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COMPREHENSION OF IRONIC UTTERANCES BY BILINGUAL CHILDREN

This study investigates verbal irony comprehension by 6-year old bilingual children speaking Polish and English and living in the USA. Researchers have predominantly focused on monolingual populations when examining non-literal language in young children. This is the first exploratory study of how irony is comprehended by children growing up in a bilingual setting. Results suggest that 6-year olds from this population score high in decoding the intended meaning behind an ironic utterance and that there is a relation between this ability and the development of their theory of mind (ToM). Interestingly, the data suggests that in the tested sample, no difference could be observed between comprehension of sarcastic irony (i.e., irony containing the element of blame directed towards the addressee) and non-sarcastic irony (irony without criticism towards the interlocutor). The results may be a basis for assuming that irony comprehension may be different in bilingual, compared to monolingual, samples.

Key words: irony comprehension, bilingualism, non-literal language

Introduction

It is generally believed that more than half of the world's population is bilingual (Grosjean, 2010). However, even though bilinguals make up a significant portion of the society (Bialystok, Craik, & Luk, 2012), a lot of research focuses solely on people who use only one language on an everyday basis. *Monolingual, typically developing* is considered a norm in language acquisition studies. Although there is an emerging body of research looking into lexical skills,

morphosyntax, and executive functions of children who grow up in a multilingual setting, there is a gap in knowledge about their acquisition of figurative language, which forms a part of everyday communication in various cultural and linguistic contexts (Filippova, 2014). One of the types or instances of figurative language use is verbal irony.

Irony is a common conversational device (Booth, 1974), which is used frequently across communities. According to Dews and Winner (1999), four instances of ironic utterances occur in contemporary popular TV shows every half an hour. Gibbs (2000) claims that as much as 8% of all conversation turns among friends are ironic.

Irony makes use of the discrepancy between the listener's expectations and the actual state of the world. The prototypical form of irony is a counterfactual critical comment (i.e., sarcasm), where a statement which is positive on the surface conveys a negative meaning, such as "Great job!" uttered in order to criticize somebody for their mistake or clumsiness (Filippova, 2014; Schwoebel, Dews, Winner, & Srinivas, 2000). This type of ironic remark is the one that is the most commonly used among other instances of verbal irony (Dews et al., 1996), and also earliest acquired and first understood by children (Filippova & Astington, 2008; Harris & Pexman, 2003; Pexman, & Glenwright, 2007). However, the term "irony" is much broader: It includes humoristic comments, understatements, circumlocutions, and rhetorical questions, to name a few (Gibbs, 1986; Utsumi, 2004). In the literature, there are many competing definitions trying to describe what irony actually is (Attardo, 2000; Clark & Gerrig, 1984; Kreuz & Glucksberg, 1989; Kumon-Nakamura, Glucksberg, & Brown, 1995; Wilson & Sperber, 1992). Barbe (1995) decides not to define irony, but instead to characterize or describe it. According to her, in an ironic statement, the surface meaning is different than the real, intended meaning. The relation between the two meanings does not necessarily need to be an opposition, such as saying "Great job!" or "That was clever!" in order to criticize somebody for making a mistake and hence implying a message of "You did it wrong!", but may be much more subtle.

Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989, p. 374) defined verbal irony as a statement that presents something that is not literally true and at the same time expresses an attitude. This definition overlaps to some extent with the description provided by Barbe (1995), although the latter seems to be a more precise one, by indicating the difference of the two meanings and not necessarily referring to something that is not literally true, as the former does. For instance, in a situation where a person went on a blind date and was asked later how the date went, answers with "He had nice shoes" (an example used by Barbe, 1995), there is no reason to question the factual state of the reply. However, it is the choice of information that makes the statement ironic. Omitting information that is expected and instead saying something else adds a supplementary meaning and makes it possible to infer that

there was something wrong with the date if the only given information refers to the fact that the shoes were nice, which might actually be true.

An important part of the description of irony that Barbe (1995), unlike Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989), does not include is adding some attitudes – that is, extra information conveyed with the meaning. The component of attitude is also adopted by Milanowicz (2013), who claims that irony is used not only to describe the circumstances of events but also to express the attitude and feelings of interlocutors.

The type of the irony used in the study material is a prototypical irony, where the two meanings – the surface and the intended one – are in opposition to one another. This will be explained in more detail in the Method section.

