

ENGLISH SIGHT WORD RECOGNITION BY TAMIL DYSLEXIC CHILDREN

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INTRODUCTION

Dyslexia is generally defined as a reading and spelling difficulty discrepant with intelligence and educational opportunities. It has been characterized as a language based disorder (Catts 1989, Kamhi & Catts 1986, Vellutino 1979), where 'language' is a term for what theoretical linguists would tend to call 'grammar'. In addition to their relatively poor written language skills, children with developmental dyslexia have been found to exhibit difficulties on a variety of language tasks, including speech perception and production and syntactic sensitivity (Byrne 1981, Catts 1986, Joanisse, Manis, Keating & Seidenberg 2000, Lewis & Freebairn 1992, Rispen 2004, Snowling 1981).

Reading is a complex process. Successful reading requires many basic processes, such as the identification of letters, the mapping of letters into sounds and the recognition of words. Learning to read words by sight is a central part of developing skill as a reader. All the beginning readers start reading through the skills of sight words. The Proficient reading comprehension depends on the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read. In 1930s and 1940s, reading programs were focused on comprehension, and children were taught to read whole words by sight.

Five different ways of reading words (Ehri, 1991 and 1994)

1. By sounding out and blending letters, referred to as *decoding* or *phonological recoding*.
2. By pronouncing common spelling patterns, a more advanced form of decoding.
3. By retrieving sight words from memory.
4. By analogizing to words already known by sight
5. By using context to predict words.

SIGHT WORDS

The sight-word method was invented by Gallaudet, the director of the American Asylum at Hartford in the 1830s. It was designed for the education of the deaf by juxtaposing a word, with a picture. Orton, a neuropathologist in Iowa in 1929 sought the cause of children's reading problems and concluded that their problems were being caused by the new sight method of teaching reading.

The "Sight Word" method is not synonymous with "Whole Language" approach, but is often considered to be part of it. The *sight* indicates that sight of the word activates that word in memory, including information about its spelling, pronunciation, typical role in sentences, and meaning. Whole-word readers were called "subjective" readers, as they must scan for meaning-bearing parts of words from *external* features (length, shape, or whatever they can remember), relying on context clues to "predict" (guess). Many guesses about unfamiliar (unmemorized) words must be verified by context, re-examined and revised as necessary.

Sight words are words the reader learns to recognize immediately and accurately. They are words that are common in many books and texts. When people are able to identify sight words, reading becomes much easier. The Kucera-Francis lists of 220 most common sight words in the English language. The top 25 are: *the, of, and, to, a, in, that, is, was, he, for, it, with, as, his, on, be, at, by, I, this, had, not, are, but*.

DIFFERENT PHASES OF SIGHT WORD LEARNING

There are four phases of sight word learning, they are:

1. Pre-alphabetic
2. Partial alphabetic
3. Full alphabetic

4. Consolidated alphabetic

PRE-ALPHABETIC PHASE

The pre-alphabetic phase characterizes sight word learning at the earliest period, before children know much about the alphabetic system and, of course, long before they can read independently. This phase is called *pre-alphabetic* because, unlike the phases that come later, readers do not use letter-sound relations in their reading. In this phase, children remember how to read sight words by forming connections between selected visual attributes in or around words and their pronunciations or meanings (Ehri & Wilce, 1985; Gough & Hillinger, 1980; Gough, Juel, & Roper/Schneider, 1983).

PARTIAL ALPHABETIC PHASE

The second phase of sight word learning is called *partial alphabetic phase*. Partial alphabetic readers remember how to read sight words by forming connections between only some of the letters in written words and sounds detected in their pronunciations. Because of the first and final letters and sounds in words are the easiest to pick out, these may become the connections that are remembered. We have called this *phonetic cue reading* (Ehri, 1987; Ehri & Wilce, 1985; 1987a, 1987b; Rack, Hulme, Snowling & Wightman, 1994; Scott & Ehri, 1989).

