

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR EUROPEAN PORTUGUESE SPEAKING CHILDREN

Ana Castro^{1,2}, Dina Caetano Alves^{1,3}, Susana Correia^{3,4} & Célia Soares¹

¹ Escola Superior de Saúde do Instituto Politécnico de Setúbal, ² Centro de Linguística da Universidade Nova de Lisboa (CLUNL), ³ Centro de Linguística da Universidade de Lisboa (CLUL), ⁴ Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Background

Phonological awareness is an explicit linguistic competence that assumes a crucial role in language development and in the reading/spelling learning process, being these competences addressed by many professionals, such as educators, teachers, speech and language therapists/pathologists, and psychologists (Freitas, Alves & Costa, 2007).

The project 'Phonological Awareness – instruments for clinical and educational intervention' had as a main goal to turn available a phonological awareness assessment tool, in digital format, validated and standardized to Portuguese children between 3 and 9 years old.

Many studies were conducted to explore and identify the main features to be included in **ConfIRA** (Phonological Awareness – Screening and Assessment Instrument; Castro, Alves, Correia & Soares, in prep.).



Aim of the study

Until the current version, numerous exploratory studies were carried out, focused on the effect of (psycho)linguistics features as well as validity and reliability. The goal of this presentation is to describe the main steps of the development of ConfIRA towards its current version, considering the effect of phonological unit (and properties), age and schooling.

Methods

Task ConfIRA administration

Variables Schooling ranges (groups)

Age ranges (groups)

Phonological awareness performance (scores)

Data analysis Descriptive statistics analysis

Participants [sample from Pereira, Fontes & Castro, 2013 / Relatório de Sors, 2016-2017]

1453 children between **3 and 8 years old** (yo), with **typical language development**, participated in the different studies conducted under the project.

Table 1. Characterization of participants (sex, age and LI diagnosis)

AGE (yo) / SCHOOLING	N	SEX	
		F	M
3 yo	57	30	27
4 yo	169	88	81
5 yo	237	120	117
1st grade	185	95	90
2nd grade	159	70	89
3rd grade	61	31	30

Discussion

→ Considering the different studies developed, ConfIRA responds properly in terms of validity, reliability and usability.

✓ Many studies were focused on different (psycho)linguistics, methodological and psychometric aspects, in order to improve the instrument; this improvement is reflected in the current version.

→ Results show better performances for schoolers than preschoolers, mainly bridging the 5 yo group to the 1st grade one (alphabetization effect).

✓ In each item, children's performance increase as the age/schooling ranges.

→ The results show differences between tasks; (intra)syllable units are easier than the phoneme and stress ones.

✓ In each group of tasks, there is differences between children performance, independently of their schooling range.

Conclusions & next steps

→ Results show that it is crucial to invest in the different psychometric steps of language assessment tools, until get the right versions.

→ Next step: to finalize the current extended version, reduce it to a screening one and standardize both.

References Castro, A., Alves, D., Correia, S. & Soares, C. (in preparation). ConfIRA: Consórcio Científico e Tecnológico - Instrumento de Rastreio e de Avaliação. Freitas, M. J., Alves, D., & Costa, F. (2007). O Conhecimento de língua: desenvolver a consciência fonológica. Lisboa: Ministério da Educação/DGIDC. Frota, S., Correia, S., Severino, C., Cruz, M., Vigarão, M., & Cortês, S. (2012). PLEX5 - A production lexicon of child speech for European Portuguese: Um léxico infantil para o Português Europeu. Lisboa: Laboratório de Fonetica CLUL/FLUL. Pereira, A. R., Fontes, R., & Castro, A. (2013). Contributo para a validação de um instrumento de avaliação de consciência fonológica em idade pré-escolar e escolar [Monografia de licenciatura]. Setúbal: Escola Superior de Saúde do Instituto Politécnico de Setúbal.

RESULTS related to the instrument

Correlations, validity and psychometry aspects

Table 2. Studies focused on (psycho)linguistics, methodological and psychometric aspects

Segmental awareness	Syllabic awareness	Word awareness	Other aspects
Ribeiro & Alves (2007)	Cardoso & Castro (2011)	Lopes & Castro (2009) ¹	
Afonso & Correia (2008)	Santana & Castro (2008)	Alves, Castro & Correia (2010)	Santos, Pinheiro, & Castro (2010) ¹
Vasco & Castro (2008)	Barriguita & Alves (2008)	Antunes (2013) ¹	
Silva & Correia (2008)	Meireles & Alves (2008)	Leitão (2013) ¹	
Aparício & Correia (2008)	Jesus & Castro (2008)	Alves, Castro, Correia & Soares (2015) ¹	
	Isabel & Alves (2009)	Miranda, Castro & Alves (2015) ¹	
	Ribeiro & Alves (2009)	Vidigal, Castro & Alves (2015) ¹	
		Martins & Alves (2016) ¹	
		Silva, Alves & Soares (2016) ¹	
		Ortega, Alves & Castro (2016) ¹	

- **2008-2011**: tasks and phonological properties of the stimuli (at segmental, syllabic and word levels)
- **2009-2015**: psychometric aspects as validity and reliability*
- **2015-2016**: pictographic properties of the stimuli[#]
- **2015-2016**: tool usability[§]

ConfIRA is now adapted to the evidences of these studies and assumes them in terms of (psycho)linguistics, methodological and psychometric aspects, considering also the different professional needs observed, in order to be a valid instrument.

RESULTS related to the data collected

Table 3. ConfIRA results organized by age/schooling

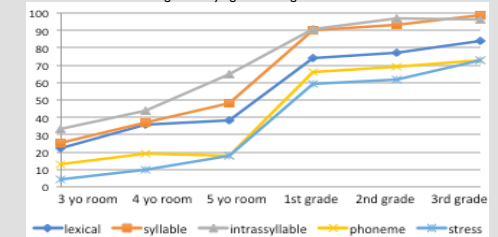


Table 4. ConfIRA results organized by phonological tasks