Development of Irony Comprehension in Young Children

Comprehension of verbal irony is a complex cognitive process (Ackerman, 1983; Filippova & Astington, 2008; Recchia, Howe, Ross, & Alexander 2010; Winner & Leekam, 1991). In studies on children's comprehension of irony, it has been shown that the process occurs late in development (Pexman & Glenwright, 2007). However, there is no agreement as to when the ability develops and what age can be considered as the youngest at which ironic statements may be decoded correctly. According to the research conducted by Dews et al. (1996), 5-year-olds lack the ability to understand ironic assertions, contrary to the group of 6-year-olds. This finding was at that time coherent with previous studies of that topic, none of which have indicated irony comprehension below the age of six (Ackerman, 1982; Andrews, Rosenblatt, Malkus, Gardner, & Winner, 1986; Demorest, Meyer, Phelps, Gardner, & Winner, 1983; Demorest, Silberstein, Gardner, & Winner, 1984; Winner et al., 1987). An investigation held by Filippova and Astington (2010) has showed a similar tendency. In their study, 5-year-olds fell behind children aged seven and nine in reasoning about the social-cognitive aspects of irony (i.e., the speaker's meaning, belief, intention, and motivation). Milanowicz and Bokus (2011) found that it is between the age of five and six when children develop the comprehension of the intended meaning of an ironic speaker.

But some more recent research (Banasik, 2013; Banasik & Bokus, 2012; Recchia et al., 2010) showed that children as young as 4 may be able to comprehend ironic statements. It is unclear whether the variability in research results stems from the differences in methodologies, various samples of children that do not share the same cultural and linguistic backgrounds, or the historic time and the environment type that influences communicative styles (such as more exposure to visual media and different narratives changing over the decades). The problem needs to be addressed by more research using new methods that take into account children's linguistic abilities, as well as by replicating classic studies from the field. However, there seems to be a significant gap in research on how figurative language is understood by bilingual children. This population is special and worthy

of attention not only due to the fact that increasingly more people in the world are bilingual but also because the development of the *theory of mind* (ToM) among bilinguals is usually more advanced than in a similar population speaking just one language (Bialystok, 2001; Goetz, 2003). ToM has been shown to be related to comprehension of ironic utterances, which is described in the following section.

When it comes to comprehension of various irony types, some studies led to the conclusions that the ability to comprehend ironic criticism is acquired long before the comprehension of ironic compliments (Harris & Pexman, 2003; Pexman & Glenwright, 2007), and this seems understandable due to the higher frequency of ironic criticisms in everyday discourse (Gibbs, 2000). Even adults consider the interpretation of ironic compliments to be more difficult than ironic criticisms (Pexman & Zvaigzne, 2004).

The reason why understanding irony is difficult for children may be related to the specificity of interaction as well as to the context-dependence (Kreuz & Glucksberg, 1989). One needs to understand the presence of the duality of meaning in the utterance, that is, that there is both a surface meaning and an intended one, which is hidden (Barbe 1995; Kreuz & Glucksberg, 1989). Also, it is important to know that the knowledge that the speaker possesses is shared by the addressee. In other words, being able to relate to the other person's thoughts, intentions, and emotions, which is often labeled with the umbrella term of ToM, is a crucial part of irony comprehension (Banasik, 2013; Huang, Oi, & Taguchi, 2015). To sum up, to understand irony is to grasp the other person's intent, as well as the two conflicting meanings, and to be able to acknowledge the real one.

Irony Comprehension and Theory of Mind

Theory of Mind is defined as the cognitive ability to recognize and attribute mental states to both oneself and other people as well as to understand that other people may have thoughts, beliefs, and emotions different than oneself (Astington, 1993; Flavell & Miller, 1985).

A significant body of research claims that children seem to have difficulties in understanding complex mental states before the age of four (Wellman, Cross, & Watson, 2001), even though young infants are sensitive to certain mental contents such as goal-directedness and intentionality (Gergely, Nádasdy, Csibra, & Bíró, 1995). One of the standard tasks measuring this ability is the false belief task, which is based on a situation where one character's understanding of the situation contrasts with the subject's knowledge. For instance, one protagonist of a story presented to a child hides an object in location A. While the character is absent, a second protagonist moves the object from location A to location B. The tested child is then asked where the first protagonist will look for the object.

