



Description and Analysis of Pragmatic Presuppositions in Conversations between 3 to 6 Years Old Children

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ABSTRACT

Presupposition is a concept which is already held in the mind of a speaker before in his/her speech as a correct supposition. Presuppositions are relevant to speakers not sentences (Brown&Yule, 29, 2000). In fact, a lingual presupposition is something not clearly expressed by a speaker and thereby is latent, but among possible presuppositions, which one is regarded by the speaker which is corresponded by listener's inference? This is an inference that can be obtained from the linguistic elements of the surface structure. Through it, what is in the person's mind can be comprehended. Oral presuppositions allow us to explore the inner world of the speaker. Which strategies are used by children aged 3 to 6 who are Persian speakers in order to express pre-consumptions? What is the appearance trend of presuppositions in the primary ages among 3-6 age Persian speaker children? What is kind or kinds of frame of presuppositions among children aged 3 to 6 who are Persian speakers? Persian speaker 3 to 4 or 5 to 6 years old children in their lingual interactions don't use narrating and storytelling strategies to express presuppositions. According to the obtained results in this study, 3 years old children are not able to apply narrating. 5 to 6 years old child prevents from storytelling due to factual comprehension and correct distinguish of presupposition, but 4 to 5 age group uses this technique to express their presupposition. The first presupposition grown in Persian speaker child aged 3 to 6 is existential presupposition, then factual presupposition and at last non-factual presupposition and structural and counter factual presupposition are appeared at the end of 6 years old. Application of aforementioned presuppositions in the age between 4 to 5 and 5 to 6 is along with concrete and proactive verbs.

KEYWORDS: Presupposition; existential presupposition; factual presupposition; lexical presupposition; structural presupposition; non-factual presupposition; counters factual presupposition; pragmatics; Imagination; creativity; conceptualization

INTRODUCTION

This paper trends to describe the conception of presupposition and its kinds and also strategies chosen to express presuppositions in the words of 3 to 6 years old children who are Persian speaker and also identify and analyze different kinds of presuppositions. This study in the first step helps children with the process of language learning. Child will be discovering this learning process and how to apply verbs having existential, non-factual and factual presuppositions and linguists will be discovering one of the imperative elements in the way of language learning process. Based on this way, linguists will teach the second language with an appropriate method.

This study is analytical-descriptive and was carried out through recording children sound, data collection and their description as well as investigation as a direct relation in the form of face to face conversation and choosing based on age group. Children aged 3 were separated and 5 and 6 years old children were considered together and 6 years old children were also separated. Almost, number of girls and boys were equal. Data was recorded in the Children's Creativity Center, 5th area of Tehran Municipality. Data record was conducted through interview and children conversation with themselves and their teachers via recorded sound. Then, they were assigned after many times listening. Sometimes, data was recorded while children were playing in the yard or game room or watching cartoon (at informal situation). This study included 156 respondents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rachel Dudley, Nacho Orita, Morgan Moyer, Valentine Hacquard and Jeffrey Lidz (2007) in Maryland University in the paper entitled "Are three year olds really insensitive to Factual presuppositions?" have done some researches. Studies have shown that the child is rarely thinking about the detection of non-factual presupposition and

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this issue lasts at least up to the 4 years old age. Child mostly trends to reject the sentence “John thinks that Marry is at home” in the texture like “Marry is not at home”. Even though, John thinks that Marry is at home. Previous researches are driven from this issue that child doesn’t know the difference between presupposition of “understanding” and “thinking” at least till 4 (6-8). Sometimes, this issue is discussed that child might have the correct comprehension of understanding even till maturity age or even older (9-14). Rachel et al have designed a test allowing the child clearly and transparently compare the sentences without being forced and approve his/her perception. Obtained results indicate that 3 years old children don’t distinguish between “knowing” and “understanding”. A child doesn’t have the ability to perceive difference between verbs. Obtained results indicate that some of pre-elementary children might comprehend the factual presupposition of “understanding”.

