

## Abstract

The present study investigated Cantonese-speaking children's understanding of false belief, particularly the developmental sequence of 'knowing that' and 'thinking that' in children's theory of mind. Besides, the emergence sequence of prediction and explanation, and the effect of language were also examined. Sixteen 3-, twenty 4- and nineteen 5-year-olds participated in this study. They were tested in an appearance reality task (AR) for assessing 'knowing that' and false belief prediction (FBP) as well as false belief explanation (FBE) for assessing 'thinking that'. In the AR and FBP tasks, belief terms including '諗' and '以為' were manipulated. Results revealed that 'knowing that' emerges before 'thinking that' across the three age groups and false belief prediction comes in later than false belief explanation, thus confirming the theory theory position. In addition, the role of language in assessing children's understanding of belief was confirmed as there was a trend that children performed better in '以為' than in '諗' questions, though the effect was not significant. Finally, a model, which suggested that the language effect would be significant under the presence of 1) a poor understanding of false belief concept and 2) an adequate knowledge of connotation of false-belief-indicating belief terms, was proposed.