

VU LEARNING HUB

vulearninghub.xyz

HIGHLIGHTED HANDOUT

EDUA411

Teaching of Urdu in Early Childhood

EDUA411 by VU Learning HUB

Prepared for VU students • Free study resources

<https://vulearninghub.xyz>

EDUA411

Teaching of Urdu in Early Childhood

Ibtedai Bachon ko Urdu Parhana — Study Handout

This handout covers EDUA411 Teaching of Urdu in Early Childhood: how young children (ages 3–8) acquire Urdu as a first or second language, and how teachers can build listening, speaking, reading and writing through play, stories, rhymes and print-rich classrooms. Urdu examples are transliterated so every student can read them; key terms carry their Urdu meaning alongside.

The golden rule of this course: young children learn language by USING it joyfully — through talk, song, story and play — not through drills and copying. Every exam answer should show a playful, meaningful activity, not a worksheet.

Table of Contents

- Unit 1: How Young Children Learn Language ([Lectures 1–4](#))
- Unit 2: Listening and Speaking: The Foundation ([Lectures 5–9](#))
- Unit 3: Phonological Awareness and the Urdu Sound System ([Lectures 10–13](#))
- Unit 4: Teaching the Urdu Script: Alif-be-pe ([Lectures 14–18](#))
- Unit 5: Early Reading in Urdu ([Lectures 19–23](#))
- Unit 6: Early Writing in Urdu ([Lectures 24–27](#))
- Unit 7: Stories, Rhymes and Literature ([Lectures 28–30](#))
- Unit 8: Assessment, Classroom Environment and Home Links ([Lectures 31–34](#))

Unit 1: How Young Children Learn Language

Lectures 1–4

Learning Objectives

- Explain first vs second language acquisition in early years
- Describe the stages of language development (0–8 years)
- Apply key theories: behaviorist, nativist, interactionist
- Explain the role of the mother tongue in learning

Language Development Stages

0–1 year — cooing, babbling (all languages' sounds), first words around 12 months.

1–2 years — single words, then two-word telegraphic speech ('ami ao', 'pani do').

2–4 years — vocabulary explosion, simple sentences, overgeneralization ('main ne khaya' → 'main khaya').

4–8 years — complex sentences, storytelling, early literacy; the EDUA411 window.

Three Theories, One Classroom

Behaviorist (Skinner) — language learned by imitation and reinforcement: correct gently, praise attempts. Useful for rhymes and repetition games.

Nativist (Chomsky) — children are born with a language faculty (LAD); given enough input, grammar unfolds. Implication: flood the classroom with rich Urdu input — don't 'teach' grammar rules to 5-year-olds.

Interactionist (Vygotsky) — language grows through social interaction; the teacher scaffolds: models, extends ('han, bara kutta!'), and converses. This is the course's home theory.

Mother Tongue Matters

Children learn best first in the language they think and feel in. For many Pakistani children Urdu is a **second language** (home language: Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Saraiki...). Never shame the home language — **bridge** from it: accept answers in the home language, recast in Urdu ('han, tusi pani mangya — Urdu main kehte hain mujhe pani chahiye'), and let comprehension lead production. Forcing Urdu-only on day one creates silence, not learning.

Case: a Pashto-speaking 4-year-old is silent in the Urdu classroom. Wrong response: scolding or labeling 'weak'. Right response: learn a few Pashto words yourself, pair her with a bilingual buddy, use Total Physical Response (actions first, words follow), praise every Urdu attempt, and let her point/speak Pashto while you model the Urdu. Silence is a normal silent-period stage, not failure.

Unit Summary

- Stages: babbling → words → telegraphic → sentences → storytelling; EDUA411 targets ages 3–8.

- Skinner (reinforce), Chomsky (rich input), Vygotsky (scaffolded interaction) — use all three wisely.
- Bridge from the home language; honor silent periods; comprehension before production.

Exam Pointers

- ★ Outline language development stages with Urdu examples.
- ★ Compare the three theories and their classroom implications.
- ★ A child is silent in Urdu class. Diagnose and plan your response.

