

Analysis of Agentive Responses in the Day Care Situation: A Combination of Piagetian and Vygotskian Interpretations

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Our Team

Finland Jyrki Reunamo

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Research Background

- ◆ May 2008 Dr. Jyrki Reunamo of Helsinki University was keynote speaker at a conference at the Ching-Kuo Institute (CKI) in Taiwan
- ◆ Dr. R. was launching his teacher development project for day care centres in Finland
- ◆ Dr. R. believed that learning systematic observation would increase teacher sensitivity to children's behavior and cognition

Research Background

- ◆ Dr. R. invited the Dept of Early Childhood Educare to participate in his project and international collaboration began
- ◆ Dr. R. sent a research plan to Taiwan, and the CKI team worked with Dr. Wu from the National Academy for Educational Research (NAER) in developing Chinese versions of the research instruments

Research Background

- ◆ August 2009, Dr. Wang and Dr. Lee of CKI visited Helsinki, bringing along videos of the pilot work in Taiwan
- ◆ The team discussed revisions to the instruments so that they applied equally to the two cultures

Research Background

- Sep – Dec 2009, training observers for Finland & Taiwan
- Dec 2009 – July 2010 , data collection in FI & TW
- July 2010 – Oct 2010, data coding & entry
- Oct 2010 – Nov 2010 Dr. R. visited Taiwan to do data merging and data analysis with Taiwan colleagues

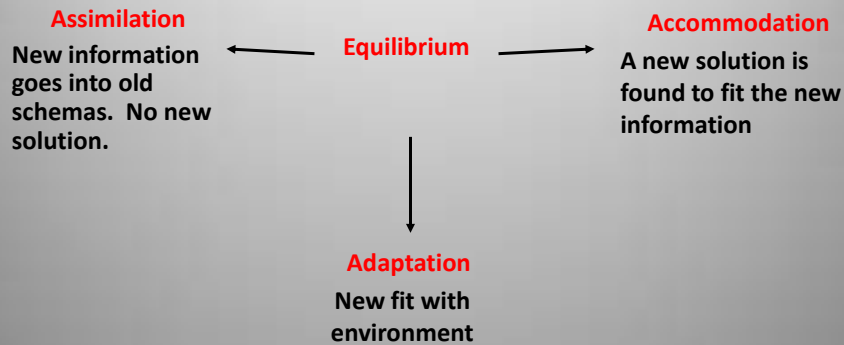
Theoretical Framework



Piaget and Adaptation

- ◆ During cognitive and conceptual development, children might **assimilate** outside information into his own schema without changing his original schema
- ◆ Or, the child might change his schema to **accommodate** new information
- ◆ When the child is satisfied with his schema, there is **equilibrium** in the system until new information upsets the equilibrium
- ◆ Piaget sees **adaptation** as the main process

