BACKGROUND
Rapid Automatised Naming (RAN) and Phoneme Awareness (PA) are the two main indicators of future reading proficiency.
This is known because of numerous studies carried out using samples of native English speaking children (eg. Kirby et al., 2003; Torgesen et al., 1997; for a review, see Bowey, 2005).
Are these abilities equally as important in a transparent writing system, such as Spanish, as what they have proved to be in English, an opaque writing system?
Does the phase of literacy acquisition have an effect on the relative importance of these abilities?

AIM OF THE STUDY
To determine the extent to which PA and RAN are predictors of reading fluency in Spanish, a highly transparent writing system.

METHOD
PARTICIPANTS
In this longitudinal study native Spanish speaking children were assessed at 3 time points over 3 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>First Grade</th>
<th>Second Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>4.7-5.6</td>
<td>5.7-6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TASKS - Measures of RAN and PA were administered at Kindergarten; while Reading Fluency was assessed at Kindergarten, First and Second Grade.

PA - Phoneme Blending
/s/-/o/-/l/ →/sol/ → “sol” (sun)
/k/-/r/-/u/-/θ/ → /kruθ/ → “cruz” (cross)
/a/-/ŋ/-/a/-/s/-/ → /uŋas/ → “uñas” (nails)

Reading Fluency: Nº of individually read words in 1 min.
Control Measures: Age and IQ.

RESULTS
Regressions Predicting Reading Fluency

Unique Variance (%) Explained by RAN & PA

Controlling for Initial Reading Fluency

DISCUSSION
Both RAN & PA explained unique variance during 1st Grade. A year later RAN increases in predictive power while PA is far less potent. In fact, controlling for initial reading fluency, PA ceases to be a significant predictor.
It seems that, in Spanish, after children gain high levels of proficiency on grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences the reliance on PA is reduced.
It appears during this more advanced stage improvement in reading fluency increasingly relies on the ability to quickly access lexical-phonological representations, as measured by RAN.

Contact email: onochie@correo.ugr.es

References

This work has been financed by project ID “FP7-PEOPLE-2007-1-1-ITN” Project Nº 215961 and the HUM-820 group of the JA