Literacy development among monolinguals and bilinguals: Orthographic influences

Prof R. Malatesha Joshi (Texas A & M University)

Chair : Dr WANG Li Chih

Abstract

One of the influential models that is useful in the assessment and intervention of reading problems is the Simple View of Reading (SVR) proposed by Gough and Tunmer (1986) and Hoover and Gough (1990), according to which the two most important elements of reading are decoding and comprehension. The relationship between decoding and comprehension is expressed as \( RC = D \times LC \), where \( RC \) is reading comprehension, \( D \) is decoding, and \( LC \) is linguistic comprehension. Various studies have shown that SVR can account for approximately 40–80% of the variance in reading comprehension for readers ranging from 2nd through 10th grade among English speaking children. In addition to English-speaking children, we have tested SVR model with students from Spanish, Chinese, and Hebrew backgrounds as well as in bilinguals by administering decoding, \( LC \), and \( RC \) measures at various grade levels. Similar to the findings of English-speaking children, a significant variance in \( RC \) was explained by the two factors: \( D \) and \( LC \). However, the percentage of variance was different at different grade levels and in different orthographies and the results are explained in terms of the nature of the orthography – whether it is transparent or shallow. The results have important implications for literacy instruction. In opaque languages like English and Chinese, systematic decoding instruction should be continued for a longer period of time and comprehension instruction can be introduced at earlier time for Spanish-speaking children. Further, different decoding systems have to be applied in Hebrew literacy instruction due to its pointed (vowelized) and unpointed (unvowelized) system of writing.

R. Malatesha Joshi, Ph.D., is Professor of Reading/Language Arts Education, ESL and Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University, where he teaches and conducts research in literacy development and literacy problems among monolinguals and bilinguals in different orthographies. Dr. Joshi is the founding Editor of Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal, rated one of the top journals in education and educational research. A monograph series titled Literacy Studies: Perspectives from Cognitive Neurosciences, Linguistics, Psychology and Education is also under his editorship. He has published numerous books and scientific papers in high-impact journals and has presented scientific papers in professional meetings in U.S. and abroad. He has received numerous awards, both within the U.S. and outside the U.S., such as Erasmus Mundus Visiting Scholar Universiteit Potsdam, Germany, May-July 2010 (only 3 candidates were selected from non-EU nations), Outstanding Faculty Mentoring Award, CEHD, Texas A & M University, 2011, COST Special Interest Group on Spelling Development, Visiting Research Scholar, German Institute for International Educational Research, at Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany, Visiting Research Scholar, National academy for educational research, Taipei, Taiwan, and National Chung Cheng University, Chia-Yi, Taiwan, and Visiting Research Scholar, The National Key Laboratory of Cognitive Neuroscience and Learning, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China. In 2014, Dr. Joshi is one of the committee members, selected by the Israel Council of Higher Education, to evaluate all the teacher education programs in Israel. At the present time, he is the Co-PI of three grants: Processes of Children’s Literacy Acquisition in Chinese as a Second Language; from the Hong Kong Public Policy Research (PPR) Funding Scheme, China (2014-2016), Strengthening Europeans’ capabilities by establishing the European Literacy Network - COST Action IS1401. 2014-2018, and the recently funded 3.5 million dollars grant from the Institute of Educational Sciences, Efficacy and Replication Trial of the Individualized Adaptive ITSS with 4th and 5th Grade Students in High Poverty Schools, (2015-2019). He has also served on the review panels for Institute of Educational Sciences as well as the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development.