy in terms of two teachers' perceptions and practices. The qualitative case study design generated detailed findings by using semi-structured interviews and classroom observations.

The directing questions for this research study were the following:

1. What are the perceptions of private schools' teachers' in Al Ain regarding the Arabic emergent literacy instruction?
2. What are the practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction these teachers apply in the classroom?
3. Are there any differences between the teachers' perceptions and their actual practices of Arabic emergent literacy instruction?

This chapter aims at discussing the main findings from the three research questions by interpreting the statements and actions of the teachers using the perspective of emergent literacy and linking them to the finding of pertaining previous studies. The chapter also concludes with recommendation for the Ministry of Education, teacher education programs and teachers in addition to implications for future research.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Q1: What Are the Perceptions of Private Schools' Teachers' in Al Ain Regarding the Teaching of Arabic Emergent Literacy?

Semi-structured interviews were the instrument by which data about the perceptions of teachers was collected. The data yielded as a result of analysis was related to three main themes: emergent literacy learning, Arabic emergent literacy and emergent literacy instruction in early childhood, under which ideas pertaining to certain topics were discussed under subthemes.

Teachers' Perceptions about Emergent Literacy Learning

The main findings in relation to teachers' perceptions about emergent literacy include their views about the functions of language aimed at in teaching, the essential emergent literacy skills, the influential factors on teaching and learning emergent literacy, the dimensions of children's readiness to learn emergent literacy, the effective activities for introducing a language and teaching emergent literacy and children's independence in learning.

In their statement about the functions of language that they believe represent the purposes for teaching emergent literacy, the operational and cultural functions of language were emphasized by T1 and T2 and as they support children's acquisition of vocabulary and communication skills. This finding supports the findings of Scull, Nolan and Raban's (2013) study on the 3D Language Learning Model that highlights three dimensions of language; the operational dimension in the knowledge of language concepts, the cultural dimension in the social contexts of language and the critical dimension in analyzing and making judgments using language. The beliefs and practices of teachers in their study emphasized the cultural feature of language

through providing experiences of social use in authentic situations in addition to elements of the operational aspect in teaching recognition of letters' concepts.

The emergent literacy skills that T1 views as essential is letter shape recognition and distinguishing between letters, which are similar to the perceptions of teachers of who stated that alphabet knowledge skill is important in the reported findings of a couple of studies (Abdulkarim, 2003; Girard et al., 2013). In contrast, the skills that T2 highlights are associating letter sound to picture and children's accurate pronunciation of sounds, and they pertain to the phonological awareness and print awareness skills reported by Tafa (2004), Stellakis (2012) and Abdulkarim (2003) in their exploration of teachers' perceptions about emergent literacy instruction.

The teachers in this study described children's readiness to learn emergent literacy in terms of physical readiness, emotional readiness and cognitive readiness. This finding is consistent with AlBajja's (2002) discussion on the factors which impact children's readiness in terms of cognitive readiness, affective readiness, educational readiness and physical readiness. He identified the cognitive readiness is by the cognitive maturation level that qualifies a learner for comprehension and processing linguistic concepts. The affective readiness is described as the children's characters as learners and their emotional traits, whereas the preparedness of the organs of hearing, speech and sight for constructing the skills of reading and writing is entailed in the physical readiness.

When describing the factors which influence children's development of emergent literacy, T1 and T2 mentioned home and school environments which were reported in Lim and Torr (2008), Browning's (1995) and Ihmeideh's (2006) studies.

The findings of Lim and Torr (2007) and Lim and Torr's (2008) studies were consistent with the statements that T1 and T2 gave about the impact of children's age and abilities on their development of emergent literacy.

T1 perceives the skills of children's physical development such as small muscles development and eye-muscle coordination as prerequisite skills to reading and writing in addition to components of alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness; such as letter shape recognition, letter's sound recognition and blending sounds to form words, whereas T2 stated the skill of blending and segmenting sounds and words mastering of articulation of letters in her discussion. These findings corresponds to AlBajja (2002) and Mobaydeen (2003) pointing out that the practice of several subskills which qualify a learner for acquiring the emergent literacy skills is one of the characteristics of early learning settings and instruction.

Teachers' Perceptions about Arabic Emergent Literacy

The challenges that teachers face in teaching Arabic emergent literacy are among the findings in relation to the first research question.

First, among the challenges teachers expressed with regards to teaching Arabic emergent literacy are ones that are related to the unique features of the language and are similar to the ideas in literature. These features that the teachers stated include the richness of Arabic language as observable in the multiple meaning for a single word (AlAtasi, 2008) as well as the several forms of each letter and the similarity between the shapes of some different letters (Mahfoudhi et al., 2011).

Second, the diglossic nature of Arabic language reflected in the use of multiple forms of Arabic Language; the dialect named "Ammia" and the formal

"Fusha" (Ibrahim, 2011) creates difficulties for children to acquire the formal form "Fusha" at school when they join early education when they use the dialect "Ammia" in their daily (Jamjoom, 2014) from the view point of T1 and T2.

The lack of support for children's learning of standard Arabic language from community and home is the third challenge the participant teachers mentioned and is confirmed by Scott and Ytreberg's (1990) statement about the significance of making language learning more relatable to children by engaging families and community members. This finding is also similar to the reported challenge of the lack of congruence between home and school in the forms of literacy learning in Ihmeideh's (2006) study. In addition, T1 and T2 stated that the families' support and the relationship between the teacher and parents are important for forming positive attitudes within young learners' toward Arabic. This finding supports the findings of Brown et al.'s (2012) study in which the participant teacher expressed that parents, family, and community have critical roles in emergent literacy instruction.

Forth, both teachers were found to consider the limited time teachers have for applying lessons and children have for practicing Arabic during a school day a challenge, in a statement that supports the findings about the role of time in Browning's (1995) study on the influential factors on emergent literacy instruction.

Finally, T2's description of the difference in expectations between teachers and parents with regards to the learning outcomes of emergent literacy learning corresponds with the source of pressure that Campbell (2015) indicated about the parents' unrealistic expectations and misconceptions about the ways children learn phonics in the preschool level in his study.

Teachers' Perceptions about Emergent Literacy Instruction

The ideas generated from the teachers' answers to questions on the instruction of emergent literacy were grouped into the subthemes of: The skills of emergent literacy to start with in teaching, the class routine with regards to teaching emergent literacy, the selection of teaching and learning materials, the learning environment where children learn emergent literacy and the use of technology in emergent literacy instruction.

The emergent literacy skills that T1 stated she focuses on starts with phonological awareness, oral language development, and then reading by teaching to blend sounds and compose words, and concludes with writing in which the concepts print awareness are taught. Whereas T2 views oral language development as the first skill that is followed by skills related to listening and reading instruction that slightly precedes writing. These findings are consistent with the literature on the components of emergent literacy which comprise phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print awareness and metalinguistic awareness reported in the studies of Kaderavek and Justice (2000) and Justice and Kaderavek (2002).

Scott and Ytreberg's (1990) highlighting of the role of routine in the classroom by using procedures and activities which are familiar to children is supported by the participant teachers statements about the need to follow a fixed daily routine when teaching emergent literacy with young children and creating a lesson structure where activities and procedures are applied in the same ways throughout the school year to avoid children's confusion.

Another finding that pertains to a theoretical principle of teaching emergent literacy is the perception about the learning environment that T1 and T2 expressed,

that is, their description of the learning environment as a place that brings a sense of home and belonging to children in the classroom which is consistent with Morrow's (2012) interpretation of the role of the teacher in preparing the learning environment to be secure, safe, welcoming and learning-oriented. Morrow (2012) also states that provision of print-rich learning material in the learning environment, which T2 statement about displaying learning materials that are related to current learning concepts like flash cards is consistent with.

With regards to the teachers' perceptions about the integration of technology in the instruction of emergent literacy in the classrooms, T2 showed a higher regard to the possibilities technology offers for teaching and learning as she stated that practices of instruction should incorporate the various applications of the smartboard to pertain the learning experiences of Arabic to the enjoyable activities in the daily life of children. Her view contrasts with the views of teachers of Arabic emergent literacy who were reported by Ihmeideh (2010) to moderately believe in the importance of utilizing the computer technology in literacy instruction.

Teachers' Perceptions about their Roles in Emergent Literacy Instruction

The participant teachers' perceptions about their roles in emergent literacy learning were found to comprise discovering children's levels, learning styles and interests, planning instruction according to children's levels, learning styles & interests, preparing children to learn emergent literacy, selecting activities to achieve certain learning outcomes and supporting and encouraging children to learn.

Some of these reported roles support the results of Sandvik et al.'s (2014) study that included exploring the beliefs of teachers with regards to their

instructional roles and the recent research on emergent literacy. The common ideas between the two studies pertain to preparing children for the skills of read and write, facilitating children's engagement in literacy activities, introducing literacy activities to children and motivating children to learn reading, whereas the role of proposing ways for children to incorporate literacy activities in play was not stated by the teachers in this study. A possible explanation for this finding is the lack of understanding of the concept of learning through play by teachers and thus their exclusion of mentioning play when describing their emergent literacy instruction.

