Methods for teaching modern Hebrew

Métodos para la enseñanza del hebreo moderno

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Resumen

El idioma es un componente importante en la cristalización de la identidad cultural y nacional de los estudiantes en Israel, ello se hace evidente en los esfuerzos realizados para introducir el hebreo en las escuelas. En este contexto, el objetivo de este artículo es hacer una revisión de las habilidades relacionadas en cómo el cerebro aprende a leer y escribir, y revisa los enfoques metodológicos básicos para la enseñanza de la lectura y la escritura; y en una segunda parte, revisa dos métodos

comercialmente disponibles para la enseñanza de la alfabetización hebrea, con el fin de definir y establecer como conclusión sus características y los puntos clave de una metodología adecuada, para la enseñanza del hebreo moderno.

Palabras clave: método de enseñanza, enseñanza de la lectura, enseñanza de la escritura, hebreo

Abstract

Language is an important component in the crystallization of the cultural and national identity of students in Israel, as is evident in the efforts made to introduce Hebrew in schools. In this context, the objective of this article is to review the skills related to how the brain learns to read and write, and reviews the basic methodological approaches for teaching reading and writing; and in a second part, it reviews two commercially available methods for teaching Hebrew literacy in order to define and establish, as a conclusion, their characteristics and the key points of an adequate methodology for teaching modern Hebrew.

Keywords: teaching methods, reading instruction, handwriting instruction, Hebrew

Introduction

The Hebrew language, Jewish literature and culture is at the center of language education in the elementary school in the State of Israel. The integration of each student in studies, society and culture is accomplished through their mastery of the language. The language is an important component in the crystallization of the cultural and national identity of the students in the country.

At the beginning of the establishment of the State of Israel, the residents did not speak a single language. Each immigrant brought with them the language and culture on which they grew up with. In Israel, a situation of multilingualism was created and a uniform language was needed to create something unique and unifying (Carrillo, 2021). Ben-Raphael et al. (2006) explains that the task was not easy because the immigrants came as religious and secular, Oriental and European, and each ethnic group absorbed the culture, religion and beliefs of their Diaspora state. As will be describe in detail, in the literary review, Eliezer Ben Yehuda and his colleagues, late 19th and early 20th century, made great efforts to introduce the Hebrew language, as an official language in the land of Israel in general and in schools in particular (Ben-Raphael et al., 2006).

According to Bar-Adon (2018), many programs were written for the study of the Hebrew language spoken from those days, which was used only as a sacred language, in prayers, blessings and Bible study, to now a days; and Walters (2019) highlight the findings of his investigations that reveal important insights into learners' experiences, enjoyments, frustrations and expectations regarding both the purposes and the processes of learning how to read in Hebrew and raise issues about learning and teaching, so the debate about it opened. Share (2017) argues that research on the process of literacy acquisition in the Hebrew language broadens the perspective of research in this field, mainly in aspects related to phonological awareness, reading and spelling.

In recent years, in Israel schools, teaching staff have been given autonomy to decide the textbooks for the teaching of Hebrew. Because of that, our main goal is to stablish the principal characteristics of a proper approach, that on one hand could be useful for choosing the adequate textbook, or on the other hand could be useful for designing activities to be implemented in the classroom by those teachers that would want to make their own educative resources.

This article, in its first part, reviews the skills related to how the brain learns to read and write, and it reviews the basic methodological approaches to teaching reading and writing; and in a second part, it reviews two commercially available methods of teaching Hebrew literacy in order to define and establish, as a conclusion, their characteristics and the key points of an appropriate methodology for teaching Modern Hebrew.

