Reading Hebrew: The Language and the Psychology of Reading It

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Over the last two decades, the study of languages and writing systems and their relationship to literacy acquisition has begun to spread beyond studies based mostly on English language learners. As the worldwide demand for literacy continues to grow, researchers from different countries with different language backgrounds have begun examining the connection between their language and writing system and literacy acquisition. This volume is part of this new, emerging field of research. In addition to reviewing psychological research on reading (the author's specialty), the reader is introduced to the Hebrew language: its structure, its history, its writing system, and the issues involved in being fluently literate in Hebrew.

Chapters 1-4 introduce the reader to the Hebrew language and word structure and focuses on aspects of Hebrew that have been specifically researched by experimental cognitive psychologists. The reader whose only interest is in the psychological mechanisms of reading Hebrew may be satisfied with these chapters.

Chapters 5-8 briefly surveys the history of the Hebrew language and its writing system, the origin of literacy in Hebrew as one of the first alphabetic systems, and then raises questions about the viability (or possibility) of having full-scale literacy in Hebrew. Together, the two sets of chapters present the necessary background for studying the psychology of reading Hebrew and literacy in Hebrew.

This volume is appropriate for anyone interested in comparative reading and writing systems or in the Hebrew language in particular. This includes linguists, researchers, and graduate students in such diverse fields as cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, literacy education, English as a second language, and communication disorders.

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