Dyslexia and English as a foreign language

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Abstract
According to Richardson (1992), dyslexia means a specific language disorder that involves difficulties with reading and often an associated impediment with the spoken word and/or writing. Dyslexia is a very broad subject with many aspects of study. Thus, this research paper will only concentrate on a specific issue: the spelling difficulties that young Greek-Cypriot dyslexics face when they try to learn English as a foreign language.

After defining dyslexia the spelling difficulties that dyslexics face with their native language will be referred. Moreover, a reference will be made to how the educational system treats these children. Then, a great importance will be given (a) on the spelling problems faced by dyslexics when they learn English as a foreign language, (b) on how we can help those children to cope with their difficulties.

Finally, an examination of the actual difficulties that Greek-Cypriot dyslexics face will be exemplified by means of original data and will indicate how the theory corresponds to reality.

1. Introduction
Dyslexia is a learning disability characterized by difficulties in expressive or receptive, oral or written language. The term dyslexia has been coined from Greek and literally means difficulty with (dys) words (lexis) (Pollock & Waller, 1994). Dyslexics face difficulties in language processing and, therefore, have difficulties in translating language to thought (as in listening or reading) or thought to language (as in writing or speaking).

Christodoulides and Bosinakis (1997) report two kinds of dyslexia. "The hereditary one (88%) and the acquired one (12%). It is found in all the civilisations that have written language and it is met more frequently in boys than in girls (4:1)" (p.9).

According to Stark et al (1991) there are certain criteria that must be met in order to allow a diagnosis of dyslexia. These are:

1. Reading ability in the first language at least two years below age norms if over 10 years old (less of a discrepancy is permitted for younger children)
2. Normal intelligence
3. Normal vision and hearing, allowing success in school
4. No gross neurological deficits
5. No primary emotional disturbance
6. Adequate educational opportunity
7. Originally good motivation

Dyslexia is not related to intelligence since there is a discrepancy between the child’s intelligence level and his/her performance in reading, writing and spelling (Christodoulides & Bosinakis, 1997).

To continue with, there are varying degrees of disability, from the comparatively mild to the really severe. Thus, a child of average intelligence with a mild case of dyslexia is often easier to help than a very intelligent child who is severely affected (Christodoulides & Bosinakis, 1997).

Dyslexic children do not learn efficiently by the most frequently used methods of teaching reading. Even if they learn to read, they do not spell at the same rate. Besides reading and spelling, they are weak in two or more of the following areas: auditory memory, short-term memory, phonological abilities, and orthographic abilities (Christodoulides & Bosinakis). It is also important to say that those children are not "lazy, careless or stupid, although they are often given these labels" (Christodoulides & Bosinakis, 1997, p. 10).

Studies of these children have shown (Christodoulides & Bosinakis, 1997, p. 10) the following strengths and weaknesses of children with dyslexia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>What you will see</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* gross motor skills</td>
<td>* Often good at sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* strong mechanical skills</td>
<td>* Often good at taking things apart, putting them together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* mover, doer, active</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* good at imagining, revisualising</td>
<td>* gets main ideas, draws conclusions, good comprehender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* sees gestalt, the big picture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* can be very creative</td>
<td>* artistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* ego strength (out of class)</td>
<td>* has friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* confident (out of class)</td>
<td>* takes risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* intuitively intelligent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>What you will see</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* difficulty at most basic level of language processing (sound/symbol associations)</td>
<td>* difficulty with reading (decoding, word identification, spelling, handwriting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty with role processes</td>
<td>Poor computation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty with sequences of any kind</td>
<td>Poor use of formulas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misses details</td>
<td>Poor speller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts out (not surprising because the action (right hemisphere), kinaesthetic mode, is strongest, and language to mediate action is weak)</td>
<td>Often lacks fund of general info (names, months of year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor self-esteem concerning language tasks (reading, writing, spelling)</td>
<td>Overly physical or aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulsive</td>
<td>Angry, uncommunicative, defensive, untrusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk-taking can be poorly thought out and dangerous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although children face problems when they deal with language processing they often show special talent in areas such as art, athletics, architecture, graphics, electronics, mechanics, drama, music, or engineering as well as in areas that require visual, spatial and motor integration. A multisensory method of teaching must be, therefore, used, according to which the children can learn easier by using their senses as well as by taking advantage their special talents.

