Visual Working Memory, Reading Abilities, and Vocabulary in Mexican Deaf Signers

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Abstract : Deaf signers usually show lower scores in Auditory Working Memory (AWM) tasks and higher scores in Visual Working Memory (VWM) tasks than their hearing pairs. Further, Working Memory has been correlated with reading abilities and vocabulary in Deaf and Hearing individuals. The aim of the present study is to compare the performance of Mexican Deaf signers and hearing adults in VWM, reading and Vocabulary tasks and observe if the latter are correlated to the former. 15 Mexican Deaf signers were assessed using the Corsi block test for VWM, four different subtests of PROLEC (Batería de Evaluación de los Procesos Lectores) for reading abilities, and the LexTale in its Spanish version for vocabulary. T-tests show significant differences between groups for VWM and Vocabulary but not for all the PROLEC subtests. A significant Pearson correlation was found between VWM and Vocabulary but not between VWM and reading abilities. This work is part of a larger research study and results are not yet conclusive. A discussion about the use of PROLEC as a tool to explore reading abilities in a Deaf population is included.

Keywords : deaf signers, visual working memory, reading, Mexican sign language
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