## **ARTYKUŁY**

JERZY ZYBERT (WARSZAWA)

# ADULT-TO-CHILD SPEECH AND INPUT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Research into L1 acquisition has substantially helped understanding L2 learning processes. Numerous suggestions have been made to include various features of adult-to-child speech in the input to FL learners. Teaching practice has demonstrated that this is both possible and beneficial for learners. Further research may still shed more light on the potential of relating L1 acquisition to L2 learning to guide methodologists and teachers. This paper attempts to provide a synthetic view of what is known about adult-to-child input. It also discusses some arguments for the propositions of adopting certain characteristics of adult-to-child speech in teaching FL.

Due to the process of globalization, in which English functions as a *lingua* franca, the demand for English is growing steadily. In consequence, this leads to seeking effective ways of lightening the burden of learning it. One of the potential ways of facilitating learning it is looking at how L2 learning processes can be related to L1 acquisition processes and subsequently applying relevant findings to teaching the former. This idea is in no way new and findings from studies into adult-to-child (A-C) speech1 seem useful particularly in the case of teaching young learners, who make up the most swiftly growing group of learners in primary education (McKay 2006). Truly, parents recognize the significance and usefulness of English in the modern world and, therefore, are willing and ready to invest in their children to promote their future careers<sup>2</sup>. Apart from this, the trend promoting a young age as the most suitable for foreign language (FL) learning also results from the general conviction that learning a foreign language in childhood and adolescence is much easier than it is at a later age, which corresponds with the popular slogan "the younger, the better". This assumption is shared by many linguists; according to the Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg 1967) the first years of life are crucial for language acquisition – the hypothesis holds that beyond the period the human being is unable to acquire a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This label has been adopted here after Schaffer (2004) in place of 'child directed speech' that is also commonly used in the literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> This is attributed to the fact that English functions currently as a *lingua franca* (Komorowska 2006)

language. Although learning a language is still possible after puberty, it is of a different nature and its results are apparently of a different, poorer quality.

The claim advanced herewith is that adult-to-child speech is worth exploring for the purpose of potential taking advantage of research findings and applying them in FL teaching. If the nature of A-C speech does have an impact on L1 acquisition, some of its characteristics may also be followed to positively influence FL learning processes and affect the learner's awareness of the specific social roles that he/she has to assume while interacting verbally in a foreign language.

Disregarding various speculations about the origin of natural human language and of speech, no one would doubt today that communicative linguistic abilities can only be developed due to prior exposure to input (whether sounded or signed). This requirement concerns both L1 acquisition and L2 acquisition/ learning; nobody would deny, either, that in both situations acquirers/learners attend to language data, work on them, and use them to arrive at formulating rules that ultimately control the production of messages and meaningful interaction with other language users. All learning entails obtaining information and language learning is no exception: it is based on the information contained in the input provided; therefore, looking into the kind of input that characterizes child directed speech should provide helpful insights to help tailor the input designed for foreign language learning. A-C speech with its simplifications and modifications is evidently intended to make it comprehensible for children; it may well be that adult-to-adult (A-A) speech in formal educational settings might, to some extent, be modelled on A-C speech with the aim to facilitate the FL process, at least in its early stages.

Since a language can only be learnt if learners are exposed to comprehensible input it follows that they must also be given an opportunity make use of the linguistic information obtained from the input. This is possible in interacting with competent language users who can always modify their input to make it meaningful to learners. Adult-to-children speech is conspicuously different from adult-to-adult speech. Addressing children, adults, or better to say, competent language users, adopt a special style that is characteristically adjusted to children's comprehension abilities. Incidentally, this style is also used by older siblings and non-native speakers. Mere observation of carers' linguistic behaviour indicates that it is spontaneous and quite unconscious. In the light of this, studying this kind of input seems to be of particular significance as it certainly appears to be most basic structurally and thus closest to UG rules. This input is variable and rich enough to allow the child to construct a system that he systematically develops to become a competent language user. In conclusion, defining and describing A-C speech can be crucial, if attempts are to be made to follow it in teaching L2, especially to young learners.