FULL ALPHABETIC PHASE

The third phase of sight word learning is *full alphabetic phase*. Beginners remember sight words by forming complete connections between letters seen in written words and phonemes detected in their pronunciations. This is possible because readers know how graphemes symbolize phonemes in the conventional spelling system, and because they can segment pronunciations of words into phonemes. When readers apply this knowledge to form connections for specific sight words, spellings become fully bonded to pronunciations.

CONSOLIDATED ALPHABETIC PHASE

The last phase of sight word learning is *consolidated alphabetic phase*. In this phase the readers are able to remember complete information about the spellings of a rapidly growing number of sight words. As fully connected spellings of more and more words are retained in memory, letter patterns that recur across different words become familiar. Repeated experience of reading a letter sequence that symbolizes the same phoneme blend across different words yielding a consolidated unit in which

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several graphemes become bonded to a blend of phonemes. This phase allows readers to operate with multi-letter units that may be morphemes, syllables, or parts of syllables.

SIGHT WORDS READING BY DYSLIXICS

Many poor readers have difficulty in reading fluency because they do not identify words in the reading passage. With their energies focused on recognizing words, their reading is filled with long pauses and many repetitions. Fluent reading requires selection of sight words within the stock of vocabulary. When a selection contains too many difficult (non sight) words, the reading material will be too arduous and lead to frustration for the readers. (Burns, Roe & Smith, 2002: Jenkins et al 2003).

Dyslexic children have deficit in phonological processing so they have problems in segmenting words into phonemes, and also they have trouble in pseudowords in reading. The spelling difficulties persist in those children. In addition to that, dyslexic children had deficit in sight word reading because of the irregular spelling pattern system of English language; particularly Tamil dyslexic children face a lot of problems in learning English as a second language.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The present paper explores the reading errors by Tamil dyslexic children in English sight words.

METHOD

SUBJECTS

About 13 Tamil speaking dyslexic children from both the English and Tamil medium children aged about 7 to 14 years are taken for this study. Among these, two girls and two boys were from Tamil medium.

MATERIALS

3½ x 2½ inch Flash cards are prepared as English Basic Sight words for data collection for this study. Personal interaction and observation was used to collect the data.

ANALYSIS**PRE-PRIMER WORDS****ADDITION**

Initial Consonant

"has"	for	"as"
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Final Consonant

"butu"	for	"but"
"too"	for	"to"
"one"	for	"on"

DELETION

Initial Consonant

"is"	for	"his"
"or"	for	"for"
"as"	for	"was"

Final Vowel/silent-e

"hav"	for	"have"
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Consonant Digraph

"e"	for	"she"
"at"	for	"that"

SUBSTITUTION

Medial Vowel

"his"	for	"her"
-------	-----	-------

Final Consonant

"than"	for	"that"
--------	-----	--------

REVERSAL

Mirror image

"saw"	for	"was"
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PRIMER Words**ADDITION**

Initial Consonant

"many"	for	"any"
"know"	for	"now"
"your"	for	"our"

Final Vowel

"moru"	for	"more"
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	“overu”	for	“over”
DELETION			
Initial Consonant	“an”	for	“man”
	“an”	for	“can”
Final Consonant	“the”	for	“them”
	“no”	for	“now”
	“it”	for	“its”
Medial Vowel	“sad”	for	“said”
Consonant Digraph	“fir”	for	“first”
Suffix	“on”	for	“only”
SUBSTITUTION			
Initial Consonant	“few”	for	“new”
	“kan”	for	“can”
Medial Vowel	“then”	for	“than”
REVERSAL			
Mirror image	“nam”	for	“man”
	“own”	for	“now”
FIRST Grade Words			
ADDITION			
Initial Consonant	“beach”	for	“each”
	“down”	for	“own”
Final Consonant	“justu”	for	“just”
	“worku”	for	“work”
DELETION			
Initial Consonant	“any”	for	“many”
	“here”	for	“where”
	“our”	for	“your”

Final Consonant	“own”	for	“down”
	“year”	for	“years”
Final Vowel/silent-e	“mak”	for	“make”
Consonant Digraph	“rough”	for	“through”
Prefix	“cause”	for	“because”

SUBSTITUTION

Initial Consonant	“gust”	for	“just”
Final Consonant	“man”	for	“may”
Medial Vowel	“man”	for	“men”
Consonant Digraph	“would”	for	“should”