Behavior shown by one third of the mature children indicates the appropriate perception of factual presupposition of “understanding”. Marilyn Shatz, Henry M Wellman and Sharon Silber in University of Michigan in the paper entitled “The acquisition of mental verbs: A systematic investigation of the first reference to mental state” argue that the ability to think and having relationship about lingual knowledge, beliefs and their and other goals is the criterion to recognize the human. Still, a little bit has been known about the origin of this ability, because there is no accurate assessment about the child’s ability. Here, we propose the results of using homogenous analysis method from the speaking happened naturally on child and also evaluate child’s ability to make relationship and mental (subjective) thinking capability. The first study done by Shatz et al (2007) is over frequency and performance of verbs on mental references such as thinking and understanding verbs. The results indicate that the first usage of mental verbs is for conversation applications rather than subjective references.

The first attempts of mental references start to emerge in some of children speaking when children are in their late three. While most of studied children are exposed by the necessity of lingual knowledge, they make a reference for their mental (subjective) state. Marly et al come to this conclusion that emerging such references shows that still younger children have awareness shortage of such states. They don’t have an appropriate cognition form the verbs having subjective and objective states. Similarity between aforementioned and current researches is that in both they pay attention to the child comprehension from verbs having actual and non-actual presuppositions. Their difference is in which current research pays attention to how presupposition, creativity power and meaning cognition grow in order to comprehend verbs with actual, non-actual, lexical presupposition, existential and other kinds.

Theoretical Bases

Pragmatics: language pragmatics studies the meaning in such a way that in this case, communication is used by speaker or writer and is interpreted by listener or reader. So, pragmatics is to study speaker’s meaning. This kind of study includes interoperation of people means in the special texture and the effect of texture on what is said. Therefore, pragmatic is to study texture meaning (Agha Gol Zade, 2014, 130, quoted by Yule, 2000).

Presupposition: presupposition is a conception which is considered by speaker before speaking as the appropriate supposition in the mind (Brown and Yule, 29, 2000).

Potential presupposition: to analyze presuppositions of speakers, presupposition is related to the application of the vast number of words, terms and structures, here, linguistic structures are considered as the potential presuppositions reagents which are changed to the actual presuppositions only in the texture where speaker is in. Potential presupposition is a hypothesis which is usually along with using linguistic structure like using verb “repenting” in the sentence “he is repenting from his action” which shows he actually does the mentioned job(Yule, 26,2000).

Actual presupposition: it is a conception based on existence of a person or thing is identified by one noun phrase. Existential presupposition not only exists in possessive structures (your car) (you have a car), but also it is seen in any certain noun phrase. Applying each of phrases in the following example, it is assumed that such elements are formally considered by speaker (Yule, 27, 2000).

Lexical presuppositions: It is a conception based on using a word by the speaker which other words are inferred from this. Generally, in lexical presuppositions, application of one form along with its expressed meaning is arbitrarily received by presupposition of another conception which is not expressed. Each time you say that a person can undertake a duty; expressed conception indicates that person has been successful in some ways. When you say somebody can’t undertake a duty, expressed conception indicates that person has been successful in mentioned duty (Yule, 27, 2000).

Structural presuppositions: It is a conception in the structure so that a structure gives you information that hasn’t been expressed before. In such cases, some of structures in one sentence show the especial presuppositions arbitrarily and with discipline. It is possible to say that speakers can use such structures to apply as information in the presupposition form (which they seem to be correct) they also are accepted as the correct presuppositions by the listener. As an example, question structures of who are such kinds (and Yule, 28, 2000).

Non-actual presuppositions: It is a conception based on incorrectness of especial information as the contents against true content. It means that what is proposed as the presupposition is not only incorrect, but also it is inconsistent with what is considered as the correct one or they are in paradox with reality. One conditional structure is mainly called a condition inconsistent with reality and proposes this presupposition information in the phrase (if phrase) is not correct while speaking (Yule, 28, 2000).