Verbal irony, just as the false belief task, requires from the addressee the ability to hold two conflicting representations and to choose between them. In ironic statements, two meanings are communicated: one that is hidden- the

intended, real meaning – and one that is the surface meaning that one needs to discard. Sharing this aspect of discrepancy may explain the correlation between irony comprehension and ToM obtained in a number of studies (Banasik, 2013; Filippova & Astington, 2008; Happé, 1993; Sullivan, Winner, & Hopfield, 1995). Children younger than five years old and autistic people, who have been shown to demonstrate low scores in ToM, do not deal well with understanding irony (Dews et al., 1996; Happé, 1993; Harris & Pexman, 2003; McDonald, 2000). Additionally, some brain imaging research data suggests that the same brain regions that are responsible for mentalizing are also involved in decoding ironic utterances (Shibata et al., 2010; Uchiyama et al., 2006; Wakusawa et al., 2007).

Whereas the data suggests that the more advanced the ability to mentalize in monolingual children, the better their skill to comprehend ironic utterances, there has been no research to see if a similar pattern can be observed in bilingual children, who, as will be explained in the next section, are generally believed to obtain higher scores in ToM tasks than their monolingual peers.

Theory of Mind and Bilingualism

There is evidence showing that bilingualism facilitates high performance in standard ToM tasks (Goetz, 2003; Kovács, 2009), possibly because, in a bilingual setting, one needs to deal with conflicting representations and ambiguous input (Kovács, 2009). Bilinguals need to recognize the fact that they would use different *code* (selection of words in particular language) depending on the person they are speaking with and the addressee's familiarity with one or another language (Goetz, 2003). They become aware that knowledge of their interlocutor differs from their own, and this awareness may be helpful while resolving ToM tasks. Goetz (2003) examined three groups of 3-, and 4- year-olds: Chinese monolinguals, English monolinguals, and bilinguals speaking Chinese and English. For most of the tasks (including appearance-reality task, perspective-taking task, false-belief unexpected contents task), the bilinguals performed better than their monolingual peers. Goetz explains these results with the constant requirement of adapting messages to linguistically different addressees that bilingual children face every day. Kovács argues that highly developed ToM in bilinguals may be related to their inhibitory skills and representational competencies (the awareness of an alternative representation of a certain object). Taking into account the relation between irony comprehension and ToM described in the previous section, it might be hypothesized that bilingual children would also do better in figurative language recognition and grasping the intended meaning of an ironic utterance.

Research Questions & Hypotheses

The aim of the presented study was to explore the way ironic utterances are comprehended by children who grow up in a bilingual setting. We were

interested in how accurate they are in decoding the actual meaning of an ironic comment and whether their score is correlated with their ability to recognize thoughts, intentions, and emotions of other people. Also, we tried to examine if some of the expressions were more difficult than others and whether the factor of including the blame element, that is, personal criticism towards the addressee of the speaker, was of importance to the accuracy – that is, if either sarcastic or non-sarcastic comments were more difficult to children. Based on existing data from monolingual children (Winner et al, 1987), we hypothesized that sarcastic comments (i.e., ones including the blame element) would be more difficult to children than non-sarcastic ones (comments not directing the blame towards the addressee).

The specific research questions were as follows:

1. What is the accuracy rate of irony comprehension in 6-year-old bilingual children speaking Polish and English?
2. Is there a relation between results in the Irony Comprehension Task (ICT) and the ToM Task (ToMT)?
3. Are there differences in accuracy between blame and non-blame irony?

Methodology

Children who took part in the study were recruited in one of the Polish Saturday schools in the area of Boston. Parents who agreed for their children to be tested were asked to provide information about the languages spoken at home and the perceived level of proficiency in each of the languages. If both the parent and the teacher described the child's fluency as at least communicative in both English and Polish, the child was included in the study. The language of the testing was Polish. Before the testing, the experimenter spent about four hours in the classroom engaging in activities with children in order to reduce the effect of shyness and intimidation. Additionally, this time was used to make observations about the children's linguistic and social behavior. Also, the Cross-linguistic Vocabulary Task (Haman, Łuniewska, Pomiechowska, 2015) was included in the tasks to control for vocabulary knowledge in Polish. The results were not included in the analysis, but the data was used to make the decisions about excluding a result from the study due to a low vocabulary score, which may result in obstacles for the child in comprehending the tasks and difficulties in responding to the question. This was the case for three children. All of the children were attending American schools, where the language of instruction was English.

