

ASPECTS OF PRAGMATIC SKILLS IN CHILDREN WITH ADHD

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The present study investigated the ability of children with ADHD to interpret figurative language in relation to other linguistic abilities. Figurative language is an aspect of pragmatics and its use presupposes linguistic, communicative and cognitive skills. Thus, the relation between figurative language and symptoms of ADHD may further highlight children's learning and communicative abilities. Participated 20 children diagnosed with ADHD who attended an intervention program for less than 3 months and 20 children diagnosed with ADHD who attended an intervention program for more than 3 months aged 6-11 years. The control group was matched for age, gender and IQ. Expressive and receptive language was assessed with the Verbal IQ Test (Stavrakaki & Tsimpli 2000). Figurative language was assessed with two separate tasks which focus on understanding multiple meanings in and out of context. Results demonstrated that both clinical groups received lower scores in all language assessments compared to the control group. Moreover, the two clinical groups did not differ in productive vocabulary, comprehension and production of syntax and interpretation of figurative language in context. However, the clinical group which attended the intervention program for more than three months received higher scores in the task assessing the interpretation of figurative language out of context ($t=-2.6$, $p=0.018$). Also, a significant correlation was found between inattentiveness and the ability to interpret figurative language out of context ($r=0.733$, $p<0.001$). These results support a causal relation between inattentiveness and pragmatic skills. Discussion emphasizes that intervention programs for ADHD should include the improvement of pragmatic skills.