The Effect of "Al Manaahil" on Spelling and Reading of Students in Third Grade

Muntaha Issa Haddad

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THE EFFECT OF "AL MANAAHIL" ON SPELLING
AND READING OF STUDENTS
IN THIRD GRADE

BY
MUNTAHA ISSA HADDAD

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts
Major in Speech
South Dakota State University
1988
اهدا:
الب أبي والابي
أهدي ثمرة ما صنعت إيدي يحكم
إبتكمر منتَهى
TO MY PARENTS

This thesis is dedicated to you in appreciation for your love, help and support over the years.

Muntaha Haddad
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to my adviser, Dr. Harold Widvey. I will always remember his kindness when I met him the first time and his encouragement, guidance and support while taking his courses and writing this thesis which made it possible for me to complete this thesis.

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Last but not least I would like to thank my friend Salah Al Janabi; I am indebted to him. His encouragement is a kind that only a true friend can give.

To all of you my sincerely

MIH
THE EFFECT OF "AL MANAAHIL" ON SPELLING
AND READING OF STUDENTS
IN THIRD GRADE

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Arts, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Harold Widvey
Thesis Adviser

Jerry Ferguson, Acting Head
Department of Speech
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The development of Jordan television began in 1964. Faruk A. Jarrar, in his book, *Television in Jordan, a Short History*, gave a brief general overview of television in Jordan until 1970. He said that television in Jordan, as in many other developing countries, is a recent media of mass communication and that broadcasting facilities are government owned and operated as a general rule (Jarrar 1970).

Jordan TV was officially inaugurated by His Majesty King Hussein on 27 April 1968. The corporation's programs are varied, supplying news, information, entertainment, and education. Jordan's satellite earth station was inaugurated on 29 May 1972 (Gress 1973, 30). In April 1974 Jordan Television (JTV) introduced color for the first time. With the increased viewing over the past fifteen years, there has been a remarkable increase in transmission power throughout the country. In 1980 came the introduction of Electronic News Gathering (ENG) equipment which is used to cover all local news as well as major international conferences (Al Khteeb 1983, 1).
Since 1968 Jordan Television has begun transmitting children's programs, beginning with one-half hour of cartoon films. During 1975-76 children's programs established independence and were provided with supervisors, authors, producers, and directors (Ennab 1988).

The television screen is recognized as an important medium for transmitting information to be received through the human senses of hearing and seeing. As such it has become an educational resource. The program called "Al Manaahil" is a recently developed children's program, and combines education and entertainment, colorful graphics, games, and action footage of locales in the Arab world (Al Urdun 1987, 8).

This research is designed to determine whether this program has a measurable effect on children's skills in spelling and reading Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).

**Statement of Purpose**

Television is considered to be one of the most important information media available in Jordan and is considered an effective source of information and knowledge in both the school and the home. This study is designed to test the assumption that there is some effect of children's programs in JTV upon children. Specifically, this study will investigate the effect of a
program called "Al Manaahil" on spelling and reading skills of children between the ages of six and ten.

The research will test the following hypotheses:

1. There is no difference in the spelling skill of the children who viewed selected episodes of "Al Manaahil" and those children who did not view the episodes.

2. There is no difference between male and female results in spelling skill.

3. There is no difference in oral reading skill of children who viewed selected episodes of "Al Manaahil" and those children who did not view the episodes.

4. There is no difference between male and female results in reading skill.

**Origin and Justification of the Study**

Students in Jordan are regarded as being weak in writing (spelling) and reading Modern Standard Arabic. This complaint is voiced by the student's parents and teachers.

Without reading skills, learning is difficult in school. In the Arab World TV is available in many homes. A special TV program such as "Al Manaahil" may be suitable for teaching children spelling and reading of Modern Standard Arabic.
"Al Manaahil" takes advantage of television, as a powerful, attractive communication tool, television, to contribute to the development of reading and writing skills. Children's TV programs in Jordan are still very new. At this time, more people are becoming aware of TV and the role that it can play in society.

"Al Manaahil" is a recently developed series of sixty-five one-half hour television shows, the overall aim of which is to apply a variety of techniques and approaches to the teaching of reading through the medium of television (Al Manaahil, 1986, 1).

Jordan has achieved the stage where most children of school age are attending school.

This study examines the effect of "Al Manaahil" on children's ability to spell and read Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).

Personal Experience

The researcher taught physical education and coached sports in high school. Students in the high school age group found TV interesting and learned much from TV about sports. Also, they gathered more information from TV than from other sources. This created an interest in TV as a teaching medium.

The introduction of a new TV series program, "Al Manaahil," provided an opportunity to do some original
research in the effectiveness of such a program. Viewing the episodes of this program created interest in assessing the educational effect of "Al Manaahil" on children, the focus of this study.

Other Research that Justifies the Study

Recent research has examined the effect of TV on children in the six-to-ten age group.

In the United States, a number of studies have reported effects of TV on children. In Jordan and other Arab countries, studies are not readily available. Interviews are often the only source of information. However, the existing information from studies in the United States shows that study in Jordan and other Arab countries may be justified.

A study done in the United States showed that children do not attend to everything on TV. Paul Zuckerman and others conducted a study of 112 children—35 second graders, 51 third graders, and 26 fourth graders ranging in age from 7.5 to 10.5 years. The aim of the study was to test children's recognition memory of commercials. The results found attention to television commercials was not high. The average proportion of children who were attending during the programs was higher than during the commercials (Zuckerman, Ziegler and Stevenson 1978, 96-104). This suggests that children
may be selective in viewing, a factor which could affect outcomes in any study.

Daniel R. Andreson and others conducted a study on the effect of TV program comprehensibility on preschool children's visual attention to television. The result showed that for preschoolers, visual attention was greater in the presence of immediate dialogue. A significant increase in visual attention occurred with age. There was no main effect of sex of viewer or interaction with sex on the variables studied (Andreson et al. 1981, 151-7). This would suggest that attention would not be a problem for the student in elementary school.

