

Readings on L2 reading: Publications in other venues 2010–2011

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This feature offers an archive of articles and books published in other venues during the past year and serves as a valuable tool to readers of *Reading in a Foreign Language (RFL)*. It treats any topic within the scope of *RFL* and second language reading. The articles are listed in alphabetical order by author, each with a complete reference as well as a brief summary. The editors of this feature attempt to include all related articles that appear in other venues. However, undoubtedly, this list is not exhaustive.

Al-Shehri, S., & Gitsaki, C. (2010). Online reading: A preliminary study of the impact of integrated and split-attention formats on L2 students' cognitive load. *ReCall*, 22(3), 356–375.

With twenty English as a Second Language (ESL) students in Australia as the participants, the researchers found that an integrated reading format, where comprehension questions were inserted within the reading text, proved to facilitate second language (L2) reading comprehension more than a split-attention format, which consisted of reading followed by comprehension questions. Findings also revealed that a format that includes access to an online dictionary facilitates vocabulary acquisition, but that readers spend more time reading the text with this format. The study appears to be the first investigation that examines the interaction effects of online instructional formats with L2 reading. Results hold important implications for technology-based reading programs. The authors provide a compelling argument for more research on the subject.

Alsheikh, N. O. (2011). Three readers, three languages, three texts: The strategic reading of multilingual and multiliterate readers. *The Reading Matrix*, 11(1), 34–53.

In this case study, the author investigated the reading strategies used by three trilingual readers pursuing graduate degrees at a university in the U.S. when reading across three languages (English [L3], French [L2], and Hausa [L1]). Specifically, the author compared the perceived and the actual use of strategies of these readers across the three languages. Findings revealed that the subjects showed high awareness of strategic reading, that they employed more reading strategies in their L2 and L3 reading than in their L1, and that they used more problem reading (PROB) strategies than global reading (GLOB) strategies, and then less support reading strategies (SUP). The study also showed that the most proficient reader employed more strategies than the least proficient one.

Bundgaard-Nielsen, R. L., Best, C. T., & Tyler, M. D. (2011). Vocabulary size matters: The assimilation of second-language Australian English vowels to first-language Japanese vowel categories. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, *32*, 51–67.

In this study, the authors carried out an experiment to investigate the relationship between L2 (Australian English, [AusE]) vowel perception and L2 vocabulary size in two groups of adult native speakers of Japanese who differed in the size of their L2 vocabulary. A “whole-system” approach, in which the learners were presented with all the AusE vowels, was adopted. The experiment showed that learners with a larger L2 vocabulary size were more consistent in their vowel assimilation patterns, compatible with the L2 perceptual assimilation model. The article concluded that the findings are consistent with the prediction that L2 vocabulary acquisition drives a learner to rephonologize early in immersion-based conversational acquisition.

Cho, S., Xu, Y., & Rhodes, J. A. (2010). Examining English language learners’ motivation of, and engagement in reading: A qualitative study. *The Reading Matrix*, *10*(2), 205–221.

The authors of this study used interviews with instructors and a focus group of fourth-grade students to explore the motivation and engagement of English Language Learners in a reading intervention program. The qualitative data was drawn specifically from the instructors' and students' perceptions regarding the program. Based on their anecdotal evidence, and with references to previous quantitative studies, the authors concluded that challenging reading materials of high interest make a more positive impact on students’ motivation to read. Also of importance in engaging students to read were the teachers’ preparation, attitude, and expectations of student performance. Finally, the authors argued that their results imply that the connection between oral reading skills and comprehension skills is weaker than had previously been accepted.

Dixon, L. (2010). The importance of phonological awareness for the development of early English reading. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *13*(6), 723–738.

Dixon tested 297 Singaporean kindergarten students on phonological awareness (PA), receptive vocabulary and word-level reading skills in order to explore the relationship between PA and English word-level reading among a multilingual sample. The study examined whether PA would predict word reading skills in the multilingual context of Singapore for bilingual and L2 English learners, even though the kindergartners were taught using a logographic, or look-say, method. Dixon found that both PA and vocabulary are statistically significant influences in the reading success of the students, even though the Singaporean educational system does not teach phonological awareness for reading English. In fact, PA was found to have a larger influence than word recognition. The study also found that the mother’s educational level, family income, and ethnicity (Chinese, Malay or Indian) were significant influences in L2 English reading skills.

