

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This research work is related to Montessori method. Education system is changing vastly. As the children are the centre of further education. Since ten years, Montessori schools has been the rising area for the development of the Early Childhood Education. So, the researcher was keenly interested in and impressed with the new education system for the growth of children in motor sensorial skill. The whole research work is focused on "The application of Montessori method in developing reading skill". Dr. Maria Montessori, the founder of Montessori Method who took care to prepare an environment which would give children space for their developmental needs. As the main objective of this research is to find out the application of Montessori method in developing reading skill, it can be clearly seen that if a child learns to read in a motor-sensorial way with no pressure, they may learn before the age of five or six.

### **1.1 General Background**

Language possesses the characteristics like the duality of structure, arbitrariness, displacement, productivity, cultural transmission and so on.

The term language is defined differently by various linguists. Language is "The system of sounds and words used by humans to express their thought and feelings" (Hornby, 2006). By this, he wants to state that language is a system through which people interact among them. In the same way, Widdowson (1983, p.3) defines, "Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols which permit all people in a given culture or other people who have learned the system of that culture to communicate or interact." So, he believes that language is culture specific. And according to Crystal (2003, p. 225). "A

particular variety or levels of speech and writing may be referred to as language and this is related to the register stylistics."

To speak relatively with regard of the natural gifts granted to living creature's, language is the only human property gifted by the unseen or divine power in nature so far. The uniqueness of human beings is further comparable to the super-creature in the sense that the animals can mimic and release their instinctual impulses through vocal pipes and not seem to have speech organs except the lungs and vocal pipes where human beings can articulate all types of utterances which carry certain types of message and help the subjects to interpret the internal world around. The prime role of language in the human existence is further justifiable with regard to the interlinks and relations weaved by human beings among themselves and thus his area of existence is expanded from the Earth to space and there to horizon.

### **1.1.1 Language Skills**

We can observe language consisting of basic skills. They are:

- a      Listening:** Listening is one of the primary language skills. It is a receptive language skill because while listening, we receive some information. Listening activities depend on the level of the listeners and the purpose of listening.
- b      Speaking:** Learning a language primarily means learning or being able to speak in it. We speak to express our ideas, feeling, thoughts needs, etc. Speaking is the skill which makes us able to express ourselves fluently in the language under consideration. It is a productive skill.
- c      Reading:** Reading is one of the receptive language skills. Reading generally means understanding or making sense of a given text. It involves extracting the required information from the text as effectively as possible.

- d      Writing:** The term 'writing' refers to a graphic representation of speech sounds. It is the productive skill involving visual production of language for conveying the message.

### **1.1.2 The Concept of Learning**

It is hard to define the concept of learning and people's way of learning variables. Something is learned easily. A baby quickly learns if they cry when they are hungry, their mother will give food to satisfy the hunger. Other things are more difficult to learn and require determination and a desire to learn accompanied with much practice if they are to master the skill. I have summarized from, E.C.E.C, 2006, p. 33.

**a      Learning is a Life Long Process**

A baby learns to sit and walk when he is ready. No matter what we do, we will not be able to make a 6 week old baby walk. A child learns to read and write and he will have no friends, if he shares he will have many friends. Adults or teenagers will learn to cook, play the guitar and drive a car. Each stage of learning requires a different level of maturity. We learn from watching and listening to others.

**b      Learning Causes Change**

When we learn something, we know more (knowledge), we understand more (concepts) and we can do more (skills). However, we must use this learning if we are to make a change in our behavior, otherwise the learning is of no use.

**c      Learning is universal human experience**

A child learns to eat independently, dress himself and make friends.

**d      Learning is Development and Adjustment**

Child learns skills which will help in establishing relationships. A small child is egocentric. Every time he says 'I', and 'me'. He learns that he must share his teacher and mum. Thus learning helps in his work and profession later.

**e      Learning is Organization of Experiences**

We learn by practice e.g. when learning to drive a car, we need to have the need and desire to learn. We need to put out learning into practice.

**f      Learning is a Product of the Environment**

A home where books are treasured will encourage children to read. A home where exercise is emphasized will produce sportsmen. A school which encourages discovery will produce good students. A child living in a poor situation will learn to steal in order to survive.

**g      Learning is Discovery**

A one year old child discovers that he can walk. A two year old child can talk. A five year old child learns that a strong branch will hold him, but a weak branch will cause him to fall if he sits on it. All children are inquisitive, they learn by exploring and experimenting.

### **1.1.3 Language Learning of Child**

Longitudinal development of language and language learning is learning to speak, language is speech. The first task in learning to speak is learning to pronounce word. Pronunciation is learned by imitation. Children literally pick up the pronunciation of words from the people with whom they associate. A young child's entire pattern of pronunciation changes rapidly if placed in a new environment where people pronounce words differently because of the child's

flexibility of the vocal mechanism and the absence of developed habits of pronunciation. Some parents and educators argue that early childhood is the proper time to begin learning of foreign language. If children learn the correct pronunciation they will speak like native. Longs, (1990) suggests that, "There can be better achievement in phonology than in syntax during the early period of life."

#### **1.1.4 Learning Through Plays Games**

Children like to play with their peer. Their creativity can be better developed through actions, engagement in different activities. Creative play enables the development of communication. Play is an especially powerful tool for teaching language skills to children. Children expand their vocabulary and improve their receptive and expressive language by interaction with other children and adult in spontaneous play situations. Play promotes the development of these facts of communication.

- a      Receptive language (follows directions, understand basic concepts).
- b      Expressive language (expressive needs, wants, feelings used words, phrases, sentences, speak clearly and distinctly).
- c      Nonverbal communication (causes congruent communication, facial expressions, body gestures, hand gestures).
- d      Auditory memory discrimination (understands, different sounds, spoken language).(Catron & Allen, 1999, p. 21).

Play helps to originate the child's interests. In a class, different levels exist, if the children are to develop successfully play helps as a tool for other learning situations. Play helps to develop through cognitive, language, physical, emotional and social way.

According to Hurlock (2000, p. 172) play promotes the development of the following aspect of cognition.

- a Problem solving learning (uses divergent thinking, suggests solutions to peer problems. "What if situations, answers question extends sentence or story logically)
- b Concept formation (understands spatial relations, identifies colors, numbers shapes)
- c Imitation/ memory (imitates, recalls past events and sequences events).
- d Association/classification (matches, sorts, groups, classify and establish relationship between objects).