In addition, the way T1 generally perceives her role as a one who delivers knowledge, presents learning activities for children to apply that knowledge and assesses their learning is consistent with the teachers' traditional views of their roles as teachers of isolated literacy skills rather than facilitators in Stellakis's (2012) study. This result can be justified by the teacher's philosophy of teaching and learning in which her education and experience are the main contributors. T2, on the contrary, described her role as a creator of enjoyable lessons who has a friendly relationship with children. Similarly, Lim and Torr (2008) reported the perceptions of participant teachers in their study as one who design enjoyable activities that engage children in using the language.

5.2.2 Q.2: What Are the Practices of Teaching Arabic Emergent Literacy These Teachers Apply in the Classroom?

Data about the actual practices of emergent literacy instruction that the participant teachers applied was gathered by conducting classroom observations where the researcher recorded the events in four lessons of each teacher in detailed description. The analysis of this data generated the themes of lesson structure where all the teaching activities were included under certain parts of lesson in addition to the instructional actions in relation to emergent literacy of which the findings were found to be comparable with previous studies' findings.

Teachers' Emergent Literacy Instructional Practices

The instructional activities of both T1 and T2 generally focus on skills of phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge. These activities include teaching the sound and the shape of letters directly through saying and repeating what children see in the smartboard or in picture cards, presenting the different shapes of each letter in positions and with vowel marks and presenting similar-shaped letters for the purpose of discrimination. In addition, emergent writing activities like tracing letters and making the letter using playdough in FS2 level and writing words and word parts in Year 1 level were regular practices of both teachers.

The types of activities implemented and the ways emergent literacy skills are taught by the participant teachers represent elements from different teaching models of literacy. T1's instructional practices correspond with the methods of teaching implemented in both the skills and the subskills instructional models. This is evident the components of the skills model in her teaching of language skills separately, focusing on elements of vocabulary, decoding and meanings of language units

instead of the holistic structure as well as presenting specific lessons for the reading elements followed by reviewing and assessing (Reutzel & Cooter, 1992). In addition, she was observed teaching the skill of reading by following a hierarchical system that consists of phonics in the base and then decoding skills by building relationships between and sounds and symbols of the letters, teaching words of selection to reinforce the previous skill and presenting whole units of language such as words in the final stage (Tompkins, 2005). T1 starts her lesson with presenting the sounds of letters and then linking them to their shapes while presenting words that contain the letters, and she ends the lessons with revision and assessment while children work on table activities.

While the practices of T2 corresponds to a few elements of the skills model, she also implements elements from the whole language model in her preparation of a variety of learning materials to appeal to children's interests and needs through story videos, story books, pictures and literacy games while encouraging them to make efforts to read and write, in addition to starting her lessons with presenting whole entities of language like stories, sentences and words instead of the letters solely (Botzakis et al., 2014).

It is important to note that such explanation of the teachers practices in light of the language teaching models is a result of analyzing their practices in a higher level that their perceptions since their statements didn't clearly imply an adoption of a certain model. This can be justified by the probability of the teachers' lack of knowledge of such models and of the ways teaching literacy reflect certain theoretical principles due to their preparation in teacher education programs or teacher training.

Another dimension to clarify the foundation of T1 and T2 emergent literacy practices with is the concept of developmentally appropriate practices described in Ihmeideh's (2006) study. The practices of the teachers in his study were developmentally inappropriate in general as they emphasized the skill letter recognition in their implementation of methods like worksheets, spelling tasks, and following the teachers' models in the emergent literacy tasks. Such practices were also presented by the teachers in this study, and thus can be described as developmentally inappropriate. Nevertheless, T1 and T2 incorporated different types of games in their lessons and provided opportunities for play and exposure to authentic materials such as stories in practices that are considered to be developmentally appropriate.

Supporting Children's Efforts for Learning

The support of the participant teachers for children's learning efforts that was observed in their guidance of children during tables' activities by explaining the instructions as well as the encouragement, praise and verbal and symbolic rewards correspond to Reutzel and Cooter (1992) explanation of the emotional dimension of teaching with regards to reassuring children while they try new missions to help them get near to the targeted level of performance in any skill.

Offering Opportunities for Independent Learning

It was found that the few examples of the participant teachers' offering opportunities for children's independent learning were observed in the young learners' working individually or in pairs to follow the instructions under the support and limited supervision of teachers in tables' activities. This reported practice

doesn't correspond with Scott and Ytreberg's (1990) discussion about the principle independent learning in emergent literacy activities. They have described encouraging children's curiosity and love of exploration by giving them the power of choice as a drive toward better learning. This principle includes allowing children to select the nature of activities they prefer engaging in and the learning materials they would like to practice with following a sense of independence to raise their intrinsic motivation to learn.

Teachers' Efforts to Build Children's Vocabulary

The practices of teachers in this study included making efforts to build children's vocabulary comprises showing pictures for naming things, storybook reading and replacing a word a child uses with another word that is more accurate linguistically. The methods used by the teachers are similar to the vocabulary instruction practices of the highly effective kindergarten teachers in Alenezi's (2014) study, where activities such as direct teaching of vocabulary by methods of discussion and explaining definition in addition to reading storybooks aloud were reported. The activity of story reading corresponds to one of the activities teachers mentioned as a method to enrich children's English vocabulary in Lim and Torr's (2008) study.

The Use of Technology in the Lesson

The use of technology in emergent literacy classes was apparent in the methods both teachers have utilized the functions of the smartboard in emergent literacy instruction. The main purposes of using the starboard was display of songs, videos about stories or educational concepts, educational games reading documents

such as electronic storybooks or sight words in addition to showing children how the writing or art activities they are required to work on at the tables look like. This result supports the results of Ihmeideh (2010) who reported that Jordanian kindergarten teachers didn't implement computer technology in their activities of Arabic reading and writing instruction for purposes other than displaying games and presenting activities for children to work on at home. The teacher in Alenezi's (2014) study also visually presented the vocabulary she taught using technology.

Similar to the teachers in Ihmeideh's (2010), the teachers in this study didn't present activities at which children learn emergent literacy by using technology themselves. Also, there haven't been events where children used the internet or word processing program during the lessons. However, FS2 children were given opportunities to work on interactive educational games on the smartboard themselves at the final part of some of T1's lessons.

The Activities Included In Emergent Literacy Lessons

The main types of activities that both teachers tended to implement repetitively are naming letters, presenting songs, explaining the meanings of words that contain the learned letters, and writing the learned letters and words. This finding is similar to the result that Ganey (2010) reported in his study on the self-reported beliefs and practices of prekindergarten teachers. The activities mentioned in his study also included sight words and reading stories aloud which are practices of T2.

In addition, the lack of informal situations where the teachers in this study provided instruction is inconsistent with Reutzel and Cooter's (1992) principle on

emergent literacy instruction as T1 and T2 didn't engage children in abundant conversations and prolonged positive interaction in addition to limiting their response towards children's attempts that are not directly related to the learning outcome to correcting mistakes or giving a short specific answer. This might be given explanation by referring to the teachers' statement about the limited time they have for teaching Arabic literacy skills which require much effort and consistency. The periods of time specified for Arabic literacy instruction in the British school were among the challenges that T1 and T2 stated when speaking about teaching Arabic for young learners as they were asked to accomplish many learning outcomes using a variety of interesting activities for children.

In terms of the additional learning areas included in emergent literacy lesson, T1 presented words that are related to the local Emirati culture when teaching children about a letter's sound and shape in several incidents. This practice follows a principle that Reutzel and Cooter (1992) mentioned about emergent literacy instruction in which they stated that the topics of teaching should be related to incidents and conceptions in children's minds to promote meaningful learning and increase understanding of the content. It also applies Scott and Ytreberg's (1990) statement about the importance of reflecting learners' cultural backgrounds in the learning situations of language in an attempt to implement a holistic view of learning reading and writing that is related to real life. These ideas also support the teachers' integration of emergent literacy concepts with learning experiences that are related to math, art, health and culture is implemented in T1 and T2 lessons.

The Learning Environment

The learning environment at which children learn emergent literacy in this study generally consists of the carpet, the tables for learning application activities and the smart board. There are no elements of print or children's work displayed in the classrooms of T1 and T2. This finding contradicts with Morrow's (2012) description of the recommended learning environment for emergent literacy as a one that contains effective learning materials of which print-rich ones are set up. However, the teachers in this study created arrangements that are different from the traditionally-directed arrangements of teachers in Ihmeideh's (2010) study who gave spaces for whole class activities in place of learning corners.

5.2.3 Q.3: Are There Are Any Differences between the Teachers' Perceptions and Their Actual Practices of Arabic Emergent Literacy Teaching?

