Effect of Viewing Children's Movies in Literary Arabic on Kindergartners' Oral Skills

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Abstract
One of the factors influencing literacy among kindergartners, and in particular their expressive skills, is the visual-auditory channel. However, there is no consensus in the scientific literature in everything pertaining to the degree of causality of this contribution to expressive skills among this population. The aim of the present study was to test the effect of viewing movies in literary Arabic on the oral skills of kindergartners whose mother tongue is Arabic. The research design was quantitative-experimental. The research included 70 kindergarten-age children who were sampled from two kindergartens in the Arab society in the north of Israel, using a convenience sample. The children were aged 5-6 years. Of these, 35 (50%) are boys and 35 (50%) are girls. The research instruments included early literacy tests: morphological awareness, phonological awareness, vocabulary. Oral language skills were tested by a language test after viewing each of the movies. The findings indicate that the research hypothesis, according to which a positive effect of viewing movies in literary Arabic on their oral skills will be found, was supported. Thus, viewing movies in literary Arabic significantly improved kindergartners' oral skills.

Keywords: Kindergarten Children; Literary Arabic, Oral Arabic Skills; Diglossia, Viewing T.V. folk Stories

1. Introduction
The scientific literature has dealt extensively with the effect of different media contents on the language skills of children aged 2-5 years [1]. The main focus of this literature was on television content, but not on movies. The findings of a broad range of studies in this context clearly indicate the existence of a significant positive relationship between viewing television content that is oriented toward enriching kindergartners' language and increasing measures of attention, concentration, understanding, vocabulary, expressive language, sound-letter knowledge and knowledge of narratives [2]. However, the literature did not unequivocally determine whether kindergarten-age children can develop skills of grammar, phonological awareness, and literacy knowledge from viewing these and other programs. Indeed, there is evidence that educational television programs for kindergarten-age children afford a good opportunity for interactions and verbal speech. However, there is also evidence that children who watch television at a high frequency have lower language scores [3]. It should be noted that children's first language is the spoken language, which is completely different from literary Arabic.

One of the factors that influences literacy among kindergarteners, and in particular their expressive skills, is the visual-auditory channel. There is no consensus in the research literature in everything pertaining to the degree of causality of this contribution to expressive skills among this population [4]. Furthermore, no studies were found that tested the effect of contents communicated through movies in literary Arabic on expressive skills of kindergartners. This raises the need for the present study, whose aim was to test the relationship between viewing children's movies in literary Arabic and the oral skills of kindergartners in literary Arabic.

Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write, and includes mastery of a broad linguistic ability and awareness of the spoken and written system. The development of literacy among children includes learning the consensual reading and writing system of the language, as well as the morphological, syntactical and lexical aspects that characterize written text in that language [5]. However, in early childhood, even before acquiring full literacy ability, children develop early literacy skills which comprise the basis for reading and writing skills in their first years at school [6].

The research question was: Does viewing children's movies in literary Arabic improve the oral skills of kindergarten-age children?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Kindergarten Environment As A Literary Environment

The literacy skills acquired at kindergarten age are numerous and diverse, where the three major ones are: phonological awareness, morphological awareness and vocabulary. We will first discuss the kindergarten environment as supporting the literacy skill of phonological awareness [7]. In order to improve emergent literacy skills in early childhood, it is necessary to cultivate children's awareness of syllables, in the first stage, and then phrases. This can be achieved by the kindergarten teacher using word games, recognizing and creating rhymes, and comparing sounds. It is therefore not necessary to use letters in order to cultivate the phonological awareness of kindergartners, since this awareness is based on the analysis of speech sounds (Shankweiler, 1999). Children's involvement in word games increases their orthographic recognition ability of the different words and their capability of using this knowledge for reading and constructing words [8]. As mentioned, kindergarten teachers are mainly occupied with developing children's phonological awareness, without dealing in reading per se, a skill that is acquired beginning in first grade.

