

CONVERSATIONAL BEHAVIORS OF MONOLINGUAL AND BILINGUAL CHILDREN: A STUDY ON EPISODES AND INITIATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Conversations shape social interactions and conversational rules shape understanding among the participants. Among these conversational rules, initiations, verbal or non-verbal, are one of the basic rules. Initiations are important in the sense that they signal where a certain stretch of discourse, in other words, episodes, starts and ends in long stretches of discourse. Each episode in a conversation continues the same topic and contributes to topical coherence. Therefore, applying conversational rules are important at all stages of language development since it will prevent communication breakdowns. In this study, the focus is on the type of episodes that take place in conversations and how episodes are initiated by both monolingual Turkish-speaking and bilingual Turkish-Danish-speaking children. For this purpose, group conversations of monolingual and bilingual children were analyzed in terms of episodes and how these episodes are initiated. The results show that conversational skills continues to develop at school age. Being a monolingual or bilingual also makes a difference in conversational skills.

Keywords: Conversational Skills, Episodes, Initiations, Monolingual, Bilingual

TEKDİLLİ VE ÇİFTDİLLİ ÇOCUKLARIN SÖYLEŞİ BECERİLERİ: SÖYLEŞİ BÖLÜMLERİ VE SÖYLEŞİ BAŞLATMA ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

ÖZ

Sözlü etkileşimin devamlılığı katılımcıların söylem kurallarına uyması ile gerçekleşir. Sözlü iletişimin devamlılığını sağlayan öğelerden biri de birden daha fazla katılımcının yer aldığı, birden daha fazla konunun konuşulduğu karşılıklı konuşmalarda konu devamlılığını sağlamaktır. Söyleşi becerileri arasında sözlü veya sözsüz araçlarla yeni bir konunun başlatılması ve söyleşinin konular çerçevesinde devam ettirilmesi de yer almaktadır. Bu nedenle, söyleşi becerilerinin uygulanması dil gelişiminin her döneminde önem kazanmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, çoklu katılımcıların yer aldığı ve birden fazla konunun konuşulduğu söyleşilerde söyleşi bölümlerinin nasıl başlatıldığı ve hangi çeşit bölümlerle konunun devam ettirildiği ele alınmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, söyleşi becerilerinin tekdilli ve çiftdilli dil gelişiminde farklılık yaratıp yaratmadığı da incelenmiştir. Bu nedenle, tekdilli Türkçe konuşan çocuklarla ikidilli Türkçe-Danca konuşan çocukların söyleşileri bölümler ve bölümlerin nasıl başlatıldığı açısından

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incelenmiştir. İnceleme sonuçları, söyleşi becerilerinin okul çağında da devam ettiğini ve tek dilli veya iki dilli olmanın fark yarattığını da göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Söyleşi Becerileri; Söyleşi Bölümleri; Söyleşi Başlatma; Tek Dillilik; İki Dillilik

Introduction

Conversations form the core of everyday interactions with verbal and nonverbal conduct. Social interaction is facilitated through conversations. Conversations are considered as activities which enable interaction among the speakers since speakers negotiate meaning and achieve communicative goals. Conversations, therefore, do not start or occur by themselves randomly; on the contrary, they are structured communicative units. These interactional and communicative characteristics attribute conversations an orderly nature, which is governed not only by linguistic but social requirements as well. Analysis of conversations draws on the characteristics of social interaction. Social interactions is not constrained with linguistic descriptions of language only because conversations bear their own rules and own structures to be accounted as social interactions. Conversation analysis, therefore, has been the concern of linguistic and sociolinguistic studies as well (Schiffrin, 1994; Hutchby & Woofit, 1998; Woofit, 2005; Sidnell, 2010; Sidnell & Stivers, 2012; Gee, 2014).