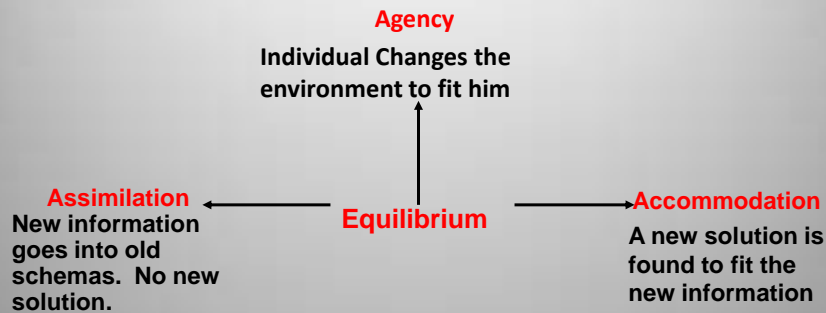
Piaget and Adaptation



Vygotsky and Agency

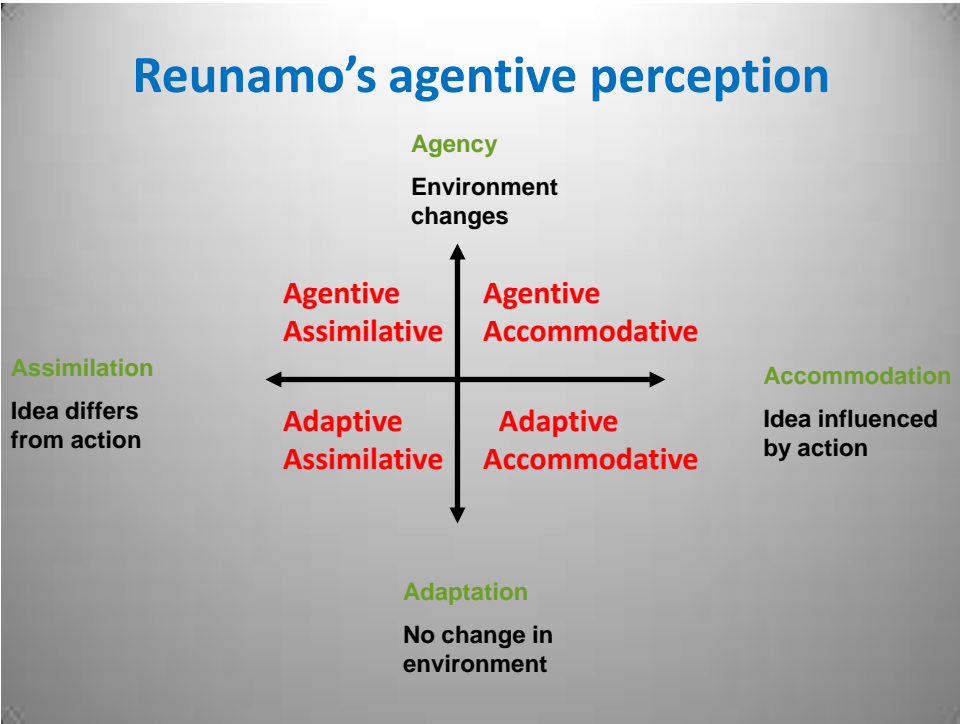
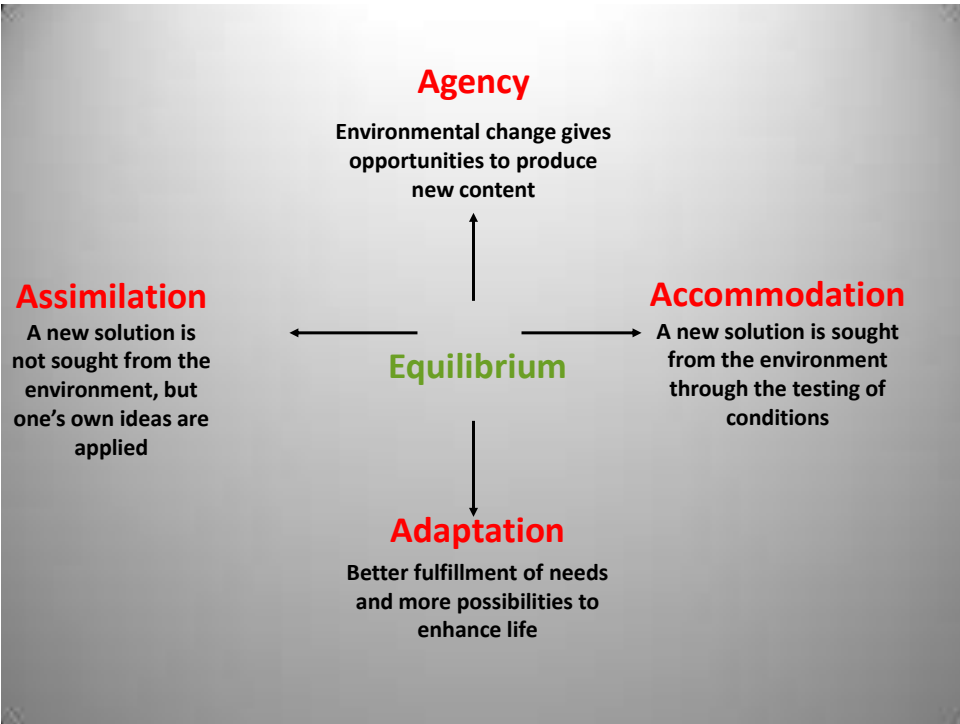
- Cognitive development is a social cultural process; children can only develop in a social situation.
- There is a dialectical relationship between the individual and the environment
- The child's mental structure is **transformed** when he **internalizes** and absorbs cultural information
- At the same time, the **social context** is changed by the individual. This is his concept of **agency**

Vygotsky and Agency



Reunamo and Agency

- **Ahearn (2001)**
Agency refers to the socioculturally mediated capacity to act.
- **Reunamo(2007)**
Agency refers to action that has an effect on something.



