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**Exploring the Impact of Montessori Approach on Early Reading: Case of
Private Schools in Tiaret**

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in Didactics

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Dedication 1

I dedicate this work to my wonderful parents Mohamed and Mebarka, whose love, commitment, and faith in my abilities helped me become the person I am today.

I cannot thank you enough, but I wish I made you proud.

Special thanks to my beloved brothers: Hakim, Hamid, Bilal, Youcef, and Abd Elhadi.

To my only sister Fatima, you have always been there for me, providing love, laughs, and support. Your presence has filled my life with joy.

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Dedication 2

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Abstract

Early language development is crucial, especially for the development of reading skills, hence appropriate teaching strategies must be used throughout this phase. Unfortunately, the methods used in language instruction nowadays are frequently critiqued for being inadequate and insufficient in meeting the needs and interests of young learners. This research aims to investigate the extent to which the Montessori approach is effective in teaching and learning early reading skills as an alternative to traditional methods. In order to accomplish this objective, a mixed-method approach is used where three research instruments have been employed: a questionnaire addressed to teachers in private schools in Tiaret, a classroom observation, as well as a test as a quasi-experimental approach. Based on an in-depth analysis of the results, the Montessori approach has been demonstrated to effectively teach early reading skills besides being fun and catering for different learning styles. It is suggested for use in language syllabi, either partially or entirely.

Keywords: Early language development, teaching strategies, Montessori approach, early reading skills.

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Key to Abbreviations and Acronyms

AD Anno Domini

ALM: Audio Lingual Method

EFL: English as Foreign Language

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

CEFR: Common European Frame of References

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General Introduction

Educational research has focused on language teaching, seeking to develop the best possible teaching methods, approaches, and strategies to meet the needs of learners. Therefore, various educational systems and methodologies aim to improve curricula and increase efficiency. The proposal of introducing English as a foreign language in Algerian public elementary schools has recently gained attention. Likewise, Montessori education is being implemented in private language centers.

Moreover, the Learner-centered approach was first introduced to the educational field in 1907 by Dr. Maria Montessori. According to her theory, a child's innate desire to learn is fueled by his or her active participation in their own growth. All the child requires is a ready a setting with various materials (Montessori materials) and sensory exercises where he is free to pursue his interests.

Hence, Dr. Montessori had a distinct viewpoint on the process of learning, especially as it relates to language. She was adamant about the enormous intellectual potential and capacity of people to acquire language. She created an approach to education that went against the grain of traditional approaches, which only considered seeing and hearing as means of acquiring knowledge, in order to fully realize this potential. Based on this perspective, she developed specialized educational resources for every facet of language, such as the pink series, sandpaper letters, and large moveable alphabet, which are meant to be used in the teaching and acquisition of early reading abilities literate and author (Montessori, 1912).

The fundamental aim of this study is to highlight the extent of the impact of the Montessori Method in teaching and learning reading skill for preschoolers of Soltan Abbad Academy and Al Imtiyaz private school. In addition, the study seeks to ascertain whether the Montessori approach can be more successful in teaching and learning than standard approaches. The research then aims to assess the value of the Montessori sensorial resources created to instruct and acquire early reading abilities.

The Algerian educational system has been criticized by many scholars, including Rezig (2011), Tafari & Boufatah (2017), and Gauchem (2018), for being unreformed for such a long time. They made this assertion because they believed that the traditional methods for when it comes to addressing the early childhood developmental requirements and catering to the various needs of all pupils, particularly in the area of language acquisition, education has fallen short. Because Krashen (1982) emphasized age as a critical component in learning a second language, primary school is seen as a rich environment for language learning.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate how well the Montessori Method works with young children learning English as a foreign language, particularly when it comes to reading comprehension. Furthermore, the researchers desire to improve English language study by applying the Montessori method, which sheds insight on young children's language development. Other researchers will be inspired to carry out more research in this area by the results of this study. Additionally, the researchers hope that the curriculum designers, instructional supervisors, and teachers will benefit from this study.

This study attempts to put forward the following questions:

1. To what extent is the Montessori Approach effective for children's reading skills?
2. What does it take to be a Montessori teacher?
3. How to implement this approach in EFL classrooms?

To address the objectives and question of this study, it is hypothesized that:

- a) The Montessori approach contributes to fostering children's reading skills by developing their phonological awareness.
- b) Being a Montessori teacher refers to understanding how to use Montessori materials and adapting them to learners' needs
- c) It can be best implemented by using materials such as sandpaper letters, sand tray and moveable alphabet with the teacher acting as a guide letting children learn on their own.

Montessori approach progresses from writing to reading using the sensorial materials specifically between the ages of 3 and 6 years. This is different from the standard practices in Algeria, where children in primary school (ages 8 to 9) are taught a second language using simply a textbook and a whiteboard.

Consequently, the study will attempt as main objectives to: First, showcase on which level can Montessori -with its various materials- improve pupils' reading skills. It will highlight the main aspect of reading efficiency Montessori can cater for. Second, it will explain about the role of the Montessori teacher and the different materials he should be expert in using. Third, it seeks to give useful advice on how to best implement this approach in EFL classrooms.

The structure of this work comprises two major chapters. As the opening part of this dissertation, the literature review chapter evaluates the factors associated with the topic being studied.

Thus, a brief overview of the Montessori approach's principles, stages, and supporting material is provided in the first section. While the second section gives a general overview of reading as a skill, it focuses mostly on reading approaches, obstacles, and strategies ending up with teaching early reading skill utilizing the Montessori approach.

The second chapter is a practical one, it is divided into two main sections. The first section deals with a thorough description of the study methodology (mixed method approach) and the design that was selected. An overview of the findings is included in the final section, which is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

The study ends with the shortcomings of the work besides recommendations for more studies. Lastly, the study concludes with a general conclusion that explicitly answers the research question.

CHAPTER ONE:

Montessori and Reading

SECTION ONE:

An Overview about the Montessori Approach

I.1.1. Introduction

Over time, a variety of approaches to teaching languages have been developed in the field of education. The Montessori method is one of these approaches developed by Dr. Maria Montessori in the early 1900s as an alternative to traditional teaching approaches. It changed the methodology and requirements for instructing young readers. For a general grasp of the subject, the teaching and development of early reading abilities, along with the Montessori methods are divided into two sections in this chapter.

In the first section, Dr. Maria Montessori and her approach are briefly described, along with the essential language-related ideas they emphasize, including principles, developmental stages, and instructional materials.

I.1.2. Maria Montessori Biography

Zierdt (2007) states that Maria Montessori was born in 1870 in Chiaravalle, Italy. At the age of twelve, Maria's parents moved to Rome to provide their only child with a better education compared to what Ancona could provide. Maria began studying engineering at the Regia Scuola Tecnica Michelangelo Buonarroti. After this experience she decided to continue her studies in medicine to become the first Italian female doctor.

After graduation from medical school, Montessori was selected as the Italian representative to participate in a Women's International Congress in Berlin. Soon after, she was appointed assistant doctor at the psychiatric clinic in the University of Rome. Because of this experience, Maria became interested in children facing cognitive challenges.

In 1897, Montessori had a revelation. She theorized that mental deficiency presented chiefly a pedagogical, rather than mainly a medical problem. In 1900, she began

to direct a small school (Ortho phrenic) in Rome for challenged youth. The methods she employed were both experimental and miraculous. She suggested that teachers should find a way to teach the child “how to” before making him execute a task.

From 1896 to 1906, she occupied the chair of Hygiene at the Magistero Femminile in Rome. In 1907, Montessori began to affirm her theories and methods of pedagogy to be known as the “Montessori Method” by directing a system of daycare centers for working class children in one of the worst neighborhoods in Rome. The remarkable success of her work in the “House of Children” (Casa dei Bambini) quickly spread worldwide.

Maria was invited to the United States of America by Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, and others to set up a classroom at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, where spectators watched twenty-one children behind a glass wall for four months. The two gold medals went to this class. She was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Maria Montessori sacrificed herself on behalf of her children until she passed away at the age of 81 on May 6, 1952, at Noordwyk-on sea, Holland. Since her death, there has been a continuous global expansion of interest in Dr. Montessori’s methods.

Figure I.1.1.*Dr. Maria Montessori*



I.1.3. Montessori Philosophy

Maria Montessori believed in a progressive approach to education. Conceptually, Montessori philosophy is consistent with the schools of thought of Itard, Pestalozzi, Rousseau, and Seguin (Edwards, 2002). Because she thought that an outside discipline should shape a child's desires, Montessori rejected techniques that included rewards and punishments (Montessori, 2004). By reformulating the child's perception of school, the Montessori educational philosophy allows him to move autonomously and at his own pace within the prepared environment. In a prepared environment, kids are free to move around without needing adult supervision (Montessori, 2004).

This approach to classroom management is different from the idea requiring students to sit in a group while in class (Montessori, 2004). A respectful classroom environment is a priority in the Montessori learning environment. The teacher and student work together to achieve the intended positive results. According to Lillard (2007), the intended results are attained through collaboration-based learning and the communication style that children acquire with adults. Additionally, when children of all ages engage in Montessori classrooms, they show solidarity with one another especially when it comes to older children helping younger children and cooperation rather than rivalry takes place (Flynn, 1991). Learning to communicate in a peaceful framework is therefore one of the main goals for teachers and students in Montessori classrooms (Thayer-Bacon, 2011). Consequently, the Montessori classroom environment and teachers have a significant impact on how students communicate and collaborate.

I.1.4. The Core Principles of the Montessori Approach

Montessori theory methods, concepts, and underlying principles are applicable to all ages. It is within these concepts we find the reasoning behind why things are such in a Montessori environment. Regarding her method of teaching children, Maria Montessori maintained the following objectives and beliefs.

I.1.4.1. Respect for the Child

According to Dr. Montessori, everyone has a comfort zone where he tries to be creative or productive, but other people's interruptions of this usually result in anger and unpleasantness (Montessori, 1912). She said that children are in a similar zone when attempting to establish connections, grasp patterns, and correct themselves. What happens when they are interrupted?

In fact, the child experiences identical annoyance. Hence, Montessori emphasizes respect for the child, allowing them to walk, observe, and correct themselves at their own pace. She highlighted that adults do not respect children. In contrast, the Montessori classroom emphasizes a strong emphasis on a child's right to be respected. In the end, teachers have a responsibility to respect students by helping them to take initiative and study on their own. According to Montessori (1936/1996), children who have options are more likely to develop the abilities and skills necessary for independent learning, strong self-esteem, and successful learning.

I.1.4.2. The Absorbent Mind

The phrase "absorbent mind" was first used by Maria Montessori in her 1946 book "Education for a New World" to describe the way that babies freely and

unconsciously take in information from their environment. According to her, children from birth to age six have an absorbent mind that aids in the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge and abilities through sensory encounters. According to her, kids are naturally curious and have a strong desire to learn at this age.

According to Montessori (2007a, 2007b, as quoted in Isaacs, 2018), children's early experiences and impressions shape their personality and development. According to Montessori (2007a, 2007b, as quoted in Isaacs, 2018), children's early experiences and impressions shape their personality and development. In addition, according to Montessori (1949), the absorbent mind just absorbs any idea it comes across and makes no distinctions between what is good or bad, right, or wrong.

Furthermore, infants go through phases where they also have short attention spans and quickly switch their focus from one event to the next. She concluded that an absorbent mind is a powerful instrument for growing and absorbing knowledge. Providing children with diverse experiences during this era can have a significant impact on their future development and achievement.

I.1.4.3. The Sensitive Periods

Children under the age of six are extremely responsive to particular kinds of learning experiences because they are in a sensitive developmental stage. During these years, they absorb information like sponges, which makes the early years a crucial moment for educational discovery. During this stage, the child develops their personality and realizes their full potential. The child's sensitive times for order, movement, language, and little objects stand out. The sensitive periods manifest

themselves as a pattern of behavior. During this stage, it is common to perform some acts repeatedly without any apparent purpose. After such activity, a new function emerges, frequently with amazing strength.

According to Montessori's theory of child development, during these stages, the child exhibits energy and pleasure in their activities. According to Montessori, a kid who lacks stimulation or is hindered at this stage of learning may exhibit negative behaviors and hinder their natural development. Montessori (1966) saw sensitive periods as crucial for both a child's psychological development and learning process. As a result, in developing her approach to Montessori emphasized the need of optimal learning times for children. Montessori teachers use their knowledge of sensitive periods to create a positive learning environment and organize activities for children. According to Standing's book *Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work*, organizing instruction around children's sensitive times fosters a persistent passion that must be witnessed to be believed.

