THE EFFECT OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE AND TEXT STRUCTURE ON EGYPTIAN AND DANISH SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

Volume 2

Mahmoud Ibrahim Abdalla

Ph.D
University of Edinburgh
2001
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Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere thanks to the following people: my first supervisor, Dr. Michael J. Wallace for all his encouragement and guidance; my current supervisor Dr. Ian MacWilliam for his assistance; the members of the postgraduate research committee, especially Dr. Neale Laker, without whose patience this thesis might not have been completed.

Special thanks also to my colleague Chris Stone who patiently listened to my ideas and suggestions; my friend Merlyn Guthrie for her help in typing the early draft of the first part of the thesis. Thanks also to the teachers and students of al-Amal secondary school in Egypt and Aarhus Katedral secondary school in Denmark for their participation in the experiments contained in this thesis. Finally, I would like to thank my wife Hanan, for her encouragement, unrelenting support and for her patience during this difficult time.

Mahmoud Ibrahim Abdalla
Edinburgh
September 2001
Research based on the schema theoretic approach has shown that reading comprehension is an interactive process. It is an interaction between the reader and the text. The interaction involves the reader’s background knowledge of text structure and the hierarchical content structure of the text; what Carrell (1984) calls content and formal schemata. This thesis relates to this kind of research. The schemata theory indicates that the reader’s cultural background knowledge of the content facilitates EFL/ESL reading comprehension. Meyer (1975, 1977) recognizes five types of expository text structures that are believed to affect comprehension and recall: collection, description, problem/solution, comparison/contrast, and causation. She claims that the cause/effect and comparison/contrast are well organized forms while the collection of descriptions is the loosest type. Reading comprehension research paid much attention to the way EFL/ESL readers deal with the well organized texts while neglecting how these readers cope with the less tightly organized types. This thesis is designed to investigate the effect of the collection of descriptions text type on the quantity and quality of Egyptian and Danish secondary school students’ recall as well as the effect of topic familiarity on their comprehension.

In the first phase of the thesis, one hundred Egyptian and Danish students read and then recalled two passages representing the two cultures. The passages were about the Egyptian festival of Shamm en-Naseem and the Danish festival of Fastelaven. This was followed by a cloze test. The results indicated that prior knowledge of the content of the passage aided comprehension. As predicted, Egyptian and Danish subjects recalled more T units (idea units) from the familiar text than the unfamiliar one. While there was a statistical significance (p < 0.0001) between the two mean scores of Danish subjects, the performance of the Egyptian subjects on both passages was almost the same (the mean scores were 8.2 for the Egyptian text and 7.3 for the Danish text). The cloze test scores and the T unit analysis revealed that items that are closely related to cultural aspects of the text were best recollected by those who share the culture. However, there were cases when subjects in both groups failed to recall some of the culturally related ideas. In addition, the text structure affected the quantity and quality of information recalled by both groups.

Six Egyptian and Danish subjects participated in the second phase of the study. This time subjects read the same passages in a think aloud manner. Their talk was recorded and then transcribed. Data analysis confirmed the above finding that prior knowledge of the topic aids comprehension. It was also evident that the think aloud technique played a significant role in facilitating subjects’ overall understanding and encouraged more elaborations on cultural aspects of the text. The results also showed that subjects used different strategies to construct main ideas but the extent to which they could use these strategies was limited by the text structure and the information presented in it. The examination of the two case studies indicated that students relied on their linguistic skills to understand the passage when the topic is unfamiliar to them. The organization of the text and unfamiliarity of the content affected the quality of their predictions. The tendency was to provide general expectations rather than predicting specific ideas.
Appendix A

1. Tests
2. Cloze Tests and Answer Key
3. Questionnaire
Task 1

Read the following passage at your own reading speed and try to understand it (not to memorize it). After reading the passage, you are asked to do the following:

1- write down as much as you could remember from the passage. You have to remember that this is not memory exercise.
2- Write in complete sentences.
3- You could use words from the original text or your own words.
4- You are not allowed to refer back to the passage during the recall process.

When you finish the recall task you will be given a cloze exercise about this passage.
The Egyptian related text: Shamm en-Neseem Festival

The ancient Egyptians revered the coming of spring and called it Shemou, a term which exists today in modern Egypt in the name of Shamm en-Neseem (or the smelling of the breeze). The name has altered somewhat but, surprisingly enough, the festival has remained unchanged for more than five thousand years, still bringing awe and rejoicing to the minds and hearts of all people.

The harvest month of Shemou (April) was welcomed in ancient Egypt by paying tribute to Min, the God of fertility. A bundle of lettuce, the plant of Min, was carried in the ceremonial procession. The ancient Egyptians believed that lettuce contained an oil beneficial for fertility. One look at modern Egyptian rejoicing at this same feast is enough to see that times have not changed. Lettuce still forms part of Shamm en-Neseem's feast.

The ancient Egyptians attributed to onions a great healing power. Legend has it that a child of a pharaoh was taken ill and only by smelling onions was its health restored. The Egyptian people still believe in the great healing properties of onions. On Shamm en-Neseem, bundles of onions are hung outside people's homes and an onion is even kept under the pillow to be broken and smelled first thing in the morning.

Another important item on the Shamm en-Neseem menu is the feseekh or salted fish, a form known to ancient Egyptians. The egg has always been symbolic of God's creative power, a symbol of beginning of life. In fact, whenever and wherever the festival of spring was held, eggs always played some part in the celebration. The ancient Egyptians colored and exchanged eggs as a token of the rebirth of nature, a custom that is still carried out on Shamm en-Neseem.

Maybe the most remarkable aspect of this picturesque festival is the thronging of Egypt's total population in the streets, gardens and on the Nile, all dressed in their newest spring outfit and out since the early hours of the day to smell the spring breeze. Egyptians still refuse to cast aside their winter clothing before this great day symbolizing the advent of spring. Children have been bathed on the eve for fear that the "Shammamah" sniffing around when all are asleep, discovers a foul smell. A remnant of ancient Egyptian legend, the "Shammamah" was supposed to curse all who have not bathed on the eve of the feast.
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A bundle of lettuce, the plant of Min, was carried in the ceremonial procession.

The ancient Egyptians believed / that lettuce contained an oil beneficial for fertility.

One look at modern Egyptian rejoicing at this same feast is enough to see / that times have not changed.

Lettuce still forms part of Sham en-Neseem’s feast.

The ancient Egyptians attributed to onions a great healing power.

Legend has it that / a child of a pharaoh was taken ill / and only by smelling onions was his health restored.

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On Sham en-Neseem, bundles of onions are hung outside people’s homes / and an onion is even kept under the pillow to be broken and smelled first thing in the morning.

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Maybe the remarkable aspect of this picturesque festival is the thronging of Egypt’s total population in the street, gardens and on the Nile, all dressed in their newest spring outfit and out since the early hours of the day to smell the spring breeze.

Egyptians still refuse to cast aside their winter clothing before this great day symbolizing the advent of spring.

Children have been bathed on the eve for fear that the “Shammamah” sniffing around / when all are asleep, discovers a foul smell.

A remnant of ancient Egyptian legend, the “Shammamah” was supposed to curse / all who have not bathed on the eve of the feast.
The ancient spring festival in Egypt (Shemou) has remained unchanged for more than 5000 years, though it is now called Shamm en-Nessem. The smelling of the
April (Shemou) is the time to pay tribute to Min, the god of fertility. The plant of min, was thought to contain a fertility oil in ancient times and is still used in the festivities of today. Onions were believed to have properties and this belief is still held by modern Egyptians. Bundles of onions are hung outside the houses and even put under so that they can be smelled first thing in the morning.

The Shamm en-Nessem menu also includes fish (feseekh) and eggs which are of the beginning of life or the creation. The ancient custom of and exchanging eggs still continues. On the eve of the festival children are to avoid the the Shammamah and on the day of the festival everyone appears in the streets, gardens and on the Nile, wearing their new spring and smelling the spring breeze.

Answer key
1- breeze
2- Lettuce
3- healing
4- pillows
5- salted
6- symbolic
7- coloring
8- bathed
9- curse
10- outfits
Task 1

Read the following passage at your reading speed and try to understand it (not to memorize it). After reading the passage, you are asked to do the following:

1- write down as much as you could remember from the passage. You have to remember that this is not a memory exercise
2- write in complete sentences.
3- You could use words from the original text or your own words.
4- You are not allowed to refer back to the passage during the recall process.

