A MEASURE OF WORD-LEVEL AUTOMATICITY AND ITS RELATION TO READING FLUENCY

A Dissertation

by

ELIZABETH MCMILLAN FRYE

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APPROVED BY:

Woodrow Trathen
Woodrow Trathen, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Dissertation Committee

Darrell Morris
Darrell Morris, Ed.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee

George H Olson
George Olson, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee

Robert Schlagal
Robert Schlagal, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee

Alice Naylor
Alice P. Naylor, Ph.D.
Director of Doctoral Program

Judith E. Domer
Judith E. Domer, Ph.D.
Dean, Graduate Studies and Research

ABSTRACT

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AND ITS RELATION TO READING FLUENCY

Elizabeth McMillan Frye, B.S. Appalachian State University

M.A. Appalachian State University

Dissertation Chairperson: Woodrow Trathen, Ph.D.

A measure of word-level automaticity may have relations with other behaviors that we associate with fluent reading. Reading graded lists of isolated words presented through a flash presentation is a practice that reading clinicians have used to measure automatic word recognition. Yet, there is a paucity of research that exists on the efficacy of this practice for assessing word-level automaticity.

This dissertation study was designed to test an informal word recognition instrument, the ASUWRI, and determined it to be a reliable and valid measure of automatic word recognition. Student performance on the Appalachian State University Word Recognition Inventory (ASUWRI) with varying flash presentation durations of 300 msec, 650 msec, 1000 msec, or 2000 msec were contrasted and compared to other measures of reading. MANOVA analyses revealed that the ASUWRI was the *only* dependent measure to vary across presentation duration

conditions when combined Conditions 1 and 2 (300 & 650 msec) were contrasted with combined Conditions 3 and 4 (1000 & 2000 msec).

Post hoc analyses revealed significant differences between the mean scores of the dependent measures (reading tests) across conditions for each grade level. For third graders, the ASUWRI did not differ significantly from WCPM and *STAR Reading Test* across the presentation durations of 300 msec and 650 msec. However, findings revealed that for the 2000 msec presentation duration, the ASUWRI differed significantly from the WCPM and STAR and approached significance for the 1000 msec duration. For fourth graders, post hoc analyses revealed that the 300 msec flash presentation duration on the ASUWRI did not differ significantly from the WCPM or STAR but did differ significantly from the Woodcock. However, for the 650 msec, 1000 msec, and 2000 msec presentation durations, the ASUWRI differed significantly from WCPM, but not from Woodcock.

For both third and fourth graders, there was evidence that during the faster presentation durations of 300 and 650 msec, word-level automaticity as measured by the ASUWRI approximated automaticity in connected text as measured by WCPM. Also, the slower duration scores on the ASUWRI may indicate decoding ability (Woodcock) rather than automatic word recognition. Furthermore, the faster presentation conditions of 300 and 650 msec yielded more instructional-reading-level matches between the ASUWRI and WCPM than the slower presentation conditions of 1000 and 2000 msec.