

Studying The Evolution of Linguistic Concepts: An Overview of Cross-Cultural Variants

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Abstract

Different linguistic and psychological trends have achieved well-known results, in Institutes and Scientific Research Centers, directed by specialists in the field. We have distinguished among these authors those who are known today for dealing with such topics, dividing them into 2 groups: (i) Psychologists and linguists, who have made language acquisition of children the object of their work, and (ii) Researchers, psychologists and pedagogues, who have also dealt with evolutionary disorders during the language acquisition process at these ages.

The method used in this article is an analytical-descriptive one. An analysis of Albanian and foreign authors has been made, as far as the language acquisition of children in infancy and childhood is concerned, but also with homogeneous groups and classes, divided on the basis of evolutionary development, social and cultural conditions, origin and according to age groups of children.

The following treatment gives a brief summary on how babies learn to speak naturally, how language comes to humans, and how many stages the individual must go through in order to learn to speak. Even linguists and writers in this field have long highlighted these issues in the first textbooks, such as the primers of different languages.

In closing this presentation of ideas, opinions and practical achievements of researchers during experiments, tests, and short-term and long-term observations with individuals or groups of people, in the field of studies on the acquisition of the first language, it is and will continue to be a dynamic field with many open issues that grab you and attract you to new research. Which theory (or combination of theories) is in such a position that it seeks to give the most correct ways of language development in children? How many cross-linguistic and cross-cultural variants exist within language acquisition? How can more complete answers to such questions help to understand the human mind? These questions are pretty far to get an answer, but close searches can bring us closer to solving the puzzle.

Keywords: language acquisition, vocabulary, childhood, linguistics.

It must be said that such research in this field can be shaped in studying levels based on achievements in foreign linguistics, according to different linguistic schools, in which detailed scientific experiments and observations have been carried out for years and continue to be carried out, not only on numerous individuals. Of course, the different linguistic and psychological directions have achieved well-known results, in well-known Institutes and Scientific Research Centers, directed by specialists in the field. However, even in Albanian linguistics, a tradition has already been created, however new, for such research. For a few years, they have proven that they can deal with such topics even in the conditions of Albanian science: in terms of language acquisition by young children, especially regarding the acquisition and enrichment of the lexicon in early childhood ages. We have distinguished among these authors those who are known nowadays for dealing with such topics, dividing them into 2 groups:

1. Researchers, psychologists and linguists, who have made the language acquisition of children the object of their work,

2. Psychologists, researchers and professors, who have also dealt with evolutionary disorders during the process of language acquisition at these ages.

In general, it must be affirmed that the literature written by Albanian authors has, at most, goals of scientific knowledge in this research field; so the few researchers that we will mention in the following should be appreciated mainly for the bringing of Western science, even when they have brought many examples and research models from long-term observations in Albanian-speaking environments. On the other hand, in the literature of this field of knowledge, we already have quite few selected translations by European and world-famous authors, mainly from USA, which we have consulted and cited according to the arguments presented.

Language acquisition is a term that indicates the process through which a natural language is

learned, as a mother tongue or when a second language is required (respectively, L1 and L2); to avoid ambiguity in terminology, in recent years, it is referred to as L1 and L2 language acquisition. According to today's philosophical knowledge about language, we note that it was created from the vital need to communicate and to organize the society. Umberto Eco writes: "The sign is used to transmit information, to say something that someone knows and wants others to know as well" [1].

In the first sense, the process of language acquisition is purely spontaneous and undoubtedly belongs to the way in which the child learns to speak, that is, to develop passive and active skills in his mother tongue. From a theoretical point of view, there are essentially three dominant ideas related to language acquisition:

1. Behaviorism presents the model of linguistic communication, which is called the model of behavior, the context that brings about the imitation of learning, as described by the stimulus/response (reaction)

2. The maturational model or form [3-4] according to which human beings genetically inherit a language ability, which helps them learn the language. This innate mechanism, which Chomsky calls LAD (Language acquisition device), is thought by him as an internal grammar. Precisely, this innate ability of the human brain or this internal grammar, which is found in the brain of the newborn child, is called universal grammar (UG).

3. Constructivism or theory of evolution [5]: the process of language acquisition is dynamic and is achieved step by step, in a continuous interaction between physical development and cognitive development of children.

