

Pačesová, Jaroslava

## Parts of speech

In: Pačesová, Jaroslava. *The development of vocabulary in the child*. Vyd. 1. Brno: Universita J.E. Purkyně, 1968, pp. 64-65

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/119977>

Access Date: 27. 11. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

## PARTS OF SPEECH

The aim of the present work is above all the investigation of the phonetic and phonemic development in a Czech-speaking child. An analysis in terms of phonemic contrasts and more particularly those of constituting phonemic features is therefore the core of this study. Grammar and syntax were not intended to be dealt with. We have seen however, that the existence of interjections have played an important role even as far as the phonemic inventory is concerned. That is why we consider it necessary to add some remarks on this word-category as well as on its relation to the other parts of speech.

In the early stages of speech development the most common words are those which express the reaction to the impulses which attract the child most. Further, there are such expressions by means of which the child establishes his first social intercourse with his environment. The large majority of these words are interjections, especially those of onomatopoeic origin, then follow the appellatives designating concrete persons and objects which being of daily use are thus of the greatest importance to the child, and finally, there are the verbs expressing his action. Figure 58 shows the proportion of the word-categories occurring in the child's idiolect within the period of the first fifty words.

As Figure 58 clearly indicates, interjections are the most frequently used category and account for more than half of all the words counted<sup>82</sup>. Furthermore, their employment is very wide here. Thus the item *búbú* expresses both the appellative *cow* and the action of *mooring*. Similarly, the items *mémé* designate both the *goat* and the *bleating*, *haf* both the *dog* and the *barking*, *kákaká* both the *duck* (and a bird in general) and the *quacking*, *kokokodák* both the *hen* and the *cackling*, *kykyryký* both the *cock* and the *crowing*. To name the car the child used at first the interjection *tudú*. Later on this interjection became an apposition to the expression *a car*, cf. [*a:to tudu:*]. Also the term *houpy* had manifold meanings; besides the interjection *houpy houpy* it served for naming the rocking chair, the cradle and the action of rocking.

The differentiation between the parts of speech belongs to the later developmental stages. In this period, only two examples suggest that the child starts to make a difference between the appellative and the action. Those are the parallel expressions [*čiči:*] and [*ňau*] (where *čiči* represents the appellative *cat* while the interjection

---

<sup>82</sup> Ohnesorg has a similar observation. In the first stages of speech development, interjections were the leading category and were followed by substantives, verbs and particles in both his children, cf. *Růst slovní zásoby*, p. 92.

*mňau* the miaowing of the cat) and [pi-pi]—[kokokoda:k] (representing the *hen* and the *cackling* respectively).

The substantives come second in the frequency scale of parts of speech in this period. Like the interjections, the substantives too express at first the whole situation, naming concrete persons and things occurring in the immediate surroundings. Within this word-category the demonstrative pronoun *toto* could be ranked. The boy used this pronoun to name any object whose real designation had been unknown to him as yet, thus ascribing to it the appellative function.

Nor were adjectives used in their proper functions at this stage of speech development. The instance *malá malá* represents only a combined reaction (the spoken word accompanied by gesticulation with arms) to answer the demand *udělej malá*. i.e. the nursery form for stroking one's cheek.

The remaining two word-categories, viz. adverbs and particles had primarily a contrasting function. Thus the adverb [*tam*] (*there*) served as contrast to [*tadi*] (*here*). Similarly, the particle [*ano*] and [*ne*] (*yes* and *no*), juxtaposed to the verb, were used to express agreement or disagreement with the given reality, cf. [*hajat ne:*] versus [*hajat ano:*], [*hapa: ne:*] versus [*hapa: ano*], [*papu: ne:::*] versus [*pa:pa: ano:::*]<sup>83</sup>.

As was expected, no prepositions and no conjunctions were recorded in the realizations of the first fifty words. Semantically empty words do not as a rule belong to the fundamental stock of words of the child, in the same way as numerals, which the child starts to use only later on when he comes to differentiate between singular and plural.

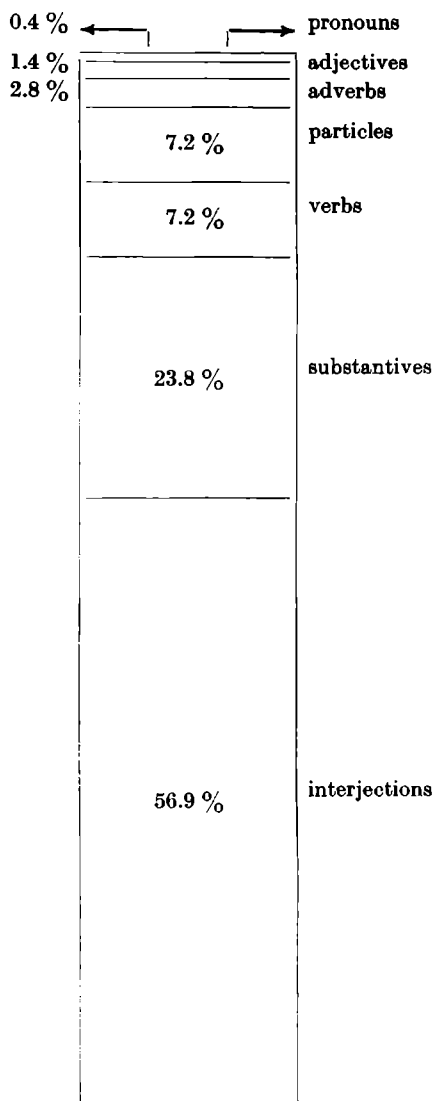


Figure 58

<sup>83</sup> As might be seen in the quoted examples, both the positive and negative particles were used postpositionally. — On this question cf. M. Seemann, *Porucky*, p. 29. As for the non-Czech material, notes on postpositional negation in children may be found in the works of L. Kaczmarek, *Kształowanie* and R. Dravina, *Zur Sprachentwicklung*, p. 148.