- **Sensitivity to order**

According to Montessori (1949), order is not only crucial during this delicate time but also an essential need. Montessori said that a child's sensitivity to order starts at birth, peaks in the early toddler years, and typically lasts until the child is five years old. This sensitive period is characterized by the child's innate desire for repetition and consistency, which makes them crave routines and predictability. (Lifetime Montessori School, 2023).

Montessori cites numerous examples of young children being upset by disorder in their environment. For example, exposure to unexpected places and people can be

upsetting for them. According to Montessori (1966), the first year of life requires inner direction, which is assisted by predictable routines and organized surroundings. A young toddler can recognize signs of food preparation and respond with excitement. It is important to distinguish between children's demand for order in their surroundings and adults' need for neat surroundings.

More importantly, a child's normal development depends on an environment that is consistent, stable, and predictable: "The child is developing himself out of the elements of his environment... it is his foundation," according to Standing (1984, p125-126). The child's need for order becomes more apparent at the age of one year and a half. This corresponds to the developmental period at which she or he is first able to control their surroundings and move objects from one location to another. She will go to considerable measures to return items that are "out of place" and expects to locate them as she first saw them. A child's initial developmental period is characterized by this quest for order (Isaacs, 2018).

- **Sensitivity to Walking**

Babies have an intense desire to get better at walking between the ages of 12 and 15 months. They have a long way to go before they get tired of exercising this new ability to move. When given the freedom to walk at their own pace, children's walking abilities are sometimes underestimated. However, adults should be mindful that children have no concept of time and enjoy exploring (Montessori, 1949). During this period, the baby is changing from a defenseless to an active being.

- **Sensitivity to Small Objects**

When a newborn reaches their first year and has a larger area to explore, they are drawn to small items like insects, pebbles, stones, and grass, as Montessori (1948/1993) noted. They will pick something up, give it a close inspection, and sometimes even put it in their mouth. Babies at this age have a need for detail as part of their attempt to learn more about the world. Babies in this sensitive age are drawn to real-world materials.

- **Sensitivity to Learning through the Senses**

The second sensitive stage begins when there is a desire to use the hands and mouth to explore the world. Through taste and touch, the infant takes up the characteristics of the objects around him and tries to act upon them. Crucially, it happens via the sensory and motor activity that forms language's neural structures. Montessori concluded that the hands, which are used for working, and the tongue, which humans use for talking, she referred to them as "instruments of human intelligence," noting that they are more closely connected to his mind than any other bodily organ (Montessori, 1949).

- **Sensitivity for Language**

Regarding language acquisition, Dr. Montessori (1949) stated that a child picks up language on his own and does not need any instruction. The youngster is the one with the power to change a language's qualities and people's attributes. Through careful observation, we can determine that the youngster has skills that will help in the development of the characteristics he will have as an adult. She continued by saying that language acquisition begins soon after birth since an infant picks up on the voices of those around him and stores these impressions subconsciously.

The youngster continues to develop his language skills through interactions with people in his environment. Learning a language involves hearing sounds, seeing how people make sounds, making sounds themselves, understanding meaning by speaking, and characteristics of reading, words, symbols, and letters. The sensitive phase of language supplies the absorbent mind with the foundations needed to grasp that language period, and the unconscious process of adopting our native language is highly powerful (Montessori, 1949).

I.1.4.4. Prepared Environment

Pedagogical theorists including Bronfen Brenner (1979), Piaget (1978), Montessori (1998), and Vygotsky (1978) concentrated on the process of learning and how the environment of a child influenced this ability. Since Maria Montessori believed that the "Children's House" (Casa Dei Bambini) was a unique teaching setting, the fundamental tenet of modern school architecture is that they should be sanitary, according to healthy housing standards, and so on. Her goal was to build them in a way that would make them psychologically rewarding, in a way that would correspond with the children's psychological needs (Montessori, 1944).

The reason Montessori gave her school the name “Casa” which also means "house" in Italian, the language she taught was that she saw the surroundings as a "home lovely home" where children might feel entirely at ease both physically mentally intellectually (Montessori, 1944). She explained that an ideal children's home should have both an indoor and an outdoor space. Regarding the outdoor space, she states, “What is needed for children is an open-air atmosphere of activity that will develop the psychological side” Montessori (1948, p.67). She continued by saying that a prepared

environment is one that is designed to meet the needs of children's developmental stages. It includes physical space, furniture, materials, kids, and adults and is free of conflict, rivalry, and judgment. Everyone is free to be himself and feels at home there (Montessori, 1944).

Montessori believed we could provide our children with a setting that would maximize their learning, allow them the freedom to learn and take charge of their lessons, and allow them to grow into the best versions of themselves according to Seldin and Epstein (2003). In fact, the prepared environment is considered to mean that every material is arranged for very precise purposes, either in a specified location or in a specific manner. For instance, the child can work with the easier materials first, so those are arranged at the top of the shelf. Since the child's focus and concentration skills are still developing, these materials need the least amount of effort and concentration.

Nevertheless, as the content advances, it becomes more complicated and demanding. As a result, the prepared environment needs to include the right furniture, as laid out by Montessori: materials for math, language, sensory, and practical life learning. The mixed-age group is one of the main components of a prepared environment. Montessori found that children learn best in a community setting where they may interact with peers of various ages and abilities. This fosters cooperation, teamwork, and the development of their tolerance and social skills.

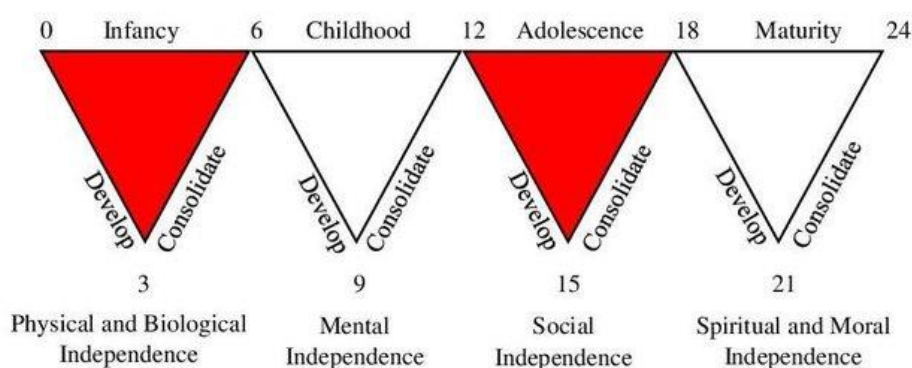
In conclusion, two essential components of the Montessori approach to education are the prepared environment and the mixed-age group. Together, they create a nurturing, engaging, and stimulating learning environment for kids (Montessori, 1948/1993).

I.1.5. Montessori's Stages of Development

It was acknowledged by Dr. Montessori that the kid developed through patterns. She referred to them as "planes of development" and listed the four (04) different stages that a child experiences between birth and the age of twenty-four: Early Life, Early Life, Teenage Years, and Early Adulthood and Maturity. She realized that one child's psychological and physical characteristics varied greatly from one another on each of these planes. She believed that it is like a metamorphosis that the child goes through (Montessori, 1946). For instance, a child aged 0-6 absorbs everything they can from their surroundings. Thus, Dr. Montessori divided the process into stages to better comprehend its patterns:

Figure I.1.2.

Montessori's Stages of Development (adapted from Montessori, 2012)



I.1.5.1. Early Childhood (Birth to age 6)

Although early childhood education offers several developmental milestones and benefits, Montessori (1949) acknowledged that this crucial stage focuses on the child's capacity to assimilate new information and stimulation. According to Montessori, a child will learn and develop both gross and fine motor skills as well as unconscious and conscious brains when they feel at ease in their surroundings, considering everything that happens during the first six years of a child's life. She also mentioned how much young minds are learning as they crawl, stand, walk, and talk in addition to recognizing sounds, tastes, and smells. They will also develop hand-eye coordination, adapt to their environment, and increase their vocabulary in many languages.

Among many other milestones, kids will learn a hundred words and perfect their cognitive development as they get closer to childhood. Furthermore, she emphasized that throughout the first developmental stage, kids will engage in independent play and job completion, cultivating the attitude of "I can do it all by myself!" Along with independence, the kids as adolescents start to display distinct personality traits and emotional patterns, individuality and personality distinction start to emerge.

I.1.5.2. Childhood (Ages 6-12)

Once a kid reaches important cognitive achievements, their want to learn more and become independent grows in the second plane of development. Due to their developing conscience and functional awareness of good and evil, the child's attitude now includes "I can decide and think for myself!" (Feez, 2010 as cited in Isaacs ,2018). Children in this age range will also learn how to solve problems, think critically, and create cause-and-effect scenarios through Montessori activities. In addition, the kid will

start to consider their place in the world, their identity, who they want to be, and how they may help others in need as they gain more knowledge about it and its surroundings (Montessori, 1948/1993).

I.1.5.3. Adolescence (Ages 12-18)

Adolescence marks an important turning point in everyone's life. Children's reflective learning and application are strengthened by this third plane of development while their social, emotional, and physical development rises. Adolescence promotes self-care and self-evaluation with a growing awareness of the world and one's own emotions, culminating in the mindset "I can stand on my own!" "As a result, adolescents will practice making increasingly independent decisions, establishing social networks, and growing emotionally independent (Montessori, 1948).

I.1.5.4. Young Adulthood & Maturity (Ages 18–24)

The fourth and final plan of development takes place as a child transition from adolescence to early adulthood, increasing maturity and preparing them for ultimate independence. Young people are going to start going on adventures, establishing a more cognitive understanding of their identity based on their current spiritual and emotional state (Montessori, 1948). Additionally, there is a great need for financial independence and decision-making throughout this time of growth. Their perspective has changed to "I can acquire it myself!" because of their recent experiences working and receiving a salary. Dr. Montessori created a specially prepared environment for each kid after realizing that certain children could require their own, and that there

couldn't be one intended to serve all children. children's surroundings on each of these planes; their requirements varied greatly.

I.1.6. Montessori Classroom

The Montessori learning setting places a strong emphasis on a respectful classroom climate. In Montessori classrooms, both teachers and pupils work together to achieve the desired good results (Estes, 2018). Furthermore, when children of different ages meet in Montessori classrooms, they show solidarity with one another, older kids help younger kids and collaborate instead of rivalry (Flynn, 1991). According to Duckworth (2006), Maria Montessori saw education including moral, mental, and emotional components. Thus, one of the main goals for educators and students in Montessori classrooms is learning how to communicate in a peaceful environment (Thayer-Bacon, 2011).

Still, some children show negative behaviors in Montessori classrooms. Montessori believed that children's inappropriate behaviors were a result of their inability to carry out their freedom to move around. Children that engage in bad behavior typically have to remain near the teacher and aren't allowed to walk about the classroom freely. In such cases, the teacher consoles the kid and addresses the matter in person (Lillard, 2007). Due to this, the role that Montessori educators and the Montessori environment play in fostering teamwork and communication in the classroom.

By allowing the child to choose the materials and work at their own pace, the Montessori method seeks to develop the kid's independence, according to Isaacs (2015). Naturalness and authenticity are essential components of the Montessori

method, and the setup of the setting has an impact as well. In other words, the youngster will use the materials he has chosen to complete the task at hand and contribute to the environment's order, cultivating accountability and self-control. Natural and authentic resources are required in the classroom, and calm surroundings help kids grow in self-discipline. According to American Montessori Society (2021), some elements that are essential to a Montessori classroom are as below:

1. Every youngster is respected as an individual: Montessori education places a strong emphasis on the fact that kids learn in a variety of ways and accommodates all types of learning preferences. Additionally, students are permitted to learn at their own pace. Under the guidance of a personalized learning plan and the teacher, each student advances through the curriculum at his or her own rate.
2. Montessori students acquire independence, coordination, organization, and focus on a young age: Classroom layout, materials, and daily schedules that support the development of self-regulation (the ability to learn for oneself and reflect on what is learned) are beneficial for toddlers through teenagers.
3. Children are a part of a friendly, close-knit community: the three-year-long multi-age classroom simulates a family setting. While younger students feel supported and gain confidence in the challenges ahead, older students gain from their position as mentors and role models.
4. Students who follow the Montessori Method have independence within boundaries: The Montessori Method allows students to be independent

within prescribed limits. They choose preferred fields of study and work within the guidelines set by their instructors.

5. Students are supported in becoming active seekers of knowledge:

Teachers set up spaces where students are free to ask questions and have access to the tools, they need to find the answers.

6. Self-evaluation and self-correction are essential components of the Montessori educational methodology: Students develop the ability to examine their work critically as they become older and become skilled at identifying, fixing, and growing from their mistakes.

I.1.6.1. Learning Materials in a Montessori Classroom

Dr. Montessori developed a teaching method and created a collection of educational materials that best suited how children learn via exploration and observation. Montessori classrooms still use materials created by Maria Montessori. They remain current and alive because of their substantial quality, sensual appeal, and creative knowledge transfer. As Lillard (2008) states, after observing the students in the classroom and considering their developmental needs, Montessori created materials that she believed would address those needs. After that, she observed the students using the materials, made revisions and refinements until she felt she had a product that would address one or more needs.

