

## **How best to teach reading in Arabic? Which is more effective, CVsbased or phonemes-based method?**

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### **Abstract**

Based on the Psycholinguistic Grain-size Theory (Ziegler & Goswami, 2005), this study aimed to determine whether reading in Arabic is more easily acquired when the teaching method varied according to phonological unit size; phonemes, demi-phonemes (a tri-phonemic unit /ʔεC/) or core syllables

(CV). We also examined the predictors of reading via the different phonological units.

104 pre-literate kindergartners were allocated to three teaching methods matching those three phonological units using an unfamiliar script (Malayalam). The children participated in 14 training sessions which were evaluated via multiple learning (retention) and generalization measures.

The CV-based method was found to be more effective than phonemes or demi-phonemes. Further, working-memory, short-term memory and RAN predicted learning via phonemes and demi-phonemes but not via CVs.

**Keywords:** accessible phonological unit, reading acquisition, working memory