Ideas b) and c) are both innate (innatism), yet different, while for the latter position language is a learned behavior.

In the process of language acquisition, even in its continuity, we can identify some distinct and decisive steps for the development of the

child's language skills. In the first two months of life, the child is able not only to distinguish the sounds that belong to the language, but also to distinguish between different sounds in terms of features such as phonetics. In the first year of life the child is in the "prelinguistic" stage of development, from the production of the first word that normally corresponds to the first twelve months of life. This stage of acquisition is still a production in phonetics, babbling (stuttering), which is the production of the sounds of the word, to then structure them into syllables, which come and are repeated frequently. The phonetic changes in the child's pronunciation during the first year of life are related to the changes that gradually affect the vocal tract (lengthening of the throat, elasticity, teething, etc.) "In the stammering stage" (of Babel), in which the child is able to produce utterances consisting of a single word (holophrastic stage), corresponding in category to the semantic one, such as agent, action, patient, place, instrument. Within the first years of life, around the age of 15-16 months, the American psychologist Marilyn Shatz [6] writes, most children have assimilated many of the sound configurations of the language, from this moment they begin lallations (or Babel), accepting different sounds of the language and connecting them together in order to imitate the rhythm and intonation structure of the language. By 15 months, many children (but not all) begin to acquire some identifiable words and use them casually in appropriate settings. The researcher above goes further, characterizing the phenomena of language acquisition of this stage up to 3 years old, when she states that at the age of 15 months, a human being is still more of a baby than a child. In the first 20 months, infants undergo many changes: they develop structured language and begin to use adaptive skills to recognize the world in which they live, to control their emotions and social behaviors, and to reflect on adaptive skills and cognitions. At this age, children are not only self-centered, but also stubborn and generous. In short, the 3-year-old

child has transformed into a person who knows the social life that surrounds him and becomes part of it [7].

This stage is usually very short and lies between the age of sixteen and eighteen months. In this period, the child is already able to understand a large number of words addressed to him: his capacity for decoding is more developed than that of encryption,* which is a constant of the language acquisition process. In the holophrastic period, the child is prepared for the next stage, that of "combination", which produces mini-groups consisting of two words; in this period there is a dynamic growth of the vocabulary, a time that marks the limit at the end of the second year of age, the average age to understand several hundred words. The first words that the child articulates, that he produces, often do not correspond to their normal form, which is why they are sometimes called *protoparole* [6].

Literature review

2.1. Theoretical rationales

The most vocal linguists as well as psychologists of cognitive sciences have dealt with the phases of lexicon acquisition from small preschool ages and have them as the object of their scientific research work. Among them I will mention the famous Italian linguist Tullio De Mauro, one of the most prominent experts in Sossyrian knowledge, who states that the ability to use words and phrases in auditory phonetic forms is innate to normally and naturally developed human beings from the first steps of their life, even in the prenatal phase. He writes: "All individuals of the human species, except for pathological cases and severe traumas, inherit from birth this ability, which in Albanian is called "ligjerim" (in Italian "linguaggio", in French "langage" o faculté du langage, in English "language", in Spanish "lenguaje", in German "Sprache", in Russian "язык", in Japanese "gengo", etc.). Of course, in terms of the behavior of all human beings, we are talking

about a complex ability, which, apparently, comes completed in different ways [8] (p.3).

This theoretical elaboration that we are presenting, in support of the linguistic-practical subject, which is the main point of our work, would be better started with the explanation of the concept of “language acquisition”, which is a term in the vocabulary of language learning or language acquisition, especially when it comes to the first language (L1). The following treatment gives a brief and summary picture to understand how babies naturally learn to speak, how language comes to humans and how many stages the individual must go through until he learns to speak. Even the linguists and writers of this field have long underlined these issues in their first textbooks, such as the primers of different languages; thus, scientifically and in terms of contemporary knowledge, and this is also seen in “Albania-Kosovo Common Primer”. A book for teachers, [9] (p.49) where three moments given are related to language development in general, to speaking in particular and mainly, to the enrichment of active and passive vocabulary of the little ones:

4. Speech development.
5. Vocabulary enrichment.
6. Improving and clarifying the speaking linguistic structures of Albanian.

