Acquisition of Demonstratives by a Russian-Speaking Child

Sofia Krasnoshchekova

The paper's aim is to show how the Russian-speaking children acquire the system of demonstratives. The main functions (that are demonstrative and anaphoric) and their correlation are discussed as well as the acquisition of the deictic proximity opposition and the means the children use to replace a noun are regarded.

Keywords: *demonstratives, language acquisition, pronouns, Russian language*

1   Introduction

Demonstrative pronouns and other demonstratives have long been studied by linguistics. The main functions and meanings of demonstratives have been described both typologically, without references to any specific language, and in the Russian language. Nevertheless, the process of acquisition of pronouns is not described completely, especially in Russian language. It is known now, how the children acquire personal pronouns, including the 3d person pronoun *on* 'he'[1] (which is close to demonstratives by its functions) and its anaphoric and deictic properties. Other classes of pronouns attract the attention of the children's speech researchers less frequently. As for other demonstratives, now the way of acquisition of locative deixis is well-known: at first the child does not separate "far" and "close" objects, then she starts indicating "farness" in some contexts, then, practically at the same time, the idea of "closeness" appears, and at last the opposition is acquired entirely. Moreover, the notions of "far" and "close" areas in children's mind (or language) at first don't coincide with those of adults and are developed step by step. But for Russian language such conclusions are made only on the material of locative adverbs, and it would be interesting to find out, if the acquisition of this opposition goes differently for demonstrative pronouns themselves.

The purpose of our study is to describe the behaviour of demonstratives in the speech of Russian-speaking children: to show the process of building the system of demonstratives, to show how Russian-speaking children build their own system up to the "adult-like" state. Our sub-purposes are to create a hierarchy of functions of the demonstratives used by children, to collect more clear evidence about the acquisition of the proximity opposition, to find out if there are any significant differences in the usage of demonstratives by Russian children and adults and to clarify how the characteristics of the demonstratives system depends on the age of children.

The data from children's speech are also able to enlighten some disputable moments in the theory of demonstratives – those as the status of the form *eto* 'this' (either a form of pronoun *etot* 'this, adjective', or a separate lexeme). These data can be taken into account in the description of demonstratives in the "adults'" system of language.

---

[1] In Russian personal pronouns *ona* 'she', *ono* 'it' and *oni* 'they' are correspondingly the feminine, neutral and plural forms of *on* 'he'.

2 Study background: Demonstratives in adult's speech

2.1 The class of demonstratives

In Russian language the class of demonstrative pronouns include such words as *etot* 'this', *tot* 'that', *takoj* 'such', *etakij* 'such-close', *takov* 'such-short form', *sledujushchij* 'next' and demonstrative numeral *stol'ko* 'so much' (Beloshapkova 1989). Demonstrative adverbs *tam* 'there', *tut* 'here', *zdes'* 'here', *tuda* 'to there', *s'uda* 'to here', *ottuda* 'from there', *ots'uda* 'from here', *togda* 'then', *tak* 'so', *potomy* 'therefore', *poetomu* 'therefore' are close to demonstrative pronouns. Demonstrative pronouns and adverbs are united into the class of demonstratives, which in their turn are part of a larger class of deictis words.

Some researchers also tend to reckon the pronoun *on* 'he' among demonstratives, though it is usually seen as one of personal pronouns. We agree with the opinion of the majority and don't consider it here. In this article we describe pronouns *etot* and *tot* and their versions, *takoj*, adverbs *tak, tam, zdes', tut* and their respective direction adverbs. These demonstratives are the most frequent in the speech of both adults and children.

2.2 Functions of demonstratives

Deixis can be divided into two large types: proper deixis (or demonstration itself) and anaphora. By proper deixis a word refers to a part of non-language reality, by anaphora – to a part of preceding (anaphora) or subsequent (cataphora) text. K.Buhler suggests the third type of deixis – "deixis to imaginary", by which a word refers to the speaker's imagination. It is possible to include here so-called "anaphora without antecedent".

The first and the main function of demonstratives is "proper deictic" or demonstrative, though the anaphoric one is also very frequent. The demonstrative function is the first to appear among demonstratives diachronically: the anaphoric one develops on its basis later, by the "metaphorical transfer", when the properties of space are transferred to language.

Russian spoken language has wider range of functions. Special functions include the "supporting" function (it appears in phrases with the topic nominative like "wolf, it came" and provides the pronominal duplication), which has two positional variants: with the demonstrative in postposition ("wolf, it came": classic supporting function) and with the demonstrative in preposition ("it came, wolf": specifying function). Other functions are expressive and searching. In expressive function the pronoun or shows the speaker's attitude to the phrase or to the situation on the whole. The searching function is used to fill in the pauses, when the speaker hesitates about what to say next.

The pronoun *takoj* has even larger amount of specific functions. It can take the emphatic function (not the same as expressive – the emphatic function is used instead of "very" and is also called "the function of high degree of the characteristic"), the classifying function and the actualizing function. The latter is used, when the speaker seeks to make an object or the whole situation more clear in the eyes of the listener.

2.3 The proximity opposition

The proximity opposition is considered the main for the locative adverbs and corresponding pronouns. This suggestion is completely right speaking of the locative adverbs ("here" means "close to", and "there" means "far from"). The meanings of the pronouns given in the dictionary show that, prototypically, *etot* 'this' relates to *tot* 'that' in

the same manner, as "here" relates to "there": "this" refers to "close" objects, and "that" – to "far" ones. In idiomatic phrases like "here and there" the proximity opposition nullifies. Nevertheless, the data show that the demonstrative pronouns may be in different, not so straightforward relations.

3 Study background: Acquisition of demonstratives

Following chapter discusses the previous works in the area of our topic and findings significant for our study.

3.1 Acquisition of deixis and the proximity opposition

According to E.Clark, English-speaking children acquire the proximity opposition completely in several years. First demonstratives appear in the child's speech at the stage of two-word utterances (Clark 2003). The contrast between "here" and "there" on the one hand and between "this" and "that" on the other hand develops in three stages: on the first stage children don't see the contrast, and the pronouns do not differ in the sense of "far" or "close". "Here", for example, is used in deictic meaning, and "there" in non-deictic. On the second stage there is the partial contrast in some contexts, and on the last stage the full contrast is set, and the "adults'" opposition is acquired. Children tend to use different strategies according to the reference point they had chosen (they can refer, for example, either to the place of the speaker or of the listener) and their preferences in expressing spatial relations (for example, one can mark "closeness" and leave "farness" without marking, and another can do vice versa).