While the consistency between teachers' perceptions and practices was included in several previous studies, the differences between the perceptions and practices was one of the purposes of this study.

It was found that the perceptions and practices were generally consistent, and thus supported the findings of several previous studies (Girard et al., 2013; Brown, Scull, Nolan, Raban & Deans, 2012; Ihmeideh, 2006). However, two points of difference existed between emergent literacy perceptions and practices the case of T2. These points include the differentiation of instructional activities in accordance with children's levels of abilities that was reported in T2's statements yet not observed in actual practices as well as the types of activities and materials of teaching and learning included in the class routine that is related to emergent literacy. This finding suggests that instructional practices are not solely dependent on the

teacher's perceptions but involves other factors that might cause a difference in the ways a teacher translates her philosophy into classroom practice.

5.3 Recommendations

The study presents several recommendations for the Ministry of Education, teacher education programs and teachers as following:

Recommendations for the Ministry of Education

1. Including guidelines in the policies regarding Arabic emergent literacy in the preschool and kindergarten levels that targets private schools' practices. These rules should include obligating these schools for to provide a minimum number of classes that is based on research on language development in early years
2. Conducting a project for designing teaching and learning materials for Arabic emergent literacy with consideration of principles in early learning and Arabic language skills teaching as well as the contribution of experienced teachers of young children.
3. Offering training programs that expose teachers to practical guidelines and applicable practices for Arabic emergent literacy instruction that are based upon current research on effective practices.
4. Designing an Arabic emergent literacy curriculum that is authentically built on the features of Arabic language, the use of technology, and the characteristics of young children's development and learning.

Recommendations for the teacher education programs

1. Emphasizing the topic of Arabic emergent literacy in the curriculums of teacher education programs in Arab countries to provide teachers with the necessary foundation of knowledge and skills for effective teaching of Arabic language to young children.
2. Including theories that focuses on Arabic language acquisition and learning in the content of the compulsory courses future teachers study. An example of these theories is AlDannan's natural teaching of standard Arabic language theory.

Recommendations for teachers

1. Selecting the instructional activities for Arabic emergent literacy with carefully consideration to children's levels of development, the features of Arabic language and the characteristics of the learning environment.
2. Creating applicable strategies for parents to engage in Arabic emergent literacy learning of their children using home activities or events at the school.

5.4 Implications

Based on the findings of this study, the areas recommended for future research include the following:

- This study aimed at exploring the perceptions and practices of teachers without including their impact on young learners. So, a purpose of a future study can be the effect of certain teaching activities on children's acquisition of emergent literacy skills.
- The participant teachers in this study worked in the same school and taught different grade levels. So, selecting participants who teach the same grade level at different schools can be applied in a future study to explore whether the school system and curriculum has a major influence on perception and practices.
- Conducting a similar study in Arabic private school or a government school since the setting of this study was a British private school.

It is also recommended that more studies on the topic of Arabic emergent literacy should be applied utilizing a qualitative design because there is a scarce in the literature available from studies with rich and comprehensive conclusions.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Classroom Observation 3

Teacher 2

Date: Sunday Nov. 12th 2017 **Time:** 7:50– 8:50 pm **Place:** Year 1 classroom
18 children “Native Arabic speakers”

I sit on a chair behind children’s activities table on the right side of the classroom; having a clear full view of the teacher.

7:50 - 7:55: Carpet Time

The teacher enters the classroom pulling her cart and holding her laptop, and then she leaves her cart to the left of the carpet and puts her laptop on the table next to the smart board. She stands in front of children who are sitting on the carpet. She says: ‘Okay. Let’s see who is sitting right. Sit in a straight line;’ moving her arm from the right to the left. She looks at all children and then says: ‘Good morning,’ and children reply: ‘Good morning.’ The teacher asks: ‘How are you today?’ and children reply together loudly: ‘Good. “AlHamdulellah” (Thanks to Allah), and as children complete: ‘and “La Illah Illa Alla; Mohammad Rasul Allah” (و لا إله إلا الله: محمد رسول الله) **(and No God but Allah; Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah)** she lip syncs with them.

The teacher takes Lego cubes from a box she has previously put on the front table, ‘I will give only 3 Lego cubes to each one;’ she says and then starts giving 3 cubes to each child sitting on the carpet with the help of the Assistant Teacher. A girl says: ‘Miss, I have only 2 cubes,’ and the teacher replies as she continues to give the cubes out to children: ‘It is okay. No problem. So that it is enough for everyone.’ She checks what every child has as she walks around the carpet and asks them if anyone hasn’t taken cubes. Children start assembling and disassembling the cubes and showing each other and the teacher. The teacher says: ‘Miss N. **(her name)** still has some Lego.’ She stands in the front and says: ‘Now, everyone disassemble the Lego and put it in front of him;’ and she makes hands gesture of pulling the two hands away from each other, ‘We will have a competition;’ she says. She starts singing: ‘Cross your feet,.... Cross your feet,...’ in a rhythm with the names of some of the children. (رَبِّعَ قَدَمَيْكَ يَا، رَبِّعَ قَدَمَيْكَ) (يا). Some children disassembling the cubes as the teacher said. The teacher says: ‘Break the Lego up and put them in front of you,’ as she walks around the

carpet and watches children. She says: 'Who finished disassembling raise your hand;' she puts her finger on her lip, and then says: 'Without saying: 'I finished.'" She looks at a girl who raised her hand and says: 'break up means disassemble,' while disassembling the two cubes she has in her hands, and then the girl disassembles the Lego cubes she has. 'Now, I have a competition. Remember the game of ...' the teacher says as she assembles and then disassembles the Lego cubes in her hands. A boy says: 'Analysis and assemble,' and the teacher replies: 'yes. Go on. Analysis and Assemble.' Then she says: 'Yallah **(Go on)**; quickly, Assemble, Assemble.' Some children hold the Lego cubes combined. Then the teacher says: 'Good. Now, Analysis.' Then she looks at children and says: 'What have you done now?' a child answers: 'analysis.' Then the teacher says: 'Now, assemble.' She walks around the carpet and checks all children; she complements children who have combined their Lego cubes; 'Well done.'

Then the teacher stands on the front and says: 'Now, let's see. Everyone do...Analysis.' She makes hands gestures of pulling her hands away from each other and asks: 'Everyone is ready? Raise your hand and say 'We are ready.' She raises he both hands, and children copy her; she instructs two children who didn't raise their hands to do so. The teacher says: "'Yallah" **(Go on)**. 1, 2, 3.. Assemble.' Children work fast as they assemble the Lego cubes, and then most of them hold the combined cubes up; the teacher praises them.

8:55-8:07: A whole group activity

The teacher stands in the front and says: 'Now, Mrs. S **(she says the Teacher Assistant's name)** and me will give you Small Boards.' She takes small boards and laminated A4-sized sheets from a basket in the right side of the classroom and gives them out to all children while they are seated on the carpet. She asks: 'Who will help me?' then she says: 'We will give you markers now.' The Assistant Teacher gives a white board marker to each child. A boy says: 'Me, Miss;' and the teacher replies: 'Who says 'Me' will not receive a marker from me. I will only give the ones raising hands silently.' She continues to give small boards and markers to children until each one has them.

She stands in the front and says: 'Now, we will play 'Analysis and Assemble of words' (تحليل و تركيب كلمات). You will help me?' Mrs. N **(she says her name)** will do 'Analysis', you will do 'Assemble'; like the Lego.'

Then the teacher stands in front of the White Board and writes a "Ja" (جـ) on the White Board; she asks: 'How do we read this syllable?' and a child reads it. The teacher praises him and then she writes "Ba" (بـ) next to the previous syllable leaving a space between them; she asks: 'How do we read this syllable?' Several children answer, and a couple of children read the syllable connected to the previous syllable: "Jaba" (جَبَّ). Then the teacher writes a "Lon" (لـ) next to the

previous two syllables leaving a space between them; she asks: 'and how do we read this syllable?' and most of children read it; a couple of children read the 3 syllables combined as "Jabalon" (جَبَلٌ) **(means 'mountain' in Arabic)**. The teacher praises them and reads the syllables separated one after one while pointing at each one as she reads it, and then she reads them combined as a word. Then the teacher says: 'Now, assemble, assemble, assemble (تركيب، تركيب، تركيب)' in a fast rhythm. A girl raises her board; the teacher praises her and then asks: 'Who is second?' she praises the boy who raises his board next, and then she encourages children as she checks their work on the boards. The teacher asks a boy: 'What is this word?' the boy reads the word, and the teacher praises him and asks him to write it 3 times on his board in a nice handwriting. She says the same comment after praising every child who wrote the word and reading word from their boards. Then she asks children who have written the word 3 times to raise their boards; she praises them: 'Well done,' and then she asks: 'Are you ready for the second assemble? Raise your hand;' she raises her hand and says: 'We are ready,' and children copy her.

