

DEVELOPING LANGUAGE SKILLS RECIPROCITY

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***Abstract:** Literacy begins long time before the beginning of formal studies in school. A child evolves and develops lingual skills, his reading and writing at the same time. Reading, writing, listening and speech are skills that develop in reciprocity, as different aspects of the language, rather than one after the other. Literacy develops in the daily reality of a child. Thus, its function is an integral part of the childhood period. Children learn to read and write and improve their lingual competence while studying a written language and by active activity, and in that process, they research the print and are assisted by significant adults in their life, their parents and teachers.*

This applied research emphasizes that there is much importance of the time devoted to writing, and in the way of teaching and instruction at early reading that would teach the contexts and rules of orthography, graphemes, and distinction between them and their duties, as part of executing tasks and writing assignments at the time of reading acquisition [11]

***Keywords:** Reading, writing, linguistic, competence, emergent literacy*

The findings of the study have proven that the intervention program for writing development, that is delivered with a close accompanying and instruction and relates to each study subject, including lessons of learning how to read, will significantly increase achievements in reading, writing and lingual skill. The study clarifies and confirms that there is a correlation between formation of lingual skill, reading and writing, and the three have a communicative function, and children that begin to read, naturally employ the same strategies as a skilled reader with speed and ease with the purpose of achieving meaning from a written text, in their natural language [2, 9, 19, 23]. Reading is thus perceived as a complex process in which a reader constructs a message which has been encoded by the writer in a graphic language [8]. In this definition, the graphic input and the exact identification of components that appear in print are partial and the main point is focused

on the process of collection of information and in production of meaning out of a text. The intervention program constructed from the hive model [18] is based on studies, and indeed the acquisition of beginning reading is comprised of two processes: the process of perception of print, that includes graphic awareness, phonemic awareness and the graphic-phonemic adjustment and the process of production of meaning from the text. These processes constitute a single holistic interactive unit and this is due to the fact that all dimensions of a written language are interrelated and develop in the same way and at the same time. In fact, a combined process takes place here that integrates expanding of the repertoire and lingual knowledge of children, and is not a transition from one separate process to another [10, 1]. Thus, spoken language and written language are inseparable [14, 15, 20, 25]. In literate societies, such as the Western societies, a child is exposed to a written language from the start, and emergent literacy is expressed even prior to the child has acquired his world and making it into a meaningful one. Children even prior to school age, use writing which in part is their personal invention. They do so, one way or another, by means of judgment that are usually different from those of their parents and teachers [6, 7, 12, 13, 22, 24, 25]. “A child is like a scientist. He is born to be a nature researcher. In his every step and every expression, he has an assumption of a guess which he confirms or negates in his further activity” [27]. Learning of reading and writing is acquired while a socialization processes, in which traditions of culture, verbal communication and attitudes regarding the written text are reflected. In these societies, a child internalizes the functional characteristics of literacy as part of learning of reading and writing. Reading is closely related to familiar activity and situations; the children learn to produce meaning from their literacy environment. The term of emergent literacy first coined by Clay [5], indicated the process of literacy development that takes place while reciprocal relations between a child and the print.

In fact, children arrive to school with a variety of skills that might assist them in acquisition of reading, writing and lingual skills. Differences in these skills in young children predict later differences in acquisition of reading, writing competence and lingual skills [17] as well as academic achievements in general [3], that he has the competence to “read” stories that are familiar to him from listening [22] and “write” messages and stories on his own [31, 22, 26]. Nonetheless, researchers assume, that at the time this development occurs, something new appears in a child, something that has not been in him before. They emphasize, that children learn, change their motives and strategies, and even develop new strategies, and improve their lingual competence. This is a result of use of writing and reading in daily contexts at home and in school, as well as a result of stimulation and arousing in a child’s environment. This experimental study emphasizes that there is much importance of the time devoted to writing, and in the way of teaching and instruction at early reading that would teach the contexts and rules of orthography, graphemes, and distinction between them and their duties, as part of executing tasks and writing assignments at the time of reading acquisition [11].

