

The Relationship between the First Language Phonological Awareness and the Second Language Reading Ability and the Cross-language Transfer of the First Language Phonological Skills

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Abstract

Evidences suggest that the phonological awareness plays a major role in the acquisition of reading in a second language, and it has a significant influence on reading proficiency. This study investigated the relationship between the L1 (first language - Hungarian) phonological awareness and the L2 (second language - Romanian) reading ability, and the cross- language transfer of the L1 phonological skills. We examined the L1 phonological skills, and the L1 and L2 reading ability of 33, third grade children. Significant correlation was found between L1 phonological awareness and L2 reading ability. Our results suggest that phonological awareness exerts a stronger influence on reading accuracy, than on fluency. We used linear regression analysis to examine the predictive value of L1 phonological awareness to L2 reading proficiency. We found that L1 phonological awareness account for 52- 54 % of the variance of L2 reading accuracy, and 17- 21% of reading fluency. These findings demonstrate that cross- linguistic transfer of L1 phonological skills does exist between Hungarian and Romanian language.

Keywords

phonological awareness, reading ability, cross- linguistic transfer, reading accuracy/proficiency