

We conducted two experiments targeting the development of understanding privileged access with subjects between 6 and 9 years of age. In the first experiment we found a developmental trend and a question-type-specific effect in attributing privileged access to self and others. Reversing the order of first-person and third-person-related questions in the second experiment eliminated all the effects found in the first one. This result appears consistent with the idea that children's understanding of privileged access proceeds from their first-person perspective toward a generalization to other people. Our data suggest that at the age of six, children are quite close to being able to formulate a content-independent inference rule of privileged access (e.g., 'people know their states of mind better than anyone else'). Even though most of them cannot spontaneously apply this rule to other people, they readily recognize and start using it when primed with questions about first-person privileged access.