CODA ACQUISITION IN TYPICALLY DEVELOPING BRAZILIAN CHILDREN

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INTRODUCTION

Brazilian Portuguese consonants can appear as syllable onset in the beginning of a word and within the word, as a coda in a syllable within a word and in the end of a word and, as the second consonant of a syllable (CAMARA JR., 1979; SILVA, 1985; MATZENAUER, 2000).

For the coda, the following segments are considered: /R/ and /S/. Some words in Brazilian Portuguese show the /R/ as a coda, but in São Paulo, this segment is vocalized to an /l/, not being considered as a coda. As also, some syllables end with an /i/ or an /i/ but most part of the researches do not consider them as a coda as it nasalizes the previous vowel.

In relation to age acquisition, some studies observed that the coda /R/ is acquired typically developing children before three years of age (WERTZNER, 1994; MEZZOMO, 2004). For the coda /S/, a study with children from São Paulo observed that this segment was acquired at 4-6 years old in final syllable and 6-9 years old in syllables within the word (WERTZNER, 1994). A study with children who lived in the South of Brazil showed that it is acquired at 3:10 in all syllables of the word (WERTZNER, 1994).

This research aimed to compare the accuracy of codas in two groups of typically developing children.

METHODS

All children were enrolled in a public day care center in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. No hearing or language complaint about their children. All were Monolingual Brazilian-Portuguese-Speaking children.

Procedure

Parents signed the permission for the research and answered a questionnaire about their children. Children needed to present adequate answer in the vocabulary assessment, according to their age (Teste de Linguagem Infantil – ABFW, BEFI-Lopes, 2000).

After that, three Phonology Tests were applied (picture naming, imitation and continuous speech tests).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 – Comparison of S and R codas in two groups of children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Speech</td>
<td>/S/</td>
<td></td>
<td>18 boys</td>
<td>23 girls</td>
<td>/R/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitation</td>
<td>/S/</td>
<td></td>
<td>24 girls</td>
<td>24 girls</td>
<td>/R/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The /S/ coda showed difference between the two groups only in the imitation test in initial and final syllable. Data are with accordance to the comparison of the error of omission of this coda between the groups, showing that younger children present more percentage of this error. This can be related to the fact that older children present better motor performance than younger children, being able to imitate with more precision the adult standard.

Figure 1 – Errors of the R archiphoneme

Figure 2 – Errors of the S archiphoneme

- Most frequent errors

The errors that appeared more than ten times were compared between age ranges (Table 2). Differences were found for the archiphoneme /R/ just in initial syllables, indicating that this phoneme is acquired first in initial syllable than in final syllable.

For the S archiphoneme, there were differences only in the imitation test, indicating that older children are more accurate than younger ones.

Table 2 – Comparison of the errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of error</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Type of archiphoneme</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Speech</td>
<td>/R/</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.798</td>
<td>0.573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitation</td>
<td>/R/</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.997</td>
<td>0.573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naming</td>
<td>/R/</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.573</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCES


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