



THE XXVI ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC CONFERENCE, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, 27–30 October 2015

Word Collocations as Language Knowledge Patterns: A Study of Infant Speech

Svetlana A. Osokina^{a,*}

^a*Altai State University, 61, Prospekt Lenina, Barnaul, 656049, Russia*

Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to show the role of word collocations in the process of forming infants' language knowledge at the beginning stages. We choose keeping a scientific journal as the main method of the study since this allows us to watch causes which could happen long before the observed baby's speech behavior. The study shows that at the beginning stages knowledge of a word may have no connection with its meaning, or concept. Knowledge of a word can be seen as recognition of a particular word in a regularly heard by a child word collocation.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of National Research Tomsk State University.

Keywords: collocation; set phrase; language knowledge; thesaurus; infant speech; speech development; language acquisition

1. Introduction

Here introduce the paper, and put a nomenclature if necessary, in a box with the same font size as the rest of the paper. The paragraphs continue from here and are only separated by headings, subheadings, images and formulae. The section headings are arranged by numbers, bold and 10 pt. Here follows further instructions for authors.

Formation and development of language knowledge in infancy is one of the most interesting questions for discussion in modern linguistics. It has gained special attention due to criticism of N. Chomsky and his followers' ideas of inborn language capacity described, for instance, in (Hauser, Chomsky, and Fitch, 2002). Nowadays the accent is more frequently being put on the experience acquired by a baby in getting language knowledge. Influence

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +7-909-501-1887

E-mail address: s.a.osokina2@yandex.ru

of the experience gained in the process of an infant's communication with adults on the development of his/her speech is discussed in Russian linguistics within the psycholinguistic approach dating back to the works of L. S. Vygotsky. This approach has points of contacts with behaviorism psychology but pays more attention to the research of inward thinking mechanisms connected with speech than to outward activities. The role of language practice is studied in usage-based theory of language (Tomasello, 2003).

The point under discussion in this article is rather not the development of infant speech (i.e. specialties of making verbal contacts between adults and children, though this question can't be left without thinking) but formation of language knowledge system, that is the system due to which children acquire the ability to use language and to process the incoming information as well as generate new knowledge. This system is called language thesaurus, e.g. (Osokina, 2014).

Knowledge of language is based on knowledge of words and the ability to use them in communication. Therefore, the basis of language knowledge is formed by the capacity to extract a word from speech – to recognize it and, that far as it is possible to speak with regard to infancy, to realize it as a word, or a particular sequence of sounds, not an accidental one.

Infant ability to extract words from speech is discussed, for example, in (Jusczyk, 1999; Kooijman, Junge, Johnson, Hagoort, & Cutler, 2013; Johnson, 2014). The authors pay attention to study of the phonetic part of the word (the influence of stress, vowels characteristics, word edges, etc.) as main factors that young infants may use for speech segmentation and words recognition.

However, studying the wide sound sequence from which a word is extracted has no less importance when we explore the formation of language knowledge. In other words, to have enough evidence for conclusion that a child understands a word as a word it is equally important to study how he/she can correlate a word with another word, not a random meaningless set of sounds. It is logical to suppose that everything said by adults is given to a child from the very beginning of his/her life as a kind of chaotic obscure stream of sounds. Then the child starts to notice repeated sets of sounds (the ability of infants under a year to statistical analysis of the heard sounds of speech is discussed in (Johnson, 2012), though the researcher says it is not absolutely clear what exactly calculations infants might be performing over language units, and which exactly units), and later inside these sets of sounds it becomes possible to notice shorter repeated sound sets that can evidently be words.

The purpose of this article consists in showing the role of word collocations in the process of forming infants' language knowledge. The discussed observation results can find their practical use in the field of teaching technologies aimed to develop infant speech at the beginning stages.

2. The role of set collocations in knowledge formation

To begin with, I define word collocations as repeated combinations of words reproduced in speech as ready-to-use language units that we insert into speech without thinking which word must follow after which word. In other linguistic works such word combinations may be described as set phrases, idioms, collocations, stereotypes, etc. Though each of the listed items has its specific characteristics, I think it is possible to look at all of them from one point of view due to one main feature, relevant to every mentioned word combination type – they may be heard in speech of practically every person and recognized by a listener as familiar phrases that he/she uses in his/her speech as well.

So, I consider studying approach from collocations to words to be one of the most important in the field of language acquisition and knowledge formation research. I see word collocations as repeated pieces of speech that a child must necessarily be able to catch in order to come to any idea of the word. Catching word collocations is a kind of precondition, or prerequisite, of forming knowledge about the word. This supposition results from the observation that adults never talk to their children with separate words. Even showing a particular material object and trying to stick an exact word to this particular object, an adult never utters only this exactly word; the word always goes in a sequence of other words. For instance, pointing at the clock an adult never says simply "*clock*", he/she says, "*This is a clock. The clock goes tick tock.*" And most adults use the same word sequences to describe clocks as if they have agreed to utter the same word collocations in order to describe things to children.

Word collocations frequently repeated in speech may be considered as primary patterns of language knowledge acquired by a child. The reason to think so is that collocations of words are primarily perceived blocks of the extremely complicated working language system; this interaction of working language and a perceiving infant consciousness occurs to be the first experience of language acquisition, and experience is the basis for knowledge.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1110576>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1110576>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)