

TYPES OF SYLLABLE DIVISION AMONG RUSSIAN CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS AND MODERN THEORIES REGARDING THE SYLLABLE

N.I. Lepskaya, E.N. Vinarskaya and G.M. Bogomazov, Moscow University, Moscow, USSR

The syllable structure of speech is formed gradually during the first ten years of a child's life under the influence of a fuller acquisition of the native language. Russian children of different age groups intuitively divide words into syllables in accordance with different language models.

The first step is to divide a word into syllabic segments, consisting of a sequence of sounds with increasing sonority. These segments are functionally indivisible (the model of the open syllable). Then the gradual increase in vocabulary and the mastering of the sound structure of words lead to the second step, i.e. these segments are turned into phonetic sequences, the most productive of which is the model of the closed syllable. A child's gradual understanding of the morphological structure of words becomes more fully reflected in his syllable division and leads to the third step, i.e. the morphological principle of syllable division.

All three types of syllable division are true, primarily of the initial, dynamically expressed part of a word.

Children of older age groups use all the above mentioned types of syllable division. This means that newly acquired skills do not completely oust earlier acquired skills. Taking these facts into consideration, it may be assumed that the above mentioned syllable models exist in the speech of adults.

The existence of a number of syllable models in language in accordance with different types of syllable division may account for the diverse theories in linguistics.