Ercetin, G. (2010). Effects of topic interest and prior knowledge on text recall and annotation use in reading. *ReCall*, *22*(2), 228–246.

With second language learners of English at a Turkish university as participants, the investigation examined the effects of topic interest and prior knowledge on the reading of

hypermedia texts. The author explored the effects of the independent variables on both written recall and use of annotations while reading. Findings revealed that performance was facilitated when topic interest was high, but the interaction effects of prior knowledge and topic interest was nonsignificant. The researcher also conducted follow-up interviews, and the qualitative data revealed that topic interest was more important for comprehension than prior knowledge. Overall, the study is the first to examine these factors in a L2 hypermedia environment. The author concluded that readers may compensate for lack of prior knowledge by using annotations which may also increase interest in the topic. Finally, the author offered an extensive review of research on L2 reading in hypermedia text environments and connect present findings.

Gao, L., & Rogers, T. W. (2011). Use of tree-based regression in the analyses of L2 reading test items. *Language Testing, 28*(1), 77–104.

The authors examined the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) to see whether findings of Tree Based Regression (TBR) provided information and details about item difficulties in terms of cognitive processes with L2 reading. Findings demonstrated that well-informed TBR analysis can provide rich details about the cognitive processes involved in answering individual items on the reading comprehension test. Results substantiated prior assertions that varied cognitive factors are utilized in complex and different combinations with L2 readers.

Gebril, A. (2010). Bringing reading-to-write and writing-only assessment tasks together: A generalizability analysis. *Assessing Writing, 15*, 100–117.

The author examined the composite score generalizability of writing-only and reading-to-write tasks. The author used a multivariate generalizability analysis to gauge the effect of both the task and rater facets on composite score reliability and determined that a composite score of both types of tasks is just as reliable for writing assessment as scores obtained from either type of task alone. The author argued that the inclusion of reading-to-write tasks in the writing assessment of L2 students in university writing programs would lead to positive washback.

Goldberg, S. J., Weinberger, E. R., Goodman, N. E., & Ross, S. (2010). Development of early Hebrew oral reading fluency measure. *Journal of Jewish Education, 76*, 198–214.

The authors discussed the lack of and need for a reading assessment to screen Hebrew L2 students in Jewish day schools in North America. They described the early progress of their development of an oral reading fluency measure modeled on Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIEBELS) to screen first grade students for reading abilities and diagnose deficiencies, and eventually to monitor the progress of those students who require additional support. Their assessment tool was designed to predict reading abilities and facilitate the planning of curriculum for English-speaking students learning to read and speak Hebrew as their L2. The study included a discussion of pilot data collected to determine reliability and validity of the authors' assessment.

Hansen, G. F. (2010). Word recognition in Arabic as a foreign language. *The Modern Language Journal, 94*, 567–581.

The author used a series of three different tests to investigate the impact of the Arabic writing system in Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) learners' visual word recognition. The tests were given to three groups of AFL learners representing three levels of competency, and to a control group of native speakers of Arabic. The first test required the decoding of pseudowords and gauged the impact of unfamiliar graphemes and phonemes; the second tested the impact of vowelization in reading speed and comprehension; and the third measured the extent to which learners could apply valid vowel patterns to unvoiced pseudowords. The author found that unfamiliar phonology was not a factor that significantly affected the time of decoding at any of the three competency levels, although it did result in a high number of errors. Also, vowelization did not improve reading speed or comprehension. Instead, contrary to what might be expected, at the low and intermediate levels, the addition of vowels to the text slowed reading speed, which contributed to a possible "cognitive overload." The author concluded that graphical and orthographical elements of the Arabic writing system do deter word recognition in L2 learners of Arabic.

Jackson, C. N., & Roberts, L. (2010). Animacy affects the processing of subject-object ambiguities in the second language: Evidence from self-paced reading with German second language learners of Dutch. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 31, 671–691.

With 20 German L2 learners of Dutch and 29 Dutch native speakers at a Dutch university as its participants, the study addressed the question of how German second learners of Dutch process subject versus object relative clauses (RCs) when the animacy of the antecedent noun phrase (NP) and the RC-internal NP was manipulated. It also examined the extent to which L2 learners incrementally assigned grammatical roles prior to encountering crucial lexical and morphosyntactic information provided by the lexical verb and its auxiliary. Results showed that L2 learners performed like Dutch native speakers in parsing ambiguous subject and object RCs. They were also able to use morphosyntactic information in the form of number agreement on the auxiliary verb to disambiguate temporarily ambiguous sentences when pushed to make an on-line commitment to a subject- or object-first interpretation.