2. Previous studies
Many books and articles have been written on dyslexia. However, only few focused on the spelling difficulties that dyslexics face when they learn English as a foreign language. The only research paper that has been found, deals with the reading and not the spelling difficulties that dyslexic college students face when they deal with EFL.

More specifically, Bensoussan’s research paper, "English as a Foreign Language and the Dyslexic College Student: Pilot Screening Test and Remedial Materials in the Language Laboratory", is to determine whether it is possible to design a diagnostic test of reading in EFL, able to differentiate between certified dyslexic children and others. Another purpose of this paper is to outline the development materials for dyslexic used in the Haifa University language laboratory to supplement the regular EFL courses.
This study has been conducted at the Haifa University, where most of the students have Hebrew as their native language. It is also important to say that this research paper (a) contributed to the creation of a diagnostic test for dyslexic students who learn EFL (b) helped the researchers to design a program for dyslexic students on the Pre-Advanced, Advanced 1, and Advanced 2 level course of teaching EFL.

3. The study
As stated earlier this paper focuses on the spelling difficulties that Greek-Cypriot dyslexic children face when they try to learn English as a foreign language.

Children with the specific learning difficulty face a lot of difficulties in their native language as far as their spelling is concerned. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that children will find spelling in a foreign language to be frustrating. The ultimate goal of this research paper is, therefore, to make some suggestions on how these children can be helped to cope with their problem.

4. Spelling Difficulties in the native language
It is well known that there is sound-to-word correspondence in Greek. Thus, one would expect that the dyslexic children do not face many difficulties as far as the spelling is concerned, since the pronunciation of Greek bears a more or less consistent relationship to its spelling. Nevertheless, dyslexic children find it difficult to cope with word spelling in their native language.

Greek is a highly inflected language with many declensions and conjugations. The children find it difficult to deal with nouns since their spelling differs, according to their category. Not only that, but also the fact that in declining nouns and verbs the three active cases are used (Nominative, Genitive, Accusative) causes more confusion to the children (Giannakopoulos & Siarenou, 1995). Consequently, the children make mistakes as far as the endings of nouns are concerned since they (the endings) vary according to their function in the sentence; for example, in the sentence, Ο Γιώργος πινάκει, they write πινάκειον while in the sentence, Η Αννα χτενίζει, they write χτενίζετε.

Moreover, the difficulty to cope with word spelling is reinforced by the confusion caused by he written or oral similarities between the letters. Thus, the letters β-θ, π-τ, φ-ψ, η-ω, ζ-ξ and ρ-σ are likely to create problems to the children since they have similarities in their written form; for example, a child might write,

\[\text{θόλος} \quad \text{for} \quad \betaόλος,\]
\[\text{ψτόνω} \quad \text{for} \quad \phiτόνω,\]
Furthermore, letters which have similarities in the way they are phonetically produced cause confusion when they are used. These letters are π-τ, φ-β, θ-δ, σ-ζ and so on (Boursie, 1986); for example, children write,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>Instead of</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>βόβος</td>
<td>φόβος</td>
<td>ζάρι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σάρι</td>
<td>βόβος</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>βάρος</td>
<td>φάρος,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>κλαθι</td>
<td>κλαδι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be observed that they cannot distinguish between the voiced and voiceless consonants.