Research Questions

1. What is the agentic perception of young children when they interact with the environment?
2. Are there age differences?

Research Method



Subjects

	Taiwan	Finland
Age	N (%)	N (%)
3Y	63 (17%)	118 (17%)
4Y	95 (26%)	149 (21%)
5Y	125 (34%)	206 (30%)
6Y	83 (23%)	225 (32%)
Total	366 (100%)	698 (100%)

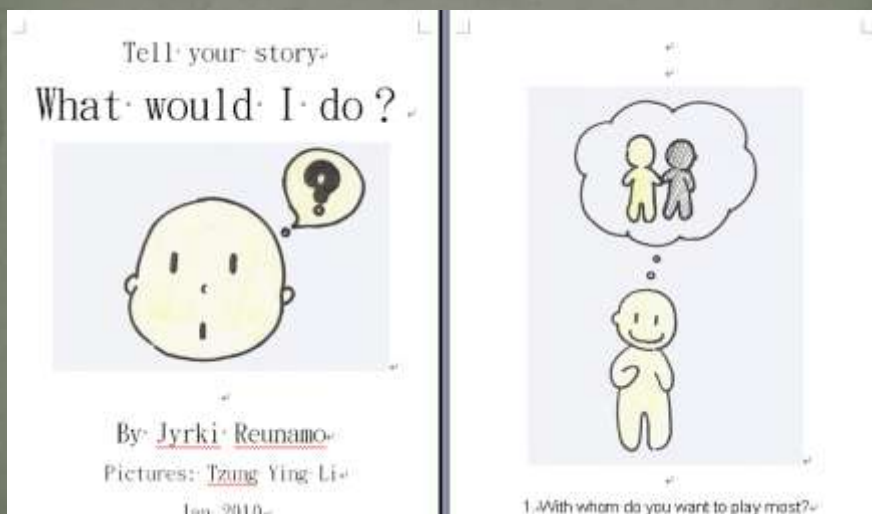
Interview Questions

- The interview questions and pictures are in a story book prepared for the interview.
- There were 16 different items
- 6 adult child interactions
- 9 child child interactions
- 1 control item

Interview instructions

- *“I would like to read a book which is about you. This book is unfinished and I need your help in completing the story. Could you help me?”*
- *“In the book the yellow child is you and I would like you to tell me what you will do in each page and I will write it down for you. Are you ready to start?”*

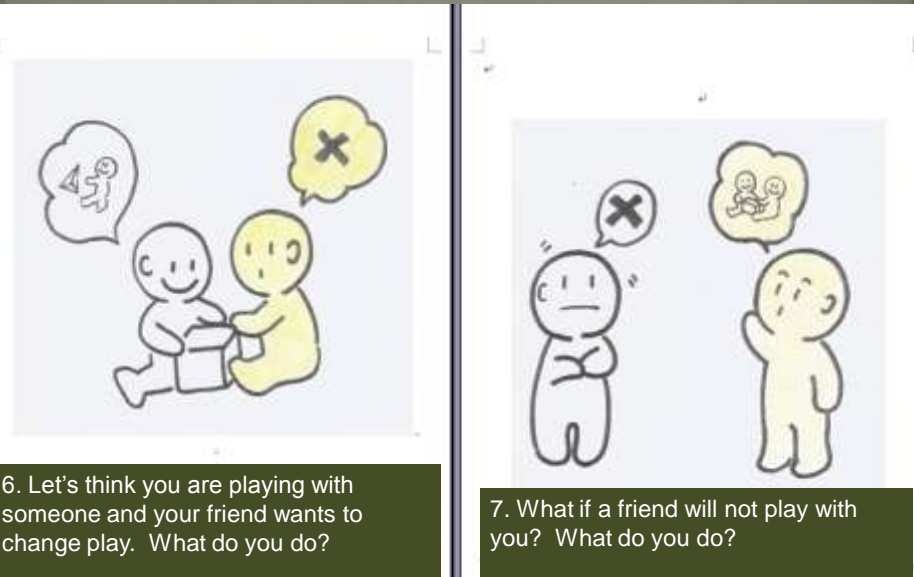
Interview Story (English Version)



Interview Story (Chinese Version)



Interview Items (Child-Child Interaction)



Interview Items (Adult-Child Interaction)