Karbalaei, A. (2010). A comparison of the metacognitive reading strategies used by EFL and ESL readers. *The Reading Matrix*, 10(2), 165–180.

With 190 students of English (96 Iranians and 93 Indians) as their participants, the author utilized the Kit of Reading Comprehension (Rajinder, 2008) to test reading and examine specific metacognitive reading strategies that included items from the MARSI (Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory). Findings revealed that in both the ESL and EFL context the participants reported similar use of strategies, although the Indian students used strategies more frequently. The most used strategy for both groups was the problem-solving strategy. Results are discussed in light of prior research, and the author underscores the importance of teaching metacognitive strategies in the classroom.

Karlin, O., & Romanko, R. (2010). Examining multiple variables within a single ER setting. *The Reading Matrix*, 10(2), 181–204.

This study examined three dimensions of affect, vocabulary and reading fluency of 110 university students in an extensive reading class using the communicative study/teaching methodology in Japan in a one-semester session. Results showed that the learners' vocabulary gains did not improve significantly, whereas their affect increased substantially at the end of the semester. With regard to fluency, the gains were minimal, yet tests showed that lower-level learners' fluency increased at a greater rate than their higher-level counterparts. The authors also discussed the pedagogical implications of the study.

Lee, Y. L. (2010). The application of Bakhtinian theories on second language reading comprehension: A qualitative case study. *The Reading Matrix, 10*(2), 222–242.

In this study, the author applied Bakhtinian theories to L2 reading comprehension. He argued that while speed, accuracy, and vocabulary knowledge are important in L2 reading, individual differences among the readers are more vital in the comprehension of a text. He accepts the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and other Russian scholars of the 1920s that there can be no right or wrong interpretation of a text and that the dialogic process between the reader and supposed author is fundamental to the reader's understanding of the text. The author compared the active construction of meanings of two participants who read the same article from a Chinese newspaper, and found that worldview and personal histories are essential elements of reading comprehension. Since he views reading as an inherently social behavior, the author argued that teaching L2 reading should involve a dialogic pedagogy which values the individual construction of text meaning.

Lesaux, N. K., Crosson, A. C., Kieffer, M. J., & Pierce, M. (2010). Uneven profiles: language minority learners' word reading, vocabulary, and reading comprehension skills. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 31*, 475–483.

With 87 native Spanish-speakers from 3 schools in a southwestern U.S. urban school district as participants, this study investigated the effects of Spanish and English oral language and word reading skills on English reading comprehension. The participants are followed from the 4th to the 5th grade. Findings revealed that the students' oral language skills had a significant effect on L2 reading comprehension, while their word reading skills were not significantly related to L2 reading comprehension. The authors also briefly discussed the educational implications of this study.

Liu, P. D., & McBride-Chang, C. (2010). Morphological processing of Chinese compounds from a grammatical view. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 31*, 605–617.

This study explored morphological structure processing of both Chinese subordinate and coordinative compounds of 21 Hong Kong college students by using a visual priming lexical decision paradigm. Differences of the priming effects were found in these two types of compounds. For subordinate compounds, the structure information facilitated semantic processing, while for coordinative compounds, the structure information inhibited semantic processing. The article concluded that morphological processing of Chinese compounds is influenced by compounding structure processing.

Mancilla-Martinez, J., Kieffer, M. J., Biancarosa, G., Christodoulou, J. A., & Snow, C. E. (2011). Investigating English reading comprehension growth in adolescent language minority learners: Some insights from the simple view. *Reading and Writing, 24*(3), 339–354.

Documented research on the development of reading skills of minority learners remains sparse, and it appears that the present study is the first to report on a longitudinal study of students from fifth to seventh grades. Spanish-speaking language minority students were evaluated at four different times between fifth and seventh grades, in order to investigate the shape and elevation of normative growth trajectories in reading comprehension with the simple view of reading. The simple view adheres to two different factors: linguistic comprehension and word decoding. Findings demonstrated a slowing rate of reading comprehension development for these learners during the middle school years. Results are discussed in light of previous work with monolingual learners, and suggestions for further research are offered.

Marx, A. E., & Stanat, P. (2011). Reading comprehension of immigrant students in Germany: research evidence on determinants and target points for intervention. *Reading and Writing Online First*.

