



## The development of forms of negation in the acquisition of Turkish

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### Abstract

This study scrutinizes the development of negation in Turkish by analyzing of a monolingual Turkish-speaking child's speech between 28 to 32 months. The developmental progress of negative forms in parent-child exchanges is explained and presented with examples featuring a girl and her parents. The data has been obtained from the CHILDES database and is divided into three sets based on the age of the child: 2;4, 2;6 and 2;8. First, the paper attempted to outline how negation is formed in Turkish and analyzed the data to find patterns of negation to trace the development of negation in the child's speech. It aimed to prove how the child gradually expands her ability to use negative forms by using different communicative strategies over a five-month period. To facilitate this expansion, the child uses some strategies such as variety sets, multiple negative forms in collaboration, giving reasons and results in the speech. The child is identified to have acquired the forms of negation and strategies for a successful communication in a clear developmental sequence. The data reveals that the expansion goes from easy to linguistically and cognitively more challenging forms. The child acquires and uses free forms such as *yok* (not existent) initially, but later she can also produce more complex utterances such as *orada hiçkimse yok* (There isn't anyone there). Therefore, this study presents evidence for the existence of developmental expansion of each form to make negation, but there is no evidence of clear-cut stages going successively and following each other in a systematic order. Thus, the analysis proves that negation develops by expanding on the previous knowledge and the forms are used interconnectedly, so they mostly overlap.

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## 1. Introduction

The term “negation” and its implications have been a matter of discussion for long in the field of Linguistics. Even Aristotle attempted to answer the question of why human languages have varying negative structures. The reason might be that all human communication systems feature a representation of negation in form and speakers need a means for assigning truth value for lying, irony or coping with false or contradictory statements (Horn, 1989).

The forms of negation in child language have been studied widely and the recent studies have mostly concentrated on the developmental (Klima & Bellugi, 1966; Bellugi, 1967), functional aspects

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(Vaidyanathan, 1991, de Villiers & de Villiers, 1979) or semantic categories of negatives (Bloom, 1970; McNeill & McNeill, 1973; de Villiers & de Villiers, 1979). In a number of these studies, children's spontaneous speech with adults has been studied but with a focus on adult-child interaction. Moreover, these studies were in different languages and would likely have different results in the Turkish context. There is apparently no account of a methodical and detailed study about the acquisition and use of negation by children in the case of Turkish.

This paper intends to explain the patterns of negation found in the speech of a Turkish child (from approximately 28 to 32 months). A drastic change in her use of negation over a four-month period has been observed. At the end, she begins to produce certain negative constructions and their combinations, which have not previously been present in the data. This progress has been investigated by looking at the strategies she uses and tracing the expansion of her knowledge in negation.

The research paper is an exploration of developmental sequences of negation in the first language by a native child in Turkish. Such a choice has been made because

- Negation is one of the basic components of language that can provide rich data for the study of both syntax and semantics.
- Negation has been studied in many other languages, but not extensively in Turkish.
- Negation is assumed to acquire early as they are “easy” to learn (Krashen, 1981).
- Negation is vital for communication even at very early stages.

The research contributes further to the literature on the first language acquisition. In this article, the researcher makes an attempt to

- trace the development of the forms of negatives by one Turkish child in a longitudinal study,
- identify what strategies the child uses to expand her production of negation and to increase complexity,
- and compare the results of this study with those of previously published research.

## 2. Turkish Grammar

“Turkish is an Altaic language with the features of an object-verb language” (Greenberg, 1966; Lehman, 1978; Aksu-Koc & Slobin, 1985). “Although word order can show variation depending on pragmatic purposes, the dominant one is SOV (Subject + Object + Verb) with suffixed inflections, postpositions, and preposed demonstratives, numerals, possessives, adjectives, and relative clauses”. (Erguvanli, 1979; Aksu-Koc & Slobin, 1985).

Furthermore, Turkish is a highly agglutinating language and each morpheme works like a link in the chain by positioning in the string with their phonological and semantic features. “Each morph is syllabic and stress is placed on the final word. For example, noun suffixes are ordered as: stem + (plural) + (possessive) + (case)”, as mentioned in Aksu-Koc & Slobin (1985). The following is given to exemplify the possible combinations:

<b>Singular</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Plural</b>	<b>English</b>
kalem pencil (stem)	pencil	kalem-ler pencil PLU	pencils
kalem-im pencil POSS	my pencil	kalem-ler-im pencil PLU POSS	my pencils

kalem-de pencil LOC	on pencil	kalem-ler-de pencil PLU LOC	on pencils
kalem-im-de Pencil POSS LOC	on my pencil	kalem-ler-im-de pencil PLU POSS LOC	on my pencils

In Turkish, agglutination is demonstrated in verbs, too. Affixation is mostly realized by adding suffixes to the stem. Aksu-Koç (1988) revealed that “the inflectional verbal affixes are positioned in order, to mark tense/aspect, modality, negation, number and person. The tense/aspect suffixes are present progressive (-Iyor), aorist (-Ir), reported past (-mİş), future -(y)AcAK and definite past (-DI). They can be applied to the verb roots with proper phonological variants by taking the vowel and consonant harmony rules into consideration” (p. 17). “There are four different modality for various reasons and they are the neccessitative (-mAII), abilitative -(y)AbII), potential ((y)AbII), and conditional (-sA) suffixes and person suffixes mark the subject-verb agreement” (Aksu-Koç, 1988, p. 17).