At the moment when children reach the status of social being (in the sense that they have begun to understand and be understood), they enter into diverse relationships with other peers, as for example, during games, an act or process that becomes a trigger for the evolutionary and linguistic development.

Only human language, as facts in today's situation prove, was the inseparable traveler of the very evolution of being. Its ability to have an extraordinary economic yield, where from a few dozen phonemes hundreds of thousands of words can be created and an infinite number of utterances to represent human experiences, makes this creation of man his most perfect tool [10] (p.49).

In addition to our above-mentioned authors, it is good to appreciate the few translations from the works of foreign researchers, among which we can single out, especially, “Infancy Years” 1.(Early childhood development, viewed from a biological perspective. The next book of education) by Remo H. Largo [11] and “Body language” by the author Allan & Barbara Pease [12] (p.49).

We will continue with some flows of today's contemporary discussions, related to the acquisition of language by humans (homosapiens), which, in historical and anthropological explanations, is almost the same thing, or is comparable to the acquisition of language by infants, since the individual's growth periods coincide or approximate the stages of his historical development. We do not hesitate to say that the hypotheses presented today in front of the cognitive sciences (where language has a leading role) by a number of researchers, without fundamentally denying the achievements of the American linguist, can be called 2 post-Chomskian, otherwise, and born in the new century, which we have entered for two decades. It is about the Darwinian evolutionary theory, which, according to some researchers in the field of language and discourse, is the only theory, where the topic of the origin of the extraordinary faculty attributed to man, such as speech, can be incorporated. Regarding this, everything we will have in the following is based on Darwinian knowledge, an idea created by Ch. Darwin, who focused on the belief that humans are animals among other animals [13] (p. 4). According to the philosopher Cartesio, the rational soul is at the basis of the qualitative difference between humans and other animals, according to which for many researchers today, discourse (which has replaced the soul), is the main characteristic to see humans as a “special” entity in nature. Besides this, to believe that for human beings the history of development has not flowed as it has for all animals is an interpretation that strongly feeds our anthropocentric pride. According to this, humans

are not different from other species in the way that any living species is different from another, because humans are not just animals. “To think of discourse in terms of qualitative differentiation with the rest of the living world, writes Francesco Ferretti, cuts off any possibility of seeing the human verbal capacity as a form of biological adaptation due to natural selection.”[13] (p. 5).

From the point of view of adoption, otherwise, the fact that we can be made to be so arrogant by the extraordinary ability that characterizes our species, is not quite at odds with the idea that these abilities bring us back to the animal nature of human beings; not at all. To investigate the origin of discourse (language), in the light of evolution, in fact, means to analyze the arrival of verbal capacities at the limits of abilities, more simply basic, almost present in other human species, which marked the path of the evolution of *Homo sapiens*. In the center of this argument there lies the idea that the initial steps of human communication should be guided by cognitive abilities in such a way that they are firmly embedded in the organisms in the environment where they live. Thanks to these capacities, organisms acquire, so often at the cost of a very great effort, a state of equilibrium with the external environment. Now, if the idea that men are animals among other animals is true, the methodological conjecture of the relative investigation of every human faculty must be presented; thus it is possible that the reference to the “equilibrium force”, established in the act of organisms to adapt to the environment, should also be assumed a first-hand role in the analysis of the origin and functioning of the discourse. Because this is a real revolution that must be fulfilled, since the fact of effective communicative exchange involves an “effort”, which processes a verifiable phenomenon before everyone's eyes. The most original case appears in the course of speech, during which the difficulty arises and remains with the sender in trying to keep the “thread of the conversation” - showing with the data that the communication is

directed on a balance (with such uncertainty), between the attention of the speaker and listener expectations. One of the basic hypotheses is the idea that the strain of balance, remaining in the act of the speakers of affective communication, can function as a key to the entry of the meanings of the bringing of the verbal capacity in the phylogeny (evolutionary history of a human or plant species). In relation to this hypothesis, there is an idea closely related to the so-called metaphor of communication: as a form of navigation in space. The spatial orientation ability of some birds is undoubtedly amazing, so that when we pay attention to them, our imagination immediately flies to the path of migratory birds or to the thousands of kilometers traveled by marine animals to cross from one side of the ocean to another. But it is not necessary to go that far: it may happen that for a moment the satellite navigators of our car go out of use and we are left without a driver in the continuation of the journey. Thus, the speaker builds the communicative flow by giving the “direction” or “orientation” to what he says, and the listener reconstructs what the speaker is saying, trying to keep the direction and orientation of the flow of speech (conversation) under control as closely as possible, indicators that, if not achieved, compromise the utterance, as is the case with the inability of schizophrenic patients, who cannot follow the flow of discourse from its source. So, basically, the origin of discourse (language) should be analyzed in reference to the concepts of “equilibrium strain” and “space navigation”, which, together with some others, are in favor of the Darwinian theory, according to which relative researches to the more special characteristics of the human nature of man must have been overcome by the analysis of the more general features, where human beings differ from other species.