Mesbah Al Khero and Hashim Al Sameraee conducted a study in Baghdad on the effect of the TV program "Iftah ya Simisum," on children. The program combined attention holding tactics (e.g. fast movement, humor, slapstick and animation) with carefully planned educational curriculum designed to foster skills such as recognition of the letters of the alphabet, recognition of numbers, simple counting ability, vocabulary, and science concepts. Other objectives of the program were intellectual and cultural development. The result of this study showed that the average of answering the questions in the "post-test" was increased from the "pre-test" in all areas
included in this program (Al Khero and Al Sameraee 1987, 27-60). This suggests that educational programs may support children's learning.

Khawla Dabbas, in her study, "Patterns and Habits of Viewing Television by Jordanian Children," was concerned with patterns and habits of viewing television on many Jordanian children and the effect of sex, age, and achievement on the amount of viewing television. The research found that the amount of viewing increases with age, however sex had no effect on the amount of viewing. Children tend to view television from 5:30 P.M. up to 8:00 P.M. The programs which 70 percent of children viewed were broadcast during this period. The study also indicated that a high percentage of children at six-to-eight years like to see cartoons. This percentage decreases as age increases while the percentage of viewing cultural programs increased with age. Also, results showed that the boys liked to view films about youth and sports and news programs while girls liked to view cartoon films (Dabbas 1980, 81-2).

The study of "Iftah ya Simisim" shows that an educational TV program may have an educational impact on children. The study by Khawla Dabbas clarifies the television viewing interests of children in Jordan.
The four studies, two conducted in the United States and two in Arab nations, suggest that television is a high-interest medium for children and that educational television programs may secure a desired educational outcome.

Procedures

Investigation of Research Resources

The following sources were surveyed to determine if any previous studies had been undertaken to examine the effect of TV on children:

Dissertation Abstracts, 1962 to date, sections on mass communication and education, University Microfilms International. (Both English and Arabic Editions)

Dissertation Abstracts International, 1972-83, sections on mass communication and education, University Microfilms International.

ERIC on CD ROM, a computerized search based on television in education and related topics.


Other sources examined include indexes of current journal literature and recent editions of related journals, a computerized search of materials in the Briggs library at South Dakota State University and a search at the University of Jordan.

The examination revealed no studies of the educational effect of the program, "Al Manaahil." A number of studies of the educational impact of television programs on school-age children are reviewed in the review of literature.

Method of Gathering Data

The study was conducted in August 1988. A random sample of 240 eight-year-old male and female elementary school students from schools in the city of Irbid was selected for the study. Students were in the third grade. An experimental method, the posttest-only control group design, was used in this study.

In experimental research, the researcher controls the value of the independent variable. This design is appropriate for this study because the researcher can control the values of the independent variable by randomly assigning children as an experimental group and a control group. Most experiments involve random assignment. To secure random selection, educational
research must elicit consent and cooperation from principals, teachers, parents, and students. This the researcher has done in her study (Vierra and Pollock 1988, 72-73).

Possible Contributions

This proposed study offers contributions to those who are in charge of children's programs. It may encourage them to increase the number of such programs and perhaps encourage them to make similar programs for other age groups of children. It may make parents feel that the time spent watching these TV programs is well spent. Teachers may find the TV programs help children with their school work because it reinforces what they are learning in school. Watching educational TV programs may make children more eager to contribute information in class. This study might contribute to the future of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) educational programs in gearing programs to specific countries by having them filmed and prepared in those countries.
The literature related to the use of television as an instructional medium is extensive. Numerous studies examined closed-circuit television systems of instruction. Others studied the impact of programs aired on public television. Others used TV versions of films to supplement regular course material. However, the research compiled in the Handbook of Research on Teaching, Third Edition, concludes that differences discovered in the various studies may have resulted from the differences in content presented rather than from the use of television (Wittrock 1986).

Differences have been observed, however. The literature provides a number of examples of the successful use of television instruction in the elementary classroom.

The nature of television makes it a useful educational tool. Researchers in Jordan indicate that 90 percent of the information which can be transmitted and received through the human senses of hearing and seeing can also be transmitted through the television screen.
(Hijazii and others 1987, 291). Television's ability to provide both visual and audible stimuli and to show movement make it particularly well-suited for transmitting information about the dynamic processes of action and transformation, and about space. The predominance of visual motion also suits television to the mental abilities of the young child (Greenfield 1984, 25). Researchers indicate that movement can help children learn because it attracts their attention to the screen. It also aids learning by making information about action easier to remember (Greenfield 1984, 25-26). A visual presentation which does not include movement may be less useful. In Sweden, for example, where skills-related material was narrated with a picture-book format, children said that they preferred movement, making comments, "it's no fun unless it moves" (Greenfield 1984, 25).

Recent research has begun to examine both the relationship between language on television and development of language in general and the processing of information received through television. Attention and memory have been the focus of study (Berger and Chaffee 1987, 631).

Research suggests that young children understand more about television than was previously thought.
Competencies related to understanding are based as much on experience and knowledge of television as on the assumed limits of children's developmental stages. With these new insights has come a new interest in considering television viewing as a supplement to studies of intrapersonal processing (Berger and Chaffee 1987, 632-33). Intrapersonal processing is a significant factor in the use of television in education.

The new interest in such research has also been encouraged by public concern about education and governmental policy. Two broad categories of current research have been identified, message processing and effects of message content. Message processing relates to message structure, mental representation of symbols, processing of narrative, attention, comprehension, and understanding. Message content deals with effect of program content, violence, advertising, news, sexual themes, and educational content (Berger and Chaffee 1987, 632-33).

Research has recognized other factors of interest. First, it has been well-established that the manner in which television presents its material is unique, not the content. Another significant conclusion is that reaction to television varies not only between children but also within the child over time (Berger and
Chaffee 1987, 632-33). While such findings complicate the study of the use of television in the process of education, studies do show that carefully planned programming can produce useful educational outcomes.

