Development of logical reasoning: Children's ability to verbally explain the nature of the distinction between logical and nonlogical forms of argument

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Abstrak

Previous research by D. Moshman and B. Franks (1986) supported the hypothesis that children do not explicitly understand the nature of the distinction between logical and nonlogical forms of argument. This research examined the performance of 8–11-year-olds (N  = 220) on Moshman and Franks's experimental tasks when the children were cued to apply particular comprehension strategies. Findings from 2 experiments indicated that a significant number of children are capable of explicitly recognizing the necessity of logical forms and the indeterminacy of nonlogical forms and that this competence must be distinguished from their tendency to fail to attend to structural relationships between propositions and to monitor the intrusion of extraneous personal knowledge in assessing the validity of an argument. The findings suggest that all of these competencies are important components of the ability to distinguish logical and nonlogical arguments