The acquisition of spatial deixis in Russian language is usually regarded as a part of the acquisition of locativity in general. When speaking about deictic relations, one of the most important is the concept of the speaker's personal field. It is defined by two oppositions: is the object far from or close to the speaker and if the speaker can see it or not. For the children younger than 3 years the only meaningful factor is proximity. The "close" border (i.e. the border of the personal field) in this case lies in the length of the child's hand, and for children an object is "close" only if they can reach and touch it (Elivanova 2007).

It is worth reminding, however, that in Russian the pronouns *etot* 'this' and *tot* 'that' do not completely correspond to the locative status of *zdes'/tut* 'here' and *tam* 'there', so, it is impossible to reduce their acquisition to the acquisition of proximity opposition, as in other languages like Chinese (Zhao 2007).

The period between the appearance of the first demonstratives and the age of 2,5[2]-3 in Russian-speaking children is considered proper deictic; during this time the child uses practically only deictic means to mark the location of objects ("proper spatial deixis") and rarely uses other locative adverbs like "ahead" and prepositional phrases like "on the table" (both groups of deictic means form the so-called "relative spatial deixis"), though those rarely used means can appear in the speech of some children. Children indicate the location of objects only from the point of view from their own body (i.e. the reference point is the speaking child), and this corresponds with one of the stages of cognitive development of locative concepts (Elivanova 2006). Nevertheless, some children use non-deictic means more willingly than deictic even on the early stages of

---

[2] Speaking of the age of the children, in 2,5 "2" means "2 years" and "5" "5 months".

language acquisition (Elivanova 2004, 11). It can be argued that such children are "referential/nominalist", and, therefore, their strategy in acquisition of locative markers parallels the strategy of language acquisition on the whole.

3.2 Acquisition of anaphora

There are two main tendencies in studies of anaphora in the children's speech, one of them being the study of children's narratives and the other deals with producing and perception of anaphoric constructions containing utterances. In the first type not only experimental texts are studied (retellings of experimental films, read stories, narratives by pictures), but also spontaneous children's speech. The main attention here is drawn to the verbal means used by children to provide the coherence of the text (personal and demonstrative pronouns, nouns, zero markers), the principles by which children choose nouns to be the antecedents or to be connected with the pronouns (subjects, objects, the main character, the first mentioned character) and the age, at which children become aware of the text coherence as an important element of the text (McGann, Schwartz 1988), (Bamberg 1986). It is known that English-speaking children younger than 6 years more willingly use pronouns in deictic function, indicting gestures and other non-verbal means, than pronouns in anaphoric function. Only 6 years aged children understand that the text must be coherent and start using anaphoric means for connecting parts of narratives. Within the framework of this tendency demonstratives are described, if they appear in children's speech and form anaphoric constructions, but there is still no clear description of their behaviour in the narratives.

In the second type producing and perception of anaphora are studied experimentally. When studying perception, the attention is paid to the factors that affect the children's choice of one or another antecedent, which is bound to the given pronoun. In the classic kind of experiments the stimulus utterance contains two competing nouns, that can be regarded as possible antecedents (for example, in an utterance like "the lion is near the house and the tiger is in the forest. It is happy" both "lion" and "tiger" can be antecedents for "it"). There are several important for children's choice factors: order of nouns (children can bind the pronoun to the first or to the second mentioned character), thematic status of the antecedent (if the character was introduced earlier), animate or inanimate antecedent, distance between the antecedent and the pronoun. Each anaphoric element (personal pronoun, demonstrative pronoun or zero) has its own features that affect the children's choice. When studying production of anaphora, it is regarded, how the aforementioned factors affect the choice of pronouns and manner of its binding to the antecedent. Within the framework of this tendency the features of the demonstratives are described in comparison with those of the personal pronouns and other anaphoric words (Chipman, Gérard 1981), (Baylin 1992).

4 Demonstratives in children's speech: study

4.1 Data

In our research we used data from longitudinal observations over children's speech. Parental diaries, audio and video recordings were used. We have analysed speech of fourteen children aged from 1 year 3 months to 4 years (seven boys and seven girls). The children's speech was recorded by their parents one time a month during all the period.

All children are monolingual, Russian-speaking, from middle class. For comparison with the adults' speech data from the National Corpus of Russian language were taken.

The analysed material contains 3117 demonstratives. Demonstrative pronouns *etot* 'this', *tot* 'that', *takoj* 'such', *stol'ko* 'so much', locative demonstrative adverbs *tam* 'there', *zdes'*, 'here', *tut* 'here' and their derivatives *tuda* 'to there', *s'uda* 'to here', *ottuda* 'from there', *ots'uda* 'from here', and pronominal adverbs *tak* 'so' and *togda* 'then' were analysed. All demonstratives were divided into four groups: a) *eto*-demonstratives: *etot* and *tot*; b) *takoj*-demonstratives: *takoj* and *tak*; c) locative adverbs and d) rarely used demonstratives *stol'ko* and *togda*.

From all the examined pronouns 213 (7%) were produced at the age of 1,3-2 years, 1104 (36%) – at the age of 2-2,5 years, 911 (29%) – at the age of 2,6-3 years, 889 (29%) – at the age of 3-4 years.

This preliminary periodization is in some sense formal and relative, because each child acquires language at her own speed, and the same language feature can appear in one child's speech, for example, at the age of 2, and in another child's speech at the age of 2,5. Nevertheless, the division into long periods (half a year or more each) can partly alleviate these differences. One of our purposes is to create a more precise periodization according to the behaviour of demonstratives.

4.2 Results: Appearance of the first demonstratives

The first demonstratives usually appear in children's speech at the age of 1,5-1,6, sometimes earlier. The very first demonstratives in our data were produced at 1,3-1,4 (locative adverbs *tam* and *zdes'*). See the examples below:

(1)   *Danja!*   Tam   *Danja!*
        Dania   there   Dania
        'Danja! There is Danja!' (S., 1,3,23)[3]

(2)   Mother: *A papa   gde?*   Child: *Zdes'* (points at the father)
                and father   where   here
                'And where is father? – Here.' (R., 1,3,23)

So, the first to appear are the locative adverbs, they are followed by the pronoun *etot* (1,7-1,9), then *takoj* and *tak* start being used (about 2,0). The pronoun *tot*, which is paired to *etot*, appears only around 2,5-2,6; words *togda* and *stol'ko* come after 3 years. The first pronominal adverbs can appear on the stage of one-word utterances, but usually it happens on the stage of two-word utterances. Other demonstratives appear in the end of the two-word utterance stage or even on the multiple-word utterances stage.

