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Parts of speech

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PARTS OF SPEECH

As in the two previous stages, so too in the third one, attention will be drawn as to which of the word-categories prevail in the child's vocabulary, which are rarely distributed and which of those used in Standard Czech are missing as yet in the child's idiolect.

For comparison, a brief outline of the findings in the first-fifty- and first-one-hundred-word period follows:

In the first stage, the interjections and substantives amounted to the majority of the child's word-stock. Verbs, particles, adverbs, adjectives and pronouns had progressively lower occurrences and numerals, prepositions and conjunctions did not appear at all.

In the second stage, the substantives and the interjections have retained their leading positions, their order of frequency is, however, interchanged. In distinction from the first-fifty-word period, the distribution of verbs shows an increasing tendency. The numerals, prepositions and conjunctions are still absent and particles, adjectives and pronouns still exhibit minimal distribution.

In the third stage, another change affecting the frequency order occurs; while the substantives remain in the first place, the verbs come as the second frequent category. The interjections thus appear in the third place. The remaining parts of speech are arranged in the following order: adjectives—pronouns—prepositions—adverbs—particles—numerals—conjunctions¹⁵⁵. As this list indicates, all word-categories used in Standard Czech are present in the child at this stage of speech development. Their proportion is shown in Figure 274.

Substantives

As before, the main function of the substantive is above all to assign names to objects occurring in the child's immediate surroundings. As for gender, it has been learned well, with minor exceptions (cf. the incorrect [*ten su:l*] instead of *ta sül* and [*g dotolkovi*] *k doktorce*). The fluctuation between masculine and feminine gender is shown in the following doublets, which however, find their counterparts in colloquial

¹⁵⁵ Cf. here the findings of D. Uhlíková, who in her Dissertation *Vývoj dětské řeči po stránce syntaktické*, has the following observation: the substantives account for about a half of the total word occurrences. The verbs, on the other hand, amount to about 20 % and the adjectives to 7 % in children at the age of two.—See also Jelínek, *Frekvence slov*, p. 89. In his observations concerning Standard Czech, the most frequent categories are the substantives and the verbs. The adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions are the next most frequent group, while numerals and interjections belong to those words which are least frequently distributed.

or dialect pronunciation: [blambu.lka]—[blambolek] *brambora, brambor*, [kola:lka]—[kola:lek] *korálka, korálek*, [papučka]—[pápuček] *papučka, papuček*, [botka]—[bótek] *bota*, [poli:veček]—[poli:večka] *polévka*. Nominative and accusative, both in singular and plural, are the most frequently used cases. Though less frequently, the other cases appear too and have the correct forms in most instances. In distinction to the previous stages, the prepositional constructions become gradually stabilized in the child's speech.

The endings of the plural are correct. In a few examples, however, the plural is formed analogously to the singular, thus ignoring the obligatory change of the stem-consonant, cf. [pejsek]—[pejskī] *pejsek, pejsci*, [blouk]—[blouki] *brouk, brouci*. The operation of analogy is shown also in the plural forms as [lefi] *lvi*, cf. the singular [lef] or [kobelec]—[kobelecī] *koberec, koberce*.

As in the one-hundred-word period, the child still prefers the diminutive forms in substantives.

Verbs

In the verb, the child comes to acknowledge its function of expressing a changeable quality of the subject. Of the forms, the infinitive is still very widespread. The concrete persons, however, appear too. Of them, the first person singular and plural is the most frequent.

Fairly frequent is also the second person singular, especially in the imperative mood. The third person singular, on the other hand, ceased to be used by the child when speaking of himself. Thus the frequent construction [jiži:ček papa:] is gradually replaced by the first person [papa:m].

In the preterite too, the first person singular and plural are the most widely distributed forms. Contrary to the previous stage, the child does use the here correct auxiliary verb *jsem*, cf. *haval jsem* instead of the older *haval*.

In distinction to Standard Czech, where the verbal form is either positive or negative and *tertium non datur*, the child's verb seems to be neutral, i.e. is neither positive nor negative, and only the negative or positive particle determines the meaning as to negativity or positivity. This is shown above all in the infinitive, cf.

