The receptive language and reading abilities of students diagnosed with auditory processing disorder (APD)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ETHICS STATEMENT & DECLARATION ................................................................. ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................. x
DEDICATION ................................................................................................. x
LIST OF FIGURES ......................................................................................... xi
LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................ xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ............................................................................ xv
GLOSSARY ....................................................................................................... xvii
Abstract .......................................................................................................... 1
CHAPTER ONE ................................................................................................. 3
Introduction ....................................................................................................... 3
1.0 Statement of the Problem .......................................................................... 3
1.1 Theoretical Basis of the Study .................................................................. 6
  1.1.1 Psycholinguistics .............................................................................. 6
  1.1.2 Cognitive Theory ............................................................................ 6
    1.1.2.1 Structural component ............................................................. 7
    1.1.2.2 Strategy component ............................................................... 9
    1.1.2.3 Executive component ............................................................. 10
  1.1.3 Biological Theory ............................................................................. 10
  1.1.4 Behavioural Theory ........................................................................ 11
  1.1.5 Summary of the Theoretical Basis for this Study ............................. 12
CHAPTER TWO ............................................................................................... 14
Literature Review .......................................................................................... 14
2.0 Structure of the Literature Review .......................................................... 14
2.1 Reading Overview .................................................................................... 15
  2.1.1 Normal Reading ............................................................................. 16
2.4.6.2 The auditory temporal order judgement argument ........................................... 104
2.4.6.3 The phonetic encoding argument ..................................................................... 108
2.4.6.4 Frequency discrimination ................................................................................. 111
2.4.6.5 Section Summary ............................................................................................. 116

2.5 Receptive Language ................................................................................................. 118
2.5.1 Listening Comprehension ..................................................................................... 118
2.5.2 Vocabulary Acquisition ......................................................................................... 120
2.5.3 The Semantic System ........................................................................................... 130
2.5.4 Relationship: Auditory Processing and Vocabulary ............................................. 135
2.5.5 Co-morbidity: Auditory Processing and Language Impairment ....................... 139

2.6 Word Reading Processes ......................................................................................... 142
2.6.1 Orthographic Input Lexicon ................................................................................ 143
2.6.1.1 Word recognition and identification ................................................................. 143
2.6.1.2 Naming ............................................................................................................ 148
2.6.1.3 Relationship: Auditory processing and naming .............................................. 150
2.6.2 Decoding Print ..................................................................................................... 151
2.6.2.1 Phonological awareness acquisition ............................................................... 154
2.6.2.2 Phonological awareness and literacy .............................................................. 156
2.6.2.3 The strongest phonological predictor of literacy success .............................. 159
2.6.2.4 Relationship: Auditory processing and phonological awareness .................. 163
2.6.3 Summary of Word Reading Processes ................................................................. 164
2.6.4 Word Reading Errors .......................................................................................... 167

2.7 Sentence Reading Processes .................................................................................. 171
2.7.1 Syntactic System ................................................................................................. 172
2.7.2 Language and Literacy ....................................................................................... 175
2.7.3 Reading Comprehension ..................................................................................... 183
2.7.4 Sentence Reading Errors ................................................................. 195

2.8 Summary ............................................................................................................. 201

2.8.1 Significance of the Study ................................................................. 201

2.8.2 The Present Study ......................................................................................... 204

2.8.3 Specific Aims and Hypotheses ........................................................................ 206

CHAPTER THREE ......................................................................................................... 208

Method .......................................................................................................................... 208

3.0 Study One ............................................................................................................. 209

3.1 Group Assignment Procedure ............................................................................. 209

3.1.1 Otoscopy ......................................................................................................... 211

3.1.2 Pure Tone Audiometry ..................................................................................... 211

3.1.3 Speech Audiometry .......................................................................................... 212

3.1.4 Auditory Processing Assessments ...................................................................... 213

3.1.4.1 Staggered Spondaic Word (SSW) test ........................................................... 217

3.1.4.2 Competing Sentences (CS) test .................................................................... 221

3.1.4.3 Digit Span (DS) test ....................................................................................... 224

3.1.4.4 Sentence Recall (SR) subtest ......................................................................... 226

3.2 Recruitment Process ............................................................................................ 228

3.3 Participants ............................................................................................................ 230

3.4 Data Collection Procedure .................................................................................. 233

3.4.1 First Assessment Session .................................................................................. 235

3.4.1.1 Screen of hearing .......................................................................................... 236

3.4.1.2 Non-verbal intellectual ability ....................................................................... 236

3.4.2 Auditory Processing Assessments - extended ................................................... 238

3.4.2.1 SCAN-C: Auditory Figure Ground (AFG) subtest ........................................ 239

3.4.2.2 Pitch Pattern Sequence- Child (PPS-C) test ................................................ 241
ETHICS STATEMENT & DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

The research proposal was approved by the Flinders Clinical Research Ethics Committee (Appendix A). This research was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Committee’s guidelines on human experimentation. Subject confidentiality was assured. No subject identification data were placed on any computer system.