Literature reviews are necessary to consolidate the foundations of a discipline, and it helps the discipline to progress at the theoretical and conceptual level (Palmatier et al., 2018). In this paper, the method of literature review related to the teaching and learning of literacy and the teaching and learning of literacy in the Hebrew language has been followed. The protocol followed was as follows is shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1

Method

Formulation of the problem: the review of the literature on literacy methods developed in the theoretical framework made it possible to know the theoretical foundations of literacy. This has helped to define the characteristics that a literacy method should have, in order to be able to critically review the literacy methods for teaching Hebrew: In the secret of letters (in Hebrew Hesod Haotiot) and The magic Key (in Hebrew Maftech Hkesem).
Literature search: the search for references followed the classical scheme of carrying out an initial search in Web of Science and Scopus. The terms used in the search terms were: Literacy, Multisensory Approach Hebrew. Once the initial set was obtained, the search was extended through Google Scholar, with the aim of identifying other studies not covered by both databases, and relevant to the issues raised in this paper.
Evaluation and selection of studies: In order to select the papers relevant to the object of this study, a review of titles and abstracts was carried out, establishing as selection criteria that they dealt with Literacy, Multisensory Approach, Hebrew. This process allowed 64 papers to be selected for review.
Assessment for the selection of the studies: The criterion for the selection of the studies was that the works to be analyzed should deal with the development of literacy in pupils in the first years of primary education. After this phase, the number of studies to be reviewed was 19, and the chapters: How does the brain learn to read? And Literacy Methodologies were developed.
Data extraction: The data obtained after the literature review were used for the description of the mother tongue literacy methods and for the description of the two literacy methods for learning Hebrew: In the secret of letters (in Hebrew Hesod Haotiot) and The magic Key (in Hebrew Maftech Hkesem).
Analysis and synthesis: We proceeded to analyze and synthesize the characteristics of a literacy method for teaching Hebrew in relation to the data obtained from the literature review in relation to the parameters: eclectic approach, brain friendly, the three levels of work: Word-sentence-text and the activities related to the student development.
Conclusions: conclusions have been drawn using the synthesis of characteristics for a literacy method applied to the two methods reviewed: In the secret of letters (in Hebrew Hesod Haotiot) and The magic Key (in Hebrew Maftech Hkesem).

Note. *Own elaboration*

1.1 How does the brain learn how to read?

It is important to bear in mind the brain activity when learning how to read, to facilitate this process for each student. According to Sousa (2017) learning to read successfully requires three neural systems and the development of specific skills that will work together to help the brain decodes abstract symbols into meaningful language. On the one hand, the visual processing system scans the printed word; on the other hand, the auditory processing system sounds it out in the head, and finally, the frontal lobe integrates the information to produce meaning. And it is important to highlight that during this whole process the angular gyrus helps decode the visual word recognition signals for further processing in the left hemisphere's language centers (Broca's and Wernicke's areas).

For the integration of this neural systems to result in successful reading, the student should develop specific skills related to phonological and phonemic awareness, the alphabetic and phonic

principles, vocabulary, fluency and text comprehension (Sousa, 2017; Wasserstein & Lipka, 2019), concepts described in detail in the following chart down below.

Table 2

Skills for reading

Phonological awareness	Recognition that spoken language can be broken down into smaller components: sentences into words, words into syllables, and finally syllables into individual sounds. This recognition comprises the identification and manipulation of onsets and rimes, awareness of alliteration, rhyme, syllabication and intonation. Phonological awareness help to see the differences between ship and sheep.
Phonemic awareness	Before addressing print, students must be able to recognize that words are composed of individual sounds (phonemes) and that these sounds can form new words. This skill is known as phonemic awareness (a subdivision of phonological awareness) and includes the ability to differentiate a sound (first, middle or last) from the rest of the word, to separate words into phonemes and to recognize a particular phoneme in a word.
Alphabetic principle	The alphabetic principle defines the idea that spoken words are formed of phonemes and that phonemes are transformed in the written language into letters This system of representing phonemes by letters is very effective, as a large number of words can be written with a small number of letters. Linking the letters with their sounds in speech allows the reader to recognize lots of written words.
Phonics principle	Phonics is a pedagogical approach that is based on the alphabetic principle and associates letters and sounds with written symbols. To show phonics knowledge, children are able to change a letter in order to form the words cat or can. Only learning the relationships between letters and sounds during phonics teaching does not necessarily lead to phonemic awareness.
Vocabulary	Readers normally have a word in their mental dictionary in order to recognize it in written texts. Students learn the meaning of most words inductively through exposure to written language in conversations, listening to adults and when reading by their own. Teaching vocabulary related to complex concepts is useful when words are not common for their everyday language.
Fluency	Fluency is the ability to read a text orally with speed, accuracy and appropriate expression. Children who lack fluency read slowly with difficulty, find it very difficult to remember what they have read because reading badly affects their working memory. Frequent reading helps reading fluency. Developing good reading fluency will improve reading comprehension because learners do not spend time decoding words, and therefore focus on meaning.
Text comprehension	Comprehension is a process that begins with the identification of words, accessing the meaning of words in context, recognizing grammatical structures, making inferences and checking oneself to make sure that the text makes sense. When faced with several meanings of a word in a text, the brain has to select the one that makes sense in context. Developing the ability of selecting the proper meaning according to context is very useful for being a efficient reader.