When you finish the recall task you will be given a cloze exercise about this passage.
Fastelavn, the Monday preceding Ash Wednesday, is a general school holiday and one of the gayest times of year for boys and girls. Everybody celebrates the day by eating Fastelavnsboller, or Shrovetide buns, which are as important in youthful games and customs as in festive adult menus. In some places children armed with “Lenten birches,” or branches decorated with brightly colored paper flowers, rise at four or five in the morning, enter the rooms of parents or grandparents and waken them by beating the bedclothes with their switches. “Give buns, give buns, give buns,” the children shout, meanwhile inflicting resounding smacks with their branches. From the mysterious depths of the covers the “sleeping” grown-ups always produce the traditional Fastelavnsboller (and sometimes even candy), with which the youthful tormentors customarily are rewarded. Possibly this custom survives from ancient times when the “Easter smacks,” delivered in many lands at this season, were regarded as part of an early spring purification rite.

In both town and rural communities older children dress up in fancy costumes and fantastic masks and make neighborhood rounds, singing for buns and rattling collection boxes:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Buns up, buns down,} \\
\text{Buns for me to chew!} \\
\text{If no buns you give} \\
\text{I’ll rattle till you do!}
\end{align*}
\]

Chant the youngsters, jingling the boxes in which they collect coins for a Fastelavn feast.

At this season there are many parties at which children play different kinds of bun games. A favorite stunt is to suspend a bun from the chandelier by a string. Everybody takes turns at trying to get a bite of the tempting morsel when the string is set in motion. The one who succeeds gets the bun prize. An old Danish Shrovetide game which adults play extensively even in modern times, is called Sla Katten af Tonden, or “knocking the cat out of the barrel.” Often an artificial cat (originally a live one) is enclosed in a suspended wooden barrel-decorated with paper flowers, painted with cat pictures. Each player, armed with a wooden stick, takes a mighty swing at the barrel. The one succeeding in smashing it is proclaimed “Cat King” and receives a prize.

In some Danish seaport towns the Fastelavn boat is a feature of the season’s festivities. A great boat manned by twelve seamen is placed on a truck drawn by several horses and paraded through the street. Horn players sit beside the driver. A seaman carrying the national flag announces the approach of the truck, which is followed by members of the Seamen’s Guild. The unique procession halts frequently during its progress through the town. “The ship is coming! The ship is coming!” shout the townsfolk. The musician play and the men dance. Contributions are collected for sick and needy seamen.
T-units for the Danish Text

1- Fastelavn, the Monday preceding Ash Wednesday, is a general school holiday and one of the gayest times of year for boys and girls.

2- Everybody celebrates the day by eating Fastelavnsboller, or Shrovetide buns, which are as important in youthful games and customs as in festive adult menus.

3- In some places children armed with “Lenten birches,” or branches decorated with brightly colored paper flowers, rise at four or five in the morning, enter the rooms of parents or grandparents and waken them by beating the bedclothes with their switches.

4- “Give buns, give buns, give buns,” the children shout, meanwhile inflicting resounding smacks with their branches.

5- From the mysterious depths of the covers the “sleeping” grown-ups always produce the traditional Fastelavnsboller (and sometimes even candy), with which the youthful tormentors customarily are rewarded.

6- Possibly this custom survives from ancient times when the “Easter smacks,” delivered in many lands at this season, were regarded as part of an early spring purification rite.

7- In both town and rural communities older children dress up in fancy costumes and fantastic masks and make neighborhood rounds, singing for buns and rattling collection boxes:

8- “Buns up, buns down, buns for me to chew! if no buns you give I’ll rattle till you do!” chant the youngsters, jingling the boxes in which they collect coins for a Fastelavn feast.

9- At this season there are many parties at which children play different kinds of bun games.

10- A favorite stunt is to suspend a bun from the chandelier by a string.

11- Everybody takes turns at trying to get a bite of the tempting morsel when the string is set in motion.

12- The one who succeeds gets the bun as prize.

13- An old Danish Shrovetide game which adults play extensively even in modern times, is called Sla katten af Tonden, or “knocking the cat out of the barrel.”

14- Often an artificial cat (originally a live one) is enclosed in a suspended wooden barrel, decorated with paper flowers, painted with cat pictures.

15- Each player, armed with a wooden stick, takes a mighty swing at the barrel.

16- The one succeeding in smashing it is proclaimed “Cat King” and receives a prize.

17- In some Danish seaport towns the Fastelavn boat is a feature of the season’s festivities.

18- A great boat manned by twelve seamen is placed on a truck drawn by several horses and paraded through the streets.

19- Horn players sit beside the driver.

20- A seaman carrying the national, flag announces the approach of the truck, which is followed by members of the Seamen’s Guild.
21- The unique procession halts frequently during its progress through the town.

22- "The ship is coming! The ship is coming!" shout the townsfolk.

23- The musicians play and men dance.

24- Contributions are collected for sick and needy seamen.
Fastelavn, The Monday before Ash Wednesday is a general school holiday, which children celebrate by eating Shrovetide ________. In some places children armed with “Lenten birches “get up at four or five in the morning and ________ their parents or grandparents by beating the ____________ with their switches. The parents reward their children’s demands of “give bins” by giving them Shrovetide buns, and occasionally candy, which is a custom, deriving from times when ____________ Smacks was regarded as an early spring purification rite. Older children dress up in fancy costumes and ____________ and go round the neighborhood ____________ ________ for buns. Different kinds of bun games are played at parties. In one game children try to bite a bun from a hanging string. Another game, which adults involves trying ____________ an artificial ____________ out of a suspended wooden barrel with a stick. In some Danish Seaport towns, a Fastelavn ____________ is paraded through towns accompanied by music and dancing seamen. ____________ is collected for sick and needy seamen.

Answer Key

1- buns
2- wake
3- bedclothes
4- Easter
5- masks
6- singing
7- knock
8- cat
9- boat
10- money
Questionnaire

Name: 
School: 
Date: 

Section 1: Background

Please answer the following questions

1. How long have you been studying English?

2. Have you ever traveled abroad?
   Yes  No

3. If your answer is yes, please tell us where and when?

4. Do you have foreign friends?
   Yes  No

5. If your answer is yes, please tell us where from?

Age: 
Grade: 

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Section 2: Questions about the text

6. How familiar is the text (festival) to you? Circle your answer
   a. new   b. fairly new   c. average   d. fairly familiar   e. very familiar

7. Do you find the text difficult?
   Yes          No

8. If your answer is yes, what makes it difficult?
   a. language  b. culture  
   c. both a and b  d. other (specify)

9. If you choose Language, which of the following caused difficulty?
   a. vocabulary  b. grammar  c. style
   d. organization of the passage  e. other (specify)

10. If you choose culture, which of the following caused difficulty?
   a. foreign names  b. unfamiliarity of events
   c. customs and traditions  d. other (specify)
   e. no equivalent in own culture (far distant culture)

11. If you have reasons other than language and culture, please write them
Appendix B

Transcripts of the Think Alouds
According to Ochs (1979), across many cultures, there is a convention whereby written language is
decoded from the top to the bottom of each inscription. The reading of conversational transcripts takes no
exception to this norm, and, generally, the history of a discourse is unfolded in a downward direction (p.
46). Based on this notion, the transcripts of Danish and Egyptian subjects’ talks follow a top to bottom
format. In the following transcripts, utterances that appear below other utterances are treated as occurring
later in time. As our eyes move from top to bottom of each page of transcription, we interpret each
utterance in light of the verbal and nonverbal behavior that has been previously displayed. In other words
the contents of a speaker’s turn are treated as relevant to the immediately prior turn.