Every time we talk about the discourse, its complicated issue comes in front of the researchers. The widely dominant tradition in the cognitive sciences leads us to believe in the “universal grammar” (UG) model, first proposed

by Noam Chomsky in the last half of the century, which is followed today by many authors, such as: Jeckendoff, 1993 , Pinker, 1994 etc. The compatibility of UG with the evolutionary framework is one of the key points for the arguments of this developmental theory. Now, the idea of considering discourse in evolutionary terms would require a behavior of hesitation: how should the drafting of discourse be interpreted as an innate component of the mind/brain (as UG proponents do), if not in the spaces of biological adaptation? A question of this kind must accept, at least among naturalists, a unique answer at the limits of natural selection. But naturalists, as it is known, are “restless souls”, so the idea of discourse as a biological adaptation, brought about by nature's selection, is highly questionable. But, if you look closely, the denial or opposition of Darwinism by the proponents of UG is not only due to the disturbed status that characterizes these authors. Noam Chomsky, for example, as early as 1998, insists that the birth and acquisition of discourse are, in his view, incompatible with Darwinian evolution. The idea that the discourse should be analyzed referring to the “qualitative difference” between people and other creatures, brings in effect different problems for those who seek to enter the study of verbal ability in the “naturalist key”.

The question of the relationship between UG and the Cartesian tradition is important in dealing with this issue, also due to the fact that Chomsky's consent to this tradition is in reality a support or a conception in which the creative aspects of human discourse are exalted. Then we say that everything goes well up to this point: creativity is certainly one of the essential belongings of human discourse (as much from its origin as from its effective functioning). However, relying on Cartesian, Chomsky considers one aspect of the creativity of language itself: that which is explained in the space of combined creativity (unlimited uses of infinite means). The Italian linguist, who we are relying on in this elaboration, writes of the American

linguist that, in doing so, he leaves unexplored another aspect of discourse, one which, in our view, on the contrary, deserves great attention [13] (p. 23). It is about what Chomsky calls the “Cartesian problem” (1988). The solution that Cartesio offers to this problem is faithful to his dualistic metaphysics: by mentioning the “rational soul”, he can more easily be attributed to the creative use of the necessary discourse, which does not agree with the mechanistic perspective [13] (p. 24). Of course, Chomsky cannot make the Cartesian dualist solution: in relation to the “Cartesian problem”, which he emphasizes that the human mind can assume, but cannot solve in principle. This ‘mystical’ hesitation of the American linguist's answer does not satisfy contemporary researchers, since, according to them, the so-called “Cartesian problem” is not insoluble in principle, but becomes so only by considering it at the limits of UG. Therefore, they note, we propose to get out of this problem: to provide an explanation of how linguistic expressions can be appropriate in the physical and social context of their origin. Remaining in anti-Darwinian positions on the issue of the birth and development of human languages, even today, N. Chomsky writes that there are even more fundamental reasons to seek a clear definition of what discourse is, as well as the reasons directly related to the issue what kind of creature we are. Darwin, according to the famous linguist, was not the first to arrive at the conclusion that the lower spirits differ from man only in the infinitely greater power that man has of associating or clothing sounds with such different ideas; “infinitely” is a traditional expression that today is interpreted in the narrow sense of the word. Still, Darwin was the first to express this traditional concept in the context of an initial account of human evolution [14] (p. 9). Other contemporary researchers, well-known in this field of knowledge, such as Ian Tattersall, who is one of the greatest specialists in human evolution, has offered us a modern version of this development: in a recent review of the scientific evidence that brings, he notes that evolution was

once believed to have produced the first precursors of our successor self. But the reality is different: the acquisition of the only modern human sensibility has come suddenly and too late. The expression of this sensibility has been favored, almost naturally, by the decisive invention that is the most marked characteristic of our modern self: discourse [14] (p. 9). If things are like this, then an answer to the question “what is discourse?” comes so important to anyone interested in the content of our modern self.