Note. Own elaboration based on Sousa (2017)

Taking into account the reading skills mentioned and with reference to Hebrew literacy, it can be described as an overall process in which two complementary aspects are included: reading and writing. Some investigations related with the learning of Hebrew should be mentioned, in this sense, based on Torgerson et al. (2019) and Karpman (2019) we could say that teachers of Hebrew should bear in mind that children should be able to: read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding; self-correct while reading based on phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual cues; write with autonomy because are able to plan and revise their own written texts; learn vocabulary; read and write with correct spelling and grammar; have legible handwriting; and finally, know and understand a range of fiction and nonfiction texts.

In order to develop those skills mentioned in the Hebrew language, children should acquire different competencies related to three levels of the written code, that is, on the one hand the word-level (phonics, spelling and vocabulary), on the other hand sentence-level (grammar and punctuation), and this should be given as well as text-level (comprehension and composition). Vaknin-Nusbaum & Raveh (2019) speaks about the importance of increasing the morphological instruction in Hebrew because develops awareness of the morphemic structure of words that contributes to extracting meaning from texts. The work of Shechter et al. (2018) suggests that explicit instruction of Hebrew linguistic components is also relevant during the initial years of schooling, as a promoting element of reading fluency among skilled readers.

Some learning experiences related to the written language in Hebrew are developed at the same time as Tolchinsky & Sandbank (2016) explain, because children's growing command of the notational and rhetorical characteristics of written language occur in parallel, as forerunners of the lengthy path that lies ahead of children before they master overall organization of texts.

Bitan et al. (2017) examined the effect of orthographic transparency and familiarity on brain mechanisms involved in word recognition in adult Hebrew readers, and they found that the temporo-parietal region of the brain is associated with spelling and phonology, because it was activated by diacritical marks and deactivated by vowels. And they found that vowels have a high degree of familiarity in the reader, and therefore there is a low level of brain activity, and concluded that orthographic transparency and familiarity of letters contributed to word recognition.

Lipka et al. (2016) present a study that analyses the development of several different cognitive and literacy skills to reading fluency in Hebrew among Grade 1 students, and the results of their research conclude that there is a need for literacy methods to work on reading fluency and spelling in the early teaching of Hebrew. Other author, Vaknin-Nusbaum (2018) tested the morphological awareness to reading comprehension in Hebrew in 100 second and third grade students on three types of morphology: inflections, derivations, and construct formation, controlling for vocabulary knowledge and found noteworthy differences in reading comprehension but not in word spelling and phonological decoding, and highlights the desirability of deepening morphological awareness to facilitate reading comprehension.

Teachers of Hebrew should promote the skills described in the Table 2 above through a methodology that is appropriate for this purpose and in order to work in a global way the word-level, sentence-level and the text-level of Hebrew language. Besides, in order to choose an optimal methodological approach to teaching reading and writing according to how the brain learns, it is important to know the positive and negative points of the different methodologies in order to adapt them to the educational objectives and to a brain friendly methodology. We will now review the theoretical underpinnings of each of the basic methodologies.

