
Children's metarepresentational abilities: Evidence from intonational production and the Norwegian response particle *jo*

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Abstract

We investigate preschool children's use of the Norwegian intonation pattern Polarity Focus (PF) and the response particle *jo*, two linguistic tools that enable speakers to highlight the truth value of a thought. In an elicitation task, 92 two- to five-year-olds heard explicitly expressed prior (positive or negative) beliefs about picture motives, in addition to a desire suggesting that the speaker held a false belief. Participants' responses show that already from two years onward, children are proficient users of PF and *jo*, suggesting an early development of the abilities to attribute thoughts and assess the reliability of utterance content.

Keywords: Pragmatic development, Intonation, Response particles

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