ABSTRACT

The present study was designed with a broad-based set of goals and accordingly was carried out in three parts. Part one dealt with reading acquisition in Persian school children in hope of shedding light on the cognitive processes involved. It was also aimed at providing insight into the strategies used by readers of Persian orthography. 120 primary and secondary school children were given specially constructed criterion based lists of words and non-words for reading. The reading scores were analyzed. The results suggested that the Persian children do go through the stages of phonological-recoding strategy and orthographic strategy as envisaged by different reading models. The analysis also revealed that the process of learning to read is affected by characteristics of Persian writing system. Part two attempted to examine children's relative reliance on phonological and orthographic skills in early grades of reading and spelling Persian and English, within and across orthographies. Vowelized Persian represents a shallow orthography with very regular grapheme to phoneme correspondence rules whereas English has an opaque orthography with inconsistent grapheme to phoneme (and vice versa) correspondence. 90 Iranian students attending both Persian and English classes from second, third and fourth grade levels were tested on reading and spelling in Persian as well as in English. The results revealed that the children had high phonological and orthographic skills in Persian as well as in English. However, in regression analysis both phonological and orthographic processing skills emerged as predictors of reading and spelling for English, while only phonological skill emerged as predictor of word reading and spelling in Persian. Part three examined reading and spelling error patterns among Persian children with developmental dyslexia and compared that with the errors exhibited by reading level matched and age matched control groups. They were matched on mental ability, reading and spelling of texts and isolated words. The results of the reading and spelling error analysis revealed a clear contribution of the uniqueness of the Persian orthography to the types of errors made by the three different groups. Similar patterns of reading and spelling error were observed among dyslexics and the reading level matched group while it was different for the age matched control group.
To:

My Father, Haj Ali (Khalifa) for being a constant source of inspiration and confidence

and

my dear wife, Shosha and my lovely daughter, Zhinoo