Creativity: Creativity is a conception whose definitions have been changed over time. Torens (2000) has considered creativity as troubleshooting. In his opinion, creative thinking briefly is a process to feel problems or current shortage of information, hypothesizing about solving problems and resolving shortcomings, evaluating and testing hypotheses, reviewing and observing them and eventually transferring conclusions to others (Torens, 2000).

Imagination: Imagination is an observer to all of perceptions of the human, because in opinion of many epistemologists, our cognition is based on personal bases and is a kind of breaking out in cosmos (Jean-Paul Sartre in his famous work called Phenomenology).

Conceptualization: Conceptualization was emerged in the late 20th century. Evans and Melanie Green (2007; 157) counted 4 principles as the general principles of conceptualization:

Conceptual, visual structure: conceptions created in the human's mind are formed from interaction between human and the environment. Therefore, in this process, a conception which leads to the meaning production has an undeniable role. Semantic roles are a conceptual structure that refers language to the conceptions in the speaker's mind not objects in the outer world. In this thinking method, semantic structure is equal to conceptual one. As a result, conventional are along and expressed with lingual conceptions, but not absolutely and entirely.

Representation of meaning is an encyclopedia. In the previous theories, words were considered as the clear semantic packages. It means the thing we have in our culture but in cognitive approach, all of knowledge treasures which one word can have are paid attention such as explicit, implicit, textural, figurative and metaphorical.

Making meanings means conceptualization. This is not the language which codifying the meaning, but it is the conception, conceptualization is a dynamic process in which lingual units are in the service of conceptual operation and background knowledge.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Gathering

Studied variables include existential presupposition, Factual presupposition, lexical presupposition, structural presupposition, non-factual presupposition, counters factual presupposition, proactive verbs as well as concrete verbs. Data collection is in analytical-descriptive form. It has been done creating a face to face dialogue with the child and recording his sound and also studying different references such as books, theses about different kinds of presuppositions, imagination and creativity power. This study included 156 respondents.

- 52 persons of respondents were 3 years old
- 68 persons of respondents were 4-5 years old
- 38 persons of respondents were 5-6 years old

This number of people was chosen due to the registration capacity of creativity center in these age groups. Data was recorded. Programs like cartoon, storytelling or telling a sentence by the teacher and following by the child and creating a dialogue situation between child and his/her teacher were used.

Situation: all of these conversations were carried out between teacher and 3 to 6 year old child in the Children's Creativity Center, 5th area of Tehran Municipality. Also it has been done via face to face conversation (T: teacher, C: child). To limit the size of the current paper, among all of 156 respondents, only one sample of each data of each age group (3, 4, 6 years old children) were introduced and analyzed. Results from analysis of total data from respondents have been shown in the table.

Research's Questions

- Which strategies are used by Persian speaking 3 to 6 year old children in order to express presuppositions?
- What is the appearance trend of presuppositions in the language of 3 to 6 year old Persian speaker children?
- What is the kind or kinds of forms among presuppositions in in the language of 3 to 6 year old Persian speaker children?

Research Hypotheses

- 1) 3 to 6 year Old Persian speaker children use narrating and storytelling in their lingual interactions to express presupposition.

- 2) Lexical, existential and factual presuppositions are grown at the early ages between 3 to 6 and structural and counter factual presuppositions are grown at the late 6.
- 3) Lexical, existential and factual presuppositions are forms in the language of 3 to 6 year old Persian speaker children which are along with concrete ad proactive verbs.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data from 6 Year Old children

T: what do you know?

C: I know I have a family.

T: what else?

C: I know there is anything in the world like horse, cow, wild horse, wild cow, lamb, tree and flower.

T: what are you thinking about?

C: he ponders for a moment.

T: for example, I think I am going to fly.

C: but I don't know I want to fly with balloon.