The measurement of phonological awareness in kindergarten comprises a very valid predictive tool for children's success in reading. The children's experience in the entire set of activities whose purpose is to increase their phonological awareness has a significant effect on achievements in reading and spelling. Gillon showed that an 11-month intervention for development of phonological awareness skills among kindergartners, based on the set of principles presented above, led to a clear and significant improvement in their phonological awareness [7]. This seems to be a trivial matter, but that is not true, because many intervention programs do not achieve the same improvement in the learners' phonological awareness. According to Shankweiler (1999), these studies indicate reciprocity between these two variables. Furthermore, morphological awareness can be extremely significant and important when dealing in a broader range of reading tasks. It seems that morphological awareness comprises a crucial variable in the acquisition of new words and in the intensity of short-term verbal memory [9].

2.2 Factors at the Foundation Of Emergent Literacy

Reading is a process that involves diverse linguistic and cognitive skills and abilities. Researches performed in recent years indicated different factors that comprise the basis for the development of different reading abilities: vocabulary, working memory, visual processes and naming speed from information stored in the long-term memory [10-18].

The reading process necessitates the ability to decode the written (graphemic) material and its conversion into sound (phonemic) information. This process is called "decoding". Many researchers tried to explain the process of the development of reading at the decoding level, and the different types of information necessary for normal development. The dual-channel model referred to two types of information that help in the decoding of words: phonological (sound) and orthographic (the graphic symbol of the letter or the word) [19]. According to this model, the phonological channel enables recognition of new words: words that are not yet read automatically are recognized with the help of the phonological store found in the working memory. The orthographic channel enables recognition of familiar words, or words that cannot be correctly decoded according to grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules, using the spatial visual store found under control of the working memory. The skill of recognizing words using phonological knowledge is based on three components: (1) Awareness of the phonological structure of the words, where prior awareness of the phonological structure of words leads to better reading; (2) Knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules – correspondence between the written word and the sound that represents it; (3) Ability to perform synthesis of the phonemes (the most basic sound units) and the word [20-22].

2.3 Vocabulary Acquisition

Over the past years, many good intervention studies proved the existence of a significant positive correlation between reading stories to children and vocabulary acquisition [23,24]. The verbal expression ability of children who were involved in activities derived directly from reading the stories was significantly higher than that of children from the various control groups who were not involved in the story reading processes [25]. Different studies found that children who were involved in activities of new words acquisition via pictures, definitions and discussion of the acquired words, while being read the stories, exhibited a higher lexical level compared to children who were not involved in similar activities [26-29]. This indicates the great benefit of teaching and activities that involve reading stories to children.

The oral linguistic skills acquired by kindergartners quickly turn into skills that help them in the reading task in elementary school. One of the significant components that influence literacy skills is the vocabulary, and understanding language skills that include the grammar, syntax and semantics [30].

2.4 Diglossia

Diglossia is defined as a linguistic situation where two varieties of the same language are used by a particular society, alongside each other, with a clear distinction between the spoken and the written language, separation between the social roles fulfilled by each of the varieties, and a linguistic relation between the two codes that compete over the same language [31].

Harris and Hodges refer to the written language as "high", while referring to the spoken one as "low". Beyond the aspect of prestige, the differences between the two varieties of the language pertain to the aspect of its acquisition [32]. The spoken language is acquired naturally, since this is the mother tongue. The standard language is learned as part of school teaching in the formal education system. The individual learns the grammar of the spoken language without

explicit teaching, contrary to the grammar that is learned for the written language. A functional difference also exists between the two varieties of the language, such that while the spoken language serves for routine everyday discourse, the written language serves for formal communication such as correspondence with formal institutions, the press, literature, school books, etc [31].

2.5 Effect of Viewing Visual And Auditory Contents On Children's Language Skills

Children's programs can improve the expressive language by encouraging speech. However, there is need for further evidence in order to test long-term effects. Thus, although a correlation was found between low scores in expressive language and viewing television, a specific cause and effect was not found. In other words, it is not clear whether the relationship is causal or is mediated by additional variables [33].

There is some evidence that kindergartners are attentive to visual stimuli of such programs and respond to them verbally, especially for high-quality content. Other evidence indicates that kindergartners acquire information, or learn first words, less effectively from television than from interaction with adults [34]. The strongest evidence is that at kindergarten age, children understand the contents and are able to expand their language by viewing television. In all cases, the child's personal characteristics, such as age and linguistic maturity.