Whatever stance one adopts concerning the question of whether the mind of a speechless newborn is a *tabula rasa* or is "programmed" with some gen-

eral knowledge of language structures, it is obvious that everyone has to "learn" a language to become "an articulate mammal". What the process of language learning consists in and what it involves has for long been the subject of endless conjectures and unresolved controversies (such as, e.g. the nativist vs. interactionist dispute). These are extremely important and interesting issues keeping psychologists, linguists, psycholinguists, neurolinguists, and many other specialists busy. However, at present these issues are, regrettably, mostly theoretical. It is expected, nevertheless, that theoretical considerations may have a more immediate, practical application, i.e., how the knowledge concerning language learning pertains and relates to language teaching. Thus the accounts of the apparent effortless ease with which children acquire language (often more than one) seem to support the nativist theoretical positions. However, they leave both language learners and their teachers frustrated in the light of the commonly inadequate results of formal language learning as related to the amount of actual effort invested in it. Therefore, examining the language that infants and children receive in the earliest stages of the process of language acquisition may provide valuable cues about what it is in this particular type of input that guides these primary acquirers in the process of developing linguistic abilities and, apparently, facilitates acquisition.

The term *input*, as it is used here, refers to the entire linguistic environment that a language acquirer/learner is exposed to. It includes the language that is addressed to the learner directly or indirectly, be it modified (deliberately or subconsciously) or not. Input is also the authentic unmodified language that is encountered by the learner (sought by him or totally incidental) as passively witnessed in the speech of other speakers (or in the written materials). It is also taken for granted that without input language learning cannot occur.

However, the question of how children actually acquire language and how input relates to learning it has not yet been answered satisfactorily. Learning, in the common understanding of the process, normally involves both an awareness of it and some effortful contribution to it on the part of the learner. Usually, it also requires some kind of explicit teaching. Evidently, all this does not obtain for children. It is, thus, preferable to say that they acquire not learn, just to emphasize that their linguistic development is a subconscious process of which they are totally unaware and that this kind of learning is naturally automatic (but not mechanistic!). For the acquisition process to take place, though, it needs to be activated by input so that the learning will take care of itself. Still, it should be obvious that, normally, learning cannot be effective without understanding that which is being learnt; so, how to account for this in the case of first language acquisition? Knowing more than we do at present about the differences in child and adult language learning might, for example, substantiate the apparent and widely accepted assumption that the potential for language development is different in children and adults; moreover it might also support the critical period hypothesis. Consequently, temptations to apply L1 acquisition accounts to L2 interlanguage data are of no use since adult learners use cognitive strategies and thus process language data differently than children do.

Chomsky has postulated that there exist innate language structures for language acquisition. He advanced this argument on the basis of his categorical claim that the language the child is exposed to does not provide sufficient linguistic information to construct the linguistic competence that all normal humans ultimately develop<sup>3</sup>. According to Chomsky language grows naturally in the child's mind<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, he has claimed that the child develops linguistic competence despite the poverty stimulus, i.e. the degenerate input it is exposed to (studies of A-C speech provide adequate evidence to counter this claim). In contrast to this position anti-nativists have advanced claims that are possibly equally valid; according to them, children acquire the language spoken to them just by employing only the very same general intelligence that they make use of in tackling all the problems which they encounter in the course of their cognitive development.

Admittedly, this controversy is difficult to reconcile, especially that it is affected by two issues. The first one concerns the understanding of what the "innateness of language" actually means; to Chomsky "innate" only means "programmed", not "ready to use" (which is true of physiological functions, such as breathing or sucking) – newborns do not speak or understand language. Although it is not possible to prove the existence of such a "programme", rational arguments must be accepted even without providing empirical evidence. Yet, its opponents do not accept these rational arguments and provide different ones – in their conviction rational, too. The second point relates to the question of whether the genetically endowed capacity for language acquisition is independent of and separate from all other mental capacities. According to Chomsky, it is highly specific and therefore, as such, is "easy to isolate from among the various mental faculties" (1979: 46).