Signed…………………………………………………………………..Date…./…./…..
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Finally, I would like to thank the kind people who offered their proof-reading services and valuable comments; Associate Professor Sandra Orgeig, Professor Chris Daniels, Dr. Harry Lyndon and Dr. Alexia Lennon.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to two people. Firstly, I would like to honour the memory of Dr. Ken Rowe, Research Director, Australian Council for Educational Research who tragically lost his life in the 2009 Victorian bushfires. Among his many achievements, Dr. Rowe chaired the independent committee for the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy in 2005 appointed by the Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr. Brendan Nelson. The inquiry received over 450 submissions from concerned parents, health professionals, educators, researchers and politicians. The collated recommendations promote integrated, effective and evidence-based literacy teaching practices in Australian schools for the facilitation of improved literacy outcomes for all students.

Secondly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my wondrous son, James. Whenever I became dispirited, despondent, despairing or just plain defeated he reminded me to ‘just finish it’. Such wisdom in one so young.
LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: The PALPA model .......................................................... 32

FIGURE 2: The dual route model of single word reading .................. 37

FIGURE 3: A revised dual-route model of single word reading .......... 45

FIGURE 4: A model of phonological working memory ..................... 56

FIGURE 5: Typical left hemisphere neural pathways for responding to a spoken question ................................................................. 131

FIGURE 6: Block diagram of the auditory pathways ......................... 214

FIGURE 7: Scatterplots showing the correlation between letter-sound correspondence and letter naming for the APD group and the NAPD group 290

FIGURE 8: Scatterplots showing the correlation between letter-sound correspondence and letter naming for the APD group and the Average group .................................................................................................................. 316

FIGURE 9: Two paragraphs of the NARA-3 as read by a participant in the APD group .......................................................................................................................... 328

FIGURE 10: Two paragraphs of the NARA-3 as read by a participant in the Average group .......................................................................................................................... 329