The experience of viewing television is optimal for developing language among kindergartners if it is adapted to the age, to new and familiar words, and with encouragement of interaction with adults. An optimal viewing experience includes minimal exposure to visual or auditory stimuli, an optimal balance between visual and auditory stimuli, and interaction with adults. Sharing with adults is not essential for development of a vocabulary when children view age-appropriate high-quality programs. The visual and auditory stimuli help develop oral expression skills among the students [4].

2.6 Linguistic Benefits From Visual Contents

Given the proper conditions, children aged two to five may benefit from high-quality educational television. There is evidence that for this group of children, attention and understanding, open vocabulary, expressive language, letter-sound knowledge, lead to an optimal situation where the child benefits greatly at the linguistic level [35-41]. However, the literature has not determined whether children develop grammar, phonological awareness and literacy knowledge from exposure to visual contents or from listening the auditory contents. Although there is evidence that entertainment television for children offers opportunities for interactions and verbal conversations, there is also evidence that children who view television for many hours during the day or in the evening have lower language scores. Children's programs can improve expressive language by encouraging speech, but additional evidence is necessary for proving long-term effects [37,39].

2.7 Attention to Visual Stimuli

There is evidence that children aged 18 months will be attentive to visual stimuli of such programs, and will respond to them verbally, especially if the content is of high quality. Additional evidence shows that children under the age of 22 months acquire information, or learn new words, less effectively from the television than from interactions with adults [37,40].

Characteristics of television programs can accelerate or delay the development of language among their target audience. The optimal television viewing experience for language development includes exposure to age-appropriate content, new and familiar words, and offers possibilities for interaction and sharing with adults [41]. Factors related to a positive viewing experience in early childhood include minimal visual or auditory stimuli in the programs, balance between new and familiar words, material that is interesting to adults for encouraging shared viewing, use of sophisticated language, formats that offer possibilities for interaction and participation via songs and questions [38]. In contradistinction, factors related to a negative viewing experience include exaggerated visual and auditory stimuli, complex narratives, presence of older siblings while viewing, content with poor language and extensive sharing while viewing programs for adults [36,38].

2.8 Effect of Age

Children's consumption of television increases with age, availability of a television in the home, certain family circumstances (low parental education, young parents, low socioeconomic status of the family, low IQ and the child being a male), and the time spent with the children at home [36,38].

The producers of educational programs for children act in close collaboration with software companies to create educational software. Television technology is evolving with the introduction of interactive digital services that may improve some of the teaching traits of educational contents for children. All this points to some urgency for understanding the implications of the television medium on the development of language among young children in a changing technological environment that affects the home routine [36,39].

In the stage of the rapid development of vocabulary between age 12 and 18 months, environmental factors, in particular those at home, continue to cultivate the acquisition of language. Activities for improving language include songs, rhymes, imagination games, reading books, parental interaction and conversation.

2.9 Verbal and visual interactions

As a result of the perceived importance of verbal interactions at home to early language, language experts traditionally recommend limited exposure to television, especially for children under the age of two. However, acceptance of television as a learning tool was assisted by increasing research on educational programs. Television program editors claim that many activities

for improving language, that are considered to be related to the interaction between parents and their child, can be duplicated, at least partially, by educational television. For example, shared parent-child reading was recognized by the committee for treating reading difficulties among young children in the United States as a beneficial activity that promotes verbal interaction and vocabulary learning [36].

Studies reported a strong relationship between attention to the television and understanding. Thus, children require a certain understanding of the language in order to participate with the television, such that attention will increase from birth to age five. Others claimed that attention to television increases the understanding of television and improves the open vocabulary in early childhood. The kindergarten-age child can also participate selectively, search for understandable content, and absorb information from viewing [36,40].

Imitation is one way that babies communicate before they develop an understanding of the language or the ability to create language. The children exhibited signs of recreation and interaction with the video as indicated by their voice, but it appears that young children have difficulty decoding and using information from the television compared to a live one-on-one interaction with adults. One explanation for this is that babies do not have a developed memory, which improves with age and through live interaction with adults [37].