Educational Uses of Television in the United States

Four studies initiated in the United States are representative of the direction being followed in the investigation of the impact of television on learning and educational progress of pre-school and school-age children.

A study by Stevenson, Zuckerman, and Ziegler at the University of Michigan examined the response of 112 second, third, and fourth grade children to eight randomly-selected television commercials. The commercials were presented within the usual program context. The study found that (1) the average proportion of children who were attending during the programs was higher than during the commercials; (2) attention decreased with increasing age both to the program and to the commercials; (3) no sex differences were observed among the responses of the children; (4) differences were noted in the proportion of children attending to the various commercials, with some commercials much more effective in capturing children's attention than others;
and (5) children had a difficult time discriminating segments of commercials that had just been presented from similar material which had not appeared (Zuckerman, Ziegler, and Stevenson 1978, 96-104). While the study was not concerned with retention of material presented in television programs, it does demonstrate that children do attend to non-commercial portions of program content, a pre-requisite for educational effect.

A 1982 study by Altermen examined the effects of television upon reading achievement of seventh-grade students. More specifically, the researcher related achieved reading skills to the amount of time spent viewing television. The research found that below average readers watched 24.41 hours per week, average readers watched 27.26 hours per week, and above average readers watched 20.41 hours weekly. The researcher concluded that there was some effect of television viewing on reading achievement. However, the difference which was consistent was the difference between the below-average and the above-average readers. No attempt was made to evaluate the program content observed by the students (Alterman 1984).

A study by Carl Tomlinson in 1982 studied the possible differences which exposure to different presentation media would have on writing ability. Three
groups of thirty randomly selected fifth-grade students from a southwest Georgia school system were presented literary material via television, oral presentation, and print. Assessment found no significant difference in quality of writing or composition length among the groups. However, more statements based on textual or narrative content stimulus stories appeared after the television stimuli. Tomlinson drew two conclusions relevant to the current study. (1) Television can be an effective medium for presenting literary works as writing stimuli. (2) Television may be more effective than independent reading for learning in impressing stimuli-story textual or narrative content on students for later use in composing their own stories (Tomlinson 1982).

An earlier study of the use of television for teaching reading showed that television could be an effective instructional technique. In 1961, Richard Carner introduced a closed circuit televised reading program for all fifth and sixth grade pupils of the Cortland public schools. Comparisons were made of the reading achievement of superior, average, and below average readers. The following results were noted. (1) Superior readers made smaller gains in reading following the televised reading than were made under regular classroom instruction the previous year. (2) Average
readers gained about the same under both conditions. (3) Below average readers made significantly greater gains following the television instruction than with normal classroom instruction. (4) Comprehension was increased significantly in the second year. (5) Attitude toward reading improved among those who had indicated a negative toward reading. (6) Superior readers receiving all formal reading instruction through television made gains in reading equal to another group of superior readers who received regular instruction. (7) Attitudes of teachers were generally positive toward the televised instruction in reading (Carner 1961). The study provides further evidence that television can be a useful instructional media for the teaching of reading.

The studies cited of research in the United States show that televised instructional material can be effective for teaching both reading and writing skills. Research in Jordan and other Arab countries also supports the position that television can be a useful educational medium.

**Studies in the Arab World**

Mesbah and Hashim conducted a study in Baghdad in 1987 to assess the impact of the program "Iftah Ya Simsim," an Arabic version of "Sesame Street," on a group of elementary children. A group of forty elementary
students chosen randomly viewed ten episodes of the program. Students were tested on a variety of measures following the episodes. The average pretest score on knowledge of the Arabic language was 26.6 percent; on the posttest it was 48.3 percent. A test of general knowledge showed pretest, 38.7 percent, and posttest, 56.4 percent. Recognition of numbers showed pretest score, 39.6 percent, and posttest, 60.8 percent. Scores of knowledge of the Arab World were pretest, 21.1 percent, and posttest, 48.9 percent. Science knowledge scores were pretest, 33.5 percent, and posttest, 52.5 percent. The average across all areas was pretest, 32.5 percent and posttest, 67.5 percent. In other measures, the researchers found that 97.5 percent of the children were interested and liked the program (Mesbah and Hashim 1987, 27-61).

A study done as a Master's thesis by Khawla Dabbas examined the patterns of television viewing by children ages four to twelve years old in Jordan. Two hundred forty children were included in the sample. She found that all of the children had access to television and that the average viewing time per day was two hours and forty-six minutes. No significant difference existed between boys and girls. Most of the children did their viewing between 5:30 and 8:00 P.M. The favorite programs
for boys were dramatic films, youth-oriented programs, sports, and news. The girls indicated a preference for cartoons (Dabbas 1980, 80-81).

The two studies demonstrate that school-age children are well-acquainted with television and enjoy viewing the medium. The first study also shows that television can be an effective educational medium for children in Jordan. The literature reviewed suggests that the program which is the focus of the current study, "Al Manaahil," may also have an educational impact on children in Jordan.

The philosophy and goals of the TV series "Al Manaahil" are of major significance to this study. This English transcription provides a summary of the rationale for the program.

"Al Manaahil"

Reading is the key to literacy, and literacy is the master key to knowledge. The question of literacy in Arabic has another dimension unknown in most languages. The fact that literacy in Arabic is possible only through Standard Arabic, which is quite different from the vernacular Arabic dialects spoken at home adds to the complexity of literacy acquisition by Arab youngsters. This linguistic problem is compounded by crowded classrooms, the insufficiency of children's exposure to
Standard Arabic and the critical shortage of qualified teachers (Ibrahim 1987, 1).

   Television is potentially an invaluable educational medium that remains virtually untapped in the Arab countries. Arab children watch a lot of television and have many favorite programs. If educational programs can be produced with enough appeal and attractiveness to engage their young audience, television would then serve the highly desirable function of fulfilling a major social and educational need (Ibrahim 1987, 2).