It follows that the place and significance of input for language learning/ acquisition is evaluated differently in various theories: in some its role is down-played, in others it is considered as determining the process of language learning. The claims about how input acts in the process stem from the respective positions, traditionally specified as nature and nurture. The first position is nativist and according to it, learning occurs due to innate knowledge about language; according to the interactionist position, it is the environment that provides learn-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "Given the richness and complexity of the system of grammar for a human language and uniformity of its acquisition on the basis of <u>limited and often degenerate evidence</u>, there can be little doubt that highly restrictive universal principles must exist determining the general framework of each human language ..." (Chomsky 1980: 232) [emphasis mine, J.Z.].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Language acquisition seems much like the growth of organs generally; it is something that happens to a child, not that the child does. [...] ... the general course of development and the basic features of what emerges are predetermined by the initial state" (2000: 6).

ers with necessary data for language development and exerts communicative pressure on learners.

The controversy itself is undeniably both very interesting and important for understanding the mechanisms of language acquisition, but it is not of concern in this paper. What is at issue is input which is indispensable for the acquisition/ learning process to occur and for its outcomes. Input is produced by competent language users and provided to acquirers/learners, who are natural conversational partners in interactive events. It needs to be emphasized that with regard to the input for first language acquisition, studies of adult-to-child speech<sup>5</sup> demonstrate that, as opposed to adult-to-adult speech in native-to-native-speaker interaction, it is not only in no way degenerate or poor as was originally assumed by Chomsky but, actually, grammatically normally well-formed, even though it is simpler and restricted in propositional complexity, in its content, and in vocabulary; in the words of one researcher: "at the formal level, then, such speech can be seen as a simpler, cleaner corpus from which to learn language" (Snow 1995: 180). Thus, the simplified input clearly facilitates its processing and comprehension. Moreover, it turns out that certain features of A-C speech that arise from the carers' attempts to communicate with the linguistically immature child are similar to, if not identical with, those encountered in A-A speech, particularly when related to negative feedback and fine-tuning as well as to turn-taking and joint attention.

Since A-C speech appears to support children in developing L1 competence research into this kind of input may bring to light a number of valuable findings that can pertain also to L2 learning and be applicable to teaching it. For example, due to contemporary advanced technology it is possible to study the phonetic and prosodic details of A-C speech and find out how they are perceived and processed; also, developments in neuroimaging make significant promises with regard to understanding the processes involved in the learners' perception of L2 and in learning it. In consequence, comprehensive and reliable accounts of A-C speech can lead to improving the quality of input designed for foreign language teaching.

Acquiring a language and (by the same token, learning another one) is not an easy task as it requires developing control of an elaborate linguistic system. It concerns a particular kind of knowledge that combines four basic components of a language: its phonology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics (Harvey 2001: 363). Looking at how children tackle this intricate system and how they begin to communicate verbally is very informative for didactic purposes: the first words that they utter (which can occur already at the age of 10 or 11 months) relate to the people and objects that they are most familiar with, i.e. those they encounter every day. Of course, they learn many more words which they comprehend well,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The term was introduced by Snow (1986) to counter the imprecise terms: caretaker talk, motherese, etc.

JERZY ZYBERT

but are unable to pronounce; therefore, their first words are those that are easy for them to articulate. Schaffer (2004: 276) notes that children name moving objects sooner than still ones (e.g. *car, bus* before *lamp, street*). However, carers (especially parents) do not, in any way, teach language to children; they normally disregard ill-formed language as they focus their attention on what children try to convey, not on how they do it. In fact, efforts to correct errors are not only futile, but can be harmful. Typical in carers' input is that speech is slow and consists of simple and short sentences which are also phonologically easy; moreover, A-C speech is also high-pitched. All this makes input clear and simple.

Apart from the above features of A-C speech, it is characterized also by other modifications. These can be grouped in a number of categories of which the most typical ones are: phonetic, lexical, and grammatical; others may also be singled out, e.g. those related to redundancy and propositional content, which were proposed already in early the studies of "baby talk" (constrained by the 'here-and-now' principle).