3. Relationship Between Visual Contents and Vocabulary
Researchers found a positive relation between viewing television and development of vocabulary among children aged two to five [35-41]. The vocabulary is both open and expressive. A common vocabulary is understanding the spoken words (such as nouns or adjectives) and the prominent vocabulary is word production. Vocabulary also refers to syntactical ability (the complexity of sentences) and to lexical ability (diversity of words). These skills generally refer to infants and kindergarten-age children with this diverse vocabulary ability. Research shows mainly a positive correlation between educational television and high scores in the open vocabulary of kindergarten-age children.

There is evidence for lexical development among kindergarten-age children, as a result of educational television. In this case, the researchers test the child's ability to differentiate between single words and their meanings.

"Rapid mapping" is the ability of rapid and smooth understanding of the meaning of a word from a single exposure, and is the first stage in lexical acquisition until the children begin to acquire and preserve additional information upon their next encounters with the word. Children aged 7-14 are usually able to perform rapid mapping. Researchers tested the development of open vocabulary among three-year-old children who watched an animation for children and not educational television. They observed the

children's processing of object, action, trait and emotional words in order to determine the ease and order of acquisition. The researchers discovered that children can learn something about a new object, action and expressive words when viewing television [38].

3.1 Screen time
The results of several studies support the relationship between exaggerated screen time among children under age six and language delays [1,42]. Lin et al. performed a clinical-experimental study and determined that exposure to television was correlated with an increased risk for developmental delays among children aged 15 to 35 months [43]. The exposure group included 75 children who viewed an average of 137.2 minutes per day. The 75 children in the control group viewed an average of 16.3 minutes per day. The risk for late language development of the exposure group was 3.3-fold higher than that of the control group. Duch et al. found that Hispanic babies and infants who viewed an exaggerated amount of television, defined as two or more hours per day, were at 5.5-fold lower risk than the experimental category of the ages and stages questionnaire (ASQ-3) after one year compared to children who watched less than two hours per day [42]. Children who began viewing television before age 12 months and viewed more than two hours per day were at a 6-fold greater risk for developing language delay. Although there are few studies on the relationship between screen time and language development, and these are mainly limited to observation methods or are semi-experimental, the findings have remained consistent, that increased screen time is related to increased risk for developmental delays in language [37,38].

Chonchaiya and Pruksananonda tested words exchange between a parent and a child while viewing television [1]. They performed an observational study in order to determine the relationship between the duration of viewing television and the number of parent-child interactions of 326 children aged 2 to 36 months. During each hour of viewing television, the children were exposed to 500 to 1000 fewer words. The researchers clarified that significant reductions in vocalization and conversations were related to more time spent viewing television. The children with language delays spent an average of 7 hours a day with their caregivers, where in 3.6 of these hours, on average, they were taken for a conversation. The children in the control group with normal language development spent an average of 9.3 hours a day with their caregivers, of which in 5.8 hours, on average, they were taken for a conversation. Furthermore, children who watched television alone were 8.5 times more likely to develop language delay. Similarly, when the television is on, parents speak less in the interaction with their children. In an observational study performed in Japan, the parents often spoke in shorter sentences of one word and spoke fewer words to their children when the television was turned on. However, the results of these studies support the assumption that viewing television disrupts the verbal child-caregiver interaction, and as a result fewer words are spoken to the child and there

are fewer opportunities for shaping a two-way conversation and communicating thoughts in sentences and not in single words.

4. Research Question
The above research review raises the following question: Does viewing children's movies in literary Arabic improve kindergartners' oral skills in the literary language?

5. Hypothesis
Viewing movies in literary Arabic will have a positive effect on kindergartners' oral skills, i.e., viewing movies in literary Arabic will significantly improve kindergartners' oral skills in the literary language.

6. Methodology
6.1 Research Design
The research design is quantitative-experimental, since the aim was to test differences in early literacy between children exposed to visual contents by viewing television and children who are not exposed to these contents.

6.2 Participants
The participants included 70 kindergartners who were sampled using a convenience sample from two kindergartens of the Arab society in northern Israel. The children's age ranged from 5 to 6 years. Of these, 35 (50%) were boys and 35 (50%) were girls. On average, the students had a low literacy level compared to national surveys. All students come from a low-middle socioeconomic background. They are all typical students, with no diagnosed disorders. Most of the students belong to traditional-religious families.