As for the cognitive development in its relation to the first demonstratives, the child should have formed a kind of notion of "I" as a deictic centre and of possibility to indicate different objects according to the reference system; at the same time the child should understand the ideas of "far" and "close". The language development at this age assumes presence of such categories as noun case, gender and number. The child is familiar with the noun case paradigm and is learning to conjugate adjectives, though the adjective paradigm is not formed entirely. Children acquire adjective paradigm inflexions (that are also the inflections of demonstrative pronouns) gradually and makes the same

---

[3] In this article the age of children is written as following: years, months, days.

mistakes in formation of pronouns as in that of adjectives (Voejkova 2010), (Sizova 2008): the most usual are assimilation and dissimilation of noun and adjective inflexions. Examples (3) and (4) illustrate this:

(3)   Mother: *Poznakomilis'?*   Child: *Da,   s   muzhim* *takom*
             get-acquainted.2-PL.PAST   yes   with   husband   such
        'Have you got acquainted? – Yes, with such husband.' (L., 2,6,14)

The right form here is *takim*, and the child makes the noun and the pronoun inflections look different.

(4)   *Narisuem   *etuju,   sobachku sobrali,   malen'kuju*
        let's-draw   this-F.ACC   dog   collect-PL.PAST   small-F.ACC
        'Let's draw this, we've collected the small dog.' (V., 2,6,17)

The right form here is *etu*, and the child makes the pronoun and the adjective inflections look identical.

The adverbs *tam* and *zdes'* can be considered the first deictic words. As for the other demonstratives, when *etot* appears, children usually are already able to produce one of personal pronouns – it is often the first person pronoun *ja* 'I', if the child refers to herself in first person, or rare for children forms *nash* 'our' or *ty* 'you', if the child chooses other strategy of calling herself. The third person pronoun *on* 'he', which is close to *etot* in functions, is usually acquired several months later than the first demonstratives (after 2 years, about 2,1-2,2), not far from the pronoun *takoj*.

4.3   Results: Main functions of demonstratives

Anaphoric and demonstrative functions are usually considered the main functions of demonstratives. If a child points or looks at something (which is clear in video recordings and is stated by parents in parental diaries and deciphered audio recordings) and at the same time pronounces a demonstrative, we ascribe to this demonstrative a demonstrative function. If a child utters a noun and then refers to the same object using a demonstrative, we ascribe to this demonstrative an anaphoric function. In children's speech the absolute majority of demonstratives are used in the demonstrative function (82% of all the recorded demonstratives). The anaphoric function appears with the demonstratives at about 2 years, starts being used regularly at the age of 2,5-2,6, but even after this age it is used less frequently than the demonstrative one (4% of all the recorded demonstratives). Nevertheless, the anaphoric function is acquired and used regularly with the third person pronoun *on* from its appearance at 2 years.

It can be supposed, that relations between *etot* 'this' and *on* 'he' develop during three stages. The age limits of these stages are different for each child, so here only the order of stages, not their duration is given. On the first stage the only primary function for all classes of pronouns is demonstrative, but the anaphoric one is supplementary for *on* and is not used for *etot* at all. The importance of the demonstrative function on the early stages of language acquisition can be explained by the child's communicative needs: children aren't ably to extract the necessary full-meaning word from their mental lexicon quickly and in time, so they call the object with the first remembered word, it being a personal or a demonstrative pronoun. On the second stage *on* is interpreted by children as a default anaphoric pronoun, and *etot* as a default demonstrative pronoun. The

functions are assigned to their respective pronouns, and each context demands its own pronoun, so there is no competition between them. On the third stage children start apply the anaphoric function to *etot*. The development of anaphora is connected to the development of the narrative deixis and children's narrative ability in general, and to the ability to refer to the objects not only from the deictic centre ("I – here – now"), but also from the shifted reference point.

On the third stage the pronouns *on* and *etot* are distinguished by other parameters. In other words, at first the only way to mark the difference between these two pronouns is to assign them different functions, but then children understand that both functions can be used with both pronouns, and begin to look for more precise distinctions and build into their system of language nuances of meaning of these pronouns.

The cataphoric function, in which the demonstrative refers to a subsequent segment of the text, first appears with the *takoj*-demonstratives and then is used also with the locative adverbs. It is usually used in complex subordinate constructions (like "*takoj, kak*" 'such as') and demands a certain level of cognitive and syntactic development.

The supporting function is characteristic only for the locative adverbs. Adults, unlike children, apply it to other groups of demonstratives too.

Among the supplementary functions of the pronoun *takoj* the most widely-used by children are the searching and the actualizing functions (6% of all the recorded demonstratives, 24% of all 752 of *takoj*-demonstratives). It is not always possible to distinguish them completely, because in some cases it is unclear, if the child forgets the necessary word/isn't able to find the right word quickly (searching) or tries to make the listener create as accurate as possible picture of the situation and to emphasize features of an object or an action (actualizing). The usage of the searching function is explained by the child's insufficient lexicon. Children use *takoj* when they cannot remember the necessary word at once and tries to describe the situation by the means they have at hand. This function is the first to appear.

The actualizing function (sometimes it's also called "typifying") is very common in the adults' spoken language (Satjukova, Voejkova 2010, 201). The pronoun *takoj* here has the pragmatic value. This also makes it common among children, but, in spite of this fact, the first contexts with it are recorded only on the second stage, at 2,5. We can suppose that, while children don't care about pragmatic relations, while they don't take the listener into account (Tomasello 1999), they don't need to actualize in the listener's mind any ideas and concepts and, therefore, to use the actualizing function. So, since about 2,5 children have some presuppositions necessary for development of the idea of the listener's point of view.

The emphatic function is also one of the first to appear, but, in comparison with other functions, it is used by children rather seldom (1% of all the demonstratives); maybe, it depends on the fact, that children do not fell the need to express gradations of the meaning by language and use instead non-verbal means like intonation, gestures and mimics.

