

# Implicit and explicit morphological awareness: Insight from developmental trajectories and implications for future research

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Children with language difficulties very commonly have additional literacy difficulties (MacArthur et al., 2000). However, most of the research investigating this comorbidity has focused on phonological awareness. The current project is a systematic investigation of the morphological skills of language impaired children, with and without additional literacy difficulties. Researchers have argued that, in order to further develop our understanding of language and literacy impairment, it is important to consider the demands posed by different measures of language ability (Duncan et al., 2013; Ramus et al., 2013). These can vary greatly and tasks often require multiple skills for successful completion. Some research has been conducted to try to unpick such differences in task requirements, particularly for measures of phonological awareness. For example, phonological awareness tasks have been contrasted on the basis of stimulus and response type (Cunningham et al., 2015), general processing demands (e.g. memory load: Ramus et al., 2013), and the extent to which they require children to demonstrate explicit knowledge (Roberts & McDougall, 2003). In contrast, measures of morphological awareness have received much less attention, with studies focusing on differences in stimulus type, e.g., nonwords vs. real words (Nithart et al., 2009), and differences between transparent and opaque derivations (Carlisle, 2000). The current research aims to extend this literature by systematically contrasting various existing measures of morphological awareness. Guided by previous research and drawing upon the theoretical framework outlined in the Representational Redescription Model (Karmiloff-Smith, 1992), a continuum has been developed which classifies existing morphological processing tasks according to a number of different characteristics and processing demands, including the extent to which they require children to demonstrate explicit knowledge. The current talk will outline the morphological awareness continuum and its development and discuss the usefulness of this in clarifying the complex relationship between language and literacy difficulties.

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