

Interactive style during
the reading of children's stories
with deceptive content

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Abstract

The intent of this article is, on one hand, to analyze the frequency of appearance of references to mental states in four fairy tales with deceptive content, and on the other hand, to describe the nature of the mother's interruptions in a daily activity of story reading. Interruptions have been grouped into four types of speech acts according to content: assertive content, interrogative content, directive content and expressive content. Measurements taken regarding the mother's language were frequency and diversity in use of mental references according to category: perceptive, emotional, volitional and cognitive terms, according to the categorization model by Bretherton and Beeghly (1982), as used in each type of speech act. We present data from an exploratory sample formed by 18 mother-child interchanges.

The most notable conclusions are the following: the stories analyzed contain numerous references to relationships between the characters' reality, beliefs and behavior; mothers interrupt the reading when deceptive content appears in the story; in a single interruption several types of speech acts can be observed; assertive and expressive type interruptions are those most used by mothers during the reading, and they use a mentalist and emotional type vocabulary in most cases to emphasize or to clarify some of the situations related to the deceptive plot.

Keywords: reading, stories, speech acts, mentalist vocabulary, theory of mind