1. Theoretical Framework

Conversational rules are prominent in adults' world; on the other hand, it plays an important role during the course of language acquisition since children should acquire and develop the ability to structure conversations to achieve communicative goals. Conversational ability starts as early as 9 months when the child realizes the existence of the external world and makes the external world as the topic of the conversation (Stephens & Matthews, 2014). They become aware of the basic conversational rules before they start talking. While listening to mothers or caregivers interacting with them, children notice turn taking and take turns by cooing, gesturing or laughing, which develop conversational interaction. Not only taking turns but initiation of conversations are also encouraged at this stage. Development of the conversational pragmatics is a very important part of language development. What is meant by conversational pragmatics is for the children to understand the meaning, to be able to recognize the intended meaning and then to figure out the implication of what the speaker is trying to convey. Adults can go beyond what is said and what is encoded linguistically. That is, adults have the required linguistic competence to interpret the implicit information and understand the intended meaning. Children's interpreting language is a part of a conversational competence and of conceptual development. Development of the conceptual awareness, linguistic sensitivity and awareness of the contribution of extra linguistic context contribute to the development of communicative,

consequently, conversational skills (Siegal & Surian, 2007). With the developing linguistic and cognitive development, conversational production go beyond a turn or a couple of turns and the development continues well into the school years. Formal education inevitably contributes both to the linguistic and conceptual development as well as to the social skills.

Conversations are deployed to achieve a communicative goal; that is why, they should be initiated and interactionally achieved by the participants (Liddicoat, 2007). Initiating a conversation is an essential part of socializing, which seems rather difficult to some people initiate a conversation. Some suggest ways of verbal initiations and some state that speech is not really necessary; getting the attention of the listeners by any sort of attention getters will be enough to initiate a conversation. Attention getters may be verbal tokens such as address forms or polite forms such as 'excuse me' or 'pardon' (used commonly in Turkish); or non-verbal tokens such as eye gaze or body position. Conversational initiations, especially verbal tokens, are of concern of linguistic and sociolinguistic studies as well (Linell & Korolija, 1997; Woofit, 2005; Liddicoat, 2007; Gee, 2014). Conversational initiations become especially important in multi-party conversations since the more the number of the participants is, the more likely the conversations become longer. In long and multiparty conversations, several topics of conversation can be introduced. Thus, in long stretches of conversation, when the topics change and new topics are introduced, "discontinuities or fractures within the discursive flow" occur and the conversation is divided "into episodes" (Linell & Korolija, 1997, p. 167; Korolija & Linell, 1996, p. 801). Episodes and topics are basic to conversations. An episode is defined as "discursive events or action sequences, each delimited from prior and subsequent discourse and internally bound together by something; e.g. a coherent, topical trajectory or a common activity" (Linell & Korolija 1997, s. 167). Episodes are natural units of social interaction in the sense that they continue the same topic, larger units than a sentence, and they are the focus of attention of all the participants (Ibid). Having the same continuing topic, each episode is bounded within itself and draws a boundary between the prior and subsequent episodes. Since they are characterized with topic maintenance, episodes are internally coherent. Episodes, therefore, are building-blocks of the topicality, each of which contributes to topical coherence (Korolija & Linell, 1996, p. 800). This characteristic of episodes make them a salient unit of analysis as they are regarded as natural units of social interaction in especially multi-party conversations and as they display where the attention is focused in a conversation. Episodes signal the topic shifts and it is the speakers who will maintain the discursive flow. If discourse trajectories are followed while initiating and closing episodes, each episode will contribute to the development of the topic with each speaker contributing to the developing topic.

Episodes are more likely develop in multi-party conversations because of several reasons. One important reason is that when there are more than two participants in a conversation, there may be more topic shifts since different participants will be actively involved in the conversations and will contribute to the topic shift as well as to

the topic development. Korolija & Linell (1996) states that topic shifts are possible in multi-party conversations where;

-there is no predefined task or agenda.

-there is an informal situation.

-it is possible to refer to the extralinguistic context.

-participants can move around.

