

Objektpronomen: Herkunft und Erwerb

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Lyons (1975) argued that deixis is the source of reference and that the anaphoric use of pronouns is derivative to their function as deictics. If children's understanding of anaphoric referring expressions is based on their prior understanding of deixis (cf. Karmiloff-Smith 1979:217) it comes to no surprise that deictic expressions are documented in the data of children before pronouns are used as a means of coherence.

The aim of this study is to determine how children learn the different functions of pronouns and if this process mirrors Lyons claim and possibly the origin of anaphoric pronouns. If at early phases of language development children do not use pronouns as a cohesive device, i.e. to refer back to a previously established discourse referent (cf. Hickmann 2003, Karmiloff-Smith 1979), the question how they arrive at this function needs to be asked. It will be argued in the present study that the anaphoric function is acquired piecemeal and it will be shown that the children's use of other referring expressions display basic signs of cohesion. Using the narrative data of preschool German children it will be shown that children initially encode spatial deixis and translate this function stepwise into the temporal relations of typical discourse where reference often depends on the establishment of referential links.