Unit 2: Listening and Speaking: The Foundation

Lectures 5–9

Learning Objectives

- Explain why oracy precedes literacy
- Build listening skills through stories and instructions
- Develop speaking through conversation, rhyme and role play
- Handle multilingual classrooms practically

Oracy First

Children must **hear and speak** Urdu long before they read and write it. Listening comprehension is the engine: vocabulary, sentence patterns and pronunciation all enter through the ear. A classroom poor in Urdu talk produces children who can copy letters but cannot understand or say anything — the classic failure this course exists to prevent.

Teaching Listening

- **Storytelling:** daily read-alouds with big books, props, voices, prediction pauses ('phir kya hua?').
- **Instructions games:** 'Simon says' in Urdu ('...ne kaha: hath upar karo'), treasure hunts with oral clues.
- **Rhymes and songs:** 'machli jal ki rani hai' — rhythm builds phonological memory effortlessly.
- **Listening centers:** audio stories with picture cards to sequence.

Teaching Speaking

- **Conversation circles:** 'aaj subah kya khaya?' — every child speaks daily; teacher extends and recasts.
- **Role play:** dukandar-gahak (shopkeeper-customer), doctor-mareez — functional language in joyful contexts.
- **Show and tell:** 'yeh meri cheez hai, yeh ... hai' — structured show-and-tell frames.
- **News time:** two-minute personal news builds narrative skill ('pehle... phir...').

Assessment without fear: observe and checklist — does the child follow 2-step instructions? speak in 3–4 word sentences? retell a story's main events? narrate personal news? Record quarterly; never test oracy with paper exams.

Unit Summary

- Listening and speaking are the foundation; print without oracy is empty copying.
- Listening: stories, instruction games, rhymes, audio centers. Speaking: circles, role play, show-and-tell, news time.
- Assess oracy by observation checklists, never by written tests.

Exam Pointers

- ★ Why must oracy precede literacy? Give three reasons.
- ★ Plan a week's listening activities for KG.
- ★ Design an observation checklist for speaking skills.

Unit 3: Phonological Awareness and the Urdu Sound System

Lectures 10–13

Learning Objectives

- Define phonological awareness and its levels
- Describe Urdu phonemes challenging for children
- Teach rhyming, syllables and beginning sounds through play
- Connect sounds to letters (phonics bridge)

Sound Awareness Levels

Phonological awareness = noticing and playing with sounds: 1) **rhyme** ('billi — chilli'), 2) **syllables** (clap 'kit-ab' = 2), 3) **onset-rime/alliteration** ('suraj, sitaray, sabz'), 4) **phonemes** (first sound of 'tarbooz' = 't'). Research is clear: this awareness predicts reading success — and it is built through play, not drills.

Urdu Sounds Needing Attention

- Aspirated vs unaspirated pairs (k/kh, g/gh, t/th) — minimal-pair games ('kal' vs 'khal').
- Retroflexes (t, d, r with tongue curled) — new for many home languages; tongue-gymnastics rhymes help.
- Nasalized vowels (an, in, un with chand-bindl) — songs exaggerating them.
- Similar letters, different sounds: beware confusing ze/zoe, seen/sheen only at the letter stage — at the sound stage keep it oral and playful.

Play Activities

- Rhyme time: finish the couplet; odd-one-out ('billi, chilli, kutta' — kaun mukhtalif?).
- Syllable clapping with names and objects around the room.
- 'Main spy hun' — 'mujhe woh cheez lao jis ka pehla awaz ... hai'.
- Sound boxes: objects starting with the week's sound.

Bridge to phonics: only AFTER children can hear and play with sounds do we show that each sound has a written shape (harf). 'Yeh awaz /b/ hai — dekho, is ki shakal yeh hai: be.' Sound first, symbol second — reversing the order is the most common teaching error in Urdu classrooms.