To continue with, confusion is created (a) when the vowels υ/υ/η and ο/ω are used, and (b) when the diphthongs ου, αυ, οι, ύι are used because they are phonetically similar to ο, ε, η, τ, and υ. Thus, we get the following pairs of words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>Instead of</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>μαξί</td>
<td>μαξί,</td>
<td>σφερα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ιψος</td>
<td>ιψος,</td>
<td>ολήθηα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καλί</td>
<td>καλί, ηκοκορά</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>φόβος</td>
<td>φόβος,</td>
<td>υός or ιός</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The consonant clusters μπ, γκ, γγ, ντ, τσ, τζ also cause problems to the children since they are produced in a similar way as the consonants π, κ, τ (Boursie, 1986). A child may, therefore, produce the following pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>Instead of</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>παρούτι</td>
<td>μπαρούτι,</td>
<td>τύνομαι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>αγγαθ/ακάθι</td>
<td>αγκάθι,</td>
<td>τζουβαλι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τσακάρης</td>
<td>τσαγκάρης,</td>
<td>τσάκι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>αγκελος/άκελος</td>
<td>Αγγελος</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, some pairs of consonant clusters are falsely used by the children. These pairs are στ-τσ, τσ-τζ, στ-σπ, σφ-σβ (Boursie, 1986). Consequently, we get the following pairs of words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>Instead of</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>στάντα</td>
<td>τσάντα</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τζουβάλι</td>
<td>τσουβάλι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>στάζω</td>
<td>σπάζω</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σβαίρα</td>
<td>σφαίρα</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The spelling errors that occur when the children deal with their native language reinforce the argument that these children will face more difficulties when they are taught EFL.
5. Traditional approach of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL)

The traditional EFL approaches "usually imply that the language presented on a textbook page is the learning aim" (Vale & Feunteun, 1996, p.17). Moreover, "the pressure to complete a coursebook within a prescribed amount of time" (Vale & Feunteun, 1996, p.74) as well as the assumption that "all the children are able to, and motivated to, learn the same language, for the same purpose, at the same time" (Vale & Feunteun, 1996, p.17), make the teacher to choose a more convenient way of teaching. Thus, "a similar content is taught to all the students at the same time for a similar purpose" (Vale & Feunteun 1996, p.17). In this way, the traditional EFL approaches fail to meet the needs of each child and more importantly, the needs of a dyslexic child, since the individual child is not "at the centre of the learning that takes place" (Vale & Feunteun, 1996, p.18).

To continue with, "much of the history of EFL has been concerned with the need for language accuracy", which most of the times "contrasts with language fluency" (Vale & Feunteun, 1996, p.76). This happens, because teachers try to focus "on the accurate production of linguistic patterns as apposed to encouraging pupils to express their personalities in the foreign language" (Vale & Feunteun, 1996, p.76) and, therefore, tend to correct the mistakes that the children make in an improper way. Consequently, the "over-zealous correction of such errors by the teacher" (Vale & Feunteun, 1996, p.76) discourage the children to speak or to take risks or experiment with language since they are afraid that they will be punished or loose their self-image in front of the class.

In addition, "the whole-word method of teaching pupils to read" (Hornsby, 1996, p.70) and spell is also used by the traditional EFL approaches. According to this method, children learn a word by sight after having associated this word with a certain picture. Thus, when a child comes across an unknown word he/she is expected to make use of phonics-associating a single letter with a single sound in order to help him/her to work it out (Hornsby, 1996, p.70). Even though many children manage to learn by using this method, most dyslexics fail to do so. In this way, dyslexic children are discouraged from learning English since they feel incapable of assimilating this language.

According to what we have just mentioned, we notice that the traditional approach of teaching English as a foreign language usually fails to achieve a balance "between the aims of a coursebook and the needs of the children" (Vale & Feunteun, 1996, p.75). That is why we should use child-centred education, also known as affective education, and create the conditions for an environment that fosters language acquisition instead of language learning.
6. Spelling Difficulties in Foreign Language Learning

Although reading has always been considered as more important than spelling in the early days at school, "spelling in fact poses the greater problem for dyslexic children, and this difficulty can continue long after the reading difficulty has been greatly improved" (Pollock & Waller, 1994, p.39). Obviously dyslexia impedes an individual's ability to spell since it prevents "the ability to manipulate the sounds and shapes of symbolic representations of words" (Raymond, 1997, p.28). That is why, dyslexic children need more time to recognize, understand and spell what they read.