FIGURE 11: The processing auditory and print input (PAPI) model .......... 393

FIGURE 12: The reciprocal nature of reading and component skills ....... 402
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: Participants according to Group for Study One ........................................ 230
TABLE 2: Mean Standard Scores on FUSAPB compared by Group .................. 232
TABLE 3: Range, mean and standard deviation on FUSAPB raw scores compared by group .................................................. 233
TABLE 4: Auditory Processing Tests and Corresponding Aspects of Auditory Processing Skill .......................................................... 246
TABLE 5: Matched APD and Average Reader Participants by Group for Study Two ........................................................................ 267
TABLE 6: Comparison of RCPM Scores for Matched APD and Average Reader Participants ................................................................. 268
TABLE 7: SES Distribution of Matched APD† and Average Reader Participants by Group, based on Paternal Educational Attainment ......................................... 271
TABLE 8: SES Distribution of Matched APD† and Average Reader Participants by Group, based on Maternal Educational Attainment .................................. 272
TABLE 9: A Summary of the Purposes of Study One and Study Two .................. 275
TABLE 10: Mean scores on extension AP testing compared by group .................. 280
TABLE 11: Spearman’s Correlations between Tests of Auditory Short-Term Memory, Phonological Working Memory and other Auditory Processing Measures for the APD Group .................................................. 282
TABLE 12: Mean Standard Scores for Receptive Vocabulary (PPVT-3) with Listening Comprehension (CELF-3:LP) compared by Group ...................... 284
TABLE 13: Spearman’s Correlations of Receptive Vocabulary (PPVT-3) with Listening Comprehension (CELF-3:LP) by Group ........................................ 284
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 14:</th>
<th>Spearman’s correlations between item categories on the PPVT-3 and standard scores on phonological working memory, vocabulary and reading comprehension tests for the combined APD+NAPD group (n=48)</th>
<th>286</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 15:</td>
<td>Mean Standard Scores on Reading Tests compared by Group</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 16:</td>
<td>Mean Severity Scores compared by Group</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 17:</td>
<td>Spearman’s Correlations of the Auditory Processing Score (APS), Auditory Processing- Dichotic Listening score (AP-DL) and Auditory Processing –Short-Term Memory score (AP-STM) with the Language Assessments and Reading Comprehension Assessment for the Combined APD+NAPD Group</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 18:</td>
<td>Spearman’s Correlations of the Auditory Processing Score (APS), Auditory Processing- Dichotic Listening (AP-DL) and Auditory Processing-Short-Term Memory (AP-STM) score with the Language Assessments and Reading Comprehension Assessment for the APD group</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 19:</td>
<td>Spearman’s Correlations of the Auditory Processing Score (APS) and Auditory Processing- Dichotic Listening (AP-DL) and Auditory Processing – Short Term Memory (AP-STM) with the Auditory Short-Term Memory Tests and Non-Speech Tests for the APD Group</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 20:</td>
<td>Spearman’s Correlations (p≤0.05) between Language and Reading Measures for the APD Group</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 21:</td>
<td>Spearman’s Correlations between Auditory Processing Tests and the Receptive Language and Reading Tests for the APD Group</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 22:</td>
<td>The Model of Best Fit for NARA-3: Reading Accuracy and NARA-3 Reading Comprehension Standard Scores: Forward and backward regression analysis</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 23: Error Totals for the APD Group compared to the NAPD Group.... 309
TABLE 24: Descriptive Analysis of Error Categories compared by Group....... 310
TABLE 25: Mean Standard Scores on Receptive Language and Reading Measures compared by Group. ................................................................. 315
TABLE 26: Spearman’s Correlations between the Receptive Language and Reading Measures for the Reading-age Matched APD Group ................. 318
TABLE 27: Spearman’s Correlations between the Receptive Language and Reading Measures for the Reading-age Matched Average Group .......... 320
TABLE 28: Spearman’s Correlations between the Auditory Processing and Language Measures for the Reading-age Matched APD Group ................. 322
TABLE 29: Error Totals for the APD Group compared to the Average Group. 324
TABLE 30: Descriptive Analysis of Error Categories compared by Group....... 325
TABLE 31: Descriptive Analysis of Selected Error Types for the APD Group compared to the Average Group................................................................. 326
TABLE 32: Success Rates of Self-corrections on Selected Error Types by Group. ............................................................................................................. 327
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADD</td>
<td>Attention deficit disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder</td>
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<td>AFG</td>
<td>Auditory Figure Ground subtest</td>
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<td>AIT</td>
<td>Auditory inspection task</td>
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<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Amplitude modulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Auditory processing</td>
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<td>APD</td>
<td>Auditory processing disorder</td>
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<td>ATOJ</td>
<td>Auditory temporal order judgement</td>
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<td>CELF</td>
<td>Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals test</td>
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<td>CS</td>
<td>Competing Sentences test</td>
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<tr>
<td>CV, CVC</td>
<td>Consonant-vowel, consonant-vowel-consonant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Dual Route Cascaded model</td>
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<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Digit Span</td>
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<tr>
<td>FM</td>
<td>Frequency modulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fMRI</td>
<td><em>functional</em> Magnetic Resonance Imagery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUSAPB</td>
<td>Flinders University standard auditory processing battery</td>
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<td>GPC</td>
<td>Grapho-phonemic correspondence</td>
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<td>IQ</td>
<td>Intellectual Quotient</td>
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<td>ISI</td>
<td>Inter-stimulus interval</td>
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<tr>
<td>LI</td>
<td>Language impairment</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSR</td>
<td>Less skilled readers</td>
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<td>LTM</td>
<td>Long-term memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>LTWM</td>
<td>Long-term working memory</td>
</tr>
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<td>NAPD</td>
<td>Non-auditory processing disorder</td>
</tr>
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<td>NARA</td>
<td>Neale Analysis of Reading Ability</td>
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<td>NWRT</td>
<td>Nonword Repetition Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>OIL</td>
<td>Orthographic input lexicon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>PALPA</td>
<td>Psycholinguistic Assessment of Language Processing in Aphasia</td>
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<td>PAPI</td>
<td>Processing Auditory and Print Input model</td>
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<td>PIB</td>
<td>Phonological input buffer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIL</td>
<td>Phonological input lexicon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPS</td>
<td>Pitch Pattern Sequence test; (LT) Left Total, (RT) Right Total</td>
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<td>PPVT</td>
<td>Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test</td>
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<td>PWM</td>
<td>Phonological working memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Reading accuracy</td>
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<td>RAN</td>
<td>Rapid automatized naming</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAP</td>
<td>Reading Accuracy Profile</td>
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<td>RC</td>
<td>Reading comprehension</td>
</tr>
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<td>RCPM</td>
<td>Raven’s Coloured Progressive Matrices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>Reading disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R = D x C</td>
<td>Simple view of Reading: Reading = Decoding x Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGDT</td>
<td>Random Gap Detection Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR</td>
<td>Reading rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socio-economic status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL</td>
<td>Sentence Length test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLI</td>
<td>Specific language impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Sentence Recall test</td>
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<td>SRD</td>
<td>Specific reading disability</td>
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<td>STM</td>
<td>Short-term memory</td>
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<td>SSW</td>
<td>Staggered Spondaic Words test</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOJ</td>
<td>Temporal order judgement</td>
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<tr>
<td>WISC</td>
<td>Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRMT</td>
<td>Woodcock Reading Mastery Test</td>
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</table>
GLOSSARY