Table 1 (Functions of the demonstratives) and Table 2 (Functions of *takoj*-demonstratives) provide more details:
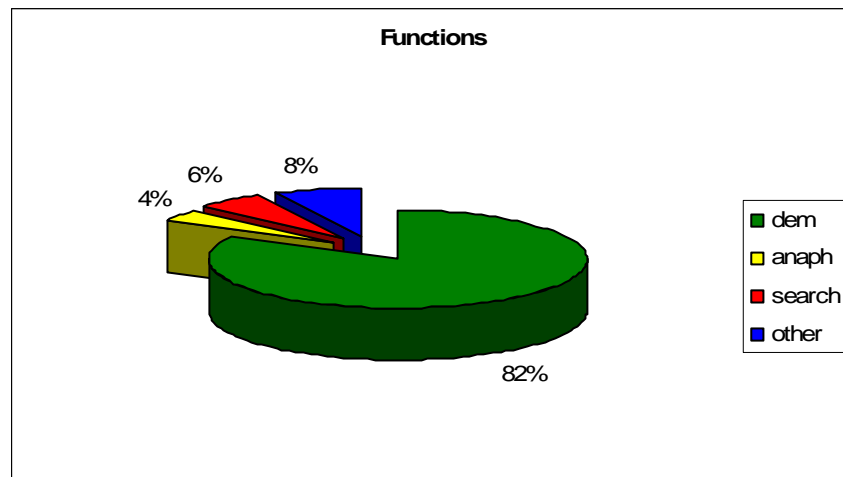
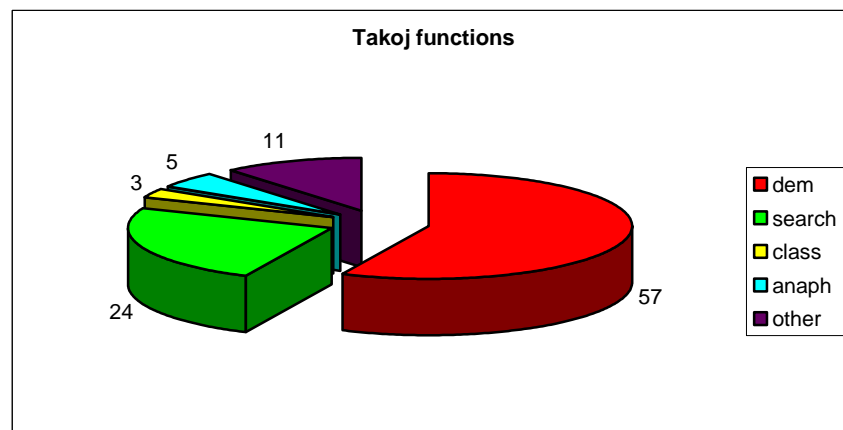Table 1. Functions of the demonstratives: percentage.

Table 2. Functions of takoj-demonstratives: percentage.

4.4   Results: The proximity opposition for the adverbs and pronouns

The proximity opposition is early acquired with the locative adverbs. *Tut* 'here' appears practically immediately after *tam* 'there', children do not confuse adverbs with each other and refer *tam* to "far" (as they understand "farness") objects and *tut* to close objects. Of course, children's conception of "far" and "close" doesn't in all correspond to the adults' one. But if we don't take into account these slight differences as well as the reference system the child have chosen, we can presume that children uses "far" and "close" adverbs regularly right.

On the whole children use more "far" than "close" adverbs (56% vs. 44% of all the recorded locative adverbs, total amount is 1035; see Table 3), especially before the age of 2 years (65% vs. 35%, total amount of adverbs in this age is 71). It is known that the first member of the opposition acquired by children is usually the marked "far" one, and on the very early stage their deictic system has the firm of "*tam* vs. zero", but the second, unmarked member also appears instead of zero very early – before 2 years.
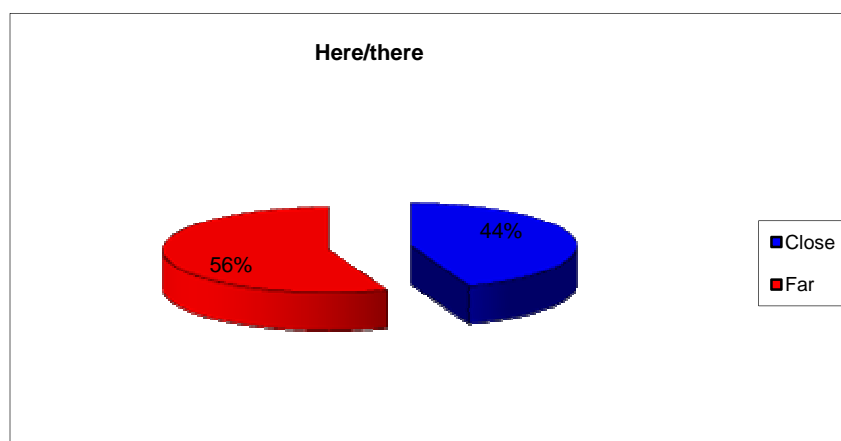
Table 3. "Far" and "close" locative adverbs: percentage.

However, this system cannot be applied to the *eto*-demonstratives. Though in the adults' speech *etot* 'this' and *tot* 'that' are just as universally opposed by proximity as *tut* and *tam*, children don't show such parallelism. The pronoun *tot* appears much more lately than *etot*, the majority of children acquire it by 2,5 (whereas *etot* is recorded at 1,8). Though there exist earlier cases of appearance; more than a year can pass sometimes between the points of appearance of *tot* and *etot*. Its usage greatly depends on the child's individual characteristics. For example, only one child in our data uses *tot* regularly (V., a boy); one child shows the first *tot* forms at 2,1 (O., a girl), but judging by other factors we prefer to call these forms phonetic variants of *etot*. Most children use *tot* extremely seldom (about 1% of all the recorded demonstratives in our data and 3% of the *eto*-group demonstratives. Total amount in the latter group is 1315. See Table 4). So, the proximity opposition at first doesn't apply to the *eto*-demonstratives, however logical it could've seemed.
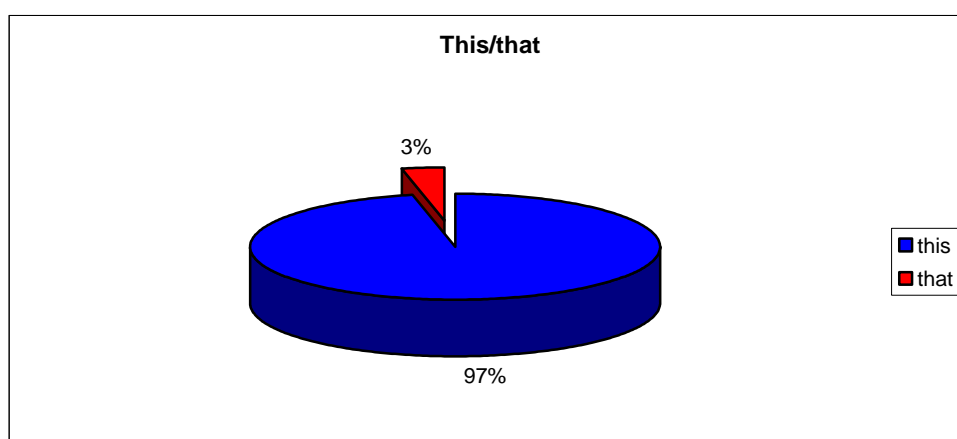

