

Nature of the Project

It was decided that the focus should be on learning about emergent literacy in preschools and early literacy in elementary schools.

Approximately twenty Arab scholars and experts in a variety of fields of research (e.g., linguistics, cognitive psychology) and lines of work (e.g., speech and language therapists) accepted the invitation to take part in the project on a volunteer basis. The group will meet for four or five workshops, each lasting one or two days. Each workshop will have a theoretical/professional component and an empirical component, and emphasis will be placed on interpersonal relations as well.

There is an option of involving expert scholars from abroad to present recent discoveries on relevant topics (e.g., diglossia).

The theoretical material that accrues during the workshops will be collected for inclusion in a summarizing document.

Main Topics

First workshop: **Linguistic literacy in preschools** (July 2007)

Second workshop: **Challenges facing children in learning to read and write** (August 2007). Guest lecture: Dr. Reem Khamis-Dakwar, Teachers College, Columbia University Diglossia through Neuro-scientific Lenses: New Research Perspectives

Third workshop: **Early language acquisition, emergent literacy**. Workshop participants will present findings from their research. (January 2008)

Fourth workshop: **Diglossia in Arabic and in other languages** (February 2008). Guest lecture: Prof. Julie A. Washington, Department of Communicative Disorders, University of Wisconsin. Topic: African-American diglossia and educational efforts to meet the challenge.

Fifth workshop: **Development needs of the MOE and RAMA**

Symposium: **Spoken and Written Language in a Diglossic Context: Implications for Literacy Acquisition in Arabic** (February 2008). Guest lecture: Prof. Julie A. Washington, Department of Communicative Disorders, University of Wisconsin.

Brief Biographies of Participants in the Project Workshops

Hanadi Abu Ahmed is an expert on learning disabilities and a learning-disabilities diagnostician; this year she is working primarily in the Amal school network. Previously, she taught grades 1 and 2. This year she is working as an instructor in the diagnosis of learning disabilities in Arabic in a course on coefficients of learning functioning at the University of Haifa.

She is working towards a master's degree at the University of Haifa, specializing in predicting decoding ability and in reading comprehension in second grade: evidence from longitudinal research in preschools. Advisors: Prof. David Share and Dr. Raphiq Ibrahim. She is due to receive her master's degree in 2008.

Alkahira Abud Alhai is a learning-disabilities diagnostician and learning-disabilities therapist who uses a multidisciplinary approach. She previously taught teachers of special-needs preschoolers, trained instructors for the Reading and Enjoying Together program, and was a national project

planner for Mabatim. She was the coordinator of the Ma'agan program for the entire Arab sector, as well as a coordinator and instructor for Milo centers.

She is certified as a preschool teacher by the State Teachers' College–Seminar Hakibbutzim (1983) and studied diagnosis and treatment of learning disabilities and special education, also at Seminar Hakibbutzim, and a master's degree from the Schwarz Early Childhood Program at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (no thesis). Email: turkia62@bezeqint.net

Hanan Abu Nofal–Srouf is a certified educational psychologist and an intern in developmental psychology at Maccabi Healthcare Services. She works for the Educational Psychology Service in Nazareth and is a facilitator of preschool teachers in the Mabatim program. She is involved in three projects, all of them adapted to Arab society, that are intended to fill in gaps in the developmental knowledge of preschool teachers and childcare providers. The projects are being sponsored by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Van Leer Institute.

She has a master's degree in developmental psychology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2001). Thesis topic: "Traditional Concepts and Treatments of Mental Illness: Folk Healing and Healers Among Palestinian Arabs Living in Israel." Advisor: Prof. Yoram Bilu. Email: hananas17@gmail.com

Amir Abu Yonis is a certified educational psychologist, currently working for the Educational Psychology Service in Nazareth. He formerly worked for the Educational Psychology Service in the Northern District and was the coordinator of preschool psychologists in Nazareth. He is an instructor in the Ma'agan program in Nazareth and coordinator of the team there. He is also a facilitator for the programs Atlalat-Mabatim, Learning to Live Together, Discussions among Children and with Children, and Hosen: Coping with Stress and Trauma. He is currently training to be a practitioner of the EMDR trauma treatment method.