Shatri (2021) stated that children are more interested in concrete things than abstract things and that the use of these didactic materials, which have many different forms such as shape, size, and weight, by educators would be beneficial in facilitating the learning process. Montessori stated in The 1946 London Lectures that “the hand is the

instrument of intelligence. The child needs to manipulate objects and to gain experience by touching and handling” (p.36). The curriculum for practical life is likely to be the first set of educational materials a child encounters in a Montessori classroom.

Pouring various materials, using tools like scissors, tongs, and tweezers, cleaning, polishing, making snacks, setting the table, and clearing the dishes, planting flowers, gardening, tying up and removing clothing fastenings, and other tasks are included in these activities. The teacher will introduce the sensory materials once the student becomes comfortable with the work cycle and shows the ability to concentrate on self-selected tasks. The key element of the sensory materials is that each one focuses the child's attention on a single notion.

For instance, the pink tower consists of ten cubes which are all the same size, the smallest is 1 cm^3 , and the tallest is 10 cm^3 . The child is just paying attention to the cubes' consistent volume drop as they construct the tower. There are no extra indications present, like different colors or numbers inscribed on the cube's faces, that could aid the child in correctly sequencing the cubes.

Figure I.1.3.

The Pink Tower



Another sensory item, the sound boxes contain six pairs of closed cylinders. The cylinders vary in sound when shaken, from soft to loud. Once more, the child can only utilize sound as a signal to complete this activity. Sensory materials are not meant to overload the child's senses with stimuli; rather, they are tools meant to help the child identify and categorize the stimuli he will meet on a daily basis.

Figure I.1.4.

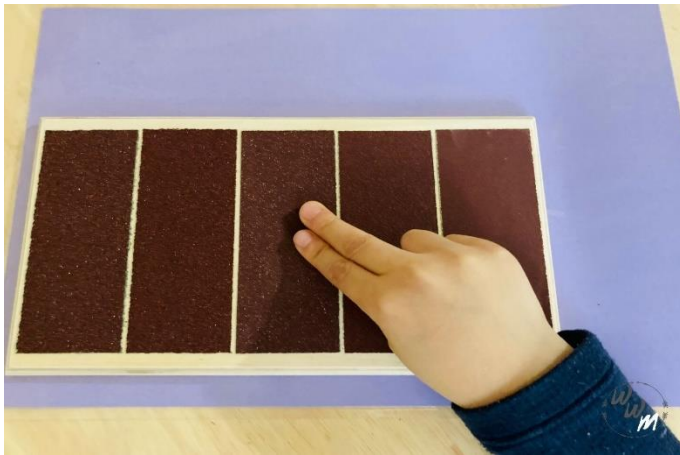
The Sound Boxes



The touchboards, which provide the kid with tactile experiences of alternating strips of smooth and rough sandpaper, serve as a warm-up for the geography sandpaper globe, which illustrates smooth seas and oceans and rough sandpaper for the land masses.

Figure I.1.5.

The Touch Boards



The touch boards also serve as a warm-up for the child to trace with his index and middle fingers the sandpaper letters in literacy and the sandpaper numerals in mathematics. The sandpaper letters are used to teach children the sound of each letter through muscular and visual memory, children trace the letter until the shape of the letter becomes part of their muscle memory.

Figure I.1.6.

The Sandpaper Letters



The Montessori Moveable Alphabets set includes many wooden alphabet parts that are packaged in two wooden boxes with 26 sections apiece. Within the box, the components are arranged alphabetically. Using creative methods, youngsters can learn to read, write, and spell with the aid of the Moveable Alphabets.

Figure I.1.7.

The Movable Alphabets



I.1.6.2. Teacher's Role in the Montessori Approach

In a Montessori classroom, the teacher acts as a guide, helping the student seek self-education that fits their developmental stage (Montessori, 2004). Based on each child's specific needs, Montessori teachers offer guidance and support. This kind of help is minimal during the educational process (Edwards, 2002). This demonstrates that the teacher only steps in to help the child when it is really required. The teacher, also referred to as the classroom manager, is in charge of an arrangement where pupils set the rules for their own conduct while at work.

Montessori teachers work in collaboration with the children during this process of self-education (Montessori, 2004). This means that the teacher must stand up to an outside authority figure who dictates to the learner what to do and how to act (Harris, 1995). Therefore, the aim of a Montessori teacher is to help children develop internal discipline and self-confidence (Edwards, 2002).

The guide teacher is also responsible for establishing a need-oriented environment in the classroom by regularly observing the students (Baynham, 2016). Consequently, according to Bărbieru (2016), teachers should set up a space that is ready for the demands of the students. So, The Montessori approach promotes the child's social and individual development through the teacher's guidance, the child's unstructured work, and a prepared setting. The relationship between Montessori theory and practice can therefore be better understood by highlighting the collaboration and communication that is developed between kids, who are at the center of learning and follow their own preferences in a prepared environment.

The Montessori teacher plays a crucial role. The teacher must get a deeper sense of the child's worth as a human being, a new appreciation for the significance of his impulsive behaviors, and a more comprehensive understanding of his needs. The most crucial component of a teacher's identity is their spiritual preparation. According to Montessori this form of preparation should be the first step in the training of all teachers, regardless of nationality or religion. Our kids may reach their full potential thanks to a Montessori education and grow up to be involved, capable, respectful, and responsible members of society who understand that education is a lifelong process.

I.1.6.3. Learner's Role in the Montessori Approach

A child actively engages in the learning process instead of to being a passive information recipient in a Montessori classroom. In terms of learner autonomy, Mocanu (2012) studies methods of teaching foreign languages that see pupils as unique individuals with sentiments, emotions, and interpersonal relationships. One of Caleb Gattegno's approaches was based on the Montessori principle of promoting learner autonomy.

Frierson (2016) asserts that students today lack agency. This is because students aren't frequently put in situations where they may practice being independent, claims. However, the Montessori Method encourages students to assume responsibility (Frierson, 2016). Children who learn independently experience a variety of advantages, including enhanced academic achievement (Siagian et al., 2020; Fatihah, 2016). Children become familiar with each other and communicate easily after healthy relationships are established.

Children usually participate in group activities and split work by agreement. These kinds of activities are frequently called collaborative learning. Early childhood education is very crucial in light of Montessori Futura Indonesia's broad age grouping. This fosters cooperative learning and accountability by enabling older kids to mentor and serve as role models for younger ones (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012). Learner autonomy is positively impacted by this degree of comfort during class activities, breaks, and departures. Teachers supervise children during learning activities and let those select games and learning resources based on their developmental stages (Aras, 2016; Singer et al., 2014).

I.1.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this part presents a theoretical background on the Montessori method. It provides an overview of this approach, including its philosophy, principles, stages of development, and the Montessori classroom. The literature review clearly indicates that the Montessori approach is flexible, emphasizing critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Maria Montessori's vision, which began almost a century ago, is just as relevant today as it was then. It emphasizes the fundamental belief in the child's ability to direct their own learning, as guided by professional and attentive educators.

CHAPTER ONE: Montessori and Reading

SECTION TWO: Reading as a Skill

I.2.1. Introduction

This section discusses the difficulties EFL young learners have with reading comprehension. Thus, Numerous studies have emphasized the need of looking at how people learn to read from ancient times. Few studies have examined teaching reading to very young students using the Montessori method, even though many have examined the reading process in general and the various approaches to teaching reading. Therefore, this chapter reviews the study of a few scholars to shed light on the subject and make its main ideas more understandable.

I.2.2. Definition of Reading

Reading has been defined in various ways by a variety of researchers. The majority of researchers have defined it identically. However, each one sees reading from a particular perspective.

First and foremost, according to Ziegler and Gorwani (2005), Reading is the process of understanding written speech reader to understand the meaning. He also Cite that Bakhouti and Atouane (2017) claim that, “Reading is the receptive skill in the written mode” (p. 3-12). Along with this, they mention that Mikulecky (2008) states that reading covers both conscious and unconscious thought processes. The reader uses a number of strategies to replicate the meaning intended by the author.

Hence, the reader does this by comparing information in the text to his other prior knowledge and experience. Consequently, reading is a cognitive process involving arrange of methods. Including existing knowledge and expertise to recognize the desired meaning of the text.

Apart from this, they add that Alderson (2000) stipulates that reading is an interactive process between the reader and the text. Furthermore, Tarigan (2008) asserted that reading is a process used by readers to acquire meaningful messages conveyed by the writer through words. Reading also involves creating a mental model of text and connecting it to own knowledge or experience. In addition, reading is a strategic process because the reader employs a variety of strategies, talents and efforts in order to reach comprehension (Grabe,2009).

The reader engages dynamically with the text as he or she tries to extract meaning, and a variety of expertise is applied: linguistic or systemic information (through bottom-up processing) as well as schematic knowledge (via top-down processing). Because reading is a complicated process, Grabe contends that many academics attempt to comprehend and explain the fluent reading process by dissecting it into a series of component abilities.

I.2.3. Reading Comprehension

The basis of the reading process is comprehension. Thereby, understanding a written product is utterly pointless. In view of this, numerous researchers in education define reading comprehension. To give an example Pang (2014) cited in Bekhtaoui and Atouane (2017)) defines that understanding reading as the process of deriving meaning from it, as Bekhouti and Atouane (2017) cite. In fact, lexical comprehension is necessary, in addition to critical thinking and analysis. As a result, comprehending is not a static process, but a dynamic one.

In other words, the reader actively interacts with the text to generate meaning. Using the writer's language and expression to convey information, ideas, and points of

view is one way that this active participation involves drawing conclusions. Gani et al (2016) stipulate that, “Reading comprehension is a complicated, cognitive, meaning-constructing process which involves the interaction of the reader, the text, and the context”(p.145). Otherwise, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) cite that the complex process of reading comprehension involves many different parts, procedures, and elements aimed at helping students become more proficient readers. As described by Pressley (2000) and Birsch (2011), is the capacity to interpret written material with meaning. For the reader to learn from the text, it requires the quick application of numerous reading skills, including word recognition, fluency, lexical knowledge, and prior knowledge.

I.2.4. Approaches to Learning to Read

Searching for the best way to teach reading in primary and infant classrooms has led to arguments over public concerns. Before the 1850s, educators applied the alphabetic method through the approach of practice and drill in which children had to be aware of the alphabet letters. In these following lines, we will explore various methods for the known purpose. According to Solver (1957), the ABC method that is used by Greek and Romans, it is the original method of teaching reading and remained popular for many years.

This method involves children reading letters first, then combining them to form syllabus, and finally building words from what they have learnt, and finally words into sentences. Greeks utilize several methods to help struggling student learn the alphabet, for instant, a father purchased twenty five slaves for his son and each slave beard a name of a letter, Quintilian (35 AD) , a well-known roman philosopher recommended playing with ivory letters to help children learn to read .

However, he cautioned against teaching reading very fast. he believed that reading is hampered by excessive haste. In order to reveal the true nature of the situation. The child will inevitably exhibit hesitancy, interruption, and frustration if he tries more than his abilities allow the mistakes, he makes merely lead him to lose confidence in what he already knows. “It is necessary to read slowly at first and then with certainty a long time before practice results in speed without errors” (Slover 1957, p.413).

According to Slover (1957), there is also the gingerbread method, which gained popularity in the 1800s, it involves allowing a kid who can recognize a gingerbread letter to eat the cookie. Learning the alphabet will be simpler as a result it took three weeks. She also included a brief account of Braxton Craven’s teaching methodology from 1849, in which he stated that the first stage in teaching children was to introduce them to the varied sounds that each letter in the alphabet represents. According to his declaration, it would be best to allow the learners to practice memorizing independently.

The next phase is rule-based pronunciation instruction. As soon as they can pronounce monosyllables, at this level they need to be taught to read simple sentences at this level. the same with two or more syllables. Finally, teaching kids to read correctly should be a top priority. Teachers, for example, had to pay attention to tones, stops, etc. to prevent inadvertently causing them to develop poor reading habits. There are many resources and methods used to teach and learn to read. These materials were ‘the Horn book’ (Back in 1450), which was liked in America and up until the start of the nineteenth century, England.

Another instrument known as ‘The New England Primer’ ‘an extremely famous textbook which was first printed in 1690 by Benjamin Harris. It combined reading passage from the Bible with an examination of the alphabet. Every letter was complemented by a woodcut depicting a religious statement (Slover,1957, p.414).

