INTRODUCTION. This work takes a deeper look at the differences in the linguistic competence of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in terms of both orality and writing.

AIMS. The purpose of this study is to check whether, in oral tasks, these children present the same problems related to inhibition and self-regulation as those pointed out in research working with written data. Likewise it seeks to describe those problems (lack of appropriateness, inappropriate production) as they appear in our oral data.

PATIENTS AND METHODS. A written and an oral argumentation produced by 25 participants between 9 and 11 years of age were analysed. In the written task, the children wrote their argumentations, and in the oral task their argumentative interaction with a collaborator was videotaped and later the types of arguments used in each case (logical, fallacies, sanctioning or moralist) were analysed.

RESULTS. There is an obvious difference between the results in the two tests, which suggests the need to review the verbal evaluation mechanisms and to complete the written results with oral skill tests. The problems normally associated with written tasks do not appear in oral language; participants are able to follow the discursive thread and to provide new arguments related with the topic.

CONCLUSIONS. The data obtained highlight the added difficulty of a written task for children with ADHD, the reliability of the oral results with regard to linguistic skills, and the need to use both types of data in evaluations.