   "Al Manaahil" expressly seeks to supplement classroom instruction as well as to make basic reading skills accessible and comprehensible to all who need them. The series also seeks to relate language to other school subjects and to modern life in a way that no traditional school program does (Ibrahim 1987, 1).

   "Al Manaahil" is intended primarily for Arab children in the first few years of school ("Al Manaahil" 1986, 1). The series is intended for children in the first, second, and third grades. Among this target population, however, the series will focus on second graders with special attention given to early second graders. Special attention will also be given to children with reading problems. It is understood, however, that this will be done without in any way
sacrificing or compromising the needs and interests of 
average and high-achieving students ("Al Manaahil" 1986, 
3). Most children in the target group will be familiar 
with these notions: (1) writing symbolizes spoken 
language; (2) written language can be spoken or 
verbalized; (3) the sequence of Arabic writing is from 
right to left; (4) some letters connect to a preceding 
letter only, whereas others connect to a preceding and/or 
a following letter as well; (5) the shapes of most 
letters vary in a manner determined by their position in 
the word; (6) blending letters into words and decoding or 
analyzing words into their constituent letters ("Al 
Manaahil" 1986, 4).

Experience and research findings from similar 
series in other countries indicate that this type of 
series can be successfully utilized in adult literacy 
programs as well as in programs designed for teaching the 
language of the series to speakers of other languages 
("Al Manaahil" 1986, 4).

Complaints are made by many Arab educators and 
researchers with respect to the unsatisfactory level of 
achievement and proficiency of most Arab school children 
in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Two factors, among 
others, are frequently cited as major contributors to the 
problem: (1) Television, as well as some other mass
media, seem to utilize more colloquial than standard Arabic in their programs (Even when Standard Arabic is used, the general impression is that the language used is "not standard enough."); (2) Colloquial Arabic seems to have been gaining ground at the expense of Standard Arabic in a number of areas, including the classroom. In this connection, field research in a number of Arab countries has revealed that the vast majority of teachers, including teachers of Arabic at all levels, tend to use colloquial Arabic regularly in their teaching ("Al Manaahil" 1986, 1). The present series is a form of non-institutional education which seeks to supplement and complement school curricula in the Arab countries. Its purpose is reinforcing and enriching the reading abilities of Arab children by emphasizing skill-building and developing successful strategies for decoding written standard Arabic. Without success in reading, educational progress in general will be retarded ("Al Manaahil" 1986, 3). Also the series is not intended for any one Arab country or for a specific group of Arab countries. It is an attempt to be equally useful to all Arab countries ("Al Manaahil" 1986, 3). Moreover "Al Manaahil" aims to promote Arab culture and spiritual values, the dignity of manual labor, women's role in society, good health habits, team work and cooperation, respect for the views
of others and consideration for the elderly and disabled (Al Urdun 1987, 8).

"Al Manaahil," the new television series which aims to make learning fun for Jordanian youngsters, is a lively, educational and entertaining series of sixty-five half hour television programs aired (Al Vrdun 1987, 8). Because it is likely that the voluntary home viewer will see some programs but miss others, each program is self-contained and offers a valuable learning experience in itself. Regular viewers will obviously derive more benefits, as they will have the opportunity to build upon, reinforce or extend what they have learned from previous programs (Al Urdun 1987, 8).

The Co-Production

Funding for the "Al Manaahil" television series was provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Jordan. This funding has made possible unique co-production arrangement among Jordan Television (JTV); The Jordan Company for TV, Radio, and Cinema Production, Ltd. (JCTV); and the Children's Television Workshop (CTW), bringing new patterns of multi-country and multi-agency collaboration and innovative television forms to the Arab world (Co-Production 1986-87, 1).
With facilities and technical crew provided by JTV, the principal Arab producer was JCTV, based in Amman. JCTV was ultimately responsible for local administration and production of the programs and worked closely with CTW consultants throughout the entire production. CTW's role was to provide training and technical assistance based on its record of successful children's television productions in the U.S. and abroad.

The project followed a process that has been tested repeatedly and successfully over time by CTW, a three-way working collaboration among producers—to represent production values of the medium; subject matter specialists—to assure accuracy and appropriateness of the content; and child research specialists—to represent the needs, interests, and abilities of the target audience (Co-Production 1986-87, 1).

A multi-national Arab advisory board was formed to identify the linguistic needs of Arab children and to formulate a detailed statement of their series' goals and objectives. Countries represented among the advisors were Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Yemen Arab Republic, and Jordan.

Five work-intensive seminars were held both in New York and in Amman, Jordan, in order to plan and develop the series. The seminars were attended by Al
Manaahil's linguistic specialists, producers, researchers, writers, and educators.

"Al Manaahil" is an entirely original production. The Arab team created reading goals and teaching approaches tailored specifically to the structure of the Arabic language and to the methods used to teach reading in the Arab countries. The characters, settings, music and style of humor are Arabic. The transfer of CTW's technology was an important aim of the Government of Jordan and USAID. Through a very positive and professional relationship in which CTW has worked in close consultation with the Arab team, this objective has been realized in the "Al Manaahil" project (Co-production 1986-87, 1-2).

Total cost of "Al Manaahil" was $6.3 million; USAID granted $5.9 million and the Jordan Government contributed the balance. JTV, which owns "Al Manaahil," plans to distribute the series at nominal cost through the Arab world. Profit from its sale will be spent to produce additional educational programs (Al Urdun 1987, 8).
Conclusion

Studies reviewed from the United States and Arabic-speaking countries show that children are affected by television programs and that television is an effective media for presenting educational material. "Al Manaahil" is designed to secure educational objectives. This study tests the impact of selected episodes in a controlled educational experiment.
CHAPTER III
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Selection of the Design

This study of the educational impact of the Arabic-language children's television program, "Al Manaahil," was structured as a posttest-only control group design, as described by Campbell and Stanley in their book, Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research. These authors point out that when subjects are chosen through random selection from the population for both the experimental and the control groups, in educational research, particularly in the primary grades, we must frequently experiment with methods for the initial introduction of entirely new subject matter, for which pretests in the ordinary sense are impossible (Campbell and Stanley 1963, 25). They then conclude that the posttest-only control group design fills this need (Campbell and Stanley 1963, 25).

