

Pačesová, Jaroslava

Conclusions

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CONCLUSIONS

Prosody

The priority of *speech melody* in language acquisition noticed in most investigators is confirmed in our data. In the first developmental stage the child has three pitch levels, viz. the rising, the falling and the expressive one. Of the first two, the rising is more frequent. The third, expressive level, is applied in order to stress the emotional attitude to the given reality.

No deviations from Standard Czech as far as the place of *stress* and its strength is concerned, were recorded in the child's unemotional speech. Under emphasis, however, his stress was rather overloud and was placed on an additional syllable to the first and even examples occurred where every syllable of the word was bearing stress.

As for *quantity*, neither the correct phonetic realization of the long vowels nor the contrastive function of short *versus* long was mastered by the child at this stage of speech development.

Phonology

Vowels

In spite of the fact that all vowels belonging to the Czech vocalic system appeared in the child, their stability as to the phonetic realization and distributional status differ to a considerable degree. As for the learning process, the child mastered well the vowels /a/, /i/, /u/, while the phonetic realization of the remaining two, i.e. /e/ and /o/, is unstable as yet. Unstable in this period are also the diphthongs. The frequency count displays a similar picture: /a/ is the most widely distributed vowel and is followed by /i/ and /u/. The functional load of /o/ and /e/ is considerably lower.—As for the place of occurrence, the vowels occurred in medial, final and initial positions, in this order of frequency.

In terms of features, the child mastered well the contrasts wide *versus* narrow, palatal *versus* velar and low *versus* high. The threefold distinction between low, mid and high is rather unstable as yet, and so is the feature of length. Unlike Standard Czech, the child did realize these sound differences in vowels: open *versus* close and rounded *versus* unrounded.

Consonants

Stops

With the exception of /g/ and the velar allophone of /n/, the boy has all the Czech stops in his consonantal inventory. From what has been said in their analysis, these conclusions may be drawn: first, the voiceless stops are more stable and their func-

tional load is considerably higher compared to their voiced counterparts; second, the front stops are more stable than the back ones and the former are more widely distributed. The most stable are the bilabial stops, the following are the alveolar ones while the palatal and velar stops are still in the learning process; third, among the consonantal phonemes, the stops /p/, /t/, /k/ are the first in the frequency scale.

Fricatives

The unstable phonetic realization and the minimal distribution of the fricative phonemes in this developmental stage necessarily point to the fact that the fricative articulation has not been learned well by the child as yet. Of the Czech fricative phonemes, he has only /j/ and /h/, while /f/, /s/, /š/, /x/ and /l/ are very unstable; the fricatives /v/, /z/, /r/ and /ʒ/ did not appear at all.

Affricates

What has been said above of the fricative phonemes, holds good all the more with regard to the semi-occlusive phonemes /c/ and /č/. Both their unstable phonetic realization and their sporadic distribution reveal the fact that the feature of semi-occlusivity has not been mastered by the child in this period.

In terms of features, the stop articulation has been learned well while the fricative and semi-occlusive articulations exhibit instability as yet. The contrast oral *versus* nasal is established well. The contrast front *versus* back, on the other hand, has not been learned perfectly due to the unstable character of the distinction of palatality velarity. The greatest instability, however, is shown in the feature of voicing.—Two additional sound differences, unknown in Standard Czech, appeared in the child's phonemic repertory, viz. aspiration and palatalization.

Consonantal Clusters

No consonantal clusters appeared at this stage of speech development. In their simplifying, the stop has been preserved while the fricative or the affricate was dropped.

Due to the non-existence of consonantal clusters no *assimilation* of voice, place or manner of articulation took place, nor did *dissimilation*. *Vocalic harmony*, on the other hand, where all vowels contained in the word were equalized, was a frequent phenomenon.

Phonemic Shapes of Words

As for the phonemic *length*, the child had disyllables, monosyllables, trisyllables and tetrasyllables in his vocabulary of this period. The words are arranged in their order of frequency.

Of the phonemic *shapes*, the pattern CV is by far the most frequent and together with the \bar{V} -pattern accounts for 92.8% of the open syllables. The close syllables are represented by a single pattern, viz. CVC.

Parts of Speech

As far as the parts of speech contained in the corpus of the first fifty words are concerned, the *interjections* are the most widely distributed. The *substantives* follow. The distribution of verbs, particles, adverbs and pronouns is very slight and the prepositions, conjunctions and numerals are absent at this stage of speech development.