Unit Summary

- Phonological awareness (rhyme → syllable → phoneme) predicts reading; build it through play.
- Target Urdu's tricky sounds: aspirates, retroflexes, nasalization — with games, not drills.
- Sound first, letter second — the phonics bridge.

Exam Pointers

- ★ List the four levels of phonological awareness with an Urdu example each.

- ★ Design three games for teaching beginning sounds.
- ★ Why must sound awareness precede letter teaching?

Unit 4: Teaching the Urdu Script: Alif-be-pe

Lectures 14–18

Learning Objectives

- Describe the features of the Urdu (Perso-Arabic) script
- Sequence letter teaching developmentally
- Use multisensory methods for letter learning
- Handle similar-looking letters and joinings

Script Features Children Must Master

- **Right-to-left** direction; **contextual shapes** (letter looks different alone, initial, medial, final).
- **Nukta (dots)** distinguish be/te/se, jeem/che, etc. — dot errors are the #1 early spelling error.
- **Joining rules:** some letters join both sides, six (alif, dal, dhal, re, ze, wao) join only to the right — words break where they appear.
- Short vowels (zer, zabar, pesh) are usually **unwritten** — early readers need partially vocalized text, then graduate to unvocalized.

Developmental Sequence

Teach high-frequency, visually distinct letters first (alif, be, meem, seen...), in small groups with their sounds; introduce similar-looking letters **separately in time** (be now, te next week — never together on day one). Teach joining early through two-letter combinations children already know orally ('ab', 'am'). Letter **names** matter less than letter **sounds** for reading — prioritize sounds.

Multisensory Methods

- Trace in sand/shaving foam while saying the sound; form letters with playdough, sticks, pipe cleaners.
- Sky-writing with big arm movements; find-the-letter in big books and the environment.
- Letter-sound songs and actions; movable alphabet for building words before writing them.

Common error clinic: child writes be without dots or confuses jeem/che. Remedy: back to multisensory — trace the dotted version while chanting 'teen nukte — che', sort letter cards into 'nukta families', and play 'doctor' checking words for missing dots. Never punish — dots are genuinely hard.

Unit Summary

- Urdu script: right-to-left, shape-shifting letters, nukta distinctions, partial joining, unwritten short vowels.
- Sequence: distinct frequent letters first; similar letters separated in time; sounds before names; joining via known words.
- Multisensory tracing, building and finding — before pencil-and-paper writing.

Exam Pointers

- ★ List five script features that challenge beginners.
- ★ Plan the first month of letter teaching (sequence + rationale).
- ★ A child confuses dotted letters. Diagnose and remediate.

Unit 5: Early Reading in Urdu

Lectures 19–23

Learning Objectives

- Explain emergent literacy and concepts about print
- Use shared and guided reading
- Build vocabulary and comprehension
- Create a print-rich Urdu environment

Emergent Literacy

Reading begins before school: children learn that **print carries meaning**, books read right-to-left (in Urdu!), pages turn one way, and stories have beginnings and endings — **concepts about print**. Classrooms build this through daily read-alouds, big books with pointer tracking, and environmental print (labels on everything: 'darwaza', 'khidki', 'kitaben').

Shared and Guided Reading

- **Shared reading:** teacher reads an enlarged text with the whole class joining in on refrains, predicting, and noticing letters/words — the bridge from read-aloud to independence.
- **Guided reading:** small groups read a just-right-level book with teacher support — prompting ('tasveer dekho, pehla harf kya hai?'), not telling.
- **Independent browsing:** book corner time builds stamina and love — never optional in a good ECE class.

Vocabulary and Comprehension

Read-alouds are vocabulary machines: explain 3–4 new words per story with pictures, actions and repeated use through the week. Comprehension = **retelling** (beginning-middle-end with props), **prediction**, **connecting** ('tumhare sath kabhi aisa hua?'), and **answering who/what/where** — never worksheet comprehension at this age.

