

## CHILDREN'S IDEAS ABOUT SYMBOLS OF SLOVAK STATEHOOD

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**Abstract:** The subjects of the research were authentic utterances of 5-6-year-old children. They represented individual conceptions of concepts of the pre-primary curriculum - symbols of Slovak statehood (capital, anthem, president, state, state flag, state emblem) in a narrower or broader context. The aim of the research was to find out the content meanings of narrower and broader conceptions of concepts in 5-6-year-old children, which are the content of the state curriculum. We hypothesized that at the children's exit from pre-primary education, their conceptions of concepts are more similar to scientific concepts. The study answers two research questions: do children's narrower and broader conceptions of concepts confirm theory? Which are the exceptional, non-repetitive children's conceptions of concepts? The research strategy was qualitative. Children's authentic utterances enabled short individual interviews to be obtained. Children's utterances were analyzed, categorized, and interpreted. Narrower conceptions are associated with a pre-scientific conception or a naive conception (45%). A broader context of conceptions emerged for 42% of the children in the research set. 13% of the statements were categorized as "don't know" responses. Exceptional conceptions of the symbols of Slovak statehood result from children's experiences in everyday life. If children perceived them in different contexts, they explained them by some features of objective reality. These concepts are still abstract for children at this age. According to the findings, it is questionable whether teaching children about symbols of statehood is meaningful in kindergarten when children's narrower conceptions of the concepts prevail at the exit.

**Keywords:** concept, notion, psycholinguistic theories, symbols of the state.

### 1 Introduction

Today's children are growing up in conditions of diverse changes, demands and advances. They are reflected in the curricula of formal education. Their development is to be informed by the results of research, including in the area of the concepts that are the content of learning in schools. A conception, according to Fontana (1996, p. 65), is "an idea that an individual has about a class of persons, objects, or events, grouped together on the basis of what they have in common". The child understands and uses concepts in speech in an individual way depending on the conditions of his/her development. They are explained by psycholinguistic, linguistic and pedagogical theories.

Our research is supported by Jean Piaget's (1896-1980) theory of concept formation in child cognitive development. This theory is extensive. A simple summary of its essence is complex. We have extracted knowledge from it in order to identify children's statements confirming this theory. We have drawn on the second stage of cognitive development: preoperational thinking - years 2 to 7 of life, when the child uses static figurative (reproductive) imagery. These are elicited by observed facts - sensory experience, which children reproduce. The child relies on demonstrative thinking to understand concepts. Piaget and Inhelder (1997) distinguished children's conceptions of reality in which children's thinking has played a role (spontaneous conceptions) from conceptions that have been formed by the action of knowledge from those around the child (scientific conceptions). The two groups of concepts (children's ideas) have much in common. "The child chooses from the set of presented concepts only those which are appropriate to him in view of the level of construction of cognitive schemata which he has reached. Moreover, what he chooses is subject to assimilation to these cognitive schemata, so that distortion of objective meanings occurs. Piaget explained distorting egocentrism as an irreducible imbalance between assimilation and accommodation" (Pupala, 2001, p. 193).

L. S. Vygotsky (1896-1934) studied the development of children's speech in the context of the development of thinking with a different approach than Piaget. He emphasized the social and cultural conditioning of language and thought, which develop through the influences of learning and environment. Vygotsky (2017, p. 109) considered the meaning of a word from