Slover (1957) asserted that, from around 1790, Jansenists were employing the phonic approach rather than the alphabetical one. The foundation of the phonics approach is spelling words by articulating the sounds that made them. It teaches kids about the current link between graphemes in writing. Additionally, phonemes the intermediaries between spoken and written letters and sounds, which will help the child automatically and independently deciphering words. However later, learning to read through phonic has come under fire for being uninteresting and less effective and time consuming.

I.2.5. Reading Strategies

There are a few key practices that can help you read effectively and properly. As Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) cite reading strategies, according to Baker and Brown (1984), there are valuable and cognitive behaviors that learners engage in when reading that help them make and preserve meaning.

I.2.5.1. Predicting

To be a good reader, students should define a reading objective; hence, good readers read with a purpose. Predictive reading is one approach for boosting comprehension since it allows the reader to establish a goal for their reading. Research has shown that good readers use their experiences and knowledge to develop predictions and ideas when reading (Block & Israel, 2005). This strategy also promotes

more student involvement, which boosts student attention and comprehension of the content (Oczkus, 2003). Comparing the outcome in the text with the prediction process is crucial since it will help the student understand the subject matter better. Some techniques to teaching predicting include teacher modeling, predicting throughout the text, working with partners, utilizing a graphic organizer, or placing post-it notes throughout the text.

I.2.5.2. Visualizing

Visualizing is the ability of a reader to create images in his mind from words he has heard or read (Routman & Pressley, 2000). It is one of the skills that enable comprehension of what is read (Adler, 2001). According to Armbruster et al (2001), readers (especially younger readers) who use their ability to visualize while reading understand and remember what they read more effectively than those who do not. Furthermore, Miller (2002, p.81) stated that, "Reader's create images to form unique interpretations, clarify thinking, draw conclusions, and enhance understanding".

I.2.5.3. Questioning

Questions are essential to comprehension as they clear up misunderstandings, encourage further study, improve our understanding, and go deeper into the text, (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Studies reveal that teachers' probing questions significantly enhance and promote their students' reading-related learning (Armbruster et al., 2001). McKenzie (1997) goes on to distinguish even more precisely, listing 18 different types of inquiries, such as hypothetical, clarifying, crucial, and probing questions. He names another category "strategic questions," though, which teachers might not be as

familiar with. Strategic questions are qualitatively distinct from the other question types,

according to McKenzie (1997)

“Focus on ways to make meaning They help us while passing through unfamiliar territory by prompting us to think deliberately: What do I do next? How can I best approach this next step, this next challenge, this next frustration? What thinking tool is most apt to help me here”? (p.4)

Thereby, strategic questions promote awareness or meta-cognition Mackenzie (1997).

I.2.5.4. Inferring

Inferring refers to reading between the lines. Miller (2002) explains that readers use their prior knowledge and textual clues to develop distinctive interpretations of the text. He suggests that students employ connections, questioning, predictions, and visualization to derive deeper meanings from text evidence. Oczkus (2004, p.84) stated, "By thinking aloud and modeling for students the process of making inferences as they come up in the reading, you strengthen their ability to eventually infer on their own". Inferring is often confused with predicting (Oczkus, 2004). Predictions are a form of inference that combines background information and text clues to reach a logical conclusion (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997).

I.2.5.5. Summarizing

According to Goudvis and Harvey (2007), readers summarize key information by putting it in their own words. "Summarizing is a complex strategy that involves the orchestration of a variety of skills including determining the key ideas from details, logically ordering those ideas and paraphrasing" stated Oczkus (2002, p.168). Summarizing entails memorizing and organizing the most relevant elements from reading Oczkus (2002). Lipson (1996) suggests that good readers use their understanding of text order and structure to summarize effectively. Oczkus (2002, p.168) stated, "For many students, especially younger children, retelling is easier for them". According to Oczkus (2002), retelling is a crucial aspect of summarizing, as it involves providing a longer version of the summary with additional details and order.

I.2.6. Teaching Reading

Education and learning are complementary aspects of one another. It is impossible to talk about reading instruction without discussing the teaching methodology. For that, Alyousef (2006) claims that the majority of reading research focuses on strategies that help students read well and improve their comprehension. Guthrie (1996) contends that rather than undertaking a lengthy investigation of several cognitive techniques, most studies only look at one. Besides, few studies have addressed the issues related to motivation and engagement.

Hence, Alyousef (2006) explains that the foundation of engaged reading is the reader's motivational and cognitive traits, which include social interaction, information acquisition, cognitive strategy use, and intrinsic incentive to learn from text. Student's perseverance, reading self-direction, and cognitive effort are indicators of these engagement mechanisms. Likewise, word recognition is a crucial part of mastering

reading, and a wealth of data shows that the main difficulty for new readers is developing rapid, automatic word identification skills. Efficient readers use word stems, word patterns, morphemes, individual letters, and letter clusters to identify word units.

This will help pupils cope with the English have phoneme-grapheme discrepancies. Conversely, the majority of academics emphasize how important it is to provide contextualized lexis because isolated words do not accurately reflect linguistic or psychological reality. The exercises ought to consider reading proficiency, understanding of schemas, reading strategies, and reading engagement. In addition, the methods of instruction and learning should be modified to increase students 'enthusiasm and drive for reading. Students are better able to identify the language used in the areas they study in school when they use a topic area or subject literature.

I.2.7. History of Teaching Reading

Reading instruction is not an idea that just appeared overnight. On the other hand, since the beginning of time, many research have examined this issue. As a result, the approach used to teach reading has developed over time. Benjamin (1988) shows that Halcyon Skinner's device is one of several educational aids that are patented as instructional appliances, devices, and apparatuses for precisely this reason.

Undoubtedly, a reading instruction system was the subject of the first educational invention patent, which was obtained in 1809. Herbert Austin Aikinsin (1911) claimed that an educational tool designed to teach any topic where questions might be answered in such a way math, reading, spelling, foreign languages, history, geography, and literature may have been the first gadget developed by a psychologist. in a way that necessitates a particular type of word, letter, or symbol. Moreover,

Tierney and Pearson (2021) show that the Cooperative First Grade Studies, the first important study on beginning reading strategies, assisted in easing the search for a solution.

The conclusion that no single technique was better than any other and that there was no such thing as a silver bullet or panacea emerged with Chall's study (2021).

Despite these advancements, the teacher was nevertheless commonly positioned as a mechanic generating readers on an assembly line. Chall's studies taught him that no tactic is better than any other and that there is no magic bullet or panacea. By the 1970s, debates about the best the focus of research changed to language acquisition and early literacy development, as reading instruction had become less effective.

Consequently, a number of methods for teaching reading have multiplied'. Paige. D (2018, p.43) According to Cahyono and widiati (2006), GTM (Grammar Translation Method) was the first adopted method to language teaching that emphatically considered the significance of the reading skill. Then, With the introduction of the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) in the 1950s, it has failed. This approach places a strong focus on word knowledge, having students match words in a foreign text to their equivalents in their home tongue (Dubin&Bycina, 1991).

Likewise, they assert that Charles Carpenter Fries(1970) had the opinion that teaching writing and reading should only resume once pupils have mastered speaking (Rivers, 1970). Noam Chomsky's philosophy of language provided new reading concepts after his ALM deterioration in reading instruction (Silberstein, 1987) and The field of cognitive psychology emerged, focusing on the processing of knowledge

(Klatzky, 1980). Later on, this psycholinguistic approach to reading gained popularity as a top-down paradigm that highlighted the reader's role in the reading process.

According to Bekhouthi and Atouane (2017), Priyanka (2015) clarifies the teaching methodology in reading instruction. Thus, the teacher reads the text aloud and asks learners to read it loudly one by one. After reading. Nonetheless, GTM pays close attention to the text's meaning and makes no attempt to pronounce words correctly. Later on, the direct method of teaching reading became popular. Priyanka (2015) states that a standard reading lesson consists of three steps: pre-reading, during reading, and post reading. In the first phase, the teacher assumes the students' prior knowledge, imagination, and prediction before reading. After the reading, there are instructions and comprehension questions in the target language, and mispronounced words are corrected.

In the second level, explanations, gestures, or drawings are used to explain the foreign language. The third stage uses audio- language to excite students about future developments. Together with reading aloud, the teacher and students use drawings and actions to introduce new material and present it in multiple languages. Lui and Shi (2007) contend that proficient speakers of the target language ought to get encouragement and recognition. Students should respond to comprehension questions in the target language throughout the post-reading phase. In other words, Initially, the teacher should provide a succinct overview of the subject and teach the pupils how to read accurately, quickly, and fluently.

After reading, they ought to be able to articulate their ideas orally and understand the main ideas of the text. Furthermore, along with encouraging students to

speak up and giving them opportunity to do so, the instructor should also manage, oversee, and evaluate the class (Irmawati, 2012).

I.2.8. Reading Challenges

Most people find it difficult to master reading skills, especially young people. For that particular reason, Rossingh (2013) indicates that children who struggle with printing and spelling may get progressively irritated at not being able to express themselves verbally on paper. Other children, especially English language learners (ELLs for short), may discover that their apparent aptitude for spelling and writing quickly gets in the way of their transition from pre-literacy to academic literacy.

The curriculum and the instructor's expectations for students' academic performance mostly depend on their ability to acquire a wide and comprehensive vocabulary that can be mobilized, recruited, and oversaw. Likewise, according to Akbari (2017), the important information in a written work is that the oral lecture and lack of sufficient resources are examples of how present teaching methods have failed to improve reading abilities, assignments or workouts for prolonged reading. According to research, children struggle to comprehend English texts and are deficient in critical reading comprehension skills.

To precisely enhance reading abilities, educators should create reading plans and establish a shared comprehension among EFL students over what the intricate process of reading includes. Additionally, Students lack knowledge of the fundamentals of paragraph arrangement, coherence, and cohesiveness in paragraphs, as well as technical terms. Notions in a particular text without content schemata, not being familiar with

internet dictionaries, not knowing where to look up definitions of strange words, and not being able to comprehend the connection between words in a sentence and sentences in a paragraph in terms of syntactic and semantic elements.

I.2.11. Teaching Reading Through the Montessori Approach

Through the introduction of phonics and the encouragement of learners' autonomy to study at their own speed through self-directed kinesthetic activities, the Montessori Approach develops reading competence. Montessori incorporates visual, aural, tactile, and particularly kinesthetic senses of the written sign while teaching children to listen for individual sounds once more. Language development and sensori motor training are well linked by Montessori, with one assisting the other. She didn't choose a certain tactic for teaching reading.

In fact, the table of contents of her manual does not include reading. Still, there's a section on authors' reading material and another on writing assignments for "alphabetical signs." A youngster can be better prepared to follow articulate language sounds by learning to follow sounds and noises created in their environment, recognize them, and distinguish between them. Written language is viewed as an extension of oral language (Montessori, 1965). Active listening can help children develop phonemic awareness. Sandpaper letter exercises can help children enhance their phonemic awareness and ability to break down spoken words into sounds and syllables. Children are directed through the process of making words by segmenting and combining sounds with the help of the movable alphabet.

According to Grant (1985), Montessori believed that children had the capacity to learn. They can teach themselves. In other words, kids can manipulate and grasp the

cardboard characters that compose the movable alphabet within a section-marked box. Because sandpaper letters and words use a tactile approach, children naturally start writing letters and then words building using the movable alphabet, as well as through hand training exercises involving the senses and real-world applications. Sandpaper letters and a moveable alphabet aid the kinesthetic sense in remembering shapes crucial to written language.

At the same time, sounding out letters and words helps children enhance their auditory memory, discriminating, and oral kinesthetic memory. Liberman (1979) emphasizes the need of understanding the phonetic structure of letters for effective use of the alphabetic principle by readers and writers. So, sandpaper letters allow children to explore language sounds and the symbols they represent. Additionally, children's increasing ability to break down spoken words into their constituent sounds and their understanding of the connection between sound and meaning also aid in the process of word formation.

As Montessori (1912) highlights that a child can create words with a movable alphabet, this equipment is only intended for the mechanical creation of children's words. The teacher may combine different phonemic awareness exercises with the movable alphabet. Phoneme counting is used to demonstrate this. For example, you can ask the kids how many sounds there are in words like "box," "sat," "top," and so on. Phoneme identification, for instance, pronouncing a word's initial or final sound.

After each word or sound, children select the appropriate letter(s) from the alphabet box and arrange them on the table in the correct order. Through the collaboration of the senses, touching and seeing the letters at the same time helps to fix

the image more quickly, claims Montessori (1912). Children who can form words with the movable alphabet are not reading or writing, but rather practicing these skills. We briefly discussed the evolution of writing and mechanical reading or decoding. For a child to read with comprehension, additional practice in a more direct manner is necessary.

“I do not consider as reading the test which the child makes when he verifies the word he has written. He is translating signs into sounds, as he first translated sounds into signs.... What I understand by reading is the interpretation of an idea from the written signs.... So, until the child reads a transmission of ideas from the written word, he does not read “(Montessori 1912, p.296).