The form of this design is as follows:

\[ R \times 0_1 \]
\[ R \quad 0_2 \]
This diagram indicates at "R" that subjects for both the experimental group and the control group are randomly selected. The "X" represents the treatment. "O₁" and "O₂" are the posttests.

This design greatly reduces the effect of noncontrolled factors which could affect validity. It controls the effects of history, maturation, pretesting, instrumentation, regression, selection, subject mortality, and the independence of these variables. It also controls for the interaction of testing with the experimental treatment. It is questionable whether it controls for the interaction that results from being selected as a part of the experimental group with the experimental treatment (Campbell and Stanley 1963, 8).

Selection of Subjects

The educational television series, "Al Manaahil" is designed for use in nations in which Arabic is the language. A study of the educational impact of the program required a group of subjects of elementary school age to serve as an experimental and a control group.

The city of Irbid in Jordan was selected for this study. It has a population of 155,400 (Jordan Television Corporation and Radio Jordan 1988, 26). The official language is Arabic as 100 percent of the population speak Arabic. English is taught in the school as a second
language (Kurian 1982, 915). The people of Irbid are representative of the population of Jordan. The official religion of Jordan is Islam, with Christian minority (Kurian 1982, 915). Irbid is one of the major urban centers (Banks and Overstreet 1983, 259). Irbid is one of Jordan's fastest growing industrial areas, and the administrative center of the country's most fertile region. The town is built on the site of an early Bronze Age Settlement. It is Beth Arbel of the Bible and Arbilla of the Decapolis. Some authorities claim it is the burial place of Moses' mother and four of his sons (Showker 1984, 120). Irbid has many schools which include private schools and public schools. Also, it has colleges run by the Ministry of Education and others run by the private sector. There are two Universities—Yarmuk University and the University of Science and Technology. There are many professional people in Irbid such as teachers, engineers, doctors, lawyers, government workers, and private business professionals.

The schools selected in Irbid included five elementary schools, with a total of 480 students from four public schools and one private school.

The Head of the Division of Education in Irbid was contacted by personal contact in August 1988 and a request was presented for permission to conduct the study
with students from elementary schools of Irbid. Such permission was granted by letter August 20, 1988 (See Appendix A.).

Principals of each elementary school were contacted to secure their help and cooperation. By August 21, 1988 all of the principals had agreed to cooperate in the study.

A decision was made to select the sample of subjects from students in the third grade. The reason for selecting this group was primarily because the "Al Manaahil" program was meant to appeal to the age group six to ten years. The third grade includes children of eight to nine years.

The names of all third-grade students from the participating schools were provided. Students were identified as male or female. A sample of sixty males and sixty females was selected for the experimental group. A similar sample was selected for the control group. The selection of the sample for each group was selected in the following manner because no random number list was available. In the first school there were one hundred third grade students in two classes of fifty students each. The researcher chose fifty students from the two classes in the following manner: First, the researcher alphabetized and numbered the entire list of
the students names and chose every other name without knowing anything about the students. Second, the researcher chose all the odd-numbered students of the alphabetized list for experimental group and the even number ones for the control group.

The second school had sixty students in third grade in two classes. The researcher alphabetized and numbered the entire list of the student names for both classes and chose every other name. She chose thirty students. She chose ten students from the even numbers. The researcher alphabetized and numbered the entire list. The researcher choose all odd-numbered students of the alphabetized list for her experimental group and the even numbered ones for the control group.

Both the first and second schools had only male students.

The third school was a private co-educational school. There were three classes of third grade students mixed male and female students in each class. The first and second classes had thirty-three students each. The third class had thirty-four students. The researcher separated male and female and made two numbered alphabetized lists from which she chose twenty-five odd-numbers plus five students chosen at random from the even numbers of the list to the number of thirty male
students. And in the same manner used to chose thirty female students. The researcher chose fifteen for the experimental group from the list of thirty male students and fifteen for the control group. The same was done for the female students.

The fourth school had one hundred female students in third grade in three classes. The first and the second class had thirty-three students each. The third class had thirty-four students. The researcher chose forty students from the three classes. She chose forty students in the manner described in the first and second school. Of the forty students, twenty were chosen for experimental group and twenty for the control group.

The fifth school had 120 female students in third grade in three classes. Each class had forty students. The researcher alphabetized and numbered the entire list of the students' names and chose every other name. She chose odd-numbered students of the alphabetized list for experimental group and the even-numbered ones for the control group. Each group had twenty-five students.

The researcher randomly chose eight episodes of "Al Manaahil" from the series as each show was not dependent on seeing the previous show. Each episode is a unit by itself and does not depend on seeing the previous unit to be understandable.
The assessment of the educational impact required that the researcher structure a test to be administered to the experimental group and the control group after the presentation of the episodes of "Al Manaahil" to the experimental group.

A method of testing ability to read and to spell correctly was created. It was much like the tests for reading and spelling used in elementary schools. Twenty sentences including fifty words about content of the episodes of "Al Manaahil" were prepared. These were evaluated by five teachers of Arabic language and the Supervisor of Arabic language of the schools in Irbid (See Appendix B for a copy of the verification by the Supervisor of Arabic Language.).

To test spelling skills, the sentences of the test were read to the students, and the students were asked to write the sentences. These written sentences were scored for correct spelling. Three days after the spelling test, the students in the experimental and control groups were asked to read the sentences aloud to test for their ability to read. The researcher scored the students for accuracy. The data from the test procedures was recorded for statistical analysis.

The students in the experimental group were brought with their teachers to central locations each of
eight school days, beginning August 21, 1988 and ending August 29, 1988.

The spelling tests were administered by the researcher in a large assembly room in a central location for both experimental and control group.

