

## **The Structuring of Narrative Texts into *Figure* and *Ground*: Attention, Memory and ADHD**

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The Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is considered to be one of the most common disorders in childhood and adolescence. DSM IV manual indicates ADHD symptoms related to a change in language patterns without a precise definition of the characteristics of this linguistic behavior. There is strong evidence that difficulties presented by ADHD patients are related to the central executive system of working memory. Kofler et al. (2009) suggest that internal attentional focus, one of the subsystems of the central executive system, is associated with the inattentive behavior of ADHD children. Once cognitive processes are at the base of language use (Fauconnier, 1994) as well as at the base of psychopathological conditions, language investigation may reveal aspects of these pathologies. For example, there are some aspects of the production of narrative texts related to the cognitive capacities of attention and memory just as there are attentional and memory components related to ADHD. In this perspective, the analysis of the narrative production of children with ADHD is a powerful tool for a better comprehension of certain aspects of the disorder. This paper presents results of a study that was conducted in partnership with the Attention Deficit Disorder Clinic at the Medicine School Hospital, UFMG, Brazil. Thus, the research focused the figuration process; i.e., the distribution of informational elements into narrative *figure* and *ground* (Hopper, 1979; Talmy, 2000; Langacker, 2008; Tenuta, 2006) in the language production of children and adolescents with ADHD, for the purpose of identifying any distinct pattern in relation to a control group. The research pointed to differences in narratives produced from tasks with distinct cognitive requirements. Specifically in relation to the production of narratives by children with ADHD, there was a tendency to the occurrence of less quantity of narrative background events, proportionally to the occurrence of figure events, comparatively to the narrative production of the control group in the task that demanded information retrieval from working memory. These results confirm the hypothesis of a relevant role of the working memory in the context of this disorder.

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