
The development of morphology in a naturalistic preschool setting

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Résumé

Previous research has shown that preschool children can enhance their knowledge of some derivational and inflectional language processes, orally, before formal literacy learning (Nunes & Bryant, 2006, for a review). However, most research has been conducted by specialists, through well controlled "laboratorial" designs (Nunes & Bryant, 2009, 2014, for a review; Seixas & Rosa, 2009). This intervention study aims to assess whether, and how effective, is an intervention conducted by the preschool teacher himself, in the naturalistic setting of a kindergarten classroom. One hundred, five-year-olds, from twelve different classrooms of the same public preschool, were allocated as whole groups, to an intervention (N=50) and control (N=50) conditions, equivalent on pre-test measures of non-verbal intelligence, phonological awareness, letter knowledge and morphological awareness. Preschool teachers from the intervention group will undergo two-weeks training (February 2017) on how to explore story-books to develop morphology in the classroom. This will be followed by a six-weeks intervention phase with children (February / March 2017) exploring ways to identify, interpret and blend the meaning of stems and affixes. Post-test measures of morphological awareness (stems identification, word derivation and inflection, word analogy, pseudoword interpretation) will be assessed (April 2017). Qualitative data on both preschool teachers' and children's views will also be collected. We expect to find confirmation that, to a significant extent, an intervention conducted by the preschool teacher is effective. Furthermore, we will also contribute for the enhancement of training, assessment and educational tools.

References:

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Mots-Clés: Development of morphology, morphological awareness, learning in naturalistic settings