Table 4. "Far" and "close" eto-demonstratives: percentage

Our first presumption is that *etot* for children is the default deictic pronoun, which refers to any objects regardless of their location, and *tot* is the default cataphoric pronoun, which primary function is to build subordinate constructions like "*tot, kotorij*" 'that, which'. Thus, the child's language system at the age of 2,5-3,5 contains three

functionally opposed pronouns: anaphoric *on* 'he', demonstrative *etot* and cataphoric *tot*. But the data show that pronouns *tot* in deictic, "far" meaning appears earlier than in cataphoric function and refer to physically far objects or appears together with *etot* in contrasting meaning. See the example below:

(5)   (Mother is coloring a picture. One is already coloured.)
      C: *I*   tu   *tozhe*. (points)
         and   that-F.ACC   too
         'And that too.' (V., 2,5,23)

Thus, in general *etot* and *tot* are opposed by locative characteristics.

On the early stage of language acquisition[4] children manage with only one means of expressing the proximity opposition – the locative adverbs. The pronouns carrying the same meaning are surplus. *Tam* refers to far areas and objects, *zdes'* 'here' and *tut* refer to close areas, *etot* and *eto* refer to close objects. At the same time, children are interested practically only in the closest area. So, on the one hand, the "far" meaning is more important for children as marked. This meaning cannot be left unexpressed. This implies high frequency and early acquisition of *tam* and *tuda* 'to there'. On the other hand, the "close" meaning is also very important for children, because the main part of communicative situations is related only to the deictic centre (I – here – now). This implies the wider variety of means of expressing "closeness": *etot*, *eto*, *zdes'*, *tut* and *s'uda* 'to here'.

As for the speech perception, children understand *tot* in directed to them adults' utterances 2-3 months before its appearance in their own speech. Such period of time is called "the nearest development zone" (Vygotsky 1984). See example (6).

(6)   Grandmother: *Prinesi mne*   tot   *kubik.*
                    give me   that   brick
                    'Give me that brick.'
                    (Child, V., is 2,3,19. He starts using *tot* at 2,5)

Speaking to younger children adults refrain from using this pronoun.

When children begin to understand *tot* as a separate word in the adults' speech and use it themselves, they note that *tot* is somehow connected to *etot* and construct a proportion: "*tot* : *etot* = *tam* : *zdes*", then they transfer the long ago acquired proximity opposition from the locative adverbs to the *eto*-demonstratives. Disjunctive questions the adults pose to children ("*etu ili tu?*" 'this or that?') also help children to understand and develop the opposition. Then the *eto*-demonstratives are included in the deictic system. And only when children are able to produce syntactically complex constructions, they give *tot* the cataphoric meaning.

Thus, the relation between *etot* and *tot* passes through several stages in its development. On the first such stage only *etot* is present in the language system. It is used in a non-deictic and non-locative meaning and can be regarded as an analogue of an article (that Russian language doesn't have). On the second stage *tot* appears, also in a non-deictic and non-locative meaning. See example (7):

---

[4] Again, the age limits vary greatly from child to child, so the term 'stage' is used in a non-strict sense.

(7) Mother: *Davaj, rasskazhi schitalochku.* – C: *Ne* ta, *po-moemu.*
     come-on tell rhyme not that-F I-think
     'Come on, tell me the rhyme – It isn't that (the right one), I think.'
     (L., 2,2,5)

Here and in other similar cases the first pronouns *tot* mean "right, the right one" and *ne tot* 'not that' "wrong, not right one".

On the next stage *tot* gets involved in an opposition "demonstrative epronoun 1" vs. "demonstrative pronoun 2". Children look for the meaning that can help to tell the difference between two demonstrative pronouns, and on the fourth stage the proximity opposition is transferred from the locative adverbs to the demonstrative pronouns. On the last stage *tot* obtains the cataphoric features.

This development of relations between *etot* and *tot* is similar to the development of relations between *this* and *that* in English-speaking children as described by E.Clark (Clark, Senguil 1978): at first two members do not form an opposition and are used in a non-deictic meaning, then partial contrast appears (in some contexts), and then the full contrast is set.

Nevertheless, the infrequency of *tot* in the children's speech questions the primary place of the proximity opposition for the demonstrative pronouns in the adults' speech and the system of language. Perhaps it would be more correct to describe *etot* in the first place as a purely demonstrative pronoun without references to the object's proximity and *tot* in the first place as building material for cataphoric constructions; the "far" and "close" meanings thus set in the second place. There are several arguments for that: a) the foregoing data from the children's speech; b) the fact that *etot* has a "far" pair whereas *eto* does not, so, the opposition isn't equal; c) the fact that a range of demonstratives diachronically had "close" equivalents but now don't. For example, *takoj* 'such' and *tak* 'so' were opposed to respectively *etakij* and *etak* that now are used only in special situations or have their own, non-demonstrative, lexical meaning. Moreover, demonstratives *togda* 'then' and *stol'ko* 'so much' now don't have any paired words at all.

So, the only core, central way of expressing the proximity meaning is the locative adverbs, but the problem needs further investigation.

4.5 Results: Locative adverbs as an "avant-guard" of demonstratives.

There are several evidences for the fact that the locative adverbs go ahead of the other demonstratives and "pave their way" into the system of language.

1. It is locative adverbs that are the first of demonstratives to appear in the children's speech. The very first contexts with demonstratives in our data contain the demonstrative *tam* 'there' and are produced at the age of 1,3. See example (8):

(8) Mother: *Gde kiska? Gde sobachka?* – Child: *Tam* (points)
     where cat where dog there
     'Where is the cat? Where is the dog? – There.' (B., 1,3,15)

Most children either acquire *tam* earlier that *etot* 'this' or the two demonstratives appear simultaneously. It could be supposed that *etot* as an easy means of distinguishing an object from the others and the background should appear in the first place, whereas *tam*, referring to the idea of "farness" and demanding certain cognitive abilities from the

child (including the ability of counting from the deictic centre), should be more difficult. But in reality children at first do not use language to refer to the unmarked ("close") objects and needs language to point to the marked "far" situations.

