

MEASURING LINGUISTIC AND COGNITIVE ABILITIES BY MEANS OF A SENTENCE REPETITION TASK IN CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DYSLEXIA AND DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study is twofold: (a) to examine linguistic and cognitive abilities in Greek-speaking children with Developmental Dyslexia (DD) or Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), and (b) to detect whether the performance on Sentence Repetition Task (SRT) is affected by (verbal) working memory (WM) abilities. Previous studies have indicated that children with both DLD and DD have lower linguistic and WM abilities in comparison to their peers. More recent studies focus on the interaction of these two abilities, indicating that the linguistic deficit is driven by the cognitive deficit. Sentence Repetition Task (SRT) is an appropriate and reliable tool for measuring both linguistic and cognitive abilities. For this reason, we tested 30 monolingual children (with DD, DLD and non-impaired controls) by means of an SRT and a verbal working memory task (VWMT). The results have shown that both clinical groups had lower linguistic and cognitive abilities than the control group; however the DLD group show a lower performance on the SRT both in terms of accuracy and grammaticality in comparison to the DD group. Interestingly, we found that the performance on the VWMT predicts the accuracy on the SRT, while lexical knowledge predicts the grammaticality scores in both clinical groups, albeit not in the control group. From our findings we deduce that (a) both clinical groups have impaired linguistic and cognitive abilities; however the DLD group encounters more difficulties with their linguistic abilities and (b) SRT measures both morphosyntactic abilities and WM abilities, as different predictor variables have a different impact on participants' performance.

Keywords: Developmental Dyslexia, Developmental Language Disorder, Sentence Repetition Task, working memory abilities.