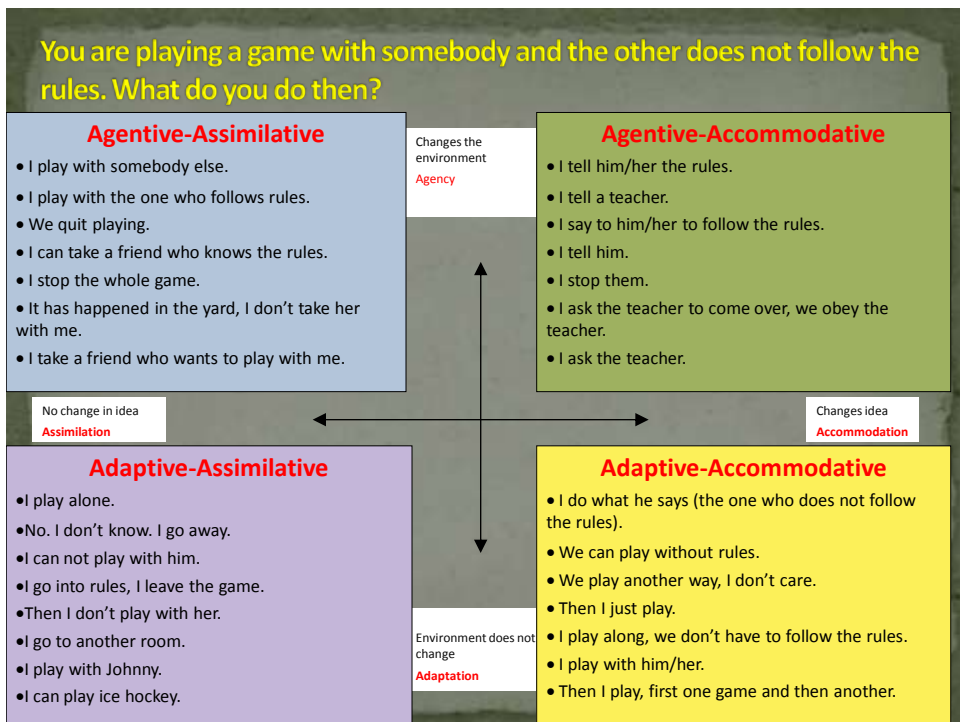
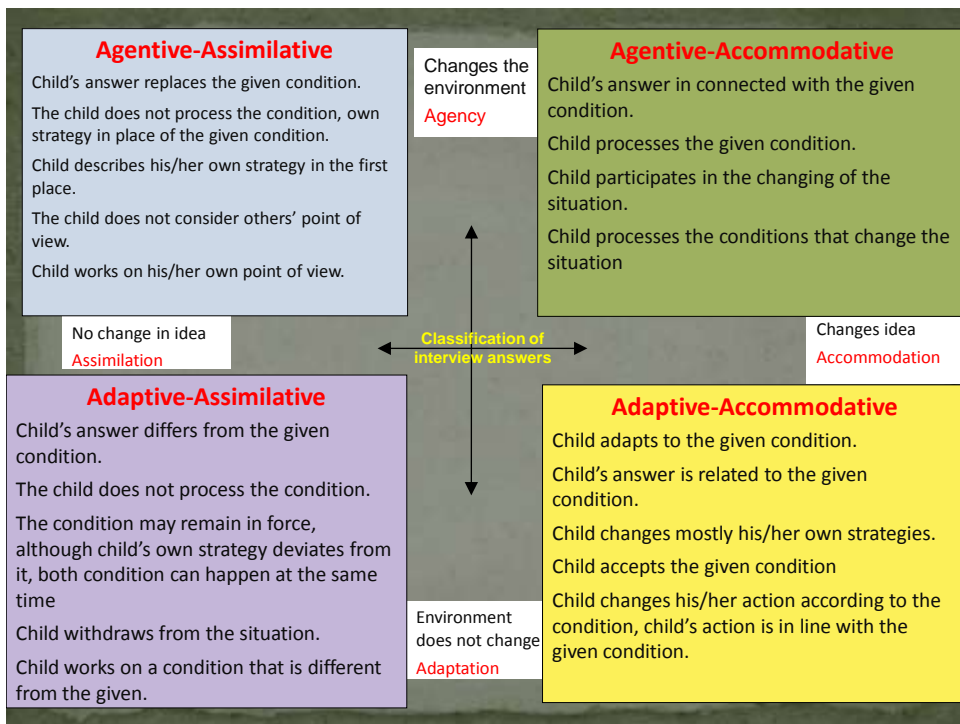
10. A teacher comes to stop your play, What do you do then?