Phonetic modifications include those mentioned above (higher pitch, which makes speech sounds more audible; clearer pronunciation of distinctive sounds, especially of vowels) and prosodic ones, particularly intonation, which is not only very varied but often exaggerated to highlight different patterns and to make tones conspicuous.

Lexical modifications consist in the use of diminutives, reduplications and special 'children's' forms (e.g. *choo-choo* for train, *nana* for granny, *potty* for chamber pot). Moreover, onomatopoeic forms occur frequently in A-C speech. Carers help children to learn those words by using them to describe or to refer to the activities being performed, circumstances currently obtaining, and the objects involved. These are words of high frequency whose choice for A-C speech is confined to the current physical situation and is bound up with and dependent on the limitations of the "here and now" principle. It is also necessary to note that all such words are used repeatedly by carers thus exposing children to them frequently.

Grammatical modifications consist in de-complexification of syntactic structures resulting in the use of short and simple utterances, the avoidance of embedded clauses, and the reduced use of auxiliaries (Snow 1995). Notwithstanding, A-C speech is not only well-formed, but in comparison with A-A speech it contains very few lapses, false starts or hesitations, if any. On the other hand, A-C speech characteristically includes a relatively large quantity of imperatives and interrogatives. The high occurrence of these forms corresponds with children's natural need to ask questions themselves to satisfy their curiosity while exploring the surrounding reality, and to follow their egotistic drive to subdue the environment by using commands. This is manifested in children's early speech in which these forms are not yet well-formed.

Redundancy in A-C speech is apparent in the frequent repetitions of words and phrases addressed to the child. In response, this is very often echoed by the

child, who also repeats the given word or phrase, thus unconsciously engaging in linguistic self-practice.

Compared with adult-to-adult speech adult-to-child speech includes the following main features:

## **Phonological characteristics**

Clear enunciation Higher pitch Exaggerated intonation

Slower speech

Slower speech Longer pauses

#### **Syntactic characteristics**

Shorter utterance length Sentences well formed Fewer subordinate clauses

# **Semantic characteristics**

Limited range of vocabulary 'Baby talk' words

Reference to here-and-now

#### Pragmatic characteristics

More directives More questions More attention devices Repetition of child's utterances

Source: Schaffer (2004: 296).

Apart from the above enumerated characteristics of A-C speech the child-carer communication is enhanced by other behaviours that accompany interaction. These are non-linguistic and paralinguistic and include, e.g. facial signals, gestures (visual), and touch (tactile information) that supplement verbal input. Altogether, this observable fact indicates there is a close relationship between the so called 'multimodal motherese' and the acquisition of lexis. This means that carers create multimodal situations in which children receive a combination of auditory and visual information, e.g. when labels are provided for moving objects (cf. Gogate et al. 2000).

A very significant feature of A-C speech is the phenomenon of fine-tuning. With regard to language acquisition in general, fine-tuning means that certain features of input are adjusted to the perceived communicative competence of the addressee. According to Krashen (1980), fine-tuning is the provision of the specific linguistic features that a child is ready to acquire next. Evidence from research indicates that carers increase the rate of recurrence of specific features in the input just prior to children's first using them (Wells 1985). On the basis of available evidence (Ellis 1994) it is claimed that fine-tuning is adjusted qualitatively and quantitatively on a continuous scale in response to children's linguistic and communicative progression. Consequently, in A-C speech attuning is concerned with and depends on the child's current linguistic/communicative advancement, his/her age and needs. Taking it in a broad view fine-tuning refers to all the adaptations and modifications that characterize A-C speech described above.