-conversational skills are limited where the participants are children or speakers of other languages. Among many others, one important aspect affecting communication is the culture shared by the participants of a conversational situation. As culture is defined as a system of values, beliefs and rules shared by people, participants of a particular culture share the same judgements about how a conversation should develop and hold the similar expectations. On the other hand, we also have to consider co-cultural groups who are bound by ethnicity, religion, gender and socio-economic status. Co-cultures in which smaller groups of people are bound by shared values, beliefs and rules that will have common properties with the larger culture (Hamilton & Creel, 2016, p. 21). The fact that co-cultures exist within larger culture brings up the issue of bilingual individuals who have shared values, beliefs and rules not only with the mother tongue culture but with the second language culture as well.

Based on this theoretical background, we had a look at the group conversations of Turkish-speaking monolingual and Turkish-Danish-bilingual children and saw that the course of conversation presented two different pictures. Participants start talking about the task they were assigned to do and as the conversation develops, any speaker in the group initiates a topic about something new, which, consequently, guides the others into talking about this new topic.

This study, therefore, was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What type of episodes take place in the conversations?
2. What type of attention-getting devices are used both in initiating the exchanges and the episodes?
3. How are the exchanges and episodes initiated?
4. Does the existence of another language, hence the culture, make a difference in terms of the episodes and attention-getting devices?

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

The participants of this study were Turkish-speaking monolingual children and Turkish-Danish bilingual children. Monolingual children who participated in this study were school children living in a provincial town in Turkey. They are the second generation of immigrant, working class families living in a district where working class families live. All the children participated in the Anadolu Project were born in Turkey and had parents immigrated to Turkey. Home language is Turkish.

The bilingual participants were Turkish-Danish bilingual children who participated in the Køge project. They belonged to the second generation of Turkish immigrants, who were born and raised in Denmark. The acquisition of Turkish started from birth and acquisition of Danish started around the age of 3. Although home language is Turkish, these children speak Turkish with their parents but Danish with their siblings and with their peers.

For the present study, one group of monolingual first graders and one group of bilingual first graders were included. The groups were chosen randomly among the mixed gender groups, in which there were both boys and girls. In each group, there were two girls and two boys. The aim of choosing a mixed gender group is to eliminate the potential gender effects as much as possible. Both monolingual and bilingual data were analyzed in order to reveal any potential effect of a particular culture on language and on communicative development. The first graders were included in the study because we aimed to see the effect of age since we assume that the communicative development is shaped to a considerable extent until the school age, age of seven. We also aim to minimize the effect of formal education on the communicative and conceptual development. The effect of schooling has been saved for further comparative studies.

2. Research Procedure

This present study is a part of two long-scale projects designed to study the linguistic development of Turkish-Danish bilingual and Turkish monolingual.

2.2.1 The Køge Project

The bilingual data came from Køge Project, a large scale project designed to collect linguistic, sociolinguistic and pedagogical data from 17 Turkish-Danish bilingual children from Grade One through Grade Nine. These children, who began in Grade One in 1989, were followed until they reached Grade Nine. The linguistic data collected within the framework of the Køge Project included group conversations of Turkish-Danish bilinguals with their Turkish-Danish bilingual peers; group conversations of Turkish-Danish bilinguals with Danish monolingual peers; face-to-face conversations with monolingual Danish adults; face-to-face conversations with monolingual Turkish adults. A selected collection of conversation transcripts were published in a volume (Turan, 1999).

2.2.2 The Anadolu Project

The monolingual data came from Anadolu Project, a large scale project designed in line with the Køge Project. Anadolu Project was conducted by Anadolu University, in Eskişehir, Turkey. The Anadolu Project was designed both as a cross sectional and a longitudinal study in cooperation with the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. The cross sectional data came from 48 children from Grade One to Grade Seven. In each grade, there were three groups; an all-boy-group, an all-girl-group and a mixed-gender

group. There were 4 participants in each group. The longitudinal data came from 76 children from Grade One to Grade Eight. The purpose was to have monolingual control group data to compare the linguistic development of bilingual school children in Denmark and in other European countries with that of monolingual Turkish-speaking children. Within the framework of Anadolu Project, the same kind of data were collected under exactly the same conditions with the same kind of tasks and instruments to allow comparative analysis. A selection of conversation transcripts were published in a volume (Özcan et al., 2010).