T: do you think one day you can do this?

C: yes, I can.

T: what did you understand?

C: I understand that I have to be intelligent

The first hypothesis: 5 to 6 year old child answers his teacher's questions realistically. According to this matter, the first hypothesis in this sample is rejected.

The second hypothesis: the child completely disintegrates factual presuppositions conceptions of knowing and understanding from non-factual presuppositions of thinking. He uses presuppositions of "horse", "lamb", "tree" and "flower". Teacher engaged his mind with this sentence "I think I am going to fly" and the child answers realistically "but I don't know I want to fly with balloon". He clearly disintegrates factual presuppositions conceptions of understanding from non-factual presuppositions of thinking and refuses using other presuppositions. According to these evidences, the second hypothesis is approved.

The third hypothesis: the child uses 3 non-proactive and concrete verbs of "existing", "being intelligent" and "being" against only one proactive verb of "flying". According to these evidences, the third hypothesis in this sample is rejected.

Data from 4 Years Old Children

C: I know if somebody robs your car, you have to call police not following robs, because maybe they are killer, they kill you.

T: what is in your mind?

C: I imagine I am doing military service now.

T: you are relay doing military service or you are thinking?

C: I just imagine.

T: what happened in the military service?

C: all of us are passing away while doing military service.

T: why? God forbid

C: because drug dealers attack and kill all of us.

T: if drug dealers attack, will all of you be killed?

C: yes, because they are a lot.

T: so what is this issue, I mean military service?

C: military service, a war.

T: you mean anyone who is going to military service is going to fight.

C: yes.

T: can you explain?

C: adults have to go to the military service.

T: what is weird to you?

C: military service is weird to me, firefighting is weird to me.

T: why?

C: because I always want to play war games.

T: what are you repenting for?

C: I want to come with you, but I don't come and I repent.

T: what makes you happy?

C: somebody tells me it is a time for military service.

T: well, but you told me anyone who goes to military service is killed.

C: I see, but if you didn't take care, you would be killed.

T: what do you like?

C: I like to watch cat and mouse and war games and nothing.

The first hypothesis: the child uses exciting and action fantasies to express factual presuppositions of understanding and non-factual presuppositions of thinking and existential presuppositions of military service and firefighting.

The second hypothesis: expressing factual presuppositions of understanding this matter that "people have car" and existential presuppositions that there is a person called robber in the outer world who can rob them and a person called police who is an existential presupposition and is in the outer world and also it is in the mind of fully grown up 4 years old child which is made using fantasy and creativity power in his mind and also non-factual presupposition that he thinks there is place called military service in which in each moment drug dealers attack which are originated from his existential presupposition and subsequently there is something called death which vanishes human and leads him/her to nonentity, are driven from this issue that existential and factual presuppositions are grown faster than other presuppositions in his mind and even he considers the non-factual presuppositions as the factual one. The child even knows the non-factual verbs as the factual one due to experiences and action games around the world. To comprehend in which age exactly he disintegrates these 2 presuppositions from each other, needs more research. To express all of these presuppositions, he used his fantasy power and also he started narrating and storytelling. "I imagine I am doing military service now", "all of us are passing away", "drug dealers attack", "all fight in the military service", "all are killed". According to these evidences, the first hypothesis is approved in this paper and based on aforementioned descriptions, the second hypothesis is proved as well.

The third hypothesis: "going", "attacking", "dying", "robbing", "killing", "taking", "fighting" are proactive verbs which are applied by the child against 3 non-proactive verbs of "being" and "like" and "being happy". According to these evidences, the third hypothesis in this sample is proved.

Data from 3 Year Old Children

T: what do you know?

C: I know the ground has gravity, clouds are in the sky, I have papa and mama. I know soccer on the grown and lawn.

T: what do you think?

C: I have a cartoon called Robin Hood.

T: do you have it really?

C: yes.

T: what do you repent for?