a linguistic point of view as an association between the sound form of a word and its subject content. He stated that "a concept is not a simple grouping of associative connections acquired by memory, nor is it an automated rational habit. It is a complex act of thought which cannot be acquired by simple rote learning, and which constantly requires that the child's thinking itself be raised to a higher stage in its internal development in order that the concept may come into being. A concept at any stage of its development is, from a psychological point of view, an act of generalization. Concepts, psychologically represented as meanings of words, evolve. Already at the moment when a child first acquires a new word associated with a certain meaning, the development of the word has not ended but only begun. Initially, the concept is a generalization of an elementary type. It is only in the course of the child's development that he passes from the elementary generalization to ever higher types of generalization and thus completes the process of forming real concepts. This process of developing concepts or meanings of words requires the development of a number of functions such as deliberate attention, logical memory, abstraction, comparison and discrimination. All of these more complex psychological processes cannot be contained by memory alone; they cannot simply be learned and acquired." Vygotsky doubted the correctness of the view that in schooling the child grasps concepts in ready-made form and acquires them in the same way as he acquires any intellectual habits (Vygotsky, 2017, pp. 72-73). He examined the development of scientific concepts in children on the basis of the school's declared task of "instilling in children a system of scientific knowledge". He found that the development of scientific concepts outpaces the development of spontaneous concepts by the influences of school instruction, the teacher's action, and the child's learning process. He rejected the view that "scientific concepts are simply acquired in a ready-made form by leading the child to scientific knowledge and to the acquisition of concepts". Vygotsky found that the concepts of ordinary life are inappropriately associated by researchers with the child's scientific thinking and transferred "also to another sphere of concepts which arise under quite different internal conditions". He wrote that the distinguishing characteristic of a word (concept) is a generalized reflection of reality. The examination of words is to be carried out in connection with their meaning, because it reflects different types of the child's perceiving and thinking consciousness and different ways of reflecting reality (Vygotsky, 2017, pp. 70, 72, 130). This means that the child acquires words (concepts) by interacting with culture, in social activities and discourse. Children interpret social interactions. They also take place in school education. School content contains concepts that are products of culture. Children learn by "negotiating meanings" so that they become their "cognitive property" (Pupala, 2001, p. 202).

Another theory from which we validated the claims in the children's statements is the theory of understanding the meaning of concepts. Bloom (2015, p. 29) stated that "the meaning of words is shaped by the concept. A concept (notion) need only include some aspects of knowledge about the internal world". Children learn words through the ability to acquire concepts, the ability to understand, and the ability to remember. Children categorize unfamiliar entities based on their perceptual properties (what they look like, what sounds they make). Children can interpret the meanings of concepts based on perceptual experience and similarity, essence, shape, and repetition of their use in certain situations, especially by nearby adults. Of course, such interpretations may carry errors and may be naive. Children think about concepts in layman's terms, naively with essences. Essences represent the relationship between the external properties of an object and how it is categorized by the child. "That is, if an object resembles another to a sufficient degree, it falls into the same category." Lay essentialism in children's conceptual thinking represents little insight into how things and the world around them actually work. "The idea that a concept is shaped by an understanding of

why it has the properties it has sets virtually impossible conditions for the possession of the concept." This is an explanation for why preschoolers do not understand the meanings of concepts in the strict sense, as a theory of correlation between certain properties. They are at the level of conceptualizing specific concepts on the basis of their perceptual properties. Children's conceptions of concepts correspond primarily to "what things really are, not just what they appear to be" (Bloom, 2015, pp. 151, 168). "The biggest problem 5-6-year-olds have is with abstract concepts that have no association with any concrete forms, or their associations are mistaken or incorrectly tied to the wrong meaning structures." Learning the meanings of words is complicated by the fact that they do not have labels telling them exactly what they mean. There is a concept on one side and a form on the other. "A relevant conception of a word in terms of language acquisition must include all - exclusively those forms whose meanings are to be learned". They are referred to as scientific concepts (electricity, heat, etc.). Children's scientific conceptions of concepts are concrete (concrete concepts). It is typical for preschool children to learn to name surrounding facts, to categorize them, to know functions and relationships (Bloom, 2015, p. 27). Children's conceptions of concepts are not always based on direct experience with real entities, but on experience with their visual representations-from books, movies, television programs, videos, and other people's narratives. Usually distant real entities, children learn to name them in pictures (photographs, drawings), but they do not represent them accurately, for example, three-dimensionally. Therefore, in research, it should be kept in mind that "naming pictures differs markedly from naming real-world objects" (Bloom, 2015, p. 170). This is the background knowledge for our research and interpretation of the meanings of children's conceptions of concepts.

### 1.1 Research Problem

Exploring children is important for sensitizing educators to them in education. There is always a child at the beginning, in the process and at the end of teaching. The educational process therefore needs to be combined with diagnostic and research procedures. Findings about the child's dispositions and potentials are central to a quality and effective educational process (Kasáčová et al., 2016). Exploring children's conceptions of concepts from a pedagogical perspective is a "risky" path. It requires the researcher's theoretical insight on the basis of which to think through the research design and plan well. Mainly, it involves the risks of slipping into psychological and linguistic intentions and interpretations without a sufficient knowledge 'background'. Nevertheless, we share Vuzňáková (2018) view that children's speech development, mother tongue teaching and children's educational success depend on knowing how to understand the meaning of words. They acquire knowledge through new, unfamiliar words and concepts. Therefore, the educator can find out what the children have learned about the concepts from the content of education and whether his/her work was effective. He/she can assess whether children are conceptualising concepts in a more scientific way, whether the content of the curriculum overestimates/underestimates children's cognitive abilities and opportunities for experience. We are aware that interpretations of the findings depend on the level of competence of the educators also in the area of application to teaching. Similar research but science concepts was conducted by Monat (1973; adapted from Pupala 2001) with children just before they entered Year 1 of primary school. Babiaková (2017) focused similar research on literacy concepts.