In the sample, 31 bilingual children were presented with several tasks, including the ICT, and then asked to answer a series of questions. The questions checked the children's understanding of the intended utterance meaning (non-literal vs. literal). In the final analysis, data of 28 children ($M_{age} = 71.86$ months, $SD = 5.4$; 13 girls and 15 boys) were included.

For the purpose of the analysis, we focused on two types of ironic comments: those that refer directly to the addressee and can be understood as criticism because they include an element of blame and the ones that reference a general situation but are not a direct comment on the addressee's behavior or feature, and thus are more neutral. Another task that was used was the Reflection on Thinking Test (TRM; Białecka-Pikul, 2012). The tasks are described in detail in the following section.

Materials

For the purpose of this study, we used the ICT (Banasik & Bokus, 2012), which is a story comprehension task consisting of 12 stories. Six of the stories include an utterance which is counterfactual and interpreted as ironic by adult speakers of Polish. Six of the stories involve the character saying something that is interpreted as a literal comment to the depicted situation. The stories were controlled for length (number of words in each story), morphosyntactic complexity (simple or compound sentences were used, but not complex ones), difficulty of words (words already acquired), and dyads of characters in the story who say the ironic utterance (child to child vs. adult to child). The pictures were presented on a large screen connected to a computer, together with a pre-recorded audio material where ironic utterances were read with a marked prosody. Children were then asked to answer a series of questions. The accuracy score was measured by an answer to a question in which the child had to choose one of two options where the meaning of the utterance was represented. For instance, when the child heard the story where one of the characters said "We are so lucky today!" in response to everything going wrong (the characters missed the bus, it started raining), the child heard the question: "When mommy said 'We are so lucky today!', did she mean that...", followed by the next screen with two pictures and audio of "Everything went well and they are lucky today (first picture) or everything went wrong and they are not lucky today (second picture)?" Children replied by pressing the touch screen where a picture representing the right answer was displayed next to a picture representing the incorrect answer that is the literal meaning in the case of ironic comments. The transcripts of the English version of the ICT are presented in the Appendix. For the version in Polish, see Banasik (2013). Ironic utterances included in the task could be classified into two categories. Although all of them were a type of the simplest, most commonly used, and earliest understood irony, that is, irony where the two layers of meaning are based on the relation of opposition to one another, half of the utterances were referencing the addressee directly by commenting on their behavior or an attribute, such as "You are so clean!" when the protagonist fell down and landed in a muddy puddle, and the other half presented a statement that was a comment on the situation or the outside world rather than the addressee themselves, for example, "We are so lucky today" uttered when everything goes wrong.

To check for children's development of ToM, we used the TRM (Bialecka-Pikul, 2012). The TRM, which is an original task constructed on the basis of an exhaustive literature review (Bialecka-Pikul, 2012), uses a set of stories constructed in such a way that they include various aspects of ToM, that is, visual perspective understanding, emotion and intention understanding, pretense and imagination, understanding states of knowledge and degrees of knowledge certainty, remembering and forgetting, recognition of appearance versus reality, understanding of verbal ambiguity, and understanding of deception. The task enables an analysis which is twofold: A basic, quantitative one, including the accuracy of the children's responses to the questions about the character's behaviors, and a qualitative one that provides children's interpretations of the character's actions through their answers to the open-ended question of "Why?"

Procedure

The current study is a part of a larger project where both monolingual and bilingual children are tested with a set of tasks. Children were tested with the ICT (Banasik & Bokus, 2012) and the TRM (Bialecka-Pikul, 2012).

The study was conducted on the school premises. Children were tested individually. The experimenter first tried to get to know the child and then acquainted him or her with the procedure and the equipment used (the computer, the touch screen, and the sound recording device). After that, the test proceeded. The stories in the ICT were prerecorded and displayed to the children during the session together with the picture stimuli on a large (21.5 in.) touch screen. After doing a trial test, the children responded to the questions by touching the screen and answering the questions aloud, which was recorded by the sound recording device. The stories in the TRM were displayed on the computer screen and read to the child by the experimenter. The order of tasks was counterbalanced.

