

Deictic expressions as time-related discourse markers

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Abstract

Deixis is a widely researched subject in both cognitive linguistics and pragmatics and refers particularly to the primary dimensions of perception such as time, space and person. After the 'Pragmatic turn' in the 1950's and the upcoming new research techniques on spoken language, two additional dimensions were suggested: social and discourse deixis (Levinson, 2000). Their respective linguistic entities, such as pronouns and anaphoric structures, became interesting for research on discourse dynamics and strategies, e.g. in multimodal corpora such as talk shows or political debates. This project addresses the questions of i) how the primary dimensions of perception, especially time and space, develop in early bilingual language acquisition and methodically ii) how deixis can be analyzed as time related events in the context of mixed-topic discourse. The data is part of a longitudinal study on bilingual language acquisition (German, Spanish) of three-year-old twins which includes protocols and recordings of natural speech in different everyday situations. The results show that the probability of occurrence for spatial deixis is higher for the L1-learner than the competent adult speaker. Temporal deixis, on the contrary, occurs significantly more in the adult speaker's performance, and displays a highly significant dominance over spatial markers.

Keywords: *deixis, deixis dominance, discourse analysis, language acquisition*