The importance of interaction between a teacher, a parent and a pupil is a key motive in child’s development. Differences in the perception of teachers of themselves as mediators,

and differences in quantity and quality of mediation explain variance in functioning of young children. According to these approaches, the experiences a child has experienced with an adult that responds to him are of most significance in development of awareness [29, 30]. Just like at time of reading books, at time of writing with children, mediation for writing promotes the same skills. The quality of mediation is measured by the extent of separation of a word into its sounds by the teacher or a parent and encouraging a child to relate sounds to names of letters and their graphic forms. Indeed, children who have been encouraged to separate a word into sounds, to relate sounds to names of letters and their form, related to morphology and final letters, exhibited a higher level of reading, writing and lingual skill in current study. Every literacy activity has its own unique character and thus, in the process of activity unique characteristics of the activity receive an extensive attention. Thus, it is likely to assume that those skills that receive focused attention at the time of the activity will be especially reinforced. Learning of reading with the intervention program for writing development testifies to the fact that it is important to diversify in the writing activity of teachers, parents with children. There is a separate importance to the various activities. Reading of books allows for a child an exposure to a way of writing of the language, to its orthography and development of his lingual skills, and also to spread out before the child a rich language and a vocabulary which he does not encounter in daily life [4, 16].

In summary: literacy begins long time before the beginning of formal studies in school. A child evolves and develops lingual skills, his reading and writing at the same time. Reading, writing, listening and speech are skills that develop in reciprocity, as different aspects of the language, rather than one after the other. Literacy develops in the daily reality of a child. Thus, its function is an integral part of the childhood period. Children learn to read and write and improve their lingual competence while studying a written language and by active activity, and in that process, they research the print and are assisted by significant adults in their life, their parents and teachers.

Method

In current study, it has been suggested, that in light of the main research findings, that an attempt will be made to implement the intervention program for writing development on the “Telling Sounds” method [28] that is approved by the Ministry of Education, which would include the following characteristics: increasing the instruction system for a teacher, depth of intervention and conduct in the intervention program.

“Telling sounds” [28]

The purpose of the “Telling Sounds” reading method is to instill the fundamentals of reading and writing skills in a most simple and short way. Through two booklets for a pupil, he gradually learns how to read the sounds of letters and vowels and to write them with print letters and then in a cursive script. The method is a significant phonetic method (the learner composes, constructs and build words, sentences and stories from consonants and vowels) which is presently a method that includes all of the recommended components by the reading committee. This way allows for a key to accurate and meaningful reading. In order to get the child to it, we must arouse his awareness of the existence of letters and

vowels, their combination and separation; to teach him in a clear, light and correct way and not to confuse him with duplicity of “messages”. We shall prevent him from the need to improvise and cover up on reading omissions (such as bypassing of an unassimilated vowel and spare him the creation of improper reading patterns. For example, a pupil who has not internalized the “Holam Haser” (“o” in Hebrew that is written only in the diacritics and thus can be missed) reads the word “Madhom” like this:

1. Madhem (what could it be)
2. Oh... Madhom.

A pupil is to be allowed a time period (which is individual for each person) for a segmented reading (however accurate) and he is not to be hastened to reading rapidly before he is ready for it. The stage of segmented reading is not to be skipped in learning how to read. This stage is important to the process of learning how to read (Bar-ba-ra – Barbara). In a short period of time, which is individual to each person, a pupil stops on his own, to segment and fluency of reading increases with the reading. Fluency of reading that is achieved after study period of 3-5 months is dissimilar to the fluency of reading after 10 months just as the fluency of reading at the end of first grade is dissimilar to the fluency of reading at the end of second grade.