Results

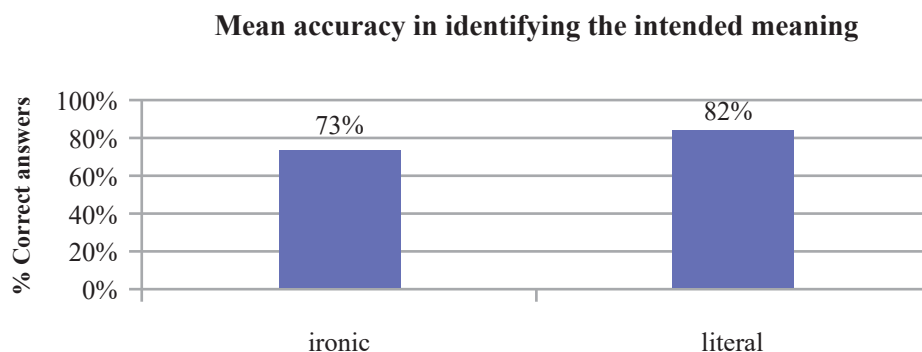
The results indicate that the children scored relatively high on the ICT. The mean results for ironic and literal statements are presented in Figure 1 below.

On average, children recognized the correct meaning behind the ironic utterance in 73% of all ironic stories and understood that the character meant to convey the literal meaning in 82% of the stories with a non-figurative comment. This indicates results high above chance.

A significant correlation was found between accuracy in the ICT and results in the ToM Task ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.000$), even though the variance in the TRM in the tested sample was quite small. While the possible score has the range of 0 to 12, the obtained results varied from 5 to 9 ($M = 6.96$, $SD = 1.2$).

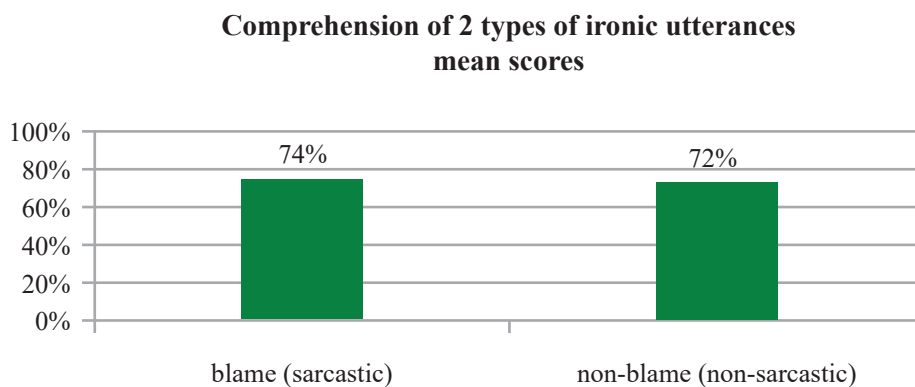
A *t*-test for dependent samples was run in order to compare the mean results for answers in case of blame irony (stories with sarcastic comment)

Figure 1. Mean Accuracy in Identifying the Intended Meaning



and non-blame irony (stories with a non-sarcastic ironic comment). The results are presented in Figure 2. No significant difference was found. The mean accuracy for sarcastic (blame) irony was slightly higher ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 0.96$) than for non-sarcastic (non-blame) irony ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 0.94$) but it was far below the level of statistical significance. This is an interesting result, contradictory to what has been found with studies in monolingual children (Andrews et al., 1986; Happé, 1993; Banasik & Bokus, 2016.)

