

A meta-analysis of the spelling abilities of children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) across European orthographies

Speakers: Nelly Joye (UCL Institute of Education, UK), Lucie Broc (University of Nice, FR)

Abstract:

Written language has been described as a window into residual language deficits in children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) and numerous studies point to a specific area of weakness in spelling. However, there are a number of challenges in interpreting the current data. There is a lack of consistency in the processes used to identify the participants, their age, the orthography in which their spelling was assessed, the type of spelling task used and the extent to which co-occurring problems (such as phonological impairments and reading impairments) are reported. We conducted a meta-analysis with the aim of identifying these factors and give a single conclusion on the spelling abilities of children with DLD, across European orthographies.

A systematic search of the literature was conducted, yielding 32 studies. From these 32 studies, the difference in scores between children with DLD and a comparison group of typical children was extracted, giving a set of 64 effect sizes to be meta-analysed. These effect sizes were combined for the overall set, as well as for subsets of studies that differentially looked at the impact of phonological and reading difficulties on the spelling of children with DLD. Moderators such as age, spelling task or orthography were also considered.

This meta-analysis confirms the spelling deficit of children with DLD, and points to a number of factors that might impact on the spelling performance of children with DLD, such as phonological or reading deficits. However, most studies assessed children's spelling in English and little were found in other orthographies, impeding our ability to assess the impact of orthographies on the spelling ability of children with DLD. This talk will discuss these results and future directions for research on DLD's spelling performance across orthographies.

Informazioni aggiuntive:

Lucie Broc is a lecturer at the University of Nice. She is teaching developmental psychology to trainee primary and secondary school teachers. Her research interests are typical and atypical language and literacy development in children and adolescents. During her PhD at the university of Poitiers, under the supervision of Thierry Olive, she evaluated the spelling and writing skills of children with a developmental language disorder. On-going work involves the collaboration with Julie Dockrell and Nelly Joye on cross-linguistic aspects of spelling development (which will be presented at the seminar). Another of her on-going projects assesses the impact of verbal working memory on the narrative skills in children with DLD, a hearing impairment or autism, with Marie-Anne Schelstraete at the University of Louvain-La-Neuve in Belgium.

Nelly Joye is a final year PhD student at the UCL Institute of Education, under the supervision of Julie Dockrell and Chloë Marshall. Her background is as a school-based speech and language therapist and her research interests are also in atypical language and literacy development across languages. Her PhD project is a cross-linguistic French-English comparison of the spelling of children with DLD. As part of this project, she is currently collecting data in schools in Nice. This visit to Nice is also the opportunity to write the work that will be presented today with Lucie, and to collect some questionnaire data for the European Literacy Network action of the COST, also in collaboration with Lucie.

Nelly and Lucie are both part of WG1 in the COST action IS1401 to build a European Literacy Network and started working together during their PhD.