

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The present issue comprises five articles based on studies in Russian, Bulgarian, Romani, and Polish. It opens with a text entitled *The acoustic characteristics of Russian vowels in children of 4 and 5 years of age* by Elena E. Lyakso and Alexandra D. Gromova from the Saint-Petersburg State University. The purpose of the study was to examine the process of development of first and second formants, and the duration and intensity of Russian vowels in child speech. Five normally developing Russian children during the fourth and fifth years were recorded in situations of free interaction with their mothers and the investigator. Measurements were made of 1) the fundamental frequency and the first two formants in words, 2) the intensity of these harmonics, and 3) the vowel and its stationary part duration. It turned out that the formant characteristics do not correspond to those in adult speech as yet.

The second article is entitled *Between adults, siblings, and Teddy-Bears: How Bulgarian children acquire personal deixis?*, written by Juliana Stoyanova (Sofia University). The author analyzed the child's initial use of the 3rd person verb and pronoun forms for referring to self and the addressee, or pronominal reversals. The Bulgarian sample includes 5 longitudinally studied children as well as 2 children who were each tape-recorded in 60-min. sessions. The Bulgarian data were compared with the data reported on Polish (Smoczyńska, 1992, see reference in Stoyanova's article). The results add some language-specific (Bulgarian) and style-specific data to the discussion about the development of self- and other-reference.

The third article on *Measuring children's assertiveness from conversational samples* was prepared by Barbara Jacennik from the University of Warsaw. The Polish speaking children with whom the conversations were tape-recorded were 21 primary school students between 7 and 11 years. The adult partner was instructed to use a conversational style that would encourage child participation - to speak in a friendly, non-evaluative, peer-like manner. The children's behaviors were judged as "active participation in conversation" or as "passive or withdrawal from conversation". The article demonstrates an application of conversational analysis to children's communicative assessment focusing on assertiveness.

The fourth article was prepared by Encho Gerganov (New Bulgarian University) and Hristo Kyuchukov (Veliko Tarnovo University). The title is *Word associations in Romani. Some prototypes in cross-cultural perspectives*. The article is a preliminary

report on word associations given by Romani people living in Bulgaria. Seventy-three Roma participated in a pilot experiment. They came from different regions of Bulgaria and spoke different Romani dialects. The results of the Romani word association experiment were added to the database of word associations for 7 languages and cultures (shown in the previous work of the first author - Gerganov, 2003, see reference in the article). It turned out that white is the prototype and black is the variant in Romani culture, while in Bulgarian the prototype is black and the variant is white. It was also found that night is the prototype and day the variant in Bulgarian culture but in Romani culture the relation is reversed although both cultures had coexisted for hundreds of years.

The issue ends with the article entitled *The influence of interpersonal communication on human development* by Stefan Frydrychowicz from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. In his exploration of the phenomenon of interpersonal communication, the author considers four dimensions as follows: transmitting information, sender's emotional attitude towards the message and its receiver, cooperation between participants (joint activity), relationship between the participants. His goal is to answer the question: What characteristics should the course of interpersonal communication have in terms of these dimensions to warrant its impact on human development?

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