SECOND GRADE WORDS**ADDITION**

Initial Consonant	“bus”	for	“us”
Final Consonant	“known”	for	“know”
	“used”	for	“use”
Final vowel	“oldu”	for	“old”
Medial Vowel	“palace”	for	“place”

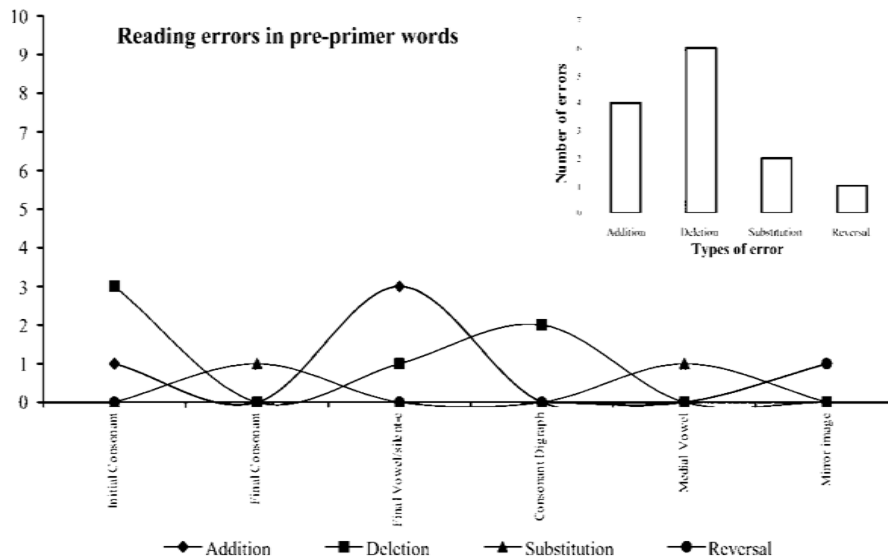
DELETION

Initial Consonant	“now”	for	“know”
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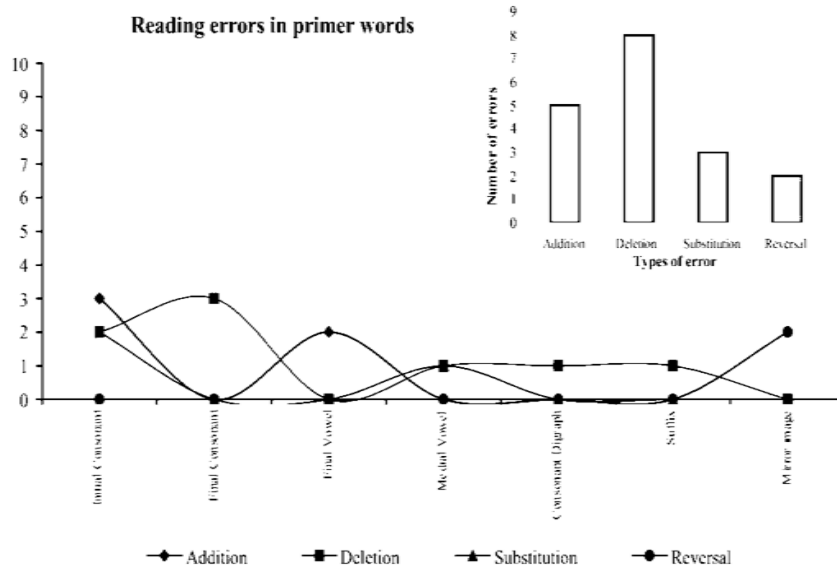
	“art”	for	“part”
Final Consonant			
	“state”	for	“states”
Initial Vowel			
	“gain”	for	“again”
Medial Consonant			
	“tree”	for	“three”
Consonant Digraph			
	“eat”	for	“great”
	“all”	for	“small”
SUBSTITUTION			
Initial Consonant			
	“gear”	for	“year”
Medial Vowel			
	“want”	for	“went”
	“come”	for	“came”
REVERSAL			
Mirror image			
	“su”	for	“us”
THIRD GRADE WORDS			
ADDITION			
Initial Consonant			
	“send”	for	“end”
Final Vowel			
	“lastu”	for	“last”
Final Vowel/silent-e			
	“fare”	for	“far”
DELETION			
Initial Consonant			
	“old”	for	“told”
Final Consonant			
	“eye”	for	“eyes”
Initial Vowel			
	“way”	for	“away”
Consonant Digraph			
	“throu”	for	“through”
Negative form			
	“do”	for	“don’t”
	“did”	for	“didn’t”
Prefix			

