

Abstract

Unexpected poor comprehenders (henceforth referred to as poor comprehenders) have age-appropriate word reading, but struggle to understand texts. However, poor comprehenders' word reading is typically assessed with standardized measures, leading to a gap in knowledge concerning their specific word reading strategies. To help clarify the specific word reading abilities of poor comprehenders, we investigate their morphological and orthographic word reading strategies. We also extend prior studies by investigating multiple aspects of poor comprehenders' morphological awareness; specifically, morphological structure awareness and morphological analysis. Using a regression-based approach, we identified 64 average and poor comprehenders out of a large sample of children in grade 3. Poor and average comprehenders were matched on word reading, nonverbal reasoning, phonological awareness, receptive vocabulary, and chronological age. Our results show that poor and average comprehenders performed remarkably similarly on both morphological structure awareness and morphological analysis, as well as our two evaluated word reading strategies. The exception to this similar performance was one morphological structure awareness task, that of word analogy, on which poor comprehenders performed more poorly than average comprehenders. Overall, these results point to areas of relative strength that might be an avenue for effective intervention, as well as highlight one specific area of morphological awareness that may require additional attention in poor comprehenders.

Key words: unexpected poor comprehenders, morphological awareness, word reading strategies