

# How children acquire reported speech in German and Dutch: A corpus study

Franziska Köder

This study examines how 31 German-speaking and 38 Dutch-speaking children between 1;1 and 4;6 years of age acquire direct and indirect discourse. Based on a corpus of naturalistic data, all speech reporting constructions with the reporting verbs *sagen* and *zeggen* ('say') were analysed. The results indicate that direct discourse is not only acquired before indirect discourse but also used considerably more frequently by children and their interlocutors. The number of all speech reporting types increases with age. Contrary to the predictions, cases in which features of direct and indirect discourse are mixed are relatively rare in child language.