	“til”	for	“until”
Suffix			
	“do”	for	“does”
SUBSTITUTION			
Initial Consonant			
	“but”	for	“put”
	“land”	for	“hand”
Medial Vowel			
	“sit”	for	“set”
	“get”	for	“got”

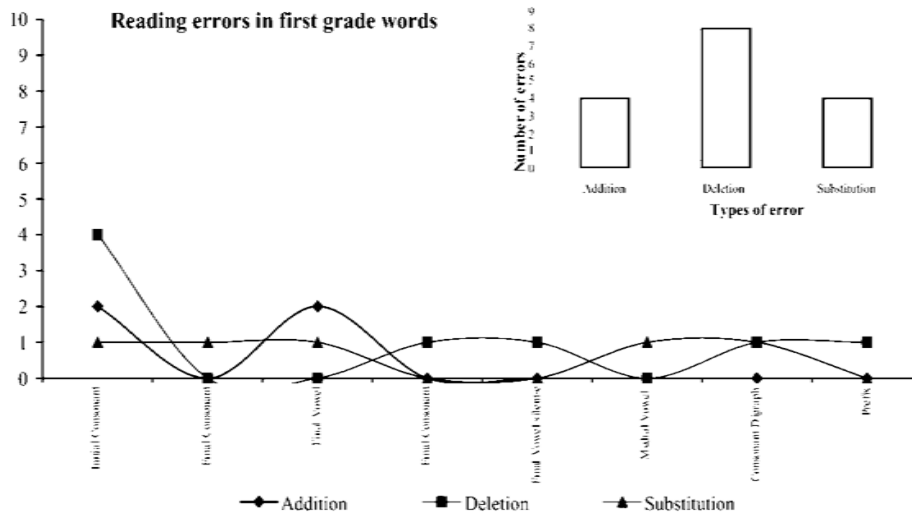
RESULTS



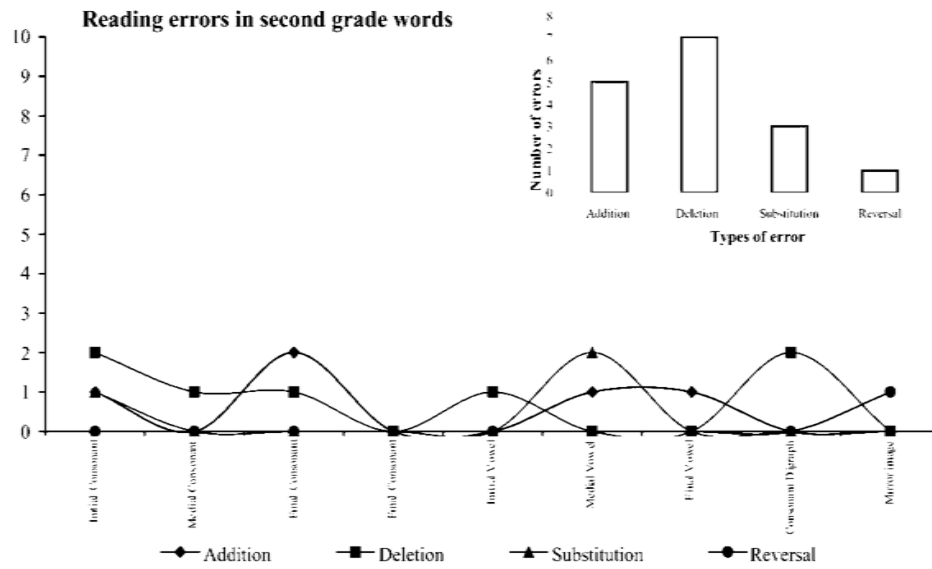
Graph - 1



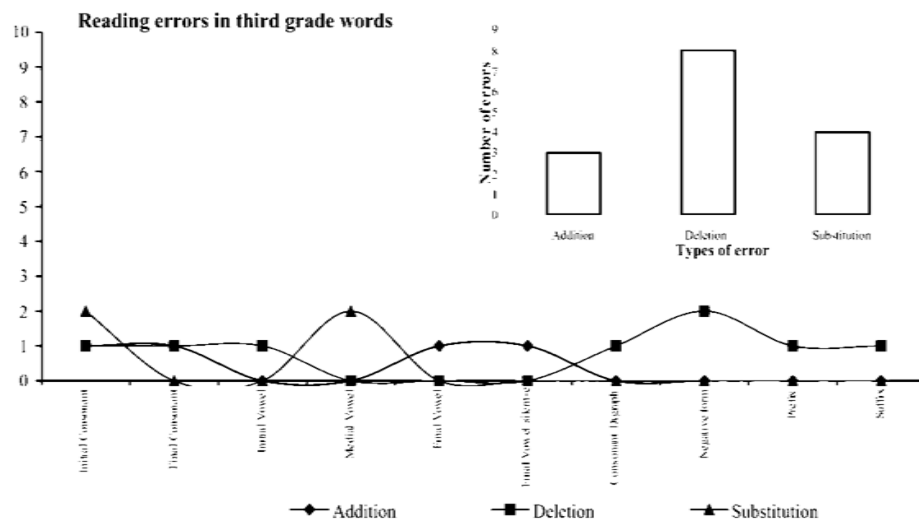
Graph - 2

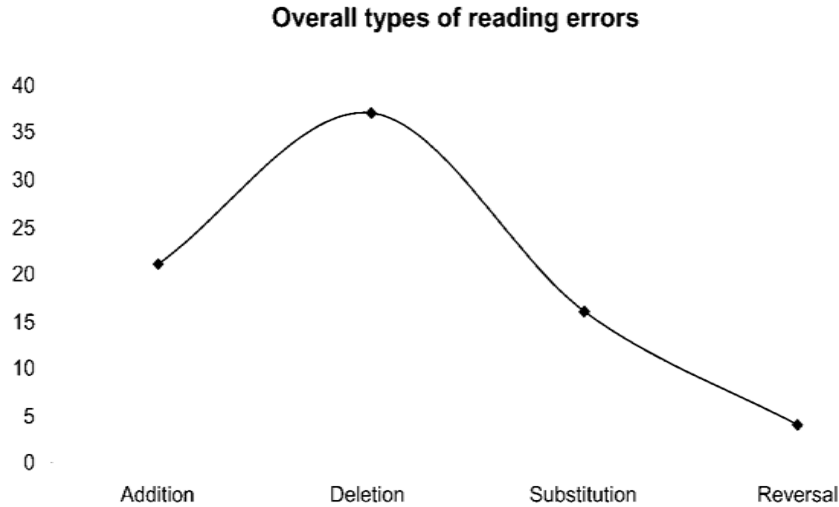


Graph - 3



Graph - 4



Graph – 5**Graph - 6****CONCLUSION**

The dyslexic children has problem in word recognition skills. They commit errors in phonetically equivalent and/or non equivalent letters which were substituted, added or deleted at the initial, medial and final position. These children have added, substituted, deleted and reversal letters in various position. Tamil dyslexic children learning English as a second language faced many problems to read and the mother tongue (Tamil) impact also viewed in their reading. Skilled readers can learn to read new sight words with very little practice. But, in the case of dyslexics and poor readers, they cannot learn to read without the extensive help of a one-to-one tutor for a year or more years. Deficit of sight word recognition in dyslexic children is due to the lack of grapho-phonetic knowledge to analyze grapheme-phoneme matches in order to store complete representations of sight words in memory. To develop the sight word learning in dyslexic children, the teachers must have more phonic knowledge and also train these children in proper way by presenting flash cards. This will definitely help the dyslexic children to get success in learning to read words by sight.

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