THE ROLE OF SEMANTIC ORGANIZATION IN VERBAL MEMORY PERFORMANCE OF HIGH-FUNCTIONING AUTISTIC CHILDREN

Abstract

This study examines verbal memory deficits and the importance of semantic organization on high-functioning autistic children's verbal memory performance. The Hong Kong List Learning Test (HKLLT) is used to study 18 high-functioning autistic children's verbal memory performance. The test is separated into a random condition, with no guided semantic clustering, and a block condition, with guided semantic clustering. Results show that high-functioning autistic children perform significantly worse than controls on learning, delay free recall and recognition. They have less efficient semantic organizational strategy, but they have shown the ability to use the strategy effectively. In this study, the importance of semantic clustering is particularly high on memory retention (delay free recall).