T: once my father wanted to go to the swimming pool. I told him that I wouldn't come. Then I repented.

T: you repent you didn't go?

C: yes.

T: what is weird to you? For example, seeing dinosaur here is weird to me!

C: a monster comes to our house.

T: is there any monster in the world?

C: yes, I see it in the dream.

T: what dream did you see? Have you ever seen its dream before?

C: yes, dinosaur.

T: what did it do?

C: I threw it out with the stone.

The first hypothesis: the child uses fiction and fantasy to express non-factual presuppositions of seeing dream and factual presuppositions of being weird. So the first hypothesis is proved.

The second hypothesis: the child perceives factual presuppositions of repenting "once my father wanted to go to the swimming pool. I told him that I wouldn't come. Then I repented". This case is the only sample over the research which has reached this word in his 3. Nevertheless, he hasn't disintegrated non-factual and factual presupposition from each other and has considered all as the real one. So the second hypothesis was proved.

The third hypothesis: the child uses proactive verbs of "coming", "going" "seeing" against non-proactive verbs of "having". So, the third hypothesis was proved.

Statistical Analysis of the Total Data Related to the 156 Respondents

Table 1: Hypotheses rejection or prove related to 6 years old children group

Hypothesis	Rejected	proved	Total number of sample	Rejected	proved	Results
The first hypothesis	20	18	38	47%	53%	Rejected
The second hypothesis	2	36	38	95%	5%	Proved
The third hypothesis	13	25	38	66%	34%	Proved

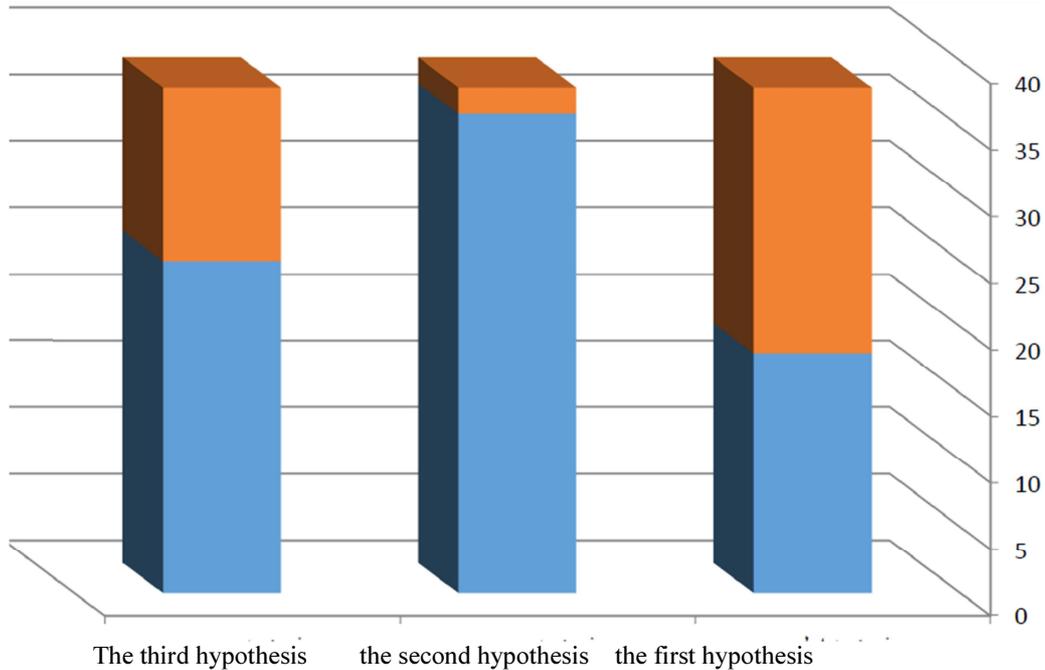


Figure 1: Hypotheses rejection or prove related to 6 years old children group

According to the above table, out of 38 persons of 6 years old respondents, about the first 20 persons, the first hypothesis was rejected and for the 18 persons, it was proved. The second hypothesis with the same respondents was rejected only about two persons and was accepted about 36 persons. The third hypothesis with the same respondents was rejected about 13 persons and was accepted about 25 persons. As a result, as it is seen in the chart, the first hypothesis is rejected in 6 years old children and the second and the third hypotheses were proved.