## 2.1. Negative Forms in Turkish

There are four means of negation in Turkish. These are *ih hih*, *yok*, *değil* and *-mA*.

### 2.1.1. *ih-hih*

It is a universal negative marker, which can be applied to all types of predication after the model for negation of nonverbal predicates.

### 2.1.2. *Yok* ('No')

*Yok* is used to express non-existentiality. In other words, it is the negative of *var* ‘existent’ (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005).

Example: Oyuncağ-ım yok.  
Toy- POS NEG: EXIS  
‘My toy is not here (existent).’

### 2.1.3. *Değil* ('Not')

*Değil* is mostly used to make the negative form of nonverbal sentences (Underhill, 1976). The person suffix can follow it as it is shown below:

Example: Ben öğrenci değil-im.  
I student not 1SG  
‘I am not a student.’

According to Göksel and Kerslake (2005), “*Değil* can also be used for negating verbal sentences. In this case the verb is typically conjugated with the imperfective marker *-Iyor*, less commonly with the future marker *-(y)AcAK* or the perfective marker *-mİş*”:

Example: “Her yere taksiyle gid-iyor değil-im.  
go-IMPF not-1SG  
‘It’s not the case that I go everywhere by taxi.’ ” (Göksel, Kerslake, 2005)

### 2.1.4. The negative marker *-mA*

The negative form of a verb can be made through the insertion of the suffix *-mA* (*-A* is in capitals as it harmonizes with the last vowel of the verb stem, and can possibly turn into *-e*, *-ı*, *-i*, *-u* and *-ü*). It is located between the verb stem and the modal, tense and person suffixes (Underhill, 1976).

Example: bin-me-(y)eceğ-(i)m  
 ride-NEG- FUT-1SG  
 ‘I won’t ride (it).’

However, “there are some irregularities in the combination of the negative marker with” (Goksel & Kerslake, 2005):

“the aorist -(A/I)r (producing the combination –mA-z):

gel-ir	gel-me-z
come-AOR-3SG	come-NEG-3SG

the possibility suffix -(y)A:

yap-abil-di	yap-a-ma-dı
do-ABIL-PAST-3SG	do-ABIL-NEG-PAST ” (Goksel & Kerslake, 2005).

## 2.2. Negation in Child’s Speech

Some children can make attempts to simplify the system of negation. They can pick up one of the forms and then overuse it (Aksu-Koç, Slobin, 1986). They seem to acquire a simple rule to negate utterances and then overgeneralise it by applying it to all predication (noun or verb). They simply add negation word *yok* (Example d), *değil* (Example b), *gitti* (Example c) (acquired as an amalgam word to say nonexistent, thus it has the same meaning with *yok*) or *ih huh* (Example a) to the sentences which are kept as they do not need the morphophonemic changes to be meaningful. It can be said that the acquisition of the negative in Turkish is relatively simpler than other languages such as English, in which a child has to deal with many types of auxiliaries (don’t, didn’t, haven’t, etc.) to be able to make correct sentences. In Turkish, verbal predicates are negated only by inserting the negative particle –mA- immediately after the verb stem. For example, al-dı (take-PAST-3SG), al-ma-dı (take- NEG-PAST-3SG). For clarification, please see the examples below (Aksu-Koc & Slobin, 1985).

a. Yap-ıcağ-ım ih. I won’t do (it).

Do FUT 1SG NEG Intended meaning: yap-ma-yacağ-ım(do-NEG-FUT-1SG)

b. Anne otur, kalk değil. Mother sit, don’t get up.

Mother sit get up NEG Intended meaning: kalk-ma (get up- NEG)

c. Baba gitti. Daddy has gone.

Daddy gone. Intended meaning: Daddy isn’t existent

d. Ay, koy-du-m yok. I didn’t put it

Oh put PAST 1SG NEG Intended meaning: koy-ma-dı-m (put-NEG-PAST-1SG)

## 2.3. The Developmental Stages of Negation

It may be challenging for a child to be aware of the system of negation in acquisition “because negation exhibits a great deal of language-particular variations, a child may not initially see how his language represents negation” (Abdulkarim & Roeper, 1998, p. 39). Klima & Bellugi (1966) claim that there are three developmental stages of the acquisition of negation.

Stage 1: Negation in external position

The negative element no is used externally in the sentence. No negatives are produced in the clause. There is no auxiliary verb use.

- a. No eating that one.
- b. No Fraser drink all tea.
- c. No Adam find truck.

#### Stage 2: Negation in internal position

The negative elements no and not are used internally in the sentence. Auxiliary verb is still not available.

- a. I not swimming now.
- b. I not going to be baker.
- c. I not fall.

#### Stage 3: Full mastery

The child can produce target-like negated utterances.

- a. Don't get on my feet.
- b. I don't see you.
- c. I can't wear it.