Figure 2. Comprehension of Two Types of Ironic Utterances – Mean Scores



Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate how verbal irony is comprehended by bilingual children. In particular, we were interested in accuracy rates in tasks measuring the comprehension of ironic comments, their relation to the level of ToM development, and the difference in sarcastic versus non-sarcastic irony. To the authors' best knowledge, there has been no research so far on the topic addressing the problem of early understanding of ironic utterances in non-monolingual settings. We measured accuracy in the ICT and the TRM. The results suggest that bilingual 6-year-olds can very well recognize the real meaning behind ironic utterances. The mean score for comprehending ironic statements was 73%. This result is consistent with some newer studies on irony comprehension by children which show that children even younger than six years are effective in recognizing the ironist's intention (Banasik, 2013; Banasik & Bokus, 2012; Milanowicz & Bokus, 2011; Recchia et al., 2010;). Also, we hypothesized that bilingual children should be better in figurative language comprehension due to the fact of generally higher ToM scores and having to process linguistic ambiguity on everyday basis, as well as because of generally higher metalinguistic abilities. Although there is no other bilingual study that would be parallel to this one, some researchers found that it is not until the age of seven or eight years that monolingual children acquire this ability, which is contradictory to our results (Ackerman, 1982; Andrews et al., 1986; Demorest et al., 1983, 1984; Winner et al., 1987). Clearly, more research is needed on the topic, and at this point it is impossible to conclude whether in fact bilingual children may achieve higher scores in tasks measuring figurative language comprehension. We did find, as we expected, that there is a relation between the level of ToM development and children's performance on the ICT. This finding is consistent with previous research on the topic conducted with monolingual children (Creusere, 2007; Winner et al, 1987). Comprehending irony is impossible without being able to predict the speaker's intentions.

Results of the study showed no evidence for a higher accuracy rate in decoding sarcastic than non-sarcastic ironic utterance. This result is surprising and differs from findings reported in the literature (Creusere, 2007; Winner et al, 1987). We assume that this result might be explained by the culture effect. Americans prefer a direct, straightforward style of addressing their interlocutors (Ting-Toomey, 1999), which may be reflected in the way parents use or do not use non-literal language (i.e., irony) in their child-directed speech. Parental linguistic input is known to influence children's comprehension (Hoff 2003; Huttenlocher, 1991). Eastern European culture, on the other hand, relies heavily on the use of figurative speech because of the tradition of the need to convey meanings that would not be understood by the authorities (Barta, 2013). It is possible that with no training in listening to and processing of sarcastic comments, children do not understand

them better than non-sarcastic ironic comments. In other words, children who, in our study, were capable of understanding irony understood sentences containing the element with blame equally well as the ones without the blame element because none of the expression types were more familiar to them. Behind this attempt at explaining the results, there is an assumption that because of their place of living, people may adopt communicative practices and values that reflect to some degree the ones used in their environment.

Further research exploring the factor of culture, child-directed speech specificity and using irony towards children, as well as the relation between irony comprehension and the exposure to figurative language, is needed and could help understand both the results of the present study as well as to contribute to a broader understanding of the process behind decoding figurative language.

Our study may be a starting point for further research that takes the topic of irony comprehension to bilingual communities.

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Appendix

Stories used in the English version of the Irony Comprehension Task (ICT). The highlighted fragments were exposed by the readers by using marked prosody

1. Steve and Tom are playing in the backyard. There are puddles and there is mud on the ground. Steve falls down. He stands up and his pants are wet and muddy, says Tom.

1. Why do you think Tom said this?
2. When Tom said did he mean:
 - Tom did not get dirty and is clean.
 - Tom got dirty and isn't clean
3. When Tom said: was it:
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Tom said?, was he being:
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

2. Mary and Lilly were playing with blocks. They finished playing and Mary is putting the blocks away. Lilly starts playing with other toys. 'You are not helping me at all!', says Mary.

1. Why do you think Mary said so?
2. When Mary 'You are not helping me at all!' did she mean:
 - Lilly is putting the blocks away and she is helping Marta.
 - Lilly is not putting the blocks away and she is not helping Marta.
3. When Mary said: 'You are not helping me at all!', was it:
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Mary said: 'You are not helping me at all!', was she being:
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

3. Chris wanted to have some juice. He asked his brother for the juice. Chris' brother poured him a glass of juice. Chris knocked down the glass and spilled the juice over the clean tablecloth. There was a big, wet stain on the tablecloth. Said the brother to Chris.

1. Why do you think Chris' brother said this?
2. When Chris' brother said did he mean:
 - that Chris did something well and his brother is happy with that.
 - that Chris did something bad and his brother is not happy with that.
3. When Chris' brother said: was it:
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Chris' brother said: was he being
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

4. Jerry was supposed to come straight home after school. His grandma has been waiting for him. It gets dark outside. Jerry gets home. Says Jerry's grandma.