Literacy methodologies

Throughout the history of education, different methodological approaches have been developed to teach reading and writing in the mother tongue. Literature on mother tongue teaching classifies the teaching of reading and writing into synthetic, analytical and mixed methods. Each of the

three methods has advantages and disadvantages, depending on the nature of the language being taught, the age of the students, and their main way of learning related to visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or tactile, for example (Rendón et al., 2019; Piñón et al., 2018; Tinta, 2020; Gomes-Franco, 2019).

Next, a revision is done based on Rendón et al. (2019), Piñón et al. (2018), Tinta (2020) and Gomes-Franco (2019). In the case of the first type of methods, *synthetic methods,* they have their origins in the alphabetic proto-methods developed in ancient Greece. Later on, during the 16th and 17th centuries appeared the phonetic methods, and later, in the 18th century, syllabic, iconographic and semi-globally based methods appeared. In general terms, synthetic methods can be considered the so-called "traditional" methods, which start teaching the simplest linguistic structures (grapheme, phoneme, syllable) and then move on to more advanced structures such as the word and the sentence. Different kind of variations of these methods are used nowadays. Depending on the initial linguistic element studied, they are classified as follows:

- Alphabetic methods: teach reading by naming each of its letters isolated from their phonetic value, in a certain order and then combining them later.

- Phonetic methods: teach reading by presenting phonemes individually. There are several variants of this method: onomatopoeic (imitating sounds), gestural or kinesthetic (with movement), phonetic-mimic (combining the two) and multi-sensory (visual-auditory-kinesthetic-tactile).

- Syllabic methods: teach the syllables first. One form of this method is the photo syllabic method, which illustrates each syllable with a picture.

Throughout history, in addition to, and in order to improve the methods for teaching reading and writing, during the 17th and 18th centuries various scholars, including Comenius, devised a different way of teaching reading and writing, starting teaching the language from the globality of the linguistic fact (words and sentences), a method that was called *analytical or global*. Among its principles were to:

- Follow the natural order of spoken language and the global perception of familiar sentences.

- Delay the process of decomposition.

- Encourage learner action and playful teaching activities.

- Encourage learning in an undirected way.

- Prioritize visual function over auditory and motor function.

- Encourage the reading of mental or visual ideas.

- Focus on students' centers of interest.

Both methodologies, synthetic and analytic, besides, have been reviewed over time and it has been found, and although both have positive points, they have negative points as well. In the case of the synthetic method, these negative points can be summarized as follow:

- It favors mechanical learning to the detriment of other forms of learning.
- Starting from the simplest units of language (letters, sounds…) to the most complex, the reverse of the natural evolution of language.
- Slow down the development of reading speed, because it captures the attention of a very small visual field related to each letter or syllable, and favors regressions when reading.
- Avoid the personal discovery of reading by presenting the child with the keys to reading.
- Learning is based on repetition of decoding reading fragments and imitation of adult writing.
- Text comprehension is sacrificed because decoding of the written code is encouraged when reading.
- Letter-based methods lead to spelling.
- Syllable-based methods lead to syllabification.

As far as analytical or global methods are concerned, the negative aspects are as follows:

- The units of language study are overly broad (sentences), and their complexity can be very difficult for children learning to read.
- Identification of new words is not possible without knowledge of the written code.
- Inaccuracy and invention are encouraged in reading in increasing order as the visual field of vision increases: word-phrase-story.
- When the broad reading units come from the adult context, they do not respond to children's expression.
- It favors learners of the sensory-visual thymus, but not learners in whom other senses predominate in learning, such the auditory one, for example.
- The learning process is slower because it involves the learner having to know all the words in order to understand the text.
- Its correct implementation needs highly trained, creative and active teachers.

Piñón et al. (1999) explain that from 1920 methodologies had an important evolution and mixed methods emerged, bringing together the positive aspects of synthetic and analytical methods; based on the idea that the teaching of reading and writing cannot be done in the light of a single approach, but must be eclectic, combined and multifaceted.