2. The locative adverbs are the first to take the supporting function, both in a supporting and a specifying variant. They are used in this function most frequently (76% of all the demonstratives in the supporting function; total amount is 60. See Table 5). Example (9) is an illustration.
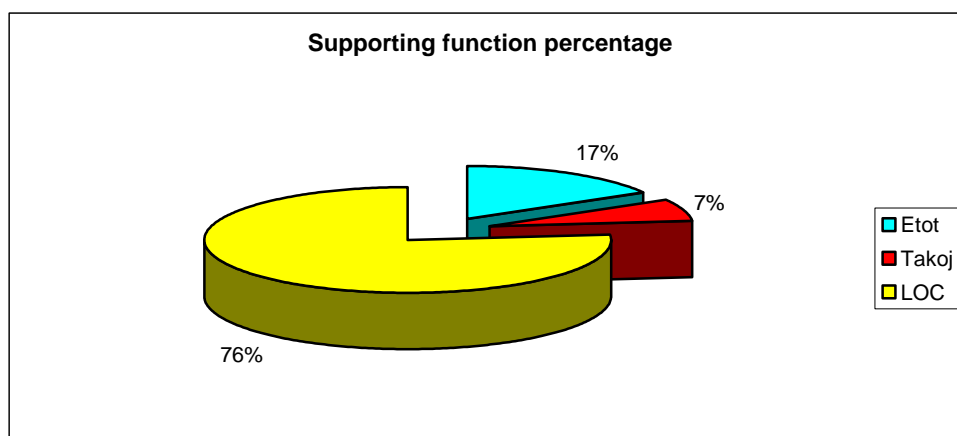

Table 5. Supporting function: percentage

(9) *Kukla   dolzhna   tut   spat', v   spal'nike.*
      doll   must   here   sleep   in   sleeping-bag
      'The doll must sleep here, in a sleeping-bag.' (L., 2,0,29)

3. The locative adverbs appear most frequently in the anaphoric function (40% of all the demonstratives in the anaphoric function; total amount is 116. See Table 6 below), though children do not usually use them in cataphoric constructions, unlike the pronoun *takoj* 'such'. The "anaphora to the situation" also appears earlier with the locative adverbs than with *etot*, though for *etot* this type of anaphora is acquired rather early, at about 2 years.
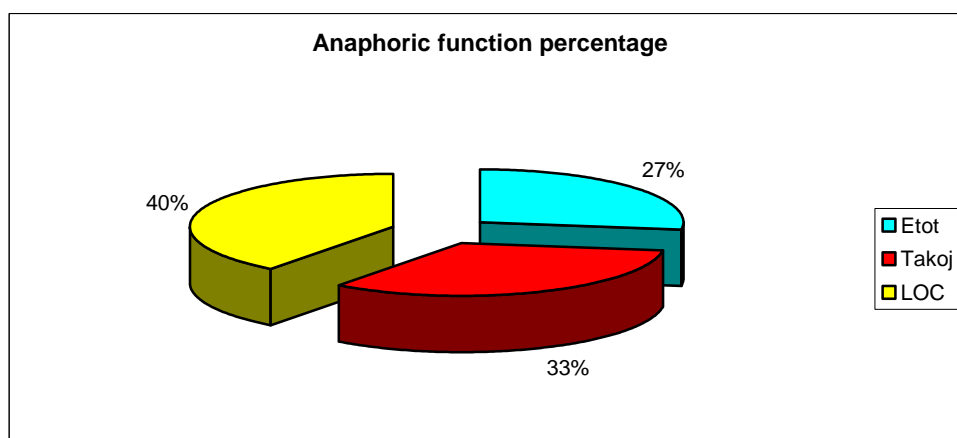

Table 6. Anaphoric function: percentage.

The locative adverbs are unchangeable and easy to pronounce (*tam*, *tut* 'here', *tuda* 'to there') short and convenient to store in memory, that's why they appear so early and are used so widely by children. We can say that they are an "avant-guard" of the demonstratives: on them children try and work through the new features and functions and then transfer the "polished" characteristics to the other demonstratives, including demonstrative pronouns. Thus, the locative adverbs help children to acquire the system of demonstratives more quickly.

4.6   Results: Ways to replace the noun: *on, etot, takoj*

The speaker resorts to the different ways of replacing the noun, when he during his speech forgets or cannot quickly extract from the mental lexicon the necessary word or when he doesn't know how to call one or another object properly.

It is known that in the adults' speech the default replacing pronoun in such cases is the pronoun *etot* 'this' (or *eto*[5]). Though this usage stands close to hesitative *eto* (used when a speaker isn't sure how to continue, can be translated as "well, ehm": "*ja… eto… poshol*" "I… ehm… went"), *eto(t)* here has its own lexical meaning. *Eto(t)* refers directly to the objects of real world and allows not to turn to full-meaning words. If *eto(t)* denotes an object in the field of vision of both communicants or one that can be unambiguously understood from the situation, this usage is called "proper demonstrative". If *eto(t)* refers to an object outside the field of vision or one the listener has to guess about, this usage is called "nominative" (Poholovka, Kravchenko 2002). Sometimes in such cases adults use the personal pronoun *on* 'he' or non-verbal deictic means (gestures, pointing looks). Usually *on* is used, when the speaker presumes that the listener exactly knows or can easily understand from the situation which referent the pronoun denotes. In other cases *on*, if not supported by the previous text nor by the unambiguous reference to an object, can be regarded as a fault and lead to a communicative failure. As for *eto(t)*, the restrictions here are weaker, and it isn't necessary for the referent to be in the field of vision of the communicants. Besides, "nominative" *on* usually appears in cases when the speaker "forgets" to look from the listener's point of view and ascribes the interlocutor his own picture of the situation (the sphere of the Theory of Mind), and *eto(t)* usually appears when the speaker isn't able to quickly remember the necessary full-meaning word (the sphere of speech production and the mental lexicon).

Back to our research, for children the set of replacing means is more manifold. Young children, on the one-word utterances stage, use pointing gestures and so-called "capsules" that can be regarded as proto-pronouns. "Capsules" are special words that don't have analogues in the adults' language and are specific for each child (each child uses her own "capsules"). Like "standard" pronouns, "capsules" can denote any object and thus replace the full-meaning words (for example, A. uses words *biba* and *bil'ba* that don't exist in Russian to call the objects she doesn't know names for). With the entrance of the pronouns, children get rid of the "capsules" but still use non-verbal deictic means both with demonstratives and separately.

