

13th International Conference of the Association of Language Awareness held at Vienna University of Economics and Business on 19 - 22 July 2016

Susana Pereira
Encarnação Silva
Mariana Pinto

Language awareness in the 1st grade of Primary School

In line with the guidelines that resulted from the Curriculum reorientation in Portuguese first language teaching, grammar teaching is oriented by the following principles: (i) Grammar teaching makes the implicit knowledge explicit; (ii) Explicit knowledge about language should be constructed from observation, manipulation and systematization activities, leading to the development of metalinguistic competences; (iii) Explicit knowledge can improve other linguistic and discursive skills (cf. Reis (Coord.), 2009; Denham & Lobeck, 2010; Costa et al., 2011; Santos et al. 2014; i.a.).

In the light of these principles, in the context of a quasi-experimental research project, an intervention program was implemented in 1st grade classes of Primary School (aged 6/7) in the 2014-2015 school year. The program aimed at developing the students' language awareness, namely in the syntactic and lexical domains, by promoting the observation and manipulation of sentences, phrases and words.

In this talk, we present the partial results of this project. Concretely, we will discuss the implementation of a specific activity that aims to enhance lexical awareness.

The study involved the following stages: (I) Applying a pre-test – a verbal definition task (Sim-Sim, 2011) - to both experimental and control groups; (ii) Implementing the activity in five sessions of about 60 minutes (involving only the experimental group); (iii) Applying the post-test to both groups; (iv) Analysing data collected at both stages qualitatively and quantitatively (with the support of SPSS software tool).

The results show that there is a significant difference in the verbal definitions presented by the students in the two moments (pre-test and post-test) and that this difference is significant in the experimental group and not in the control group, which confirms the importance of developing an explicit and intentional teaching leading to early development of lexical awareness.

References

Costa, J., Cabral, A., Santiago, A. & Viegas, F. (2011). *Conhecimento explícito da língua - guião de implementação do Programa de Português do Ensino Básico*. Lisboa: DGIDC.

Denham, K. & Lobeck, A. (eds.) (2010). *Linguistics at Scholl. Language Awareness in Primary and Secondary Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reis, C. (Coord.), Dias, A., Cabral, A., Silva, E., Viegas, F., Bastos, G. & Pinto, M. (2009). *Programa de Português para o Ensino Básico*. Lisboa: Ministério da Educação/Direção Geral de Inovação e de Desenvolvimento Curricular.

Santos, A., Cardoso, A. & Pereira, S. (2014). Às voltas com as palavras: Desenvolvimento da consciência linguística no 1.º ano de escolaridade. *Tijuelo*, 10, 84-100.

Sim-Sim, I. (2011). *Avaliação da linguagem oral: Um contributo para o conhecimento do desenvolvimento linguístico das crianças portuguesas*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.