Table 2: Hypotheses rejection or prove related to 4 to 5 years old children group

Hypothesis	Rejected	proved	Total number of sample	Rejected	proved	Results
The first hypothesis	13	55	68	81%	19%	Proved
The second hypothesis	7	61	68	90%	10%	Proved
The third hypothesis	18	50	68	74%	26%	Proved

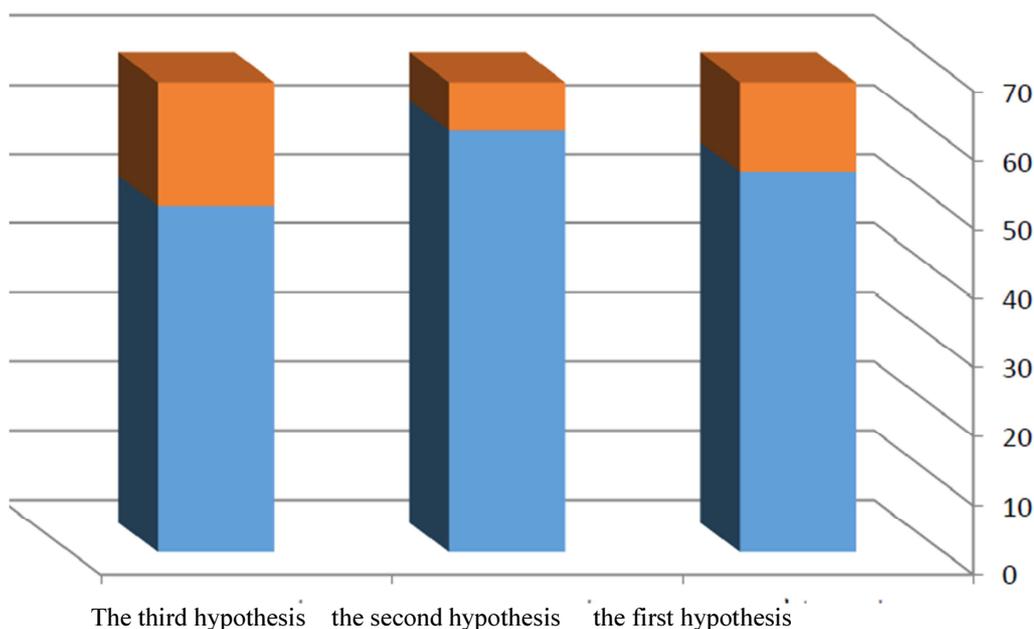


Figure 2: Hypotheses rejection or prove related to 4 to 5 years old children group

According to the above table, out of 68 persons of 4 to 5 years old respondents, about the 13 respondents, the first hypothesis was rejected and for the 55 persons, it was proved. The second hypothesis with the same respondents was rejected only about 7 persons and was accepted about 61 persons. The third hypothesis was rejected about 18 persons and was accepted about 50 respondents. According to the above chart, all three hypotheses were accepted in this age group.

