



The nature of dyslexia in a transparent orthography

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Reading involves decoding written language in order to understand it. In learning to read, children implicitly learn their writing system encodes their spoken language and thus they can decode printed words into spoken words to get meaning. However, many children around the world have problems in learning to read, failing to acquire fluent decoding. Research suggests that underlying this difficulty in learning to read (dyslexia) is a phonological deficit that takes various forms. Theories of dyslexia assume that children with dyslexia do not develop effective phonological representations, which results in phonological processing difficulties. However, the existing evidence is mainly based on studies in children learning to read English, which has an opaque orthography, and is one of the hardest orthographies to master. In this talk, I will consider the issues involved in dyslexia in Dutch which can be considered a transparent orthography. I will make clear that research evidence shows that the cause of dyslexia may lay in either an underspecification or an overspecification of phonological representations in the brain of the dyslexic child.