6.3 Instruments
Early literacy tests: The following three measures of emergent literacy: morphological awareness, phonological awareness, and vocabulary (see appendices) were tested:

Morphology/grammar: This test is based on the Ministry of Education's curriculum. The criterion for choosing the words in the vocabulary and the morphology is the level of the students according to their age cohort, and based on customary tests for this age group.

Scoring of each of the tests pertaining to measures of emergent literacy is in the range of 0-100, where 0=all the answers are wrong, and 100=all the answers are correct. The tests were prepared by a groups of kindergarten teachers who teach these ages, and relying on structured tests. The procedure of administering the tasks is described in the "Research procedure" section below.

The instruments were prepared for purposes of the present study, and the researcher used the following tests in order to supply additional validity for them.

6.4 Content validity
Content validity, that tests the degree to which the content of the test reflects and represents the assessed field, was performed in order to supply additional validity for the tests. This was tested using the Lawshe (1975) test. In this test, the questionnaire items and its goal are presented to a panel of raters who are asked to rate each of the questionnaire items according to three ranks: essential; useful, but not essential, unnecessary. The tests presented in the appendices were presented to six raters (4 kindergarten teachers who are experts in the field of literacy, and two kindergarten teachers with a seniority of 15 years) who were asked to rate each item according to these three ranks. The content validity ratio (CVR) was calculated according to the equation: $CVR=(2n_e/N)-1$, where n_e is the number of raters (panel members) who voted for a particular item as "essential" and N is the number of raters (members of the panel).

CVR results range from (-1) to (1), where a positive value greater than zero means that more than half of the panel members ranked the item as essential, and a negative value means that less than half of the panel members ranked the item as essential. A value of zero means that exactly half of the panel members ranked the item as essential. The minimum values of CVR (two-tailed test, p=0.05) are presented in Table 1.

Test number	Actual number of panel members (raters) (N)	Minimal CVR value	CVR calculated for the chosen item	Include the item? (yes/no)
Morphological awareness	6	0.99	1	Yes
Phonological awareness	6	0.99	1	Yes
Vocabulary	6	0.99	1	Yes

Table 1: Lawshe test for validation of the instruments

After we calculated the CVR value for each of the items, we tested whether each of them meets the minimum conditions of the above table. If the CVR of the item was greater or equal to the required minimum, we left the item as part of the questionnaire. If the CVR was smaller than the minimum requirement, the item was removed. According to Lawshe (1975), the fact that a particular item does not meet the minimum requirement of the CVR value does not negate the possibility of testing the behavior of this item using other tests (for example, factor analysis). Now, the value of the content validity index (CVI) must be found, calculated as the mean of all items that met the criterion of the raters' evaluation. According to the data presented in Table 1, the CVI in our case is 1=3/3, a value equal to each of the CVR values calculated for the 3 tests. Therefore, all tests have a content validity that enables using them as part of the assessment instruments of the present study.

6.5 Oral Language Skill

Oral language skill was tested by a linguistic test after viewing each of the movies (appendices). In the test, the children were asked about issues raised in the movies, and were asked to use the language they heard in the movies. The number of literary words used by the children during the test, in a correct form (accurate pronunciation of the words) comprised an indicator for verbal expression ability in the literary language. Members of the control group were asked to answer questions after listening to stories in literary Arabic in the kindergarten, via a process similar to that of the research group. Evidence shows that children aged two to five years learn language from high quality educational television. Studies showed that children develop understanding, vocabulary, expressive language, letter knowledge, knowledge on narrative and telling stories. The evidence was particularly strong for vocabulary, which improved by viewing children's programs twice a week, for one month. The optimal viewing experience that promotes the development of language is such that includes frequent exposure to age-appropriate content, to new and familiar words, and offers possibilities for interaction and cooperation with adults. Some evidence indicates that shared viewing is not essential for developing vocabulary when children view high-quality age-appropriate programs and confront familiar words and their meanings. Other evidence indicates that shared viewing helps in oral abilities and understanding of unfamiliar words and meanings. It should be noted that there was no discussion of the contents of the stories/movies, or any activities with them.

