



الجامعة العربية المفتوحة
Arab Open University



LITERACY IN THE 21 CENTURY: FUNCTIONAL LITERACY; CLASSICAL LITERACY OR LITERACY IN ENGLISH?



CENTRE FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS RESEARCH
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Conference Call for Papers

In the 21st century, conceptions on literacy are changing. Current debates identify a shift in perspective as well as a new threshold in abilities and requirements. Functional literacy has been acknowledged by UNESCO as an indispensable skill in the 21st century, at individual as well as community level. Yet many countries do not meet the threshold levels required. The International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences underlines that the majority of the population in early modern Europe lack functional literacy skills (2015); while the Global Campaign for Education (2017) claims that 774 million adults worldwide, aged 15 and above, are unable to engage in basic reading.

Contemporary studies suggest that there is a gap in the perception and attainment of literacy. From a notional viewpoint, OECD countries set their threshold at functional literacy levels; MENA countries keep their focus within classical literacy requirements; while further conceptualizations link English to literacy from global and functional perspectives. From an attainment perspective, World Bank report (2019) presents literacy rates in the MENA region for the population ranging between 15 and 24 as lagging behind OECD countries.

Given that literacy rates are the outcome of educational attainment as well as the predictor of future labour force, the effective skills of the population of 15 year olds in the comprehension and processing of texts, after years of education yield unsatisfactory results.

CALR invites linguists, researchers and faculty members working in the domain of education to present working papers, research articles and case studies on classical and functional literacy, concerns and controversies in teaching literacy, particularly in relation to English. Submissions are specifically welcome on views that present functional literacy as a concept and as practice, particularly:

- For researchers:

1. What thresholds are required for literacy in the 21st century?

2. What does functional literacy mean for bilingual learners?
3. Does literacy in the primary language stimulate second language literacy?
4. Case studies from MENA and OECD countries.
5. Future directions
 - For practitioners:
 1. Are schools meeting the needs of English learners?
 2. What are appropriate models of instruction for bi-literacy development?
 3. In which abilities do learners have the largest deficits?
 4. What is the fundamental reason for their difficulties?
 5. Future directions

For conference participation:

Selected submissions will be included in CALR Linguistic Journal, vol.11, due on December 2020.

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