Book selection: predictable repetitive texts ('...billi ayi, ...kutta aya'), culturally familiar content, big clear vocalized print, strong picture support, and stories worth loving — children reread favorites 20 times, and each rereading builds fluency. A library of 50 beloved books beats 500 dull ones.

Unit Summary

- Emergent literacy: print concepts grow from read-alouds and environmental print.
- Shared reading (whole class) → guided reading (small group) → independent browsing.
- Vocabulary via rich read-alouds; comprehension via retelling, prediction and connection.

Exam Pointers

- ★ What are concepts about print? How do you teach them?
- ★ Contrast shared and guided reading (purpose, grouping, teacher role).
- ★ Plan a read-aloud lesson with vocabulary and comprehension built in.

Unit 6: Early Writing in Urdu

Lectures 24–27

Learning Objectives

- Describe developmental stages of writing
- Build fine-motor readiness
- Use invented spelling and process writing
- Respond to children's writing constructively

Writing Develops in Stages

Scribbling → **mock letters** → **letter-like forms** → **random letters** → **invented spelling** (writes sounds heard: 'ktab' for kitab) → **conventional spelling**. —

- Each stage is an achievement — **invented spelling is precious data**: it shows exactly which sounds the child hears. Celebrate it; conventional spelling comes through reading exposure, not red ink.

Readiness Before Pencils

Writing needs **fine-motor strength**: playdough, tearing, threading beads, pegboards, tweezers transferring pom-poms, easel painting with big brushes. **Pencil grip** develops from whole-hand to tripod — never force small pencils early; short crayons and chalk promote correct grip naturally. Sitting posture and paper slant (for right-to-left flow) matter.

Process Writing for Little Ones

- **Modeled**: teacher writes a morning message, thinking aloud ('main ... likh rahi hun').
- **Shared**: class composes together, teacher scribes — children see speech become print.
- **Interactive**: children come up to write known letters/words in the shared text.
- **Independent**: journals with drawings + labels → sentences; word walls and personal dictionaries as scaffolds.

Responding: read the message first ('wah, tum ne billi ke bare main likha!'), then pick ONE teaching point ('dekho, billi main teen nukte...'). Respond to meaning before mechanics, always — a child whose ideas are ignored stops writing.

Unit Summary

- Writing stages: scribble → mock letters → invented spelling → conventional; honor each.
- Fine-motor play precedes pencils; short crayons build tripod grip.
- Modeled → shared → interactive → independent writing; respond to meaning first.

Exam Pointers

- ★ List writing development stages with what each reveals.
- ★ Plan fine-motor activities for a pre-writing week.
- ★ A child writes 'ktab'. Is this good or bad? Explain and respond.

Unit 7: Stories, Rhymes and Literature

Lectures 28–30

Learning Objectives

- Select quality Urdu children's literature
- Tell stories effectively (not just read them)
- Use folk tales, rhymes and poetry
- Connect literature to language objectives

Choosing Books

- Language just above children's level, repetitive/predictable patterns, cultural resonance, lovable characters, illustrations that carry meaning, values worth absorbing. Mix: folk tales ('alif laila' adaptations), modern picture books, information books, poetry collections.

The Art of Telling

Great telling beats great reading: **learn** the story (don't read cold), use voices/gestures/props, pause for predictions, let children chant refrains, and retell with flannel boards or puppets so children can retell themselves. A story told three ways (told, read, dramatized) teaches thrice.

- **Rhymes (nazmen):** 'nani teri morni', 'machli jal ki rani' — phonological awareness, vocabulary, cultural belonging in one package; add actions and children never forget.
- **Folk wisdom:** kahavaten (proverbs) and paheliyan (riddles) — 'nao (boat) ...?' riddles build metaphorical thinking and delight.

Literature Across Objectives

One story serves many goals: Monday — enjoy and predict; Tuesday — vocabulary hunt; Wednesday — retell with props; Thursday — dramatize; Friday — draw/write about it. Depth over breadth: **five encounters with one beloved book beat five different books.**

Dramatization plan for 'pyasa kawa' (thirsty crow): assign roles (kawa, ghara, pani), narrate simply, children act and speak key lines ('pani upar ao!'), then discuss the moral (mehnat/aqal). Language, comprehension, values, confidence — one activity.

