

## **Acquisition of prepositions and question words in Czech – a parent-report study**

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In Czech, there are almost no empirical studies concerning the acquisition of grammatical words and forms by children. Our poster presents data about acquisition of prepositions and question words (QW) produced by children between 18 and 48 months of age. In this age, children acquire a substantial amount of grammatical phenomena. The poster is only one part of the larger research which is focused on acquisition of various function words and grammatical morphemes in Czech.

The study is based on parental reports (Fenson et al., 1993, 2006). This method is often used for the assessment of vocabulary; our study aims to extend the use of questionnaires to the study of function words and grammatical morphemes in morphologically rich language such as Czech. We collected the data through two web-based questionnaires completed by the children's mothers, and focused on children's spontaneous production of prepositions and QW.

Besides the prepositions and QW, we also included questions about children's expressive vocabulary and the grammatical complexity of their utterances. Some demographic data were collected as well. In total, we obtained data on 118 children (average age 32 months, SD = 8.52) for the prepositions questionnaire, and on 106 children (average age 30.5 months, SD = 7.54) for the question-words questionnaire. Our analyses conformed that the total numbers of acquired prepositions and QW strongly correlate with the age of children, but even more with children's expressive vocabulary and grammatical complexity of their utterances (similarly for example Marchman et al., 2004, or McGregor and Sheng (2005), who propose lexical-grammatical continuity between acquisition of grammar and lexicon. Children with larger lexicon were reported to use more complex grammar, and lexicon serves as a better predictor of grammatical development than age.). Mixed-effects logistic regressions showed that age, children's expressive vocabulary, and grammatical complexity have a strong independent effect on number of prepositions and QW produced by children. We used the random effects from the mixed logistic model to estimate relative difficulty of individual prepositions and QW.

The first prepositions and question words acquired by children are for example "s" [with], "k" [to/towards – space meaning], "z" [from – space meaning), "do" [to – space meaning], "v" [in – space meaning], and "kde" [where], "co" [what], "kdo" [who], "kam" [where to], "kdy" [when]. The order of acquisition for additional prepositions and question words will be presented in the poster.

The linear model analyses examined the effects of various factors, such as gender, birth order and parent education, on the order of acquisition. The analyses showed that mother education has a weak significant effect on acquisition of question words. In case of other factors, we did not find any significant effect.

**Word count:** 438

## References

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