The reading tests were administered by the researcher in their schools. The researcher tested the reading ability of each student separately. The reading test consisted of reading aloud the same passage.

The design of the study would allow use of the t-test for testing for main effects of the scores of the test of writing (spelling) and reading. However, analysis of variance was selected as the appropriate statistical test for this study because analysis of variance provided a method to measure for main effect and for interaction of the experimental variable and/or the assessment instrument with the sex of the student.

Campbell and Stanley indicate that where there are two or more groups in each condition analysis of variance is appropriate to test for interaction (Campbell and Stanley 1963, 27).

The data were analyzed with the ANOVA computer program available through the South Dakota State University Department of Statistics.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The experiment testing the impact of selected episodes of the television series, "Al Manaahil" used measures of skill in reading and correct spelling of Arabic by elementary children to determine whether four hypotheses should or should not be rejected.

The data and the statistical test of the data which relate to the spelling skills of children will be considered first. The second section will present the data and tests which relate to the hypotheses on reading skills of children. The final section will suggest conclusions about the use of "Al Manaahil" in education.

**Effect of "Al Manaahil" on Spelling**

The children who had been assigned to the experimental group viewed eight episodes of "Al Manaahil" over a period of eight school days. After viewing the episodes these students and the students in the control group were tested for skill in spelling. The students achieved the following test scores:
Table 1.--Student scores in spelling test with analysis of variance of scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Viewing Male</th>
<th>Viewing Female</th>
<th>Nonviewing Male</th>
<th>Nonviewing Female</th>
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<td>60.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mean: Viewing = 57.45833333  
Nonviewing = 44.36666667

Analysis of Variance Procedure

**Dependent Variable: Spelling (Main effect)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11977.14583</td>
<td>399.38194</td>
<td>4.21</td>
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<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>223750.01667</td>
<td>948.09329</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>235727.16250</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R-Square  C.V.  Root MSE  Spelling Mean
0.50809   60.47851 30.79112  50.9125000

F calculated = \(\frac{\text{MST}}{\text{MSE}} = \frac{3992.38194}{948.09329} = 4.21\)

**Dependent Variable: Spelling (Interaction)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>AnovaSS</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>10283.50417</td>
<td>10.85</td>
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<td>1680.10417</td>
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<td>View*Sex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.53</td>
<td>13.53750</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F calculated = \(\frac{\text{MSview*sex}}{\text{MSE}} = \frac{13.53750}{948.09329} = 0.01\)
Hypothesis (1)

There is no difference in the spelling skill of the children who viewed selected episodes of "Al Manaahil" and those children who did not view the episodes.

The results of the analysis of variance of the scores in spelling are provided in Table I. The critical value of "F" for the mean of treatment effect at the .05 level is 2.60. The computed value of "F" for the test of spelling scores is 4.21. This is sufficient to reject hypothesis 1, a null hypothesis. Examination of the data shows that the mean for the experimental group was significantly higher for the students who had viewed the eight episodes of "Al Manaahil." For this group, "Al Manaahil" had a positive educational effect on correct spelling of Modern Standard Arabic.

Hypothesis (2)

There is no difference between male and female results in spelling.

This hypothesis cannot be rejected. The critical value of "F" for interaction of sex of subject with the experimental value is $F = 3.84$ at the .05 level of confidence. The computed value of $F = 0.01$ (See Table 1.). It appears that being male or female did not affect
the outcome of the test of spelling skill of Modern Standard Arabic.

**Effect of Viewing "Al Manaahil on Reading**

The next two hypotheses related to the reading ability of the children included in the study and to the possible interaction with the sex of the students.

**Hypothesis (3)**

There is no difference in oral reading skill of children who viewed selected episodes of "Al Manaahil" and those children who did not view the episodes.

An examination of the data displayed in Table 2 shows that Hypothesis 3 can be rejected. The critical value of "F" at the .05 level of confidence is 2.60. The calculated value of "F" for this distribution is 2.99. This indicates that there is a difference in the reading skills of those who viewed "Al Manaahil" and those who did not. Students who viewed the selected episodes tended to have higher scores on reading Standard Modern Arabic than did students who did not view the selected episodes.
Table 2.—Student scores in reading for Experimental and Control Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Viewing Male</th>
<th>Viewing Female</th>
<th>Nonviewing Male</th>
<th>Nonviewing Female</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>43.</td>
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<td>43</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mean: Viewing = 62.08333333
Nonviewing = 52.13333333

Analysis of Variance Procedure

Dependent Variable: Reading (Main effect)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F Value</th>
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<td>Model</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7828.283333</td>
<td>2609.427778</td>
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<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>206212.900000</td>
<td>873.783475</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>214041.183333</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

R-Square  C.V.  Root MSE  Reading Mean
0.036574  51.76097  29.55983  57.1083333

F calculated = \( \frac{\text{MST}}{\text{MSE}} = \frac{2609.427778}{853.783475} = 2.99 \)

Dependent Variable: Reading (Interaction)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F value</th>
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<td>5940.150000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<td>1728.066667</td>
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<td>1.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>View*Sex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>160.066667</td>
<td>160.066667</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F calculated = \( \frac{\text{MSview*sex}}{\text{MSE}} = \frac{160.066667}{873.783475} = 0.18 \)
Hypothesis (4)

There is no difference between male and female results in reading.

The Analysis of Variance test for interaction of sex of subject with the experimental variable failed to produce a significant value of "F" for interaction. The value of "F" required for significance at the .05 level is 3.84. The achieved value of "F" was 0.18. Hypothesis 4, there is no difference between male and female results in reading, cannot be rejected. There appears to be no consistent effect of sex of subject on reading skills of Modern Standard Arabic among the students in this study.

Summary

Hypotheses 1 and 3 which stated that no difference exists in the spelling and reading skills of students who view "Al Manaahil" and students who do not view the program are rejected. Those students in the experimental group did achieve higher scores on the post tests for spelling and reading Modern Standard Arabic.