The teacher says: 'I will choose a word that is a little harder because you are heroes. Once I write the syllable, try to read.' She writes a "Aa" (أ), and a child reads it immediately, then she writes a "R" (ر) next to it leaving no space. A girl reads the syllables separately as: "Aa..Ro..Ro..Ro" (أ،ر...ر،ر)، and then teacher says: 'Read the two together.' A boy reads the syllables together the correct way: "Aar" (أر), and the teacher praises and reads it again; 2 girls say: "Aarnab" (أرنب) **(means 'rabbit' in Arabic)**. The teacher asks: 'Why did I put 2 letters together?' a boy answers: 'Because "Aa" (أ) doesn't connect to anything.' The teacher replies: 'right. But in "Ja" (جـ) I put 1 letter. This is new. The excellent one will guess.' After waiting for seconds, she asks: 'What is on the "R" (ر)?' a child answers: ' "Sokoon" (سكون) **(a diacritic that marks the absence of a vowel)**.' The teacher says: 'Right. "Sokoon" (سكون) is weak and pitiful. It is lonely and needs someone with it.' then she repeats it and asks children again: 'Why did we put the two letters together?' and 'Why did we put the letter which has a "Sokoon" (سكون) with another letter?' and a couple of children reply. The teacher reads the 2 syllables together and then asks children to read it together, children repeat. Then the teacher writes a "Na" (نـ) and "B" (بـ) with spaces between them. She asks children to assemble and read them; several children read them, and the teacher praises them. Children write the word on their boards, a boy raises his board and shows her. The teacher says: 'Well done. But "B" (بـ) must be written like this..' then writes "b" (بـ) in its form at the end of a word connected to the letter before it, using a marker on the White Board. The teacher checks on children as they write on their boards and says: 'Don't forget the dots and the "Tanwin" (تنوين) **(nunation: the suffix ("-n") in Arabic)** she checks the board of a girl who has raised it and says: 'Well done. Nice

handwriting. Write it 3 times so that your handwriting will be nice.’ The teacher encourages children while they work: ‘Rabbit, rabbit. A pretty rabbit jumps here and here;’ she sings quietly, and then she says: ‘Who finishes will get House Points,’ and says the names of 2 boys who will get House Points. ‘Now, I will write the names of the ones who will get House Points,’ she says and then writes the names of 4 boys on the White Board. She keep checking on children as she walks around the carpet; she praises a girl and tells her to write the “Tanween” (تتوين).

The teacher stands in front of the board and says: ‘Now. are you ready for the next word?’ and then she erases the syllables she wrote before. She says: ‘The last word is long, but you get 2 House Points, Are you ready?’

She says: ‘Now, read this syllable,’ and writes a “Jon” (جُنْ). A boy reads it as “Ja. Na...Ja. Na” (جَ، نَ . جَ، نَ). The teacher points at the short vowel marks “Harakat/Tashkeel” on the letters, and then a boys reads it correctly. The teacher smiles and repeats: “Jon...Jon” (جُنْ) (جُنْ) and children repeat after her; the teacher writes the boy’s name on the White Board. The teacher asks: ‘Why did I put “Jo” (جُ) and “N” (نَ) here?’ a boy answers: ‘Because of the “Sokoon” (سكون).’ The teacher says: ‘Right. Because the “Sokoon” (سكون) is weak and pitiful and needs to go with friends.’ She writes a “..Jo..” (جُ) next to previous syllable leaving a space, and then asks children to read it. Several children read it, and the teacher reads it: “Jo. Jo” (جُ، جُ),’ while making her hand in a circle shape and repeats the syllable; children copy her. Then she write a “..Lon” (لُ), and several children the syllables together as a word: ‘ “Jonjolon” (جُنْجُلْ); the teacher praises them. She reads the words several times with a rhythm and hand gestures of making a circle shape with her hand; she asks: ‘Who is “Jonjol” (جُنْجُلْ)?’ a boy replies: ‘the mouse.’ The teacher replies: ‘the little rat’s name was “Jonjol” (جُنْجُلْ),’ and a boy adds: ‘Looks for his jewel.’ **(the title of a story the teacher read for them the previous week was ‘Jonjol looks for his jewel’)**. The teacher praises the boys and writes their names on the White Board.

She says: ‘Now. Assemble, assemble (تركيب، تركيب).’ A boy writes and shows the teacher while saying: ‘It must be 3 times.’ The teacher checks his board, praises him and then writes his name on the White Board; she keeps checking on all children and encouraging them.

8:07 – 8:14: Tables’ Activity “Assemble Game”:

The teacher says: ‘Now, we will sit on tables,’ and calls the names of 2 girls to sit on the right table. She gives them small white sheets (each is a 1/3 part of an A4-sized sheet). She tells children sitting on the carpet to wipe their small boards, then she holds 3 small white sheets where each has a syllable written on

it in a large black font and says: 'We have three letters we will assemble together.'

The teacher checks the children who have finished cleaning their boards and tells them to sit on the tables with their boards; 4 girls sit on the left table and 4 boys sit on the right table, the rest of children are sitting on the carpet. The teacher and the Teacher Assistant say the instructions as they give out the small sheets to children; each gets 3 sheets and is asked to assemble the sheets in a correct way to make a word and then write the word on the small board. The teacher asks a boy: 'What is the word you can make here?' the boy puts the sheets next to each other on the carpet and reads the word: "Jabalon" (جَبَلُونُ), and the teacher praises him before telling him to write the word on his board. The teacher sits on the carpet with children who are working, checks on them and encourages. She praises the ones who have finished assembling and writing the first word and then gives them 2 more sheets;



After 2 minutes, the teacher walks to the tables to check on children, encourage and praise them.

8:14 – 8:28: Tables' Activity "Writing Worksheets":

Children who assemble the syllables on the sheets correctly and write the 2 words 3 times each on the small boards are asked to clean their boards and give them to the Assistant Teacher. The teacher gives children who have finished worksheets for writing:

<p>* Assemble the following syllables and then write the words that result from the assembling:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ar / na / bon _____ 2. Bu / ma / ton _____ 3. Jon / jo / lon _____ 4. Tha / la / bon _____ 5. Tem / sa / hon _____ 6. Thaa / ni _____ 7. Hhoo / ton _____ 8. Hhe / saa / non _____ 9. Too / ton _____ 10. Ja / ba / lon _____ 11. Aa / bi _____ 	<p>* ركب المقاطع التالية ثم اكتب الكلمات الناتجة من التركيب:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. أر / نأ / ب _____ 2. بو / مآ / نة _____ 3. جُنأ / ج / ل _____ 4. ثع / ل / ب _____ 5. تم / سآ / ح _____ 6. ثآ / ني _____ 7. حو / ت _____ 8. ج / صآ / ن _____ 9. تو / ت _____ 10. ج / ب / ل _____ 11. أ / بي _____
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Most children move to tables; including the small tables on the sides of the classroom, and 2 more children sit on the left and the right table. The teacher walks between children; she guides, instructs, encourages and praises them. She calls the names of 2 boys who are playing with blocks in the blocks corner and gives them the sheets to write on the carpet.

6 boys are sitting on the right table, 6 girls are sitting on the left table, 2 children are sitting on the table to right side next to the wall of the classroom, a boy is playing with blocks; 2 girls who are seated on the left table have blocks in front of them. The Teacher Assistant leaves the classroom after 26 minutes of the beginning of the class.

A boy shows his worksheet to the teacher; she asks him: 'Have you finished?' and he nods. The teacher asks him to read the words he has written. The boy reads the words slowly one after one while standing beside the teacher; she corrects the word he misreads. Then the teacher talks to all children: 'Your friend has finished assembling and writing all the words. Clap for him;' she claps for him with children, and then she praises him and promises to put a House Point for him. Then she asks the boy to help his friends on the table he was sitting on, and the boy does so. A girl walks toward the teacher to show her worksheet, and the teacher asks her to read the words loudly while standing beside her. Then the teacher praises the girl, claps for her and asks her to help her friends sitting on the other table. The teacher walks between children sitting on the carpet and the tables; children take turns to show her their worksheets, and she asks each one of them to read the words before praising them and taking their sheets.

The teacher asks children who finished writing and showed her their worksheets to clean up, and children return the markers, pencils and erasers to their places in the baskets.

8:28 – 8:40: Clean-up and Concluding song

While several children are still writing in the worksheets, the teacher stands on the carpet and says: 'The ones who finished, stand the Snow, Snow "Thaljon, Thaljon" (ثلج، ثلج) stand;' and 5 children stand in a line on the right side of the carpet. 2 of the children start singing the song, and then the teacher calls the names of 2 children and tells them to stand with their friends on the carpet to sing. The teacher stands opposite to them on the other side of the carpet and tells children to wait before singing. Then the teacher says: "Yallah" (). One, two, three...' and starts singing in a low voice while making gestures with her fingers.

