

Building the Bilingual Literacy Gap

The April Issue

2026

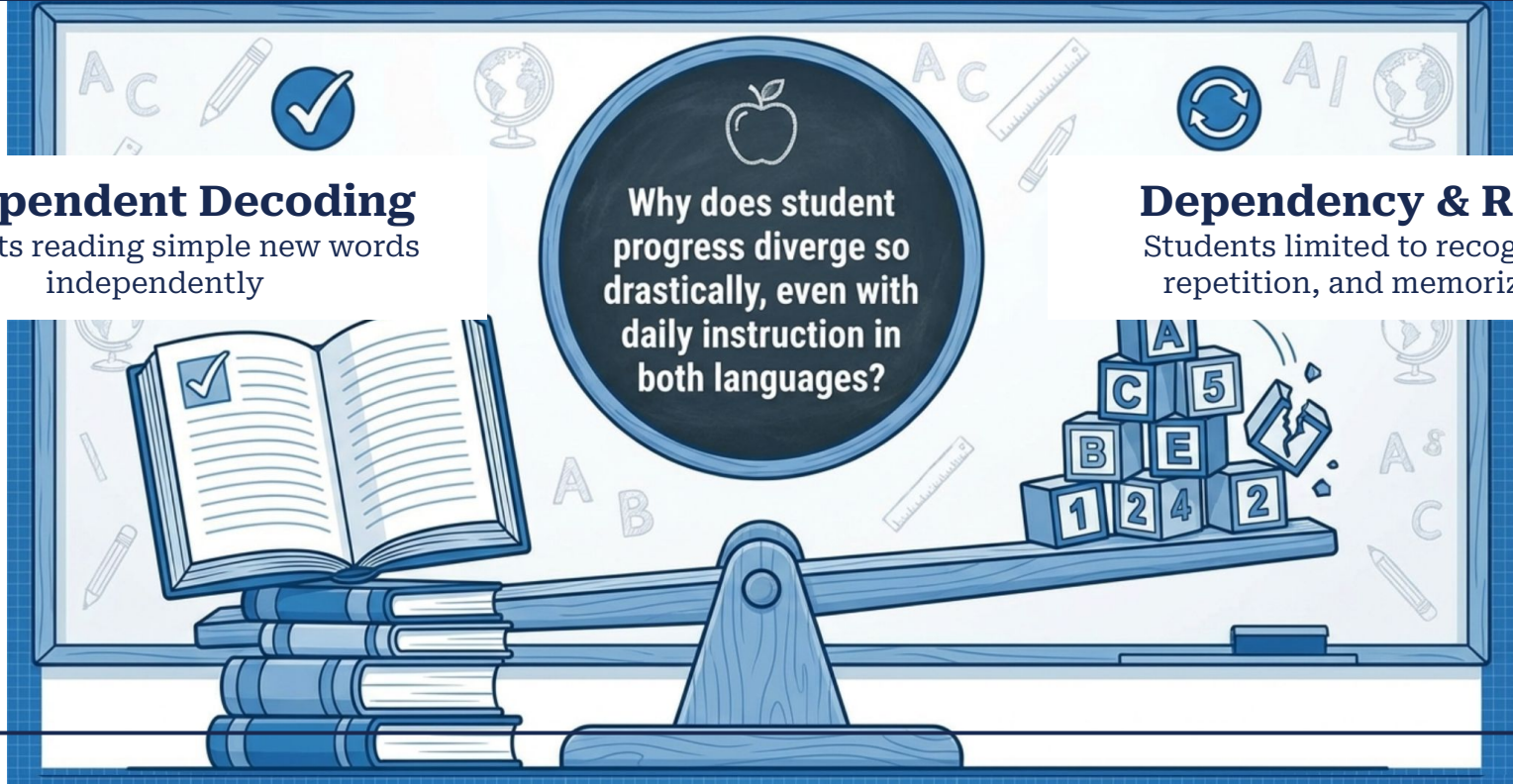
 **Chapters
& Co.**

A Diagnostic Brief
for School Leaders

The Divergence

Independent Decoding

Students reading simple new words independently



Dependency & Recall