As described in chapter 8, the main objectives of analyzing the verbal data in this experiment is to
examine the influence of the think aloud technique and reading strategies on L2 comprehension. The
analysis was not intended to either discuss the nature of the transcription process or the decisions which
must be made about the re-presentation of speech as text. As we know, there is a wide range of speech
features that may be transcribed. Therefore, the researcher used a simple and modified form of the
transcription system developed by Ochs (1979) to suit the purpose of the current study. Nonverbal material
was not marked. The verbal material was transcribed according to the following rules:

1- All the utterances were written exactly as they were pronounced by the subjects.
2- The letter S is used to refer to the subject being interviewed and the letter T is used to refer to the
   interviewer.
3- In these transcripts, punctuation is used to mark not conventional grammatical units but, rather,
   attempts to capture characteristics of speech delivery. For example, a question mark indicates a
   high rise as in questions and a full stop is used to mark a low fall. Capital letters are only used at
   the beginning of each response and in names and some abbreviations such as the word O.K.
4- A slash marks the end of an utterance. There are two major strategies for linguistically encoding
   an idea or proposition. The first strategy involves encoding an idea in the space of a single
   utterance. In the second strategy the proposition is conveyed through a sequence of two or more
   utterances. The current research focuses on the second strategy and therefore a slash is used to
   mark the end of an idea conveyed through a sequence of utterances. A pause may mark the end of
   a single utterance within a sequence of utterances
5- The transcription symbols which are used in this task are shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to mark</th>
<th>How to mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Utterance boundary</td>
<td>/ placed at end of utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pause length</td>
<td>(..) marks a short pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intonation</td>
<td>(.....) marks a long pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Intonation</td>
<td>? marks high rice (as in questions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other marks</td>
<td>! marks exclamatory utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. marks a low fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( ) unclear reading, no hearing achieved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Transcripts of Danish subjects’ responses to the Fastelavn text
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Name: Mette Nelsen</th>
<th>Interviewer: Lone Jacobsen</th>
<th>School: Katedral Skole</th>
<th>City/Country: Aarhus/Denmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

S: Well it tells me about er (..) Fastelavn in Denmark and how er (..) we celebrate it that we are eating Fastelavnsbolle/er (..) and it’s very important to be eem (..) dressed out in costumes and er (..) very em (..) very funny and festive yes./

T: What do you expect from the (..) next paragraph?/

S: Well I would expect that they would say more about this Fastelavn and I could er (..) imagine that they would tell about how we em (..) eh (..) oh (..) I don’t know how to say it in English but (inaudible) and how eeh (..) yes we celebrate the whole day how emm (..) by singing for people (..) in their houses and so on/

T: O.K. good thank you/

S: What does this passage tell you?/

S: Well it tells about how the children they wake up their parents er (..) with rice and they are singing er (..) give buns give buns and oom (..) and get candy or (..) Fastelavn Fastelavnsbolle then/ and how the older dress with masks and beautiful costumes and they collect coins to (..) to Fastelavnsbolle or candy (inaudible) and er (..) they collect in the neighbourhood they are singing for people in the doors (..) yes (..) yes/

T: You know these creatures?/

S: Yeah I know them I em (..) did it myself when I was little/ it’s very funny. it’s a very good day for children and I think that it’s (..) a good tradition and it’s a (..) it’s something that oom (..) what can I say now? that it’s special for them (..) we have with tradition (..) O.K./

T: O.K. what do you expect from the rest of the text? I mean the next part/

S: Er (..) maybe they could tell more about this old Danish tradition and em (..)/

T: What parts of the tradition?/

S: Maybe when we do er (..) when we have the cat king or cat queen and the er (..) eeh (..) Sla Katten af Tonden I don’t know how to say it/ and eer (..) I think that’s what the next part will be about/

T: O.K. let’s see if you’re right (..) so I guess you were right/

S: Yea you can say so about the cat king and (..) and knocking the cat out of the barrel as it’s called in English/ eeh (..) well it’s also about how (..) how the parties there’s a lot of different games for for the children how they have fun in this day/ (..) so I guess this that is what it’s about/

T: And you still know (..) this game?/

S: Yea I know it and I often often we play such things when I (..) when there is Fastelavn/  
T: Yes! (..) /

S: And it’s very funny and it’s a good day for both children and adults/  
T: O.K. can you guess what the rest of the text is about?/
S: Aha (..) eem (....) well I guess it goes on with this (laugh) oh ma (....)/

T: Are there any traditions that hasn’t been mentioned?/

S: Aah (....) I really don’t think so I think well now (..) it’s everything I can’t remember anything yea O.K. yea O.K./

T: And what do you have to say about the last part of the text?/

S: Well actually I never (..) I never er (....) did this part of the text. I never (..) eem I’ve tried it and never heard about it either so it’s kind of a surprise eer (..) that they’re driving down the street and they all shout the ship is coming and it’s (..) it’s kind of a surprise anyway er (..) I never thought that you did such things in Fastelavn (..) O.K. (....) yea (..) so it must be an old tradition./

T: Yea (..) great. thank you/
T: Camilla would you begin by telling your name (...) and the name of your school?/
S: Yes my name is Camilla Larsen. (...) and the school of mine is Aarhus Katedral school (...) /
T: O.K. and your English teacher was?/
S: Ertiz Lutzu/
T: O.K. and you finished studying English last year?/
S: Oh yes. /
T: So you took it up to (...) second grade?/
S: Yes/
T: O.K. what did the first part of the text tell you?/
S: Eem (...) it it er (...) told me about eem (...) Fastelavn in Denmark. (...) it is a holiday for the (...) kids and eh (...) em (...) Fastelavnboller (...) em playing enjoyable games/
T: Yes what do you expect from the next part of the text?/
S: Maybe something (...) about (...) when you (...) hit the (...) the barrel (...) or something/
T: Yea O.K. let’s see if you’re right?/
S: Yes/
T: Now you’ve read a big part of the text what did you understand from it?/
S: Eem (...) it said something about the smaller kids who get (...) these lenten switches/
T: Eh! (...) em (...) yes/
S: And then they go in (...) in the morning and wake up their parents or their grandparents with them and they get a plum or candy or something/ er (...) and then there is something about (...) the candy who (...) deserve right (...) that this inheritance from Easter isn’t it ? (...) or something?/
T: Yes that’s right (...) yes/
S: Then there is something about older children/
T: Eem. (...) 
S: These children go and knock on the doors to get money for the Fastelavn’s feast/
T: Yes do we know these traditions?/
S: Yes yes I’ve done it myself when I was younger (...) sometimes/
T: O.K so you know the song too?/
S: Yes (..) I do/
T: O.K (..) what do you expect from the next part of the text what could it be about?/
S: When it (..) did it come here. / I think it's (..) something about the feast (..) how it's made up and (..) what they are doing (..) something like that/
T: So I think you were right/
S: Yes. em (....) it's about how they are (..) playing these games. (..) at Fastelavn/ and (..) the old one (..) who it's an old tradition (..) is (..) and (....) em (..) in the old days there was a real cat but now there is only cat king/
T: Yes and you know this tradition?/
S: Yes I have (..) done it a lot of times/
T: Yes! (..) do you still take part in these games?/
S: Ohm. (..) last year I did it a house was full of us it was a party (..) someone had (..) made it (..) all the stuff/
T: O.K. do you have any idea of what the last part of the text is about?/
S: Eeh (....) no/
T: O.K let's see (..) about it then/
T: What do you think it was about?/
S: It was about (....) some old traditions with a boat coming in with ( ) and the people (....) they (..) yelling and the (..) men are dancing there is (....) I don't really understand what (..) what it is/
T: So you don't know this eeh (..) this ritual?/
S: No not at all (..) I've never heard about it/
T: Thank you/
S: Yes (..) you're welcome/
T: Now we go to the next text about Fastelavn what did the first part tell you?/
S: Oh, it eem (...) tells us that it's school holiday and that (...) we eat this eem Fastelavnsboller eem (...) but but I'm ( ) ( ) traditions eeh (...) Fastelavn/
T: Yes (...) what do you think is coming next in the text?/
S: ( ) Aah (...) I guess (...) something about eem (...) how we dress out and aah (...) what happened (inaudible)/
T: Yes/
T: What did this long part tell you?/
S: Oh (...) we hear about the children eem (...) early in the morning eeh (...) wake up their parents with eeh (....) lenten branches for smacking with and eem (....) the the parents would get up and eem (...) make big meal with Fastelavnsboller/ and eem (...) well. they ( ) ( ) and eem (...) when you hear it could been eem (...) a custom survived from ancient times and but ah (...) (inaudible) ( ) ( ) someone ( ) or dress up and eem (...) go around the neighborhood asking for this/
T: Yes do we know these traditions?/
S: Yea I(...) I did it myself when I was younger ye/
T: What do you expect is coming next?/
S: Well. (...) no I bet this eem ( ) ( ) is coming next (laugh)/
T: What did this part tell you?/
S: Well now about playing different games and eem (...) and this eem (...) vocabulary ( ) and aah (...) well we hear that the original was a live ch (...) cat/
T: Yes/
S: And they would decorate the barrel with cat pictures and so on (...) and one where we had to eeh smash the barrel and the one who succeeds in it is the cat king/
T: Yes (...) is this familiar to you?/
S: Yea (...) I did it as child too/
T: Yea O.K. what do you expect is coming now?/
S: Well (...) it's difficult (laugh)/ eer. (...) actually I don't know/
T: Yes/
S: Eer (...) actually I don't know/
T: O.K./
T: What did the last part tell you?