11. What if you don't like the activity arranged by the teacher? What do you do then?

Data Coding

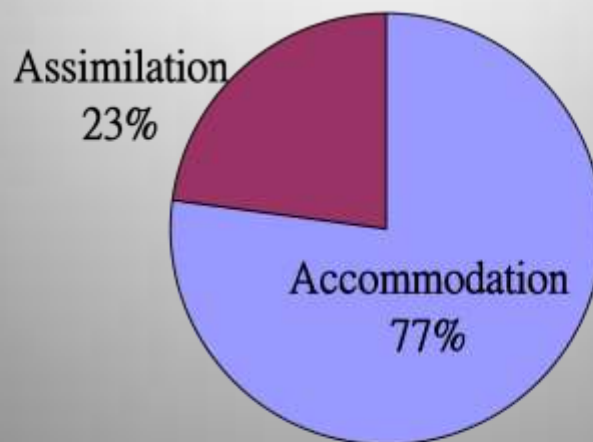
- Each response for each child was coded independently according to Reunamo's four categories
- Unclear responses were put into an "uncertain" category
- The majority of "uncertain" responses came from 3 year olds
- The data reported today does not include the uncertain responses, mainly for simplicity

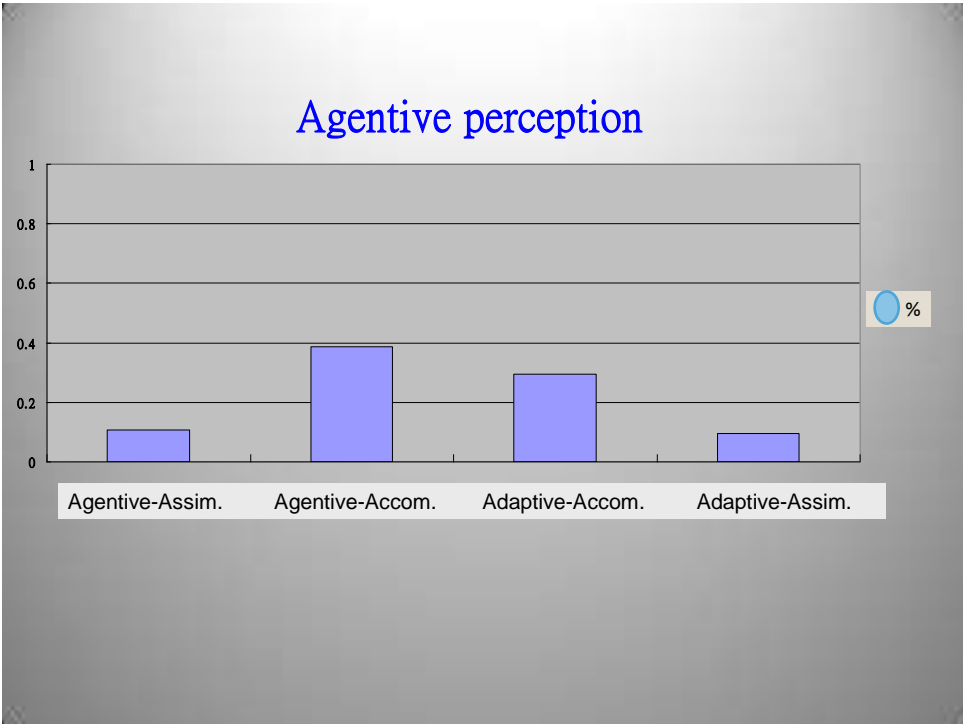
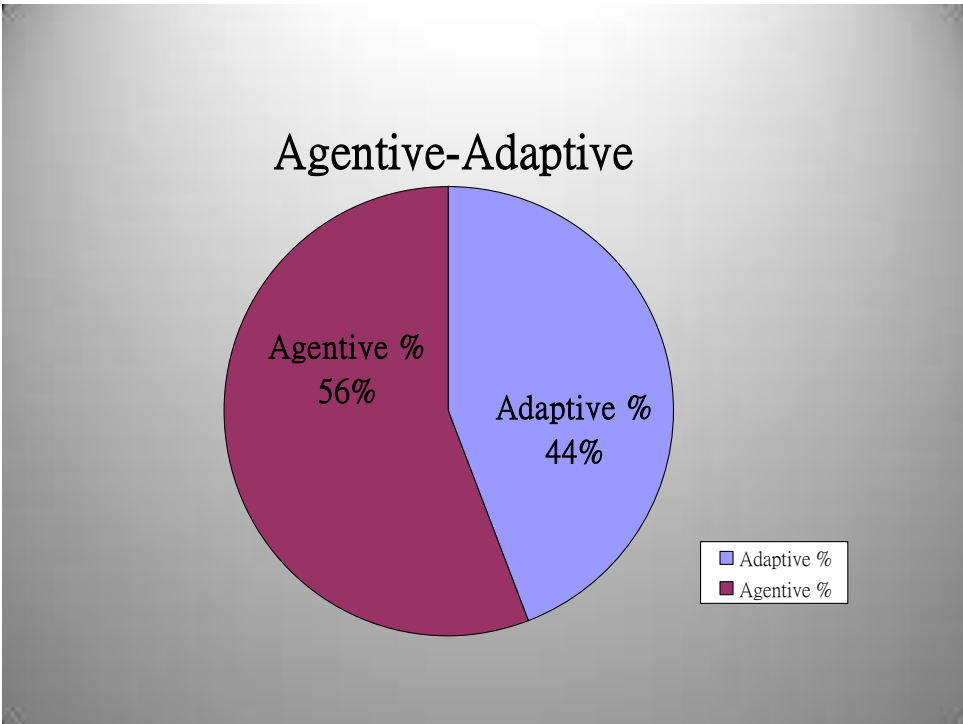


