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Rebecca G. Schär

Università della Svizzera Italiana

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Reply to Commentary on “Uses of Arguments from Definition in Children’s Argumentation”

REBECCA G. SCHÄR

*Institute of Argumentation, Linguistics and Semiotics
Università della Svizzera Italiana
Via G. Buffi 13, CH-6904 Lugano
Switzerland
rebecca.schaer@usi.ch*

I would like to thank Dr. Fasko for his useful comments on my paper. Most of all, I would like to give a reply to the comment on the relevance of my paper to teaching:

“This is an informative and interesting paper, however, **its relevance to teaching was disappointing to me**, especially because the author reported a case that used a ‘revised-Piagetian task’, (of conservation of liquids and number), in a school setting where children ‘spontaneously start discussions while they are solving a task given to them by an adult.’” (Fasko 2016, p. 1, emphasis added)

I agree with the commentator that I did not clarify on how the outcomes of this research could be used in teaching. The present paper’s relevance to teaching is therefore limited. This is due to the fact, that in the research project that we are carrying out, we would like to take a step back and first consider the inferential configuration of children’s arguments and try to understand the reasoning of small children. In many cases, the children’s argumentative capacities in school are viewed negatively. We have the working hypothesis that the children’s argumentative capacities are actually bigger than what is often believed and that it is worth looking at them in order to discover how they could be fostered in a school setting. Before, however, planning how to foster argumentation in education and proposing instruments that would help to do so, we first would like to understand how and when the children argue. Possible consequences for teaching would follow. We are not yet at the point of being able to say something about this.

Furthermore, I would like to add that I agree with the Commentator’s suggestions for future research, when he states that “future research could focus on the applicability of this line of inquiry to teaching” (Fasko 2016, p. 2). In line with my answer to the comment on the relevance of the paper to teaching, I would like to point out that the original idea of this research project is to leave the educational domain and focus on the process of argumentation (and not the product) and to understand the implicit components of these discussions. The idea is that we will be able to use the implicit components for the evaluation of the argumentation; however, we are not yet at a point to do so.