### **1.1.5 Early Childhood Development**

For a child to develop holistically, his/her physical, cognitive, social and emotional aspects should go hand in hand. The ages in which this development takes place are discussed below. I have summarized this from, E.C.E.C (2006, pp 15-16)

#### **) Physical Development**

Children of this age love to tumble, they start walking, jumping kicking a ball, climbing stairs, drawing proceed from scribbling to more details. Develop from palmer grip to a pincer grip. Move to a musical beat and hops around. Proceed with toilet training and learn to stand on tiptoe.

#### **) Social and Emotional Development**

Very young children are egocentric. They can play happily alone but prefer having an audience and say 'no' more often discover their will power. They show tantrums and develop a sense of self identity. When three years old child

develop the ability to express, they have fewer tantrums, begin to share more with others.

### **) Cognitive Development**

Vocabulary and sentence construction improve rapidly. On average, children of two years have a vocabulary of 50 words. From this age onwards they start to distinguish categories, to match things and to see relations.

## **Three to Five Years Old**

They are no more toddlers. Many things have changed in the lives of these children, they go to school now, get new friends and have to learn to adapt to other environments.

### **) Physical Development**

The child's physical development at this age grows rapidly. They are full of energy but their motor skills are not fully developed. Use sensory skills (all five senses) to discover the world around them. They can take care of it. They act impulsively.

### **) Social and Emotional Development**

They feel insecure and for this reason they reason, they demand attention. They are self-centered and family is important for them. They are still ignorant and unaware of personal limits. They imitate a lot and learn through play. They still develop their sense of right and wrong.

### **) Cognitive Development**

Their attention span is just 5-8 for. They ask a lot of questions, are curious, eager and imaginative. They have a limited understanding of time and space. They think in a literal and concrete way.

## **Five to Seven Years Old**

A five year old child's interest and way of learning is different from that of an eleven year old child. This is because children learn through their own experience and according to their age. It even varies among children of the same age.

### **) Physical Development**

Their motor skills continue to develop. It is difficult for the younger ones to use their fine motor skills; therefore, we must give them activities which help them develop it. They love drama, they like to explore and discover by touching and feeling.

### **) Social and Emotional Development**

They have more interest in other but, are self centered. Still they learn to keep them disciplined themselves; they like to listen to others, give chance to other, etc. They are still very loyal to their family but they like to experience independence. So, in the class, they need to feel secure and need personal love from the teacher, they need to feel secure and need personal love from the teacher.

### **) Cognitive Development**

Their attention span is for 10 minutes. They have a strong imagination and through their imagination they learn to figure out the truth. Therefore, teachers need to clarify abstract concepts. Children at this age are to be disciplined, and to be neat and tidy.

## **Eight to Ten Years Old**

It is important and necessary to treat the students well and build relationship with them according to their age. An enthusiastic teacher will have an enthusiastic class.



### ) **Physical Development**

Their body proportion changes, they are tall and usually thin, their motor skills are highly developed. They like games and activities.

### ) **Physical Development**

They are loyal to their family but sometime friends become important too. They like both individual and group work. They are critical to self and others. Their consciences develop. They learn to be disciplined, to make true friends.

### ) **Emotional Development**

They feel guilty and feel rejected easily. They are sensitive to praise and affirmation from adults. They also fear easily due to many impressions and information.

### ) **Cognitive Development**

Children of this age can read and write well therefore their interest in the outside world, increase reading ability. In order to help them to be disciplined, encourage them to finish their given work. Children learn through examples.

Children learn in different ways and need to use all their senses in the process. For a child to develop holistically, his physical, cognitive, social and emotional should go hand in hand. Children learn differently according to their age factor. Young learners nature and even their way of learning is different from older learners. It is important to understand creating a stimulating learning environment for young children.

Regarding young learners, Harmer (2007, p. 82) says “Young children, especially those up to the ages of nine or ten, learn differently from older children, adolescents and adults in the following ways”:

- ) They respond to meaning even if they do not understand individual words.
- ) They often learn indirectly rather than directly that is they take in information from all sides, learning from everything around them rather than only focusing on the precise topic they are being taught.
- ) Their understanding comes not just from explanation but from what they see and hear and crucially have a chance to touch and interact with.
- ) They find abstract concepts such as grammar rules difficult to grasp.
- ) They generally display enthusiasm for learning and a curiosity about the world around them.
- ) They have a need for individual attention and approval from the teacher.
- ) They are keen to talk about themselves and their own lives as main topics in the classroom.
- ) They have a limited attention span; unless activities are extremely engaging, they can get easily bored, losing interest after ten minutes or so.

### **1.1.6 An Introduction to Dr. Maria Montessori**

Maria Montessori was born on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1870 in the town of Chiravalle, Italy. Alessandro, her father was an Accountant in civil service and her mother Renilde Stoppani, was well educated and had a passion for reading. Montessori family moved to Rome in 1875. There, after a year, Maria enrolled in the local state studies; she continued her studies at the Regot Institute Technical Leonardo Da Vinci from 1886 to 1890.

After her graduation, her parents encouraged her to take up a career in teaching but she wished to enter a medical school and become a doctor. Her father

opposed this course. Medical school was on male preserve and initially she was refused entry by the head of the school. But she was determined to accomplish her aim. Later, she got admission in medical science and completed her course in 1896. Then, she became first female doctor in Italy specializing in psychiatry. As an Assistant doctor in the university psychiatric clinic in Rome, she worked for a time with mentally handicapped children. Based on this experience, she became Lecturer at a training institute for teacher in Rome and a model school for the National Language for the education of handicapped children. In 1902, she gave up her position at the institute and began a course of study in educational experimental Psychology and Anthropology.

In 1907, she opened the, "Case Dei Bambini" her first children house in San Lorenzo, a worker's quarter of Rome. Dr. Maria Montessori then had the opportunity of using the knowledge: she had gained in her experiences with handicapped children for the benefit of children of normal development. She recorded her experiences with the children in her book "The Discovery of Children."

As a scientist, Maria Montessori observed the activities of the children and considered how she might stimulate and encourage them bit by bit through continual testing out materials and aids she developed. She took care to prepare an environment which would give children space for their developmental needs.

