Chapter II

READING AND SELECTIVE SPATIAL ATTENTION: EVIDENCE FROM BEHAVIORAL STUDIES IN DYSLEXIC CHILDREN*

Andrea Facoetti

Dipartimento di Psicologia Generale, Università degli Studi di Padova, Italy
Unità di Psicologia Cognitiva, Istituto Scientifico "E. Medea" di Bosisio P, Lecco, Italy
Unità di Neuropsichiatria, Azienda Ospedaliera di Bergamo, Italy

ABSTRACT

Learning to read requires appropriate auditory-phonological and visual-spatial skills. According to the dual-route model, written words can be processed either by a sub-lexical route (analytic procedure), based on grapheme-phoneme correspondences, or by lexical route (global procedure), based on lexical units. However, the sub-lexical and the lexical routes are not independent components of written word recognition. They appear to be reciprocally related with an early role of the sub-lexical route on reading acquisition. This chapter considers crucial aspects of selective spatial attention in learning to read by the sub-lexical route. First, I will briefly review the recent literature on reading acquisition and on the crucial issue of visual and auditory selective attention in reading and dyslexia. Secondly, I will present new empirical evidence of a specific deficit of visual attention in dyslexic children. In particular, I will report and discuss the results of recent studies related to (a) attention focusing during word reading and letter identification; and (b) the time course of attentional focusing in the left and right visual hemifields. Finally, I will discuss the different behavioral pattern in dyslexic children compared to normally reading children in relation to new studies on the neural basis of reading.

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Correspondence to: Andrea Facoetti, Dipartimento di Psicologia Generale, Via Venezia 8, 35131 Padova, Italy. Tel: +39-049-8276672, Fax: +39-049-8276600, E-mail address: andreafacoetti@unipd.it
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REFERENCES


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