He has a master's degree in clinical psychology and psychology education from Moscow State University (1997). Thesis topic: "Betrayal in the Family: An Intercultural Study." Advisor: Prof. A. S. Spivakovsky. He received Israeli certification in educational psychology in 2006. Email: amirhs_boyonis@yahoo.com

Safieh Arafat is a pedagogical instructor and a lecturer on literacy and on teaching reading to beginners. She is the coordinator of practicums at the Academic Institute for Training Arab Teachers at Beit Berl College. She was previously the coordinator of the early childhood program at Beit Berl College and a district instructor for elementary schools in language skills, evaluation, diagnosis, mapping, scholastic materials, and learning environments. She has published a first-grade reading book.

She has a master's degree from the Social Sciences Curriculum Planning Program at Tel Aviv University (2002). Thesis topic: Arab fifth-graders' perceptions of the concepts of learning, teacher, and pupil. She is currently working towards a doctorate. Dissertation topic: mediation by Arab mothers reading books to their children and its connection to the spoken language and initial reading in preschool and first grade. Email: safiehar@gmail.com

Hanan Assad is a speech and language therapist and a supervisor of students and preschool teachers specializing in communication, language, and speech. She is a teaching and research assistant, and she teaches a course at the University of Haifa entitled "Acquired Language Disorders and Genetic Syndromes."

She has a master's degree from the Department of Communications Disorders at Tel Aviv University. Thesis topic: "Phonological Representation as a Common Basis for Reading and Naming Processes in Arabic-Speaking Children." She is currently working towards a doctorate at

the University of Haifa, specializing in the reading of Arabic. Advisors: Dr. Zohar Eviatar and Prof. Shimon Sapir. Email: hanan.assad@gmail.com

Omaimah Azem Gazleen is an English teacher in southern Israel.

She has a master's degree from the Department of Language Acquisition and Teaching at Tel Aviv University. Thesis topic: "The Impact of External Evaluation on Evaluation Processes in Schools." After earning her master's degree, she took courses at Tel Aviv University in early childhood literacy, language development, and theory of mind. She conducted another study, which was then presented at a conference in Berlin, on "narrative ability among Arabic-speaking children aged 6 and 10," under Prof. Dorit Ravid of Tel Aviv University. She is preparing a research proposal for a doctorate dissertation on "the relationship between conceptual development and the ability to produce expository texts." Advisor: Prof. Dorit Ravid, Tel Aviv University. Email: gazalin@zahav.net.il

Maha Eid Azzam is an occupational therapist. She is an instructor of preschool teachers in the Ma'agan and Mabatim projects and works with special-needs children in various treatment settings. She has 12 years of experience in pediatric occupational therapy, including therapeutic work, stimulation/inhibition, and teaching preschool teachers and students in various settings (Clalit Health Services, Maccabi Healthcare Services [child development], a therapeutic daycare center, the Holy Family School, Ma'agan, and Mabatim).

She has a master's degree in occupational therapy from Tel Aviv University (2005), having specialized in motor learning among children. Email: mahae@netvision.net.il

Arige Elouti has taught learning-disabled students at Oranim Academic College and at the Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel for four years. She is a member of the Israeli national affiliate of the International Dyslexia Association and has taught English as a foreign language for about 20 years.

She has a master's degree in English linguistics from the University of Haifa (2000), having specialized in discourse analysis, as well as a teaching certificate in English as a foreign language. She is working towards a doctorate in linguistics at Bar-Ilan University. Email: areej@netvision.net.il

Rola Farah is a licensed speech and language therapist who diagnoses and treats hearing and speech disorders in hospitals and at diagnostic centers.