2.2.3 Data collection

The data consisted of ten 45-minute group conversations of monolingual and bilingual children with peers in groups. For the group conversations, the students were seated around a table and left alone in a room at the school. Since the group conversations were audio recorded, each participant was wearing a small microphone attached to their clothes with a long cable to give them enough room to move around and work comfortably on the assigned project. The recorder, mixing board, was placed outside the room; therefore, participants were not aware that their conversations were being recorded although they had the microphones attached to their clothes. Each group was given a task in which they had to negotiate and fulfil a kind of problem solving task. In Grade One and Grade Three, they were given a cardboard picture of a house and furniture catalogues and were asked to furnish a house. The participants were encouraged to discuss and decide together. In Grade Five, the students were given travel catalogues to use and a world map. They were asked to identify and cut the pictures of the places in the travel catalogue and glue them on the correct place on the map. In Grade Seven and Eight, they were asked to create a cartoon strip or a collage with pictures from teenage magazines. Exactly the same procedure was followed for monolingual and bilingual groups.

The conversations took place in a natural environment. A natural, everyday task was assigned and there were no intervening factors during the conversations. The participants participated in the conversations whenever they wanted to. The recordings included the characteristics of a spontaneous conversations such as false starts, unfinished sentences, turn-takings, overlaps, repairs.

The 45-minute recordings were transcribed in the form of utterances in compliance with the CHILDES conventions (MacWhinney, 1995). Monolingual data was transcribed by Turkish monolingual transcribers while bilingual data was transcribed by Turkish-Danish bilingual transcribers. Utterances were defined as a complete unit of conversation and the boundary of utterances were defined with the speaker's silence.

2.3 Data analysis

The data were analyzed in the following order.

1. The whole conversation was surveyed to identify the episode boundaries. In order to identify the episode boundaries, sequences of utterances which develop into an episode were defined.

2. Episode initiations were identified.
3. Attention-getting devices used in order to initiate an episode were identified.

All the attention-getting devices and the initiating moves were diagnosed and classified according to MacTear's classification (1989, p. 56).

Table 1 List of Verbal and Nonverbal Attention-Getting Devices

Nonverbal attention-getting devices

Eye contact, Physical, Pointing

Verbal attention-getting devices

Vocatives, Words (hey, look), Prosodic

Table 2 List of Initiating and Reinitiating Moves

Initiating moves

Question

Request for action

Statement

Reinitiating moves

Repeats

Repeats for prosodic shift

Repeats with attention getting/direction

Rephrasing

4. All the episodes were defined.
5. All the episodes in the conversations were categorized taking eight categories of episodes defined by Linell & Korolija (1997, p. 176 ff.) (Table 3).

Table 3 Categories of Episodes

Re-contextualization	Speakers re-contextualize an element from the prior episode as a starting point for a new episode.
Analogous episode	A speaker initiates an episode somehow parallel to the topic in the prior, adjacent episode.
Reinitiation	Speakers return to a prior non-adjacent topic in the same discourse.
Reference to an event taking place in the situation.	The new episode is triggered by some event occurring immediately.
Reference to an object present in the situation.	An object which is available in the extralinguistic environment is used as a resource for talk.
Reference to an abstract activity type	A speaker starts talking about a pre-defined, agenda-bound topic.
Invoking other topics	A speaker starts talking about objects which are situationally near at hand.
Contextually unanchored episode	A speaker starts a completely new, unmotivated episode.

3. Results

3.1 Initiating moves and attention-getting devices

We, first, looked at the attention getting devices and how children initiated conversational exchanges both at the beginning of the conversation and in the episodes (Table 4). Only verbal attention getting devices were documented since the conversations are audio-recorded.

