

“QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCES IN SPELLING ERRORS BETWEEN MILDLY MENTALLY RETARDED AND HIGHLY INTELLIGENT DYSLEXIC PUPILS”

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INTRODUCTION

Few studies until now investigated the spelling performance of mildly mentally retarded (MMR) and highly intelligent dyslexic pupils and even few in Greek language. Most of them concluded that dyslexics and mildly mentally retarded pupils make similar kind-type and number of errors during writing and they have similar writing speeds.

AIM

The aim of the present study was to investigate if differences exist in the kind-type and number of spelling errors in Greek texts, between highly intelligent dyslexics and controls with mild mental retardation.

HYPOTHESES

- 1) Pupils with MMR will make more and different kind-type of spelling errors than highly intelligent dyslexics, while writing Greek texts.
- 2) Highly intelligent dyslexics will write faster than MMR pupils.

METHODOLOGY

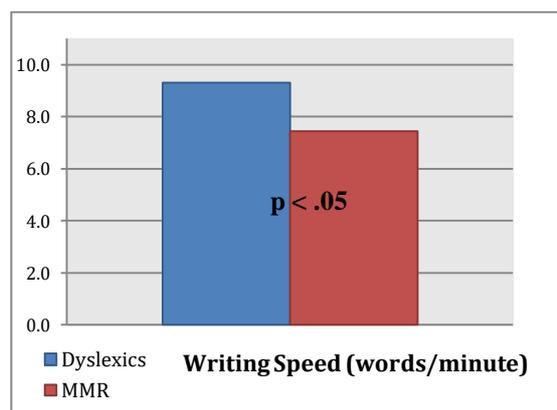
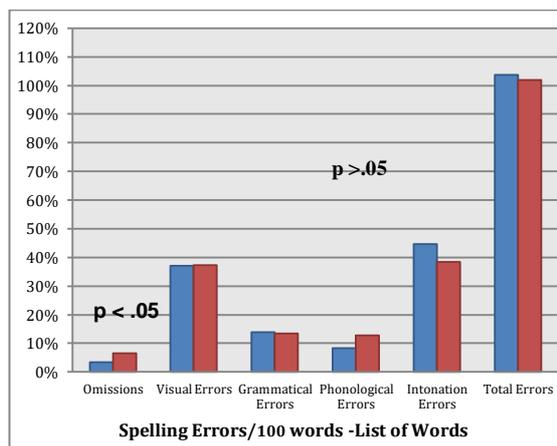
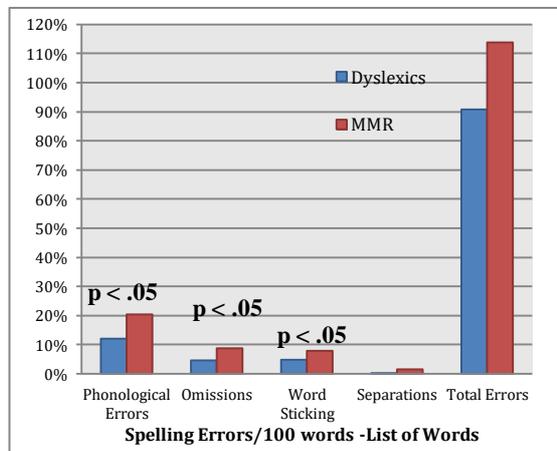
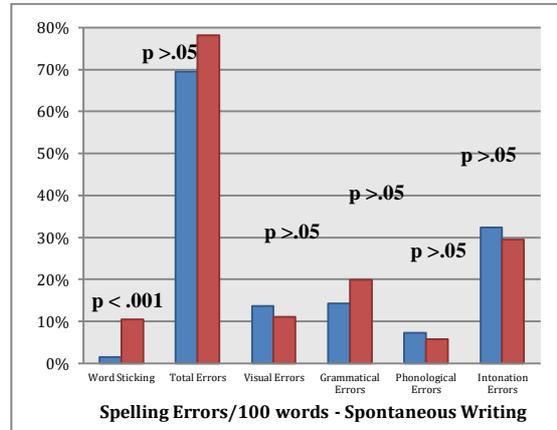
Participants: N = 78 Greek pupils divided into 2 groups:

- 1) Fifty three (53) highly intelligent dyslexics age *years, with mean IQ *
- 2) Twenty-five (25) mildly mentally retarded pupils age *years, with mean IQ *

They were pupils who were attending 2nd to 4th grade of elementary Greek school. The groups were matched for age, sex and socio-educational level.

Procedure - Materials. Each pupil was tested individually in a quiet room. They were given 3 texts appropriate for their age: 1. Dictation, 2. Spontaneous writing, 3. Word list consisted of 50 words of ascending difficulty. Their IQ was assessed with the WISC-III.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GROUPS



RESULTS

Mildly mentally retarded pupils made significantly more spelling errors only in a few categories. Furthermore, both groups had similar writing speed, except for the word list, where dyslexic wrote significantly faster than mildly mentally retarded (P<.05).

- Statistically significant differences between the two groups were found in the number of phonological errors, omissions, word sticking and word separations (P<.05). The mildly mentally retarded children performed worse than dyslexics. The fact that mildly mentally retarded pupils exhibit high rates of spelling errors is due to their of their limited mental ability reflected in their general learning retardation that is apparent in all areas of learning.
- Regarding the quality-kind of errors, it was found that the same categories of errors appear in both groups.
- In spontaneous orthography and writing by dictation, the two groups did not differ significantly. Dyslexics made the same percentage of visual and grammatical errors as the MMR pupils, who made slightly more grammatical than visual errors. In the word list, visual errors were found to be more frequent in comparison to grammatical errors, for both groups.

CONCLUSIONS

Highly intelligent dyslexics showed similar profile with the mildly mentally retarded pupils in most categories in the kind-type and in the number of spelling errors they made. Therefore, it is not possible to separate the two groups based on their kind-type and number of spelling errors. However, the two groups can be accurately separated by an objective biological diagnostic test (Pavlidis, 1981, 1990).