Such research (Pupala, 2001, p. 211) "reports that children, despite being subjected to instruction in scientific explanations of concepts, after a period of time interpreted these concepts inadequately, incorrectly, as if at a lower cognitive level. From this, the conclusion is then drawn that school teaching is of low functionality because it has failed to replace the empirical interpretation with a more scientifically adequate one". Instructive for this inquiry is the thought that "whether it is at all possible and functional to expect every person to use a scientific interpretation of concepts in every situation when, say, several

pragmatic needs are quite satisfied by such an understanding as is anchored in natural language. Therefore, surveys of this kind should account more for the importance of context in children's handling of concepts. They should not assess their knowledge only in terms of mistaken versus scientifically correct'. Concepts of concepts (objective-methodological approach) can be confronted with objective cultural contents, to what extent they approximate them. The second is the ethno-methodological approach. When analysing and evaluating children's conceptions of concepts, it is not appropriate to use confrontational criteria. It is sufficient to be interested in identifying meanings with an emphasis on their semantic essence, individual and cultural contexts. Children's conceptions of concepts are studied in a value-neutral definition and in different contexts of interpretation. The second approach inspired our research. The starting point for formulating the problem was Bloom's (2015) claim that children's utterances are the result of their conscious experiences of the content of concepts in narrower and broader contexts. "The narrower (internal psychological) context is often associated with a pre-scientific concept or naive misconception in children. The broader context represents the interpretive framework of adults (parents, teachers, experts), as a rule, a scientific concept" (according to Kasáčová et al., 2017, p. 12).

### Research Focus

The subject of the research consisted of authentic utterances of 5-6-year-old children. They represented individual conceptions of concepts of the pre-primary curriculum - symbols of Slovak statehood (capital, anthem, president, state, state flag, state emblem) in a narrower or broader context.

### Research Aim and Research Questions

The aim of the research was to find out the content meanings of narrower and broader conceptions of concepts in 5-6-year-old children, which are the content of the state curriculum. We hypothesized that at the children's exit from pre-primary education, their conceptions of concepts would be more similar to scientific concepts because they were intended to be part of the curriculum. We were interested in the answers to the research questions:

VO 1. *Do children's narrower and broader conceptions of concepts confirm theory?*

VO 2. *Which are the exceptional, non-repetitive childhood conceptions of concepts?*

## 2 Materials and methods

### General Background

A qualitative strategy was applied to address the research problem. It was important to ensure validity, reliability and objectivity of the investigation. According to Kasáčová et al. (2017), this is to meet the challenging condition of child-centred qualitative research. The research had to be planned, implemented and evaluated according to scientific procedures. It was necessary to train teacher-researchers and to ensure a large sample of respondents. The research process was determined by the procedure of analytic induction. The obtained statements were analyzed, categorized and interpreted.

### Sample

The transcripts of utterances of 51 girls (D) and 45 boys (CH) aged 5 to 6 years from kindergartens in the districts of Bratislava, Trnava, Poprad, and Spišská Nová Ves were analysed for content. The average age of the children was 5.4 years. 753 authentic utterances of the sample children were analysed - answers to the descriptive questions "What is it? Who is it?" A selection of children was available. Parents signed informed consent for the research. The children came from the classrooms of the teacher-researchers.

### Instrument and Procedures

Authentic statements of the children were obtained through short individual interviews. Concepts for the interviews were selected from the content standards of the State Curriculum for Pre-primary Education (2016) from the topic "Home". The teacher-researchers were instructed how to hold conversations with the children. The children were asked a question to understand the concept. They could supplement the question with help questions to understand the meaning and encourage the child. Each child in the research set had to answer 6 basic questions - What is the capital? What is the national anthem? Who is the president? What is a state? What is the national flag? What is the national emblem? The children's answers were captured by audio recordings. The researchers were instructed to respect the child's right to voluntarily enter the conversation and speak freely. Sensitive and empathetic communication was important. They were to be aware of the limits of the interview and to protect the personal information of the child and his/her family. The interviews were preceded by informed parental consent.

