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Preface

The present study was set out to investigate whether lower-level word processes accounted for variance in reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge among Chinese-speaking university learners who learned English as a foreign language (EFL) in Taiwan.

Seven measures of four literacy skills, including vocabulary knowledge, phonological awareness, phonological memory, and rapid naming, were administered to 128 participants of varying reading abilities, indexed by their reading comprehension scores on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC).

Pearson's correlations show that reading comprehension was associated with all the measures, suggesting that how well the EFL adult learners read was linked with their vocabulary knowledge as well as their phonological processing skills. Regression analyses indicate that vocabulary knowledge was the strongest predictor of reading scores and that phonological awareness was also a valid predictor. In addition, phonological memory and speeded naming made small but unique contribution to reading comprehension.

On the other hand, vocabulary size was correlated with four phonological processing measures but not all. Among them, Elision

and Rapid Digit Naming—subtests from phonological awareness and rapid automatized naming—were effective predictors of vocabulary knowledge. The other measures similarly made small but unique contribution to vocabulary knowledge.

In sum, the present study supports the proposal that both an average vocabulary and automatic word recognition skills are fundamental to successful reading comprehension while phonological awareness is essential to learning the alphabetic English language.