Table 3: Hypotheses rejection or prove related to 3 to 4 years old children group

Hypothesis	Rejected	proved	Total number of sample	Rejected	proved	Results
The first hypothesis	34	16	50	32%	68%	Rejected
The second hypothesis	15	35	50	70%	30%	Proved
The third hypothesis	28	22	50	44%	56%	Rejected

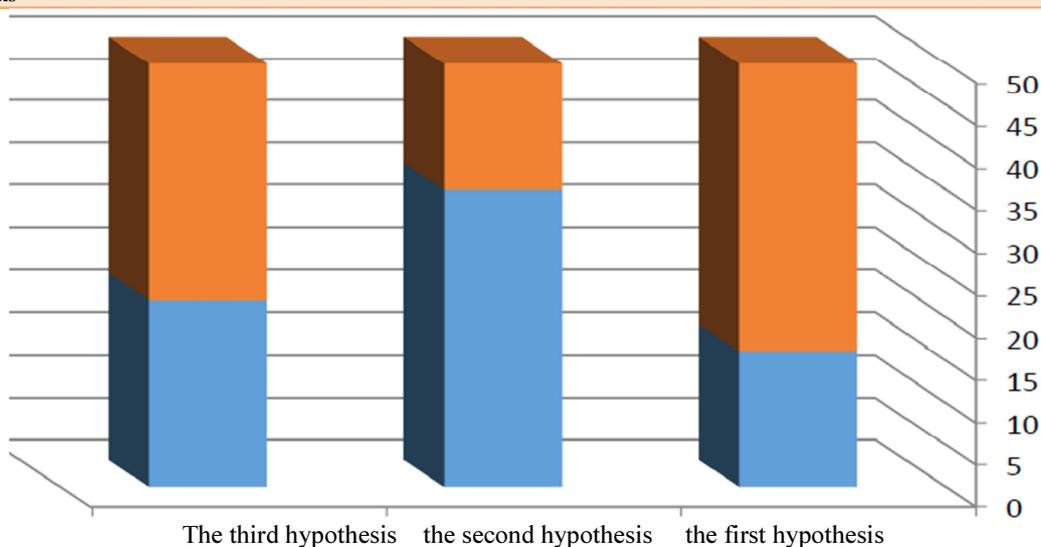


Figure 2: Hypotheses rejection or prove related to 3 to 4 years old children group

According to the aforementioned table and chart, out of 50 persons of 3 to 4 years old respondents, about the 34 respondents, the first hypothesis was rejected and for the 16 persons, it was proved. The second hypothesis was rejected about 15 persons and was accepted about 35 persons. The third hypothesis was rejected about 25 respondents and was accepted about 22 respondents. According to the obtained results which is seen in the chart, the first and the third hypotheses about 3 to 4 years old children were rejected and the second hypothesis in this sample of age group was accepted.