### Data Analysis

Children's ideas - authentic statements about the content of the concept were analyzed. In the first stage of data analysis, we conducted open coding of the transcripts. We identified the characteristics of children's authentic utterances according to claims from psycholinguistic theories about children's narrower and broader conceptions of concepts (Piaget, Vygotsky, Bloom) with a constructivist perspective. According to Charnazova (2003; after Svaříček and Šed'ová, 2007), the latter is tied to specific carriers and their perspective, which is not always a reflection of objective reality. In line with Strauss and Corbin's (1999, p. 14; after Svaříček and Šed'ová, 2007) recommendation, we started the research by exploring according to our interest, expecting that what is significant in this area would emerge. Therefore, we were also interested in children's exceptional, non-repetitive conceptions of concepts for which we did not create categories. To analyze the data, we identified statements (categories) in the three theories confirming the theory of narrower and broader conceptions of concepts (Table 1). To these, we identified codes for analysis (Gavora, 2001).

Table 1 Identified characteristics of children's authentic utterances confirming psycholinguistic theories with assigned codes for content analysis<sup>1</sup>

Theory	Scientist	Concepts	Statements confirming the theory - meaning categories	Code
Theory of concept formation in child cognitive development	J. Piaget	spontaneous imagery	Children distort objective meanings	PSP
		and scientific terms	Children reproduce sensory experiences	PVP
Theory of the evolution of concepts in children	L. S. Vygotskij	concepts of everyday life	Children interpret social interactions	VBP
		and scientific terms	Children generalise facts	VVP
Theory of understanding the meaning of concepts	P. Bloom	perceptual concepts	Children explain similarities and essences	BPP
		a relevant word concepts	Children rely on specific characters	BVP

The codes in Table 1 were chosen according to our own judgement. They were used to indicate semantically similar, equivalent parts of the analysed transcripts of the children's authentic utterances about the meanings of the concepts on the basis of their close reading.

<sup>1</sup> Narrower concepts (spontaneous ideas, concepts of everyday life, perceptual concepts); Broader concepts (scientific concepts, relevant concepts).

### 3 Results

Results of research, results of research, results of research, results of research, results of research, results of research, results of research, results of research, results of research, results of research. The results of the content analysis of the utterance transcripts provided answers to the research questions. They also serve as evidence for the research. Table 2 shows the numbers of children's utterances for the meaning categories. Each child's utterances were assigned to one meaning category only once.

Narrower and broader conceptions of children's concepts confirming the theory

Table 2 Identified conceptual confirmation theories by meaning categories of analysis<sup>2</sup>

Concepts in the topic Home	Narrower concepts (number of statements)			Broader concepts (number of statements)			(N)
	Children distort objective meanings	Children interpret social interactions	Children explain similarities and essences	Children reproduce sensory experiences	Children generalise facts	Children rely on specific characters	
Capital City	40	16	14	12	8	12	13
Anthem	40	8	34	28	16	12	17
President	39	2	10	0	18	22	10
State	36	0	22	0	12	8	24
National flag	10	6	10	48	18	20	10
National emblem	8	8	20	20	16	26	16
Total	173	40	110	108	88	100	90
	323 (45%)			296 (42%)			13%

Table 3 Identified notions of concepts confirming theories by meaning parts/characters of the analysis<sup>3</sup>

Concepts in the topic Home	Narrower concepts			Broader concepts		
	Children distort objective meanings	Children interpret social interactions	Children explain similarities and essences	Children reproduce sensory experiences	Children generalise facts	Children rely on specific characters
Capital City	1. place, city where the child lives	1. they talked about it in kindergarten	1. a city where there is a lot of something	1. that there were in it	1. Slovakia	1. concerts, Performances,
	2. globe	2. people from the family who live in it	2. a city that is big	2. Bratislava that they learned it in kindergarten	2. largest city	2. trains,
	3. shop	3. they go there with someone for a holiday, a visit	3. the name of a country the child knows			3. where the president lives
	4. road					4. Bratislava Castle
	5. work					

<sup>2</sup> Did not know - the child responded with the word don't know or didn't answer.

<sup>3</sup> Narrower concepts (spontaneous ideas, concepts of everyday life, perceptual concepts); Broader concepts (scientific concepts, relevant concepts).