From the point of view of mixed methods, when faced with a written text, the child should understand it as a whole, but it is also important for him/her to discover the combination that exists in the text, analyzing the relationships that exist between phoneme and grapheme, as far as possible inductively, encouraging a true mental analysis. Although this should not be to the detriment of using deductive teaching strategies, for some phonemes, letters and syllabic sounds that need to be explained. Because of that, it is interesting to make a first review of the positive

aspects of both synthetic methods and analytical/global methods, because they will be the basis of the mix method. In relation to the so-called *synthetic methods* highlight among its main benefits:

- They help to learn the written code because of the correspondence between grapheme and phoneme.

- It allows the association of visual, auditory, motor and tactile images to be established and is effective even for children with sensory-motor or physical impairments.

- It makes the child autonomous, being able to identify any word presented to him/her for the first time, because he/she has the keys to decipher the written code.

- It is an economical system, in relation to the time and energy needed to implement it, as only a limited number of alphabetic and phonetic signs need to be taught and learned to make all possible combinations.

- The isolated perception of phonemes ultimately aims to fuse them into more meaningful units such as words and phrases.

- Correct articulation and accuracy in reading and writing are achieved.

- The most effective transfer from the oral to the graphic system occurs at the syllabic level.

As far as analytical or global methods are concerned, the most beneficial points of these are:

- They respond to infant perception and eye movement by large units.

- Encourages meaningful motivation and creative attitude in increasing order, depending on the starting point of the unit of thought, from smallest to largest (word, sentence, story).

- Recognition is higher when the recognition unit is less complex (word).

- It encourages intellectual work and research on the part of students.

- Visual observation and retention contribute to better acquisition of spelling.

- Students whose way of learning is based on visual perception benefit from this method.

- It favors the global training of the pupils because it works from the cognitive, affective and motor levels.

Therefore, in order to establish a theoretical basis for the correct development of an eclectic methodology for teaching reading and writing that combines the best of the synthetic and analytical methods, it is desirable that in the eclectic method, words, phrases, simple passages are selected carefully graded, so that children can analyze, compare, synthesize them from the beginning and simultaneously, so that they can become familiar with all language units in a proper order while learning the mechanism.

Currently, two commercially available methods of teaching Hebrew literacy that are used in secular Israeli schools now a days are discussed below, in order to determine their main characteristics that define what kind methods are, that is, synthetic, analytical or mix methods. Specifically, they

are: *In the secret of the letters* (in Hebrew *Besod Haotiot*) and *The magic key* (in Hebrew *Maftech Hkesem*).

2.1 In the Secret of the letters (in Hebrew Besod Haotiot)

As an introduction to the method *In the Secret of Letters* by Carmela Langenthal-Nesher published by Panel Or in 2014, the editorial explains that the program for teaching Hebrew reading expresses the worldview that human beings are different from each other and fundamentally curious, and therefore curiosity is an engine that leads to success; and besides, the editors explain that the purpose of the study techniques in the book is to put a smile on the faces of the students, to enrich and encourage motivation. The method is a differential method that provides a solution for different styles of learning. It is based on the curriculum of the Ministry of Education.

Along the book we can check the presence of texts from various fields of knowledge: humorous, operators, songs and stories. According to the editors these texts have been carefully selected to create an experience and thrill.

The illustrations in the books are colorful, and the objective of this illustrations are to create experience and enjoyment, in order to help to create knowledge, as editors explain.

The method is divided into eight booklets:

- Ready-to-read booklets (letter recognition): five workbooks to impart the reading lessons (familiarity with the sounds).
- Writing and practice booklet: one workbook for practicing the writing of the letters, the texts and the typeface.
- Booklet for the development of reading fluency: one workbook for practicing fluency when reading (including calculation of standard reading time).
- Holiday booklet: one workbook for learning to read and write with contents related to cultural and historical events for the Hebrew community related to their holidays, such as: Purim, Passover, or Independence Day, for example.

In the first phase of the program there is a great emphasis on getting to know the letters of the alphabet. Hebrew belongs to an alphabetic system where the letters represent the phonemes, the phonetic units of the spoken language. The reader must then know the sound that each letter represents. This stage is a necessary condition for reading mastery of the alphabet principle will later activate the attentional resources for reading comprehension, which is the central purpose of reading.

