Disfluency characteristics of children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the characteristics of speech disfluency in 15 children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms and 15 age-matched control children. Reading, story retelling, and picture description tasks were used to elicit utterances from the participants. The findings indicated that children with ADHD symptoms produced significantly more stuttering-like disfluencies (SLD) and other disfluencies (OD) when compared to the control group during all three tasks. Further statistical analysis showed that children with ADHD symptoms produced more OD during the story retelling task than the other two tasks, whereas no significant differences in OD were observed among the three tasks in the control children. Finally, children with ADHD symptoms exhibited a higher proportion of SLD in total disfluencies (TD) than the control children. These results are consistent with previous studies that children with ADHD are disfluent in their verbal production. Furthermore, children with ADHD symptoms seem to be more vulnerable to a speaking task that places greater demands on their attentional resources for language production, resulting in increased speech disfluencies.