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Conclusions

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CONCLUSIONS

Prosody

As regards *speech melody*, of the two fundamental pitch levels the rising contour remains predominating. The expressive pitch level is still in wide usage in the child's idiolect. The use of interrogative pronouns, accompanied with a falling contour, appears as a new phenomenon in expressing the question in a grammatical way.

But for a few exceptions where, in emphatic speech, the *stress* was overloud and occasionally placed on an additional syllable to the first, no deviations from Standard Czech were noticed either in quality or in usage of stress in the child.

In regard to *quantity*, progress is evident in the gradual refining of the long vowels. The contrastive function of quantity, however, has not been mastered as yet.

Phonology

Vowels

All vowel phonemes which form the vocalic system in Czech appear in the child's phonemic repertory. Not all of them, however, exhibit phonological characteristics identical with those of Standard Czech in the child's pronunciation.

As in the first developmental stage, so too in this second one, the phonetic realization of */a/*, */i/*, */u/* is well established, while the learning process has not been accomplished as regards the mid vowels */e/*, */o/*. Similarly, the realizations of the diphthongs remain unstable. No change occurred, as far as the order of frequency is concerned. The proportions in the frequency counts are, however, more evenly balanced now. As for the place of occurrence, the vowels appear—in accordance with the findings in the previous period—most frequently in the medial position. Their occurrences in final and initial positions have progressively lower frequencies.

In terms of features, the contrast wide *versus* narrow is well established and so are the contrasts high *versus* low and front *versus* back. Rounding, however, is an insufficiently acquired feature, while the feature of length is unstable as yet and is not used contrastively. The short *versus* long distinction is utilized only in an expressive or stylistic function.

Additional non-distinctive variations mentioned in the first developmental stage, still appear in the realization of the phonemes */e/* and */o/*, an indication of their instability in the vocalic system.

Consonants

Stops

All stop phonemes found in Czech consonantal system appear and are well established in the child. In distribution, /k/, /t/ and /b/ enjoy the widest usage.

In terms of features, the stop articulation has been learned well and so are all the oppositions based on points of articulation. Nasality is another well established feature and so is, in distinction to the previous stage, also the feature of voicing. With the refinement of the correct phonetic realization of the stop and nasal phonemes, all additional non-distinctive sound differences noticed in the first fifty words disappeared.

The statistical indications are as follows: the front stops are far more frequent as compared to the back ones. The voiceless stops are far more frequent as compared to the voiced ones. The oral stops are far more frequent as compared to the nasal ones.

Fricatives

Of the fricative phonemes found in the Czech consonantal system the phonemes /r/ and /ʃ/ are still absent from the child's system and the status of the phonemes /h/ and /x/ is highly disputable. With the exception of /j/ the phonetic realization of all fricatives is unstable as yet.

In terms of features, the fricative articulation has been mastered in voiceless but not in voiced consonants. Of other distinctions based on manner of articulation, only laterality may be considered an established feature, while the vibrants which would represent the distinction of vibrativity did not appear in the child's consonantal system as yet. While the contrast front *versus* back is established, with minor exceptions, the oppositions based on the point of articulation show instability by adding non-distinctive variations in the realization of the corresponding fricatives. Though acknowledged in all substitutes which replace the as yet un-mastered consonants, the feature of voicing is not established in fricatives.

The statistical countings indicate the following: the front fricatives are—in distinction to the first developmental stage—more frequent than the back fricatives. In total, the voiced fricatives are more frequent than the voiceless ones. The comparison of the paired members in fricatives, however, shows the preponderance of the voiceless counterparts as compared to the voiced ones.

Affricates

The unstable phonetic realization of the affricates /c/, /č/, and the fact that they are replaced by fricatives or stops in most instances, clearly indicate the instability of both their manner and point of articulation.

In summary then:

1. The stop and nasal phonemes represent a more mature stage as compared to fricatives and affricates.
2. Of the total of consonantal phonemes, the stops are the most frequent.
3. The consonants produced in the front of the mouth predominate both in stability and distribution over the back consonants.
4. The voiceless consonants are more stable and more frequently distributed as compared to their voiced counterparts.

5. The consonants are distributed word-medially, word-initially and word-finally, in this order of frequency.

Consonantal Clusters

In contradistinction to the first developmental stage, two-consonant clusters are realized in the second stage. They appear in the word-medial and word-final position, of which the former is far more frequent. No cluster occurrence, however, was recorded word-initially. As for the structure of the present consonantal clusters, the shape a fricative + stop is the most widely distributed one.

Due to the restricted number and distribution of consonantal clusters, the common types of *assimilations*, i.e. the assimilation of voice, the assimilation of point of articulation and the assimilation of manner of articulation are rare at this stage of speech development. The sound assimilation, on the other hand, is fairly frequent. Contrary to the first period, where vocalic harmony was the result of such an assimilation, it is rather consonant harmony which is more frequent now.

Of the types of *dissimilation*, only the elision of one of the consonants—mostly of the fricative or affricate—has found its foothold in this developmental stage.

Phonemic Shapes of Words

In terms of their *length*, words can be divided into four groups, i.e. monosyllables, disyllables, trisyllables and tetrasyllables, their order of frequency being disyllables—trisyllables—monosyllables—tetrasyllables.

As for the *shapes*, the CV pattern remains the optimal and most frequently used of the total of syllables, in all types of words but the monosyllables, where the CVC shape is more frequent. The open syllables are far more frequent as compared to the close ones. The ratio between the vowels and consonants is expressed in the figures 47.9% : 52.1%, showing the wider distribution of consonants as compared to the previous stage.

Parts of Speech

Of the word-categories, *substantives* have the highest frequency in the realizations of the first one hundred words. The next most frequent categories are *interjections* and *verbs*. Pronouns, particles, adjectives and adverbs have progressively lower frequencies, while numerals, prepositions and conjunctions recorded no occurrence at this stage of speech development.