S: Well it tells us about the tradition em (. . .) where a great boat is eem (. . .) driven around town and eeh (. . .) well it's eeh (. . .) well (. . .) collecting for sick and needy seamen and eeh (. . .) the people are ( . . .) when the ships come.

T: Yes (. . .) do you know this?

S: No not at all

T: No?

S: No

T: Never heard about it!

S: No

T: O.K. thank you very much Karen
Transcripts of Danish subjects’ responses to the Shamm en-Neseem text
T: We’ll now go to the text about the ancient Egyptian traditions what (..) does the first part of the text tell you?/

S: Well aah (..) it tells about the ancient Egyptians aah (..) tradition. they don’t have Fastelavn as we have in Denmark but they have something called Shemou and it’s you I don’t know if you can call it like it’s like eeh (..) Fastelavn but it it’s kind of it/ and it’s a festival and it’s eeh (..) it’s eeh (..) very long in tradition and it has existed for a thousand years and eem (..) it’s eh (..) something that the Egyptians like and look forward as we do in Denmark when we have first Fastelavn/

T: At what part of part of the (..) what time of the year?/

S: Eeh (..) it’s in April isn’t it?/

T: O.K yea/

S: I think so I don’t know/

T: And what does this part tell you?/

S: Well it tells about this Shemou and how the eer (..) ancient Egyptians they believe eer (..) about what they believed about about the lettuce plant/ I think it’s kind of a plant and eem (..) and that they believed that it was a contained in oil and er (..) and even the modern Egyptians they er (..) they think the same and er (..) nothing has changed not that either/

T: Eh. chm/

S: And eem. (..) I guess this is still a part of that Shemou they have/

T: O.K do you have any idea of what the rest of the text is about? well the next part of the text?/

S: Eem om (..) I could guess it it was about the Shemou and how (..) how if they have any ritual like we have in Denmark any typical tradition that we should hear about/

T: O.K/

T: What do you have to say about this part?/

S: Well it tells us about (..) the (..) what (..) about the Egyptians they mean they think that eer (..) that onion has a healing power/ and they ch (..) they believe in this and they have eem (..) this onions hanging outside their house or under the pillows because they believe that (..) it’s kind of a power healing power kind of (..) believing thing/

T: Yes/

T: Do we know this in Denmark?/

S: No (..) I (..) I don’t think so/

T: No?/

S: Not not about onion I don’t think/
S: Yea (..) garlic is better in Denmark not not onion/
T: No?/
S: I don’t think/
T: But then on the other hand (..) garlic is not a traditional Danish plant?/
S: No (..) I guess it’s more a stone you’d have under your (..) pillow/
T: (Laugh) O.K./
T: About the rest of the text (....) do you have any guesses about what (..) it could contain?/
S: Well (....) just that. eeh (....) ohm (..) maybe they have em (..) more traditions like the onions (..) or something very different from Denmark/
T: Yes/
S: A good ( )/
T: Yes/
T: What can you tell us about this part?/
S: Well it tells us about that the (..) that the (..) Egyptians (..) have/ (..) they believe that (....) egg has a (....) has a (....) power or a (....) and they believed in this and they see it as a symbol of life./
T: O.K. do we know this (..) in Denmark?/
S: Well we have err (....) also in April we have (inaudible) and it’s kind of the same we we colour eggs and (....) and eh (....) it’s not kind of the same but it (..) you can you can compare it I guess (..)/
T: Yes/
S: Because it (..) we do the egg things and I guess we also think it’s a beginning of life ours is more a (..) a symbol of our religion I guess/ (..) I don’t know about their but (....) I think you can (..) you can say it’s kind of the same/
T: Yes, and for the last time do you know anything about (..) what could happen next in the text?/
S: No (..) (laugh)/
T: Ok (..) (laugh) that’s very good then/
T: What did you learn from the last part?/
S: Well that the (..) the Egyptians (..) they (..) they have this special day and eem (..) before this day they would not (..) throw out their winter clothes and er (..) then this day they dress out in their new spring outfit and er (..) they enjoy themselves and their children. all day and from that day they can go in spring and summer clothes and not before/ they have to bath (..) the children before they (..) before they (....) and then invented this Shammamah I think it is and they (..) and they threaten the children with him if there’re not bath it can smell you so long/
T: Thank you very much/
T: Would you please say your name and the name of your school and the name of your English teacher?

S: O.K. eem (...) my name is Mette Nelson and I go in Aarhus Katedral school so (...) and my English teacher this year is Tamsin.

T: O.K and you’re nineteen years old.

S: Yes I am nineteen years.

T: Thank you very much.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Camilla Larsen</th>
<th>School: Katedral Skole</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Lone Jacobsen</td>
<td>City/Country: Aarhus/Denmark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T: We now go to the text about the Egyptian traditions what does the first part tell you?

S: It (.) tells me that (.) em (.) the (....) ancient eem is called (.) em Shamm en-Neseem. (.) and it em (.) translated to the smelling of the breeze and it is in the spring/

T: Oh ohm. /

S: And it has been a tradition for more than five thousand years and it is still there ( ) lots/

T: Yes ohm! /

T: Do you have any idea what the rest of the text is about? /

S: It's probably about eem (....) Em (.) something about the tradition how it is/

T: What did you understand from this part of the text? /

S: That that there is something about the harvest and it is (..) eem (....) cm (.) they are celebrating the harvest and they (.) /

T: But when when does the harvest take place? /

S: In April /

T: Yes /

S: Eem (..) they take this (..) lettuce yes and they think that it is containing an oil/ (.) and (..) and (..) they are (....) ( ) /

T: Do they still eeh (.) have the same traditions (.) the modern Egyptians? /

S: Yes they have yes yes (laugh)/

T: The rest of the text do you have any guesses? /

S: Er (.) I think it’s about the feast mainly /

T: Eem eem (..) /

S: After the harvest /

T: O.K. O.K. /

T: Was this part easier to understand? /

S: Yes /

T: O.K. (..) what was it about? /

S: It’s (..) something about eem (..) the Egyptians eem (.) believed that onions has healing power/ and (..) er (.) holy ( ) ( ) ( ) and they hang onions up eem (..) with the harvest/
T: Oh um!
S: And puts on under their pillow so they can smell it the next morning
T: Do we have some of the same traditions in Denmark?
S: (....) No (..) no (..) no./
T: O.K. do you have any guesses about the rest of the text?
S: This is the morning ( ) ( ) ( ) perhaps it's something about the rest of the day
T: Yea O.K./
T: And what do you think this part was about?/
S: Oh (..) it was about eem (..) the (..) menu/
T: Eh em./
S: This salted fish and eggs and the eggs has always eem (..) been a symbol of God's power to their people/ and they are eem (..) call on call them and (....) I think they (..) ( ) a sign from God that nature is beautiful/
T: Yes (....) do we have something like this in Denmark?/
S: (....) No I don't think that people in Denmark think that (..) God's power is shown/
T: No?/
S: No/
T: But what about the eggs?/
S: Oh (..) this em (....) the egg is also in Denmark very important at Easter/
T: Yes/
S: We also follow the ( ) ( ) in the ( ) this chocolate eggs/
T: Let's take the rest of the text/
S: Yes/
T: And what would like to tell about the last part of the text?/
S: Eem (..) it's about the most remarkable principle (..) that they (..) eem (..) all people are dress up in their finest clothes and they are out on the streets on on the malls./
T: Yes/
S: And the children are washed and cleaned, because there is a legend that tells that the Shammamah that (..) come and sniff the children if they aren't bathed ( )/
T: Yes?/

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T: Do we have anything like this in Denmark?
S: (....) No .. I don't think so/
T: O.K. thank you very much Camilla/
T: Would you please start by telling us your name and the name of your English teacher and your age?