In this way, Montessori formulated a complete theory of personal development with many aspects and symptoms. Having lived a full life, she died on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1952. (Maria, J., August 16, 1996).

### **1.1.7 Montessori Method**

The Montessori method of education is best described as an "Aid to Life" rather than a specific method of passing on academic objectives. It prepares students to succeed in a world where technology is changing the way we live at a very rapid pace and general life skills are far more valuable than mastery of an outdated academic curriculum (Olaf, 2005).

One clear implication of Montessori's concept of school as home is that the inhabitants of school constitute a family. Just as the model for school in Montessori's theory is an idealized version of home, an exemplary family serves as the model for the relationship in which those attending school stand to one another. When it does, the social nature of Montessori's system becomes domestic imagery into her theory even as her educational practice acknowledged the importance of the atmosphere affections and curriculum associated with home and domesticity.

Having close contact with children and the study of their marvelous practical result shaped in the historical volume called the Montessori Method, based upon her observation. Montessori came to understand the inner nature of the child. The child is a dynamic, curious person. The child comes to know the world through the senses. The child repeats activities until they are fully mastered. Her experience led her to the following conclusions.

Children pass through particular development stages. These readiness stage are essential for child's learning.

- ) She developed structured education programme based on these stage. She called these didactic materials (i.e. intended to instruct). They have build in control of error, so children can teach themselves in a non-competitive atmosphere.
- ) A child's natural will to learn should be encouraged to foster a life-long motivation for learning.
- ) Montessori nurseries have four areas.

Practical life, sensorial, mathematical and language area (ECEC, 2006, p.5).

Thus the plan of the Montessori Method involves all those considerations which characterize a child's life (Bhatia & Bhatia, 1999, p. 90) present the plan of the method, which centers round three major types of activities in these ways.

- a Exercise for practical life
- b Exercise for sensory training
- c Didactic exercise for teaching language and arithmetic.

**a Exercise for Practical Life**

The main purpose of various exercises for practical life is to render the school true to life not a preparation for life but life in itself. The practical life exercises are the beginning point in a Montessori Environment. They help the child in their whole development, physical, emotional, mental and moral. The exercises are the foundation because they are an aid for complete development, they form a part of the daily program of "activity" in the day of the child, helping them.

- a To grow in self-knowledge
- b To develop a good self-image
- c To grow independence
- d To grow in an understanding of the environment
- e To develop motor perception and perfection of the movement
- f To develop a sense of responsibility
- g To appreciate their culture
- h To develop a spirit of helpfulness
- i To establish order
- j To develop power of concentration

## **b      Exercise for Sensory Training**

Dr. Montessori attached special importance to training the senses of the children. According to her, sensory discrimination is more important than reasoning and thinking, as self education is possible only through the development of senses, she believed that physical and intellectual development are also associated with sense training. She devised finally graded materials for this purpose.

## **c      Didactic Exercises for Teaching Language and Arithmetic**

The third type of exercises involving the use of didactic apparatus is designed to teach writing, reading and arithmetic. These exercises were included in the system at a later stage. A brief account of these exercises may be given here.

### **A.      Teaching of Writing**

In Montessori's system writing precedes reading. The later involves superior intellectual activity and the former involves merely muscular skill which is an easy process while the teaching of writing is a progress, the teacher should examine the individual who writes and not the writing. This system of writing consists of the following three steps:

#### **i      Recognition of the Form of Letters**

The children are made to pass their fingers over the letters of alphabet and out of the sandpaper and pasted on card-board. The children practise this act later with eyes closed. Thus, the children learn to recognize the letter not by visual analysis and obtained by visual imagery but by tactile and motor exercise.

## ii Learning of Phonetic Sounds

Now the children repeat the first exercise and at the same time key pronouncing the sounds which these letters represent.

## iii Control of Pen is Taught by the Use of a Metal Frame and Inset

They draw lines around the frame with a colored chalk, repeating the same act by placing the metal inset.

## b. Teaching of Arithmetic or Counting

The method of teaching counting not being very original, involves the old way of teaching by means of colored beads, number rods, wooden spindles, sand paper, numbers, simple boxes, etc. The device that is generally used is the long stair. This consists of ten rods, the first being one meter long and the last only one tenth of it. Each rod is conveniently divided into portions of one decimeter each and each portion painted red and blue. By manipulating the rods all the four fundamentals cut in sand-paper and the pupils are taught to associate the numbers with their graphic forms.

In the Montessori system the most important function of teaching is to observe the psychological and individual development of the child and to develop psychic activity. The teacher is an active observer, a guide that is why Montessori prefers to call teacher a "directress".

### 1.1.8 Reading

Reading is one of the receptive language skills. Reading generally means understanding or making senses of a given text. It involves extracting the required information from the text as effectively as possible. There are certain sub-skills in reading which the successful reader should develop. Reading can be done silently. This is called silent reading. We read aloud a text to our

people. Experiments have proved that more comprehension is achieved only through silent reading. Reading can be aloud also.

To sum up, reading is an active receptive language skill. It involves a variety of skill:

- ) Recognizing the script of language.
- ) Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items.
- ) Understanding explicitly stated information.
- ) Understanding information when it is not explicitly stated.
- ) Understanding conceptual meaning
- ) Understanding communicative value (function) of sentences and utterances.
- ) Understanding relations between parts of a text through textual cohesion devices.
- ) Understanding cohesion between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices.
- ) Interpretation of text by going outside it.
- ) Recognizing indicators in discourse
- ) Identifying the main point or important information in a piece of discourse
- ) Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details.
- ) Extracting salient points to summarize (the text, an idea etc.)
- ) Selecting extraction of relevant points from a text.
- ) Basic reference skills.
- ) Scanning To locate specially required information.
- ) Transcoding information to diagrammatic display (Munby, 1978, cited by Khaniya, 2005, pp. 141-142)

While defining 'reading', the Department of Education and Science (1975) describes three types of skills involved in reading: primary, Intermediate and



comprehension 'Primary skill' is seen as the responses to the print by recognizing the stage of the separate letters, groups of letters and the whole words. The reader must have a reasonable mastery of the process of seeing a letter or a group of letters before he can respond to the sequence of words. 'Intermediate skills' seen as the ability to handle the sequences of letters, words and larger units of meaning. This skill involves the knowledge of the probability with which sequence occur. In other words, while reading a sequence, a reader has to be able to anticipate what is most likely to follow it. Here, in this way, he can make guesses at the meaning of the familiar words and also specify the meaning of the words in terms of context (Khaniya, 2005, pp. 141-142).