The fluency of reading of pupils who finished learning of reading, is not uniform. By this method, there is much attention to the emotional side that accompanies the acquisition of reading. Any difficulty in acquisition of reading might deter a pupil and give him a sense of failure which can delay his progress. Thus, an easy method has been chosen that guarantees the children a feeling of control over the material and of success. The children understand the process, know what is required of them and feel that they progress. The texts are simple and taken from a child’s world. It should be stated that each child advances according to his maturity, with close supervision. In the learning process, an attempt has been made to prevent frustrations. For this purpose, individual examinations are performed every few days in order to assist a pupil to acquire the building blocks in an accurate manner and prevent reading disabilities. A child that is familiar with the alphabet letters, the sounds they represent, decodes combinations, consonants and vowels in an exact and easy manner, and he can direct attention resources to reading comprehension. The uniqueness of the method: in the process of instilling of reading, various factors are integrated both in separate and combined.

- The visual factor – observing a picture and the sound that corresponds it and the boards that hang in the class.
- The hearing factor – listening to sounds a teacher reads, pronouncing the sounds by the pupil, various games.
- The motor factor – writing of the studied sound and its pronunciation.
- The associative factor – by pictures that accompany the reading process and arouse associations for the sounds (B – big) associative pictures for each sound.

Alongside with instilling of reading and writing a pupil is exposed to:

- Cultivation of verbal discourse as preceding reading and writing.

- Lingual enrichment as a supporting basis for the teaching of reading – enrichment of vocabulary, understanding the structure of the Hebrew language that is built upon roots and families of words.
- Development of reading comprehension competence: sorting, prediction of events, drawing conclusions, locating items, etc.
- Operating diverse reading and writing strategies that cultivate understanding and thinking.
- The learning environment that encourages reading and writing – games, books, etc.

Recommendations for teachers/parents:

- Parents must understand that without a controlled individual drilling, there will be no mastery of the material. Thus, a child needs to read aloud every day, with the presence of an adult, the text that is being studied in class. It is of importance that the text will be read twice: first time by a technical reading and the second time by comprehension reading. The length of time to invest in the practice is about 5-10 minutes a day. After the story, the child can be asked questions about the content of the story and a conversation can be developed.
- Guessing of a word a child has difficulty in reading, is to be avoided and the child is to be allowed to read accurate reading according to diacritics.
- Stressing a child to read rapid reading is to be avoided before he has internalized the building blocks of reading in an accurate manner in order to prevent incorrect reading patterns.
- The child is not to be let reading first silently and then aloud as this condition creates: a. lack of concentration; b. he might err without supervision and disrupt the meaning.
- The child is not to be let run through the material and “allegedly” advance without criticism. These children create gaps in mastery of building blocks.
- It is important to read the child additional stories, but one should not read from the study book.
- One is to make sure that the child writes with diacritics, this strengthens acquisition of reading in an accurate manner and additionally, the child internalizes patterns of words in a correct manner without guessing.
- Parents should check whether their child writes letters and numerals in the right directions and whether he has difficulties in the writing thereof. In case of incorrect writing, the teacher is to be approached and consulted.

The purpose of current study examines the differences and achievements between pupils who study in the customary and approved methods by the Ministry of Education [55], and between pupils who study with the customary methods in which the intervention program would be integrated for emphasizing of the component of teaching of writing.

1. In reading competence manifestation.
2. In writing competence manifestation.
3. In diagnosing linguistic competences manifestation.

4. In identifying the correlation between reading, writing and linguistic competences.

Research question

To what extent development of writing according to the recommendations of "teaching program for implementation of linguistic education targets" parallel to instilling of reading amongst first grade pupils, would improve writing competence and improve achievements in reading and linguistic competence?

The study included 20 first grade pupils, of a medium-high socioeconomic condition similarly to pupils who have participated in the main study, half boys and half girls.