Table 4 Attention-Getting Devices

Verbal	
Monolingual	Bilingual
ya, hey, lan, yahu, aman, ana, yehey, bak, vay, Aa, eh, ay, aha, hi, şşt, yuhuu, uf	ya, bak, ana, oh, aha

Monolingual Turkish-speaking children used verbals such as yahu, ya ‘hey’, hey ‘oi’, ulan ‘man’, aman ‘for goodness sake, for heaven’s sake’, ana ‘mom’, vay, ‘wow’, bak ‘look’, and vocatives such as yehey, uf, aa, eh, ay, aha, hi, şşt, yuhuu for attention getting. Ana is literally translated as ‘mom’, but when used as an interjection, it does not have such meaning, but adds surprise to the situation. When a speaker says ‘ana’, he/she expresses a surprising situation.

When monolinguals started the conversations, they tried 33 initiating moves. Among these, 36% of them were questions, and 64% of them were statements. Not only with the questions but also with the statements, speakers expressed opinions and expect others to join in. 83% of the questions required information while 17% of the questions form requests for actions.

However, these initiating moves did not always take responses. With the questions, although the speaker called for an answer but only 33% of the questions received a response. When there was no response, the speaker could not develop a new topic, which consequently would lead a new topical episode in the conversation. Therefore, this lack of response impeded the development of a new episode.

When there was no response, only 17% of the time did they pursue a response and reinitiated either by paraphrasing the previous attempt or adding another question or statement to reinforce the aim. (1) (2). In the excerpts, for the purpose of anonymity, full names of the participants were not given, only the first three letters of the name were used. Each acronym represents a participant’s name.

(1) TUG: Ne yapıştıracağız?

(What are we going to glue?)

RAS: Bu ne?

(What is this?)

TUG: Bilmem.

(I don’t know.)

...

(2) TUG: Ne yapıştıracağız? Bunu buraya mı yapıştıracağız?

(What are we going to glue? Are we to glue it here?)

In excerpt (1), TUG initiated an episode but her initiation did not get a response. In the meantime, RAS initiated another episode and TUG also participated in this episode. But since TUG really expected an answer, she reinitiated even after several turns further elaborating her question. (2)

When statements were used as initiations, 29% of the initiations were followed by a response. Only one person seemed to be insistent on getting a response and reinitiated his statement over and over by adding vocatives to the statement when he could not get any response to his statement. The others just gave up when a response did not follow his/her initiating move. (3)

(3) RAS: Burda bi şey yok.

(There is nothing here.)

KOR: Öyle filan bir şeyler

(so and so)

RAS: Burda hiç bir şey yok ya.

(Well, there is nothing here.)

...

RAS: Lan şştt bana hiç bir şey gelmiyor.

(Nothing comes to me, man, şşt)

At the end, he added a verbal attention-getting device and rephrased the statement maybe to secure a response but still his move was not acknowledged. In this case, we can say that the other participants did not consider these statements as an initiation but a kind of complain or statement of the situation since there was a pre-defined task to be dealt with.

Either initiated with a question or with a statement, not every initiating move got an immediate response. If the participant did not give up and reinitiates, their moves got responses. Either immediate or delayed, these responses helped form episodes and that is how the episodes occurred within the conversational flow.

Bilingual children's attention-getting devices were fairly limited when compared to monolingual peers. They used verbals such as 'hey', bak 'look', ana 'mom' and

vocatives such as oh, aha. 'Aha' was used to point to a certain object, person or idea, meaning '*there you are, there it is*'.

Bilinguals used statements 53% of the time and questions 47% of the time to initiate episodes. These figures tell us that bilinguals, like their monolingual peers, used statements more than the questions but questions were used more frequently by bilinguals than used by monolinguals. (4) (5)

(4) MEH: Niye canikom dedin hi hi hi

(Why did you call (her) sweetheart? he sneered)

ERC: Niçin canikom?

(Why sweetheart?)

YUS: Galiba senin sevgilin var.

