

Research Report

ERP Evidence for the Phonological Loop Model in Chinese Reading

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Accepted 17 August 2007

Available online 25 August 2007

ABSTRACT

An event-related potential (ERP) experiment was conducted to explore the difference between Chinese-speaking dialectic children and normal school children in orthographic and phonological processing during Chinese sentence reading. Participants were all pre-reading children, 6-8 years old and were asked to judge whether the sentence was semantically acceptable. The critical manipulation was on the sentence-final orthographic compound, which were either correct or incorrect. For the incorrect compound, the second character of the base word was replaced by homophonic orthographic similar character. In addition, for the normal control, the orthographic and phonological mismatch elicited more negative ERP response, especially on the baseline, over a relatively long time course (including the time window of P200 and N400) at the central-parietal region. In contrast, the dialectic children in general showed no difference between experimental conditions for P200 and N400, although the more detailed time course analysis did reveal some weak effects for the N400 component.

Beni, 2005b; Molfe et al., 2006; Schlee-Kneel et al., 2004; Tallo and Keenan, 1990, 1999; Wimpey et al., 2002). With some exceptions (see below), feeding difficulties in the hearing-impaired child are due to a deficit in processing a linguistic information of the upcoming word and in segmenting them in syllables and phonemes and how the deficit would manifest in the early behavioral period. The main purpose of this ERP research is to examine the neural mechanisms of orthographic and phonological processing deficits in reading Chinese characters. Before we make an introduction to the Chinese writing system and the experimental design of this study, we first present a brief review of the early orthographic and phonological processing and the

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o hog aphic kill and in apid naming. A he ne oph iolog- ical le el, [Meng e al. \(2005\)](#) ho ed ha Chine e d le- ic child en ha e malle mi ma ch nega i i ie (MMN) han no mal con ol o a di o im li de ia ing in ini ial con onan o . o el fom he anda d llable and o im li de ia ing in empo al info ma ion.

In o de o in e iga e he ne oph iological ma ke of he po en ial defici in p oce ing o hog aphic and phono- logical info ma ion in en ence eading, e eco ded ERP

hen Chine e- peaking d le ic child en and he ma ched no mal con ol e e p e en ed, o d-b - o d, i h en- ence ha ended i h he c i cal o-cha ac e compo nd o d .The c ial manip la ion a on he econd cha ac e of he e compo nd (ee [Table 1](#)), ch ha he co ec cha ac e e e eplaced b cha ac e hich e e o hog aphicall imila o, b phonologicall diffe en fom he ba e cha ac e (in he o hog aphic condi ion), o b cha - ac e hich e e homophonic o, b o hog aphicall diffe en fom he ba e cha ac e (in he homophonic condi ion). Thi manip la ion e led in en ence ending i h compo nd non o d . Al ho gh he inco ec inp cha ac e b hem el e o ld be able o acce he co e ponding mo phemic ep e en a ion in he le icon ([Zho and Ma len-Wil on, 2000a](#); [Zho e al., 1999](#)), he combina ion of he fi , co ec cha ac e and he econd, inco ec cha ac e in he homophonic and o hog aphic condi ion co ld no ac i a e ongl he eman ic ep e en- a ion of he ba e o d in he le icon and hi o ld e l in diffic lie in in eg a ing he c en inp i h he p io en en ial con e . Mo eo e , beca e he ba e o d , he mo pheme co e ponding o he inp cha ac e and he mo pheme co e ponding o he eplaced c i cal cha ac e in he ba e o d e e all no n (ee he Me hod ec ion), he mo phological p oce e in ol ed in p oce ing he com- po nd non o d in he homophonic and o hog aphic condi- ion ho ld be imila and an diffe en ial ERP effec be een he condi ion co ld onl be a ib ed o he impac of o hog aphic and phonological mi ma che be een he inp cha ac e and he ba e o d pon eman ic p oce e . Gi en he p e io die conce ning he p oce ing of eman icall incong en o d in We e n lang age o c ip fo d le ic o lang age-impai ed indi id al (e.g., [Heleni e al., 1999](#); [Ne ille e al., 1993](#); [Robichon e al., 2002](#); [Sabi ch e al., 2006](#)) and gi en he finding in [Li e al. \(2003\)](#) and [Valde -So a e al. \(1993\)](#) fo Chine e o hog aphic and phonological p oce ing in indi id all p e en ed o d , e p edic ed ha , fo bo h he d le ic and he no mal pa ici- pan , he N400 componen fo he c i cal im li ho ld be mo e nega i e-going fo he o hog aphic and homophonic

condi ion han fo he ba eline condi ion. Impo anl , depending on he he he o hog aphic o phonological info ma ion i ed p edominan l o con ain acce o le ical eman ic ([Zho and Ma len-Wil on, 1999, 2000b](#)), he o hog aphic o phonological mi ma ch be een he inp o d and he ba e o d co ld elici diffe en ial N400 effec be een he e p e imen al condi ion fo he o g o p of pa icipan . The e co ld al o be diffe ence in he P200 componen be een he condi ion and be een he pa ici- pan g o p .