Children continue to join the ones who are singing on the carpet; 4 boys and 2 girls are still working on their worksheets on the tables.

The teacher asks children to repeat the song, and the teacher sits on her knees and makes the related body gestures without singing.

ثلجٌ ثلجٌ . . . أبيض أبيض
 ثلجٌ ثلجٌ . . . أبيض أبيض
 يسقط فوق الأرض و تنهض
 قالت أرضٌ: جاء الثلجُ
 هيا أسرع. عطش المرجُ
 ثلجٌ ثلجٌ فوق الدار
 أعطى ثوباً للأشجار

“Thaljon Thaljon...Abyad Abyad”	Snow Snow . . . White White
“Thaljon Thaljon...Abyad Abyad”	Snow Snow . . . White White
Yasquto Fawqal Ardi wa Yanhad	It falls on the land, and it rises
Qalat Ardon: Jaath Thalju	A land said: The snow came
Hayya Asrie. Ateshal Marju	Come on Hurry. The green field has gotten thirsty
Thaljon Thaljon Fawqad Dari	Snow Snow on top of the house
Aata Thawban Lel Ashjari	It gave an apparel to the trees

Children sing all the lyrics with some of the body gestures. After they finish the song, the teacher asks children to sing again. When children start singing the third time, 3 children walk towards the teacher and show her their worksheets; she checks them and praises the children before taking the sheets. She stands up and checks on the girls' table, and she encourages the 2 girls working to finish. She walks back to the carpet and says: 'I will pick a leader to sing with rest;' children raise their hands excitedly, and the teacher picks one girl and tells her to stand beside her facing children.

More children gather on the carpet; 'sing like we are 1 person, are you ready?' the teacher says, and 8 children stand in a straight line and sing. The teacher tells children that the girl she chose as a leader will make the gestures for the

rest, and then she stands in the line with the rest of children and makes gestures while they all sing.

She praise them and says: 'but next time no mistakes so that when you go up on the stage it will be right.' Then she chooses a boy to be the leader and puts a crown on a girl's head. the girl takes the crown before the teacher asks her to give it back and wears it; children laugh. 11 children are gathered on the carpet; a boy gives a big girl puppet to the teacher, and the teacher holds the puppet and says: 'She will sing with us.' Children jump with excitement, and the teacher claps 5 times rhythmically; children copy and get quiet.

About 16 children are gathered, and the teacher sings with them with gestures. . A boy gives his worksheet to teacher; she praises him and takes the sheet.

All children are gathered on the carpet except one who watches the teacher from his seat. The teacher tells children to sit after praising them and sits with them. She stands up after a second and says: 'We forgot a part,' and children stand up. She sings: "Anta Jameelon Qalboka Safen" (أنتَ جميلٌ، قلبك صافٍ) **(You are beautiful. Your heart is pure in Arabic)** with gestures: pointing at children and making a heart shape with both of her hands, and she tells children to make the gestures with her. She moves to the front side of the carpet and leads children, and she tells them to repeat the phrase while she point at a different side of children lines each time.

8:40 -8:50 Story Time

The teacher says: 'Now, sit down in your places. I have a nice story for you;' children sit, and she tells them to be quiet before she walks towards her cart she put beside the door. She looks through the cart while singing: 'Story, Story. Mrs. N has a story,' and then walks back to the front side of the carpet holding two storybooks. She puts a child-sized chair in front of the Smart board and sits on it holding one of the storybooks; 'In story time, what do we do?' she asks children and then says: 'We listen to the teacher' while pointing at her ear. She calls the 2 boys playing in the blocks' corner and the boy sitting on the table to come and sit with the rest.

She holds the storybook and points at the cover page; 'What do you see in the picture?' she asks, and a child answers: 'a large egg.' The teacher says: 'a large egg,' and a child says: 'there is a bird,' and the teacher replies: 'There is a bird or a duck; a nice duck,' and points at the duck in the picture.

The teacher introduces the story: 'the name of the story is (AlBaydatol Ajeeba) (البيضة العجيبة) 'The Bizarre Egg',' while exaggerating in her tone, and adds: 'Bizarre means strange or different form others.' A boy says: 'very big,' the teacher replies: 'Very big and what color is it?' and he answers: 'green,' and the

teacher replies: 'green, but regular eggs has no green, we will see what the story tells.'

She opens the book, and a boy sitting near her asks her; the teacher points at him and says: 'a nice question. What is inside the egg? Do you know?' a boy replies: 'I know. A duck, ' and he teacher replies: 'We will see; the strange egg.' She flips the page and starts reading: '*all the birds laid eggs,*' and comments: 'yes, because birds give eggs. A delicious useful egg that we eat;' she continues to read: '*all of them except for pitiful Battoot*'. She asks: 'All of them except who?' and a boy answers: 'Battoot.' The teacher flips the page and reads: '*then Battoot found an egg, a very large egg. He viewed at as the nicest egg in the whole world,*' then she ask: 'What did he see?' a boy answers: 'the nicest egg.' The teacher says: 'because while he was walking **(she makes a walking gesture with her legs while sitting)** and found this egg;' she points at the picture and says: 'It is a very nice egg. I will take it.' she continues to read: 'He rolled it and rolled it **(she makes a rolling gesture with both of her hands)** to his house. She flips the page and reads: '*But people saw him and got scared;*' she makes a scared face expression and continues reading: '*It is a strange egg. Look! Look!*' **(She points with her index finger with a surprised face expression)**. She reads: '*All the birds got scared of the shape of this egg*' and points at the picture, and then she continues reading: '*and they said: 'this egg will never hatch."*' The teacher asks: 'What is the meaning of hatch?' **(She makes a hand gesture of hatching by pulling her hands away from one another with fingers gathered)**, and a boy answers: 'it means it broke.' The teacher replies: 'It broke, and what comes out of it?' **(she makes a gesture of her hand moving upwards)**, and a boy replies: 'Battoot.' The teacher says: 'Battoot, a small duck or a small hen'. The teacher continues to read: '*But the other birds did not think that, and suddenly* (she makes a surprised face expression and gesture) What happened?' she reads: '*Crek, Crak. Crek, Crak.*' **(she makes hand gestures of opening and closing her hand)**. She asks children: 'What is this sound?' a boy answers: 'the egg's sound, and the teacher replies: 'When it is ...?' and a boy replies: 'hatching.' The teacher continues to read: '*Crek, Crak. Crek, Crak.*' She says: 'What is happening? We are all surprised.' She slowly flips the small pages in the storybook containing stages of the hatching of an egg each in a small page. She opens the next page and reads: '*After hatching, the nicest baby in the world went out of it.*' she points at the picture, 'Is the egg that hatched the big one or the small one?' and a child answers: 'the small one.' The teacher flips the page and read: '*It hugged its mother the duck,*' and she added: 'I love you so much so much mommy, and she said: I love you so much my child.' The teacher reads: '*All eggs hatched, except for Battoot's. He waited and waited,*' and then she asks: 'How are we when we are waiting?' board or happy?' and a child answers: 'board.' The teacher continues to read: '*Crek, Crak. Crek, Crak,*' and then she points at the picture in

the next page with a surprised look in her face; 'What is this?' she asks and a child answers: "'Temsah" (تمساح) **(a crocodile in Arabic)**. The teacher comments: 'It thinks Battoot is its mommy. It hugs her and follows her everywhere.'

She closes the storybook and asks children: 'Did you like the story?' and then asks them to tell her their favorite part of the story. She reviews the events of the story before thanking children and leaving the classroom.









Notes:

One of the two boys who spent periods of the class in the block area only speaks English, and the teacher gives him instructions in English.

Appendix B

اسمي الجميل/.....

الهدف: أن يبحث التلميذ عن كلمات بها حرف (الحاء) ويكتبها بخط جميل |

Appendix C

Teacher Perceptions & Practices Semi-structured Interview Questions

Perceptions

- *Language Acquisition & Learning*
 - How should language be first introduced to young children? (Emergent Literacy: conversation, stories. Reading Readiness: picture cards with letters)
 - What skills must a child acquire in order to develop the ability to read and write?
 - Which domain do you view as more important in language acquisition by a child: His cognitive development level, His surrounding environment “Parents, family, friends and teachers”?

- *Emergent Literacy Learning*
 - What features/functions of language do you believe is the most significant? (operational ‘concepts’, cultural ‘social contexts’, critical ‘analysis & making judgements’)
 - How independent should a child be in learning language?
 - Is there a social component in learning language? Please Explain.
 - Do you believe in the importance of rewards in teaching language?
 - “The child learns the language when he is ready”; Do you agree with this statement? And why?

- *Arabic Language Literacy*
 - What are the factors that impact children learning of Arabic?
 - What are the challenges of teaching Arabic to young children?
 - Are there unique features of Arabic language which influence the types of instruction activities? Please explain.

