Acquisition of differential marking of animate and inanimate objects in Russian by monolingual children of early age.

Animacy is the most significant factor for differential objects marking (DOM) at the early stages of language acquisition. In the grammatical system of Russian language the differential marking of animate and inanimate objects can be expressed using case forms of nouns.

The distinction between animate and inanimate nouns is of utmost significance for the early periods of children development and is based on a clear basis.

Inanimacy: *On vidit stul-ø*. He sees a chair — ACC=NOM.
Animacy: *On vidit mal'čik-a*. He sees a boy — ACC=GEN.

This difference is only relevant for masculine nouns belonging to the 2nd inflectional class in the Singular, however, in Plural all nouns have different inflectional endings in the Accusative depending on the animacy:

On vid-it stol-y,   vilk-i,   polj-a.
He sees table&Masc-Pl:Acc, fork&Fem-Pl:Acc, field&Neut-Pl:Acc'.
On vid-it kot-ov,   sobak-ø,   čudovišč-ø.
'He sees cat&Masc-Pl:Acc, dog&Fem-Pl:Acc, beast&Neut-Pl:Acc'.

To explore the acquisition the DOM of nouns we analyzed data of 5 informants. Russian corpus: Vanja 1;5–4;0; Liza 1;6–4;1 — speech of caregivers and children; diaries (case studies): Genja G. 1–3,5; Lev 2–4,5; Genja H. 2,2–4,8. We retrieved all utterances with nouns marked of animate and inanimate = masculine and plural nouns in accusative. We focus on the percentage of correct and incorrect DOM forms and types of mistakes.

<u>Results</u>. As children (CL) as well as caregivers (CDS) use more inanimate (63–75%); than animate (25–37 %) nouns. In CDS the overregularized forms are very low: only 0,4–0,5%. As the data shows children mostly use correct ACC forms from the very beginning.

Liza (2;8) *On posel červjak-ov kormit'*.
        He go worm&ANI-PL.ACC feed.
Liza (2;10) *On ispačkal bantik.*
        He stain bow&INANI-SG:ACC.

Mistakes make 3-10% of all contexts. Two types of errors were found: Liza, Genja H., Genja G. and Lev produce mostly inanimate form marked as animate (75-90 %):
kak Lizočka sxvatit flomastera drugogo
now Liza will seize marker&ANI:SG.MSC.GEN.ERR another&ANI:SG.MSC.GEN.ERR (Liza, 2;5).

10-25% are animate form marked as inanimate: *eto babuška mne vynosila takie gusenizy*
this grandmother to me brought out *such&INANI:PL NOM ERR *caterpillar&INANI:PL NOM ERR' (Liza 2;9).

Vanja produces mostly animate overregularized form marked as inanimate (80 %).

<u>Conclusions</u>. Despite the overall number of inanimate marked nouns is higher in the recording, children in the earlier stages of language development seem to show some strategies in differential marking of animate and inanimate nouns. Children made two types of errors: at the early stages they mark all objects as inanimate. This may happen due to the fact that the most frequent Nominative serves as a base form at the premorphological stage and prevails in the CL (Voejkova 2011; Tseitlin 2009; Gvozdev 1961 Dressler 1961).

Then they transmitted from the erroneous under-marking of the animate nouns in the protomorphological phase to the erroneous over-marking of the inanimate nouns in later periods. Finally, there are almost no overregularizations in Russian CL. Thus, children speech production is influenced by the systemic properties of their target language.

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