Amplitude modulation (AM) sensitivity - refers to (detection of) changes to the intensity of sound. Modulation is imposed on a carrier wave, varying the amplitude above and below its unmodulated value, but keeping frequency the same.

Auditory Processing - refers to neural processing of the auditory signal; responsible for auditory attention, detection and identification of auditory signals, decoding of auditory input plus storage and retrieval of auditory information.

Auditory Processing Disorder - “a difficulty in the efficiency and effectiveness by which the central nervous system (CNS) utilizes auditory information” (ASHA, 2005)

Central Executive - the control system that allocates attention and supervises the elements of working memory. The central executive regulates what information is stored in long-term memory.

Decoding – the process by which sections (letters or chunks) of the printed word are converted to the phonological equivalent and blended together to form the word prior to recognition of the whole word.

Discrepancy Theory – a method of diagnosing dyslexia based upon a score discrepancy between average or above average IQ scores and reading ability scores greater than 2 standard errors below that predicted by those IQ scores.

Dyslexia – dyslexia is a specific learning disability of neurological origin (The International Dyslexia Association, 2002). The criteria for the diagnosis of dyslexia is controversial. Most commonly, reading ability must be significantly below age expectation with evidence of phonological deficits and/or naming deficits. Lack of reading progress is also a strong indicator.

Encoding- the process by which the spoken word is translated to its print equivalent.

Episodic Buffer – this refers to process within phonological working memory that reactivates prior information, making it available for association with incoming information from the phonological loop or visuo-spatial sketchpad prior to storage in long-term memory.

Frequency Modulation (FM) Sensitivity - refers to (detection of) changes in the frequency of sounds. Modulation is imposed on a carrier wave, varying the frequency above and below its unmodulated value while the amplitude remains constant.

functional Magnetic Resonance Imagery (fMRI) – a measure of neural activity (oxygen consumption) while the brain is actively engaged in a task or tasks.
Grapho-Phonemic Correspondence (GPC) - refers to the letter-sound relationship

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) – an IQ score is derived from performance on measures of intellectual ability, standardised against age. The calculation is Mental Age multiplied by 100 divided by Chronological Age to arrive at a score clustered around the mean of 100.

Inter-Stimulus Interval (ISI) – the time interval between two stimuli.

Learning Difficulty – this definition applies when an individual is having difficulty acquiring literacy or numeracy irrespective of intellectual ability.

Learning Disability – this definition applies when an individual has been found to be of average intelligence yet has a specific difficulty with reading (dyslexia), spelling/writing (dysgraphia) or calculation (dyscalculia).

Less Skilled Readers (LSR) – refers to readers who are performing below expectation for age but do not fulfil the criteria for dyslexia. Both poor decoding and comprehension are common.

Long Term Memory (LTM) – the repository of processed information available for retrieval once activated.

Matthew effect - refers to the reciprocal relationship whereby the benefits of reading ensure that good readers become even better readers while less-skilled readers fall further behind. The effect is not simply that ‘the rich get richer’ but rather that readers create a reading environment that promotes greater reading experience e.g. sharing books and stories, requesting books as presents etc.