According to the purpose and manner of reading, there are different types of reading. They are:

- a Intensive reading
- b Extensive reading
- c Silent reading
- d Rapid reading/faster reading
- e Loud reading
- f Scanning
- g Skimming (Dawadi, S. et al. 2010, p. 176).

Reading is one of the receptive language skills. Reading is an important part of an academic development. Reading involves a variety of skill. Reading has become one of the most important ways of obtaining new information or knowledge exploding in the new world. So, if we have ideas for reading then it will be easy and interesting for us.

### **Ideas for Reading Activities:**

- a Pre-question: A general question is given before reading asking the learners to find out a piece of information central to the understanding of the text.
- b Do-it-yourself questions: Learners compose and answer their own questions.
- c Provide a title: Learners suggest a title if none was given originally or an alternative, if there was.
- d Summarize: Learners summarize the content in a sentence or two. This may also be done in the mother tongue.
- e Continue: The text is a story; learners suggest what might have happened next.
- f Preface: The text is a story; learners suggest what might have happened before.
- g Gapped text: Towards the end of the text, four or five gaps are left that can only be filled in if the text has been understood. Note that this is different from the conventional cloze test (a test with regular gaps throughout) which tests grammatical and lexical accuracy and actually discourages purposeful fluent reading.
- h Mistakes in the text: The text has, towards the end, occasional mistakes (wrong words: or intrusive ones or omissions). Learners are told in advance how many mistake to look for.
- i Comparison: There are two texts on a similar topic; learners note points of similarity or difference of content

- j      Responding: The text is a letter or provocative article learners discuss how they would respond or write an answer.
- k      Re-presentation of content: The text gives information or tells a story, learners re-present its content through a different graphic medium for example:
  - ) a drawing that illustrates the text
  - ) coloring
  - ) Making a map
  - ) lists of events or items described in the text
  - ) a diagram (such as a grid or flow chart) indicating relationships between items, characters or events, Ur (2005, p. 146)

### **1.1.9 Learning Reading (Montessori Philosophy)**

If a child learns to read in a motor-sensorial way with no pressure, they may learn before the age of five or six. But it is quite natural for a child not to show an interest until later. The most important thing is that learning be a relaxed and enjoyable experience.

Where a child first begins to read independently, we never ask them to read aloud. To read a word while we are at the same time, saying aloud the word we have just finished decoding is a very complex operation and can cause a lot of stress certainly not enjoyment. Beginning readers are given reading cards and vocabulary or word books to help them build up a large vocabulary with no stress.

The best first books are written about the child's environment, about the real world history, science etc. or are abridged classics which lead to an interest in great literature.

### **1.1.10 The Three Essential Components of Montessori Reading Curriculum**

The Montessori reading curriculum has three components. A strong foundation in phonics, comprehension is based on visualization and whole language or learning to read for meaning and using contextual.

Montessori reading is based on a strong foundation of phonics. This multi-sensory approach is unique in that it has children building words (encoding) before actually reading them (decoding). Developmentally appropriate activities allow children to build their own understanding of how sounds are represented by symbols and these symbols are joined together to form words.

In the Montessori classroom, by the age of four, children are developmentally ready and eager to begin the preparation for reading. Along with learning the sounds and tracing their symbols with the sounds paper letters, students simultaneously learn to hold a pencil and control it, use with the insets for design.

When children have learned the phonetic sounds, they are ready to begin word building with the moveable alphabet. They begin by building two or three letters phonetic words (those in which all the letters make their most common sound, like dog, pig, ram, bat etc). In order to allow the children to work independently, they are given small phonetic words that can be introduced for variety and additional practice in word building. After the child has mastered two and three word building, he or she can begin matching reading cards with the objects and later pictures and also begin working on building four or more letter phonetic words. After these are mastered, the child can match four or more letter words with corresponding objects and picture in a variety of formats.

The key to comprehension is visualization and in the Montessori approach to reading children have total of practice developing this skill. Visualization is an

essential component of the grammar activities where an understanding of function of words is developed through the use of manipulative activities. Working with these activities give children further practice in reading and comprehension through visualization.

It is only after the children have mastered the phonetic sounds of letters that they are introduced to the phonograms, sounds represented by combinations of letters like "sh" and "ph", long vowels sounds and other less common pronunciations of letters. Once the teacher has introduced a new sound, the children can work independently to master the sound in words.

After mastering the phonograms, children's interest will lead them to read any book they wish. We strive with young children and give them beautifully illustrated books about the real words. There are also many reading activities related to science, geography, history and many other topics of special interest as well as further experiential grammar activities which the children greatly enjoy (Blodget, R. 1984).

### **1.1.11 Teaching of Reading in Montessori Method**

Reading, on the contrary, makes part of an abstract intellectual culture, which is the interpretation of ideas from graphic symbols and is only acquired later on. Touching the letters and looking at them at the same time, fixes the image more quickly through the co-operation of the sense. Later, the two separate; looking becomes reading, touching becomes writing. According to the type of the individual, some learn to read first, other to write.

o e a

i u

The children touch the letters drawn up on the cards using first the index finger only. Then the index with middle finger, then with a small wooden stick held as a pen. The children learn to read it and write it.

The consonants are painted in blue and are arranged upon the cards according to analogy form. Near the script letter, is a smaller printed, painted in the same color.

The teacher, naming the consonant according to the phonetics method indicates the letter and then the card, pronouncing the names of objects painted there and emphasizing the first letter, as for example, 'p-pear', give me the consonant p- put in its place, touch it etc. (Hunt, 1964, p. 265).

### **1.1.12 Materials in Reading Through Montessori Method**

The reading materials consist of slop of papers or cards on which words and phrase are written in large script. The start is made with those cards which contain names of familiar objects. Once the child is able to read correctly, they are asked to repeat "faster". This reading of word cards is followed by reading of sentences describing some action or expressing some command. This involves mental reading followed by the action represented in the sentence.

Picture box with name tag, object box with name tag, control card, LMA box, sand paper alphabet, sentence card, story books, word list cards, booklets, pink, blue and green scheme, play cards, flash cards, large moveable alphabets, pictures are used.

