EYE MOVEMENT OF PRESCHOOLERS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN PICTURE BOOK READING

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We divided 75 children with ASD into three groups based on their reading profiles: children with hyperlexia (ASD+HP, N = 32), children with average listening comprehension and decoding skills (ASD+AV, N=18), and children with below average listening comprehension and decoding skills (ASD+BAV, N = 25). We also recruited a group of 31 typically developing children. Then, we compared their eye-gazing at pictures and prints during picture book reading between the four groups. For prints, we created three conditions in the picture book, namely, pages with real characters, pages with pseudo characters, and pages with non-characters, to explore the four groups' eye gazing under the three conditions. Children in the four groups are matched on age and the character recognition of ASD+HP group is comparable to that of TD group. With IQ and AQ controlled, the two-way mixed MANCOVA showed that compared with TD, ASD+AV, ASD+BAV groups, children with ASD+HP paid more attention to characters than pictures. For the three conditions, the gazing durations of children with ASD+HP on real and pseudo characters were not significant, but their gazing duration on non-characters was significantly less than the other two conditions, suggesting the role of orthographic awareness in Chinese character recognition of children with ASD+HP.