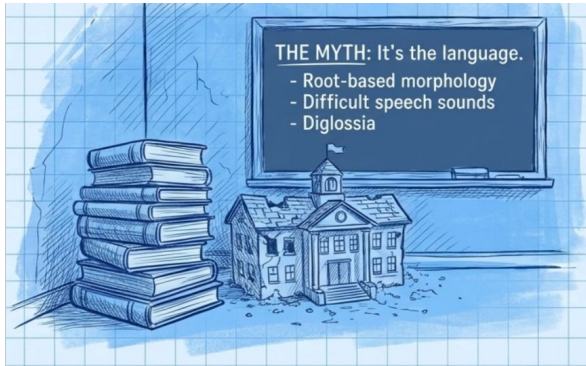
Students limited to recognition, repetition, and memorization



The Myth vs. The Reality

The Myth

It's the language.



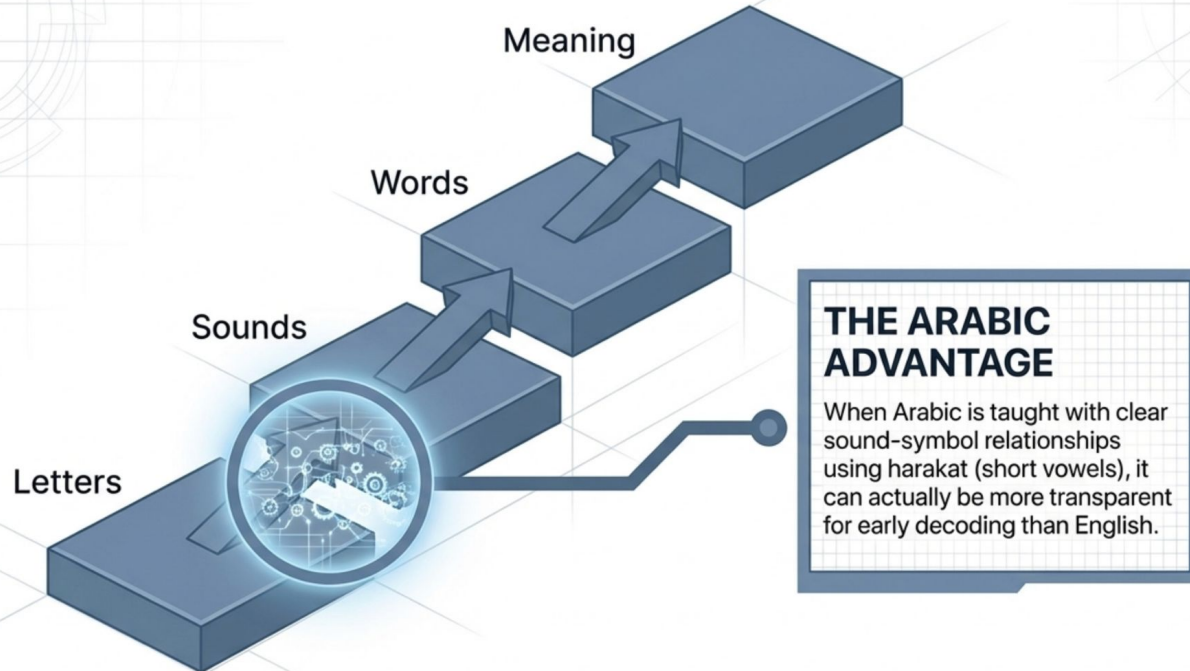
The Reality

It's the methodology of instruction.