- *Literacy Instruction in early childhood*
 - Should language skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing) be taught in a certain order?
 - What do you believe are the main roles of the teacher with regards to language teaching in early years?

Practices

- How do you select activities to help achieve certain language learning outcomes?
- What are the assessment methods you use for language learning?
- What are the learning materials you often use to teach language?

Appendix D

Date: Tuesday 12/11/ 2017 **Time:** 10:11 – 10:41 am **Place:** Parents' Waiting Room

Interview 2 Teacher 1

Q1: We will start with the first question. As a language teacher, What are your main roles; The main roles you put for yourself as a language teacher for children?

T1: my main role is to help my kids learn Arabic language in easy ways. A second role is to use the language in their communication; in daily dialogues; in... communicate with others. Third role is to help them to write the shapes of the letters in easy way; or differentiate between the shapes of the letters in the beginning; in the middle, in the end. So, take it easy, speak it easy and write it easy **(she laughs)**.

I ask: and do you believe that you just are a helper, or you are the one giving them all the information? Do you think you are just a language model; do you demonstrate, show them how to speak and how to write? Or you are; just, helping them; as you said, facilitate their learning; making it easy?

T1: In the beginning, you have a wide range of your... a big role; when they are still young. So, if they earned, you can make your role less, less, less. By the end of the first term, they can work, and they can use the language easily; almost. You still have someone needs more improvement. It is okay; but it is differentiation. You can't say: 'All of them will accept the skills in the same time.' So, say one group now work independently, so, the second group needs you to have a look two times or three times. And one of them needs someone with them all the time. So, your role should be... you should have a big role in the beginning, and then you can make it... if they like... if they accept the skills and the knowledge, you role will be less; with practice. It is with practice. And it is important point that all the teachers should have the same structures and the same orders. If you have your way; your own one, and other teachers didn't follow, or don't follow the same, your kids will be lost. So, in our school here especially, all of us have the same structures, have the same rule. So, Arabic teacher, English teacher, music teacher, P.E. teacher; the same. Even if I'm walking in the corridor and find FS1 go to swimming, and they are walking not in the straight, I can stop my walking and ask them: 'Please, follow your teacher

in a nice way; please.' So, this is not my job, but I can't see anybody didn't follow the structures. Even if I teach him or don't teach him; here, no; any teacher here, he is or she is your teacher.

Q.2: we will move on to the next question. How independent should a child be in learning language? Do you think.

T1: In the beginning, it is a little bit independent; until he learns the skills; how he can work alone, how he can work with his friends, how he can finish and stay on his chair and raise his hand, how he can share the resources with others without any noise, how he can choose the right colors for things if you ask him to color something. All of this; in the beginning it would be hard; hard (**she laughs**). And then follow the same way and have your routine. If you have your routine, you will find a good result. So, not daily you create something new; and 'I'm creative;' you are not creative if you create for this age; especially. If you create something new, they will ... they will have confuse. So, the routine to enter the class, the routine to sit on the mat, the routine to be in the groups, the routine to line up, the routine to go outside and come back, the routine to tidy up after finishing, the routine to raise their hands when they want to answer, the routine to respect others when they are talking; this is a routine. And you can change your activities as you like, but they have routine. They know; 'I can't speak with others, I can't raise my hand when my friend answers, I can't say the answer without permission.' They know; 'I sit properly on the mat,' they know; 'I stand outside my class until my teacher comes,' they know; 'there is no noise when we change activities or the time between the mat and the tables, and the tables and the mat;' there is two tomes or three times you can have some noise. So, 'stop your work and come and sit down; finish, finish, tidy up, take care of your resources; your school resources, and then come back to your place.' Sometimes; they are kids, they want to play, they want to push, they want to ... but you have to stop it and be serious with him. You see last time when I punished M (**She says a child's name**), and I asked him to stay for 2 minutes on the mat because he was shouting; he is shouting is not in our rules. He will keep their attention, so, no independent (she claps hand together to indicate the disappearance). He will keep their attention with him; This is what he wants, he wants all the teacher and the friends give their attention to him. So, no chance; they are focusing. When they finish, they show me: 'Miss, like this?' And day by day, you can learn (teach) them: 'Show your friend. Show your friend. Give your friend to give you his opinion about your work;' to accept the others' opinion, this is a good thing for improving their personality.

I ask: And you saw results in their independence when you let them and teach them to be independent? Did you see result?

T1: Ahhh... Sometimes, I have no results, and sometimes my target is not to have results. My target is to give him ... to keep his concentration on the work; sometimes. And all; I mean, all the time, they finish before the time. When they work independently, they finish before the time, and is looking for other activities. But, some of them, my target is to keep his focusing; not to achieve the target. If he can concentrate and work alone 5 minutes, he is achieving my target; behavior, not academic.

Q.3: You mentioned something about routine in your answer, and this is a question I have in mind. In language matters; because you explained the routine you have in the classroom; a system, I would say; the rules. But, in language; What is the daily routine for your FS2? Something that happens all the time in your class.

T1: Like the daily routine; say we teach five lessons; say we teach five lessons. So, one day we start with video, second day we start with song, third day we start with a bag of surprise, fourth day we start with a game, fifth day we start with making revision of sounds with cards. So, you can have a routine like this; like this. We change the starter, and the same starter on Tuesday, the same starter on Monday. Or if you find your kids not attracted to this starter, you can change it next week. But, this is the routine; what I mean; to do something they are familiar with. Not something new, new, new; if you can't attract them, they will make noise. So, you find, if they like to listen, you can make it videos, song, story. If they like to...visual; see some pictures, you can make it like a picture, and they can speak, or find out the things that start with "Ba" (ب) or like this, so they want to look. Yes, if they are hyper and want something to play or to touch, you can use the bag of surprise; you can with a box, you can use the... like; jumping game. You can use anything to use their energy; in a good way.

I ask: and how does the lesson go. If you; like, the starter you go like this by week days. How do you do the parts of the lesson? Is there a routine you always follow? This is the 1st part of the lesson, this is the 2nd part of the lesson...

Yes. 5 minutes or 7 minutes to starter, and 5 minutes to conclusion or end the lesson, and then 25 or 30 minutes in activities and show; 10 minutes show and 20 minutes activities on the tables. So, this is the routine. I can't make my starters 15 minutes, I can't make my conclusion or end of the lesson 10 minutes, I can't make ... they can't come from outside directly to the tables without any knowledge. You have to warm up them, you have to give them the knowledge, and then ask them to apply the knowledge on the tables. And then ask them what they understand, what they have learned.

Q.4: the next question is about the skills that the child must build in order to be able to read and write. So, if we speak about reading, What are the skills that will prepare him for reading? For writing, the same thing.

T1: the first skill is to recognize the letters' shapes and the second is to recognize the letters' sounds; short sounds. And third, by the end in the half term; term 2, they should recognize the long sounds of letters. And then you can use the knowledge they learned to build new skills; like blend the sounds together to read; "Ba" (ب), "Na" (ن), "ta" (ت); "Bent" (بنت). They can say it in any way, but connect the sounds and make new words. In any way; by their ways, by their ways. Sometimes, we blend some sounds with no meaning; only to make it easy for them. It is so easy to connect the sounds, it is easy; and then bit by bit you can give him some words that have meaning. To be easy. Or cut the ; like, picture of boy, 'What is this?' 'It is a boy;' "Walad" (ولد) **(means a boy in Arabic)**; 'What is the sound here?' "Wa" (و), "La" (ل), "Do" (د); "Wa" (و), "La" (ل), "Do" (د). He knows now; this is three letters, three sounds make one new word; 'Yaa, "Walad" (ولد); it is easy!'

I ask: So, this is for reading; regarding the sounds. What about writing? How do you prepare him for writing?

T1: It is depending to the ability; or the muscles. If their muscles are good and ready to catch the pen and write, it is okay. Someone from the beginning of this KG2 can catch the pencil; we have special pencils here. The size and the "Samaka" (سماكة) **(she says the word 'thickness' in Arabic)**; it is easy for them; to make the writing easy. And they can use the stones with the box of sand, or they can use the stone with the ... outside between trees; they can write on the sand outside. But it is not allowed here; they can't, but the mothers make it in the farm; they said. He can write his name under the palm tree; like this. But we use the healthy ... the safety sand. And you can use; like, playdough; to make his muscles strong. If someone has a problem in his muscles; not normal, I give him the ball; a soft ball; make it like this **(she flexes her hand)** to make his muscles strong. So we start in writing when he is ready. In the beginning, you can find 5, 3, 4; and day by day you can find one more, one more, one more; until the end of the year, you will find all of them can catch the pencil. Or if someone can't catch the pencil; by the end of the year, you can write a report; your report for the next teacher. So, your report to explain what is the problem to be easy for the next teacher.

I ask: How about the body skills he has; like, in reading and writing. His sight, the eye-hand coordination?

