

## Recovery from morphological overregularizations in Russian child speech.

One of the important issues in the theory of language acquisition is that of overregularization errors. At some period of language development children produce erroneous forms such as *braked* instead of *broke* in English (e.g., Marcus et al. 1992) or *j'ai \*batté* instead of *j'ai battu* 'I beat' in French (Royle et al. 2012). In Russian, overregularization errors often arise from applying the pattern of the most productive Russian verb class (e.g., *chita-t'/chitaj-u* 'to read/ I am reading'). This pattern is known as the "j-correlation" model (Ceytlin 2009) and consists in inserting a yod /j/ in the intervocalic position at the stem-inflection boundary in the non-past forms. For instance, Russian children produce *\*risovaju* instead of *risuju* 'I am drawing', or *\*plakaju* instead of *plachu* 'I am crying'.

While the question of emergence of such errors is quite obvious (they result from the extension of a general rule to irregular or sub-regular words), the question of how children eliminate their non-target productions is a subject of lasting debates. A mechanism that could potentially help children to overcome their overregularization errors is parental feedback, which provides direct negative evidence to the child (i.e., information about ungrammaticality of the utterance). However, the role of such feedback remains unclear. While some studies show that feedback is ineffective (Marcus 1993, Pinker 1989), others argue that it has an important effect on child speech grammaticality (Saxton 2000, Chouinard and Clark 2003).

In order to test whether there is an effect of negative feedback on error elimination in child speech, we conducted an experimental study with 76 Russian children aged from 3 to 4 years ( $M = 3;4$ ,  $SD = 0.36$ ). Data for 65 children who participated in more than one encounter were analysed. In a series of elicitation tasks, we provided feedback to children divided into groups according to three feedback types (Correction, Repetition and Clarification question) and a control group without feedback. The experiment was repeated during 4 sessions with two-week intervals between the first three sessions, and a four-week interval between sessions 3 and 4. Twelve verbs that usually undergo overregularization in child speech were used as stimuli. These were 6 suffixation verbs such as *ris-ova-t'/ris-uj-u* 'to draw' and 6 consonant alternation verbs as *plaka-t'/plach-u* 'to cry'.

We observed improvement in child speech grammaticality from session to session. However, we did not observe any significant effect of feedback type: participants of all 4 groups improved in the same way. Our results suggest that children eliminate their overregularization errors without help of negative feedback. Thus, we conclude that positive evidence (i.e., correct productions in adult speech) would be sufficient for children to overcome their early overregularization productions.

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