Children progressively start to investigate the purposes of words. This is the first time Montessori used the word “reading introduction”. Logical language is necessary for children to comprehend and enjoy books.

I.2.12. Conclusion

To conclude, this section covers a number of significant studies in the realm of education, particularly those related to the instruction and acquisition of EFL reading skills. The final one combines several meanings and ideas about reading comprehension that start from a wider perspective, covers the general understanding of the reading process and how it has evolved over time using a variety of methods, each of which is the result of the failures of the one before it, until arriving at the goal, which is the application of the Montessorian Method to teach reading to very young students.

CHAPTER TWO: Research

Investigation and Analysis

SECTION One: Descriptions of Data

Collection Tools

II.1.1 Introduction

The fieldwork conducted for the study is highlighted in this section. It provides an in-depth description of the sample and environment, research instruments, collecting data procedures, and design used. We'll encounter a thorough classroom observation employing the Montessori principles in the following part. Each question's purpose informed the discussion of the allocated questionnaire component. The section provides a thorough explanation of the pre- and post-test, which provide data to analyze the amount to which the Montessori method affects learning early reading abilities, in addition to the explanations of the lesson plans and the treatment itself.

II.1.2. Research Methodology

This section describes the study's fieldwork, covering methodology, design, sample, and setting. Besides a detailed description of the research instruments and analysis methods.

II.1.2.1. Research Design

According to Cohen et al. (2018), quasi-experimental methods are frequently preferred in educational research since they provide a chance to examine interventions in situations when the randomization and controls of actual experiments might not be possible or fully present because of limitations based on logistics, ethics, or practicality. A quasi-experimental approach was used in this study since each individual had an equal chance of being chosen for the sample. Furthermore, the study used a pretest-posttest procedure, which made it easier to compare the results from the two tests and assess the changes.

The study comprised 3 equal groups of participants: 15 learners from Al Imtiyaz School, 10 learners from Soltan Abbad Academy and 6 learners from the same school to represent the experimental group.

II.1.2.2. Exploratory Intrinsic Case Study

As stated by Baxter and Jack (2008), our study is an intrinsic case study since it places greater emphasis on examining the phenomenon under study than on generalizing. Interest researchers that have a genuine interest in the subject matter should use this approach, according to (1995), when the goal is to gain a thorough comprehension of the given issue. It is carried out not largely because the case reflects other cases or demonstrates a certain trait or issue, but rather because the case itself is interesting in all its both uniqueness and regularity. This makes the strategy appropriate for our study, which looks into how well the Montessori approach affects young learners' reading skills.

II.1.2.3. Mixed-Method Approach

Research using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is known as mixed-method research. It works best when case studies are used. According to Creswell (1999), a mixed-method study is one wherein the investigator employs both qualitative and quantitative methods for collecting and analyzing data in the same investigation. A policy researcher can use statistics, charts, and basic statistical analysis to numerically illustrate complex objects and qualitatively interpret them thanks to this type of study.

The exploratory sequence has been followed in framing this investigation, where the collection and analysis of qualitative data defines the collection and analysis of quantitative data. The researcher carried out a classroom observation that mostly included a number of qualitative findings. After qualitative information has been gathered and evaluated, a test has been given to obtain some quantitative results. Besides, a semi structured questionnaire which provides both quantitative and qualitative data.

II.1.3. Population and Sampling

The term "sample" refers to a group of individuals selected by a researcher to offer qualitative, quantitative, or mixed data to answer research questions and allow to draw conclusions. Cohen et al (2007, p.100) stipulate, “The quality of a piece of research stands or falls not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted”.

Choosing a suitable sample is crucial for any research project as it determines the usefulness of the collected information. Finding out which group the research findings may be applied to and for which group the results can be generalized is the goal of a specific study. This group is often referred to as the population in research (Kumar, 2011). Based on Kumar's assertion, the current study's target demographic was preschoolers in order to examine how well the Montessori method teaches and develops early reading abilities.

The researchers drew their population from two different settings. The first setting, Al Imtiyaz School, consisted of 15 preschoolers, aged between 4 to 7 years. The second setting, Soltan Abbad Academy, comprised 10 preschoolers to be observed, and 6 learners as an experimental group aged between 4 to 8 years old.

When the population is identified in accordance with the aim of the study, the study chose to use the stratified random sampling technique because it was necessary to have a representative sample with respect to age as an essential criterion (Kumar, 2011). The experimental group included preschoolers from Soltan Abbad Academy, as the school prepares to become a Montessori school. The learning space follows Montessori principles and features child-sized tables, shelves of materials, sensory toys, televisions, and a focus on learning, organization, and cleanliness. However, Montessori materials for teaching early reading skills were not yet available.

II.1.3.1. Teachers' Profile

We have selected seven EFL teachers who work in two different private schools in Tiaret to participate in our inquiry. They have one to three years of teaching experience. The informant's range between the age of twenty-two and thirty years old. They are all female individuals randomly selected, and the purpose of the study is not to examine how gender affects education. Every tutor teaches young pupils using the "Montessori Approach" since August 2022. They share characteristics related to managing and treating young learners, as well as creating a pleasant and healthy environment. Therefore, these teachers contributed to respond our questionnaire and provided valuable responses.

II.1.3.2. Learners' Profile

From a group of fifty young learners, having ages from four to eight (4-8), we have selected a sample of 25. Those individuals have been studying EFL for eight months using the Montessori approach at El Imtiyaz School and Soltan Abbad Academia in Tiaret. According to the CEFR model (Common European Frame of References), their present level is A1.

II.1.4. Research Context

This study has been conducted in two private schools called El Imtiyaz School and Soltan Abbad Academia in Tiaret. Our study's experimental group consisted of kindergarten and primary school pupils.

Al Imtiyaz Hammadiya School opened in 2019. The total number of tutors is 10, including 2 English teachers. All academic disciplines are taught in addition to three foreign languages: French, English, and German. There are 8 classrooms besides the main reception office. Approximately 100 students of all ages, ranging from 4 years old to infinite age, attend this school. It is well-known for its stellar reputation.

March of 2023 witnessed the opening of Soltan Abbad Academia which is located in Tiaret. This institution offers assistance courses in various modules for all levels, formations and language learning, Soroban and mental calculations. They welcome learners from the age of 3 years to an unlimited age. Out of the 12 instructors that work at this institution, 3 teach English. Kindergarten and primary school pupils who are learning "English, Arabic, and French" are taught using the Montessori

technique. This school has become known for its qualified teachers and excellent services.

II.1.5. The Description of Data Collection Tools

The terms "research tools" relate to the techniques or equipment used to gather mixed, quantitative, or qualitative data in order to support, validate, or provide answers to research questions, deny the theories, or to make inferences and recommendations. Hamzaoui and Neggadi (2012, p.47) stipulates, "The researcher will have to fully describe any tools or instruments used such as, assessment instruments, surveys, interview formats, questionnaires, observation protocols, or other data collection devices."

The research at hand collected data from two tools, a classroom observation devoted to young pupils, ages 4 to 8 years old, and a structured questionnaire sent in google forms to EFL teachers who adopt the Montessori Approach. Besides, a pre-test and post-test to check the reading skill development of the sample.

II.1.5.1. Questionnaire Description

A questionnaire is one of the most used research tools. According to Creswell (2012), questionnaire, is "a form used in a survey design that participants in a study complete and return to the researcher" (p. 382). According to Sreejesh (2014), a questionnaire is essentially a prearranged list of questions given to interviewees together with explicit guidelines outlining the format and requirements for selection.

Openheim (2001) delineates the multifaceted use of questionnaires in scientific investigations. They function as tools for obtaining and recording data on certain areas

of interest, with an emphasis on matching the goal of the questionnaire with the goals of the study and guaranteeing clarity regarding the application of results.

Our questionnaire is designed for 7 EFL teachers from different private schools. It includes only one section consists of 13 questions mainly about using the Montessori Approach in fostering reading ability at an early age. The questionnaire seeks to determine how the Montessori method affects teachers' instruction and improves students' reading proficiency.

It is a semi-structured questionnaire that contains both closed-ended questions and open-ended questions to have a variation of answers. In order to keep it from being too long or tedious, it includes a single section with 13 questions that covers the key outcomes of the study. The first 3 closed questions focus on the participants' personal and professional information (Gender, years of experience and their specific approach). The following is an open-ended question to freely talk about the approach they adopt in teaching. In the next questions, respondents are required to choose yes or no, or select the appropriate response. It seeks to explore whether learners have the capacity to read at a young age, and if they encounter any difficulties while reading.

In order to know the extent of teachers' understanding of the Montessori approach, participants were required to answer by yes or no, and make statements wherever necessary. The open-ended questions allowed to determine the impact of this approach on their teaching style, and how it fosters the reading ability. One more open-ended question regarding the participants' use of Montessori materials. A closed question to determine the number of educators who have been trained to use the Montessori method. The final query gave the participants the freedom to offer a few

suggestions for successfully implementing the previously outlined strategy into practice.

II.1.5.2. Classroom Observation Description

Observation is a data collection tool that involves monitoring behavior, events, or physical traits in their natural surroundings (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). While Kumar (2022) defines observation as a method for observing and describing a subject's behavior, it really just entails observing specific phenomena till some insights are gained. Furthermore, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2018), observation can be overt or covert, depending on whether the researcher notifies the participants that they are being watched or not.

Classroom observations provided insights into instructional processes, teacher communication, student behavior, and many other factors. The entire observation was conducted in 120 minutes with 25 young learners ranging in age from 4 to 8 years old in order to collect and validate the results. The observation was held on March 7th, and March 14th, 2024, at Al Imtiyaz and Soltan Abbad Academia in Tiaret. It was completed throughout the academic year 2023/2024.

It was a non-participant observation that the researcher was doing. It implies that the researcher only watches the teaching and learning process while they are taking a class. It offers knowledge of the circumstances around occurrences and may enable researchers to observe aspects that participants are unaware of. The observer was just sitting in the back, getting familiar with the classroom, and taking notes about environment routine and discipline. The researcher also focused on observing the

materials adopted in delivering the lesson, pupils' behavior, participation, and the teaching method. In addition to taking notes, the observer used an observation grid to gather data so she would not miss anything. The grid's primary goal is to determine whether the Montessori principles were followed or not (check chapter one Montessori principles).

The grid was divided into 4 sections. In the first section, we focused on the organization of the content and tried to determine if the teacher had made clear statements, taught at the right pace, outlined the main ideas of the lesson, and connected it to future lessons. The second section evaluated the teacher's delivery of the lesson in terms of tone, clarity, ability to hold students' attention, and eye contact and whether she projected nonverbal cues and reiterated key points when necessary. The third section sought to ascertain how students and teachers interact in terms of the teacher's flexibility, encouraged inquiries from learners, exhibited interest in their interpretations, evaluated pupils' learning, controlled well-balanced teacher-student conversation, allowed for peer and self-correction by students.

The final section attempted to evaluate the instructional materials and environment, regarding the use of audiovisual resources, classroom exercises that complemented the courses, and Montessori materials utilized in the lessons, in addition to the overall learning atmosphere.

II.1.5.3. Description of the Quasi-Experimental Phase

Testing is a tool used to assess an individual's knowledge and abilities within a specific domain. Tests, also referred to as assessment, are one of the main methods frequently employed in research, according to Perry (2008). On the other hand, tests

serve more than just the aim of assessing knowledge, they are also employed as a research method to gather information for a specific study. Therefore, in this section we are going to describe in detail the pre-test, the treatment and the post-test used to evaluate the extent to which the Montessori approach affects learners' development and reading skill acquisition.

II.1.5.3.1. Pre-test Description

This study used a quasi-experimental method (pretest-posttest) to examine the development of early reading skills, among participants before and after using the Montessori approach. First, a diagnostic test was administered orally to pretest the participants and evaluate their proficiency in some early reading skills (phonetic awareness, reading comprehension).

The first task of the pre-test required the child to name the English alphabets written on the board, and their sounds, some letters were missing, then asked to write down the missing letters so that his or her writing proficiency for the English alphabet and phonological understanding could be examined. As for the second task, the instructor provided 20 words including "cat, hat, dog, ant, bag, hot, ink, door, car, igloo, axe, apple, ball, cake, duck, gift, horse, ice cream, jacket, lion" and asked about their meanings from the learners in order to gauge their word knowledge. Regarding reading skills, the child was instructed to read some words such as "ant, arm, big, cat, elf, dog, tiger, hat, ink, robot", then they name it in Arabic language to measure their comprehension.

