The Role of Reading Self-Efficacy and Perception of Difficulty in English Reading among Chinese ESL Learners

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Abstract : Purpose: Recent evidence shows that reading self-efficacy and students perceived difficulty in reading are significantly associated with word reading and reading fluency. However, little is known about these relationships among students learning to read English as a second language, particularly in Chinese students. This study examined the contributions of reading self-efficacy, perception of difficulty in reading, and cognitive-linguistic skills to performance on English word reading and reading fluency in Chinese students. Method: A sample of 122 second-and third-grade students in Hong Kong, China, participated in this study. Students completed the measures of reading self-efficacy and perception of difficulty in reading. They were assessed on their English cognitive-linguistic and reading skills: rapid automatized naming, nonword reading, phonological awareness, word reading, and one-minute word reading. Results: Results of path analysis indicated that when students' grades were controlled, reading self-efficacy was a significant correlate of word reading and reading fluency, whereas perception of difficulty in reading negatively predicted word reading. Conclusion: These findings underscore the importance of taking students' reading self-efficacy and perception of difficulty in reading and their cognitive-linguistic skills into consideration when designing reading intervention and instructions for students learning English as a second language.