Anthem	1. song for dancing 2. musicians 3. a song for an event	1. song when he is with someone at football, hockey 2. connecting with someone in the family when they are at some activity	1. when someone receives a medal, a cup 2. at a competition 3. in sports 4. hockey anthem 5. national song 6. played when one wins	1. the talking book sings it 2. they hear it in kindergarten, on the news, at hockey, football ....	1. music/song of the Slovak Republic /Slovakia 2. song about Slovakia 3. important song 4. sung by several people	1. Over the Tatra Mountains 2. singing 3. some words, verses from the anthem 4. to make the Slovaks better 5. mountains and the Tatras
President	1. someone from advertising 2. someone who works 3. a teacher 5. a boss 6. chairman/mayor	1. a connection to someone in the family or village /town 3. someone who decides something 4. the one who protects	1. solves something 2. police president 3. someone who decides something 4. the one who protects	1. we have it to have a good time 2. he cares about Slovakia /country 3. travels the world and talks to other people	1. the man what's in the news 2. telling people /even into a microphone 3. they said the president's name	
State	1. where children learn 2. where people are 3. something bad 4. the whole world 5. houses		1. kindergarten 2. Slovak state 3. our country 4. Bratislava 5. the globe, the world	1. Slovakia 2. names of other countries that children knew 3. republic	1. where we live 2. flag 3. anthem 4. name-Slovak Republic	
National flag	1. something that moves on a stick 2. a ribbon, a piece of cloth 3. coloured paper	1. that someone in the family has it	1. something painted, 2. it's pulled out when it's won	1. that they saw her on a pole somewhere, 2. it moves when the wind blows 3. at the hotel/school 5. at a hockey game 6. on holiday	1. flag of the Slovak Republic /Slovakia 2. flags of other countries 3. square, has stripes	1. colours of the Slovak flag 2. the emblem on the flag 3. square, has stripes
National emblem	1. something that is given in return for a reward 2. marking different objects (fighter jet, tractor, car ...)	1. does anyone in the family also have it on their clothes	1. pinned to the garment 2. given in exchange for something 3. something is written and drawn there 4. something that distinguishes countries	1. magnet 2. have it at home 3. there is one in the kindergarten 4. they have seen it on buildings 5. on TV	1. Slovak emblem 2. Slovakia, Czech Republic 3. Slovak mark 4. picture, which shows that Slovakia, 5. picture hanging on the wall	1. on the flag 2. the colours of the emblem 3. shield/hoods and 2 crosses /double cross

## Exceptional children's sayings about concepts

Table 4 Non-repeating parts of conceptions of concepts by 5-6-year-old children (Kleštincová, 2016, pp. 101-105; Spišiaková, 2018, pp. 75-84).

Concepts in the topic Home	Exceptional children's sayings about concepts
Capital City	D 12: "I think Poprad or Bratislava, because it's an awfully big city". D 17: "It is such a city where everybody has to be careful because if something happens we have to call the police quickly". D 22: "Well it's some Slovak or English or Thai or Polish city". D 24: "The globe is the capital". D 28: "This is what is not a village, but it is a city". D 40: "It's like a universe that only rich people can go there". CH 10: "Komensky's school is the capital. That's the doctors, the policemen and I've seen the firemen too". CH 12: "The capital, it's a globe like that, actually it can't jump from space to space because our planet would be very big". CH 15: "Every city and village has that". CH 19: "When someone goes far to work and has to walk to earn money".
Anthem	D 26: "This is such a fight with the soldiers". D 32: "This is the most important song of our world". D 34: "Stable for the animals, that's where they live". D 40: "A hymn is such when such a long song is sung". D 46: "There's a lot of something. The anthem is sung, there is a football anthem, a Slovak anthem, an African anthem, an American anthem and all sorts of other anthems. The Slovak anthem is about Slovakia and it is in Slovak because it is Slovak. CH 9: "The anthem is where people sing at hockey and also football. I can sing it as well: Above Tatra the lightning is flashing, the thunder is beating wildly. We sing it for the Slovaks, to make them better". CH 11: "The anthem is probably some kind of train?" CH 21: "The anthem is probably a radiator".
President	D 7: "That's the writer's uncle, he's writing some papers for us". D 10: "The president is the one who put down all these buildings here". D 17: "He is someone like from a fairy tale". D 18: "The president goes everywhere and people help him". D 27: "That's Fico. There was such a figure of him at the centre". D 29: "We have to have a president to have a good time". D 30: "He takes care of the whole world". CH 11: "I've never seen him, but I know he's paying attention". CH 13: "If we didn't have a president, we wouldn't go to kindergarten". CH 19: "Ujo" who looks after our country". CH 20: "He preaches everything he can think of".
State	D 23: "A state can be an old book or a new book, all kinds of things." D 29: "That's when people run". D 31: "Everything, such a man has done, which has built the whole world". D 33: "Terribly something bad it is!" D 39: "That's like starting my car racing". CH 14: "That I'm supposed to stay still". CH 15: "That's some house untidy. The state is very important". CH 25: "There is a book when I look in bed and there are pictures". CH 27: "The place or shop where Mummy goes shopping". CH 28: "It's a house that can turn off and then it can pop up".
National flag	D 23: "The flag walks by the wind, where the wind blows, there it goes". D 24: "I've seen it on the side at the nursery, it waves like this, or it can be wedged". D 32: "When I went to the hotel, there were a lot of flags and they can be all kinds of languages". D 39: "The flag is for moving Slovakia". CH 24: "It is such a sail and my uncle has it at home". CH 27: "The flag is everywhere, for example it was at the hockey game". CH 28: "I have never seen it in Slovakia, I just know it, it is so square".
National emblem	D 29: "It's when I do something good that I get something". D 31: "My dad has such branded clothes because he goes to the forest and he needs to have such clothes there". D 38: "That's a Slovak brand. If it wasn't there, it means ban". CH 8: "The sign is to let people know where Slovakia is and where America is". CH 10: "Well the sign is about like this ....., like a fighter jet, a machine or a chimney". CH 11: "There is a tractor or a car". CH 13: "It's like a picture with letters and mountains". CH 22: "The Slovak emblem is very important for us. It says that we have Slovakia and it is ours. It is such, like a picture hanging".