S: Eem (...) my name is Karen. I'm eighteen and my English teacher is Ken Seik.

T: O.K. what did you understand from the first part of the text about the Egyptian tradition?

S: Oh it's eem (...) it's a tradition that eem (...) that kind of a feast that's eeh (...) in the middle of spring (...) aah (...) when it first start in the beginning of spring/ and (...) it hasn't change for the last eeh (...) five thousand years and eem (...) eem (...) obviously enjoys their feast/

T: Yes what do you expect from the next part of the text?/

S: Well it's a little bit difficult cause/ eem (...) eem (...) ah I guess when we hear about the feast and what they do (...) eem (...) and (...) experience./

T: O.K. what did you understand from this part of the text?/

S: Ah (...) that ahm (...) it's form a fertility (...) feast/

T: Yes/

S: And (...) eem (...) they eh (...) use a certain kind of plant to (...) em (...) to eh well mix an oil (...) it's eeh (...) suppose to be for fertility/ and eh (...) they apparently do the same thing or use the same plant eem (...) still/

T: Eem do we know this in Denmark too?/

S: No no not not as (...) no don't think so not in Denmark./

T: No O.K. do you have any idea what the rest of the text could contain/

S: Well I guess we would hear about (...) eem (...) that the feast itself and eem (...) what tradition they had in this/

T: O.K. what did this part tell you?/

S: Ohm (...) that the Egyptians had (...) that the onion has a great healing power and eem (...) they use it in this feast to eem (...) well they hang it outside and they keep it under pillow so it can prevent eem (...) prevents (...) sickness/

T: Yes?/

S: Yes/

T: O.K. what would you like to tell about this part?/

S: Well aahm (...) we now hear about the menu and aah (...) we hear about the salted fish and eeh about the egg, eeh (...) plays a great role in their feast/ it's symbolic of God's creative power and eeh (...) we hear about the ancient Egyptians eem (...) well (...) used the eggs and how they exchange it and carved it eem (...) well it's still it's still in use today/

T: Yes O.K. do we have a similar (...) kind of thing in Denmark?/
S: Yea (.) eem (.) they use eggs too. eem (.) and we colour them ( ) Easter eggs/

T: Oh (.) maybe ( ) of the end of the feast/

S: Well this is about eem (.) eem (.) the essential part of the feast eeh (.) they go out in the streets eem (.) in their new clothes/ and eem (.) have traditionally they have to bath the evening before the the (.) feast cause them eem (.) a spirit or something eeh (.) the curse eeh (.) those who haven’t bathed yet/

T: Yes (.) O.K. (.) thank you/
Transcripts of the Egyptian subjects' responses to the Fastelavn text
T: Yes (...) good morning/

S: Good morning/

T: I just want you to introduce yourself first/

S: O.K. my name is Marwa (...) I am fifteen years old (...) and (...) that's all. I like sports eem (...) /

T: What grade are you in?/

S: Two/

T: You are in grade two secondary school?/

S: Yes grade two secondary school (...) yea they say I was in grade one last time/

T: Yes you are in grade two secondary school that's good /your name is Marwa?/

S: Yea/

T: You have read the first paragraph?/

S: Yes I have/

T: Could you tell me what you understood (...) out of it?/

S: O.K. (...) it's em some kind of festival (...) em (...) em (...) it's called (...) er (...) an (...) Fastelavn or something like that/ (...) and em (...) it's a (...) schools take a holiday on that (...) you know (...) on that day (...) and (...) it's a very happy day for boys and girls/ (...) and eh (...) they have (...) eh (...) something special to eat (...) em I don't remember one thing but it's Shrovetide buns (...) em (...) and (...) that Shrovetide buns are (...) really important for em (...) useful games and for customs and (...) they are always in the (...) ah (...) menu of adults (...) I'm not sure/

T: That's good thank you/ (...) would you tell me what you expect will be mentioned in the next paragraph?/

S: Well (...) they probably gonna keep talking about that festival (...) and eh (...) gonna explain what children or adults do since they wake up in (...) ah you know (...) till the (...) end of the day./

T: That's what you expect?/

S: Yea/

T: Thank you./

T: Marwa (...) ah you read the second paragraph I hope your expectations will be the same as what you have just understood out of the paragraph/ would you tell me (...) what you have understood out of the second paragraph?/

S: O.K. (...) well the second ah paragraph tells how the kids (...) or the children start their day/ they wake up at about four or five (...) em (...) with (...) branches from trees eem (...) decorated with paper flowers coloured paper flowers (...) and they go into their parents' or grandparents’
bedrooms (..) and they beat their bedclothes with branches (..) and they ask them for buns/ (..) and so the parents or grown ups wake up (..) they get up from under their covers (..) and they give them (..) Shrovetide buns and sometimes candy/ (..) ah (..) and em it tells that this ah day or that festival ah (..) em (..) it like a (..) em something from the ancient days (..) and oh (..) O.K. (..) eeh (..) from the time that Easter smacks were delivered in that side of the country or something like that (..) ah (..) that's all I can remember./

T: Oh thank you again (..) can you tell me what you expect (..) will be mentioned or will be dealt (..) about (..) and the thing that will be dealt in the next paragraph?/

S: O.K they probably now (..) they are gonna talk about after the grown ups wake up what (..) what do they do for the rest of the day now/

T: That's what you expect?/

S: Probably/

T: Thank you/

T: Once more Marwa er (..) tell us what you have understood from er (..) the third paragraph/

S: Well they're talking about um all (..) older children and they say that they um er (..) it doesn't matter if they're from town or from rural communities (..) they dress up in really fancy clothes costumes and they (..) wear fantastic masks/ (..) and (..) um they go around the neighborhood asking for and singing for buns, and um (..) rattling their collection boxes asking for coins to (..) um (..) to make er (..) help with the feast for the festival and (..) they have a song that they sing they say a song/

T: That's all?/

S: That's all/

T: Yes again what do you expect to be mentioned or spoken about in the next paragraph?/

S: Well since (..) they were saying that they were collection coins for the feast (..) they are probably gonna talk about the feast and (..) ah how the grown ups are getting ready for it and something like that/

T: Thank you thanks/

T: Again Marwa (..) do the same please/

S: O.K./

T: With the fourth paragraph/

S: Ah (..) well it's saying that em (..) the seasons are many parties (..) and children em (..) play a lot of different games/ (..) em one of the favourite games or stunts is to suspend a bun from a string (..) I think (..) that's what I understood ah (..) and ah (..) the children try to take a bite off the bun (..) while the string is moving (..) and ah (..) whoever succeeds gets the bun as a prize/

T: That's good (..) again what do you expect from the fifth paragraph?/

S: Eh (..) mayby he's gonna talk about another game or (..) he's gonna keep (..) explaining what happened for the rest of the day/ (..) maybe talking about grown ups (..) I think/
T: Thanks/

T: Again Marwa (..) your turn can you tell us (..) what you have understood of the fifth paragraph?/

S: Well it talks about a game that grown ups play (..) and a (..) Shrovetide game (..) and ah (..) grown ups play it a lot, this is played extensively (..) ah (..) until now even in the modern days (..) ah and it explains how the game is played (..) and they put a cat in a wooden barrel (..) and it often a (..) artificial cat originally it’s supposed to be a live one (..) and um (..) then each player um (..) is armed with a wooden stick (..) um (..) and they see the barrel trying to smash it (..) and whoever smashes the barrel (..) ah (..) gets the prize and that game is called (..) knocking the cat out of the barrel or something like that and whoever smashes the barrel gets the prize and is (..) ah (..) proclaimed to be cat king/

T: O.K. (..) what do you expect is going to be in the conclusion the last paragraph?/

S: The conclusion. (..) well the problem is as to how they end the day (..) ah (..) they haven’t talked about the feast yet (..) so they are probably going to talk about that (..) and (..) that’s all/

T: Thank you/

T: Now your final talk Marwa please tell us er (..) what the idea of the last paragraph is?/

