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**Does Linguistic Comprehension Support the Decoding Skills
of Struggling Readers?**

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requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

The majority of struggling readers experience difficulty with accurate and fluent word recognition. The purpose of this study was to investigate the contribution of linguistic comprehension to the decoding skills of struggling readers. This study focused on two groups of poor decoders defined by the Simple View of Reading. Children aged 8 to 12 years with poor decoding skills were grouped according to those with below average linguistic comprehension ($n = 18$) and those with average linguistic comprehension ($n = 18$). The performance of the two groups was compared on a number of standardised measures that included pseudoword reading, reading accuracy of words in context, reading comprehension, and reading rate. In addition, the oral reading errors of the two groups were analysed to determine whether any significant differences existed as a function of linguistic comprehension. It was hypothesised that the children with a higher level of linguistic comprehension would make more oral reading errors that were syntactically and semantically appropriate due to their more advanced linguistic comprehension skills. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between the two groups on any of the measures. This suggests that children struggling with decoding, regardless of their level of linguistic comprehension, require intervention focused primarily at the word-level. These findings do not support an approach to intervention that differentiates between poor decoders based on level of linguistic comprehension.

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Ehara taku toa, he taki tahi, he toa taki tini

Success is not the work of one, but the work of many

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