Wode (1976) also proposed four stages for the acquisition of negation systems (pp. 92-101):

Stage 1: one word negation

Stage 2: anaphoric negation

Stage 3: non-anaphoric negation

Stage 4: intra-sentential negation

Wode's and Klima & Bellugi's proposals for stages are comparable. While the former focuses on the very early stages of development (one word), the latter mostly focuses on the position of the negated item. It is also worth mentioning here that this classification was made for English and it is unlikely to fit it into Turkish. In Turkish, as Aksu-Koc & Slobin (1985) state, children use simplification of the negative system, so they adopt a negative form for themselves and appropriate it for every occasion (For further details, see Section 2.2. Negation in Child's Speech). Turkish does not feature clear-cut and distinct stages of negation as they mostly overlap. Also, a Turkish child does not typically move from one clear stage to the subsequent due to the fact that s/he can strategically use multiple forms in the same sentence. Therefore, it can be misleading to think that one stage of negation ends and the next starts in a well-defined order in Turkish.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The data features a monolingual Turkish-speaking child's interactions with mainly her parents, grandmother and the investigator. The data includes a girl named Burçak, who was recorded for five months between the ages of 2;4 and 2;8 in three slots (2;4, 2;6 and 2;8). The CHILDES database is the only source the featured data in this study.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

A qualitative as well as quantitative analysis have been made to be able to understand why and how certain patterns occur. The patterns help determine the development of the acquisition of the negative formation. For each category of the analysis, the child's speech is analysed repeatedly. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative research complements each other and makes the analysis more reliable.

For this study, three sets of data from the same child have been analysed. As mentioned in the previous sections, there are mainly four different ways to make negative in Turkish.

**Table 1.** The percentage of the child utterance

Sets	Age	Total Utterance	Child Utterance	Percent
Set 1	2;4	339	148	44%
Set 2	2;6	1232	692	56%
Set 3	2;8	883	421	48%

There are 148 utterances that the child produces out of 339 at the age of 2;4, 692 utterances out of 1232 at the age of 2;6 and 421 child utterances out of 883 utterances produced by others. This is the equivalent of 44% (2;4), 56% (2;6) and 48% (2;8). This means that the child nearly manages to produce half of the conversation in each data set.

**Table 2.** The percentage of the child negative utterance

Sets	Age	Child Total Utterance	Child Negative Utterance	Percent
Set 1	2;4	148	7	5%
Set 2	2;6	692	52	7%
Set 3	2;8	421	45	10%

There are 7 utterances with negative elements, out of 148 utterances in the first set (2;4), 52 out of 692 (2;6) and 45 out of 421 utterances in the final set (2;8). It is clear that the child's use of negation gradually increases.

It can be hard to decide whether the negative inflected utterances are imitated or not when they are uttered for the first time. In these examples, the questions directed to the child are also in negation. The child is assessed with her following or previous utterances. Another point is that, she does not attempt to imitate the word by also using the question marker as soon as the first question is directed to her. Instead, she agrees with the investigator and gives a negative answer with the content of the picture. The utterances cited in these examples (Extract 1 and 2) proves to not to be an imitation.

Extract 1 (2;6)

1 \*EXP: anino binicek , sen binmiyecekmisin ?

Mum will get on, won't you get on?

2 \*CHI: ben bin-mi-yece-m [= binmiyeceğim] .

I get on NEG FUT 1SG

I won't get on.

Extract 2 (2;8)

1 \*EXP: oturmuyormu ?

Doesn't it sit down?

2 \*CHI: otur-mu-yor .

Sit NEG PRES CONT 3SG

It doesn't sit down.

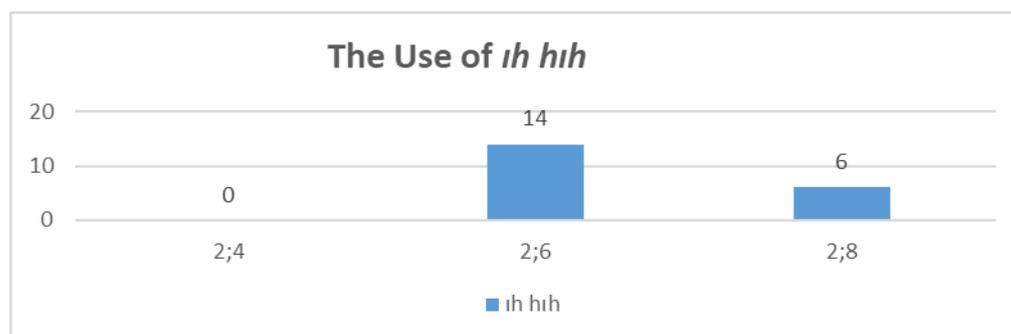
There are four ways of forming negation in Turkish as clarified in Section 2. These are *ih hih* (vocal negative response), *değil* (negation for mainly nominal sentences), *yok* (non-existent) as the negated form of *var* (existent) and *-mA* to make verbal sentences negative. Table 3 illustrates the number of use of the four different means of making negation in each set with an addition of the total number as well.

**Table 3.** Negative Elements in the Child's Turkish according to age intervals

Age	<i>ih hih</i>	<i>değil</i>	<i>yok</i>	<i>-mA</i>	Total
2;4	0	0	0	7	7
2;6	7	0	13	32	52
2;8	3	0	11	31	45

#### 4.1. The Use of '*ih hih*' (can be *ahh*, *uh huh*)

**Chart 1.** The use of *ih hih* according to age intervals



The child never uses *ih hih*, which is the sound gesture for a negative response in the first set of data, at the age of 2;4. In the second set, the child uses it for 7 times out of 52, which is the 14% of the total negative use of the child. As the child has only developed limited forms of negation, she employs this sound gesture to state her disagreement. The data shows that she also uses *ih hih* with other ways of negation as shown in the example.