S: Well the last paragraph talks about er (..) what people em er (..) in seaport towns (..) you know do (..) and (..) em (..) er (..) the people there think that the cr (..) the boat is (..) the main side of the festivities you know and what they do is (..) they em (..) get a big boat manned by twelve seamen and it’s placed on a truck and it’s em (..) drawn by a couple of horses and em (..) em (..) by the driver/ there are em (..) horn players (..) for music and em (..) a seaman carrying flags (..) national flag (..) em (..) announce the boat’s coming and the boat is paraded through town and eem (..) O.K. and eem (..)/

T: Can you remember anything else?/

S: Yea I can O.K./ and then the boat slows down whilst ( ) and the people (..) of the town they shout that the boat is coming and music is played and men dance and eem (..) contributions are collected for the poor and sick seamen you know the ones who need it/

T: That’s all thank you/ of course you’ve given us the conclusion or the last idea of the passage so I’m not going to ask you more about expectations there’s nothing coming next thank you very much Marwa/
T: Hi Mariam/
S: Hi/
T: I'd like you to introduce yourself first before (..) having the questions/
S: Eh my name is Mariam. I'm Egyptian (..) em (..) I'm in al-Amal language school (..) (laugh)/
T: What grade are you in?/
S: I'm in eh (..) second secondary/
T: Yes where do you live?/
S: I live in Maadi in Cairo./
T: Do you like your school?/
S: (laugh) somehow/
T: (laugh) yes that's good (..) I think you've read the first paragraph of the passage you've been given?/
S: Yes/
T: Can er (..) there is er (..) some feast in Denmark I think (..) eh it called the Fastelavn/ (..) em (..) this day is a general holiday (..) eh for all school (..) oh (..) it's (..) a it's a (..) boys and girls enjoy it (..) em (..) they eat some special food (..) em (..) I can't remember their names/
T: Some kind of buns?/
S: Err (..) yes some kind of buns (..) em (..) and they are so important (..) so important for the games and sports I think (..) that's it/
T: That's good (..) can you tell me what you expect will be mentioned in the next paragraph?/
S: I think he'll continue (..) describing what people do on this Fastelavn day (..) saying (..) how people enjoy it (..) and (..) how they (..) how they em (..) deal with each other/
T: Thank you very much thanks a lot/
T: Yes Mariam (laugh) have you understood the second paragraph?/
S: Yes/
T: Eh could you tell me what you have understood out of it?/
S: Yes (..) I think people eh (..) kids (..) um (..) take some branches decorate it with some coloured flowers bright brightly and they wake their um (..) um (..) go to parents and grandparents' room and try to wake they them up (..) er (..) by beating their (..) sheets (..) er (..) and then saying that they should give them buns (..) um (..) and it's about that they do this five or six o'clock in the
morning (...) um/ (...) the the (...) then they have this Fastelavn about the spring the beginning of
the spring were some um (...) Easter smacks are found (...) in the country yea that’s it/

T: That’s all? /
S: That’s all /
T: Yes tell us about your expectations er (...) or the things that will be dealt with or that will be
mentioned in the next paragraph paragraph three /
S: Ah I think it will continue say er er saying what em (...) people do this day (...) and especially where
they celebrate and the places they go (...) something like that /
T: That’s good (...) thankyou /
T: Again we meet Mariam again tell me the idea of the third paragraph /
S: Er the older children wear fancy costumes and er (...) wear masks and gather with their
neighborhoods to sing for buns um (...) they sing some songs and I didn’t know it/ um (...) while the
young the young ones um (...) collect the coins for the feast ... Fastelavn day /
T: Yes again tell us what you expect we’ll be spoken about in the next paragraph /
S: I think he’ll continue talking about the Fastelavn er (...) saying (...) exactly what people do in the
rest of the day it’s now just the day itself and what they (...) play I think /
T: Thank you very much /
T: Now your turn Mariam /
S: Ah (...) I think (...) ah (...) kids play some eeh (...) bun games (...) eeh (...) one of them (...) ah one of
them is the favourite stunt (...) ah (...) it’s to hang a bun (...) ah (...) it’s eeh (...) somehow tied to a
string that the (...) player must bite it eeh (...) and when the string is going to move em (...) the one
who succeeds takes this bun as a gift /
T: Thank you again (...) tell me (...) what will ah come next? /
S: I think he will continue talking about ancient games played in this Fastelavn (...) em (...) and I think
he must talk about adults /
T: Thank you /
T: My dear Mariam can you tell me eh (...) what you have understood out of this paragraph (...) part of
the passage you’ve just read /
S: Yes um (...) eh (...) er the adults play a game its name in English is eh (...) knocking the cat out of
the barrel/ eh (...) they put an artificial cat in a wooden barrel er (...) decorated with err (...) coloured
coloured papers eh (...) and cat pictures (...) eh (...) then the one who eh (...) someone armed with an
wooden stick with wooden stick eh (...) have a might swing on the barrel and tries to eem (...) break
it the the one who who succeeds eeh (...) they call him the cat king and they have a (...) prize /
T: O.K. again you’re going to take the last paragraph of the passage could you tell me what will eh
(...) the conclusion be? /
S: Ah (...) I think it will (...) he’ll say anything about the end of the day (...) em (...) and how they’ll be
ready to prepare themselves for em (...) an other day coming /
T: Thank you very much.

T: I think this is the last time for you to talk about this passage give us the final idea or what you’ve got out of the last paragraph of the passage.

S: Eem (...) of the Danish (...) Denmark (...) sorry the Denmark the Denmark.

T: Danish?/

S: Oh the Danish eeh (...) see (...) town eeh (...) celebrate with this Fastelavn/ eem (...) a great boat is manned by eh (...) twelve seamen eem (...) and put on a truck (...) a truck pulled by eight horses or more eem (...) er (...) the hornmen sit beside eem (...) the driver (...) and the seamen carried the carry the (...) national flag very high eeh and the and the other people walk be (...) walk eem (...) in front of them saying the boat is coming the ship is coming (...) eeh/ then the money collected for this Fastelavn parade eem (...) is for eem sick seamen who needs money to be to recover yes/

T: That’s all thank you very much and eeh we appreciate your participation in this research thank very much/
T: Yes (...) good morning Shayma/
S: Good morning sir/
T: Please (...) introduce yourself/
S: Ah (...) well my name is Shayma Farouk Lashin (...) ah (...) I’m fifteen years old (...) ah (...) I’m at al-Amal language school in second secondary. ah (...) well ah (...) I like my school and em my hobbies are em (...) reading (...) and practicing some kind of sport/
T: What about English language do you like it?/
S: Very much it’s my favourite/
T: That’s good (...) eh I think (...) you have read the first paragraph of the passage you have been given/
S: Yes/
T: Can you tell me what you have understood (...) form it?/
S: Well it’s a certain festival. (...) ah Fastelavn I think its name/ (...) um (...) well it’s a general school holiday (...) and most boys and girls (...) ah (...) well celebrate on that day by eating certain kinds of foods/ em (...) well I think it’s one of the gayest time of the year (...) and they ah practice (...) some kind of useful sports and customs/
T: That’s good (...) yes please give me your expectations what would be mentioned (...) do you think what will be mentioned in the next paragraph?/
S: Ah (...) I think they will speak about (...) ah (...) that ah (...) festival as (...) that festival and how different people celebrate the day (...) ah/
S: That’s what you expect?/
S: Yes/
T: Thank you/
T: Yes Shayma (...) of course you have understood the second paragraph I think (...) er (...) could you tell me what you got out of it?/
S: Well er (...) it is speaks about ah em (...) children in some places and how they celebrate their day/ they wake up in the early morning ah (...) and they take branches and go to their parents’ rooms and waken them by em (...) these branches asking them for candy or for Fastelavnsboller or something like that (...) then em (...) these parents ah (...) ah (...) wake up and give them candy (...) ah/ well (...) ah they also say that this custom might have been existing since old time/
T: Thank you very much (...) er again you have to mention something about your expectations what do you think will be er (...) will be mentioned in the next paragraph?/
S: As he has already spoken about children I guess he’ll be speaking about elder people and other places (...) something like that (...) how they celebrate the festival./
T: Thank you.
T: Shayma our third volunteer (laugh) (...) again tell me what you have got (...) from the third (...) paragraph/
S: Well he's speaking about older children in towns and in rural communities and how they celebrating that day/ (...) well em (...) these children er (...) go run around the neighborhood (...) aah (...) they wear (...) they're wearing fancy clothes and masks em (...) masks (...) eh they sing for buns and they ask for coins ah (...) for festival of feasts (...) Fastelavn feasts/ eeh (...) well I think that's it/
T: Thanks (...) again (...) what do you expect will be mentioned in the next paragraph?/
S: Well (...) I think there's nothing more about children there gonna speak now about adults it's their turn now (laugh) adults/
T: Thank you that's good/
T: Now we'd like to hear Shayma commenting on (...) the (...) fourth paragraph tell us what you have understood out of it/
S: Well in the fourth paragraph they speak about ah (...) children (...) ah (...) there are many parties and ah (...) children play different games in these parties/ (...) ah (...) there is a favourite one em (...) and most famous of these games (...) a bun is suspended from a (...) bite of tempting morsels or something like that and (...) well ah the bun is set in motion and the one who succeeds in this game gains the bun as the prize/
T: That's good (...) again (...) what do you expect will be dealt with(...) in the next paragraph?/
S: Ah he might speak about more games or ancient games (...) and (...) also about grown ups adults/
T: O.K./
S: And how they celebrate in ( )/
T: O.K. that's what you expect thanks a lot/
T: Yes Shayma now we are approaching the end you've read the paragraph before the last can you tell me what is the idea of it?/
S: It's speaking about an old em (...) Danish game played on that festival by adults it's called knocking the cat out of the barrel/ em (...) and artificial cat which em (...) in old times em (...) they used to use em (...) a live one (...) well em (...) this cat is enclosed in a wooden barrel decorated with paper flowers and cat pictures then each player is armed with a wooden stick and he swings at the barrel trying to know em (...) trying to smash it (...) and the one that succeeds in that is called the cat king and receives a prize/
T: That's good (...) you're going to take the last paragraph (...) would you tell me (...) what will be mentioned in it/
S: Well they'll speak about ah (...) how they end the day (...) the feast itself how they prepare themselves for it/
T: The last paragraph?/
S: Yes/
T: Thank you (laugh)/

