

Abstract

In first- and second-order belief tasks, beliefs are clearly defined as true or false. But in cases where contrasting beliefs about a certain reality are all correct or when the truth is only partially revealed to others, children's understanding of the aspectuality of beliefs is questioned. This paper explores the developmental sequences of theory of mind in preschool children and the cognitive ability underlines it. The mental file theory was put into test empirically. A total of 190 children aging from 3 to 6 years were tested with a modified intensionality task, unexpected content task, and second-order false belief task. Results showed that the required cognitive abilities are shared to tackle these three tasks. In contrast to the mental file theory's prediction, understanding of intensionality starts to emerge in children around 4 years, suggesting that the mental representations of intensionality and second-order beliefs are different in nature.

Keywords: intensionality, theory of mind, mental file theory