Moreover, it is important to say that the fact that each language is structured in a different way and, consequently, has its own conventions indicates that dyslexic children will definitely face great difficulties in their effort to learn a foreign language. The phonetic and phonological differences that exist between the Greek and the English language are, therefore, likely to create confusion to the children who try to learn EFL. Not only that but also the fact that the English language has many different spelling rules and plenty of riddles, because of the "varied cultural and foreign influences over the years" as well as the fact that it consists of "26 letters and many, many different phonemes (chunks of sounds) to reproduce" (Raymond, 1997, p.28), reinforce the argument that the illogical English spelling will cause many difficulties to the EFL learners. That is why, these children must firstly understand and then learn the "letter-to-sound relationships and rules" (Raymond, 1997, p.29) of the English language in order to be able to "translate words into their written form" (Raymond, 1997, p.28).

To continue with, the spelling weaknesses of these children can be identified through their errors. In the case of the EFL learners "spelling errors may be made due to an unfamiliarity with the different sound to symbol spelling rules involved" (Raymond, 1997, p.28). It is also important to say that while some children rely on a phonetic and "phonological approach when reproducing many words" other "reproduce words through their visual components [and] not their sounds" (Raymond, 1997, p.28).

Thus, if the word 'said' is spelled 'sed' we can assume that this is a purely phonetic spelling. Nevertheless, if a word is spelled according to its visual component, words like 'Germoy' and 'Astia' instead of 'Germany' and 'Austria' will result (Raymond, 1997). Let us now examine, some of the typical mistakes made by dyslexic children when they deal with the word spelling of the English language. Before we do that it is important to say that it is unusual to find all these mistakes made by one person.

According to what Pollock and Waller (1994), Hornsby (1996) and Christodouides & Bosinakis (1997) illustrate as well as to what has been noticed, on the basis of original data and personal experience, the typical mistakes a student can make concerning the word spelling of the English language are the following:
• Mirror writes words: ‘nomiS’ for ‘Simon’.
• Reverses letters, writing ‘b’ as ‘d’, ‘p’ as ‘q’.
• Inverts letters, writing ‘u’ as ‘n’, ‘m’ as ‘w’, ‘d’ and ‘q’, ‘p’ as ‘b’, ‘f’ as ‘t’.
• Mirror writes letters and perhaps numbers: ‘ for ‘y’, ‘ for ‘4’.
• Spells words as they sound: ‘busy’ as ‘bizzy’, ‘sight’ as ‘site’.
• Uses bizarre spellings like: ‘last’ spelt ‘lenaka’, ‘about’ spelt ‘chehat’, ‘may’ spelt ‘mook’, ‘did’ spelt ‘don’ or ‘to’ spelt ‘ananiwe’. These words bear little, if any, relation to the sounds in the words.
• Omit letters: ‘limp’ spelt as ‘lip’, ‘went’ as ‘wet’ or ‘string’ as ‘sing’.
• Cannot write the appropriate letter when given the sound.
• Cannot write letters even when they are dictated by name.
• Cannot pick out letters from a display when the name is called out.
• Cannot match up the same letters when asked to.
• Punctuation may remain an almost totally closed door. The dyslexic is lucky if he manages a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence or a full stop at the end. He may well know about question marks, exclamation marks, speech marks and capitals for proper nouns, but seldom succeeds in using them.

7. The current study
This research paper concentrates on the spelling difficulties that Greek-Cypriot dyslexics face when they learn English as a foreign language and examines, on the basis of original data and personal experience, the actual spelling difficulties.

The sample included 2 dyslexic children of elementary school. It can be, therefore, assumed that this is not a representative sample. Nevertheless, a broader investigation was not permitted, due to the restriction of time.

The materials used consisted of a list of the following words: dog, cup, light, take, ball, between, may, about, fight, money, what, help, busy, be, must, end, class, deep, birthday, truth, tooth, nose, mouth, eyebrow, king, kingdom, lion king. The words were chosen according to the following criteria:

(1) representative regular words, and
(2) words with simple as well as difficult vowel sounds or consonant clusters, and
(3) words familiar to these students.