T: This is our last question Shayma and I want you to tell me what the idea of the last part of the passage is about/

S: It speaks about people in seaport towns. ah (..) well (..) eem Fastelavn boats are considered one of the main features of these festivals/ aah (..) a large boat ah (..) where twelve people (..) twelve seamen are (..) is placed ah is placed on a truck moved by many horses and aah horns (..) palyer are sit beside the driver and aah (..) carrying the national flags and aah announcing the approach of the (..) procession aam (..) well then (..) aam (..) aah (..) this procession is followed by and aam (..) town's folk folks and aah aam (..) musicians play music and then dance/ aah well aah contributions are collected for sick and poor seamen./

T: Thanks very much thanks a lot Shayma/
Transcripts of the Egyptian subjects' responses to the Shamm en-Nesem text
T: This time I want you to tell me your name in full / 
S: O.K. my name is Marwa Ahmad and I am in second secondary and I am fifteen years old / (...) my favourite subjects are eem (...) English biology physics and I like sports and (...) that’s it/ 
T: That’s it (...) so your name in full is Marwa Ahmad Ibrahim? 
S: Yes sir/ 
T: That’s good you have read the first paragraph of the passage? could you tell me what you remember about the first paragraph about the idea that it carried?/ 
S: (...) Well (...) it talked about a special day that we have here in Egypt/ (...) and that day ancient Egyptians use to celebrate the coming of spring and they use to call it Shemou but over the years that name change and now modern Egyptians call it Shamm en-Neseem which means eem (...) the smell of the breeze/ and even though the name changed (...) the festival still the same still brings happiness and rejoicing to the hearts and minds of people and enjoyed it a lot/ 
T: Thanks very much again what do you expect would be mentioned in the next paragraph?/ 
S: O.K. (...) well they’re probably gonna (...) talk about ancient how Egyptians use to celebrate it and how we celebrate it now/ 
T: That’s it thank you/ 
T: Yes Marwa again the second paragraph tell us the main idea of what you remember about it/ 
S: Well (...) the second paragraph talks about am (...) the harvest month eem (...) in ancient Egypt ahm (...) which eem (...) which they called of course Shemou and it was in April / em (...) and it talked about what they are do that day they pay (...) pay a tribute to their God of fertility who they called Min and that tribute is a bundle of lettuce am (...) it’s the God’s plant and they believe that lettuce contained (...) oil that’s good for fertilization of the land eeh (...) yea fertility / and (...) and that’s why that’s why (...) well it said that if you look ohm (...) if you notice how in modern Egypt we celebrate Shamm en-Neseem now well we still use lettuce and it’s the main part in our celebrations so it didn’t actually change that much that’s all/ 
T: That’s good. now again what do you expect in the third paragraph?/ 
S: Well ahm (...) I think they’re still going to talking about the differences between ancient Egyptians and (...) how you know right now in modern our days how we celebrate Shamm en-Neseem/ 
T: Thank you/ 
T: Of course you’ve read the third paragraph again tell us what you still remember about it?/ 
S: O.K. (...) well it talks about eem (...) it says that ancient Egyptians used to believe that onions had a great deal of (...) eem (...) power for health eem (...) / 
T: Healing power!/ 
S: Healing power (...) yes that’s it and eem (...) there’s a legend that says if a child of a pharaoh (...) is ill they can only restore their health if they smell onions/ (...) and until now (...) in modern days aam
healing power and eem (...) what they do is on Shamm en-Nessem everyone (...) eem most of the people, they hang bundles of onions outside their homes and at night before they go to sleep they actually put a (...) onion under their pillow and they break it and smell it the first thing in the morning (...) that’s all./

T: Again what do you think is coming next?/
S: Probably the same thing they’re gonna (...) they’re gonna (...) probably talk about another activity that’s done in ancient Egypt now/
T: That’s it (...) thank you/
T: I think this time Marwa you’re going to er (...) perform perfectly so (...) give me what you’ve just grasped/
S: O.K. aam (...) this paragraph talks about eem (...) certain foods which eem (...) ancient Egyptians use to eat and still eat now at Shamm en-Neseem aam (...) it’s called feseekh or salted fish/ (...) and (...) it also talks about aam (...) how ancient Egyptian use to believe and I think we still believe that (...) aam eggs are a (...) an egg is a symbol of creative God’s creative power or the beginning of life and aam (...) in every celebration aam (...) Shamm en-Nessem (...) there has to be eggs er (...) egg has to be a part of the celebration aam (...) and (...) I think that’s all./
T: That’s all you remember?/
S: Yes that’s all I remember/
T: Thank you again what do you expect is coming next?/
S: Aam (...) yes I think other activities that’s done by ancient Egyptians Egyptians and other activities that’s done by ancient Egyptians/ but since it’s probably the last paragraph so it’s going to get like aam (...) the ending activities of the day or something like that/
T: Thank you/
T: Again Marwa for the final (...) final meeting again tell us the main ideas or the things that you still remember about the last paragraph/
S: The last paragraph paragraph talks about the most aam (...) important and remarkable aspect of that day/ and it’s that aam (...) almost Egypt’s whole population aah (...) mostly Egyptians aah (...) go out aam (...) in the early morning aam (...) they go out into the outfits and to the gardens along the Nile dressed in their best outfits and eem (...) ok eem (...) they go out to smell the breeze of spring/ eem (...) and it also talks about something that children (...) mostly children believe in/ aah (...) children are supposed to bath (...) on the eve eem (...) of that day (...) and if they believe that if they don’t eem (...) eem (...) they believe that there’s a person called Shammamah who goes around sniffing everyone who’s asleep (...) aam (...) and who discovers any foul smell (...) and aam (...) there’s an an (...) ancient Egyptian legend that said that aam (...) the Shammamah (...) aam finds out that someone has not bathed aah (...) she puts a curse on them (...) whatever that’s it/
T: Thank you very much for your participation (...) Marwa thanks a lot dear/
Once more Mariam/

(...) Could I introduce myself first?/

Yes introduce yourself and give your name in full please/

Alright my name is Mariam Mohammad Salim (...) I am fifteen years old I am in al-Amal language school in second year./

Yes second year?