Unit Summary

- Choose repetitive, cultural, lovable books; depth (rereading) beats breadth.
- Tell with voice, gesture and props; let children retell and dramatize.
- Rhymes build sound awareness; riddles build thinking; one story serves a whole week.

Exam Pointers

- ★ State criteria for selecting Urdu children's books.
- ★ Plan a week's activities around one story.
- ★ How do riddles (paheliyan) develop language?

Unit 8: Assessment, Classroom Environment and Home Links

Lectures 31–34

Learning Objectives

- Assess Urdu learning authentically
- Design a language-rich classroom
- Partner with families for language growth
- Write a personal philosophy of Urdu teaching

Authentic Assessment

- **Observation:** checklists for listening, speaking, print concepts, letter knowledge, writing stage — updated termly.
- **Portfolios:** dated writing samples, reading logs, story retelling recordings — progress visible to all.
- **Running records** (later stage): note reading strategies, not just errors.
- **Never:** written exams for 3–6-year-olds, ranking, or comparing children publicly. Assessment informs teaching; it doesn't label children.

The Language-Rich Classroom

Every wall teaches: **word walls** with pictures, **labels** on objects, **morning message** board, **book corner** with cushions and 50+ books, **writing center** with papers/cards/stamps, **listening center** with audio stories, **drama corner** with props. Rotate displays with children's own work — the room should read like their collective mind.

Families as Partners

- Send books home (book bags), invite storytelling by grandparents, share rhymes parents can sing, explain (in the home language) why reading aloud 15 minutes daily matters more than any tuition.
- Respect constraints: suggest oral storytelling where parents can't read; audio stories bridge illiteracy.

Philosophy statement (adapt for exams): 'Main samajhti hun ke chhote bache khel, kahani aur guftagu se Urdu seekhte hain. Mera kam unhen bharpur sunna, bolne ke mauqe, aur chhapay hue lafzon se bhara kamra dena hai — imtihan se pehle mohabbat. Har bacha apni raftaar se, apni zaban ke sahare Urdu ki duniya main dakhil hoga.' (Young children learn Urdu through play, story and conversation; my job is rich input, speaking chances, and a print-filled room — love before exams.)

Unit Summary

- Assess by observation, portfolios and retellings — never written exams for young children.
- Language-rich rooms: word walls, labels, book/writing/listening/drama corners, children's work displayed.

- Partner with families: book bags, grandparent storytellers, 15-minute read-alouds; honor all home languages.

Exam Pointers

- ★ Design a termly assessment plan for KG Urdu (tools + schedule).
- ★ Sketch a language-rich classroom layout with six centers.
- ★ Write your philosophy of teaching Urdu to young children (10 lines).

Key Terms Glossary

All key terms from this handout in one place — use for quick revision.

0–1 year — cooing, babbling (all languages' sounds), first words around 12 months.

1–2 years — single words, then two-word telegraphic speech ('ami ao', 'pani do').

2–4 years — vocabulary explosion, simple sentences, overgeneralization ('main ne khaya' → 'main khaya').

4–8 years — complex sentences, storytelling, early literacy; the EDUA411 window.

Behaviorist (Skinner) — language learned by imitation and reinforcement: correct gently, praise attempts. Useful for rhymes and repetition games.

Nativist (Chomsky) — children are born with a language faculty (LAD); given enough input, grammar unfolds. Implication: flood the classroom with rich Urdu input — don't 'teach' grammar rules to 5-year-olds.

Interactionist (Vygotsky) — language grows through social interaction; the teacher scaffolds: models, extends ('han, bara kutta!'), and converses. This is the course's home theory.

Scribbling → **mock letters** → **letter-like forms** → **random letters** → **invented spelling** (writes sounds heard: 'ktab' for kitab) → **conventional spelling.** —