Extract 3 (age 2;6)

1 \*EXP: peki , (ağaca)çık-mış , niye inemiyor ?

Ok, it went up (the tree), why can't it get down?

- 2 \*CHI: işte .  
That's why.
- 3 \*CHI: çık -a -ma -mış.  
Went up ABIL NEG PAST 3SG  
It couldn't go up.
- 4 \*EXP: çıkamamışmı?  
Couldn't it go up?
- 5 \*CHI: ıh .

Extract 3 shows that the child already knows how to make negative form of the verb (çıkamamış) and proves it in line 3, but she is not probably willing to use the same verb with the same form once more, so she strategically uses another form of negation at her service, which is 'ıh'. The data reveals that, ıh hıh is generally used as a reply to a negative question as sampled in Extract 1.

The child also uses this vocal negation form to answer affirmative existential questions. Generally these questions are answered with 'yok', the negative existential. She can also use yok correctly, but in some cases, she prefers *ıh hıh* to *yok* as in the Extract 4:

Extract 4: (2;8)

- 1 \*DAN: daha varmı? Are there any more? (existent?)
- 2 \*CHI : ıh .

The child continues to use ıh hıh at the age of 2;8. In the last set of data, she forms 45 negative utterances. She uses ıh hıh only for 3 times out of the total. Clearly, the frequency of its use drops from 14% to 6% (Chart 1). She uses ıh hıh functionally as a way of stating her disagreement.

It would be wrong to say that it is only the first stage of forming negation because she continues to use it while she can use other ways of making negation, too. Her language is rich in different forms of negation, so we can say that there is no clear-cut stages here. They mostly overlap and can vary from one child to another according to the variables.

#### 4.2. The Use of 'değil'

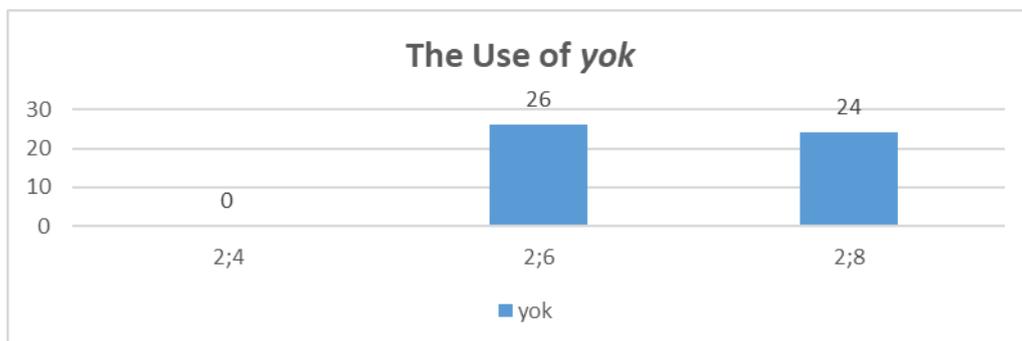
The child never uses *değil* to form negation in all data sets (2;4, 2;6 and 2;8). She can understand the meaning of *değil* because it has been used by the investigator and her parents, but she has never produced it. It can be because using *değil* as a reply to questions is an option for her and she makes a deliberate decision to go for other options. In other ways, she prefers an affirmative sentence (*saati var*), not a negative one (*bilezik değil*) (Line 2 in Extract 5). It may be because she does not know how to produce *değil* compared to other structures (*var*, 'existent') that she is more familiar with and already puts into practice or she might not be familiar with the noun bracelet, so she might have preferred this structure.

Extract 5 (2;6)

- 1 \*EXP: o saat ama bilezik değil ki .  
But it is not a watch
- 2 \*EXP: saat mi , bilezik mi anınonunki ?  
Is it a watch or bracelet that belongs to my mum?
- 3 \*CHI: saati var .  
She has a watch.

## 4.3. The Use of 'yok'

Chart 2. The use of yok according to age intervals



It has been observed that the child does not use *yok* at the age of 2;4 and starts to produce it at the age of 2;6. Chart 2 highlights that the use of *yok* slightly drops at the age of 2;8 from 26% to 24%, but the way the child uses it still expands. When she is 2 years and 4 months old, she largely uses it alone as an answer (See Extract 6). But later, she also states what is not existent and at the age of 2;8, the child produces longer answers with *yok* by expressing reasons and results of why something or somebody is non-existent. Furthermore, the child uses *yok* to answer the questions such as *var mı?* (is there..?) (See Extract 6) or *...nerede?* (where...?).

Extract 6 (2;6)

- 1 \*DAN: tankın içinde şöför varmı?  
Is there a driver in the tank?
- 2 \*CHI: yok.  
No (not existent).

In Extract 7, the child uses *yok* in a variety set to make her point clearer and stronger as well as telling what is not existent.

Extract 7 (2;6)

- 1 \*CHI: sapı da yok.  
There is no handle, too.
- 2 \*CHI: sapı yok.  
There is no handle.
- 3 \*CHI: bak sapı yok.  
Look, there is no handle.