The pretest consisted of 3 tasks, each scored on 5 points. The first task required participants to fill in 15 missing letters in a given table. The scores for this assignment were based on both oral knowledge of the alphabet and accurate writing of the missing letters, the teacher utilized proportion calculation to determine each student's score based on how many letters they could recognize, 5 points if they were able to recognize all of them. The second task was to identify 20 words. It was worth 5 points, and each correct answer was rewarded 0.25 points.

In the third exercise, which was worth five points as well, participants had to read ten words and explain what they meant in Arabic. Correct answers earned them 0.5 points.

II.1.5.3.2. Treatment Description

The experimental group of 6 learners had 18 instructional sessions on the treatment, three sessions per week, 120 min each, about phonological awareness of the alphabet sounds, as well as some vocabularies along with their reading skill, using different Montessori materials for each instruction.

II.1.5.3.2.1. Description of the First Lesson Plan

The first lesson plan, which involved raising the children's phonological awareness, was the main focus of the first five sessions of the treatment. In these sessions, the students were introduced to the target letters and their sounds, taking into consideration that some of them knew the names of the letters previously. To do this, the youngsters were given sandpaper letters, and they were asked to trace the letter's shape while staring at it and to spell its sound as often as they could until they could recall it.

The three-period lesson was used to deliver this lesson; only three-letter sounds were covered each session, and language activities were conducted to prepare students for the third stage of the lesson across three periods.

II.1.5.3.2.2. Description of the Second Lesson Plan

In the second lesson plan, the focus was on teaching the children the vocabulary that starts with the letters they have learnt by giving the youngster a few toy animals, like a lion, tiger, elephant, or cat, along with some supplies like a board, pen, and slate that were in the classroom. The teacher requested students to touch a hot cup of coffee to represent the word "hot," and the same was done of a cold bottle of water to represent the word "cold." The objective of doing it was to serve as an example for the pink box object, which is another Montessori material. The children were instructed to name each object while touching it. The vocabulary was introduced to the kids at a rate of three words per session.

II.1.5.3.2.3. Description of the Third Lesson Plan

Following their mastery of phonetic awareness and letter writing, the third lesson plan concentrated on helping students advance their reading abilities. Dr. Montessori (1965) asserted and Tahzeem (2015) demonstrated that children automatically acquire the ability to read once they have gained these skills. The teacher wrote a word on the learner's slate and asked him to articulate the sound of each letter then to combine the sounds together.

The use of the objects facilitated the process in which the children were given instructions to choose an object that the teacher had indicated, and then they were to

read the tag words and try to figure out which one was the right one for the word that had been picked.

II.1.5.3.3. Post-test Description

The post-test of the current study aimed at assessing the participant's words' knowledge, alphabet sounds, as well as their reading skills. The instruction, and the tasks remained the same as the pre-test. The post-test was delivered to the participants following the 6-week term of treatment. The treatment required more than one month to be appropriately completed. In this period, some letters were not presented due to time constraints.

Therefore, the pre-test included only the words formed by the letters presented during the treatment. To make sure that scores appropriately reflected participants' performance and to track their improvement, it seemed sense to use the same scoring scale for the post-test as the pre-test.

II.1.5.3.4. The Materials Used in Each Session of the Treatment

The observer listed the following materials during the treatment: sandpaper letters, sand tray, flashcards, slates, animal toys, computer, speakers, and some other kinesthetic materials depending on the lesson content.

- **Sandpaper Letters**

The sandpaper letters used in the experiment are shown in Figure 8. These letters were made by hand out of carton and rough paper. The sandpaper letters were the first Montessori materials that the participants encountered since, in accordance with Montessori's approach, they were meant to introduce the shapes and phonic

sounds of the letters as the first step towards writing (Montessori, 1912). Children were instructed to trace the letter, imitate its shape, and repeatedly spell its sound.

Figure II.11.

Photos of the kids trying to trace letters using sandpaper's letters.



- **Sand Tray**

Figure 8 depicts the sand tray used for the experiment. It is one of the most available Montessori materials, you may also use salt instead of sand. The kids utilize this as a warm-up before using the pen. More than just tracing the letters, it encourages kids to feel the letters.

Figure II.1.2.

Photos of the kids trying to write letters on the sand tray.



- **The White Board**

Based on the kids' apparent desire to put what they had learned from the sandpaper letters into practice, the white board was employed in the experiment. Children were free to approach the board in an orderly manner at the end of each session and write the word that was said to them.

Figure II.1.3.

A child attempts to write a word on the white board.



II.1.6. Conclusion

In summary, this part covers the key concepts that guide our investigation, including the sampling procedure, equipment selection, and research design. It also gives a thorough explanation of the teachers' questionnaire, the experimental phase, and the classroom observation. It places the reader in the research process, allowing them to understand the framework.

CHAPTER TWO: Research Investigation and Analyses

Section Two: Data Analysis and Recommendations

II.2.1 Introduction

This chapter's second section, which offers data that is both quantitative and qualitative, analyzes the data collection instruments. Beginning with the results of the questionnaire, followed by an analysis of the two observations obtained from the classroom, and the explanation of the experiment's findings. It presents the final conclusions and the interpretations in tables and graphs.

II.2.2.Data Analysis

It's clear from the data gathered from the perspectives and experiences of the teachers that kids are prepared to learn to read in English at a very young age. Still, they find reading so difficult. The questionnaire's answers show that the approach adopted to teach the learners the EFL reading competence was the primary source of the issue.

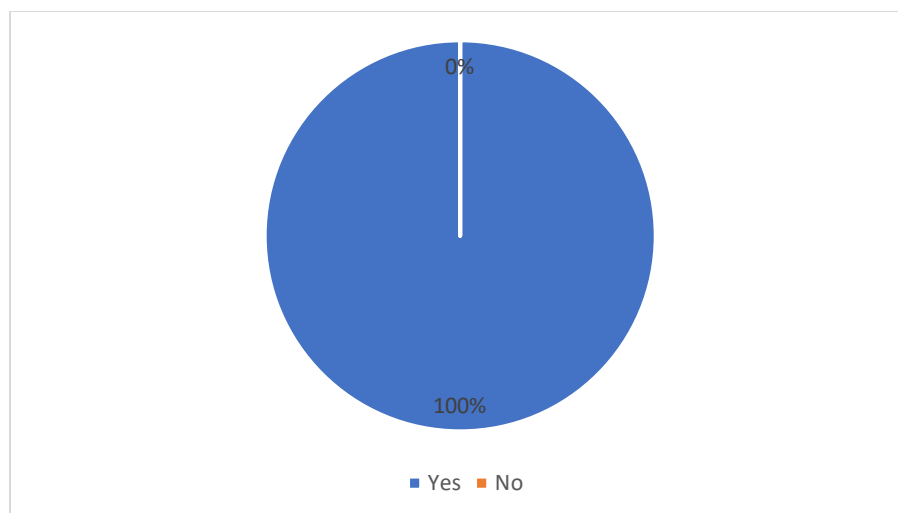
II.2.2.1. Questionnaire Analysis

The questionnaire addressed to preschool teachers in two private schools in Tiaret, tackles the aim of our research project entitled, "Exploring the Impact of Montessori Approach on Early Reading" which is identifying the effectiveness of the given approach on learning to read at an early age.

Q 5: According to you, are your preschoolers able to read at that young age?

Figure II.2.1.

Learners' ability to read.



When asked about the readiness of kids to read at an early age, all teachers select “yes”, as seen in the graphic.

Q9:What impact does this approach have on your method of instruction?

When teachers have been asked if they are familiar with the Montessori Approach and if they use it in teaching, all of them answered with “yes”. We asked our participants about how the approach has affected the way they teach, and here are what have been obtained from their responses.

Table II.2.1.

Impact of Montessori on Teaching Style

N° of Teachers	Their Responses
1	It transformed my teaching style from deductive to inductive.
2	It enables me to teach pronunciation, writing, and reading at the same time.
3	It really helped me to explain the concept of letters, kids were able to feel the letters not just hear them.
4	Montessori made teaching fun while teaching them real life skills and day-to-day activities.
5	This approach facilitated my job by saving time and energy and helped me to create very healthy relationships with the learners.
6	It had a positive impact on my teaching style, as I became a guide and monitor rather than the primary source of information.
7	I began to emphasize hands-on activities and "experiential learning" rather than passive instruction.

Q10: How do you think it is helpful to foster the reading ability?

After asking the tutors about how the Montessori approach helped promote reading skill, we have obtained the following findings. 3 out of 7 teachers claimed that in terms of teaching the alphabet's primary sounds rather than the alphabet's first names

to avoid confusing the child, because the spelling of the English language has no logical relation with its phonological aspect, especially for kids, which impedes their early reading. 2 out of 7 teachers have reported that Montessori activities focus on developing phonemic awareness, which is the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words. Then they learn the relation between letters and sounds and then combine the letter's sounds to make a word. 2 out of 7 tutors said that children enjoyed learning to read and were excited for the Montessori reading and writing. Another tutor found it quite effective according to positive feedback from their clients, who are "the parents of the kids".

Q11: What kind of specific materials are needed to implement such an approach?

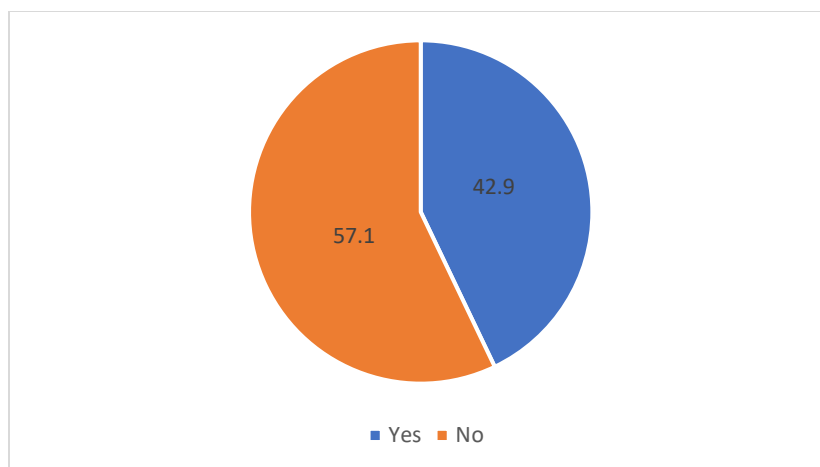
The respondents have been asked to list the teaching materials that they utilize. All teachers listed the following materials: Montessori workshop materials (sandpaper letters; sand tray; moveable alphabets; slates; CVC cards; flashcards) and audio-visual materials (TV; speakers) and some other kinesthetic materials depending on the lesson content.

Q12: Did you receive any specific training for primary school teachers to use such an approach?

When asked if they had received any training on applying the Montessori method, our respondents provided the following information.

Figure II.2.2.

Teachers' Training on the Use of Montessori Approach



3 out of 7 instructors had been trained in the usage of the Montessori approach at their workplace for two weeks, while the rest had not been trained.

Q13: What can make this approach work best in class?

It is evident from the data collected from the perspectives and experiences of the teachers that young children are prepared to learn to read in English. Still, their inability to identify items that do not make sense to them persists. That difficulty is demonstrated by the fact that, in order to avoid confusing the child, the alphabet's first names are introduced rather than only the fundamental sounds initially.

Table II.2.2.

Suggestions for successful Montessori

Teachers	Their Suggestions
1,6,7	Small-numbered classrooms no more than 20.
2	Clear instructions, calm environments, encouraging teachers, connection with classmates, so they can learn together and correct each other's.
3	Provide the necessary materials and train preschool teachers to use the Montessori approach.
4	Using entertainment in teaching (games, songs, challenges).
5	The teacher's flexibility and awareness of the approach.

Based on the information gathered from the teachers' responses, it is imperative that we acknowledge the efficacy of the Montessori approach in equipping young students with reading skills. However, to ensure its effectiveness, a few remaining issues need to be carefully studied. These flaws are demonstrated by the fact that there shouldn't be more than fifteen students. In addition, according to Algerian curricula, the Montessori reading station deserves at least one hour each week.

II.2.2.2. Classroom Observation Analysis

In this section we are going to analyze the classroom observations which were conducted in two different private schools in Tiaret. Two classroom observations in different settings were conducted, to remove the influence of the teacher and location factors in order to obtain objective and unique findings.

II.2.2.2.1. Classroom Observation One

Location:	El Imtiyaz School- Tiaret
Number of Learners:	15 learners
Date:	March 7 th ,2024
Duration:	14:00-16:00

The entire observation was carried out with young learners aged between 4 to 8 years old. Each session's observation process lasted for 120 minutes. The observation we conducted was held on March 7th,2024 in Tiaret private school. The observer relied on an observation checklist and wrote notes during the session. The researcher's focus was on the content organization, teacher's presentation of the lesson, teacher and learner's interaction besides instructional materials and environment.