## **1.2 Review of the Related Literature**

Some of the researcher or studies related to early child education or in Montessori are as follows:

**Hunt** (1964) in the book entitled "The Montessori Method" presented the method for all the senses. His elaborative ideas showed that the education of the sense is important for child who makes observers, and not any accomplishes the general work of adaption the present epoch of civilization, but also prepares them directly for practical life.

**Gurung** (2006) in the book entitled "The features of quality education" has presented on the effectiveness of materials classroom which helped the students to create new ideas and skills by themselves in friendly environment in an effective way.

**Champaign** (1999) has conducted a research work on "Use of teaching materials and its impact in the English language learning, a case study". The findings showed that teaching aids were effective and reliable supplement in teaching English and language skills.

**ECEC** (2006) in the book entitled "Introduction to early childhood development", presented the concept of learning as people's way of learning vary. A baby quickly learns that if he/she cries, when comes from study, practice and experienced.

**Ranabhat** (2007) has conducted a research entitled "English Language Teaching and Learning strategies in Montessori Schools". In her study, she concluded that teaching learning strategies of Montessori schools are playing a vital role for early Childhood Education.

**Sedai** (2008) has conducted a research entitled "A study on the instructional materials used in the Montessori schools". In her study, she concluded that materials help to develop in all the four skills. Teaching materials are an integral part of the English language teaching.

The studies reviewed above are related to teaching strategies and the early child development. None of them have been found to study about the method used in reading skill in Montessori Method. Therefore, the researcher has conducted this study entitled "Application of Montessori method in developing reading skill" as a distinct one from all research works reviewed above.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- a To find out the application of the Montessori Method in developing reading skill.

- b To identify and classify the different types of material used in Montessori classes.
- c To find out some pedagogical implication of using Montessori Method.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

It will be beneficial for the Montessori Education. More specifically, it will be helpful for the Montessori schools and even those who are interested in this field. It will give insight on the Montessori reading skill. Researchers, teacher's trainers and curriculum designers will be highly benefitted from the finding of this research.

## **1.5 Definition of the Specific Terms**

### **i. Early childhood education**

Here, the term refers for education imparted to the learners of pre-school age where the focus of teaching is an overall development of the child.

### **ii Montessori reading skill**

In this study Montessori reading skill refers to the skill used in Montessori school. It is a method used for the children.

### **iii Montessori materials**

The term in the study refers to the specific materials used in Montessori classes to develop their overall skill.

### **iv Child**

This term here refers to the learners in the Montessori schools who are of mixed age group. Their ages were from two and half years to six years.



## **CHAPTER - TWO**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter incorporates the description of the sources of data, sampling procedures, tools for data collection and data collection procedure. It contains the description of the limitation of the study and definition of specific terms.

#### **2.1 Sources of Data**

The present researcher's work was based on two types of data discussed below.

##### **2.1.1 Primary Sources**

The primary sources of data were based on the classroom activities of the Montessori schools and the teachers teaching in such school. Classroom observation form was prepared to observe the classroom activities and questionnaire sheet was prepared for the teacher (See appendix 1 and 2).

##### **2.1.2 Secondary Sources**

The secondary sources of data were books, journals, articles, reports, available website, thesis as well as unpublished sources of data which have close relevance with the present study. Books, Hunt (1964), Harmer (2007), Hurlock (1997), etc. Websites <http://www.montessori.org.au/montessori/biography.htm>., <http://www.onwei.org.au>. Articles, Maria Montessori and UNESCO, Montessori and Home Schooling here to stay, etc.

#### **2.2 Population of the Study**

The population of the study was the Montessori trained teachers teaching at the Montessori schools two teachers from each school. (See appendix 6).

### **2.2.1 Sampling Procedures**

The researcher formally visited more than 10 Montessori schools of Kathmandu valley then she selected 5 of them as per their permission using purposive sampling methods two teachers from each school were selected to fill up the questionnaires and then classes were also observed (See appendix 6).

## **2.3 Tools for Data Collection**

To collect the data following tools were used

a Classroom observation form

The researcher used classroom observation form to find out social climate, materials used in the classroom and reading related issues.

b Questionnaires

A set of questionnaires were developed for the teacher. Both open and closed types of questionnaires were used for the data collection.

## **2.4 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher spent a lot of time for the data collection process. First of all, I prepared the classroom observation form and questionnaire. I prepared those tools by visiting the concerned schools, taking advice of thesis supervisor and discussion with friends. Then I followed the following steps.

a I went to college and requested the authorized person for the recommendation letter.

b I formally visited more than ten Montessori Schools with the recommendation letter. Some of the school that I visited did not give permission to carry out task, so I selected the school that were co-operative and gave permission to do work.

- c After that, I went to the selected school asking for permission to collect the data.
- d I requested the concerned teachers to teach about reading skill.
- e Then I observed the classes and collected the data.

Finally, I requested the teachers to fill up the questionnaires.

## **2.5 Limitation of the Study**

- a The study was limited to only five schools which were applying Montessori Method in Kathmandu Valley.
- b Only reading skill was studied.
- c Only two tools were used to collect the data.
- d Only five classes were observed and only 10 teachers were taken to fill up the questionnaires.
- e The result of the research may not include whole part of the Montessori school.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The major objectives of the thesis were to identify the use of Montessori Method in developing reading skill and to identify and classify the different types of materials used in Montessori classes. The data were taken from different five Montessori schools where the students were of mixed age group. The major tools used to collect data were classroom observation forms and questionnaires for the teachers. Further analysis and interpretation has been done under the following specific headings.

#### **3.1 Questionnaire Based Analysis**

I developed open and closed type of questionnaire for the collection of data. The questionnaire was filled by the trained teachers of the Montessori schools. On the basis of filled questionnaire the analysis was done (See appendix 5).

##### **3.1.1 Knowledge About Early Childhood Education**

There were 10 Montessori trained teachers who were asked about their knowledge of this method. All of them claimed that they have already heard about the Early Childhood Education.

##### **3.1.2 Presence of Montessori Lab**

All the teachers replied that they have lab for Montessori Method. When I visited the schools and observed their labs, I found:

- ) All labs were well-equipped.
- ) All materials are ready for every skill to practice.
- ) The labs also included the basic materials for maths also.
- ) The materials were imported, not the local available materials.

) There were audio, visual and audio-visual materials.