(I think you have a girlfriend.)

ERC: Senin de var senin de.

(You too; you too have a girlfriend.)

(5) ERC: Anladım niye koydu bunları... Konuştun mu ordan çıkıyor.

(I know why he put these (the mikes) ... Once you talk, it goes over there.)

YUS: Oh hepimizin sesi birleşiyor. Ne diyorsun adam?

(All our voices are getting together. What are saying, man?)

...

Most of their initiating moves get a response no matter what they are, a statement or a question.

3.2 Episodes

We first started with the categories of the episodes. Monolinguals created 25 episodes while bilinguals created 15 episodes in total during the group conversations. The plausible reasons for this difference in numbers between monolingual and bilingual were the length of the conversations and the attitude of the participants.

In terms of the length of the conversations, there were 916 turns in monolinguals' conversation while there were 573 turns in bilinguals' conversations in total. The higher number of turns led to more topic changes, consequently, more

episodes. Apart from the number of turns, in the monolingual group, there were more unresponsive initiations. When the initiation was not responded, the speaker failed to develop the episode in question and attempted to initiate a new episode. In the bilingual group, on the other hand, episodes were initiated and were developed by the other participants in the group.

Table 5 Categories of Episodes and Their Distribution across Groups

Episode	Monolingual	Bilingual
Reference to an object/a person	36% (9)	33% (5)
Reference to an event taking place in the situation	24% (6)	7% (1)
Unanchored, ungrounded	16% (4)	-
Re-initiation	12% (3)	33 % (5)
Analogous	4% (1)	7% (1)
Situationally available other topics	4% (1)	7% (1)
About predefined topics	4% (1)	-
Recontextualization	-	13% (2)
TOTAL	25	15

Both monolinguals and bilinguals referred to the objects, people and events in the immediate context. The episodes in the conversations, thus, were on the topics related to these people or events. Re-initiations were also common in both groups. The other categories, analogous episodes or episodes triggered by the events taking place in the context of situation were rare in the groups' conversations.

A closer, detailed look at the available episodes showed that nine of the episodes in the monolingual group sent a reference to a person or an object. That is, monolingual children's talks centered on a person or an object available in the extra linguistic context. They either focused on the objects they dealt with and developed a topic around these objects or suddenly picked on one of the participants of the group. Objects served as a resource for talk because there was a predefined task and the objects mainly became the focus of the conversation. In addition to the objects, participants knew each other for some time and this somehow led to a topic changed from objects to a person. There was a lot of teasing going on while dealing with the task as well.

In excerpt (6), participants' attention was attracted by one of the objects in the catalogue and started talking about it.

(6) RAS: Bak bak bak şuna bak bak kokmuş ayak beyaz kokmuş ayaklar kokmuş ayak

(Look, look, look at this; look, stinking foot; white stinking foot; stinking foot)

TUG:aaa....

In (7), one of the participants suddenly turned the course of the conversation towards one of the other group members and started talking about him.

(7) KOR: ... tuvaleti geldi.

(She needs to go to the toilet.)

ESR: hı hı

(yeah)

RAS: Altında su vardı.

(There was water under her (seat).)

TUG: Ya bu hiç konuşmuyor ki.

(She doesn't speak at all.)

KOR: Bu donuna işedi.

(She has wetted his pants.)

When the attention was shifted to one of the participants, a new episode focused on this participant was developed. All the participants including the one in focus contributed to the episode.

The second frequent category was the reference to an event taking place in the situation. When they talked about the events, they normally talked about a particular event which occurred immediately before topicalizing it and therefore, this event attracted the attention of the one or more speakers as in example (8).

(8) KOR: aaa elime ne yapıştırıyorsun sana biz eve yapıştır diyoruz, amca gelsene yanıma.

(Oh why are you gluing it to my hand, we told you to glue it to the house, uncle come here (calling the researcher)...)