Children consider the pronouns *eto(t)*, *on* and *takoj* 'such' equally possible in replacing contexts. The pronoun *eto* is usually used when children don't have the necessary full-meaning word in their mental lexicon and are not aware of its gender; three others (*etot*, *on*, *takoj*) are used when children know the word but aren't able to evoke it from the memory. All the three pronouns are used in absolutely similar contexts, and

---

[5] Hereinafter we use the formula *eto(t)* for the cases, when it isn't relevant if *etot* or *eto* appears.

here it is possible to speak about their competition. In most part of the contexts children use the right gender form of the pronoun ("*daj mne etu*" 'give me this-F' "*daj mne etogo*" 'give me this-M'), so, the omitted noun is present in their lexicon. It is worth noting, however, that sometimes both children and adults use oblique cases forms of the pronoun *etot* to name an unknown object. In the adults' speech those forms are described as neutral, but it is difficult to say if it's right because the oblique cases forms of neutral and masculine gender here are homonymous. See example (10).

(10) *Baba,   risuj   Vane   vot   etim*
Granny   draw   Vanja-DAT   emph   this-N/M.INSTR
(gives Grandmother a pencil)
'Granny, draw to Vanja with this' (V., 2.2.17)

Adults use *takoj* to replace the unknown/forgotten noun marginally. However, in spoken language *takoj* and *eto* both can be used in a searching function, as words that fill the hesitation pauses. Moreover, *takoj* in certain anaphoric contexts can become similar to *eto(t)* in adults' speech, and because of that children are likely to mix the two pronouns. At the same time *takoj* can replace a forgotten adjective, to describe an unknown or unclear characteristic and to be a "weak" member in a pair of antonyms ("*tsvetnye ksrandashi i* takie *karandashi*" 'coloured pencils and such pensils' – *takoj* meaning "not coloured, other than coloured"), that is to carry out the same functions in relation to adjectives as *etot* in relation to nouns. If adults use *takoj* when they want to describe the situation more clearly, children compensate the lack of adjectives in their lexicon. So, at first children do not differentiate between *eto(t)* and *takoj*, both being demonstrative pronouns. They spread all the functions and meanings of *eto(t)* upon *takoj* and the features of *takoj* for adjectives to the situations when nouns are replaced.

The first demonstratives are always used in a proper demonstrative function and refer to the object the child points to, takes in hends etc.; the nominative function appears later, when the child gets able to refer to other situations than that of the deictic centre.

Children try to maintain the communication by all available means and, if they forget the necessary noun or don-t have it in their language system, they replace it with the first appropriate pronoun that comes to mind. The communication doesn't break, the adult listener understands what the child speaks about, and the child avoids the communicative failure. On the other hand, children do not have the completely developed Theory of mind and they cannot trace if the listener understands what they speak about if they use the pronoun in the nominative function. For example, a child speaks about something, carries in mind a certain referent, but doesn't let the listener know about it and at first uses a pronoun to name it. In this case the communicative failure may occur. The first case happens on the early stages of language acquisition, when the only possible reference situation is the directly observed one. The second case can happen when children have already acquired the idea of a transferred situation, but haven't yet developed the Theory of mind.

4.7   Periodization

The data shows that the preliminary periodization we gave in chapter 4.1 in some sense properly describes the stages of development of the demonstratives system. The first stage lasts from the appearance of the first demonstratives and till about 1,11-2,2 for

different children. It can be called an "elementary demonstratives stage". The demonstrative pronoun *eto(t)* and locative adverbs are used here and only the demonstrative function is possible. On the second stage the *takoj*-demonstratives appear and other functions (anaphoric, supporting etc) are introduced. This stage lasts till 2,4-2,6 and can be called an "acquisition of basic characteristics of demonstratives stage". During this stage the demonstratives are used most frequently in comparison to other stages. On the third stage, which lasts until 2,8-3,0, children begin to make the case paradigm of demonstrative pronouns more varied (forms of non-central oblique cases appear), the number of unchangeable (adverbs and *eto*) and changeable (pronominal adjectives) demonstratives gets equal, *tot* appears and the proximity relations develop between *tot* and *etot*. On the fourth stage, which starts at 2,8-3,0, the anaphoric and supporting functions get more important and rare demonstratives *stol'ko* "so much" and *togda* 'then' appear.

5   Conclusions

1. *Age and periodization*. By the age of 4 children usually acquire the system of demonstratives in the main. At this age children are able to produce and use most demonstratives and most of their functions and meanings. Nevertheless, the ratio between different demonstratives, as well as functions and meanings, isn't the same as in the speech of adults, so we cannot register the complete correspondence with the adults' system. The acquisition of the demonstratives pass through several stages. The first to appear is the locative adverbs, then the pronoun *eto(t)*, then *takoj* and *tak*, then *tot* and other demonstratives appear. As for the functions, they also are acquired according to the stages: from the demonstrative function on the first stage to the wider usage of unusual functions on the fourth stage.

2. *Functions*. The core and practically the only possible function of demonstratives for children, unlike adults, is the demonstrative one. If in the adults' speech the demonstratives can equally be used both in demonstrative and anaphoric functions, for children the anaphoric one lies in the periphery. It starts being used regularly after the age of 3, but still the amount of demonstratives in the demonstrative function is much greater than that in the anaphoric function. First of all, the anaphoric function is related to the area of the narrative deixis. While children do not refer to the transferred situation, while they are not able to abstract themselves from the deictic centre and to shift the reference point, they do not need the anaphora. Then, the anaphora appears in the children's speech together with the appearance of the third person pronoun *on* 'he', and until a certain stage in language acquisition the anaphoric function is connected only to this pronoun. At first (before 2,5) the central function for all pronouns is demonstrative, then (from 2,5 till 3-3,5) the pronouns are distributed by functions, when *eto(t)* is considered a default demonstrative pronoun, which cannot take in other functions, and *on* a default anaphoric pronoun. The locative adverbs and *takoj*-demonstratives are close to *eto(t)* here and also can have only the demonstrative function. At last, from 3-3,5 children realize that both functions are equally possible for both groups of the demonstratives and start looking for other ways of distinguishing between *eto(t)* and *on*.

The cataphoric function, a variant of the anaphoric one, begins to be used only when children get able to produce complicated subordinate constructions and thus depends on the level of syntactic development. The supporting function that is very

common in the Russian spoken language is infrequent among children and is usually used in its specifying variety.

The *takoj*-demonstratives are in addition known in the actualization and searching functions. These functions are not always easy to clearly tell apart. Children use them when they try to express their thoughts more exactly, to provide the listener with a more clear concept of the described referent, but they lack the necessary words in the mental lexicon or cannot quickly extract the full-meaning word from their memory. Other particular functions of the *takoj*-demonstratives are rarely used by children.