Course (film of the lesson) 01

It was 2 p.m. when the teacher entered the classroom. She welcomed her students with a smile and a friendly "good afternoon". Starting a session with a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Students saluted her individually and collectively before taking their seats. The instructor began the session by writing the date on the board and reviewing the last lesson quickly.

After that, the teacher wrote the letter G in both capital and small forms. Then she introduced the letter's name and pronounced its sound, asking each student to repeat after her individually then collectively. Later, she brought the letter G made of sandpaper and instructed the class to trace the letter's shape with their fingers while articulating the sound /g/. Following that, she brought the sand tray and instructed the

kids to write the letter G. Although it was difficult for them, she provided assistance, and they enjoyed writing in the sand. Subsequently, she listed three nouns that began with the letter G: girl, gift, and gorilla. To help them understand the meaning of each word, she showed them visuals that represented the words. Afterwards to ensure that they would remember the letter sound, she asked them to repeat after her many times.

Subsequently, the teacher presented the next two letters using the same method; she provided images of an igloo, an insect, and ink for the letter I, and a hand, a house, and hair for the letter H. In the last 10 minutes of the session, she wrote some words formed from the letters they had learned and asked them to circle a single letter in each word. They did very well in this task without the help of the teacher.

By doing so, learners' focus was on the letter's sound rather than its name. They enjoyed creating and tracing letters with their fingers. Sandpaper letters and a sand tray allowed children to utilize their sight and touch skills. They traced the letter until it was embedded in their muscle memory, then learned how to utilize it in a word while expanding their vocabulary. The instructor had a close relationship with her students, she was patient and gentle with them. She provided guidance to each individual.

The eye contact was strongly present, she gave them each a chance to perform on their own. Learners' discussions were totally absent. The instructor stated that she completely prohibited student conversations in order to avoid disruptions and maintain a peaceful environment. According to the PPP model (Presentation, Practice, Performance) she spent much more time in presenting the lesson for about 1 hour and 20 minutes, 15 minutes practicing tracing and writing the letters, finally she gave only 10 minutes for the last task.

The Montessori Method served as the model for the grid. It is divided into 4 sections, each section describes a specific component: lesson organization, presentation, interactions, and materials matching with Montessori method which emphasizes on the following principles: control over mistakes, respect for the kid, and the teacher. Not to be neglected are the learners' interactions, environment, and assessment. The main objectives of the observation grid are outlined in the following points.

- **Content Organization**

The teacher made a clear statement and completely responded to the problems raised during the lesson. She taught at the right pace and summarized the main ideas of the course. Unfortunately, there was no relation between today's lesson and future lessons. The course tackled learning the Alphabet letters' sounds and some vocabularies.

- **Presentation and Assessment**

The observer noted the utilization of eye contact with all students, clarity in explanations, and variation in intonation to adjust emphasis. The focus of the students was sustained. The instructor spent an extended amount of time explaining the subject, which was the only issue. The teacher used both peer correction and teacher correction in the classroom. The researchers noted that peer correction lowers a learner's self-confidence, which breeds jealousy among students who correct their classmates' mistakes and makes them feel inferior less than their contemporaries. As part of her

assessment, the teacher used the observation to record the students' participation, actions, and behaviors during the class.

- **Teacher/ Learner Interaction**

As the observer focused on the interactions between the students and their teacher, she found that the teacher excitedly welcomed the inquiries from the kids and showed interest in their perspectives. Apart from evaluating their education. The instructor allowed sufficient time for students to consider their responses before moving on to the next question. The instructor allowed children to correct one another and themselves in a way that balanced teacher-student communication. From note taking during observation process, we noticed that the teacher respects all learners equally and does not show any preference for any student based on their academic performance, race, gender, or behavior in class.

- **Instructional Materials and Environment**

Together with providing classroom supplies and supplemental audiovisual materials, the instructor connected the lessons to personal experiences. Added helpful classroom exercises to reinforce the lessons being taught. The observer saw the use of Montessori sensory elements, including moveable alphabets, sandpaper letters, and sand trays. In addition, based on the children's desire to apply the lessons they had learned from the movable alphabet and sandpaper letters, the white board was employed in the experiment. Children were free to go to the board in an organized way and write the letters that were assigned to them in the color of their choice. The

classroom was clean, and all pupils deposited their trash in the wastepaper basket. They follow all hygiene guidelines.

II.2.2.2.2. Classroom Observation Two

Location:	Soltan Abbad Academia - Tiaret
Number of Learners:	10 learners
Date:	March 14 th , 2024
Duration:	14:00 - 16:00

Course (film of the lesson) 02

At 1:00 pm, during Ramadhan, the teacher came into the classroom. She welcomed her students in a different way using an image of three different gestures: shaking hands, giving a hug, or kissing the teacher. With excitement, kids selected their preferred action. The teacher was clearly exhausted, but she tried to hide it by opening with a song to warm up the students, she used the computer and loudspeakers and played a song of adjectives and their opposites. Following that, she started the session by quickly reviewing the prior lesson.

Subsequently, she wrote the letter B on the board and requested her learners to pronounce it, and then she wrote the letter A and asked them to do the same. Following their response, she asked them to blend the two sounds. She gave them some time to think about it, but their attempts were incorrect, so she assisted them by articulating the sounds to form the sound /ba/. Then she asked them one by one to repeat the sound multiple times. Once they grasped the idea, she wrote the letter B and then the letter O,

asking them to combine the two sounds to make the sound “bo”. Two learners were able to predict the answer correctly. So, she asked to repeat after her several times. When she finally wrote the letter B and the letter I, she repeated the sound /i/. Then she asked the learners to combine the two sounds, and the majority of them produced the sound /bi/.

After they had mastered blending consonants and vowels, she wrote the word "bat" and instructed them to pronounce each letter individually before combining three sounds. They were initially confused, but after two further examples, they grasped the idea better. She assessed their reading comprehension by asking, "What does it mean?" following each word they read. She used only words that they met while learning the alphabet as examples.

The observer noticed some noise and some interruptions during the lesson, the collective and randomly responses of learners were not adequately regulated. However, the teacher did well at managing her time and using intonation to grasp the kids' attention. Assessing students 'learning was strongly present, she pushed them to tackle challenging issues and provided a variety of explanations for complex material.

The following points provide an overview of the further information that the researcher collected using the same grid during the observation.

- **Content Organization**

Taking notes made it easier for the researcher to see the teacher's assertion, which was quite clear. The instructor addressed issues brought up during the class and

clarified how this lesson related to other ones. In some way taught at the right pace. and outlined the main ideas of the lesson.

- **Presentation and Assessment**

The teacher listened to the queries and remarks of the pupils and clarified any new vocabulary, ideas, or concepts. She used examples to make her arguments clearer and connected novel notions to well-known ones. The teacher projected nonverbal cues that were congruent with her aims and used humor to increase retention and engagement. The instructor had once gone through self-correction. The observers saw that the students were motivated to participate more in the session by self-correction, and that they were aware of their faults and made an effort to avoid repeating them in subsequent lessons. Stated differently, this encounter resulted in an environment that encourages cooperation and pleasant interaction between the teacher and the students, which supports learning. Regarding time management, the teacher used class time efficiently. The observer saw the evaluation procedure, wherein the teacher assigned the kids tasks on the board, such as drawing circles on the targeted letters, matching the capital letter with its smaller counterpart and matching the letter with the picture.

- **Teacher and Learners Interactions**

The observer noted periodic disturbances and considerable noise during the session. Furthermore, because the teacher allowed for discussion, there was insufficient control over children's collective and haphazard responses. Learners' perspectives are only taken into account when they are relevant to the lesson. The researcher realized that the instructor treats every child fairly and that she obviously has a close

relationship with each of them. As the pupils interacted with their teacher and one another, she encouraged questions from the class.

- **Instructional Materials and Environment**

The instructor used the classroom technology effectively and presented complementing audio-visual materials: computer, speakers, flashcards, besides Montessori materials such as sandpaper letters and sand box. Because the classroom was so small, neither the teacher nor the students were able to move around freely. There was miscommunication when children fought over who got to use the computer to watch the videos. Due to her lack of options, the teacher banned them from approaching and told them to just listen to the songs.

II.2.2.3. Analysis of the Test's Findings

This section will examine the outcomes of the pre-test, which was administered to the children before the implementation of the Montessori method, as well as the outcomes of the post-test, which was conducted 6 weeks after the start of the program. Finally, a conclusion will be drawn, either validating or invalidating the use of the Montessori method.

II.2.2.3.1. Analysis of the Pre-Test's Findings

Location:	Soltan Abbad Academia - Tiaret
Number of Learners:	6 learners
Date:	March 21 st ,2024
Duration:	14:00 - 16:00

A pretest was used to evaluate participants' skills in phonological awareness and reading comprehension in the experimental group. The grading scale was 15 points, with 5 points for each component. The table below shows the results of the group on the pretest tasks as well as their overall scores.

Table II.2.3.

Pretest scores of the experimental group

N° of Learners	Age	Experimental Group			
		Phonological Awareness/05	Words' Knowledge/05	Reading Skills /05	Total /15points
1	4y	3	2.75	0	5.75
2	5y	2.5	0.5	0	3
3	5y	2	0.25	0	2.25
4	5	3	2.5	0	5.5
5	6y	2	0.75	0	2.75
6	6y	2.5	2.5	0	5

From the collected data in the previous table, it can be inferred that a considerable fraction of participants of the group showed some understanding of phonological concepts, such as letter names and sounds. In terms of words' knowledge, some participants showed familiarity with popular words such as "cat", "dog", "ant", and "car" because of their exposure to oral English. Regarding reading ability, the table

shows that none of the participants had any prior knowledge about reading. As a result, on the third test, which assessed their reading comprehension skill, all individuals got zero.

II.2.2.3.2. Analysis of the Post-Test's Findings

The same test was administered to the kids in purpose to see the development of their skills after a 6weeks term of treatment using the Montessori approach. The group's performance on the pretest tasks and their total scores are represented in the table below.

Location:	Soltan Abbad Academia - Tiaret
Number of Learners:	6 learners
Date:	May 7 th ,2024
Duration:	14:00 - 16:00

The scores presented in Table **II.2.4.** indicate a notable development. It clearly demonstrates that all experimental participants scored above the average. Only one participant received a lower score due to her frequent absences. The experimental group showed significant progress in all categories, especially reading, compared to the pretest, when all scores improved from zero.

Table II.2.4.

The post-tests Scores of the experimental group

N° of Learners	Age	Experimental Group			
		Phonological Awareness /05	Words' Knowledge/05	Reading Skills /05	Total /15 points
1	4y	5	5	4.75	14.75
2	5y	4	4	4.25	12.25
3	5y	3.5	2.75	3	9.25
4	5y	5	4.25	4	13.25
5	6y	5	4.5	4.75	14.25
6	6y	5	5	5	15

Learners faced some difficulties when it comes to the letter C. As an illustration, the letter “c” is pronounced as /k/ when it is followed by /a o u/ and /si:/ when it comes before /e i/. Students ask questions like, "Should I say /sieir/ for the word "car"?" However, if the sounds are presented, the child will pronounce the word "car" as /kar/. The word "ice cream" has two consecutive vowels, "ea," which confused learners when they tried to read it. However, some children were able to read it since they were familiar with the word.

II.2.2.3.2.1. Learners' errors

The Participants were tested on how well they could recognize sounds and differentiate between letters and sounds that appeared to be the same to them. Hence,

we have found that 4 out of 6 subjects have spelled all the words correctly whereas they still have encountered the given challenges.

1 out of 6 learners have not distinguished between the sounds “e” and “i”. She also has not distinguished between the sounds “c” and “s”. 1 out of 6 learners have not differentiated between the sounds “g” and “j”.

II.2.3.2.2. Gains of the Experimental group

The table and figure below present the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, indicating that every experiment participant made significant progress in every assessed area. In summary, the effectiveness of the Montessori approach has been demonstrated, with consistent results demonstrating its significant influence on learners reading development.