Proponents of evolutionists state that the theory of the primacy of thought over language/speech is at the core of the code model. Furthermore, the idea of researcher Fodor is that thoughts are representative in the structure of linguistic similarity: as formulations of “discourse of thought” [15] (p. 36). Such a model finds the aspect of communication according to which “we communicate when you tell me what you have in mind and I understand what you tell me” [15] (p. 36-37). This same psychological scientist takes a firm position against pragmatic theories of communication that emerges from the speaker in a strained context and purpose. The assumption of language/discourse as a form of instincts is perfectly adapted by S. Pinker. But the innatist theory of language/discourse (the idea of linguistic belonging as an organ, the same as the lung or the heart, embodied in human biology) is a basic idea of Chomsky's thought that has characterized all his theory from his earliest writings to nowadays. [15] (p. 38).

Now, to say that language/speech is an innate ability (and that it is the universal property of the species), as F. Ferretti writes, it means that speech is a biological adaptation, thanks to natural selection. But Chomsky, years ago, for example, was not determined to consider UG innatism in reference to the Darwinian tradition; the fact that he insists on the idea of discourse as a biological organ and the constant reference of the thesis of speech as an innate organ, should not be taken as a mistake: in his view, speech is not a product of natural selection and, for this reason, it is not a biological adaptation. The

motives that lead Chomsky to reject the evolutionary explanation lead us to take a position known to us: the idea that UG is an “all or zero” phenomenon, which does not fit well with the gradualness required by natural selection. The idea that human discourse creates the basic element of qualitative difference between humans and other spirits precludes any interpretation of the terms “gradualism” and “continuity”. Since 1988, Chomsky's opinion has been clear: “There is a long history of language/speech origin studies looking for the fate of monkey calls and so on. This type of research, writes the American linguist, in my view, is a complete waste of time, because speech is based on a completely different principle from any other animal communication system. It is quite likely that human gestures have developed from animal communication systems, but not human speech, which is based on completely different principles” [15] (p. 40). It goes on with the elaboration in relation with the ability of language, which has evolved. But evolution is not selection. It is possible that the evolution of language is a result of increased cerebral dimensions; no matter why it happened, maybe 100 thousand years ago. Well, if that is true, there is nothing in it that involves selection. However, I don't expect it to have effectively gone that way; it is an extreme speculation. But if that were true, language would have evolved as if nothing had been selected. We also mention here the concept of the social “background” which has been called “cognitive effort”, for which researchers use pidgin communication as a model. Bickerton (Ferretti, F., 2017, p. 115) described the moment of the influx of day-laborers who were needed for the mass cultivation of sugar cane, to the island of Hawaii in the 1870s and 1880s. This influx led to the forced coexistence of individuals (Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, etc.), speakers of so different languages. This Hawaiian Island phenomenon is one of many instances that could be cited: now, what type of communication takes place in this type of language situation? In cases

like these communications are used with what is called pidgin, an expressive code characterized by the almost absence of grammatical rules. According to Bickerton, Hawaiian pidgin is in favor of Chomsky's Universal Grammar. Between 1900 and 1920, therefore, the Hawaiian pidgin was briefly transformed into the so-called Hawaiian creole, a language characterized by a complex grammar. Bickerton's idea is that such a transformation can only be explained by referring to the innatism of linguistic components: the fact that the poor input (pidgin heard by newborns) has been transformed into a more complex output (spoken Creole affects the speech of these children), is proof of the truth that UG is an innate component of the human mind/brain. Even S. Pinker has the same view: the study of a creole language leads us to the good vision that the grammatical mechanism is born in the human brain [15] (p. 115). In conclusion, it should be noted that the majority of cognitive science researchers are of the opinion that in the long process of discourse development, there is the idea that the discourse has affected on the brain as much as the brain on the discourse.