She has a master's degree in communication disorders from the Faculty of Medicine of Tel Aviv University (2001). Thesis topic: The acquisition of plural nouns in spoken Palestinian Arabic. She has published articles and a longitudinal research study with Prof. Dorit Ravid on the acquisition of plural nouns in spoken Palestinian Arabic. Email: soniccenter@hotmail.com

Areen Hadia is a speech and language therapist in several child development centers, runs a multidisciplinary clinic, and is in charge of academic ties for the child development center of a French hospital. She is a lecturer in the Mabatim program, an instructor in the Ma'agan program, an instructor and lecturer for the program Discussions among Children, and a clinical supervisor of students in the Department of Communication Disorders at the University of Haifa.

She has a master's degree from the Department of Communication Disorders at Tel Aviv University (2006). Thesis topic: "Acquisition of Regular, Feminine, and Broken Plurals in Palestinian Arabic." Advisors: Prof. Dorit Ravid and Dr. Elinor Saiegh-Haddad. Email: areenhad@gmail.com

Ahmad Hammud is an Arabic teacher in the Sha'ur high school in Majd el-Kurum. He has 12 years of professional experience as an Arabic teacher. His main research interest is acquisition of the Arabic language and the problems involved.

He has a master's degree from Tel Aviv University (2006). Thesis topic: "How Arabic-Speakers Perceive Their Vowel System." Advisor: Prof. Dorit Ravid. He is currently a graduate student at Tel Aviv University under Prof. Dorit Ravid and Prof. Ruth Berman. Email: ahmadah@walla.com

Nareman Hende teaches educational subjects at The Academic Arab College for Education in Israel – Haifa and at the College of Sakhnin. She has worked as a pedagogical instructor for early childhood and is a former national instructor and coordinator of science and literacy for the Arab sector in the Department for Pre-School Education in the Ministry of Education.

She has a master's degree in education from University of Haifa (2000). She is currently working towards a doctorate in reading acquisition at Tel Aviv University. Advisors: Prof. Iris Levin and Dr. Elinor Saiegh-Haddad. Dissertation topic: predictors of reading among Arabic-speaking preschoolers. Email: nareman_hende@hotmail.com

Baha Makhoul is a professional facilitator who acts as a consultant on pedagogical matters and literacy in Arabic at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is also the coordinator and a developer of the Yahad Arabic program at the NCJW Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the university. She is also a lecturer in the Department of Special Education and Arabic at Oranim Academic College of Education. She serves on diagnostic committees for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services and on a steering committee for the development of a reading test on behalf of the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education (RAMA). Her main areas of interest include alternative evaluation methods and their effect on children's achievements, mentoring and its effect on the achievements of weak students, and initial reading in Arabic by native speakers at linguistic and social risk.

She earned her doctorate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2006) under Prof. Dan Davis and Prof. Elite Olshtain. Dissertation topic: acquisition of Arabic reading skills through structured mentoring, when the students are first-graders at linguistic risk. Email: bahamakhoul@bezeqint.net

Nadia Massarrweh is a certified educational psychologist, a group facilitator, and coordinator of sexual assault prevention for the Northern District of the Psychological Counseling Service. She also teaches at Oranim and has a private practice. She formerly worked as an educational psychologist for the Psychological Counseling Service and as a group facilitator for professionals and psychologists and for childcare workers and preschool teachers.

She has a master's degree in developmental psychology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2000). Email: nadiamss@yahoo.com

Sausan Mazzawi Habib is an occupational therapist and a dynamic learning-disabilities diagnostician, specializing in dynamic cognitive therapy for preschool-age children (ages 4–6). She works at the Local/Regional Support Center in Isfiya-Daliya, at the Interdisciplinary Clinical Center of the University of Haifa, and in private practice.

She has a master's degree in occupational therapy from the University of Haifa (2007). Thesis topic: the sensory profile of children and their participation in everyday activities: a comparative study of children suffering from atopic dermatitis and typical children. Advisor: Dr. Batya Engel-Yeger. Email: sausanh@gmail.com

Tagried Sayed is the director of a national Discussions with Children program in Ashalim. She was previously an inspector for family child-care centers in the Haifa and Northern District and a national instructor in the Department for Pre-School Education in the Ministry of Education. She has worked as a group facilitator and a facilitator of professional teams, and has published two guides to literature in early childhood for the Israel Association of Community Centers and the al-Tufula Center in Nazareth.