2. e t

2.1. Behavioral data

Fo eac ion ime (RT) and e o a e (ee [Table 2](#)) in he eman ic accep abili j dgmen a k, 2 (d le ic . . no - mal) 3 (o hog aphic . . homophonic . . ba eline) ANOVA e e cond c ed. Fo RT , he main effec of pa icipan g o p a ignifican ,

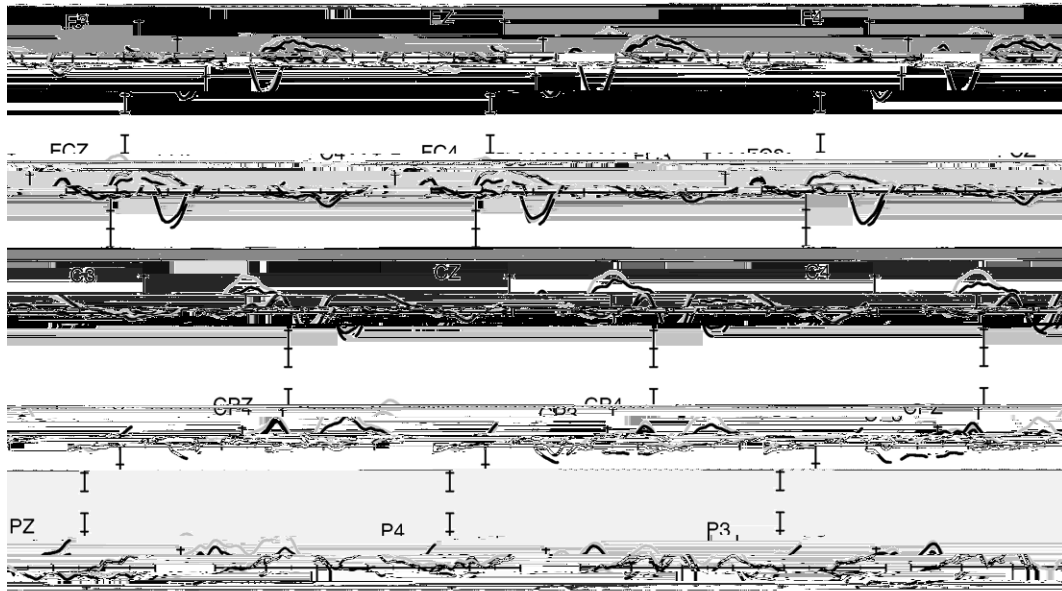


Figure 1. Comparison of the mean amplitude of the P3 component in the control group (n=15) and the developmental dyslexia group (n=15) for the three conditions. The P3 component is the largest peak in the ERP waveform, and its amplitude is significantly larger in the control group than in the developmental dyslexia group for the orthographic and homophonic conditions (p < 0.01). The P3 component is also significantly larger in the control group than in the developmental dyslexia group for the baseline condition (p < 0.05). Error bars represent the standard error of the mean.

The developmental children had higher error rates than the normal controls in the orthographic ($p < 0.01$) and the homophonic ($p < 0.01$) conditions, but not in the baseline condition. Moreover, the error rates did not differ between the

developmental children and the normal controls in the orthographic and homophonic conditions (e.g., significant higher error rates in the baseline condition ($p < 0.05$) for the developmental children). The finding

baseline condition ($-0.39 \mu\text{V}$). The main effect of an electrode /
position location is significant, F

homophonic condition, which had the orthographic mismatch. This condition gave rise, compared to the lexical children had the reading deficit in phonological processing than in orthographic processing. Moreover, in a later experiment of 531-676 ms, the homophonic condition actually led to a negative-going ERP component for the lexical children, suggesting that the phonological information concerning the orthographic processing was inhibited in the homophonic condition helped the lexical children to access the semantic of the word and hence reduced the magnitude of the negative ERP component.

The present finding of a negative effect (e.g., N400) for the homophonic and orthographic condition for the lexical group than for the control group appears to be inconsistent with the previous studies in alphabetic script. Using the same design as the present study (e.g., Ackema et al., 1994; Looch et al., 1997; McPherson et al., 1996, 1998) observed a stronger N400 component for the lexical than for the control (see Looch et al., 2003). However, the apparent inconsistency can be explained by the experimental task which applied different levels of orthographic processing. On the other hand, in an experiment, Robichon et al. (2002) found that the semantic incongruency did elicit a large N400 component and a large N400 effect for the lexical than for the control (also see Neill et al., 1993 for language-impaired children; see Helenius et al., 1999), suggesting that the reading is difficult in reading words meaning in an incongruent condition. Given the characteristics of the N400 component, it is likely that the N400 component is a reflection of the semantic incongruency in the orthographic processing.

15.6(of2(i)0(4(b)13.9()-288.3()15.1(h)0(e)-275.7(e)0()25.4(p)0(e)240)0(i)23.8



to examine the possible gender difference in Reading fluency and vocabulary and found no difference between the dyslexic girls and the dyslexic boys ($p > 0.1$) or between the normal control girls and the control boys ($p > 0.1$).

4.2. Stimuli

4.2.1. Stimuli and design

The experiment had three conditions: orthographic

can hi. The linked bilal ma oid e . ed a efe ence poin
and he AF elec ode on he cap e . ed a g o nd. Elec ode
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pa 0.05-