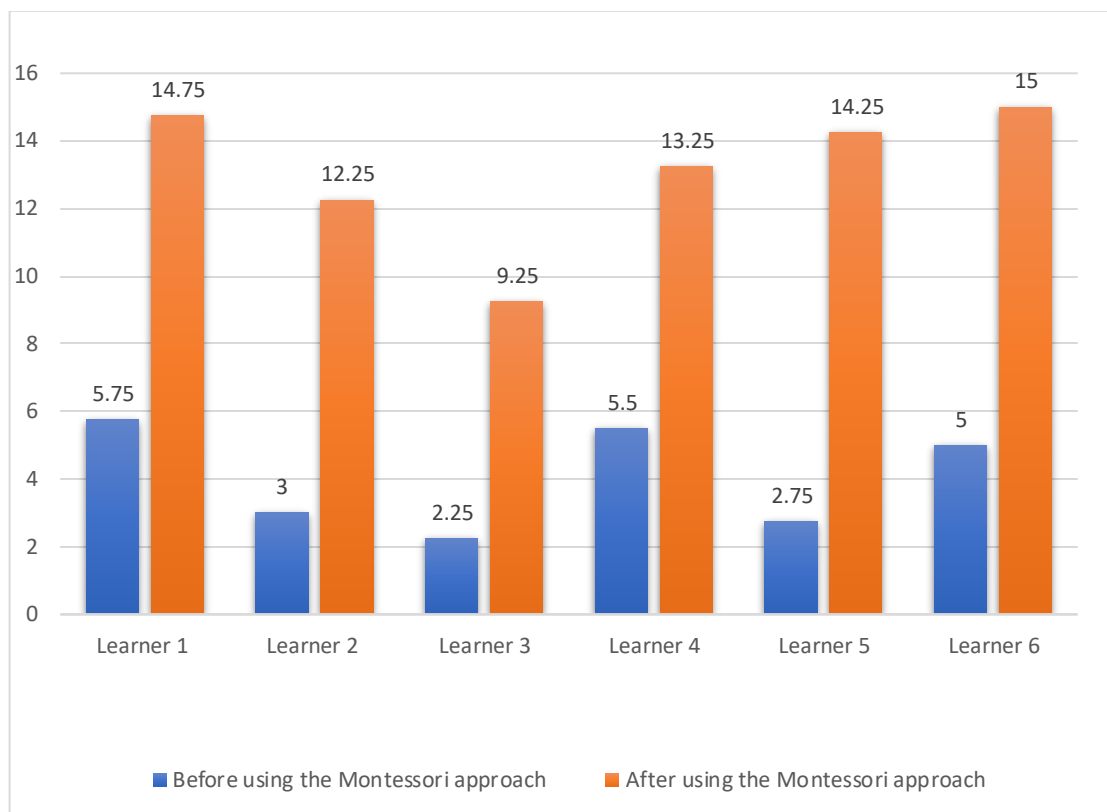
Table II.2.5.

Learners score gains

Learner Identity	Pre-test Mark	Post-test Mark	Gain
1	5.75	14.75	9
2	3	12.25	9.25
3	2.25	9.25	7
4	5.5	13.25	7.75
5	2.75	14.25	11.5
6	5	15	10

Figure II.2.3.

Learning Development Before and After Using the Montessori Approach



II.2.2.3. Recommendations

Numerous recommendations and ideas for additional research have been suggested by the research's findings. Additional study is required to examine other language-related topics covered by Montessori products, such as the blue and green series, and assess their effectiveness. Future research is suggested to concentrate on studying a specific language skill, such as writing, speaking, or listening, in relation to the Montessori approach. This approach demands an extended period to measure the impact and consequences of each aspect, resulting in a more accurate evaluation.

If the current study were to be repeated, it would be advised to focus more narrowly on either writing, listening or speaking as the main language skill. This would allow the pretest to include particular tasks that gauge knowledge of a certain topic. Additionally, this allows you to discover new Montessori materials and measure their effectiveness.

It is our hope that the Algerian government would supply the tools and instruction needed for educators to use this approach in public schools, particularly in primary school.

II.2.2.4. Conclusion

To conclude, this section entails the basic conceptions that frame our investigation. Data analysis and findings are presented in a systematic, ordered manner. Tables and graphics can help readers grasp facts by graphically representing them. The results obtained from the pre, and post tests were analyzed, discussed, and interpreted, referring to the research questions and hypotheses. Hence, it is clearly confirmed that the Montessori approach has a positive impact on the development of reading skills for young learners.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The fields of education and learning have seen tremendous growth in recent years, particularly in the areas of teaching and learning strategies that focus on helping students develop their learning process personalities and the essential life skills. As a result, the researchers carried out this study to clarify the Montessori Method, which is the best teaching strategy for fostering students' individuality and creativity.

Teaching Montessori principles and learning strategies can provide better results than classical methodologies, even when it comes to reading skills. This is because Montessori offers a variety of sensorial materials specifically designed to teach writing and reading. This dissertation explores an interesting subject and offers valuable insights into how the Montessori Approach is used to teach English language including reading skills to young children in particularly that teaching English has been recently implemented in the Algerian public primary schools.

The main problem under research was the inadequacy of recent teaching material compared to Montessori materials. Also, the learner-directed approach that Maria Montessori approached education with making young learners at the centre of the exploration of any educational quest. Thus, we mainly asked valid questions about how to be a Montessori teacher, what kind of materials we need to master and how we could adapt this approach best in English classrooms.

As for the proposed hypotheses, if you examine the tests' results we find that our first hypothesis was rather confirmed as it showed focus on phonological aspects that were improved during the process.

As for the second hypothesis, the private schools' teachers have shown a rather adequate mastery of Montessori materials which partially confirms our proposition. However, there are other roles that teachers play which are rooted in traditional teaching methods.

The last hypothesis was confirmed emphasizing the use of various sand made materials and hands on activities which the test and observations also confirmed. The findings and observations of this study provide conclusive answers to the primary research question, indicating that the Montessori method has a high positive impact on the teaching and learning of early reading skills for young learners. Furthermore, using Montessori materials was successful for all age groups. The findings of the research are in line with earlier investigations carried out in a similar setting by Fero (1997), Tahzeem (2015), Gormi (2022), and Soltani (2021).

These investigations have demonstrated the Montessori method's great efficacy and its guiding principles and resources, in supporting the development of early literacy skills. To better clarify the Montessori approach, several recommendations and pedagogical applications were explored, building on the body of current knowledge. It is suggested that public schools take into consideration using Montessori classrooms as an integrated strategy, if not as a full substitute. They can improve their instructional strategies and give students a more thorough and successful learning experience by including components of the Montessori approach.

Like most research, this one has certain limits and makes no claims to be perfect. The following restrictions that may have had an impact on the study's results should be taken into consideration.

In the experiment, we have only dealt with 6 children, which is an insignificant number of participants considering that learners in a Montessori classroom shouldn't have more than ten students. Hence, we are unable to generalize the results. Therefore, in order to maintain the small class size, we advise conducting the experiment with a manageable number of learners but divided into separate groups.

One of the main obstacles that faced the researcher in using the Montessori technique was time limits. The experimental group did not get the opportunity to meet all the alphabet letters.

Despite these challenges, there is a positive anticipation that this study will yield valuable insights into the effective implementation of the Montessori approach in teaching reading skills.

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Appendices

Appendix 01

Classroom Observation Grid

Classroom Observation Form

Module: **Instructor :**.....
Length of the Course: **Length of the Observation :...**
Observer: **Date :**.....
Subject Matter treated in the Course :.....

Content Organization

Completely
Adequately Not at All

1. Made clear statement of the purpose of the lesson
2. Defined relationship of this lesson to previous ones
3. Paced lesson appropriately
4. Summarized major points of lesson
5. Responded to problems raised during lesson
6. Related today's lesson to future lessons

Comments:.....

Presentation

Completely
Adequately Not at All

7. Projected an easy to hear voice
8. Used intonation to vary emphasis

9. Explained things with clarity
10. Maintained student attention
11. Maintained eye contact with students
12. Listened to students questions and comments
13. Projected nonverbal gestures consistent with intentions
14. Defined unfamiliar terms, concepts and principles
15. Presented examples to clarify points
16. Related new ideas to familiar concepts
17. Restated important ideas at appropriate times
18. Varied explanation for complex material
19. Used humor to strengthen retention and interest

Comments:.....

.....

.....

.....

Instruction/Student Interactions

Completely
Adequately Not at All

20. Encouraged student questions
21. Encouraged student discussion
22. Waited for students' answers
23. Gave appropriate time for thinking
24. Paced lesson to allow time for note taking
25. Encouraged students to answer difficult questions
26. Asked probing questions when necessary
27. Showed interest in students' interpretations
28. Assessed students' learning
29. Managed balanced teacher/student talk
30. Allowed students' peer/ self-correction
31. Monitored students' progress

Comments:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Instructional Materials and Environment

Completely
Adequately Not at All

- 32. Prepared students with appropriate assigned readings
- 33. Related material to real life experiences
- 34. Presented supporting audio-visual material
- 35. Used classroom equipment adequately
- 36. Provided collaborative written assignments
- 37. Used students' produced products
- 38. Supported lesson with useful classroom exercises
- 39. Promoted communication than instruction
- 40. Welcomed students' topic suggestions for next session

Comments:.....

.....

.....

.....

Signature :

Appendix 02

Questionnaire for Teachers.

Questionnaire for teachers

This questionnaire revolves around the efficacy of the Montessori approach in teaching the reading component. Your participation is valuable and we appreciate the time you are dedicating to provide us with your insights on the topic.

[Connectez-vous à Google](#) pour enregistrer votre progression. [En savoir plus](#)

* Indique une question obligatoire

-Gender : *

☐ Male

☐ Female

-How long have you been teaching preschool learners ? *

☐ 1-3 years

☐ 3-6 years

☐ 6 and more

-Do you use a specific approach to teach young learners ? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

-If yes , briefly explain *

-If yes , briefly explain *

Votre réponse

- According to you , are your preschoolers able to read at that young age ? *

☐ yes

☐ No

- Do your preschoolers face difficulties while reading ? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

-Do you have an idea about the Montessori approach ? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

-Have you ever used the Montessori approach in your teaching ? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

-If yes , What impact does this approach have on your method of instruction? *

-If yes , What impact does this approach have on your method of instruction? *

Votre réponse

-How do you think it is helpful to foster the reading ability? *

Votre réponse

-What kind of specific materials are needed to implement such an approach? *

Votre réponse

-Did you receive any specific training for primary school teachers to use such an approach? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

-According to you, What can make this approach work best in class ? *

Votre réponse

Envoyer

Effacer le formulaire

N'envoyez jamais de mots de passe via Google Forms.

Ce contenu n'est ni rédigé, ni cautionné par Google. [Signaler un cas d'utilisation abusive](#) - [Conditions d'utilisation](#) - [Règles de confidentialité](#)

Appendix 03

Test used in the experiment

Name : _____

Surname : _____

Age : _____

Hey little child!

Let's do some practice together!

Task one: SAY and WRITE the missing letters.

A		C		
	G		I	J
K			N	
P		R		T
	V			Y
Z				

Task two: LISTEN to the teacher and SAY the meaning of the words.

Cat, hat, dog, ant, bag, hot, ink, door, car, igloo, axe, apple, ball, cake, duck, gift, horse, ice cream, jacket, lion.

Task three: READ the following words.



ANT



ARM



BIG



CAT



ELF



DOG



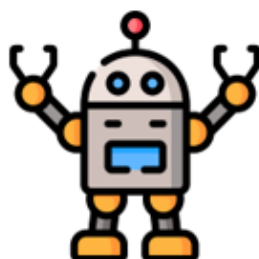
TIGER



HAT



INK



ROBOT

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة مدى فاعلية منهج المونتيسوري في تعليم مهارات القراءة المبكرة في مدارس تيارت الخاصة. استخدمت لهذا الغرض أساليب بحث نوعية و كذا شبه تجريبية. بناء على تحليل معمق للنتائج ثبت أن منهج مونتيسوري فعال في تعليم مهارات القراءة إلى جانب كونه ممتعا و يلبي احتياجات أنماط التعلم المختلفة. ة يقترح استخدامه في مناهج تعليم اللغة الانجليزية إما جزئيا أو بصفة كلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التطور اللغوي المبكر، استراتيجيات التدريس، منهج مونتيسوري، القراءة المبكرة

Resumé :

Cette recherche vise à étudier les mesures dans quelle l'approche Montessori est efficace dans l'enseignement des compétences en lecture dans les écoles privée de Tiaret. Des méthodes qualitatives et quasi-expérimentales ont été utilisées. Sur la base d'une analyse profonde résultats, il a été démontré que l'approche Montessori enseigne efficacement les compétences de lecture précoces en plus d'être amusante et adaptée à différents styles d'apprentissage. Il est suggéré de l'utiliser dans les programmes d'enseignement des langues partiellement ou entièrement.

Mots Clés : Développement précoce du langage, Stratégies pédagogiques, Approche Montessori, Compétences en lecture.

Summary:

This research aims to investigate the extent to which the Montessori approach is effective in teaching and learning early reading skills in Tiarti Private schools. Qualitative methods and quasi-experimental methods were employed. Based on an in-depth analysis of the results, the Montessori approach has been demonstrated to effectively teach early reading skills besides being fun and catering for different learning styles. It is suggested for use in language syllabi, either partially or entirely.

Keywords: Early language development, teaching strategies, Montessori approach, early reading skills.