

Call for Abstracts

Scientific Studies of Reading Special Issue:

Developmental Dyslexia across Languages and Writing Systems

Guest editors:

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Reading involves decoding written language in order to understand it. In learning to read, children implicitly learn how their writing system encodes their spoken language and thus they can decode printed words into spoken words to get meaning. However, many children around the world have problems in learning to read, failing to acquire fluent decoding. Research suggests that underlying this difficulty in learning to read (developmental dyslexia) is primarily a phonological deficit that takes various forms. However, the existing evidence is mainly based on studies in children learning to read English, which has an opaque orthography, and is one of the hardest orthographies to master. In recent years, the research base has broadened, as research around the world has provided new information on different languages. There have been suggestions from studies with other languages that dyslexia may differ across languages and writing systems involving not only phonological problems in various forms but also visual problems. Whether such differences reflect only superficial variation around a common cause or deeper variation in causes related to linguistic and writing system differences is not yet clear. The time is right to bring together observations on reading problems across languages and writing systems within cross-linguistic and cross-writing system perspectives while taking into account a broad multidisciplinary scope.

An important question is how universals and particulars in developmental dyslexia across languages and writing systems can be explained. Different cognitive architectures have been proposed to account for the processing of visual word forms. However, these models were generally developed with alphabetic reading in mind, although their principles should be extendable to any writing system whose written words have constituent components that can be assembled to produce word identification as well as a whole word form for direct accesses. In recent years, the research base has broadened and provided new information on different languages. The time is right to bring together observations across languages and writing systems within cross-linguistic and cross-writing system perspectives. These perspectives allow a focus on those aspects of developmental dyslexia that might be relatively specific to specific language properties and those aspects that are common to all languages and orthographies.

The aim of this special issue is to advance theoretical models of developmental dyslexia through systematic analyses of languages, writing systems, and orthographies in relation to the conceptualization and etiology of reading disabilities. To address the role of cross-linguistic differences, reading researchers who represent a broad sampling of written languages will be invited. Important questions to be addressed for each of these scripts are (1) how do reading disabilities become manifest within typologically different languages and writing systems? and (2)

how do within- and cross-language observations affect the conceptualization of developmental dyslexia? We call for papers with rigorous experimental or longitudinal designs reporting original empirical work on these questions from the perspective of one specific orthography or from a comparative perspective across different orthographies. Traditional behavioral research methods and methods that try to expose reading problems in the brain (e.g., ERPs, fMRI) are welcome.

Submission and Review Timeline

Interested researchers are encouraged to submit an Abstract for consideration. Submitted abstracts may be up to 250 words in length and should follow APA recommendations for content and structure. Abstracts will be reviewed by the guest Associate Editors; a select number of submissions will then be invited to submit a full paper for peer review. Please note that an invitation to submit a full paper does not guarantee acceptance; all papers will be subject to the full peer review process as per any submission to SSSR. Proposed abstracts including tentative author list are due March 1, 2016. Lead authors will be contacted with final determination about submissions by April 1, 2016. Full (invited) manuscript submissions will be due August 1, 2016; Anticipated publication date is January 2018.

Proposed Abstracts should be submitted to the special issue editors:

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