

## Review of the Evolution of Letter Design in the First Farsi Book of Iran's Primary School During 1921 to 2016

### Abstract:

The system of education at the beginning of the rule of Qajar dynasty was informal, organized in old-fashioned school buildings called 'Maktab Khaneh'. It was during the late Qajar sway that formal education became popular and around 1910, elementary education for seven-year old students became mandatory. Later at the time of Pahlavids, Persian language and literature textbooks became unified in terms of form and content for the first time. In the middle of Fath Ali Shah of Qajar's reign, publication of Persian language books began. At this point, mainly scribes were in charge of textbook writing generally using Naskh and Nastaliq scripts. With the advent of the printing industry (lithography and typography), Naskh and Nastaliq scripts were modified to adapt to the novel printing technology. With the spread of this technology, different font types fit for printing were developed. The readability of fonts is the first element to be considered when designing letters to be followed by beauty. In fact, being proportionate to text is one of the fundamental aspects of letter design. Fonts are created to serve diverse objectives, subjects, age ranges, audience psychological states and characters, gender, ... Letter design is one of the fundamental and practical branches of graphic design with various applications. With the establishment of the ministries of 'Culture' and then 'Education and Training', educational policies were embarked and the process is still being practiced today. One of such policies was content development and publication of books for various educational levels such as first grade of elementary school. Farsi book designed for this grade is the oldest one available and the first one with which the students get acquainted when formally entering the educational program. Letters, words and their shapes are essential to learning development. No Farsi book is as important for the development of linguistics skills, educating beginners and providing rudimentary education as Farsi book of the first grade of elementary schools. The most demanding part of education, is teaching alphabets to the first-graders of primary schools. Writing is the most complex skill of language learning. With its several prerequisites, the skill directly affects the process of personality building and self-confidence development in children whose inability in the skill will lead to the emergence of mental and psychological disorders. At the moment, Farsi book of the first grade of primary school has been designed to promote reading and writing skills, exercise mind and strengthen linguistic abilities. It is the only book learning which significantly influences the study of other books and the level of literacy. Writing is very important at this stage, so letters and words must be designed in a way that fits the students' physical and mental abilities. As a result, several scripts have been used in its content development. By means of a descriptive-analytical and qualitative method of research and desk study of library resources, the paper seeks to examine the process of evolution of the aforesaid book's fonts during 1921 to 2016 and answer these questions that what modifications have been made in the lettering of the Farsi book of the first grade of elementary school since the arrival of the printing industry in Iran? And what are the causes and effects of such changes? The statistical population comprises of 10 volumes of Farsi books of the first grade of elementary schools. The results achieved indicate that Nastaliq and Naskh scripts were the predominant fonts used in this textbook in 1921.

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Between the years 1958 to 1963, the necessity for the introduction of letters fit for printing led to the development of new fonts. Since Naskh was capable of modification and conversion into print letters, this script was used for publication. Since 1962, the use of Nastaliq script in textbooks lost its popularity. In 1991s, horizontal, vertical, diagonal and curve lines were added to Farsi textbooks to facilitate the practice of writing. But since 2001 onwards, three types of scripts including cursive, Naskh and Nastaliq have been used in Farsi books of first grade of elementary schools which has created problems for the students. Meanwhile, no proper font has been designed for this purpose so far.

**Keywords:** Letter Design, Farsi, First Grade of Elementary School

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