

Theory of Mind and Linguistic Acquisition

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Abstract

Theory of Mind (ToM) is a conceptual theory that is credited with enabling individuals to anticipate the mental states of others, including their beliefs, desires, emotions, intentions, and additional emotive circumstances (Flavell, 2004). Linguistic acquisition is a natural development that begins to develop in children from birth and enables communication. The cognitive domains necessary to comprehend language is also required in order for the formation of ToM to develop. The interpretations made through ToM presumptions can contain the discernment of another's false belief. In this context, the individual must be aware that the literal interpretation could be an inaccurate symbol or manufactured belief. This understanding requires a certain level of cognitive development in the child since the intention may be to signify something else and the child must be able to correctly process idiomatic expressions in order to accurately make ToM determinations (Caillies & Le Sourn-Bissaoui, 2008). This paper explores the relationship between ToM and linguistic acquisition in normally developing children, as well as those with various disabilities to ascertain the degree of cognitive development necessary in order to make ToM determinations. Exploration of this relationship reveals that linguistic and cognitive development are both essential in the construct of ToM perceptions in early childhood.

Keywords: language development, linguistic acquisition, theory of mind

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