When the classes were observed and when I interviewed informally the teachers, one of the teacher said that she liked to say Montessori Environment not a Montessori lab.

### **3.1.3 Materials Used in Montessori Method**

Most of the materials used in this technique were brought from abroad. The materials seemed more specialized. They were made up of wood. Some of them were paper made type. They used audio, video and audio-video materials too. These materials are classified as follows:

#### **1 Audio Materials**

- ) Cassettes for phonetic practice
- ) Cassettes for songs
- ) Radio

#### **2 Video Materials**

- ) Computer
- ) Television
- ) Flannel board
- ) Colorful materials hung on the board
- ) Display card (very rare), pictures.

#### **3 Audio-video materials**

- ) Television
- ) Computer

The use of locally available materials was very rare. When they were asked about it, they replied that the local materials are not effective and if they are used, they were incomplete. This was strong dissatisfaction from teacher regarding the local materials.

### **3.1.4 Ways of Teaching Reading**

The teachers were focusing on all the language skills. Most of the activities were listening and of speaking type. At the same time, there was proportional development of reading too. They used various techniques to develop reading. They were:

**a Repetition technique**

Montessori Method of teaching takes reception as a major strategy which is used to teach learner. The researcher also found this strategy used in the schools where she had visited.

**b Reciting and singing activities**

Students are frequently asked to recite the short poems and sing the songs. They read it and recite, sometimes they dance also while singing.

**c Audio visual activities**

Students are taken to the Montessori lab and there they watch short stories or simple conversation or television or computer. Later they are used to react like that in their classroom.

**d Field visit program**

To know the real use of the word practically, Sometimes the students were, taken outside the classroom or in garden around the school building. Even sometimes they were taken to the market also. The flowers, trees, animals, insect's colors and their uses.

**e Practical activities**

Sometimes students are taken to Montessori lab and asked to do various practical activities like paper work, making clothes, drawing, painting

and physical activities like: jumping, sitting, standing, sleeping etc. The students learn the things which are useful for daily life. Arranging their things like books, dishes, shoes etc. they learn practically by doing it.

In this way, it can be concluded that in Montessori Method, reading is taught by using all the senses where the learners also feel very interested. The senses where the learners also feel very interested. The teachers try to make the learners express their feeling themselves. The learners learn reading by doing which Montessori says 'holistic development' as while learning reading they also learn other practical activities.

### **3.1.5 Use of Course Book and Resources**

They claimed that they do not use any course book. But when they were observed, they were using planned materials for reading and also for other activities. They said, "We teach the life skills based on their need and our abilities". It seems that they do not use commercially available books; rather they use the ready made materials.

### **3.1.6 Use of Songs**

Most of the teachers used songs as the usual ways of teaching. The teachers replied that they use songs most of the time. They make students repeat after them. This oral repetition drill will develop their reading as well as phonic skills.

### **3.1.7 Developing Reading Skills**

The teachers claimed that they try to develop reading skill in the learners by using visual activities. They replied that they use pictures and other visual materials. There are various processes for developing reading skill

a Intelligence

- b Language facility
- c Visual abilities

One of the teachers suggested that she used all the above mentioned processes as well as process for opening a creative door or window. She meant to say that drill interaction based on some visual material will help for developing reading.

### **3.1.8 Developing Reading from Stories**

The researcher found that the teachers use stories for developing reading. Their approaches to teaching and developing reading were varied. There was no uniformity to deal with stories. The majority of the teachers (six out of ten teachers were found to use the following steps:

- a Read the story for the learners
- b Show the illustrations pictures
- c Act as the facilitator to make them comprehend the difficult words.
- d Ask them to read aloud.

Some of the other teachers replied that they use the following ways for developing reading:

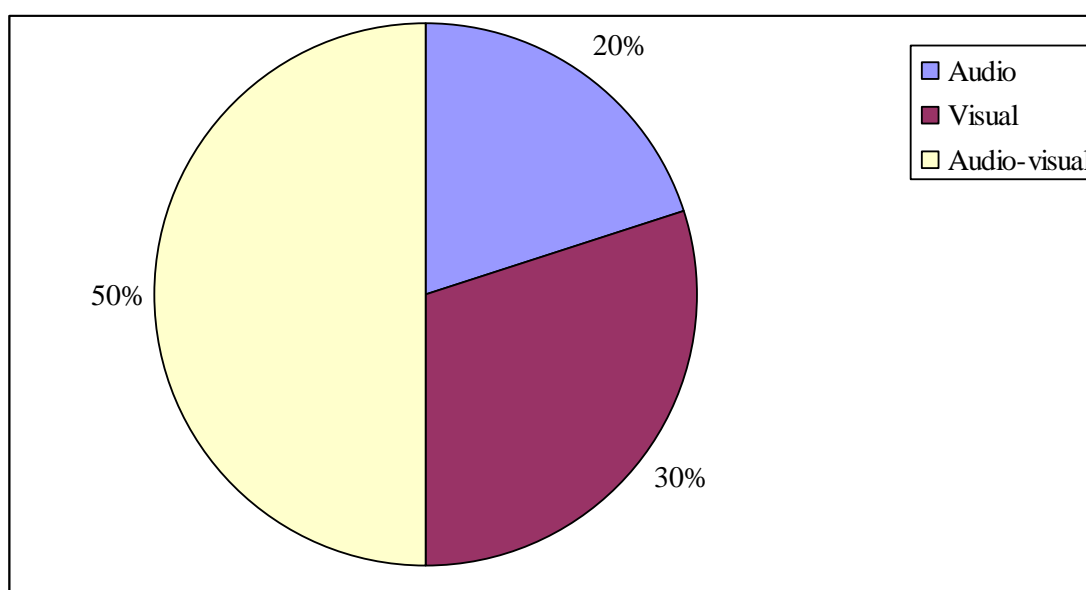
- a Phonic approach
- b Visualization/sight words in context
- c Read aloud.

### **3.1.9 Frequently Used Materials for Teaching Reading**

The following figure shows the frequency of use of materials.



