

Predictors of Arabic Word Reading: The role of phonological awareness, orthographic processing, and morphological awareness

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Abstract

There is an emergent research body on Arabic literacy development to explore the factors that may predict word-reading skill. However, the present literature is limited by two main constraints. First, though some studies investigated one or more basic literacy concepts, only two studies searched phonology, orthography and morphology together. Second, all of the previous studies used researcher-developed measures that are not based on an inclusive conceptual framework of literacy constructs. In the current study, 1098 children (grades 1–3) completed the Test of Early Arabic Literacy Skills (TEALS) to measure phonological awareness, orthographic processing, morphological awareness, and word reading. Data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The results showed that phonological awareness measures (e.g. nonword repetition, elision, RAN-digits, isolation; segmenting) explained unique variance in word reading. Additionally, some morphological awareness and orthographic processing measures accounted for significant differences in word reading. Results are discussed in the context of the current research on Arabic. Further recommendations for research and practice are discussed.

Keywords: Arabic; word reading; phonological awareness; orthographic processing; morphological awareness