7. Procedure

The present study included 35 students who were exposed to visual contents and 35 who comprised the control group and continued to learn in the traditional manner. The experiment lasted one month, twice a week. At the end, comparisons were made between the two populations in terms of early literacy achievements. The children in the experimental group viewed children's movies that appear on YouTube, on a daily basis, whereas the children in the control group continued to listen to stories in literary Arabic that were told by the kindergarten teacher. Movies viewed by the experimental group included the following:

- Children's stories in literary Arabic: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKWGR9aQZRg
- Animation movie for improving children's memory: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBphDex6eeI
- The princess and the enchantress: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRTsXfN6oWw
- A folk story – Liela and the wolf: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9muaxLLGva0
- The average length of the movies is 30 min. The movies are in literary Arabic.
- The control group did not receive reinforcement, practice and training in phonology and vocabulary.
- The students viewed the movies whose links are presented above daily. When they finished viewing all the movies, the tests of early literacy presented in the above-described instruments section were administered.
- The students' answers to the questions they were asked were documented by coding the answers according to use of correct words in literary Arabic.
- Accurate use of a literary word as arising from the movies and based on the tests presented in the appendices awarded the child with one point.
- The children were tested within the kindergarten framework, and the kindergarten teacher is the one who administered the test.
- The means and standard deviations presented in the Findings section will supply an explanation for the level of success or failure in each of the tests, among the experimental population and the control population.

8. Results

Data analysis was performed using the SPSS software. Descriptive statistics was employed for reporting the measures of central tendency and distribution, and inferential statistics for testing the research hypothesis. Analysis of variance was performed using the independent samples t-test. The findings of the present study are presented herewith. First, the measures of central tendency and distribution of the data for the two groups will be presented, the experimental and the control, before the intervention, including differences in the measures of emergent literacy: phonological awareness, morphological awareness and vocabulary, and a comparison between before and after the intervention.

	Experimental (N=35)			Control (N=35)		
Measures	Time	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
Phonological awareness	Before	71.65	8.02	72.57	8.11	-0.47
	After	82.40	9.43	72.57	8.18	4.65***
Morphological awareness	Before	73.31	8.88	73.08	8.98	0.10
	After	83.85	9.32	73.80	9.30	4.51***
Vocabulary	Before	72.22	8.45	72.02	8.04	0.10
	After	83.82	8.32	71.40	8.33	6.23***
Oral language skills	Before	66.32	6.52	68.41	9.12	0.53
	After	82.65	4.63	69.52	8.74	3.59***
***p<0.001						

Table 2: Independent samples t-tests for testing differences between the experimental group and the control group.

The data presented in Table 2 show significant differences (p<0.001) between the experimental group and the control group in all measures of emergent literacy, after the intervention, since it was found that there were no significant differences (p>0.05) between the groups in all of these measures prior to the intervention.

After the intervention, a significant difference was found between the students' achievements in the two groups in phonological awareness (t=4.65, p<0.001), morphological awareness (t=4.51, p<0.001), and vocabulary (t=6.23, p<0.001). The achievements of the experimental group in emergent literacy (M=83.36, SD=7.87) were significantly higher than those of the control group (M=72.59, SD=8.08).

A significant difference was also found between the achievements of the two groups in oral expression of literary Arabic (t=3.59, p<0.001). The achievements of the students in the experimental group in oral expression of literary Arabic (M=82.65, SD=4.63) were significantly higher than those of the control group (M=69.52, SD=8.74).

9. Discussion

The aim of the study was to test the effect of viewing movies in literary Arabic on the oral skills of kindergartners whose mother tongue is Arabic. The findings indicate that the research hypothesis, according to which viewing movies in literary Arabic will have a positive effect on the students' oral abilities, was supported. Viewing movies in literary Arabic significantly improved the kindergartners' oral skills.

This findings is in line with the research literature, according to which pre-literacy skills related to the development of oral language, i.e. phonological awareness, narrative and storytelling, and knowledge about reading and writing, were given very little attention in television research on kindergartners [6,23,44]. For this reason, these skills were grouped under one heading. There is evidence that children learn letter-sound knowledge from children's television programs, which are optimal for developing the linguistic skills of these children as they begin to decode words [3,4].