2.1. Psychological rationales in relation to the art of speaking

Anyone who aims to study the argument we are treating here, the acquisition of language by infants and toddlers, cannot avoid recognizing the contribution made in this field by great psychologists, linguists and pedagogues, distinguished for their methods of observation, which have been and continue to be of value to today's research in this field of knowledge, as support to advance these achievements, such as: Skinner, Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner. Among them, we should mention the great American linguist, Noam Chomsky, so famous for the theories of the birth and acquisition of speech by individuals, among the many contemporary trends of the linguistic school of generativism, UG and the role of language in human cognition. He is omnipresent in topics like these and it will be necessary to bring this name throughout this

commentary, according to the most recent works published by him, such as the collection "What Kind of Creatures Are We?", published in 2015 [16]. As for the others that we noted above, quite a bit has been written, many parts or even their entire works have been translated, therefore, in this paper we will mention them as names, along with the basic ideas of language acquisition and development at the age of postpartum, described in the experiments performed.

2.1.1. Chomsky's theory: how do we learn language?

One of the most widely held views of language development assumes that children learn language just as they learn anything else by repeating those behaviors that lead to some positive outcome. The child makes a sound, the parent laughs and responds. The child says "m m m" in the presence of milk, and the parent says, "Yes, milk, milk" and gives the child a drink. The child learns to say milk, because it leads him to a happy parent and to drinking milk. Children add new words by imitating sounds they hear and improve their use of language when they are corrected by the adults around them. Studies have shown that people can be born with a special ability for language, notes Chomsky [16].

2.1.2. Jean Piaget

According to this scientist, development is relatively regular. He writes: "People tend to develop certain skills before others. In infancy children crawl before they walk, stutter before they speak and see the world with their own eyes before they can imagine how other people see it." [17] (p. 35).

2.1.3. Lev Semionovich Vygotsky

Piaget describes the child as a little scientist, even a linguist mostly building an understanding of the world. Only, Vygotsky suggests that the cognitive development happens through the child's interaction with adults and more skillful peers. [18] (p. 53). According to the Belarusian scientist, at any given point in child's development, there are different problems which tend towards the ability of being solved by the child himself.

2.1.4. Erikson and his theory

In cognitive sciences, the German psychoanalyst Erikson, who bequeathed his work "Childhood and friendship", written in 1950 and edited in 1963, has also a special role. Erikson offered a basic framework for understanding the needs of young people in relation to the society in which they grow up, learn and later contribute. In this book, Erikson emphasizes the emergency of self, the search for identity and individual relationships with others throughout life [18] (p. 63). This scientist has described the stages of life during the development of the individual, especially for social and emotional development in different societies, which come and are repeated periodically in a similar way; described in the psychological plane of infancy: faith and unbelief.

2.1.5. Skinner's views

Presenting this psychologist, it is necessary to point out that in the first half of the 20th century, the ruling worldview, especially among American psychologists, was that the mind was considered only a product of the environment. According to this behaviorist idea, newborns come into life without knowing anything and become the creation of the environment in which they live.

Methods

In this article an analytical-descriptive method is followed. An analysis of Albanian and foreign authors has been made, as far as the language acquisition of children in infancy and childhood is concerned, but also with homogeneous groups and classes, divided on the basis of evolutionary development, social and cultural conditions, origin, and according to age groups of children. All Albanian authors who have dealt with language acquisition in early childhood have been analyzed, such as: Ali Shashai, who took the first safe steps on this difficult and untouched area. His book 4 "Të folurit e fëmijëve të moshës parashkollore dhe puna për zhvillimin e tij", "Speech of preschool

children and work on its development" introduces us to the process of speech development; Erlehta Mato, "Fëmija nën 6 vjeç", "Child under 6 years old", which includes children under this age. It treats the latter with their world and with the knowledge they receive through preschool educational institutions, with the problems and opportunities these children have to develop; Gjovalin Shkurtaj in his university book "Sociolinguistics" deals with children's speech and language problems in a separate chapter; Spiro Saqellari, "First words as first steps", "Fjalët e para si hapat e para" introduces us to the importance of the communication with small children during their first years for the development of their speech and the enrichment of the active lexicon; Rrezarta Draçini, through her monograph "Përfitim i shqipes përmes dialektit dhe standardit" "Acquisition of Albanian language through dialect and standard language", we get to know several stages through which the child passes in order to learn the language, in particular, she shows her thoughts about the confrontation between standard and dialect, within the area of Shkoder and beyond; Zamira Shkreli, "Parashkollorët në njohjen e parë me gjuhën amtare", "Preschoolers in the first acquaintance with the mother tongue", where acquisition is treated through didactic methods in preschool age. We have also included a number of foreign authors who have contributed with their studies on the stages of children's language acquisition. It is important to mention here: Chomsky, Pinker, Ecco etc.