1. Why do you think Jerry's grandma said this?
2. When Jerry's grandma said: did she mean:
 - Jerry came home soon and his grandma has not been waiting for him.
 - Jerry came home late and his grandma has been waiting for him.
3. When Jerry's grandma said, was it:
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Jerry's grandma said, was she:
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

5. Annie has a warm green sweater. Annie does not like this sweater. Annie's green sweater is heavy and itchy. It is cold today. Annie is wearing her sweater. 'This sweater is awful!', says Annie to her friend.

1. Why do you think Annie said this?
2. When Annie said 'This sweater is awful!', did she mean:
 - Annie likes that jumper and she is happy she put it on today.
 - Annie does not like that jumper and is not happy she put it on today.

3. When Annie said 'This sweater is awful!', was it:
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Annie said: 'This sweater is awful!', was she:
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

6. Luke was playing with his toys in his room. He finished and put the toys away. There was nothing left on the carpet. Luke's dad came in to the room. He said to Luke, 'What a clean room!'.

1. Why do you think Luke's dad said this?
2. When Luke's dad said 'What a clean room!', did he mean that:
 - The room is tidy and there is nothing on the carpet.
 - The room is untidy and there are toys on the carpet.
3. When Luke's dad said: 'What a clean room!', was it:
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Luke's dad said: 'What a clean room!' was he being:
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

7. Susie's uncle always brings her a present. Today he brought her a scrunchy. Susie's uncle remembers that Susie had long hair. He does not know that Susie's mum cut Susie's hair yesterday. Now Susie has short hair. When the uncle sees Susie, he says:

1. Why do you think Susie's uncle says this?
2. When Susie's uncle said, does he mean that:
 - Susie's hair has grown and it is long.
 - Susie's hair was cut and it is short.
3. When Susie's uncle said was it:
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Susie's uncle said was he being:
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

8. Johny is coming back from preschool with his mum. They want to get back home soon. It starts raining. Johny and his mom are running to catch their bus. But the bus door closes, the bus leaves without them. Sais Johny's mum.

1. Why do you think Johny's mum said this?
2. When Johny's mom said: did she mean that:
 - Everything went well and Johny and mom are lucky today.
 - Everything went wrong and Johny and mom are not lucky today.
3. When Johny's mom said: was it:
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Johny's mom said: was she being:
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

9. Maggie thinks spinach is yucky. She never eats it. They are having spinach for lunch today. Maggie does not want to eat the spinach. She says to her friend.

1. Why do you think Maggie said this?
2. When Maggie said, did she mean that:
 - she likes spinach very much and is enjoying lunch
 - she does not like spinach and is not enjoying lunch
3. When Maggie said, was it:
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Maggie said, was she being:
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

10. Adam and Tommy were painting. Adam knocked down a can of paint and spilled the paint all over his clothes. There is a big, wet stain on his shirt. 'You are so dirty!', says Tommy to Adam.

1. Why do you think Tommy said this?
2. When Tommy said 'You are so dirty!', did he mean that:
 - Adam spilled the paint on himself and he is dirty.
 - Adam did not spill the paint on himself and he is clean.

3. When Tommy said 'You are so dirty!', was it;
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Tommy said 'You are so dirty!', was he being:
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

11. Paul likes reading books about dinosaurs. Paul's friend brought a book about dinosaurs to preschool. Paul's friends gives it to him during recess.

'I love books like this!', says Paul.

1. Why do you think Paul said this?
2. When Paul said 'I like such books very much!' did he mean that:
 - He likes stories about dinosaurs and is happy with the book.
 - He does not like stories about dinosaurs and is not happy with the book.
3. When Paul said 'I like such books very much!' was it:
 - very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all
4. When Paul said, 'I like such books very much!', was he being:
 - very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all

12. Betty and her mum want to go for a walk to the forest. The sun is shining and it is very warm and nice out. Betty and her mum like walking in weather like this. 'What a wonderful day for a walk in the forest!', says Betty's mum.

1. Why do you think Betty's mum said this?
2. When Betty's mum said 'What a wonderful day for a walk to the forest!' did she mean:
 - It was a very nice day and Betty's mum was happy about the walk in the forest.
 - It was a bad day and Betty's mum was not happy about the walk in the forest.
3. When Betty's mum said, 'What a wonderful day for a walk to the forest!' was it:

- very funny
 - kind of funny
 - not funny at all?
4. When Betty's mum said 'What a wonderful day for a walk to the forest!' was she being:
- very nice
 - kind of nice
 - not nice at all