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**Real words and non-words learning under or without attention by children with SLI**

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### Introduction

There is an important comorbidity between SLI (Specific Language Impairment) and ADHD (Attention disorders and Hyperactivity disorders) – see Muller and Tomblin (2012). This suggests that attention difficulties, even if the children are not considered as with ADHD, could be a key factor to explain the language deficit.

Attention plays an important role when memorizing new words (Garagnani, Shtyrov and Pulvermüller, 2009). In the case of low attention, in a recognition task, subjects could not remember unknown words but only known words.

If low attention makes it difficult to remember unknown words, this could make it difficult to learn new words.

### Hypotheses

1. All children (with SLI and controls) should have more difficulties to remember words under low attention condition than under high attention condition.
2. All children (with SLI and controls) should have more difficulties to remember non-words than real words.
3. Children with SLI will have specific difficulties to remember non-words under low attention condition.

### Procedure

Subjects: 10 children with SLI (French-speaking, no bilingualism, no ADHD, no hearing, social or neurological identified deficit) – no severe deficit in comprehension (phonological-syntactic disorder).

10 control children matched for age

Language abilities were controled used the ELO (Khomsi, 2001)

Training session:
8 words (4 real words and 4 non-words) were presented to the children under two conditions:
- With attention: children were asked to listen carefully to the material presented. They knew that there would be questions asked later about the material
- No attention: children were asked to play with toys. They knew that they would hear words, and that they would be asked questions about what they did with their toys and about the words that they might hear.

Testing session:
Children were presented 14 words (including the 8 they heard before) and were asked to say whether they think they heard it or not. For the no attention condition, they were told that not being sure about their answer was not a problem.

### Results

Two word lists were used and passation was done in two orders: attention first and no attention second, or the opposite. There were no effect of list order nor passation order.