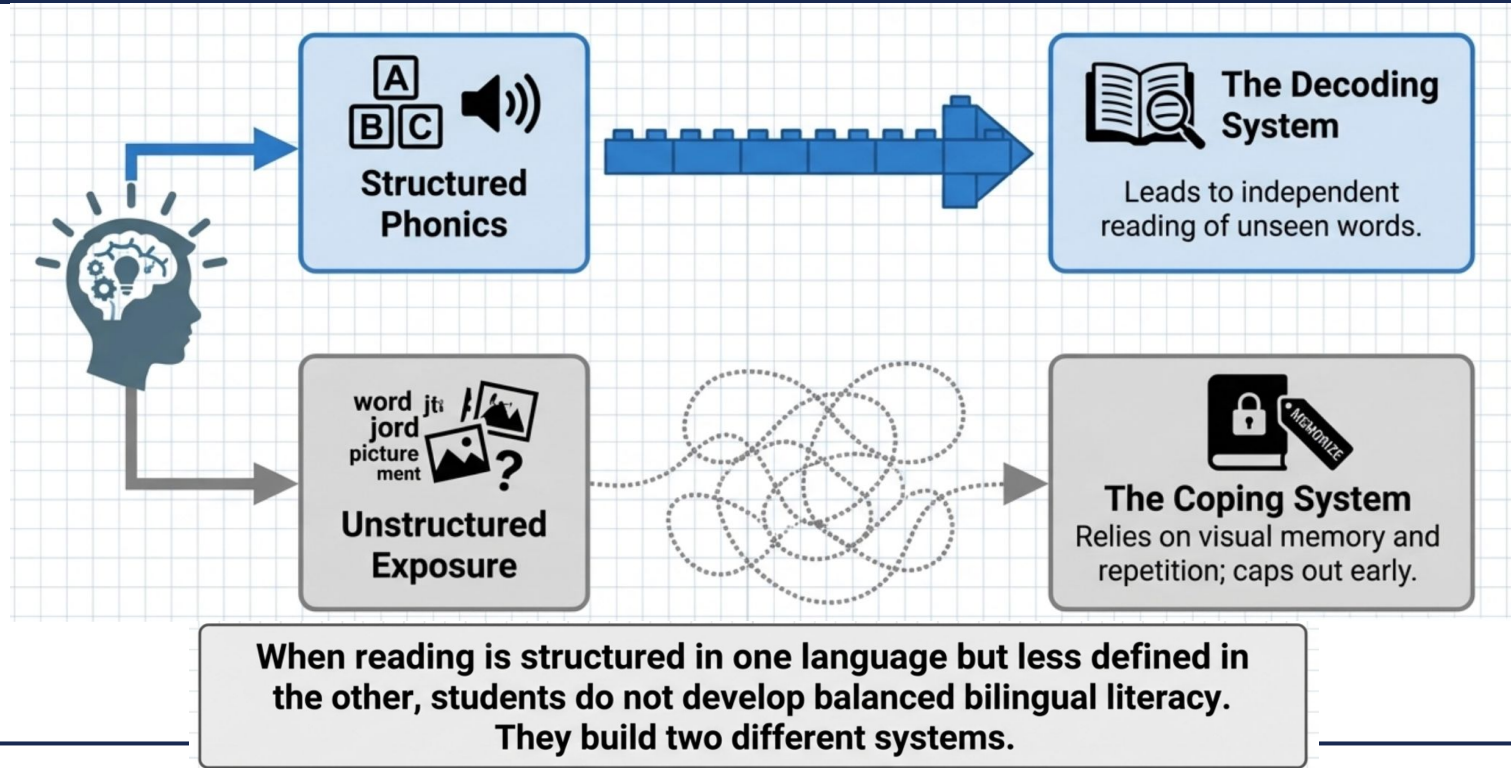


At early stages, reading is not defined by exposure to a language.
It is defined by how we build the bridge from symbol to meaning.

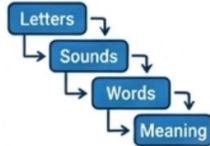
The Arabic Advantage



Different not Balanced



What to Observe in the Classroom



Slide A

1. Is reading taught through a clear progression from letters → sounds → words → meaning in each language?



Decoding System

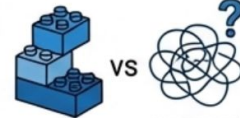
Coping System
Slide B

2. Are students expected to decode new words, or mainly recognize and recall familiar ones?



Structured Phonics
'Arabic & English'

3. Is phonics instruction structured in both Arabic and English — or only in one?



step by step

Slide B

exposure/
repetition

4. Are teachers building reading step by step, or relying on exposure and repetition?

These indicators matter more than visible output at this stage, because they show whether students are learning to read — or learning to cope.

Red Flags - Green Flags



Instruction focuses primarily on letter names or visual recognition.

Phonics is structured in one language, while the other relies on exposure, repetition, or whole-word learning.

Students succeed only with practiced or highly familiar words.