In Extract 8, the child uses the past-inflected form of *yok*: *yok-muş*. This again shows how she expands her use of *yok* in the context. She uses –mUş to express a newly discovered state of affairs. The child realizes that “there is no wood to put in the middle” in the course of the dialogue, which is a new discovery for her. Thus, she successfully uses a more complex word: *yokmuş* (by combining the negative form + past inflection) instead of *yok* to show her surprise.

Extract 8 (2;6)

- 1 \*DAN: ortasına ne koyacaksın?  
What will you put in the middle?
- 2 \*CHI: buraya tahtaları koyacam [= koyacağım] .

I will put the wood here

3 \*CHI: yok-muş.

NEG- PAST (evidential)

There was not. (not existent)

At the age of 2;8, she uses *yok* 11 times out of 45 negative utterances (24%). She expands her speech by adding up to her knowledge of *yok*. In Extract 9, she uses another verb to explain why her mother is not existent. It should be noted that Turkish children use *gitti* ('gone') as an amalgam word to state non-existence as an early expression of negation (MacWhinney, 1976). Here, the girl might still use *gitti* as an alternative, but in this case, she uses double negation *gitti* and *yok* together to produce a stronger statement by expressing the reason why this is so.

Extract 9 (2;8)

1 \*EXP: nerde anino? (The child refers to her mum as 'anino')

Where is (your) mother?

2 \*EXP: evde yok.

She is not at home

3 \*CHI: gitti yok.

She is gone, not here (because she is gone, (so) she is not existent (at home))

Another point is that the child starts to use *yok* to answer the questions starting with *niçin* or *neden* (why...?). In the second set of data (age: 2;6), she could only use it for the questions of existentiality. In Extract 10, she uses *yok* to respond the investigator's question. This extract reveals that the child can functionally use different forms of negations depending on the context. In Line 2, the child proves that she can use the negative form *-mA* in *uçamıyorum* ('I can't fly'), but this would not be appropriate for the question in Line 3, so she chooses another form of negation that is more suitable for the utterance. By repeating the negativity, but not using the same form of it, children start to use it as a linguistic device. In this way, they can stress their point of what the adult suggests, requests or asks (Al-Buainain, 2003). This type of negation can be possibly formed with *yok* by also adding the negative morpheme *-mA* (Al-Buainain, 2003).

Extract 10 (2;8)

1 \*EXP: sen uçabiliyormusun ?

Can you fly?

2 \*CHI: uç-a-mı-yor-um .

Fly-ABIL-NEG-PRE CONT-1SG

I can't fly.

3 \*EXP: niçin ?

Why (not)?

4 \*CHI: kanat-lar-ım yok .

wing-PLU-POSS NEG (because) I don't have wings.

Furthermore, there are some expressions interacting with negation that we need to mention here. Many expressions are restricted to occur with negative sentences, which are available in the data. They are produced only by a combination of one of the expressions that mark the negation (*-mA*, *değil* or *yok*). The data shows that at the age of 2;8, the child starts using these expressions such as *hiç-* (any-) to go

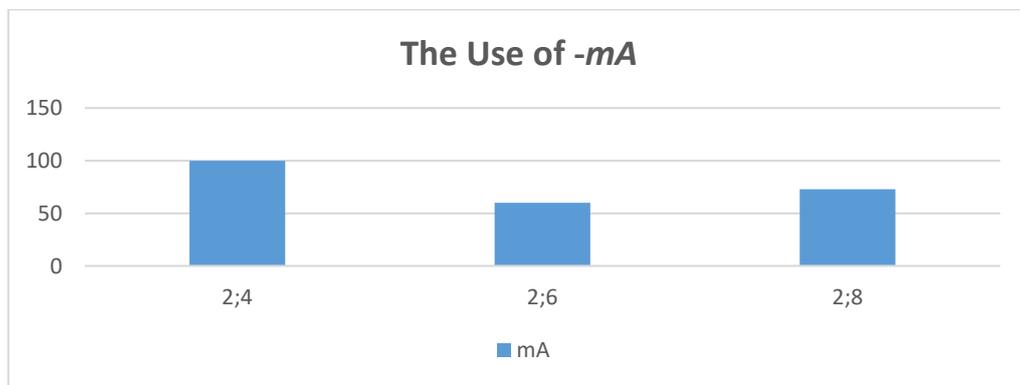
with negative statements. As sampled in Extract 11, *hiçkimse* (anyone) is used with the negative structure *yok*. This is another evidence of extending knowledge on the negative structure *yok*.

Extract 11 (2;8)

- 1 \*EXP: burda kim oturuyor? (referring to a captain's deck)  
Who is sitting here?
- 2 \*CHI: orada hiçkimse yok.  
There anyone NEG  
There isn't anyone there. (not existent)

#### 4.4. The Use of '-mA'

**Chart 3.** The use of –mA according to age intervals



This is the only structure that is used in all data sets. At the age of 2 years and 4 months, the child uses this negative structure 7 times out of 7 instances. She does not seem to be experiencing any problems with inflecting the negative suffix –mA with the verbs. In other words, she can successfully manage the vowel harmony in the verbs such as *yeMİyor*, *bulaMAz*, *görMEMişti*, *oynaMİyor*.

