

A CONCEPT MAP AND LINGUISTIC APPROACH FOR IMPROVING PERSIAN-SPEAKING CHILDREN'S CRITICAL THINKING

Elahe Taheri Ghaleno, University of Allameh Tabataba'i, Iran
Email: elahetaheri96@yahoo.com

Abstract. Lipman (1997: 98) believes that everyday thinking and critical thinking are different. Everyday thinking is common and simple but critical thinking is more complex and requires higher cognitive processing and reasoning based on the evidence. He believes that some of the critical thinking activities that a person is involved with are: issue expression, data collection, analyzing question, viewing and judging the credibility of a source, organizing information and studying results and conclusions. Concept map can easily provide these. Achieving standards of critical thinking and concept map are possible when children have sufficient language ability in order to express logical and semantic relations. Discourse particles are important to enhance children's verbal skills to express addition relations, causal relations, logical and semantic relations so they are also necessary for their critical thinking and drawing their concept map. The present research aims to examine comprehension and production process of discourse particles in 8 Persian monolingual speaking in two age groups (7-8 and 8-9 years old) using syntactic-semantic model. To achieve this goal, children storytelling while drawing their concept map, were recorded, then the number of discourse particles in the corpus of their storytelling were studied. Data analysis provides strong evidence that children use different types of discourse particles in their stories even in low amount and an intergroup data analysis indicated that there was no significant difference in the performance of the two groups. Also the frequency of the discourse particles that expressed simple relations is more than the frequency of discourse particles that expressed complex relations. The reason for that can be explained by iconicity principle in which the order of sentence elements follows the sequence of real world events. Children use simple relations more than complex relations because based on the iconicity principle the order of sentence segments has more adaptation with their event sequence in real world and their meaning is more simple so can be shown by concept map more easily.

Keywords: Discourse particles, critical thinking, child storytelling, discourse.

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