Support for the research hypothesis of the present study can be explained by the research literature that indicates that children begin to acquire the ability to learn about the phonological structure of spoken words even before kindergarten age. It has been suggested that some television programs, which are intended for ages three to five, and other children's programs, help promote phonological awareness and all aspects of linguistic literacy [45,46]. Most educational programs for children include games, songs that emphasize rhymes, and manipulation of sounds that in theory should draw attention to the phonological structure of spoken words. The potential for developing phoneme-grapheme correspondence from television has been satisfactorily proven in a large part of the very extensive empirical research literature in this field. Studies on the effect of educational television contents tested the implications or effectiveness of television teaching for increasing the phonological awareness in early childhood compared to interactions between children and adults, and found that these contents are indeed very helpful in increasing this literacy awareness [26,47]. Educational television can fulfill a meaningful role in the development of this knowledge. However, additional evidence is required in order to show that it is sufficient for enabling children to acquire these skills [35,36,48].

As indicated, television was found to support children's conversation and imagination [4,46]. Four-year-old viewers are able to tell related stories when they pretend to be reading. Entertainment programs that are very beloved by children, such as the Teletubbies, encourage role playing among children who dress and behave like their preferred figures or use toys in order to play their favorite narratives [6,45]. Television texts that are preferred at home also encourage the participation of older members in the children's games. This is important, considering that experts in the field of language stress that opportunities for verbal interactions at home that focus on literacy predetermine the degree of the child's risk for suffering from reading difficulties. Research on education

is interested in understanding the opportunities offered by the media, and in particular viewing movies on television, in order to support kindergartners' linguistic literacy [41,47].

The educational programs are also intended for raising the knowledge of texts and of literacy. Many television programs offer contents about reading books for improving children's dimensions of knowledge in everything pertaining to books. This is important, because researchers have shown that children who develop the ability to speak about texts, i.e. that their linguistic literacy is very well developed, exhibit greater success in learning to read when they move from kindergarten to school [23,26].

Children with good language skills at age five tended to watch more educational television, and less caricatures that are not appropriate for elementary school age, than children with lower skills. An improved vocabulary is related to different television programs, but not to the presentation of content that is not educational [23,44]. Researchers found that children who used a less sophisticated language tended to watch programs with a worse language, such as caricatures and family drama programs than other children. The other aspect of viewing contents intended for the general public alludes to the adult's occupation with the television and not with the child. Although parents can watch general programs with their children, they are not available for conversation or for supplying an explanation for the material discussed in the program in order to support the children's understanding of the content they are viewing. Furthermore, parents usually tend to deal less in other activities when they are viewing television [45,46]. This is not necessarily the case, because the adult's attention on the television will limit the linguistic interactions with the children. General television encourages discourse of older children. However, targeted children's programs will arouse more dialogue than non-educational television, because the content is attractive for both the adult and the child, and gives the adult a reason for maintaining the child's participation in the activity. General television for the general public therefore does not offer identical opportunities to those of the educational television that is appropriate for kindergarten age and presents contents based on language adapted to this specific age group. Children who view non-educational content tend to have a smaller vocabulary and poorer language [26,47].

The conclusion of the present study is that kindergarten-age children can gain linguistic benefit from television, in accordance with the quality of the television content. This, through increasing the opportunities for interaction and shared viewing with adults. Children of this age can develop understanding, open vocabulary, expressive language, letter-sound knowledge, and recognition of narratives and self-presentation of stories [48-63].

10. Research limitations
The present research had several limitations, where the main one was the use of a relatively small sample that may not be representative of the entire research population. This may harm the ability to supply added external validity for the findings, i.e. generalization of the findings for the general population. Another limitation stems from specific reference to typical children who are found in the normative modal range of the normal distribution in terms of their cognitive level, while a certain proportion are not such, and were not taken into account at all in this study.

11. Implications for practice
* Viewing movies in literary Arabic empowers the literary Arabic oral skills of kindergartners whose mother tongue is Arabic.
* Television was found to support children's conversation and imagination.
* Children's programs may arouse more dialogue than non-educational television, because the content is attractive for both the adult and the child, and gives the adult a reason for maintaining the child's participation in the activity.

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