The authors discussed the finding of the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) that immigrant students in Germany who do not speak German at home scored lower on reading achievement than students from native families. They highlighted two possible causes of the gap: socioeconomic and educational backgrounds of students' families. They found, however, that even when these factors were controlled, there was still a large difference. The authors summarized recent research on the effect of oral language proficiency on reading comprehension in a second language and concluded that reading skills such as decoding and linguistic comprehension were greatly influenced by oral proficiency. They recommended, therefore, that any curriculum intent on improving L2 reading skills include methodology that promotes the development of L2 oral proficiency, especially listening comprehension skills.

Melin, C. (2010). Between the lines: When culture, language and poetry meet in the classroom. *Language Teaching, 43*(3), 349–365.

Poetry is often excluded from the language classroom due to its being regarded as the most “literary” of genres. Its status is marginalized because of the multiple difficulties that both instructors and learners encounter—from the basic problems of comprehending the wordings to the deeper interpretation of the meanings it conveys. This article provided a reflection on the experience of teaching poetry in classrooms and probed into the theoretical basis needed to develop an adequate pedagogy of teaching literature. It also examined the conceptual implications of two approaches in poetry teaching, and argued for new teaching objectives.

Mohd, Z. (2010). Anxiety and academic reading performance among Malay ESL learners. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics, 14*(2), 41–58.

This quantitative research investigated the relationship between anxiety and ESL reading comprehension among 218 first-year low proficiency ESL learners from a Malaysian university.

The study addressed three questions: (a) the extent to which these learners experienced anxiety in L2 reading, (b) the relationship between the low proficiency ESL readers' anxiety level and their cognitive interference level, and (c) the relationship between these learners' anxiety level and text comprehension. Results revealed that learners' anxiety significantly influenced their reading performance. Pedagogical implications were provided based on the findings of the research.

Netten, A., Droop, M., & Verhoeven, L. (2011). Predictors of reading literacy for first and second language learners. *Reading and Writing, 24*, 413–425.

With 729 L1 learners and 93 L2 learners in elementary school in the Netherlands as its participants, the present investigation was used to construct a multi-factor model that predicts the development of reading literacy. Findings revealed differences between groups with regard to reading literacy skills, language, mathematics, and reasoning skills. Structural equation modeling was utilized in order to demonstrate that reading literacy development in both L1 and L2 learners may be explained from the following variables: decoding, language, mathematics and reasoning skills, as well as motivation and self-confidence. One major difference between the groups was that home reading sources appear to influence reading literacy of L1 learners but not L2 learners.

Pacheco, M. (2010). English-Language Learners' reading achievement: Dialectical relationships between policy and practices in meaning-making opportunities. *Reading Research Quarterly, 45*(3), 292–317.

This research explored the dialectical relationships between policy and reading practices in the classroom. The author examined the influence of policies on the beliefs and practices around what “counts” as reading in two third-grade bilingual (Spanish-English) classrooms in California. The methodology included participant observation, video recording, in-depth interview with teachers and administrators, analyses of student work samples, as well as analyses of school and district documents. The study indicates that the alignment of reading practices and policy have implications for the theoretical conceptualization of reading activity, as well as for practitioners, administrators, teacher educators and reading researchers.

Palmer, B. C., Zhang, N., Taylor, S. H., & Leclere, J. T. (2010). Language proficiency, reading, and the Chinese-speaking English language learner. *Multicultural Education, 17*(2), 44–51.

In this case study, the authors investigated the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve second language and reading proficiency of a 7 year old Chinese-speaking English language learner, who has completed second grade at a diverse metropolitan elementary school in the U.S. An 8 week instructional intervention plan was created, during which time the participant and the tutor met twice a week, in an attempt to build proficiency and reading in English. The study found that at the end of the 8 week intervention, the participant showed significant growth in English language proficiency and reading fluency, and he is developing an oral vocabulary in English. The authors report that factors beyond the tutoring sessions may have also contributed to the success.

Proctor, C. P., Dalton, B., Uccelli, P., Biancarosa, G., Mo, E., Snow, C., & Neugebauer, S. (2011). Improving comprehension online: Effects of deep vocabulary instruction with bilingual and monolingual fifth graders. *Reading and Writing, 24*(5), 517–544.