In the first booklet we learn the first sound Aa and the children learn how the sound is obtained when it is below each letter in the Hebrew alphabet. In addition, the students also learn in this section the structure of the Hebrew language, syntactic awareness. In the initial stage the students are able to identify global words like I, mine and thus begin to understand the syntactic awareness of the sentence structure, the structure of the passage link words and the like.

In the first stage there is a reference to phonological awareness. Students are asked to match the image to the opening sound of the word for example banana the opening sound is Ba. Simultaneously with the stage of letter recognition, sound recognition, phonological and syntactic awareness, great emphasis is placed on phonetic representation.

The writing system represents the reading through graphic signs and therefore the goal is for the student to know how to match the graphic sign to the components of the spoken language. In the program it can be seen that there are many activities in the development of writing for its various levels.

The practice in the workbooks is done in a spiral. In each booklet you can see the reference to all components of the language but each time the work is of a higher degree of difficulty.

In addition to all of the above, there is also a reference to cultivating morphological awareness, many single-sex males and word families. These are important components in the development of reading and the development of the student's independent writing later on.

The program has a reference to semantics, vocabulary. It is assumed that students think through vocabulary so that if we expand each student's personal knowledge and vocabulary, their thinking ability will develop better later on.

The ability to think and vocabulary also develops through listening and speaking, in order to develop a literate student. Therefore, the program has many tasks to experience in conversation and discussion in a textual and non-textual context, the goal is to develop a skill of listening and discourse.

The program focuses on developing higher-order thinking. The knowledge absorbed through the senses and the existing knowledge in memory are reorganized through various thought processes as they create new information. The program has experience in building arguments, comparing, dealing with disagreements, drawing conclusions and asking questions.

The program addresses Jewish tradition and Jewish values. In the booklet on holidays, students get to know each holiday in its time, the customs of the holiday, the meaning of the holiday, the symbols and the songs.

In addition, the program incorporates various literary works with the aim of constructing a social worldview and engaging students in a model for a moral and proper pattern of behavior.

At the end of the process of learning to read (in the last two booklets) there is an emphasis on the fluency of reading and the transition from print to handwriting. As stated in the Hebrew language, there are two types of writing. The typeface appears for the first time in Jewish writings, in the Torah, in books and more.

The daily use of writing is done in the handwriting which is a round handwriting and written more quickly. Therefore, it is important to teach the children the handwriting as well, so that they will use it later.

The manuscript is studied at the discretion of the teacher. Sometimes the teacher teaches him at the beginning of the letter acquisition when he introduces it to the students and they start using it in writing. It is sometimes learned at the end of the reading process.

In content that relates to work on reading fluency, fluency is of great importance. The reading develops from year to year and so does the flow until it stabilizes. The automatic model in reading means that a quick retrieval of words indicates that word recognition is done at an automatic level and then it allows the child to pay attention, to reading comprehension. A student engaged in deciphering the letters will not relate to the written content.

For this phase there is a teacher guide where the teacher needs to measure using a clock, the reading time and the quality of the reading. There is no reading without understanding.

Besod Haotiot's program has a website where the booklets are displayed. There are short videos to get acquainted with the letters and movements.

2.2 The Magic Key (in Hebrew Maftech Hkesem)

The Magic Key by R. Ben-Ari and N. Levine (2013), and published by MTH, Educational Technology Center in 2013, is intended for teaching reading, writing, listening and speaking in Hebrew. It is based on the curriculum of the Ministry of Education.

The goals of the program are to impart the basic reading and writing skills to all first graders, in a unique, easy and simple way and through an encounter with texts in different genres.

In the program it is of great importance to cultivate the literal discourse spoken as an integral part of the teaching of the alphabetic principle and to strengthen the fluency of reading.

According to this method, students acquire reading in three moves:

- Move 1 - In Booklet 1 you learn one vowels and some of the consonants (letters).
- Move 2 - In Booklet 2 you learn one more vowels and the rest of the consonants.
- Move 3 - In Booklet 3 you learn all the other vowels in combination with all the consonants.