Extract 12 (2;4)

- 1 \*EXP: niye gagalıyorlar , niçin ?  
Why are they pecking, why?
- 2 \*CHI: mama ye-mi-yor.  
Food eat NEG PROG 3SG  
(because) it isn't eating food.
- 3 \*EXP: onun için gagalıyorlar mı?  
Are they pecking because of that?

Even in the first set of data, at the age of 2;4, she can use negation with –mA. Extract 12 shows that she is aware of that the verb *yemek* (to eat) is transitive, so she uses it with the object 'food'. She also uses suitable tense for the context, which is the same with the tense the question has been asked (progressive).

Extract 13 (2;4)

- 1 \*CHI: bunu ağaca götürmüş babası ,bulamaz diyorlar. (playing hide and seek)  
His father took him to the tree, they say (that) they can't find (me).
- 2 \*EXP: ne oyunu bu?

What game is it?

3 \*CHI: bul-a-ma-z , saklamışlar , beni bulamaz diyorlar .

Find ABIL NEG 3SG

They can't find, (because) they hid (it), they say 'they can't find me'.

At the age of 2;4, she uses *-mA* very well to be able to tell a story, so she uses the same verb in different times successfully when her turn comes. In Extract 13, the child and the investigator talks about the game, hide and seek. It is evinced that the child uses *bulamaz* for three times in her answers. In line 1 and 3, the child justifies why they can't find it. In line 1, his father has taken him to the tree, so they can't find her. Also in line 3, they can't find him because they hid it, so they say that "they can't find me". She uses all her structural knowledge –including negation- to construct a narrative. She does not use connectives for expressing result and reason such as *çünkü* and *bu yüzden* (because and so). However, she connects her ideas very well by using verbs to compensate for her lack of knowledge on connectives.

In Chart 3, the child forms negation for 52 times in the second data (age 2;6) and more than half of it (32) are constructed using this form (60%). It is evident that there is a dramatic increase in the use of the form. She used *-mA* for negation for 7 times in the first data, at the age of 2;4. She is quite capable of inflecting the verbs for altering tenses and persons.

Extract 14 (2;6)

1 \*EXP: senin tüfeğin nerde ?

Where is your rifle?

2 \*CHI: bul-a-ma-dı-m.

Find ABIL NEG PAST 1SG

I couldn't find it

Interestingly, at the age of 2;6, the child does not use *yok* for *nerede...?* (where...?) questions anymore. In Extract 14, she uses *bulamadım* (I couldn't find it) or *bilmem* (I don't know) instead of *yok* (not existent). This shows that when she cannot find anything, it does not mean that it is not existent, it is only not available that time or she cannot see it. These extracts can be examples of the child's mental development in terms of "object permanence". By expressing that she cannot find it rather than saying *yok* (not existent), she refers that it is still existent. Piaget (1954, 1964) claims in the Theory of Cognitive Development that "this stage (the first stage) requires a child to form a mental representation (i.e. a schema) for the object". Her use of negation reflects her cognitive development, which is evident in her speech and construction of a plausible narrative.

In this data set, there are variety sets where the child uses the negative form of the same verb in different tenses. It shows that she is capable of forming the negative forms of tenses. She produces three different negative forms of the same verb in different tenses:

Dur-mu-yor Stand NEG PROG

Dur-a-mı-yor Stand ABIL NEG PROG

Dur-a-ma-dı Stand ABIL NEG PAST

Extract 15 (2;6)

1 \*CHI: dur-mu-yor .

stand NEG PROG 3SG

It doesn't stand up.

- 2 \*DAN: durmuyor ?  
It doesn't stand (up)?
- 3 \*CHI: ih ih .  
vocal negative response
- 4 \*EXP: aa, böyle dursun.  
Let it stand like this.
- 5 \*CHI: şurda [= şurada] dur-mu-yor.  
PRONOUN stand NEG PROG 3SG  
It doesn't stand (up) there.
- 6 \*CHI: orda [= orada] dur-a-mı-yor.  
PRONOUN stand ABIL NEG PROG 3SG  
It can't stand (up) there.
- 7 \*DAN: aa , tabii durmuyor .  
Yes, it doesn't stand (up).
- 8 \*CHI: şurda dursun .  
Let it stand (up) there.
- 9 \*CHI: orda dursun [?] .  
Let it stand (up) there?
- 10 \*CHI: ha .
- 11 \*CHI: o bebek.  
that baby
- 12 \*CHI: o bebek.  
that baby
- 13 \*DAN: ne yapıyor? (no response from the child)  
What is (the baby) doing?
- 14 \*DAN: yaa, o duruyor.  
It stands (up).
- 15 \*CHI: ayak-ta dur-a-mı-yor bebek.  
Foot LOC stand ABIL NEG PROG 3SG  
The baby can't stand up.
- 16 \*DAN: duramıyor ?  
It can't stand up?
- 17 \*CHI: ih ih .
- 18 \*CHI: dur-a-ma-dı.  
Stand ABIL NEG PAST 3SG  
It couldn't stand.

In extract 16, the child uses the negative form of the verb *bulmak* (to find), extending her speech by expressing the reason for her statement. At first, the data might lead to misunderstanding as she responds

to a negative question by only repeating a part of the question. There are also cases like this in this data, which we cannot precisely claim that the child comprehends the structure and can produce the negative form of it as s/he only repeats large part of the same structure. It could be so if we only looked at the first couple of lines, but in Line 3, she proves that she has comprehended it well and can produce it by giving the reason.

