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United Arab Emirates University

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PhD Dissertation Defense

Entitled

*TESTING THE DOUBLE-DEFICIT HYPOTHESIS IN ARABIC LANGUAGE AMONG EMARATI
STUDENTS IN GRADE 3*

By

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Abstract:

The purpose of this dissertation was to test the validity of the double-deficit hypothesis as applied to a sample of third-grade Arabic-speaking students in the United Arab Emirates. The double-deficit hypothesis postulates that individuals with a combination of Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) and Phonological Awareness (PA) deficits will tend to have worse reading ability than individuals with either a RAN deficit, a PA deficit, or no deficit. Thus, the double-deficit hypothesis has been advanced as an explanation of dyslexia. A correlational study design was applied to determine whether reading ability scores significantly lower for a double-deficit group than for a RAN deficit group, a PA deficit group, and a no-deficit group. The study's results confirmed that students who had a double deficit had significantly lower reading ability scores than other groups. The study contributed to the sparse body of empirical research on the double-deficit hypothesis among young Arabic students. The study also pinpointed differences in RAN and PA performance across groups, using an approach of post hoc analysis that has not been attempted in previous studies of this kind. The data suggest that Arabic-language educators, specialists, and caregivers must make an added effort to address the special needs of students with double deficits, especially in light of special orthographic and other features of the Arabic language.

Keywords: Double-deficit hypothesis, dyslexia, reading ability, reading disorder.