

Pačesová, Jaroslava

Prosody

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THE PERIOD THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED WORDS

PROSODY

As in the first section, here too attention will be drawn to melody, stress and quantity.

Melody of Speech

It has been mentioned before that the child as a rule reproduces those intonation contours given him for imitation. Of the two fundamental pitch levels, however, the rising one was more frequent. The same holds good in the second stage of speech development too. The rising contour, typical for questions, remains predominating and is occasionally applied also for statements. The interrogative pronouns appear as a novum in this developmental stage. The child has three interrogatives, viz. *who* and *what* for identification and *where* for location. The contour used in these types of questions is the falling one, the intonational pitch being on the pronoun. The expressive pitch level, noticed in the first-fifty-word period, is still common in the child's idiolect and so is the postpositional use of the particles *yes* or *no*.

Stress

The consistent and correct usage of stress in the child was observed already in the first stage of speech development. The same experience is valid in this further period. Under emphasis, however, examples illustrating the overusing of stress still occur.

One important thing, however, must be kept in mind with the prosodic features. Like melody, stress too is an expressive element in the child; though utilized to denote various connotations, these features perform above all the function of being the basis for gradual acquirement of ever more complicated word images.

Quantity

The instability of the feature of length has been quoted as a typical phenomenon of the first-fifty-word period. At this second stage in which the first one hundred words were analysed, the learning process has not been completed as far as this feature is concerned. A certain progress, however, is to be noticed here. While in the first period the short and long vowels were freely interchangeable, in the second period the boy comes to be aware of the correct distribution of the short vowels. The long vowels, on the other hand, seem to have the function of expressive variants.

As for quality, the child's phonetic realization starts approximating the Standard Czech usage: the long counterparts of the high vowels /i/ and /u/ are closer than the short ones, the long [a:], on the other hand, is more open compared to the short counterpart. The mid vowels, however, are still unstable both in quality and in quantity, the open and close allophones being realized both in short and in long members.