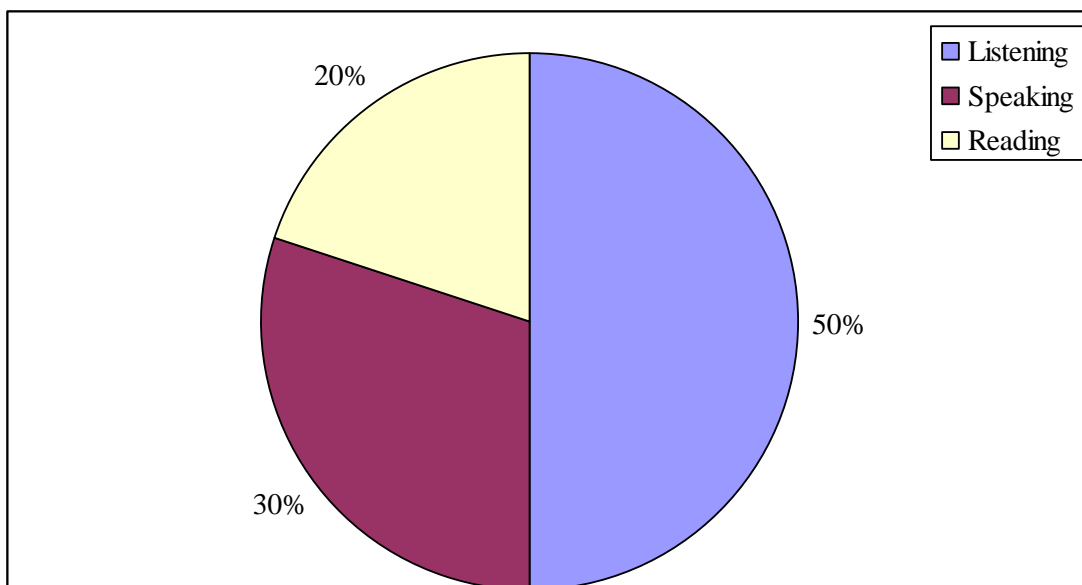
The researcher found that the majority of the teachers use audio-visual materials. Around half of the teachers replied that most frequently they use audio-visual materials like computers and television or visual CDs. The pie chart shows that 50% schools used audio visual materials, 30% used visual materials and 20% used audio materials.



**Figure 1: Frequently Used Materials in the Montessori Classroom**

### **3.1.10 Priority on Language Skills**

The Montessori teachers focused almost on all the language skills. However, there seemed relative degree of difference in the focuses. They focus more on listening and speaking than reading and writing. It was found that they followed the natural order of development of language skills. That is listening, speaking, reading and writing. The priority on language skills can be shown in the following.



**Figure 2: Priority Given to Language Skill During Teaching**

### **3.1.11 Learners Reaction in Montessori Class**

The teachers claimed that the learners showed immediate reaction to classroom teaching. They said that mostly learners are active and they have lively classroom behavior. But some of them agreed that the children's reaction depends on their nature. Some slow learners have delayed reaction. Since the learners were children, they were happy playing with the materials valuable in the lab. Most of them were reaching instantaneously. It shows that Montessori Method of teaching develops their creativity.

## **3.2 Analysis on Basis of Classroom Observation Checklist**

This is the analysis done on the basis of observation checklist. The researcher had directly observed the class for two days and filled up the observation checklist.

### **3.2.1 Classroom Decoration**

When the Montessori classrooms were observed, it was found that they were highly decorated. They had a lot of colorful pictures, word cards, sentence

cards, flash cards and charts of fruits and vegetables. The way they put them on the wall seemed more systematic.

- ) Pictures
- ) Flash cards
- ) Charts
- ) Sentence cards

More frequently, the students were asked to look at the pictures or sentences hung on the wall and read properly. These pictures could be used for pre-reading questions, repetition, group work and so on. They used them for conducting classroom activities.

### **3.2.2 Teacher's Friendliness and Interest on Students**

Most importantly as I entered the Montessori classrooms with the non-Montessori classroom and teacher behavior, I found that there is high level of teachers' friendliness in the Montessori school classes. The teachers were found to be working like friends in the classes. Students were also very close to the teachers, they had frequent gathering and peer interaction too.

Their classroom behavior had some implication to developing reading skill. The teachers were making the students more competitive, asking them to read and discuss about the words or sentences- which were put on the wall.

At the same time, some of the learners were found to be reluctant to practising what teachers were doing. Some teachers seemed to have provided more preference to students who were mostly extrovert type.

### **3.2.3 Type of Teaching Materials**

Regarding the type of teaching materials that teachers use, there were controversies. Some of them claimed that visual materials are most effective and some others claimed that audio-visual materials are the most effective ones. What they replied in the questionnaires and what was found during classroom observation were similar. Mostly teachers preferred to use the audio-

visual materials. When they were asked the cause behind it, they responded that there materials were more motivating for the children.

### **3.2.4 Appropriacy of the Materials**

As it was observed that most of the teaching materials were visual and audio-visual. They did not use any materials that had poor implication. Mostly they were highly age-based, interest-based and context-based.

#### **a Age-based and Context-based**

The materials used for the children to develop reading were of basic type. They asked to read the letters in both lower case and upper case. simple words were to read. The orthographic writing was accompanied with the Para orthographic texts. The use of the phonic method seemed more appropriate for the learners.

#### **b Interest-based Reading Materials**

The materials provided/collected for learners to read were based on the interest level of the children.

They used the materials according to child psychology. The materials were of colorful type, funny type and so on. For example, while teaching /k/ sound with 'c' spelling, they used the word 'cap' and the picture of it was a funny type of cap that is usually wore by the children. The pictures were of interesting type, laughing, dancing, singing, playing (in group and pair) etc.

#### **c Context-based Reading Materials**

The learners were asked to read the names of the things or manner of activities. Mostly teaching and learning was conducted through acting and demonstration. the teachers demonstrated the materials, and asked the learners to recognize them and finally they asked the students to produce the sound of the script (read the script).

Regarding the use of materials, the following materials were used in the teaching. They did not use the name that suggests.

- ) Story book
- ) word card
- ) sentence card
- ) colorful pictures

The use of story-book was also not very frequent. Most frequently they used word card .Similarly they used sentence card also. Pictures that they used were colorful. But, it was found that the match stick pictures were not used.

### **3.2.5 Observed Activities Regarding Reading**

The teachers were found to be using the following activities in their classes:

#### **a Reading aloud**

The Montessori Method was developed to teach the children basic mathematics and language skills. Their reading ability was developed through reading aloud. One of the teachers named it as a phonic method. In their classes also, the trained teachers used reading aloud as the only way of developing reading skill.