T1: If he is ready and can concentrate with his eyes, and find the dot he have to begin from; here, to write the letter. If he is okay, he can make focusing well, he

can put the pencil on the start point and can complete the shape of the letter; if he can't, you can make it: 'Okay. Bravo. "Raaee" (رائع) **(she says 'great' in Arabic)**. You can do it.' or make it bigger for him, or let him make it by playdough. Or let him do other activities until 1 month, and you can try again; like this.

She states a sentence in Arabic:

هو لازم يكون عنده توافق عضلي بصري، لكي يقدر على اتّباع نقطة البداية و يقدر على المشي على النقاط التي وضعتها.

(he has to have eye-muscle coordination in order to be able to follow the starting point and to be able to trace the dots you have put)

And sometimes, you can find some kids without any dots can write the letter in a nice way. It is not depending to the age. Maybe you find him in the beginning of 5 years, in the fifth year of his age, and he can catch the pencil and write. And you can find someone finishes the fifth age, and he still can't catch the pencil. It is depending to the ability, and the age; not depending to the age; it is about the ability.

Q.5: The fifth question is regarding the order of the language skills. We know that the four language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing are also targets of teaching language. But, there is a certain order they should go by? What is it? and Why?

T1: Listening is the 1st language; as Quran said. Our Quran mentioned about listening before looking or writing or... 5 times in Quran. So, my grandma keeps the Quran by listening; keep all the Quran; memorized all the Quran by listening to the "AlTablawey" () **(She mentions the name of a well-known Quran reciter whose recitation is recorded on tape cassettes)**. **(she laughs)**. So, listening is the first skill. They have to listen; carefully, to know the ways, to know the structures, to know the rules, to know the sounds of letters. So, the important is listening. And then, they will use their knowledge or their ability... to talk, speak. Using the new vocabulary, using the new sentences, using the right sentences; avoid the local sentences; like "Dereesha" (دريشة) **(She says 'window' in the local Emirati dialect)**; "Shobbak" (شَبَاك) **(She says 'window' in one of its synonyms in the Formal Arabic)**, "Shebriyya" (شِبْرِيَّة) **(She says 'bed' in the local Emirati dialect)**; "Sareer" (سَرِير) **(She says 'bed' in one of its synonyms in the Formal Arabic)**. We remove the local language and put a little bit; only one word, and make simple sentences; to be easy. Not traditional language, not local language; easy language. So, listening, talking... reading... reading because he can blend sounds easily to make new words; and then writing, because writing needs more ability; more than reading, needs "Tawafiq

Adali Basari” (توافق عضلي بصري) **(She says the expression ‘eye-muscle coordination)**; as we said earlier. He has to be ready to write. But not ready to listen, ready to talk, not ready to read; it is easy, it is easy. But writing needs more skills, needs more skills. He can read, but doesn’t want to catch the pencil. He can blend sounds by puzzle, but can’t blend it by pencil. He can connect between the picture and the sound of letter, but if you ask him to make it by playdough, he refuses. You see last time, some of them don’t what to make the shape of the letter with playdough, but like to cut the picture and put it in the... same; easy. They don’t want to be tired **(she laughs)**; they don’t want more effort; I mean.

Q.6: the next question is regarding the social component in learning language. What I mean is that: do you believe putting social activities when you teach language is beneficial? Do you do that? Something like: speaking, conversations, stuff like that?

T1: Yes. We sometimes ask them in...What did...‘What have you done in last Friday?’ Like this. ‘I go to my grandma’s farm,’ ‘I go to my grandpa’s home,’ ‘I played with my..’ So, he can speak, and you can correct the false sentences or false “AlMakharej” (المخارج) **(She says ‘articulation’ in Arabic)**; I mean, “Soubat Makharej” (صعوبات مخارج) **(She says ‘articulation difficulties/disabilities’ in Arabic)**, you can correct. Sometimes, I just listen to them when they are talking; they are working and talking in the... and if he says; like (يبدل حرف مكان حرف فيصدر) (she says: he substitutes letters so the meaning produced is different). So, you can tell him to say it more time, more time; like M (she says a boy’s name) when he said... said once; like “Bahr” (بحر) **(she says ‘sea’ in Arabic)** “Harb” (حرب) **(she says ‘war’ in Arabic)**, like this. So, you have to say it many times until he says it good; he has to repeat after you. So, listen to them when they are playing; in our duties, we listen them, we listen. If we find someone has a difficulty to say the sounds, you can make; like “Makhraj AlHarf Kayf” (مخرج الحرف كيف) (she says: ‘The articulation of the sound; how’ in Arabic). But I have no difficulty in my group. M (she says an Arabic teacher’s name) has a difficulty in her group; SEF, 3 kids. So, he has to say like; ‘Ab’ (أَب), ‘Aa. Aa. Ab.’ (أ، أ، أَب), ‘At’ (أَت), ‘At. Aa. Aa, At’ (أَت، أ، أ، أَت); like teach them how they say it; pronounce it. So now they have no difficulty; they speak good.

I ask: So, what do you think is the benefit from letting them talk and having conversations, on them?

T1: keep their behavior **(she laughs)**; So, speak with you is better than speak to each other. And sometimes, they have something in their mind makes their mind busy.

(We are interrupted by the entrance of a school administrator who greeted the teacher and talked to her for several minutes)

Q.7: the next question is about the routine. Regarding the teaching, or regarding the planning of your lesson; What do you believe are the parts that are the most important to include? Regarding targets, skills, activities that must be included; in almost every class you have.

T1: In my planning they have routine; like I said before, like story, like song in the beginning. Like; activities like cut and paste, like recognize by playing roles; like this. So, my activities should be related to my target. So, I put the target and then think about how I present or show the target, and how the kids can accept it. And if the kids like to listen, the kids like to play, the kids like to see; and then put my activities to achieve my target. Like; 'to recognize the letter by jumping on the card', 'by Bingo cards to find letters,' 'by electronic activities; like touch the letter "Ba" (ب);' like 'Connect between "Ba" (ب) and the picture beginning with "Ba" (ب),' like 'Find "Ba" (ب) in the beginning or the middle or the end;' like this. So, the target should be related to the activities, and the activities related to the target. And, you have to know what you have to do and what the kids should do. So, make the role clear; for you and for the kids. And then make the assessment clear; what is your role, what they are... when they are working on the table. Because I give them knowledge, and then when they are working on the table I need to be sure they are accepting it or I will make it again; in other ways, or other different activities. So, I'm looking for them when they are working; if they do it okay, or almost 70% do it, it is okay; he needs only revision next time. But, if they can't do it, I can change the activities. Like, puzzle last time; 'make connection between the letter in the beginning and in the last;' it is not attractive for them. So, I'm thinking to make it; like, make the chain or hang it on the tree; connect every 2 shapes and hang it; like, I will change my way. I will change my way to help them to accept this.

Q.8: And do you see; in FS2 especially, Do you see that you tend to change the activities too much, or there is sticking to types. Because you know their interests; what they like?

T1: All of them they have to practice to write; group by group. All of them they have to give me new vocabulary which have the same sound. All of them have to recognize the previous letters. When we do the activities, I can see which one wants to cut and paste, which one wants to make playdough, which one wants to make puzzles, or which one plays, which one.. You know. So, the routine with different activities should be in the starter, in the show and the end. They like... I put my electronic activities by the end of my lesson, because all of them want to share; all of them want to touch and share. So, 'finish your target and then you can have this; like a gift.' So, if you put it in the beginning, all of will: 'Haa, Haa.

Miss, me, me, me, me;’ So, finish your knowledge, finish your target; achieve your target, finish your activities, and then it is okay, you can go and play with the electronic board.

I ask: To conclude with this question. Do you believe when they are younger, you should stick to certain types of activities they know? Or do you actually change a lot to discover more of their interests? Like; they like this activity; they don’t like this.

T1: No, No. All the activities achieve one target. So, when I ask them: ‘Do you like to color?’ or ‘Do you like to match?’ or ‘Do you like to cut and paste?’ or ‘Do you like to form the letters?’ All of this is helping me to achieve my target ‘to recognize the shapes of the letter’ or ‘to recognize the letter from the many letters.’ So, I ask them: ‘You like to color?’ ‘You like to go there?’ or I can choose the weak students to make practice with playdough, to make practice with that, and when they finish, they can choose other activities. So, I ask them: ‘Do you like this activity or you like this activity?’, ‘If you like to do that, go to table green,’ ‘If you like to do that, go to ...’ Because all the activities are achieving one target.