She has a master's degree in early childhood education from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Email: tagrieds@gmail.com

Abeer Shaheen is an instructor and the head of the Department of Early Childhood at the Academic Arab College for Education in Haifa. She has studied the cultivation of mathematical thinking in early childhood and the training of science and technology instructors for the Arab sector. Her research interests are early childhood literacy and the cultivation of discourse skills among preschoolers.

She is currently working towards a doctorate in early childhood literacy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Dissertation topic: the contribution of vocabulary and literate discourse skills to reading comprehension and listening comprehension among Arabic-speaking preschoolers and fourth-graders. Advisors: Prof. Shoshana Blum-Kulka and Prof. Elite Olshtain. agshaheen@yahoo.com

Jasmine Shalhoub-Awwad is a lecturer and head of the special education program and department at the Academic Arab College for Education, as well as a learning-disabilities diagnostician. She previously worked as a district instructor and an instructor for the Local/Regional Support Center in Nazareth.

She has a master's degree in special education from the University of Haifa (2002). She is currently working towards a doctorate in learning disabilities at the University of Haifa. Dissertation topic: the role of morphological structures in word identification by normal readers (children, adolescents, and adults). Advisor: Dr. Mark Leikin, head of the Department of Learning Disabilities. Email: awadyas@macam.ac.il

Haitham Taha is a lecturer and pedagogical instructor at the College of Sakhnin for Teacher Education, an expert in diagnosis and treatment of learning disabilities, the coordinator of the Amal Center for Learning Disabilities at the College of Sakhnin, and the academic coordinator of the training program in evaluation of learning functions at the college. At the University of Haifa, he is the coordinator of the development team for the Arabic-language Elul tests to identify learning disabilities and he developed the unit for diagnosis of learning-disabled Arab students, which is part of the Unit to Support Learning-Disabled Students .

He has a master's degree in learning disabilities—diagnosis, treatment ,and research. He is currently working on a doctoral dissertation on the impact of phonological versus morphological training on the ability to decode and spell words in Arabic according to the developmental model. Email: htaha@sakhnin.ac.il

Academic director:

Elinor Saiegh-Haddad is a lecturer in linguistics in the Bar-Ilan University Department of English. She received a doctorate in applied linguistics from Bar-Ilan University in 1999. She was a research fellow at the University of Toronto and in the Department of General and Applied Linguistics at the University of Copenhagen. She also taught high school in Kafr Yasif. She is a member of several professional associations, such as the International Reading Association and the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading, and is on Education Ministry committees, including the development committee for a new ninth-grade Arabic curriculum and the gearing committee for the development of a PISA-oriented Arabic reading program. Her main research interests today are reading acquisition (cognitive and linguistic factors); the psycholinguistics of reading; diglossia; bilingualism; and assessment of reading. She has won prizes for her academic work, including the Reading/Literacy Research Award from the International Reading Association.

Website: <http://www.biu.ac.il/faculty/haddad>.

Member of the Professional Advisory Committee on Language and Literacy.

Project coordinator:

Hunaida Abu-Nofal is a member of the Initiative staff. She is a speech and language therapist and an instructor of teachers and therapists in a cluster of Jerusalem preschools for the Education Ministry. In addition, she is an instructor for the Mabatim, Discussion among Fellows, and Learning to Live Together programs. She previously worked for the Ma'agan program and at the Child Development Institute in Nazareth.

She has bachelor's and master's degrees in communication disorders from the School of Health Professions, Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University (2002). Email: hunaida.education@academy.ac.il

Reut Yamin is a member of the Initiative staff.

She has a bachelor's degree in special education and a doctorate in education from Bar-Ilan University (2006). Dissertation topic: the development of implicit and explicit morphological knowledge among young readers. Email: reut.education@academy.ac.il

Reut Yamin is the coordinator of the professional advisory committee on language and literacy and of the examination team on diagnosis, assessment, and evaluation in preschool through third grade.