This quasi-experimental study investigated the effects of working in internet-based strategic digital reading (SDR) on standardized and researcher-designed measures of vocabulary and comprehension among 240 Spanish/English bilingual and English monolingual fifth graders in a northeast metropolitan area in the U.S. Two research questions were addressed: (a) Does the intervention affect standardized and researcher-designed vocabulary and comprehension outcomes; (b) Do the outcomes vary as a function of language status. 129 of these 240 participants received the intervention; the traditional literacy curriculum was implemented for the other 111 participants. Findings at the end of the 16-week experiment indicated that there was a strong intervention effect for vocabulary knowledge, and that the intervention showed non-significant effects for reading comprehension. Effects on researcher-designed measures of vocabulary depth were significant but no significant effects were found for vocabulary breadth.

Schmitt, N., Jiang, X., & Grabe, W. (2011). The percentage of words known in a text and reading comprehension. *The Modern Language Journal, 95*, 26–43.

With 661 L2 learners from 8 different countries as its participants, the present study examined the percentage of vocabulary needed for L2 learners to understand academic texts. Two different reading texts were chosen based on topic familiarity. The first was about climate change, a familiar topic, and the second concerned circuit training with laboratory mice, and unfamiliar topic. The vocabulary tests consisted of a check list (yes/no) format, and reading comprehension was assessed with multiple choice items. Findings echoed previous research with a 98% estimate of vocabulary knowledge for readers of academic texts. The researchers provided an extensive and detailed discussion for future research, and they extended the findings to include suggestions for classroom instruction.

Schoenpflug, U., & Klische, F. (2010). Cross-and mono-linguistic text processing in bilingual children. *Educational Psychology, 30*(7), 849–870.

This investigation first examined whether gist and verbatim processing are enhanced or impaired with monolingual and bilingual fourth-graders and in bilingual children's mono-linguistic versus cross-linguistic text recall. The second part of the investigation examined the group differences with bottom-up or top-down processing in mono-linguistic and cross-linguistic tasks. The recall consisted of the child retelling a story in an orally. Overall, findings indicated that bilingual children tend to use bottom up processing strategies over top down when compared to monolingual children. Implications of the major finding were discussed, such as the assertion that gist formation is not terminated during comprehension but rather continues during retrieval stages. The authors contend that more research is needed to clarify the complex and interacting mechanisms involved in bilingual reading.

Verhoeven, L., Reitsma, P., & Siegel, L. S. (2011). Cognitive and linguistic factors in reading acquisition. *Reading and Writing, 24*(4), 387–394.

In this introduction to the April 2011 issue of *Reading and Writing*, the authors first reviewed recent studies on the role of cognitive and linguistic factors in reading acquisition. Next, they summarized the six articles that make up the issue. Of particular interest in the review of the literature regarding word decoding and phonological awareness was the authors' proposed hypothesis that "dyslexia is fundamentally a linguistic problem that involves a deficit in phonological encoding." (p. 389)

Yun, J. (2011). The effects of hypertext glosses on L2 vocabulary acquisition: A meta-analysis. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24(1), 39–58.

The integration of a hypermedia or hypertext gloss into L2 reading material has long appealed to SLA and CALL. The author in this study synthesized the features of effective technology use and research design employed from empirical research studies by meta-analysis. The present study especially focused on the effects of hypertext glosses on L2 vocabulary acquisition and aimed to find out which specific combination of hypertext glosses (text-only vs. text and visual) were more effective and beneficial on L2 vocabulary acquisition. Potential moderators for accounting for the between study variation were also discussed. The study revealed that studies with large samples provided a bigger effect size, and that low proficient learners were more likely to benefit from multiple hypertext glosses than their intermediate and advanced counterparts, which was different from previous studies. In addition, test type formats were also a significant factor across the studies.

Zhang, L. (2010). A dynamic metacognitive systems account of Chinese university students' knowledge about EFL reading. *TESOL Quarterly*, 44(2), 320–353.

With 20 native Chinese university students of EFL as the participants of the study, the author examined metacognitive strategies utilized while reading. The author offered a thorough review of research on metacognition, and then moved on to provide operational definitions for both language learning strategies and reading strategies. A detailed review of research with Chinese EFL learners and reading strategies is also provided with corresponding suggestions for further research. The author demonstrated that little research on Chinese EFL learners' reading problems is data-driven, and therefore grounded assertions cannot be drawn. The findings of the present study attempted to address the lacuna and yielded a strong relationship between metacognition and successful EFL reading comprehension, with the amount and quality of metacognitive knowledge different for successful and unsuccessful learners. Suggestions for future research are detailed.

About the Editors

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