

Determinants of Letter Knowledge in French-speaking Children

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Overview/ Introduction

-Why is alphabetic knowledge important?

- Early mastery of the alphabet leads to better reading performance tests
- Alphabetic knowledge promotes self-teaching: learning general associations between print and sound allows children to decode novel words, which is critical for allowing children to acquire new sight-word vocabulary independently.
- Not all children master the letters of the alphabet quickly, which makes knowing more about what makes letters easy or difficult to learn a pertinent question

-What were the goals of the study?

- Describe in detail the development of alphabetic knowledge from K to Grade 2
- Explore what these children find difficult to learn about the alphabet and why
- Replicate the standard relationship between letter-naming and reading performance

Methods

-Sample

- 667 French-speaking children in Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 enrolled in 14 different schools in Gatineau, Québec

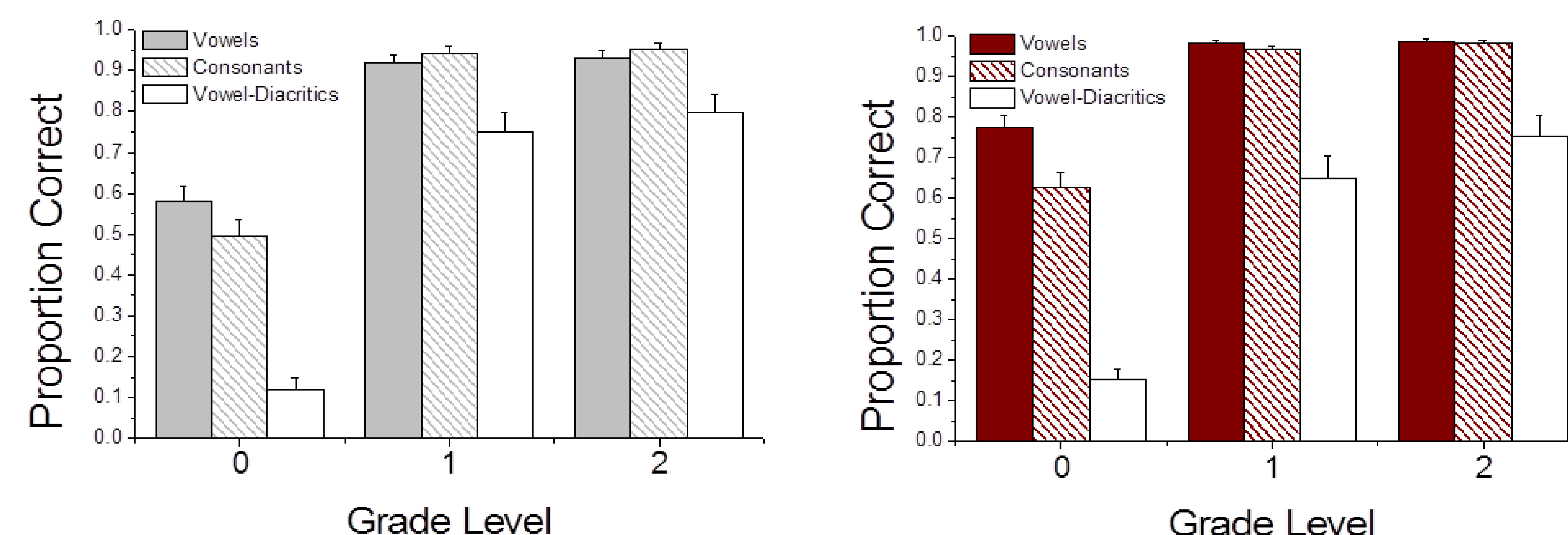