Children are taught sounds first, with a clear connection to letters.

Both Arabic and English are taught through structured phonics instruction.

Students apply decoding skills to new words in both languages.

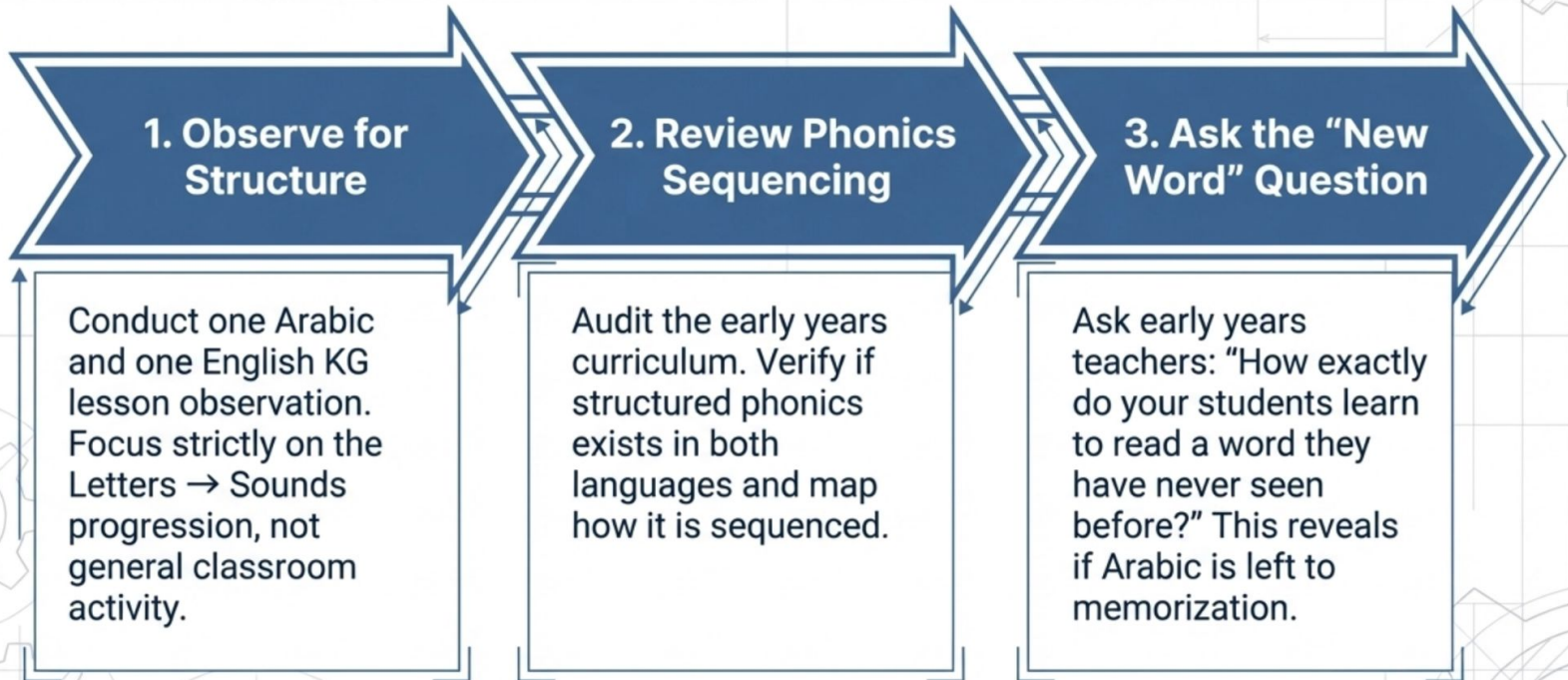


THE ULTIMATE LEADERSHIP QUESTION

“Are we building independent readers
in both languages — or only in one?”



Leadership Use Case (Next 30 Days)



Leadership Connection

Schools exploring bilingual literacy development may benefit from:

1. Arabic–English literacy alignment diagnostics
2. Phonics implementation reviews
3. KG2 to Grade 1 reading readiness discussions

These can take the form of short classroom observations, leadership discussions, or structured walkthroughs.





The Literacy Channel

Supporting structured early literacy in English and Arabic.

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