The intervention program for writing development was operated with increasing of instruction system for a teacher, depth of intervention and conduct in the intervention program for a period of one month by teachers of the class. The addressing of teachers of the writing was throughout the entire school day, and in every subject. The teachers initiated different writing opportunities, while giving attention to reading, correct writing, and enrichment of lingual competence in various forms, in groups, individually and in class. The teachers made sure to talk to pupils after they have written, and give feedbacks to every pupil, for correct writing and writing that enriches lingual skill. Parents were partners to the writing process. Prior to beginning of the program, the pupils were given a series of tests examining lingual skill, reading competence, and writing competence. A test battery identical to that which served the main study. At the end of the intervention program, a second test battery was given to the pupils. After that, the rate of change of pupils in various research indexes was examined and the findings are reported.

The two tests were also given the main research. The tests for evaluation of level of reading, reading comprehension and writing in first grades has been designed by a team of the committee for teaching of reading and of a steering committee for reform in reading in Shomron committee. The test has been intended to evaluate the achievements of first grade pupils after several months of studying in first grade. For examination of skills, national standards have been formulated for execution of assignments.

The first test includes Seven assignment that examine different aspects of skills of reading, writing:

First assignment – reading names of letters

Second assignment – reading sounds of letters

Third assignment – reading combinations of consonants and vowels

Fourth assignment – reading of meaningless words with diacritics

Fifth assignment – reading of words

Sixth assignment – reading aloud of a text

Seven assignment – writing

The second test for examination of linguistic competence is based on pictures in sequence test. A pupil must first organize the information from a picture into a narrative scheme, and then, to transfer that scheme into a narrative text he writes. Understanding of a story and the linguistic level of the storyteller can be expressed when a pupil tells it independently. The story chosen in current study is comprised of 4 pictures . It has been was presented to pupils in proper sequence, (details of the test are shown in the main study)

Findings. Rate of change in reading competence

Reading competence is examined by 6 tasks. For examination of change, a dependent-samples T-test was performed, and the findings are presented in table 1.

Table 1: averages, standard deviations and results of the T-test for comparison control group and implementation group in reading competence.

Assignment	control group		implementation group		T
	M	SD	M	SD	
1	22.80	4.57	24.85	4.09	4.10***
2	21.85	4.17	24.05	4.17	3.32**
3	41.00	4.70	44.15	3.26	4.40***
4	15.10	5.14	16.70	4.53	5.01***
5	15.60	4.23	18.60	2.30	5.53***
6	59.85	15.24	63.80	13.49	5.69***

p<0.01 *p<0.001

The findings in table 1 indicate a significant rise in all indexes in reading competence and in some of the indexes, it can be seen that in implementation group, standard deviations are reduced, which indicated an increase in homogeneity in reading competence amongst pupils following the intervention. These findings of the applied research study, confirm the first research hypothesis of main study.

Rate of change in writing competence

Writing competence was measured in the applied research study through a test. For the evaluation of change in writing competence a dependent-samples T-test was conducted which indicated the fact that writing competence has significantly improved – T (19)= 4.62, p<0.001. In control group, the writing competence was relatively mediocre (M=10.85, SD=4.12) in a scale of scores between 1-15. According to the findings, it can be seen that standard deviation in implementation group is also reduced, which indicates homogeneity in writing competence implementation group. This finding in the applied research study confirms the second research hypothesis of main study.

Rate of change in lingual competence

Lingual competence of pupils was measured by 5 indexes: opening, body, closing, causality and tenses, in a series of dependent-samples T-test, and are presented in table 2. Table 2: averages, standard deviations and results of dependent-samples T-tests in a comparison control group and implementation group, in lingual competence.