Most importantly, it needs emphasizing that A-C speech is socially oriented and thus is accompanied by LASS (Language Acquisition Support Sys-

10 JERZY ZYBERT

tem)<sup>6</sup>, which is clearly related to the activities that are performed by both the carer and the child. A very interesting conclusion drawn from psychological research on children's socialization is carers' propensity for anticipatory behaviour in their contacts with a child (Durkin 1988). This is manifested in their treating a child as if it were more cognitively developed than it actually is. Behaviours such as talking to a child, even though it does not yet understand speech, especially the use of imperatives in the expectation of a child's acquiescence to orders before it is able to follow, make a specific feedback that constitutes a foundation for the child taking up interactive roles in the future. Bruner has noted that children's "long period of immaturity is designed precisely for them to acquire the particular cultural and linguistic conventions into which they are born. Thus, in all cultures adults and children engage in routine interactions involving nursing and eating, bathing and sleeping, dressing and undressing, and other activities, in which adults address them in at least some language" (in Tomasello 2001: 36). It is also worth noting that it is nouns that are characteristically used during play with toys, but in non-toy play it is verbs that are mostly used while speaking to children. Whoever observes the development of children's linguistic abilities knows very well that they go through the silent period, i.e. develop comprehension skills quite well before they can (and are willing to) speak.

Infants exhibit significant quantitative and qualitative differences in the very first stages of L1 acquisition: some can use ten words before they reach their first birthday, while others still do not utter any at the age of nineteen months; with regard to comprehension, variation across individuals is even more pronounced: in ten-month-olds it ranges from zero to 144 words (Bates et al., 1995). It has not been documented that these differences have any effect on the rate of L2 acquisition/learning. However, it is well known that some L2 learners need a silent period, while others do not; in those that do, the length of the period varies. In the case of the ones that go through it the phenomenon can be viewed as comparable with the re-linguistic period in infants. Incidentally, can we also talk about a "second language infancy period" with relation to the process of second language learning?

With regard to the social aspect of A-A speech, it needs to be noted that it is normally reliant on LASS and is usually accompanied and supported by, so called, "joint attention episodes". These episodes take place when the child and the carer experience an event jointly and the latter's words and gestures are related to what the former is doing at the moment. This is excellently illustrated in this quotation:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The concept and the term were introduced by Bruner (1983) to refer to the ways in which adults assist children's acquisition of language.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The term infancy is normally used to refer to the first twelve months of life of a newborn, its end being marked by the onset of speech (use first words for communication with the environment) and communication.

Take the following common scenario of a mother and her 2-year-old child plying with a set of toys: the child inspects the toys, selects one of them, picks it up and begins to play with it; the mother thereupon starts talking about the toy; she may name it, point out its uses and features comment on the child's previous encounters with it or similar toys, and in this way verbally enlarges on the specific topic that the child is attending to at the moment. Talking about some other toy that the child is not interested in just then would be inappropriate and insensitive, depriving the child of valuable opportunities for language learning in a meaningful situation (Schaffer 2004: 299).

It must be strongly emphasized that the comment in the last sentence of the above quotation deserves special attention.

Research on input has disclosed that it is characterized by various systematic modifications. These are actually simplifications that speakers spontaneously attune to the perceived current linguistic level of the acquirer/learner. The simplifications concern both the content and grammatical complexity of input; they originate from the speakers' communicative competence, their linguistic experience, and, possibly, intuition. All this decides about the choice of content, vocabulary, syntax, forms of address, register, etc. in interaction with the learner. Such choices apparently depend on who participates in discourse – in everyday situations we also speak differently to friends, clergymen, post-office clerks, etc. The phenomenon of simplifying language seems to be natural in human verbal interaction and what it involves seems to be intuitive. Nevertheless, it is also conditioned by culture characteristics of the speaker – this remark, however, does not necessarily refer to A-C speech, which, due to its specificity, is sometimes claimed to be universal: since it is highly similar across cultures it may "have an innate basis in pan-human child-care behavior" (Ferguson 1978: 215).