The words were dictated in class and the students were asked to write them down in order.
Original data was collected at "George Christodoulides' Institute". Throughout the lessons the difficulties that these students face when they read and write were observed. The spelling difficulties were examined as soon as the children wrote down the words dictated to them.

The following lists present what the children wrote:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student 1</th>
<th>Student 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boc</td>
<td>bog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cag</td>
<td>cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take</td>
<td>take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boll</td>
<td>doll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lite</td>
<td>lait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bitwean</td>
<td>bitouin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mei</td>
<td>mais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a paout</td>
<td>apout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fite</td>
<td>fait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mani</td>
<td>mony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yuat</td>
<td>whaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hepl</td>
<td>helab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beze</td>
<td>bize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de</td>
<td>be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mast</td>
<td>mast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>end</td>
<td>end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>klass</td>
<td>class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntep</td>
<td>dep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>birday</td>
<td>berthey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trooh</td>
<td>troth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tooht</td>
<td>towth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nous</td>
<td>nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mouth</td>
<td>mauth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>idrau</td>
<td>eibret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kink</td>
<td>cing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kingdoM</td>
<td>kindgom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liom Kim</td>
<td>lioncing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1 Results

After observing the spelling errors made by the children we notice the following:

(1) Both children spelled certain words by using letters (vowels and consonants) whose sounds are near to the correct ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S1</th>
<th></th>
<th>S1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cup</td>
<td>cap</td>
<td>beze</td>
<td>busy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ball</td>
<td>boll</td>
<td>must</td>
<td>mast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beteen</td>
<td>bitwean</td>
<td>clas</td>
<td>klass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(2) They were confused with the use of letters which look a like. More specifically, they (a) substituted a letter with another similar letter, and (b) mirrored or reversed certain letters.

(3) In some cases they used the correct letters but in the wrong order.

(4) The children omitted certain letters.

(5) The second student added some letters in certain words.
eyebr0w  eibret

(6) The first student capitalized certain letters within the word structure.
S1
kingdom  kingdoM
lion king  LioM kim

(7) They wrote words whose outline or shape may be similar to the correct word, but some of the letters were confused.
S1
ball  boll
between  bitwean
about  apout
birthday  birday
truth  trooh
nose  nous
king  kink
lion king  LioM kim
S2
between  bitouin
about  apout
money  mony
what  whaut
truth  trooth
kingdom  kindg0m
lion king  lioncing

(8) They used bizarre spellings and, therefore, created nonsense words.
S1
dog  boc
what  yuat
deep  ntep
truth  tooh
eyebrow  idrau
S2
doc  bog
help  helnb
eyebrow  eibret
king  cing

(9) They spelled words as they sound
S1
ball  boll
light  lite
between  bitwean
may  mei
fight  fite
money  mani
busy  beze
must  mast
class  klass
birthday  birday
nose  nous
S2
light  lait
between  bitouin
fight  falt
money  mony
busy  bize
deep  dep
mouth  mauth
(10) In one case the students were confused over whether there should be one or two words. Thus, the first student wrote ‘a pout’ instead of ‘about’ while the second wrote ‘lioncing’ instead of ‘lion king’.

7.2 Discussion
To begin with, a close examination of the spelling errors indicates that the children face indeed a lot of difficulties in word spelling. A factor which contributes to the spelling errors is the students’ "unfamiliarity with the different sound to symbol spelling rules involved" (Raymond, 1997, p28).

Moreover, it is important to say that both students almost made the same mistakes; for example they both wrote ‘mast’ instead of ‘must’. However, in certain occasions they made different errors when they spelled the same word; for example, S1 wrote ‘ntep’ instead of ‘deep’ and, therefore substituted ‘d’ with ‘nt’, while S2 wrote ‘dep’ instead of ‘deep’ and, therefore substituted ‘ee’ with ‘e’.

Furthermore, in some cases S1 did not make the same mistakes as S2, and vice versa. Thus, (a) S2 added some letters in certain words and wrote ‘mais’ and ‘helnb’ instead of ‘may’ and ‘help’, while S1 wrote ‘mei’ and ‘hepl’, and (b) S1 capitalized certain letters and wrote ‘kingdoM’ instead of ‘kingdom’, while S2 wrote ‘kindgom’.