Mismatch Negativity - abnormal brainstem responses linked to susceptibility to noise and also reduced sensitivity to acoustic changes.

Orthography – the printed symbols (letters) that represent speech sounds

Phonological mediation – the conversion of letter symbols or written words to their corresponding phonology after recognition, either silently or spoken aloud. Decoding may or may not be involved before recognition (see Decoding).

Phonological representations - the neural representations of speech sounds, in isolation (e.g. ‘p’) or as whole words (e.g. ‘parallel’)

Phonological Awareness – refers to knowledge regarding the sound structure of the language. Phonological awareness skills include rhyming, syllabification, sound segmentation, blending and manipulation.

Phonological Working Memory (PWM) – when auditory short term memory capacity has been exceeded or when verbal information requires manipulation, the information enters the phonological working memory system, where it is processed while presided over by the central executive.
Prosody – the suprasegmental features of an utterance e.g. rhythm, stress and intonation. These features convey information about the speaker’s intention and emotional state.

Rapid naming or Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) – the rapid (spoken) retrieval of the correct label for an object, picture, letter, symbol or word

Recoding – the process by which known letter-sound correspondences are modified to incorporate more complex correspondences e.g. ‘s’ correspondence is modified to incorporate the digraph variation ‘sh’. Often used in relation the complex process of vowel recoding e.g. ‘o’ correspondence must be modified to incorporate ‘oo’, ‘oa’, ‘ou’, ‘ow’ etc.

Specific Reading Disability (SRD) – this term is usually applied to determine eligibility for special education funding. SRD is usually diagnosed when reading ability is significantly below (by 2 years or alternatively 2 standard deviations) expectation for age. Persons diagnosed with SRD may be dyslexic or less-skilled readers (LSR).

(Auditory) Temporal Order Judgement (ATOJ/TOJ) – refers to the ability to retain the sequence of auditory information and make accurate responses pertaining to that sequence.
Abstract

This study hypothesized that students with a diagnosed auditory processing disorder (APD) will exhibit significantly greater auditory processing deficits (including phonological working memory), receptive language and reading difficulties compared to a non-APD group (NAPD) in Study One and significantly greater receptive language and reading difficulties compared to a reading-age matched Average reader group in Study Two. A relationship between the degree (severity) of auditory processing deficits and both receptive language and reading ability was also hypothesized. Further, it was hypothesized that the pattern of reading errors exhibited by students with APD will show differences compared to the reading error pattern of the two groups of students without APD. Participants in Study One had already undergone a diagnostic battery of auditory processing assessments. The participants in Study One underwent further assessments of auditory processing including auditory figure-ground, temporal gap detection, pitch perception and auditory sequencing. The Average reader group in Study Two was screened using the Sentence Length test, a screening tool designed to identify children who may be at risk of an auditory processing disorder. For both Study One and Study Two the CELF:Listening to Paragraphs subtest and Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-3 were administered followed by subtests of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised and the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability-3. The reading tests cover letter naming, grapheme-phoneme conversion, word identification, word attack and text reading. In Study One, the APD group exhibited significantly poorer phonological working memory (PWM), but not significantly different receptive language or reading abilities than the NAPD
ABSTRACT

group. Interhemispheric transfer deficits, as demonstrated on dichotic listening tasks, were significantly correlated with PWM performance. PWM ability was significantly correlated with receptive vocabulary, listening comprehension and reading comprehension abilities. The severity of AP deficits was correlated with phonological working memory and receptive vocabulary. The results also suggest a contribution of non-speech auditory processing deficits (frequency discrimination) to PWM and word reading abilities. In Study Two, the APD subgroup exhibited significantly poorer receptive language and reading abilities (based on standard score performance) compared to the reading-age matched Average reader group, matched on raw scores. Again, PWM was significantly correlated with receptive vocabulary, listening comprehension and reading comprehension in the APD subgroup. Reading errors made by the participants with APD were less likely to retain the intended meaning of the text, compared to the NAPD group in Study One. In Study Two, the APD group made as many errors that lost the intended meaning of the text as the significantly younger reading-age matched Average reader group. Analysis of error types in the APD group showed a greater number of whole word substitutions of meaning and word shape and fewer recasting and decoding errors compared to the Average group. The study supports a relationship between auditory processing deficits, phonological working memory and both receptive language and reading abilities.