The male subjects and the female subjects have very similar scores within groups, producing an insignificant value of "F" for interaction. Hypotheses 2 and 4, stating no difference in outcome related to sex of
subject cannot be rejected. No significant interaction was revealed in this study.

For the third grade students in the elementary schools of Irbid, Jordan, the eight episodes of the television series, "Al Manaahil" did produce an increase in test scores of skill in reading and spelling Modern Standard Arabic.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of TV programs on spelling skill and reading skill of children. This research was designed to focus on the influence of the new program called "Al Manaahil" on children between six and ten years of age, since this program is a new program in Jordan TV and no study has been done on it. This thesis is an original study. This research adds to the number of previous studies regarding the effect of TV programs on children's spelling and reading skills.

Four null hypotheses were advanced as the hypotheses of this study. These hypotheses postulated no difference in spelling and reading between those who viewed "Al Manaahil" and those who did not, and no interaction with the sex of the group member. Data were collected using a sample of eight-year-old male and female elementary school students, from public and
private schools in the city of Irbid for the study. The data was analyzed with the analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the significance of difference between groups. The .05 level of significance was selected to determine the probability of rejecting or not rejecting the null hypotheses.

The four hypotheses were structured to examine the difference between children who viewed the episodes of "Al Manaahil" and those children who did not view the episodes. Tables 1 and 2 showed that the means of the scores of the spelling and reading skills tests for children who viewed the episodes are significantly greater than those scores of the children who did not view the episodes. The null hypotheses were rejected. Tables 1 and 2 also showed that the means of the scores of the spelling and reading tests show no significant difference due to sex.

Examination of the results of the analysis of the data showed that the children's program called "Al Manaahil" had an impact on Jordanian children. This kind of educational and entertainment program had an educational effect. Most of the studies regarding the effect of TV programs on children indicated that the TV did have an effect on children.
The results of the American and Arabic studies showed that TV programs were highly effective on children. Evaluation of the impact of "Al Manaahil" is consistent with results of other research. Researchers have recognized that reactions to television vary not only between children, but it varies within the child over time (Berger and Chaffee 1982, 631).

The findings of Krull and Hussan (1979) and Lorch et al. (1979), strongly support the hypotheses that major determination of young children's visual attention to television programs is the degree to which they were able to comprehend it (Anderson and others 1981, 154). Although understandable dialogue appears to be an important factor in maintaining young children's attention, a meaningful sequence of scenes appears to be less important (Anderson and others 1981, 156). This test may also have been met by "Al Manaahil." Attention is a prerequisite to learning.

Alterman, in his studies on the effects of television upon reading achievement, found that there were 76 percent of students that would rather watch television than read. The study also indicated that television had an effect on reading achievement (Alterman 1984, 128). The results of this study of "Al Manaahil" reaffirm that television may improve reading skill.
Salomon's 1983 study postulated that television may hold attention better and therefore be preferred to text at these and later ages (Anderson and others 1986, 1024-33).

Arabic studies showed educational and entertaining children's TV programs have great effects on children as Mesbah Al Khero and Hashim Al Sameraee found in their study (Al Khero and Al Sameraee 1987, 60).

This study helped to affirm that the television series, "Al Manaahil" can also be effective educational material for teaching reading and spelling of Modern Standard Arabic.

The study of "Al Manaahil" found no difference in the measured outcome related to sex of subjects. This is consistent with other research. Most of American and Arabic studies showed no significant sex differences in attention to the programs or commercials. It also supports studies which show that children's TV programs elicit high interest and have significant effects on children.

Educational television programs may secure a desired educational outcome.

This empirical study supports the theory of communication which shows the positive effects of television programs on children, particularly those
programs geared to their needs and interests. This program "Al Manaahil" enhances the children's learning experiences.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Study

This study was limited in the sample size. The two groups, experimental and control group were chosen from five schools which included two boy's school and two girl's school from public schools. The fifth school was a private school which had boys and girls. While all schools are from the city of Irbid, the sample was limited to the five available schools, not all elementary schools in Irbid.

Selection of the samples of the two tests was chosen from the program of "Al Manaahil" from eight episodes. The other episodes of "Al Manaahil" were not tested.

The success of "Al Manaahil" makes one feel that there should be other somewhat similar programs prepared in Jordan for children of both younger and older age. The experience gained in this first program made in Jordan for children of Jordan has developed a corps of experienced people in this television medium, so, more programs would be more easily produced. It is proved once again that television medium is a powerful
educational tool if rightly used. Programs of this kind would be helpful not only for children, but also for older people who did not have a chance to go to school. To make these educational and entertainment programs successful, children's television programs need specialists in children's education. A nation may need to invest in, and choose, the talented people needed for working with the small screen. Adequate mass media and television training must be provided. Careful attention to children's writers is required in order to provide well-trained people, capable of creating appropriate programs.

"Al Manaahil" addresses the needs of all Arab countries in reading curriculum, incorporating values and attitudes such as these: Arab cultural and spiritual values, scientific concepts, the dignity of manual labor, appreciating a women's role in society, developing good health habits, encouraging team work and cooperation, respecting the views of others, and having consideration for the elderly and disabled ("Al Manaahil's" Goals and Objectives 1987, 5).

From these "Al Manaahil" goals and objectives there should be further study conducted to see if the above goals are being achieved. This researcher's study has been limited to tracing the effect of the program "Al
 Manaahil" on spelling and reading Modern Standard Arabic. For instance, it would be interesting and important to find out if the following goals are being achieved. (1) Scientific thinking; (2) Appreciating woman's role in society; (3) having consideration for the elderly and disabled. It may be more difficult to test these than testing the effect on spelling and reading skills. However, only careful assessment techniques can determine the extent to which "Al Manaahil" achieves its goals.
APPENDIX A
Hashimat Kingdom of Jordan  
Division of Discipline and Education  
State of Irbid  
By the name of God most gracious  
most merciful

#A/2/10/5682  
Day: 8/20/1988

To: All elementary School Principals

Subject: Field Studies

This is to acknowledge that Ms. Muntaha Isaa Haddad will be conducting field studies on a group of students from several schools within the city of Irbid. This study pertains to the influence of the televised children's program "Al Manaahil" on their academic performance.

