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Word and pseudoword reading accuracy and reading speed in 7-15 year old print and braille readers

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Background and aims: The investigation presented in this study was performed with groups of 7-15 year old blind and sighted students and demonstrates the speed and accuracy of print versus braille (pseudo)word reading of the groups. The changes in the speed and accuracy of reading that have appeared on the surface are described in this study according to age groups. Explanations are offered which are based on some particular results of cognitive neuroscience research.

Methods: Data were collected from 180 students (nblind=90, nsighted=90). Both reading tests consist of three lists of (pseudo)words and comprising 40 1-syllable, 40 2-syllable and 40 3-4 syllable items.

Results: It had been expected that in the event of print reading, the word-length effect would be more significant for pseudowords than for words. We also expected that in the event of braille reading, no such difference would be detected between the reading of (pseudo)words, presumably due to the equality of the two types of decoding strategy. New findings arose when the results were analysed according to age group clusters.

Discussion: In the cluster of 11-15-year students (nblind=30, nsighted=30), the reading strategy of word and pseudowords is different in both modalities. According to these results, it would seem to be the case that blind readers use both direct and non-direct methods of reading.

Keywords: braille and print reading, word-length effect, reading accuracy and speed