Extract 16 (2;6)

- 1 \*DAN: bulamadın mı davulunu ?  
Did you not find your drum?
- 2 \*CHI: bul-a-ma-dı-m .  
Find ABIL NEG PAST 1SG  
I couldn't find it.
- 3 \*CHI: bulamadım , nenem kaldırmış.  
I couldn't find it, (because) my grandmother put it away.

In the last set of data, the child is at the age of 2 years and 8 months. She used *-mA* for 31 times out of 45 to make negation (73%) (See Chart 3). In other words, the child mostly uses this structure to form negation. She is quite competent in moving different parts of the sentences to manage the flow of the conversation.

In Extract 17, there is a sample of a pragmatic variation set. The child uses a sequence of utterance with a constant intention, but varying the form. This can be seen mostly in parental speech, but child speech is largely affected by parental speech (Küntay & Slobin, 2002). It would be expected because the child uses parental speech as an input. Therefore, detecting some traces of her parents speech in the child's output, or production should not be surprising. In this extract, she uses the same sentences by reordering or by deleting some referential terms. Fernald claims that Japanese mothers use this type of talk to get their child do an act or ease the communicative bulk of the sentence (1993). In this case, she repeats the same content so as to make the most of comprehension and compliance on the hearer. She changes the word order in the 1st, 2nd and 5th lines as follows:

- |         |                          |            |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| (V S O) | inanmıyorum ben sana     | (1st line) | don't believe- I-you     |
| (S O V) | ben sana inanmıyorum     | (2nd line) | I -you -don't believe    |
| (S V O) | (ben) inanmıyorum babaya | (5th line) | (I)-don't believe-in dad |

The verb in negative form moves from the beginning of the sentence to the end successively in line 1 and 2. And in line 5, the word order changes again with the deletion of object pronoun 'you' and the addition of 'dad' as object of the sentence. In this final data set, she shows that she can manage the use of negation correctly not only in form but also in meaning effectively as a communicative act. She repeats this variety sets many times with negative forms in the data. Obviously, as she becomes proficient in the use of structures, she goes beyond the structure level and keeps adding on the knowledge she has already acquired.

Extract 17 (2;8)

- 1 \*CHI: inan-mı-yor-um ben sana . V S O      don't believe- I -you.  
Believe NEG PRE CONT 1SG  
I don't believe you.
- 2 \*CHI: ben sana inanmıyorum .S O V      I -you -don't believe  
I don't believe you.

- 3 \*EXP: öyle mi ?  
Is it so?
- 4 \*EXP: şaka mı yapıyor baba ?  
Does your father make a joke?
- 5 \*CHI: inanmıyorum babaya . (S) V O (I)- don't believe- in (my) dad.  
I don't believe in (my) dad.
- 6 \*EXP: inanmıyormusun ?  
Don't you believe (him)?
- 7 \*CHI: a ah .  
Vocal negative gesture

In Extract 18, the child uses expressions such as *hiç kimse*, *hiçbir şey* (anybody, anything) in interaction with the verb in negative form. At the age of 2;8, the data shows that she can also use it with *yok* in Extract 11.

Extract 18 (2;8)

- 1 \*EXP: peki ne içer kediler?  
Ok what do cats drink?
- 2 \*CHI: hiçbirşey ye-me-z.  
Anything eat NEG PRES 3SG  
It doesn't eat anything.

#### 4.5. Negative Question

Negative questions are formed with the combination of both questions and negative constructions. In the data, there are only two samples of negative questions. Langendoen (1970) points out that “negative questions are semantically problematic because they do not function as denials of questions” (pp. 155-69). Al-Buainain (2003) claims that because of its complexity, negative interrogation is acquired in a later stage. “In Turkish, to create yes/no questions and others, the question particle *mi* is added; and for wh-questions, phrases such as *ne zaman* ‘when’, *kim* ‘who’ or *neden* ‘why’ are used” (Al-Buainain 2003). Interrogatives with question particles are developed later than the Yes/ No types. Thus, it would not be wrong to say that acquiring questions in Turkish is easier than many other languages such as English. Children only add *-mi* to the end of the verb by inflecting the suffix. Forming a negative question is not very complicated, too. However, it can challenge children cognitively.

Extract 19 (2;6)

- \*CHI: niçin yap-ma-m ? why don't I do (it)?  
Why do NEG PRES

Extract 20 (2;8)

- \*CHI: niye dur-mu-yor bu? why isn't it standing?  
Why stand NEG PRES CONT PRO 3SG it

In the data, both questions (wh- and why?) are information questions. In these questions, the child is aware that by only adding the wh- question word to the sentence, she can make negative questions in Turkish. There are no negative yes/ no questions in the data, which can be challenging and confusing for the child to use, which can get both positive and sometimes a negative answer from the hearer to

mean positive. (A: Aren't you coming with us? B: No, I am not (coming)./ Yes, I am (coming)). These questions are also used as a communicative act to show surprise to the hearer, but this is expected to develop at a later stage.