#### **b Drilling**

The teachers read aloud and students were asked to repeat after them loudly at normal speed. Most of them were using the chorus drill at the same time.

#### **c Recitation**

One of the stronger ways that they followed was that the students were made as creative as possible. No focus was given on recitation. Students were asked to induce or find out the rules or new words. They mostly think, not recite

**d      Reading based interaction**

Students were found to be interacting with each other in the reading task. It seemed very interesting in the class. Teachers' task was to monitor them on their task. It showed that Montessori methods of teaching also follow the task-based learning.

**e      Picture description**

One of the tasks that they were provided was picture description. It was the means of classroom interaction. They were highly motivated to describe the colorful pictures.

**f      Reading whole words**

The learners were asked to read the whole words after they have learnt to produce the individual sounds.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This is the last chapter of the whole research work. This chapter is related with findings and recommendations. The findings have been derived on the basis of questionnaire and observation checklist as attached to it in the appendix. The findings are important in this work. On the basis of findings the researcher had made some recommendation.

#### **4.1 Findings**

In this study, the objectives were formed regarding the use of Montessori method in developing the use and it was also attempted to identify and classify the types of materials used in those classes. In this process, the questionnaires and observation checklist were used to collect data. The findings derived are as shown below:

##### **4.1.1 Questionnaire Based Findings**

- a All the Montessori trained teachers involved in the research were absolutely familiar with early childhood education.
- b The labs in the Montessori are well-equipped, they have the materials useful for practicing all the language skills.
- c The labs have basically imported materials they are the pictures with their description.
- d In Montessori classroom, the audio-visual and audio-visual materials are used. For reading only the visual materials are used.
- f In those classes, various techniques were used for developing teaching reading. They were
  - ) Repetition

- ) Reciting
  - ) Field visit
  - ) Practical reading activities
  - ) Audio-visual activities
- a The use of course books in those classes were not found but most of them were well prepared before teaching. They had brought the ready-made and self-prepared teaching materials.
- b This shows that there was no use of any formally and commercially produced course books, but there was use of pre-prepared reference and teaching materials for developing reading.
- c They used oral repetition drill to develop their reading skill through phonic skills.
- d Regarding the processes of reading skills, the teachers used the reading developing processes like intelligence, language facility and visual abilities.
- f The teachers develop the reading skills through stories also by using the illustrations in a sequential order.
- g The teachers gave more priority to listening and speaking skills compared to the reading and writing skills.

#### **4.1.2 Findings on the Basis of Observation**

- a The Montessori classes were well-decorated with pictures, flash cards and colorful charts which could be used for reading.
- b Teachers were highly friendly to students and there was more competitive environment in the classroom.
- c There was high level of appropriacy regarding the materials. They were age-based, Interest-based and context-based.



- d The students were allowed to dance, paint, play while reading in the classroom.
- e In the classroom the students were encouraged to read aloud, drill, repeat/recite, interact on the basis of the pictures or the visual displays on the board or on the wall.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

The researcher has suggested following recommendations

- a In the Montessori schools, there seems to be an integrative approach to teaching. They teach language skills as well as the basic mathematical skills. So it is suggested that mostly the schools that start the formal education from the basic level should follow Montessori method of teaching at the pre-primary level.
- b In those classes, the researcher found that there were mixed ability and varied age groups of 3-6 but the teachers were dealing with students of them in an uniform way. It may sometimes create negative influence on learning.
- c The materials used were highly expensive. They were brought from abroad. It would be better if they could use the locally available materials. They may be asked to read anything that they are likely to encounter around them.
- d Only the short-term Montessori training is not enough but also the teachers should have basic knowledge of child psychology for teaching and developing language skills and vocabulary.
- e The Montessori method of teaching should be extended to the government's ECD programmers. It could be done through teacher training, and resource management.

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## **Appendix - 1**

## Appendix - 2

### Reading Related Issues

Q. No.	Questions	Yes		No
1	Do the teachers read aloud?			
2	Do they ask student to drill?			
		Sometimes	Never	Always
3	Recitation			
4	Interaction(reading based)			
5	Picture description			
6	Reading whole words			
7	Self reading			
8	Forced reading			

### **Appendix - 3**

1. Bina's Ketaketibari, Kathmandu, Maharajgunj.
2. Scholar's Home Academy, Kathmandu.
3. Mother Goose School, Kathmandu.
4. Phoenix International Academy, Lalitpur.
5. Creative Academy School, Kantipur.

## Appendix - 4

### Picture collection of Montessori Classes in Different Montessori Pre-Schools



**Sensorial Education**



**Math**



**Fun with Botany**



**Fun with Zoology**



**Fun with Geography**



**Pre Historic Study**



**Nepal Study**



**Nepali Language Arts**



**English Study**



**Reading Activities**

Source: Nepal Montessori Pvt. Ltd.



## **Appendix - 5**

## Reading Related Issues

Q. No.	Questions	Yes		No
1	Do the teachers read aloud?			
2	Do they ask student to drill?			
		Sometimes	Never	Always
3	Recitation			
4	Interaction(reading based)			
5	Picture description			
6	Reading whole words			
7	Self reading			
8	Forced reading			

## Appendix - 6

### Selected Teachers from each school

S.N.	Name of School	Name of the Teacher	Qualification	Teaching Experience	Total
1	Scholar's Home Academy	Mrs. Bipin Sherchan	M.A. (Sociology)	5 years	2
		Mrs. Mandira Subedi	B.B.S	5 years	
2	Phoneix International Academy	Mrs. Srijana K.C.	M.A. (English)	24 years	2
		Mrs. Premolia Subba	Graduate	25 years	
3.	Mother Goose School	Mrs. Shanti Thapa Lama	M.A. (English)	10 years	2
		Mrs. Sangita Thapa	Graduate	6 years	
4	Bina's Ketaketi Bari	Mrs. Bina Gurung	B.Ed.	21 years	2
		Miss. Karma Dolma Sherpa	Intermediate	6 years	
5.	Creative Academy School	Miss. Sumitra Giri	B.A.	2 years	2
		Miss Shanta Adhikari	B.Sc.	8 years	
		<b>Total</b>			<b>10</b>

Audio	2
Visual	3
Audio- visual	5

Listening	50
Speaking	30
Reading	20