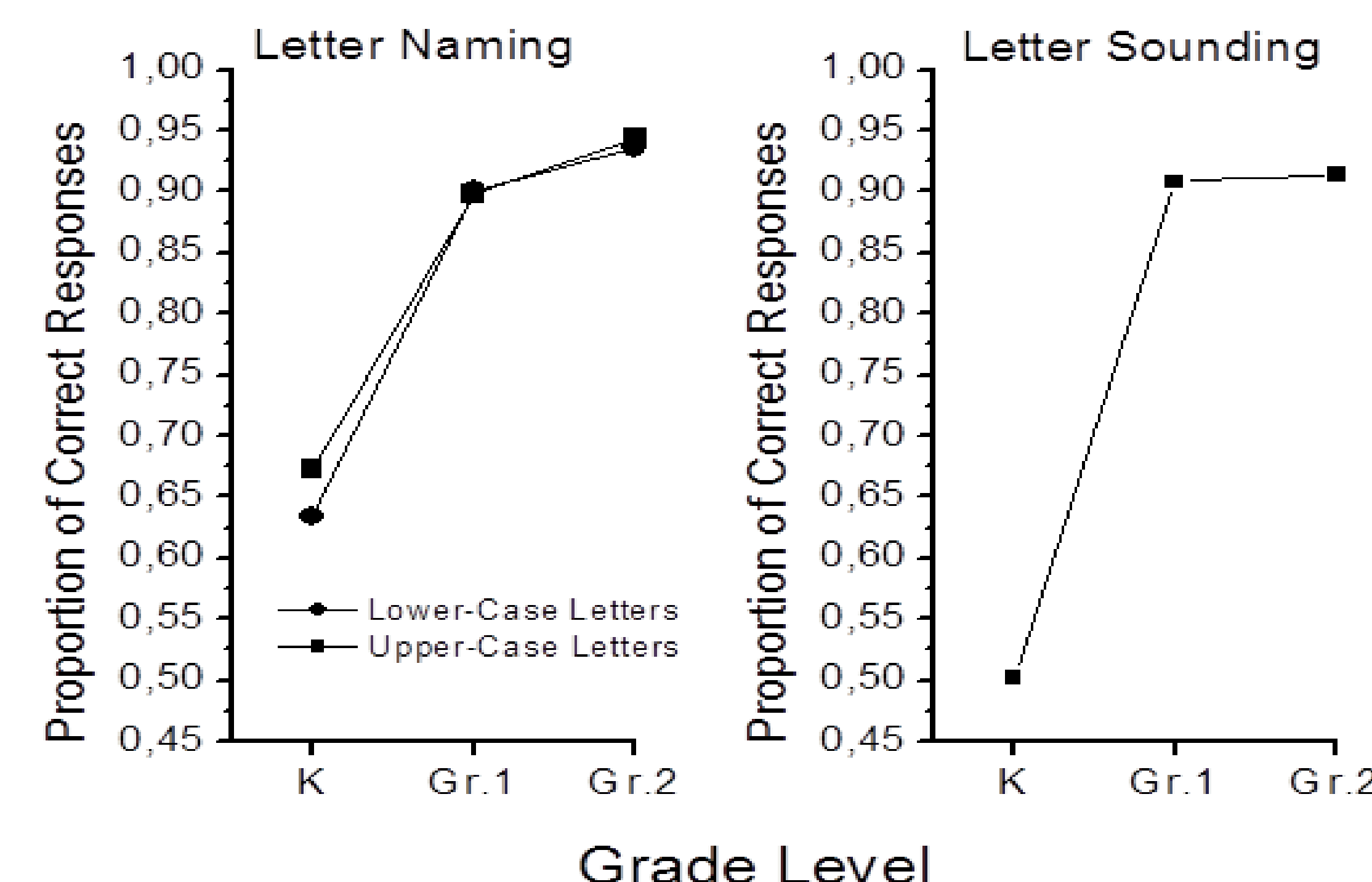
-Testing Procedure

- Individual testing in a quiet room in the child's school
- We took a large set of measures over four 30-minute sessions: alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, oral reading of real words and non words, orthographic vocabulary
- Letter naming and letter sounding measures were taken in separate session

Acknowledgments

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Results



Conclusion

-Development of alphabetic knowledge

- Lack of mastery is evident by the end of Kindergarten: only 12% master all the basic (non-diacritic) letter
- By Grade 2, 50% can name all letters; 85% can read all letters excluding diacritics

-Naming and sounding the alphabet

- Diacritics are harder than other items for both tasks
- Performance gets better from Kindergarten to Grade 1
- Naming is easier than Sounding

Reference: The theoretical Framework of this project

Desrochers, A., & Thompson, G. L. (2008). De l'orthographe à la lecture orale. In A. Desrochers, F. Martineau & Y.-C. Morin (Eds.), Orthographe française: évolution et pratique. Ottawa: Éditions David.