

Assessing the Arabic-English Bilingual Reading Competences

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationships between students' reading ability in their native and second languages. The researchers assessed the Arabic-English bilingual reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension of 186 male and female grade four Emirati students from four primary schools. To assess students' reading fluency and accuracy, students read aloud grade appropriate reading passages in Arabic (L1) and English (L2). The read aloud tests were used to measure reading accuracy which was determined by the number of syllables read correctly in one minute and reading fluency which was measured by the Multidimensional Fluency Scale. Silent reading comprehension tests were used to measure the students' competence in reading comprehension. The reading comprehension tests involved students reading grade appropriate passages in Arabic and English as determined by analyses of the curriculum and textbooks, and answering comprehension questions. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to ascertain the relationships between the variables. The research results showed significant positive correlations between the students' L1 (Arabic) reading competencies (accuracy, fluency and comprehension), between their L2 reading competencies, and between their L1 & L2 reading competencies.

Keywords: Bilingual reading, reading assessment, Arabic-English bilinguals, UAE