Studies show that A-C speech is normally well-formed and is in no way "degenerate" or "noisy". Its early simplicity evolves into more and more elaborate chunks and their grammatical complexification becomes gradually adjusted to the child's growing language abilities. Characteristically, A-C speech contains short utterances with few verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and pronouns but more nouns; overall, it has a high proportion of content words as compared with function words. Phonologically, it is typically provided at a higher than normal pitch with clearly marked (even exaggerated) intonation contours and clear articulation (strong, rather than weak forms; full, not contracted forms, etc.). The speech rate is usually lower and produced with pauses between utterances. Moreover, what is highly noticeable about A-C speech is that it clearly complies with the "here-and-now" principle.

These characteristics allow one important conclusion to be drawn, namely, that linguistic input to children is quantitatively and qualitatively different from the speech addressed to linguistically competent adults, but it is not degenerate. Admittedly, there may be more features of A-C speech that characterize and distinguish it from other types of input.

Still, from whatever is known about it to date it should be assumed that it is intended to enable meaningful communication between the participants of the communicative act.

Discussions concerning input stem from the idea of centeredness – the teacher-centred vs. learner-centred approach in language teaching methodology. This shift in emphasis occurred due to understanding that learners themselves are actively involved in the learning processes and make significant contributions to the learning outcomes.

Following the views of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner with regard to children's cognitive development and their ways of acquiring language, it is assumed that children learn quite a lot by acting out, cooperating, and interacting with others. This interaction, particularly in the child-parent dyad, inclines one to advance the claim that there is mutual interdependence between the two, which is crucial for the social development of the child. Thus the process of speech development takes place in this interpersonal context wherein the child can be considered a scientist, who creates his knowledge through contacts with the environment; likewise, the child is an explorer, who discovers reality by verifying his own hypotheses about the encountered facts (Schaffer 2004). This interactive and ecological perception of human development suggests that it should be taken as a basis for all practical activity, including foreign language teaching.

Schaffer maintains that carers' help and their guidance speed up language acquisition<sup>8</sup>. He provides the following arguments to support this claim (2004: 299-301):

- While playing with their young children parents observe their interest; having identified the child's focus of attention parents talk to the child about it adjusting the talk to the child's level of comprehension. Addressing the very young they usually name and describe the objects involved in the play, whereas talking to the older ones they ask wh-questions. This gives the child an opportunity to show his abilities and the answers themselves, incidentally, create an opportunity for the parent to provide appropriate feedback.
- Evidence from research demonstrates that progress in first language acquisition depends on the amount of time children spend in joint attention episodes: the more time and episodes, the faster and better the progress. The rate of language development correlates with the amount of A-C speech in shared activities.
- The degree of responsiveness determines the child's language development: the more A-C speech the child is exposed to, the more attention the mother pays to her child, to what he is doing, or even gazing at, the faster the progress<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> We might add that input data are thus physically reinforced by the activity being experienced by the child.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> This argument, however, can be challenged: Borys, a boy who had exceptionally good care since birth, especially from his talkative mother and grandparents involving him in a great number of joint

• Children who are free to determine their focus of attention in shared activities that involve A-C speech acquire the language faster and more efficiently in comparison with the situations in which children's attention is shifted by carers and drawn to what is not determined by the child.

The review of the characteristics of child directed speech presented in the sections above is by no means exhaustive. Nevertheless, it is hoped that it provides sufficient information concerning the major and most frequent linguistic and communicative means that carers employ in A-C speech to facilitate verbal communication with children. Additionally, the review also shows the role and significance of A-C speech in children's linguistic and social development. Clearly, this kind of input is not intended to teach L1 and, what is more, at present it is also difficult to state authoritatively to what extent A-C speech is actually helpful in the development of children's speaking skills. Likewise, it is difficult to show what contributions children themselves make to the development of their linguistic and communicative skills. In conclusion, it is not postulated that A-C speech can serve as a model in FL teaching.