Results

In general, it must be affirmed that the literature written by Albanian authors has, at most, goals of scientific knowledge of this research area; so the few researchers that we will mention in the following should be appreciated mainly for the bringing of Western science, even when they have brought many examples and research models from long-term observations in Albanian-speaking environments. On the other

hand, in the literature of this field, we already have quite a few selected translations by European and world-famous authors, mainly from the USA, which we have consulted and cited according to the arguments presented.

First of all, here I will mention the didactic teacher and researcher Ali Shashai, who took the first safe steps on this difficult and untouched area. His book "Speech of preschool children and work on its development", "Të folurit e fëmijëve të moshës parashkollore dhe puna për zhvillimin e tij" introduces us to the process of speech development, which, as the author describes, goes through three stages:

1. acquisition of words
2. practical acquisition of grammatical constructions
3. Development of connected speech.

On the other hand, prof. Shashai points out: "Speech development at young ages is realized through listening and speaking, while, partially, in the older preschool age group and largely in the young age it is also realized through reading and writing" [19] (p. 4).

Through this book, we also get to know the author's accurate data about the linguistic knowledge that children of this age have. He emphasizes that preschool children know a significant number of words, phraseological expressions, greetings, etc., which they should listen to and use in everyday life: in the family, while playing with peers and children of different age, as well as in various active and passive situations with the older ones. "It has been estimated that children of the adult preschool age group (six-year-olds) know and use about 3,600 words: up to 2,500 of which are known and used by children from 4 to 5 years old." [19] (p. 18). At the end of the paper, the author lists the vocabulary used by preschool children.

3.1. Erlehta Mato

Researcher Erlehta Mato has written the book "Child under 6 years old", "Fëmija nën 6 vjeç" which refers to children under this age. It treats the latter with their world and with the

knowledge they receive through preschool education institutions, with the problems and opportunities these children have to develop. In relation to this age group and the ability to develop, the author herself says: "From the age of 1 to 6 years, a person covers half of the road that he does throughout his life. A child's brain at this age works twice as hard as an adult's. The period of 3-6 years is the age of the biggest leap that a person makes in life" [20] (p. 3). Also, in addition to the psychological and social features of preschool children, which the author deals with in her book, "Language and speech development" also takes an important place. She emphasizes: "Materials develop understanding, meanings develop concepts and speech" [20] (p. 94). Erlehta Mato thinks that a number of didactic elements help preschool children. "Preschoolers acquire every necessary skill through the telling of events, fairy tales, stories, dramas, games and other activities that activate listening and communication." [20] (p. 96). At the end of her work, the author introduces us to some indicators of child development at certain ages, starting from 1-6 years old.

3.2. Gjovalin Shkurtaj

The well-known Gjovalin Shkurtaj in his university book "Sociolinguistics" deals with children's speech and language problems in a separate chapter.

In Chapter VII, the researcher formulates: "Child language or as it is called by the English term "Baby talk", presupposes the analytical examination of all linguistic tools (lexical items, morphological items, phonetic processes, morph syntactic processes, allocutionary structures of phrases) used by speakers of a certain community to communicate with young children" [21] (p. 287). When we use language, as a general agreement code, it comes at all levels, along with the semantic level or meaning. This leads to naturally achieving the process described by linguists, that the situation of children's speech is determined by the speaker-listener interaction [21] (p. 287). In this stage, the little ones progress in enriching the word and

their combination according to valence, to be ready to pass from the period called holophrastic, to the creation of the first sentences. Thus, we noticed that from double and triple syntactic combinations, such as: *tushi amje*, (sweet milk) *jopi mal*, (big ball) *puca eme male* (my big shoe), *vali em* (my brother), and *tutla me foka tuqe* (doll with red hair) – they go to sentence structures: *Pi tushi amej* (drink sweet milk); *tap jopi mal* (catch the big ball). When the child begins to create the first sentences, the difficulties increase, therefore the care and attention to her speech should also increase [21] (p. 287). At this stage, we see the use of the third person by the speaking little ones.