## 5 Discussion

The research findings showed that the narrower concepts of Slovak statehood are more pronounced in 5-6-year-old children. According to the state curriculum, the studied concepts should be the content of children's learning in kindergartens. Narrower conceptions of concepts are associated with the pre-scientific concept or the naive concept. As many as 13% of the statements contained the answer "don't know". In this response we included the child's silence when he/she did not know the answer or was unsure of the answer and did not say anything. The broader context of the concepts emerged for 42% of the children in the research set. They had elements of an interpretive framework that contained at least one feature of scientific explanation. The narrower conceptions of concepts confirmed a statement from the theory of concept formation in child cognitive development (Jean Piaget). Children at the age studied distort the objective meanings of concepts (173 utterances) for those concepts that are more difficult to gain sensory experience with (capital, anthem, president, state). The research was conducted with children who do not live in the capital. Children also conceptualize concepts on the basis of similarities to other realities with which they have experience and essences (otherwise mediated reality) in accordance with Bloom's theory (110 utterances). In the narrower conceptions, children were least likely to use meanings that relied on social interactions (40 utterances). They mainly associated these statements with family members. This confirmed the claim from Vygotsky's theory that children interpret social interactions in a close social and cultural environment. Broader conceptions (scientific, relevant) confirmed the theoretical claims that children reproduce sensory experiences in conceptions (108 statements) and rely on concrete features of the content of conceptions (100 statements). They also begin to generalize the meanings of concepts (88 statements). Concepts of the symbols of Slovak statehood are mainly derived from children's experiences in everyday life (Table 4). If children perceived them in different contexts, they explained them by some features of objective reality.

## 6 Conclusions

The concepts being explored are abstract for 5-6-year-olds. According to the findings, it is questionable whether teaching children about symbols of statehood is meaningful in kindergarten when children's narrower conceptions of the concepts prevail at the exit point. Research is needed on other concepts in all educational areas. This learning should be part of primary education. In kindergarten, children should be educated in common concepts that are related to their childhood life. It is not possible to generalize the research results to the entire population of 5-6-year-old children, but only to the research population of children. We hypothesize that multiple variables influenced the children's responses, such as the child's personal characteristics, level of cognitive and language development, range of experiences, stimulating environment, and teacher-researchers' approach. Nonetheless, the investigation was meaningful. It approximated children's ability to verbally express ideas about concepts that are the content of kindergarten instruction. It can lead to thinking about the effectiveness of children's learning in kindergarten as well as to similar research. This study approached only the first level of children's understanding of concepts to the basic questions What is it and Who is it? Research in this area is also important because national curricula should be built on the results. Comprehensive research data is to be provided by the VEGA 1/0505/24 project Children's Preconceptions about the Phenomena of Reading Literacy.

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