All in all, the considerations discussed so far allow formulating certain principles that should be followed to make foreign language learning and teaching successful; the following are assumed to be most essential:

- ensure an early start (in any case, possibly before puberty),
- begin familiarizing FL students through a silent period and never force them to speak,
- simplify/attune the input to the age and actual level of students' communicative and linguistic skills modifications should concern phonetics/phonology, lexis, and grammar,
- necessarily use plentiful redundancy (especially repetitions and paraphrases); relate the propositional content to the 'here-and-now' principle; use appropriate register and forms of address,
- use non-linguistic and paralinguistic modifications in spoken messages (facial signals, gestures, eye contact, and touch),
- create multimodal situations in which students receive a combination of auditory and visual information, e.g. when labels are provided for moving objects.
- create social activities that are performed by both, the teacher and the student,
- treat students as if they were more cognitively developed than they actually are,
- talk to the students a lot and use imperatives and interrogatives, particularly while playing together collective games,

attention episodes, made his first attempts to speak only at age two, which seems relatively late considering the rich A-C input that he had received (personal experience).

14 JERZY ZYBERT

• speak and move – kinaesthetic learning – physical movement that accompanies language use consolidates linguistic skills.

Drawing on the A-C speech facts quoted earlier, it can be assumed that some of the linguistic and communicative means, measures, and steps employed by carers to assist children in L1 acquisition can, hopefully, be successfully followed or adopted in teaching L2, especially to young beginners. For example, teachers should use lots of lexical modifications as they intuitively invoke associations, which definitely supports comprehension of the meanings of new words and commits them to memory. Another lesson from studying A-C speech is that errors be treated adequately to the learners' current interlanguage level; also, teachers should refrain (to a reasonable degree) from providing negative feedback: just as correcting children does not, in principle, have much positive effect on L1 acquisition, correcting adults' speech may also be ineffective. Just one more example: give learners a chance to decide for themselves what to focus on in the L2; attending to what intrigues them enhances the development of learner autonomy. Consequently, the LASS devices that are listed in the preceding paragraph are considered to be fundamental for L2 and are thus strongly recommended in FL pedagogy.

### REFERENCES

BATES, E. / DALE, P. /THAL, D. (1995): Individual differences and their implications for theories of language development, in: FLETCHER, P. / MAC WHINNEY, B. (eds.). *Handbook of child language*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 95-151.

Bruner, J. (1983): Child's Talk. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CHOMSKY, N. (1979): Language and Responsibility. Sussex: The Harvester Press.

CHOMSKY, N. (1980): Rules and Representations, Oxford: Blackwell.

DURKIN, K. (1988): The social nature of social development, in: Hewstone, M. / Stroebe, W. / Stephenson, G. (eds.): *Introduction to social psychology*. New York: Basil Blackburn, 29-59.

Ellis, R. (1994): The Study of Second Language Acquisition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ferguson, C.A. (1978): Talking to children: a search for universals, in: Greenberg, J.H. / Ferguson C.A. / Moravcsik, E. (eds.), *Universals of Human Language*, vol. 1. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 209-221.

GOGATE, L. / BAHRICK, L. / WATSON, J. (2000): A study of multimodal motherese: the role of temporal synchrony between verbal labels and gestures. *Child Development* 71: 878-894.

HARVEY, T.A. (2001): *The psychology of language from data to theory*. Hove & New York: Psychology Press.

Komorowska, H. (2006): Teaching English as *lingua franca*, in: Zybert, J. (ed) *Issues in foreign language learning and teaching*. Warsaw: Warsaw University Press, 111-123.

Lenneberg, E. (1967): Biological Foundations of Language. New York: Wiley.

MCKAY, P. (2006): Assessing Young Learners. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schaffer, H. R. (2004). Introducing Child Psychology. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

- SNOW, C.E. (1986): Conversations with children, in: FLETCHER, P. / GARMAN, M. (eds.) Language acquisition: studies in first language development. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 69-89.
- Snow, C.E. (1995): Issues in the study of input: fine-tuning, universality, individual and developmental differences, and necessary cause, in: Fletcher, P. / Mac Whinney, B. (eds.) *Handbook of child language*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 181-193.
- Tomasello, M. (2001): Bruner on language acquisition, in: Backhurst, D. / Shanker, S.G. (eds.). *Jerome Bruner*. London: Sage Publications, 31-50.
- Wells, G. (1985): Language Development in the Pre-school Years. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.