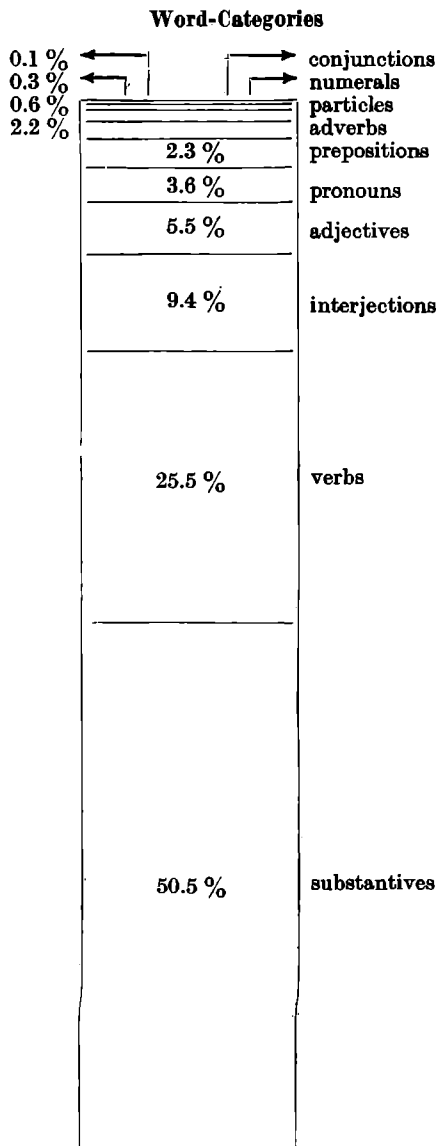


Figure 274

the examples reported already in the previous period, [*papat ano*]—[*papat ne*], but, occurs in the finite verbal forms too, cf. [*hapa:m ne:*] [*jiži:ček papa: ano:*]. The correct realizations, however, where the inflected verbal forms include the negative particle, appear as well, cf. [*nema:m*], [*nespapa:m*]. To express different grades of negation various means were employed, e.g. [*nežeknu — nežeknu nič — nežeknu aňi ň — nežeknu aňi muk*].

Analogy to the most productive verbs of the type *dělat* explains the incorrect forms such as [*spa:m*] *spím*, [*vaza:m*] *váží*, [*fonova:m*] *telefonuji*, [*pi:sa:m*] *píši*.

As for the verbal aspect, the child evidently prefers the perfective form to the imperfective one. We shall deal with this question more particularly in the conclusive chapter on Speech Development.

[Interjections

Figures representing the frequency counts of interjections are steadily decreasing. No new interjections enter into the child's vocabulary at this stage of speech development and those of the previous periods have considerably lower distribution. The process of fluctuation between word-categories, noticed in the first-one-hundred-word period, is more evident here. Having accepted the inflectional suffixes, most of the interjections are now evaluated as nouns, verbs or adjectives, cf. [*haf*]—[*hafa:ček*], [*bu:*]—[*bučet*], [*bak*]—[*bakani:*]. Also their former function of assigning the names to objects has given way to the proper appellatives in this period, cf. [*kokokoda:k*]—[*slepíčka*], [*ka:kaka:*]—[*kačenka*], [*bu:*]—[*klavička*]. As far as the interjections are preserved in their original forms even in this period, they have become one of the expressive means introduced for emotional effect, cf. [*kozenka me: meči:*], [*auto tudí jede*], [*kuca:m kuci kuc*].

Adjectives

With the exception of the nursery form *malá malá* all the adjectives have acquired their proper attributive function in this developmental stage. Also their gender corresponds to the Standard Czech usage in most instances. In masculine and neuter gender, however, the child clings to the colloquial forms where the standard *-ý* and *-é* underwent the change into *-ej* and *-í* respectively, cf. [*napapanej jiži:ček*] *napapaný Jiříček*, [*decko škaredí:*] *škaredé děcko*.

As in substantives, so too in adjectives the child's predilection for diminutive forms is shown, cf. [*malilinenki:*] *malinký*, [*velikana:nskej*] *velikánský*. As the example illustrates, he uses the diminutive forms instead of the comparison in adjectives, a category which is absent from his idiolect as yet. While in the earlier stages the emphatic lengthening of the vowel accompanied with gesticulation served as means for gradation (let us recall here the child's spoken and active reaction to answer the question of how big he is: [*ta:::k*] (so much) with his hands going up high over his head), this is now achieved by the inserting of extra syllables in the given adjectives, cf. [*velikej*]—[*velika:nskej*]—[*velikana:nskej*]—[*velikanana:nskej*]; a similar method is adopted when the gradation has the opposite intention, cf. [*mali:*]—[*malinkí:*]—[*malilinenki:*]—[*malilinenki:*]—[*malulilinenki:*]. The insertion of additional syllables is, analogously, used for expressing duration, cf. [*cínk*]—[*cilínk*]—[*cililínk*]—[*cilililínk*].

In distinction to Standard usage, the child has an undeclinable possessive form used in all three genders, both singular and plural, cf. e.g. [*ta:tovo nu:š*] *tátiv nuž*, [*babičkovu taška*] *babiččina taška*, [*mamiňkovu dítě*] *mamiňčino dítě*, [*dedovu boty*] *dědovy boty*. The question of whether these forms are but distortions of or analogies

to neuter gender, or whether their appearance in the child is to be explained on different grounds, remains to be solved. The existence of such forms in some of the Bohemian dialects and their parallel in the Saxon genitive which, as a sole witness of the former synthetic character of Old English is a vital component of New English, suggests that such formation is not alien to languages in general.

With regard to other categories, we can say the following: their non-existence or minimal distribution in the child's vocabulary clearly demonstrates that they have not been mastered in their proper functions as yet and that their establishment does belong to later stages of speech development.