The acquisition of the letters and punctuation is done in a gradual way, by analysis and by synthesis of words and expressions. The method adapts to the developmental abilities of the students in that it does not burden the memory, and at the same time it allows the students to make generalizations that make it easier to acquire the decipherment.

The "Magic Key" program also begins in kindergartens because although there is intensive work in kindergartens, the program assumes that there will be populations of children who developmentally will not acquire all the skills required to acquire reading and writing such as: immigrant children, people with disabilities and learning disabilities. These children will be required at the beginning of the process of acquiring reading and writing to master the basic skills of the buds of literacy. They will therefore need for a longer period of time during the acquisition itself, vocabulary enrichment, cultivation of listening and speaking abilities, cultivation of alphabetical skills and adaptation of materials and means to their level. Teachers will need to be given tools to mediate learning through a pool of printed, computerized, or television activities that exist in the Magic Key program.

The Magic Key reading method, combines principles of several literate approaches. The method applies principles of the phonetic approach such as establishing phonological awareness and knowing the names of the letters, direct and explicit instruction of the alphabetic code and cultivation.

Remembrance skills of the orthographic pattern of the word. The approach also incorporates principles of holistic approaches, such as multiple exposure to types of natural, relevant and authentic texts from the world of children while developing spoken and written language.

Development of reading comprehension and vocabulary - Decoding instruction is done in a varied practice, which emphasizes the development of reading comprehension and vocabulary. After acquiring the alphabetic code, teachers direct students to use the vocabulary learned, generalizations, screenings, and stories for self-expression.

Teachers point to linguistic phenomena such as families of words, derivation of words and patterns, in order to raise awareness among students of the language and its structure. In this way, thinking about language in general and words in particular develops. Language games are also used, which create situations of learning while amusing words.

Pragmatics - from the few words form (already in the early stages) natural connections, real and communicative and meaningful: phrases, sentences and passages. Conjunctions

And words (such as: the, of, yes / no) are given globally, and they make it possible to create complete and natural sentences. There is no use of high and uncommon vocabulary in children's language. The use of natural and familiar language makes it easier for students to acquire reading.

Morphological and syntactic knowledge - recognition of morphological phenomena at the level of the single word. In Hebrew there are distinctions between male and female, singular and plural, and their verb form. There are many activities in the program that deal with this area for example: the students have to paste the shape of the female under the picture of the girl and the shape of the male under the picture of the son.

Syntactic knowledge (the order of the words in the sentence and the connection between them) - all of these contribute to the understanding of the reader by relying on the context. For example, when readers learn to recognize the suffix in a word they knew to notice that the form belongs to

the plural of female so they may also read the verb in female without errors and relatively quickly because they are aware of the connection between body and sex. Readers who are unaware of this meaning may decipher the subject and verb sound by sound. In the program there are activities that develop the morphological and syntactic awareness. The teaching of the grammatical pattern is done only when it promotes the teaching of reading comprehension. There is no practice of the grammatical pattern to its name. That is, the practice of matching between male and female will be done only if it fits the context.

Development of listening and speaking - the program deals with a focused acquisition of decoding along with cultivating literacy skills in the four modes of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The teachers read aloud authentic texts of various kinds to the students, including quality works by the best Hebrew writers and poets such as Fanya Bergstein, E. Hillel Chaim Nachman Bialik and more. Giving exposure to the iron-clad assets of Hebrew literature, came with the intention of enriching their cultural world, their language and providing them with tools for later reading literature, as independent readers.

In addition, the program has pieces of information intended for reading aloud, developing listening comprehension, developing the spoken language and cultivating awareness of the differences between the written language and the oral language. These texts are embedded in each booklet and most are accompanied by activities for students. Teachers are also asked to encourage spoken and written discourse for self-expression on the contents of texts. Students can listen to other texts on the website.