Yes/

I just want you to give me the main idea of whatever you remember about the first paragraph of the passage you've just taken/

(...) It's talking about the (...) how the Egyptians revered the coming of spring (...) they called it (...) Shemou but now it's called Shamm en-Neseem or the smelling of the breeze (...) it's always with the people (...) the festival haven't changed for some more than five thousand years it's always the same but the name has changed (...) that's it./

That's all yeah (...) again what you'd expect be mentioned in the next paragraph?/

I think he will talk about how the Egyptians celebrated with it (...) and what they do on this day and what they do on that special day/

Yes thank you/

Guess again Mariam the second paragraph has been read by you and you sum it up or give us whatsoever you remember about it/

Yes ahm (...) the ancient Egyptian ah (...) celebrated with Shemou (...) in April ah (...) they brought presents for the God of fertility Min ah (...) it was the God of lettuce something like lettuce ah (...) they believe that lettuce contain an oil ah (...) beneficial for fertility (...) and (...) till now they still use lettuce to celebrate Shamm en-Neseem/

Again what's coming next?/

(...) I think he'll talk about the ancient Egyptian and how they celebrate it. aam (...) and compare between them and now (...) the modern Egyptians/

Thank you/

Yes Mariam I think the third paragraph was short enough to be read in no time now again give us whatsoever you remember about it/

(...) the paragraph says that ancient Egyptians believe that onion has a great healing power. (...) that if a child was ill and just when he smell the onion he recovers/ (...) nowadays in countryside (...) people hang bundles of onions (...) of onions (...) of onions/

Yes!
S: Of onions on their doors and they put it under their pillows that they can smell the first that they can smell as the first thing in the morning (..) on the day (laugh)/
T: Yea (laugh) a little slip of the tongue no problem yes/
S: Yes/
T: Yes now again what do you think is coming in the next paragraph?/
S: I think it’ll talk about eem (..) the food Egyptians eat err (..) on that on that day/
T: Once more with the fourth paragraph Mariam again (..) what is the main ideas or the ideas you still remember about (..) the fourth paragraph?/
S: Well the paragraph eem (..) talks about how the Egyptians eem (..) celebrated/ and what they all eem (..) they ate some kind of salted fish called feseekh/ am (..) and they also believed that eem (..) eggs are a symbol of God's creative power a (..) symbol of the beginning of life so they eeh (..) painted it and exchanged it with each other show how loving and kind they are with each other together (..) that’s it./
T: O.K again what do you expect is going to be mentioned in the next paragraph?/
S: I think he’ll he’ll (.) talk about how Egyptians (..) ah use to do or play in this day and how they do now/
T: Thank you/
T: And finally with Mariam to give us her ideas that she has understood about the last paragraph of the passage yes (..) Mariam/
S: Well it says how Egyptians celebrate/ (..) and they hang onions and they go out their homes (..) in the early hours of the day to smell the breeze (..) aam (..) they could go to the gardens Nile (..) the Nile wearing their newest spring outfits (..) outfits/ eem (..) and it says (..) that everybody must have a bath (..) in the Shamm en-Neseem evening (....) before the Shamm en-Neseem aam (..) that they believe that aah (....) that there’s a legend saying that the Shammamah aam (..) Shammamah (....)/
T: Goes around sniffing?/
S: Right goes around sniffing eeh (..) to see who (..) who hasn’t bathed (..) that’s it (..) and curse him/
T: Who has a bath?/
S: No (..) who hasn’t had a bath/
T: Is that all?/
S: Yes/
T: Thank you very much thanks a lot/
T: Good morning again Shayma/

S: Today I just want you to introduce yourself in full (..) mention your name in full in order to have the name in complete/

S: My name is Shayma ( ) I’m in al-Amal language school (..) in second secondary/. eeh (..) well I’m fifteen years old/ ah (..) my favorite subjects are English (..) biology well (..)/

T: That’s it thank you. now I (..) think you’ve read the first paragraph of the passage you have just taken/ (..) please tell me the main idea of whatever you remember about the first paragraph/

S: Well (..) it speaks about ancient Egyptians and how they celebrated the coming of the spring (..) they call this festival Shemou/ and up till now this festival still exists (..) even though it’s five thousand years old (..) under the name of Shem en-Neseem or the smell of the breeze/ (..) and up till now it brings happiness and joy to the hearts and minds of our people (..) that is it./

T: Thanks a lot/

T: Again could you tell me what do you? (..) what you expect will be mentioned hi the next paragraph?/

S: Well (..) guess he will mention how ancient Egyptian celebrated this/

T: That’s what (..) that’s what you expect?/

S: Yes/

T: Now we come to the second paragraph Shayma/ again tell us what you can remember about the second paragraph/

S: Well it speaks about how Egyptians celebrate the coming of the month of April the month of harvest! ( ) well they pay their tribute to ah (..) Min the God of fertility they (..) take a bundle of lettuce to the (..) to (..) which is the plant of Min (..) in a ceremonial procession well they believe that lettuce contained a certain oil which was beneficial for fertility/ well (..) up till now Egyptians still (..) believe lettuce is still a form of celebrating this feast (..) and this proves to us that times haven’t changed this ceremony or celebration/

T: Thank you very much/ I think that you have memorized some sentences/

S: (laugh)/

T: Haven’t you? (laugh) I think you have memorized them because you’ve been given the same words of the sentences as your friend but it’s O.K. no problem/

T: Again can you (..) tell me what you expect to be dealt with in the third paragraph?/

S: They’Il complete speaking of how Egyptians celebrate ah (..) this (..) feast (..) the rest of the (..) day/

T: Ancient Egyptians or modern Egyptians?/

S: Ancient Egyptians/
T: Thank you very much/

T: I think you’ve finished the third paragraph quickly so again I want you to give us the idea of it/

S: Well (..) ancient (..) it speaks about ancient (..) Egyptian and how they believe in the onion eh (..) in the healing powers in onions/ well legends said that pharaoh’s child was ill and only by smelling onions he (..) his health was restored/ (..) up till now people still believe in onions powers of healing and people (..) in modern days (..) Egyptian people hang a bundle of onions from their homes and (..) they put an onion under their pillow so that (..) it will broke will be broken and (..) the first thing they would smell in the morning it would be onions/

T: Thank you very much/ (..) again what do you think is coming in the next paragraph?/

S: I think more about ancient Egyptians (..) er (..) maybe other things (..) about how they celebrate it/ (..) something like that/

T: Thanks/

S: You’re welcome/

T: Thank you/ once again we meet our dear Shayma so please (..) er tell me what you remember about the paragraph you’ve just read/

S: Well it speaks about err (..) other important err (..) meals that they use eer (..) ancient Egyptians used to eat at Shamman en-Nesem/ speaks about eer (..) a kind of salted fish called eeh (..) feseekh aah/ (..) well err (..) this was was not ancient Egyptian/ it also speaks about eggs to them was a aah (..) symbol to God’s creative power and a symbol all (..) also of the beginning of life ancient Egyptians used to colour eggs and exchange them as a symbol of rebirth of nature aah (..) well aah (..) up till now Egyptians still use these eggs and eem (..) and eem (..)/

T: So they not only used to do this but they still eat or celebrate that day using the same things/ O.K. thank you again what’s coming next?/

S: I think eeh (..) they’ll they eeh (..) go on speaking of eeh (..) ancient Egyptians but not food maybe about aah (..) some games they played aam (..) something like that/

T: ( ..) Thanks/

T: With our final meeting Shayma again give us the idea that are still there in your mind about (..) the last paragraph/

S: Well ah (..) it speaks about a very remarkable aspects aah (..) in aah (..) how Egyptians celebrated the day/ ah (..) well all Egyptians would go out in the early morning to aah (..) smell the (..) spring breeze/ they would go out to the streets to the gardens or sit by the Nile in the early morning aah (..) dressing in their newest outfits/ aam (..) well up to now this er (..) Egyptians still do this up till now and they refuse to (..) cast aside their winter clothes until that day/ well there is a legend er (..) told by old (..) ancient Egyptians that aah (..) the Shammanah would go sniffing around all those who are sleeping and they would (..) curse er (..) those who hadn’t bathed in the evening of their feast so children would bath before sleeping so that they wouldn’t be cursed by that Shammanah that’s it/

T: I think there is no other questions to be asked. because this is the final paragraph/ thank you very much for your participation Shayma thanks a lot/