3. *The development of the proximity opposition.* The proximity opposition is acquired differently for the locative adverbs and the *eto*-demonstratives. It is well known that the locative adverbs are opposed as "close" and "far" from the very appearance, and children regularly use *tam* and *tut/zdes'* in rught contexts. For the *eto*-demonstratives the acquisition of this opposition proceeds more slowly. Some children may have about a year pause between the appearance of *etot* and that of *tot*. *Tot* is used many times less frequently than *eto(t)*, a paired "close" pronoun. The proximity relations between them are set only at about 3 years. We suppose that on the early stages of language acquisition children use one means of proximity indication – locative adverbs, while other means are regarded as abundant. *Etot* at this age is seen as a default demonstrative pronoun that doesn't relate to "closeness" or "farness". When *tot* appears, the already formed proximity opposition is transferred from the locative adverbs to the *eto*-demonstratives. However, the data from the children's speech question the central place of the proximity opposition for the *eto*-demonstratives in the adults' speech. Possibly, we should consider primary the general demonstrative meaning for *etot* and the cataphoric meaning for *tot* and put the proximity meanings on the second place.

4. *The special status of locative adverbs.* The locative adverbs take a special place in the system of the demonstratives: they can be seen as an "avant-guard" of the demonstratives. They are the earliest to appear, the first to be used in the supporting function, the most frequent to have the supporting and anaphoric functions. Being unchangeable and short words they are easy to remember, acquire and produce. We argue that children work through the properties of the demonstratives on them and then transfer these properties to other demonstratives.

Thus, the producing of the demonstratives by children is described, yet the problem of perception remains and needs further investigation: it is interesting to find out when children start understanding demonstratives in the speech of adults and what strategies can adults follow when speaking to children. Moreover, it is possible to describe the process of further acquisition of the demonstratives and its becoming close to the adults' one.

References

Bamberg, Michael. 1986. A functional approach to the acquisition of anaphoric relationship. *Linguistics.* 24, XI: 227-284.
Baylin, John. 1992. Movement of Anaphors and the Acquisition of Embedded clauses in Russian. *Language Acquisition.* 2(4): 307-335.
Beloshapkova, Vera. 1989. *Sovremennyj russkij* jazyk. [Modern Russian language]. Moscow: Vyshaja shkola.
Bulahovskij, Leonid Arsen. 1958. Mestoimenija kak predmet sintaksicheskogo analiza i shkol'nogo usvoenija. [Pronouns as an object of the syntax analysis]. *Russkij jazyk v shkole.* 4: 30-36.

Ceytlin, Stella N. 2005. Kategorija roda v detskoj rechi. [Gender category in the childrens' speech]. In Alexander V. Bondarko and Sergej A. Shubik (eds.), *Problemy funkcional'noj grammatiki. Polevye structury*, 346-375. Saint-Petersburg.

Chipman, Harold H. and Josselyne Gérard. 1981. Le traitement de l'anaphore avec et sans contexte linguistique chez le jeune enfant. *Folia linguistica*. Vol. 15, № 112: 185-208.

Clark, Eve V. 2003. *First language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clark, Eve V. and Sengul, C. J. 1978. Strategies in the acquisition of deixis. *Journal of Child Language*. 5: 457-475.

Elivanova, Mariya Anatolevna. 2004. *Formirovanie kategorii lokativnosti v jazykovoj sisteme detej doshkol'nogo vozrasta*. [Forming of the locativity category in the language system of children of pre-school age]. Saint-Petersburg.

Elivanova, Mariya Anatolevna. 2006. Vzaimosvjaz' kognitivnogo i rechevogo razvitija pri osvoenii prostranstvennyh otnoshenij u detej rannego vozrasta. [Correlation between cognitive and language development during acquisition of locative relations in small children]. In *Ontolingvistika: nekotorye itogi i perspektivy*, 58-66. Saint-Petersburg.

Elivanova, Mariya Anatolevna 2007. Kategorija lokativnosti i ee vyrazhenie v detskoj rechi. [The category of locativity and its expression in the children's speech]. In *Semanticheskie kategorii v detskoj rechi*, 317-339. Saint-Petersburg.

Leroy, Marie, Emanuelle Mathiot and Aliyah Morgenstern. 2009. Pointing gestures, vocalizations and gaze: two case studies. In: Jordan Zlatev, Marlene Johansson Falck, Carita Lundmark, Mats Andrén (eds.), *Studies in Language and Cognition*, 261-275. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

McGann, William and Arthur Schwartz. 1988. Main character in children's narratives. *Linguistics*. 21: 215-233.

Poholovka, Anna G. and Alexander V. Kravchenko. 2002. O nominativnoj funkcii mestoimenija "eto". [Of the nominative function of the pronoun "eto"]. In *Nominacija. Predikacija. Kommunikacija: sbornik statej*, 19-36. Irkutsk: IGEA.

Satjukova, Daria N. and Maria D. Voejkova. 2010. Osobennosti funkcionirovanija mestoimenija "takoj" v russkoj razgovornoj rechi. [Properties of functioning of the pronoun "takoj" in Russian spoken language]. In *Acta linguistica Petropolitana: Trudy Instituta lingvisticheskih issledovanij RAN. T. VI Ch. 2. Izbytochnost' v grammaticheskom stroe jazyka*, 184-225. Saint-Petersburg: Nauka.

Sizova, Olga B. 2008. O zakonomernostjah usvojenija padezhnogo markirovanija fleksij atributivnogo sochetanija v doshkol'nom vozraste. [Of the regularities in the acquisition of case marking of attributive constructions endings by pre-school aged children]. In *Izvestija RGPU im. A. I. Gercena*. 30 (67: Aspirantskie tetradi. Nauchnyj zhurnal): 244-247.

Tomasello, Michael. 1999. *The cultural origins of human cognition*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Voejkova, Maria D. 1984. Semantika i morfologija pervyh prilagatel'nyh (po dannym spontannoj rechi). [Semantics and morphology of the first adjectives (based on the spontaneous speech data)]. In *XXXIX Mezhdunarodnaja filologicheskaja konferencija. Sekcija: psiholongvistika*, 4-7. Saint-Petersburg.

Vygotsky, Lev S. 1984. Voprosy detskoj (vozrasnoj) psihologii. [Questions of children (age) psychology]. In Lev S. Vygotsky (ed.), *Sobranie sochinenij v 6 t*. T.4, 243-385. Moscow.

Zhao Yi-jing 2007. Children's acquisition of demonstrative pronouns in Mandarin Chinese. In *The 21st Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation : Proceedings. V. 21*, 532-541. Seoul.