## 5. Conclusion

Negative constructions have syntactic and semantic properties, so we cannot say that they are simply negative version of affirmatives. The developmental course and types of negatives in parent-child dialogues has been studied with a large number of examples. It is revealed that the child acquires the forms of negation in a developmental sequence and also shows that she expands her use of negation in each set of data. The child initially uses free forms of negation. For example, she uses *yok* as an independent answer in Extract 6, and she improves the use of *yok* as a simple answer as in (*tankın içinde şöför var mı?* -Is there a driver in the tank? *yok* No (not existent)) to a stage where she can use *yok* followed by an object (*sapı da yok*- There is no handle, too) in Extract 7. In another example, she uses *yok* with evidential past *-miş* to show her surprise in Extract 8. In the following two extracts (Extract 9 and 10), she displays her ability to use *yok* to express the result of an action (she has gone so she is not existent) in order to answer the information questions (why, in these two cases). As clearly emphasised, each time she uses the form *yok*, she has expanded on it. The development can be in the meaning of the structure, or in the form. In other words, it can happen morphologically, syntactically or semantically as she develops cognitively.

The children's utterances mirror a continuum of development. As the introduction of new linguistic forms increases, the use of particular forms change gradually. In other words, the children's utterances evince increasingly complex patterns. This complexification involves the substitution of general rules and replacing them with the more specific based on the context. The development also goes from the general to more specific. In Extract 11, the statement, "*orada hiçkimse yok*" (There isn't anyone there.) requires semantic, syntactic and also morphological knowledge to use *hiçkimse* and *yok* together. As the children's analytical understanding of linguistic knowledge develops, the complexity of her language follows the upward trend.

According to Aksu-Koc & Slobin (1985), "Turkish children acquire the entire set of noun inflections and much of the verbal paradigm before 2 years old". The data confirms this statement as the child could produce negative sentences with *ih hih* and *-mA* (2;4), but the production is poor in terms of the amount and variety. As she grows up, her use of negation reveals complexity and richness.

This study approves that children commonly stay on a hierarchical course in terms of accuracy of negative production, but they do not follow a strict sequence. Instead, the observed child in this study gradually develops her ability to produce negation. Another point to reveal is that the negative forms are used in absolute harmony in the context. Even though the child knows how to make negative form of a verb with *-mA*, she still uses the others to support her point or to show her opinion in a recognizable manner.

Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that various aspects of acquisition interact with each other in the development of negation. These are the development of word order, which is about the placing of a word in the proper position regarding the verb, the development of tense, which is about the ability to realize negative particles as tense carriers, the development of inflection, which is about the ability to express number, gender, person and tense. They all feed into the development of negation. In other words, this means using the correct form of the negation (for sentence type) and placing it in the right position in relation to the verb. As a final word, the acquisition of verbal paradigms and their inflections reflect a variety of syntactic relationships in the progress of negation, which can be recommended as a potential research topic in the context of Turkish children's first language acquisition.

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## Türkçe dil ediniminde olumsuz ifade şekillerinin gelişimi

### Öz

Bu çalışma, Türkçe konuşmanın tek dilli bir çocuğunun 28 ila 32 ay arasındaki konuşmalarını analiz ederek, olumsuzluğun gelişmesini inceliyor. Dil ediniminin ilk evrelerinde ebeveyn-çocuk etkileşimlerinde olumsuzluk biçimlerinin gelişimi, bir kızın ve ailesinin verdiği verilerden örnek teşkil eden örneklerle tartışılmaktadır. Veriler CHILDES veritabanından elde edilmiştir ve çocuğun yaşına göre üç gruba ayrılmıştır: 2;4, 2;6 ve 2; 8. İlk olarak, Türkçede olumsuzluğun nasıl oluştuğunu ana hatlarıyla ortaya koymaya çalışmış ve çocuğun konuşmasında olumsuzluk gelişimini izlemek için olumsuzluk kalıplarını bulmak için verileri analiz etmiştir. Bu, çocuğun beş ayda farklı iletişim stratejileri kullanarak olumsuz formları kullanma becerisini aşamalı olarak nasıl genişlettiğini kanıtlamayı amaçladı. Bu genişlemeyi kolaylaştırmak için çocuk; çeşitli kümeler, işbirliği içinde birden çok olumsuz biçim, konuşmada nedenler ve sonuçlar vererek bazı stratejiler kullanıyor. Çocuğun, başarılı bir iletişim için olumsuzluk ve stratejilerin biçimlerini net bir gelişimsel sırayla edinmiş olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Veriler, genişlemenin kolay dil ve bilişsel açıdan kolaydan daha zorlayıcı biçimlere doğru devam ettiğini ortaya koyuyor. Çocuğun başta yok olmak üzere özgür biçimleri kazanır ve kullanır fakat daha sonra, orada hiçkimse yok gibi daha karmaşık sözler üretebilir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, her formun olumsuz yapmak için gelişimsel olarak genişlediğinin varlığına ilişkin kanıt sunmaktadır; ancak adımların net bir şekilde aşamalı ve birbiri ardına gittiği ve birbirlerini sistematik bir düzende izlediğine dair herhangi bir kanıt bulunmamaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu analiz; olumsuzlamanın önceki bilgiyi genişleterek geliştiğini ve formların birbirine bağlı olarak kullanıldığını, dolayısıyla da çoğunlukla çakıştığını kanıtlıyor.

*Anahtar sözcükler: Olumsuzluk; olumsuzluk biçimleri; dil edinimi; olumsuz biçimlerinin gelişimi; çocuk konuşması.*

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