Appendix E

Schedule of Classroom Observations and Interviews

Event	Participant	Date	Time
Observation 1	T1	Sunday 29/10/2017	12-12:40 pm
	T2	Tuesday 31/10/2017	13:40-14:40 pm
Interview 1	T1	Tuesday 31/10/2017	14-14:30 pm
	T2		15-15:30 pm
Observation 2	T1	Sunday 5/11/2017	12-12:40 pm
	T2		7:50-8:50 am
Interview 2	T1	Sunday 5/11/2017	14-14:30 am
	T2		15-15:30 pm
Observation 3	T1	Sunday 12/11/2017	12-12:40 pm
	T2		7:50-8:50 am
Interview 3	T1	Sunday 12/11/2017	14-14:30 pm
	T2		15-15:30 pm
Observation 4	T1	Sunday 19/11/2017	12-12:40 pm
	T2		7:50-8:50 am
Interview 4	T1	Sunday 19/11/2017	14-14:30 pm
	T2		15-15:30 pm

Appendix F



Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee -Research Ethics Review Form-

A. Title of Study

Arabic Emergent Literacy Instruction in Private Schools: A Case Study

B. Principle investigator (and co-investigator(s))

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Name of PI: _____
 Department (if within UAE University): _____

 Organization/Department/Unit (if other than within UAE University): _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____</p> | <p>Iman Nader AlAmirah
 College of Education – Department of Curriculum & Instruction

 200835921@uaeu.ac.ae</p> |
| <p>2. Name(s) of co-investigator(s):* _____
 Department(s) (if within UAE University): _____
 Organization(s)/Department(s)/Unit(s) (if other than within UAE University): _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____</p> | <p>_____

 _____</p> |

**Copy and paste (2) as needed.*

C. Abstract

(Give a brief abstract of the proposed research (not more than one page))

Emergent literacy is a concept that connects principles of early development and language acquisition of children. Because teachers are key contributors to children learning and growth, understanding how they view and practice emergent literacy instruction can add to the knowledge of early childhood education curricula in the studied context and explore how teachers assist young learners' acquisition and development of emergent literacy. The topic of literacy education in kindergarten will be the focus of this the research study of which questions about the teachers' perceptions of emergent literacy teaching strategies and nature of teaching practices during circle time are aimed to be answered. Models of emergent literacy instruction were based on different views on the ways children learn language and thus concentrate on developing numerous skills and knowledge areas. However, the acquisition of language concepts is an exceptional process when it comes to Arabic

language. The qualitative nature of data targeted by the researcher will be collected from case studies of private school teachers. Observations and interviews with the Arabic teachers will generate the raw data of which analysis will generate themes to aid discussion of findings. Similarly, the validity and reliability of such qualitative data will be ensured by establishing trustworthiness and credibility via triangulation and inter-rater reviews.

4. Is this a retrospective study (yes/no)? If yes, explain.

Yes

No

5. Type of study: A Master's Thesis Research Study that will be conducted in a qualitative design.

6. Will there be direct contact with the participant?

Yes

No

7. Will you obtain written consent from each participant? If yes, explain how.

Yes

No

Consent forms including full details about the study are written and will be obtained from each participant at the beginning of the project.

8. Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary? If yes, explain how.

Yes

No

A section explaining that the participation is voluntary is included in the informed consent form all participants will read.

9. Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any stage? If yes, explain how.

Yes

No

The informed consent form states that the participants have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research without resulting in any loss to the participants.

10. Will you tell participants that their confidentiality will be maintained and if published, the data will not be identifiable as theirs? If yes, explain how.

Yes

No

The participants are informed in the consent form that their confidentiality will be maintained and their identities will not be disclosed if data is published.

11. Will you provide participants with information on the study? If yes, explain how.	
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An informed consent form that includes full details about the aims, setting, procedures and benefits of the study is given to all participants at the beginning of the project.
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Will you tell participants you can and will answer any questions they may have on the study? If yes, explain how.	
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participants are informed that they can freely ask any question they may have on the study at any time, and the contact information of the researcher are given in the consent form.
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Will you ensure that your study will not deliberately mislead participants? If yes, explain how.	
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The study will be conducted under as academic project that will clearly explain all the parts of the research to participants.
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Are you confident that there is no realistic risk of any participant experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort? If yes, explain why.	
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No part of this study includes no realistic risk for participants, and the study will cause no physical or psychological discomfort to them. The consent form that will be given to participants explains the risk-free nature of the study.
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. To whom and how do you plan to disseminate the results of the study (e.g. to participants, to faculty, to scientific community)?	
The results of the study will be disseminated to faculty at the college of education, UAEU as part of the requirement of the master's program. Part of the results might be published in an academic journal or shared at a conference.	

I certify that all information provided above is correct and that it will apply throughout the performance of the proposed research and that I shall be responsible for safeguarding the confidentiality of participants involved.

I am aware of the confidential nature of this information and will vouch for any person, other than myself, who will work with this information under my direction.


Iman AlAmirah Iman
Signature of Principal Investigator

14/10/2017
Date

Signature of co-investigator(s) (if applicable):

Investigator 1:

Date

Investigator 2:	Date
Investigator 3:	Date
 Name and Signature of Head of Department of Principal Investigator*	Dr. Mohamad Shaban 14/10/2017 Date

* If the PI is a student, then the name and signature of student's supervisor/advisor are required.

NB: Please make sure all the documents (if applicable) in the Checklist below (Appendix B) accompany the present application. Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Appendix A List of Investigators

Principle Investigator

Name:	Iman Nader AlAmirah
Title/position:	Master's Students
Affiliation:	College of Education - UAE
Address:	
Tel:	
Email:	200835921@uaeu.ac.ae

Co-Principle Investigator (if any)

Name:	
Title/position:	
Affiliation:	
Address:	
Tel:	
Email:	

Additional Investigators (if any)

Additional Investigator 1*:

Name:	
Title/position:	
Affiliation:	
Address:	
Tel:	
Email:	

(*Copy and paste the above as needed)

Appendix G

Participant Information Letter

Name of study: Exploring the Nature of Arabic Emergent Literacy Instruction in Private Kindergartens: A Case Study of Two Teachers

Introduction

My name is Iman AlAmirah, and I am a graduate student in the College of Education at UAE University. I am currently conducting my thesis research into Arabic Emergent Literacy Instruction in Private Kindergartens, and would like to invite you to participate in this research. This information sheet should provide you with all of the information you need to decide whether you would like to take part in the study or not. Please read it thoroughly and ask any questions you would like to, before deciding if you would like to take part.

Purpose of the Study

The aims of this research are (a) to explore the perceptions of a private kindergarten teacher regarding Arabic emergent literacy teaching, (b) to explore the practices of teaching Arabic emergent literacy this teacher applies in the classroom, and (c) to discover the variations between the teacher's perceptions and her practices regarding Arabic emergent literacy teaching.

Study Procedures

By deciding to participate in this study, you will agree to have your Arabic literacy classes attended by the researcher for observation during an estimated period of 4-6 weeks. The researcher will also have 20-30 minute-interviews with you prior to and following the observed classes, and she will ask you to provide your lesson plans in order to support the collection of data from the observations and interviews. The times of observations and interviews will be planned with you according to your schedule, and you will be given an opportunity to review the transcript from this interview and will be able to delete, modify, or elaborate on any of your responses, if you so choose; this may require more of your time.

Confidentiality

The information collected will be used for research purposes only. The data documents will be kept confidential by securely storing it within a locked location at UAE University and assign security codes to computerized records, and it will be destroyed when analyses are completed. During interviews, your voice will be recorded, and the audio files will be transcribed while removing all names and any identifying features.

Results of this study may be published in an academic journal and as a conference paper and may include quotations from your interview. A fictitious name will be used instead of your name and efforts will be made not to disclose your identity.

Benefits of Being in the Study

Participating in this study will contribute to the knowledge about teaching Arabic emergent literacy in the early years and the uniqueness of the kindergarten teacher's roles and contribution to early language acquisition.

The findings from this study will be given to the schools involved and to Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) for their use in designing kindergarten literacy teaching and learning experiences.

Risks

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time without resulting in any loss to you.

Questions

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact the researcher, Iman AlAmirah at 200835921@uaeu.ac.ae

At the end of the research project, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you by email.

Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep,

Participant's Name
(print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H

Table 3.1. Structure of the ELLCO K-3, Research Edition

GENERAL CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Section I: Classroom Structure

- Item 1: Organization of the Classroom
- Item 2: Contents of the Classroom
- Item 3: Classroom Management
- Item 4: Professional Focus

Section II: Curriculum

- Item 5: Integration of Language and Literacy
- Item 6: Opportunities for Independence in Learning
- Item 7: Recognizing Diversity in the Classroom

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Section III: The Language Environment

- Item 8: Discourse Climate
- Item 9: Opportunities for Extended Conversations
- Item 10: Efforts to Build Vocabulary

Section IV: Books and Reading

- Item 11: Characteristics of Books
- Item 12: Development of Reading Fluency
- Item 13: Sounds to Print
- Item 14: Strategies to Build Reading Vocabulary
- Item 15: Strategies to Build Reading Comprehension

Section V: Print and Writing

- Item 16: Writing Environment
 - Item 17: Focused Writing Instruction
 - Item 18: Students' Writing Products
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