3.3. Spiro Saqellari

Spiro Saqellari shows two valuable books to us. The first, from 2006, is entitled “*Fjalët e para si hapat e para*”, “First words as first steps” and introduces us to the importance of communicating with children during childhood for the development of their speech and the enrichment of the active lexicon. In the introduction of the book, the author writes: “Through communication with his mother, or his parent, the child enters the beautiful world of language, sounds and speech” [22] (p. 12).

Spiro Saqellari, in his profession as a speech therapist, introduces us quite well with children's language and its problems, and in his book he presents us with the language processes, which he describes from the age of 3-4 months and continues even further, in preschool age. The author emphasizes that he thinks of the fields of a child's development as the flow of a river [22] (p. 94). Further, his elaborations on language relate to adults and their work with children. “Dialogue with adults” the author notes, “is the foundation of the child's language development” [23] (p. 26). In a part of his work, he speaks as a speech therapist and underlines: “Language is a complex function that appears in childhood in the first weeks of life and its development continues until the age of 6, the age at which the child owns the language spoken around him” [23] (p. 176). The second book we are dealing

with, by the same author is “*Përballë fëmijës me probleme të foluri*”, “In front of the child with speech problems”. This book, when reading the title, seems as if it cannot arouse professional interests, but in fact, within its pages we find valuable material for the linguistic and speech acquisition of children.

In the chapter “Normal development of language, speech and communication” the author deals with the prerequisites of normal language development. He emphasizes that the real engine of human communication is spoken language, that is, what we learn in childhood instinctively [22] (p. 25). It then deals with the pre-linguistic and linguistic stages of children of this age. Regarding the linguistic development of children and the enrichment of their lexicon, this researcher claims: “Around the age of fifteen months, we have the word - sentence. It is a single word spoken by the child, which is interpreted by the parents as a sentence. The first sentence appears around the age of two” [22] (p. 32). Such sentences, about which the author writes, are generated in different situations and contexts of conversation with parents and close guardians of the little ones, first of all during the physiological requirements of the child and their completion by adults.

Another researcher, Milika Dhamo, helps in this field with a book about speech, which is titled: “*Çrregullime dhe terapitë e të folurit*”, “Speech disorders and therapies”. This text, as the author points out, “...aims at the formation of habits of identification, intervention, modification and treatment of speech, language and listening pathologies” [24] (p. 12).

From the psycholinguistic point of view, especially in relation to the “standard-dialect” confrontation, a pioneering work has also been done by the young researcher, prof.as. Dr. Rrezarta Dracini. Through her monograph “*Përftimi i shqipes përmes dialektit dhe standardit*”, “Acquisition of Albanian through dialect and standard”, we get to know several stages the child goes through in order to learn the language, in particular, she gives her opinion

about the confrontation between the standard language and the dialect, within the area of Shkoder and beyond. At the beginning of the paper, the author shows the child in front of language and emphasizes: "The child, in order to learn to speak, must master a very complex language system. Language acquisition is not an easy process, it is even difficult, since the child is faced with linguistic arbitrariness, the meanings of words that are often difficult to discover" [25] (p. 17). Regarding the acquisition of the first lexicon, the author states: "A child's lexicon contains words that belong to different lexical-grammatical categories. Among the first 10 words that a child utters, they are usually names of animals, toys, people, etc." [25] (p. 17).

Discussion

The conclusion of this article brings ideas, thoughts and practical achievements of researchers during experiments, tests, and short-

term and long-term observations with individuals or groups of people, in the various studies on the acquisition of the first language, it is and will continue to be a dynamic field with many open issues, which grab you and attract you into new research. Which theory (or combination of theories) is in such a position that it seeks to give the most correct ways of language development of children? How many cross-linguistic and cross-cultural variants exist within language acquisition? How can more complete answers to such questions help to understand the human mind? These questions are pretty far to get an answer, but close searches can bring us closer to solving the puzzle. These three questions are asked by the authors we cited above: King, Kendall A. & Mackey, Alison. In Albania, there is a great interest from researchers in relation to language acquisition in early childhood, an age which lays the foundations of language knowledge in the later school stages.

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