To continue with, the fact that the words ‘take’ and ‘end’ were spelled correctly by both children, shows that dyslexic children are able to remember the spelling of certain words. That is why, the traditional approach of EFL must be reformed in a way that those children can be helped to learn easily and, consequently, remember the spelling of some basic words.

It is also important to say that none of the children made all the mistakes that we expected them to make, something that reinforces the fact that all the typical mistakes concerning the word spelling of the English language are not, usually, be made by one person.

7.3 Ways of dealing with the specific learning difficulty
- Change method of teaching - Child-centered (affective) education. (Carr, 1995)
- We should not only teach the written language but all aspects of the language as well: (Hornsby, 1996)
  - Speaking
  - Reading
  - Writing
  - Pronouncing
  - Spelling
- The teaching should be cumulative (Carr, 1995):
• Each part of the lesson must lead to the next one and include part of the previous lesson. The student should also feel confident that he/she is expected to do work for which he has been well prepared.
• We need good organisation on the part of the teacher and study skills/organisation on the part of the student. (Carr, 1993, Sidetsa, 1989)
• We should use the structured phonetic/linguistic method which is most effective instead of the whole word method. (Raymond, 1997, Hornsby, 1996)
• We should use the multi-sensory (Multiple Intelligences - Gardner’s Theory) - use flash cards/images - dough to make the letters - Davis, 1995). (Hornsby, 1996), (Campbell, 1994)
• Teach the vowels (short-long) - use a mirror and have the student observe the teacher’s mouth. (Pollok and Waller, 1994)
• Teach the consonants and the double letter words. (Pollok and Waller, 1994)
• Tap out the number of syllables. (Pollok and Waller, 1994)
• Teach prefixes and suffixes. (Pollok and Waller, 1994)
• Use mnemonics and illustrations to help children to remember tricky spellings:
• She hears with her ears. (Pollok and Waller, 1994)
• Use mind mapping or teach words in groups. (Buzan, 1990)
• In conclusion the student must at a later stage (Hornby, 1996):
  • Know as much as possible about the English language/strategies on spelling and where to look for help, dictionaries, thesauruses and reliable sources.
  • Be able to read, proofread, visualise, a word once seen, get her thoughts down on paper, check spellings.
  • Feel that spelling is only a tool for writing, that she is confident that spelling can be improved and be willing to practise, practise, practise.

8. Conclusion
In this research paper an effort was made (a) to find out which are the spelling difficulties that Greek-Cypriot dyslexics face when they learn EFL, and (b) to suggest ways of coping with these difficulties.

After defining dyslexia, there was a reference on a previous study concerning the reading difficulties that native speakers of Hebrew face when they learn EFL. Then, it was explained why the Greek-Cypriot children find it difficult to deal with the word spelling of their native language, while some examples were given to reinforce the argument.

Moreover, a close examination of the traditional approach of teaching EFL indicated that the educational system does not treat those children in an
appropriate way. More specifically, "the whole-word method of teaching pupils to read" (Hornsby, 1996, p.70) and spell does not help the dyslexic children to assimilate the foreign language. Also, the fact that Greek and English are structured in a different way and, consequently, have "different sound to symbol spelling rules" (Raymond, 1997, p.28) contributes to the difficulties that the children encounter.

Furthermore, the typical spelling mistakes that the children make as EFL learners were extensively presented. Also, a multisensory method of teaching was suggested, according to which the children can learn easier by using their senses as well as by taking advantage their special talents.

Then, an examination of the actual problems that the children face, on the basis of original data and personal observation, (a) showed that the theory corresponds to reality, since the children made almost all the typical spelling mistakes, which were previously mentioned, and (b) reinforced the fact that Greek-Cypriot dyslexics have spelling problems when they learn EFL.

To conclude, children with the specific learning difficulty face, indeed, a lot of spelling difficulties as foreign language learners. Thus, as suggested before, the educational system must be reformed in order to meet their needs.

References


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