

Palatalization in Child Speech Production: A Case Study

Palatalization is a phonological process well attested in adult languages but seldom discussed in child speech cross-linguistically. Previous literature on the acquisition of Vietnamese by children aged 2;0 to 4;11 (Nguyễn & Phạm, 2014) reports palatalization across a range of initial consonants at different stages of acquisition. However, beyond empirical reports, no formal analysis was proposed to account for this phenomenon. In this paper, I focus on a longitudinal case study, with the aim of providing a further understanding of how it emerges in children's productions. Representative examples from my primary data are listed below:

Sessions	Target forms	Actual forms	Gloss
1;05.24	[lɤn ⁶]	[ɲɤn ⁶]	pig
1;07.10	[tǎk ⁵ si ¹]	[jǎk ⁵ yi ¹]	taxi
1;07.14	[tɕu ⁵ [ɲoj ²]	[cu ⁵ [ɲoj ²]	uncle sits (here)
1;08.22	[suw ¹ tuw ⁴]	[cuw ⁶]	lion
	[dɛp ⁶]	[cɛp ⁶]	beautiful
	[se ¹]	[ce ¹]	vitamin C
1;10.30	[o ¹ to ¹]	[o ¹ co ¹]	car
	[tǎk ⁵ si ¹]	[dǎk ⁵ ci ¹]	taxi
	[thit ⁶]	[cit ⁶]	meat
	[zǎw ¹]	[cǎw ¹]	vegetable

I will address this phenomenon in light of 1) segmental development, i.e. the sound contrasts the child masters during the learning period, 2) the phonological contexts that trigger palatalization, 3) whether any characteristics of the phonological system of the target language may cause palatalization happen more frequently in child language. Building on this empirical investigations, I will be in a position to address its implications for theories of phonological and phonological development.

References

Nguyễn, K. T. L., & Phạm, L. H. (2014). Lỗi phát âm âm tiết thường gặp ở trẻ 2-4 tuổi (tại Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh). *Tạp chí Khoa học ĐHSP TPHCM*, 57, 9–21. [Syllable pronunciation errors in children aged 2 to 4 (in Ho Chi Minh City), *Journal of Science*, University of Education, Ho Chi Minh City, Volume 57, page 9-21]