Table 4: Details of sample group

Age group	Number
3 to 4	50
4 to 5	68
5 to 6	38
Total number of sample	156

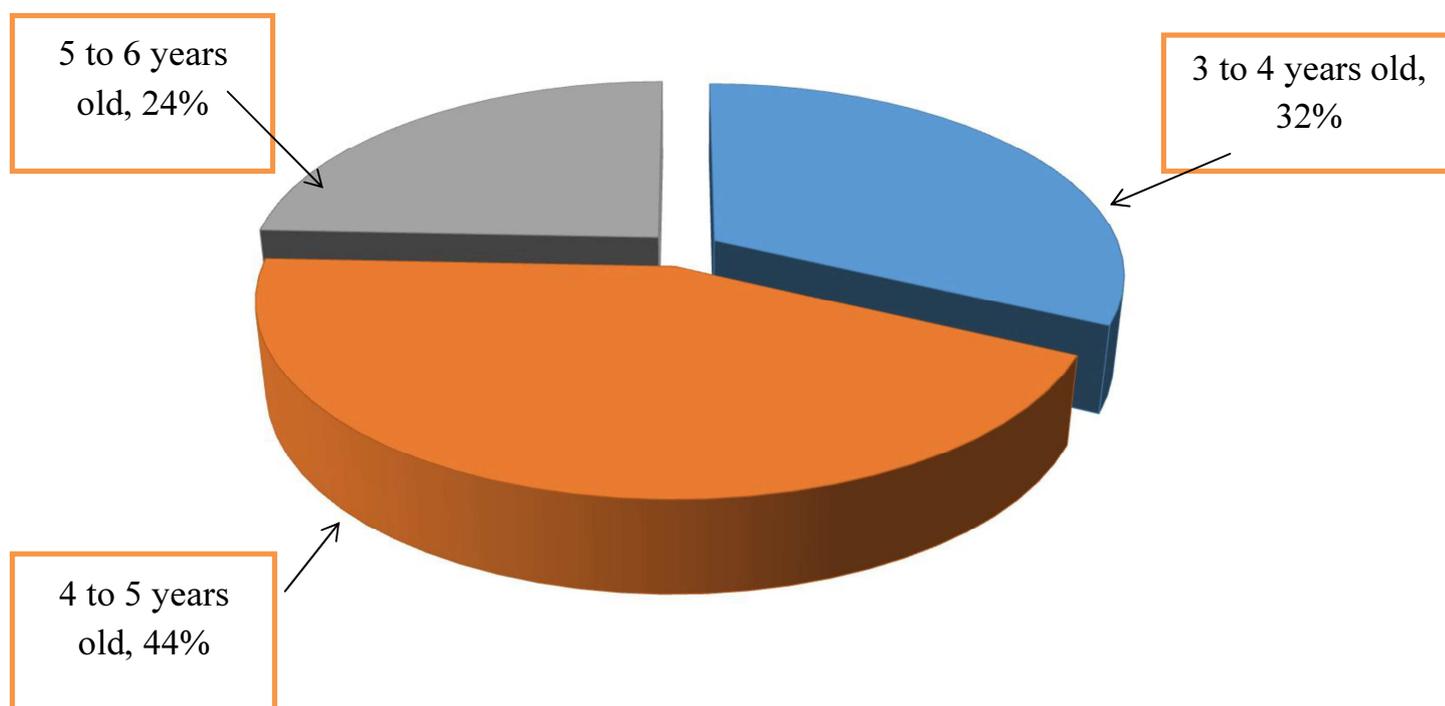


Figure 4: Details of sample group

As it is seen in the above frequency table, statistical population of the research includes 44% 4 to 5 years old respondents equals to 68 persons, 24% 6 years old respondents equals to 38 persons and 32% 3 to 4 years old respondents equals to 50 persons.

CONCLUSION

6 year old children were investigating separately and one by one. Sometimes, all of them were involved in discussion and expressed their ideas. 4 to 5 years old children also were questioned in this way. Sometimes, required analyses were done by researchers while playing, watching cartoon and involvement in creativity discussions. In the context of 3 years old children who hardly accepted necessary cooperation and a little bit data were collected. The writer has made all of his attempts to collect required and enough data through playing, painting, face to face interview with childish language and direct question and answer, involvement in the creative discussions. Due to this issue, number of 3 years old children compared with 4 to 5 and 6 years old children is less in the research. It is happened due to lack of cooperation by most of them or environmental marginal reasons or friends effects and not perceiving sentences. Despite of this issue, over the research, we have tried to provide environment, appropriate condition, required concentration, kind of dialogues, transferring calmness to the child and attracting his/her trust

with intimate and tender relation in order to help children to comprehend questions correctly and give the logic answers. The first presupposition grown up in the child is existential presupposition, then factual presupposition and after that non-factual presupposition. The first hypothesis about 3 to 4 years old children is rejected.

According to the chart of 3 to 4 years old children, 325 are proved and 685 are rejected. The second hypothesis about this age group as it is observed in the current table and chart is proved and the third hypothesis is also rejected. The child in this age is not able to use and comprehend verbs. This test has been done by 50 persons which 3 samples of their best samples have been analyzed and described in the data analysis part. The first hypothesis about 4 to 5 years old children was accepted. According to the statistical analysis and the current chart, it is completely illustrated that the second and third hypotheses also in this age group are accepted. As it is seen, the first hypothesis about 6 year's old children was rejected and the second and third hypotheses were proved.

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