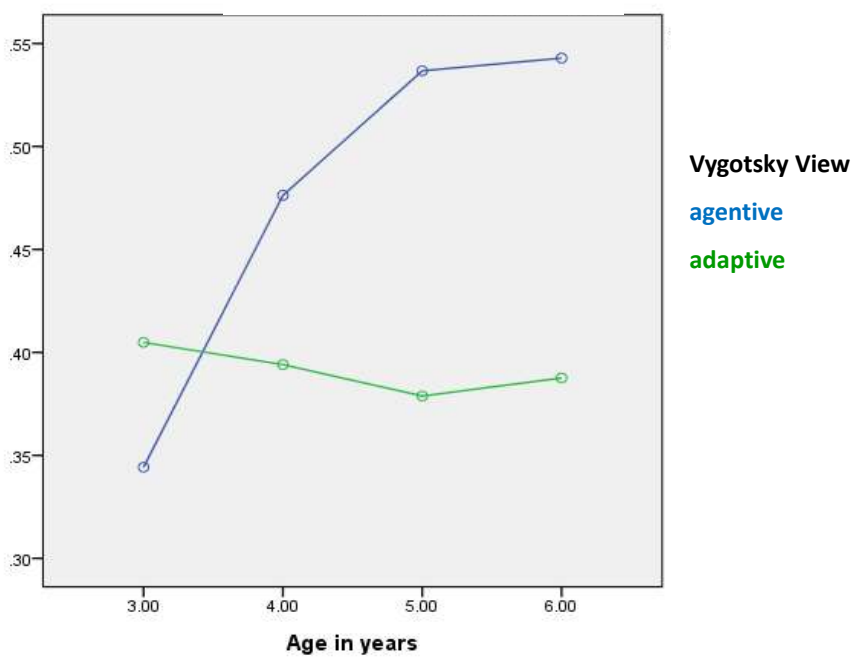
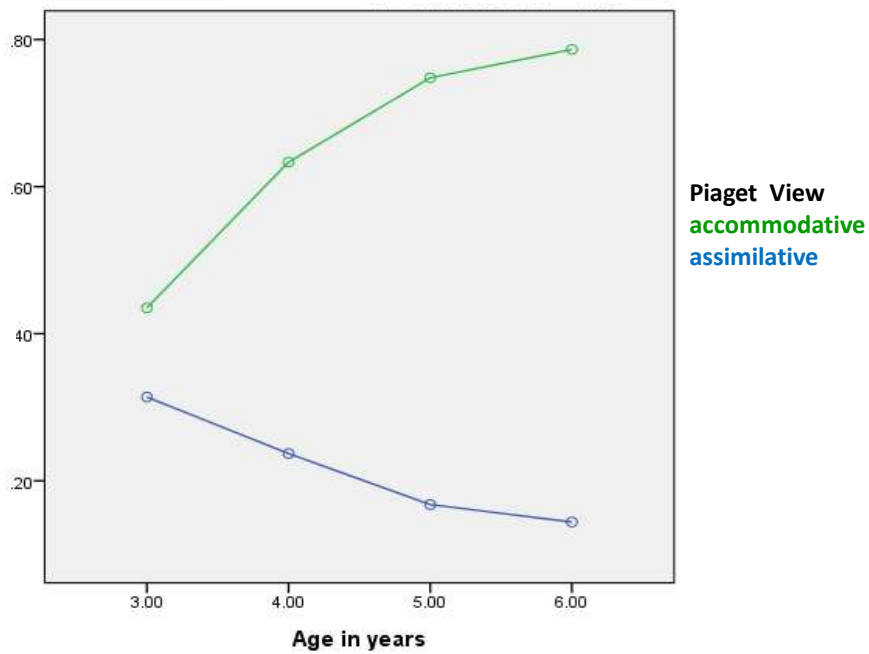
Results

