

The Orthographic Factor in Phonological Awareness with Relation to Reading

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The present study was planned to compare the extent of relationship between phonological awareness and orthographic features in learning to read. Sixty children all coming from Gujarati speaking families were selected as subjects from two schools in Bombay. These children were administered a test of listening comprehension, word reading (English medium) and word recognition (Gujarati medium) and measures of speech segmentation.

The results of the study support the following conclusions.

1. There is no significant difference in the speech segmentation ability as a whole of the children exposed to either alphabetic or semi-syllabic script.
2. Rhyme recognition scores of the two groups are almost similar.
3. Syllable stripping scores of the children exposed to semi-syllabic script are slightly better than those exposed to alphabetic script, however, the difference is not significant.
4. There is a significant difference in phoneme stripping task between English and Gujarati medium children in favour of the English medium children. This shows that such phoneme level tasks are sensitive to orthographic variations.
5. Word reading and speech segmentation ability are highly correlated for English medium children. Correlations between these tasks is low to moderate or even negative at times for Gujarati medium children.

However, the study being a small and cross-sectional one has its own limitations. One of the major limitations of the study is selection criteria for subjects where factors such as intelligence, vocabulary, overall stimulation at home, amount of exposure to reading material at home etc. have not been controlled. The results of this study can be confirmed by doing the study taking these factors into considerations. Generalization of the results of the present study should be done with caution.