An accompanying guide was written for each student booklet. To make it easier for teachers. Each page has notes and instructions explaining how to work in the booklet, plus suggestions for additional activities and at the end of each guide there are tests and pages for mapping the class.

2.2.1. Classroom accessories

The letters AB - At the end of Booklet 1 are hard pages with the letters AB and the punctuation marks. Students will be able to cut them out and practice the combinations learned.

The teacher also has about 30 large cards with all the letters of the letter AB, all the punctuation marks learned and cards drawn for each letter (drawing and word in the opening letter).

The teacher receives a collection of stickers with illustration stickers of magic (magic is a character of a girl inside the booklet). The teacher can give the student a sticker as positive feedback on progress or as she sees fit.

At the beginning of the study, each sound has an illustration of a character that accompanies it. For example: The letter T has an illustration of a daughter named Tamar.

2.2.2. Website

The program's website (https://ofek.cet.ac.il/ab/lashon/kesem/) has a section for students. The section has games to strengthen the beginning of reading. In addition, there are reinforcement activities on the site for students who have difficulty, who need additional exercises.

In addition, there is also computerized teacher training on the site for the implementation of the program and a forum for teachers to discuss various issues and to exchange information and a glossary related to reading instruction.

The site also has a section for parents where there are suggestions for cultivating the literate discourse at home as well as suggestions for joint activities of parents with their children, which support the course of teaching reading.

Discussion and Conclusion

Taking into account the theories reviewed in the previous sections in relation to the definition of literacy, how the brain learns, and the evolution of methods for teaching reading and writing, a methodological approach to the teaching and learning of Hebrew as a mother tongue is proposed where these theories converge and form the characteristics of the proposed approach are as follows, namely:

1. Eclectic approach:
    a. Mix methodology.
    b. Phases: global-analytical-synthetic.
2. Brain friendly:
    a. Multisensory resources.
    b. Visual stimulation.
    c. Auditory stimulation.
    d. Physical stimulation.
    e. Literary resources: poems, songs, stories.
    f. Emotional stimulation: games, literature, songs.
    g. Games.
3. Develop 3 levels:
    a. Word-level work: i.e. phonics, spelling and vocabulary.
    b. Sentence-level work: i.e. grammar and punctuation.
    c. Text-level work: i.e. comprehension and composition.
4. Activities related to the student development about:
    a. Phonological and phonemic awareness.

    b. Alphabetic principle and phonics.

    c. Vocabulary.

    d. Fluency.

    e. Text comprehension.

    f. Handwriting.

The above characteristics can be used as a checklist when choosing or designing a method for the teaching of Hebrew, and can be useful as well as for evaluating methods that are already implemented in order to review what kind of lacks could be found, and with the purpose to improve the teaching of the Hebrew language.

In the case of the methods analyzed available on the market for learning the Hebrew language: In the secret of the letters (in Hebrew Besod Haotiot) and The magic key (in Hebrew Maftech Hkesem), we may say that both methods meet the characteristics described in the table above. Both methods can be considered mixed, since they combine the approach to the language from the level of letters and from the level of the word, the sentence and the texts; although both start with the smallest units of the language: the letters and their sounds, which coincides with synthetic methods, and once the pupils are introduced to the Hebrew alphabet, they are familiarized with literary and non-literary texts, which coincides with analytical methods. This leads to the conclusion that both methods can be considered mixed methods.

In conclusion, we may say that teachers who teach reading and writing must have an in-depth knowledge of the theoretical bases underlying the different methodologies for teaching reading and writing and they should know how the brain learns to read and write, in order to adapt their teaching practice to the reality of the classroom, the characteristics of the language they teach and the positive aspects of the different methods.

Provided that teachers are aware of the different methods of teaching reading and writing, they will be able to select the best books available on the market, and they will also be able to develop their own method, building their own teaching resources and developing their own teaching strategies.

In relation to the prospect of this theoretical review and analysis of the different methods reviewed, it would be advisable in future research to develop and implement a set of activities related to different ways of stimulating students on different levels of the language to be learned: visual, auditory, physical, emotional in order to investigate the best way of teaching the Hebrew language.

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