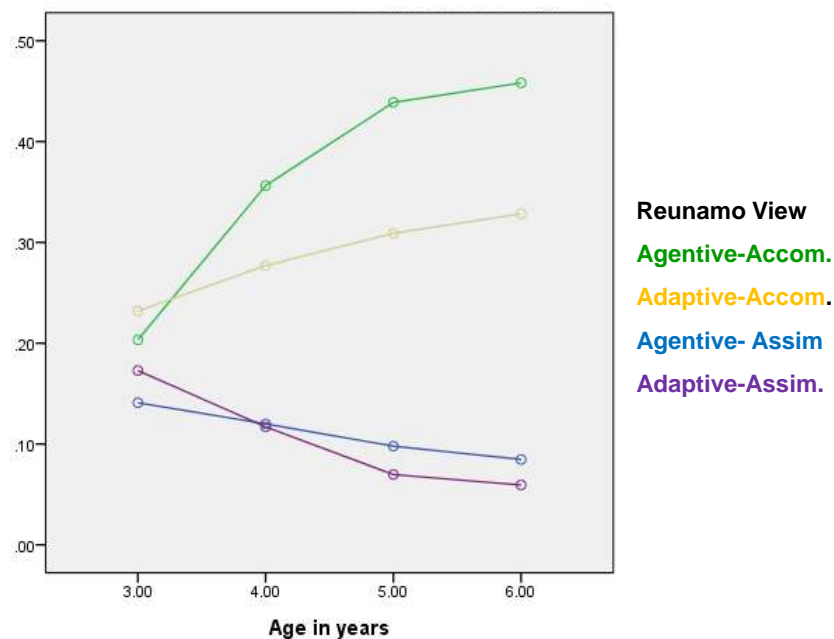


Assimilation-Accommodation









Conclusions and Questions



About Piaget's Theory

- Piaget was mainly interested in epistemology and concept formation, such as the concept of time and the concept of a game
- Most of the concepts were scientific concepts or concepts about the physical world that were not “negotiable”
- For those concepts, the child can either assimilate or accommodate new information that came in

About Vygotsky's Theory

- Vygotsky was interested in sociocultural development of the child, and how children learn from people and with people
- Most sociocultural concepts or viewpoints are more open for discussion
- Therefore, when the child is interacting with the social environment, there is a choice of being agentive and make change, or be adaptive and go with the flow

About Reunamo's Theory

- Reunamo has enriched the way we observe cognitive and social development by putting together Piaget's theory and Vygotsky's theory
- In this paper, we have examined children's views concerning social situations where there is possibility for change, and found great value in considering agentic perception in young children
- It would be interesting to study further the child's views concerning situations in the physical world vs the social world

About Age Changes

- Something interesting seems to be going on between age 3 and 4.
- At 3 years children are more adaptive than agentic in their responses. At age 4, they give more agentic responses. Why?
 - Perhaps they begin to perceive themselves as agentic
 - Perhaps they understand the social situations better
 - Perhaps they are becoming more expressive and the "uncertain" answers diminish

About Age Changes

- Between 3 and 4 years, there is a steep **rise** in **agentive-accommodative** responses. Why? Perhaps children are attempting to change the social environment, and at the same time accommodating to it. They learn to negotiate. In other words, they are more participatory.
- During the same period, there is a steady **drop** in **agentive-assimilative** responses. Why? Perhaps children are beginning to see new points of view and not adhere so strictly to their original notions. They become less dominating

Thank you for your attention