We would appreciate your providing all the assistance that Ms. Haddad needs to conduct her research. The outcome of this research will undoubtedly benefit the educational process of our children. The final results will be available upon completion.

/s/ Kasem Abu-Ein  
Kasem Abu-Ein, Head  
Division of Education

(Translated from Arabic  
with assistance of  
Professor Ali Selim.)
Day: 8/20/1988

To Whom It May Concern:

After reviewing the various episodes of the television educational series "Al Manaahil" which is seen by third grade students, a series of questions were developed by Ms. Mantaha Isaa Haddad. These questions were evaluated by the adviser of Arabic language in Irbid school district and were found to be very compatible with the language skills of third graders as well as their age group.

/s/ Ali Al Omarey

Ali Al Omarey
Advisor of Arabic Language

(Translated from Arabic with assistance of Professor Ali Selim.)
APPENDIX C
SPELLING AND READING TEST QUESTIONS

1. Amman the Capital of Jordan.
2. I love my homeland.
3. The teacher is in the school
4. Rabab is sitting in the class.
5. The child is crying.
8. Thank God.
7. Our farm produces carrots.
8. Jerush is an historical city.
10. I saw an airplane.
11. Our hen lays eggs everyday.
12. Marrakech is a Moroccan city.
14. Salaha is a good student.
15. Jerusalem is an Arabic city.
16. The fox is sly.
17. Young people respect elders.
18. Cleanliness is part of faith.
19. I remembered my lesson.
20. I eat an apple.
APPENDIX D
Assumptions and general objectives of the series included the following:

1. Writing: Teaching correct letter formation and positioning on the line, developing the ability for correct spelling, and teaching the use of basic punctuation marks.

2. Reading: Developing the ability for expressive aloud reading, training the viewers in the basic sub-skills of silent reading and reading comprehension, encouraging the viewers to develop good reading habits, including extensive (free) reading, expanding the viewers' knowledge of written MSA, increasing the viewers' MSA vocabulary and idioms and their semantic and derivational relatedness ("Al Manaahil" 1986, 5).

All episodes of "Al Manaahil" concentrated on recognizing diacritical and short vowel signs and their contribution to pronunciation. These include: (1) short vowel (vocalization) signs (fat-Ha, Damma, and Kasra); (2) diacritics (shadda, sukun, hamzatul-wast); (3) munation signs (tanwiin fat-H, Damm, and Kasr) ("Al Manaahil" 1986, 9).
The first episode concentrated on letters bā'a (ب), Taa' (ت), and thaa' (ث). It concentrated on correct pronunciation of these letters and recognizing different shapes of the same letter (ex. letter baa (ب), rehab (رحم), Yabkey (يبك). It also concentrated on correct discrimination of letters with identical or similar shapes but different dotting as baa' (ب), taa' (ت), and thaa' (ث), for example Naab (ناب), trkd (تركد), and thmar (نمر).

The second episode concentrated on letters jaa (ج), haa (ح), and Kha (خ). It concentrated on correct pronunciation of these letters and recognizing different shapes of the same letter. It also concentrated on correct discrimination of letters with identical or similar shapes but different dotting as jaa (ج), haa (ح), and Kha (خ).

The third episode concentrated on letters daal (د), dhaal (ذ), raa (ر), and zaay (ز). It concentrated on correct discrimination of these letters with identical or similar shapes but with or without dotting. Also it concentrated on correct pronunciation of dhaal (ذ) and distinguishing it from dall (ذ) and zaay (ز).

The fourth episode concentrated on letters faa (ف), qaa (ق). It concentrated on correct
pronunciation of these letters and recognizing shapes of these letters and correct discrimination of letters with identical or similar shapes but different dotting.

The fifth episode concentrated on letters siin (س) and shiin (ش). It concentrated on correct pronunciation of these letters and recognizing shapes of the letters and correct discrimination of letters with identical or similar shapes but different dotting.

The sixth episode concentrated on letters Dhaa' (ث), Thaa' (ث), Daad (ض), and Saad (ص). It concentrated on correct pronunciation of Dhaa (ث) and distinguishing it from Daad (ض), also correct pronunciation of Daad (ض) and distinguishing it from Dhaa' (ث); correct pronunciation of Dhaa (ث) and distinguishing it from Thaa (ث); correct pronunciation of Daad (ض) and Saad (ص). It concentrated on correct discrimination of letters with identical or similar shapes but different dotting.

The seventh episode concentrated on letters jeen (ج) and gheen (غ). It concentrated on correct pronunciation. Also it concentrated on recognizing different shapes of the same letter and on correct discrimination of letters with identical or similar shapes but different dotting.
The eighth episode concentrated on the letter haa (٢). It concentrated on the correct pronunciation and recognizing different shapes of the same letter (ex: haa (٢), (٢), (٢)). It also concentrated on the correct pronunciation of letters and symbols with more than one pronunciation, taa marbuuta (٢) as taa (٢) and haa' (٢).

The following symbols are used in transliterating Arabic words:

1. Consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Letter</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>١ (hamza)</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>DH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>th</td>
<td>r</td>
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<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>gh</td>
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<td>H</td>
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<td>kh</td>
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<td>d</td>
<td>k</td>
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<td>dh</td>
<td>L</td>
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<td>r</td>
<td>m</td>
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<td>z</td>
<td>n</td>
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<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sh</td>
<td>w (consonantal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>y (consonantal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Long vowels and diphthongs

aa
uu
ii
aw
ay

3. Short vowels, etc.

a (fat-Ḥa)
u (Damma)
i (kasra)
(double letter for shadda)
-an, -un, -in (tanwiin)
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