

Abstract

This study examined the phonological awareness in Chinese dyslexic children and normal readers. 23 dyslexic and 21 age-matched controls studying in Grade 2 and 3 were recruited from local primary schools in Hong Kong. Children's performance on phonological awareness tasks were compared in two languages, Cantonese, their first language (L1), and English, their second language (L2). Correlation between children's phonological awareness and reading ability were examined. Error pattern of the onset-deletion tasks between the dyslexic children and controls were compared. Result indicated that dyslexic children performed significantly worse than controls in Cantonese onset deletion task, English syllable deletion and onset deletion tasks. Stronger correlation was found between English phonological awareness and reading ability. Error pattern were similar in the two groups despite dyslexic children made more total number of errors. The findings coincide with phonological deficit hypothesis of dyslexic which phonological awareness deficit of dyslexic children is also found in a non-alphabetic script, Chinese. Onset deletion was found to be a better predictive of reading ability than syllable deletion in Chinese. Dyslexic children made same types of error as normal reading peers.

Keywords: dyslexia, non-alphabetic language, phonological awareness