Index	control group		implementation group		T
	M	SD	M	SD	
Opening	4.00	1.12	4.75	0.55	4.27***
Body	3.40	1.31	4.10	0.97	5.48***
Ending	3.80	1.24	4.75	0.44	4.50***
Causality	1.10	1.02	1.40	0.94	1.37
use of tenses	1.30	0.98	1.60	0.82	1.37

***p<0.001

From table 2, it can be seen that the abilities of pupils in indexes of lingual skill of writing an opening, body and closing have significantly improved, it can also be seen that standard deviation in the measurement implementation group is even more reduced, which indicates homogeneity in the lingual skill competence. Although no significant differences were found in indexes of causality and use of tenses, it can be seen that in these indexes, there was as well a trend of rise in competence and decrease in standard deviation, but, as stated above, no significant indexes were found. These findings in applied practical part of the study confirm also the third research hypothesis of main study.

Correlations between lingual competence and reading and writing competence

For examination of correlations between the indexes of lingual competence and indexes of reading and writing, Pearson's correlations were performed on achievements prior to intervention and the findings are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Pearson's correlations for examination of correlations between lingual abilities and abilities of reading and writing.

Assignment	Opening	Body	Ending	Causality	use of tenses
1	0.96***	0.73***	0.85***	0.69***	0.54*
2	0.97***	0.62***	0.77***	0.63**	0.50*
3	0.84***	0.78***	0.90***	0.61**	0.46*
4	0.81***	0.91***	0.88***	0.77***	0.36
5	0.91***	0.84***	0.87***	0.81***	0.47*
6	0.77***	0.80***	0.69***	0.80***	0.45*
writing	0.70***	0.87***	0.66***	0.73***	0.60**

p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

From the correlations presented in table 3, it can be seen that there is a positive correlation between lingual abilities of pupils in implementation group and between reading and writing abilities. The correlations are very high and indicate a strong linear correlation, with an exclusion of correlations between the use of tenses and reading and writing competence where correlations are mediocre and additionally, no significant correlation was found between use of tenses and the task of reading non-words. These findings in the applied research study confirm the fourth research hypothesis of main study.

Discussion and conclusions. The findings in the applied research study indicated the fact that the intervention program for writing development, on a teaching method has the following characteristics: increasing the instruction system for a teacher, depth of intervention and conduct within the intervention program, indeed improve the competence of lingual skill and abilities of reading and writing in parallel, similarly to the "Power to the Reader" method operated in the main study. Additionally, it can be seen that in large part of the abilities, the achievements implementation group, amongst pupils, were higher and more homogeneous (lower standard deviation implementation group). The correlations between indexes of lingual skill and indexes of reading and writing abilities

that were found to be high indicate the advantage of the intervention program that integrated development of writing in applied research study over the program operated in main study. Although the correlation between lingual skill in use of tenses and the non-word reading tasks was not found to be significant, this can be explained by their young age and lingual maturity. And, as mentioned earlier, rest of correlations were also found, in part, to be very high, and it indicated the advantage of this intervention program. Observing the findings presented in table 3, indicates intense and significant correlations between all the indexes of lingual competence and the indexes of reading and writing as opposed to the correlations presented in table 9, which did not reveal significant correlations between causality, tenses and reading and writing competence.

Findings of current study indicate the advantages of first grade pupils, who have learned how to read with inclusion of an intervention program for writing development. These advantages were prominent in abilities of reading, writing and the competence of lingual skill. Nonetheless, a reservation should be made, that the experimental sample is relatively small and that a teaching method existing in one of the schools was addressed. The study arouses further questions such as: to what extent, if any, the intervention program for writing development would supply a response to needs of children that require cultivation, who do not come with a literacy background to the first grade. This point was not examined. Another aspect that needs to be examined is, to what extent there is importance to prolong the process of reading acquisition until the end of first school year and not to continue the process in the second school year as well, as this process is a developmental one, that is build layer by layer and this is to prevent failures and study difficulties in higher grades. In summary, the intervention program for writing development that was put to use in the applied research study improves the correlations between lingual competence and reading and writing competence, even more than the intervention program employed in main study. It might be that the close instruction received by the teachers, the depth of intervention, time devoted to the program and the conduct with the intervention program, indicate the fact that this program is effective for improvement of abilities of first grade pupils.

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