Bilingual children referred to the events or persons in 5 of the episodes. As shown in example (9), the event they focused was related to the task they were doing. They focused on the objects in the immediate context and person in the group as monolinguals do. They were talking about whether one of the participants could reach somewhere or not; because the cord was too short.

(9) YUS: Boş ver baksana sen git bir şey olmaz.

(Don't worry, you go, it will be okay.)

ERC: Gidebilirsin bak bak.

(You can go, look look)

MEH: kablosu küçük kablo kablo küçük kablo

(The cord is small (short), the cord, the cord is small.)

Yet again, monolinguals had more unanchored, ungrounded, out of blue topics unlike bilinguals. Unanchored, ungrounded episodes were completely new to the participants other than the speaker. However, the speaker had a kind of connection in his/her mind, which he/she failed to deliver to the interlocutors in the group (10) (11) (12)

(10) TUG keşke dudağın burda patlasa

(I wish your lip would burst here.)

KOR: Valla benim de burda kaşım patlasa da ...

(If my eyebrow burst here, I swear to God)

RAS: Dudak patlarsa itfaiyeci getirin bana.

(If the lip gets burst, bring me a fireman.)

(11) TUG: zaten sen beni düğünde de kızdırmıştın.

(You already made me angry at the wedding ceremony.)

...

(12) TUG: Söyle Semiha ile beni bizi rahat bıraksın.

(Tell him to leave us, Semiha and myself, alone.)

The participant started new episodes with a reference to a participant who was not available in the extra linguistic context and with an event that apparently happened some time ago. The same participant mentioned someone else, who was most likely familiar to the other participants. This may be because they had shared experiences outside school as they belonged to the same community. Both episodes started on the basis of shared background among the participants.

Both monolinguals and bilinguals went back to another topic mentioned before in the course of the conversation. That is, in both groups, some of the episodes were reinitiations. Reinitiations occurred when one of the participants in a group brought up a previously talked topics. Monolinguals activated prior topics in which they teased each other. The same participant activated a prior topic and picked on one of the participants again and again.

(12)TUG: Donuna işedin mi sen?,

(Have you wetted your pants?)

.....

(13)TUG: Sen korkundan valla donuna mı işedin ESR?

(Have you really wetted your pants out of fear ESR?)

...

Bilinguals, on the other hand, reinitiated the topics related on the task. During the task, they sometimes got worried about being heard by the experimenter, who was in the other room and brought up the topic again and again at different points in the conversations.

(13)YUS: Adam bir de duyacak.

(The man will hear us.)

ERC: bir de Allah essah duyuyordur.

(What if he really hears us, God.)

Monolinguals did not use recontextualization type of episodes in which an immediately prior episode is taken as a starting point. Bilinguals, on the other hand, did not talk unanchored, ungrounded topics. This may be because they were more wrapped up with their tasks unlike monolinguals.

Discussion and Conclusions

We have seen that verbal attention getting devices were used to attract the attention of the other participants. Episodes took place within the flow of the conversations and these episodes were initiated through initiating moves of the participants. A new episode was triggered by either local matters in “the immediate and perceptually accessible environment with its physical spaces, persons, objects, artifacts, extra-discursive events” as stated by Linell & Korolija, 1997, p. 184. The abundance of such episodes may be explained with the age of the participants. The participants in the conversations were around the age of 7 and the cognitive development is yet to be completed. Despite the developing cognitive aspect, children in this study actively contributed in the development of the topics. Several factors such as familiarity of the participants, the existence of a pre-defined task, restricted physical movement, being in an informal situation may have affected the nature of the topics to be developed; hence, the type of the episodes. The existence of a predefined task may have required a demand for talk as well as increased the reference to the events, people and objects in the immediate context. Familiarity of the participants also led to the unanchored episodes to develop. Within the scope of the analysis, we have seen that cognitive and linguistic development affected the conversational ability. The findings showing that there were differences between monolingual and bilingual groups indicated that the existence of another language also had an impact on the use of verbal conversational requirements. This impact is seen especially on the attention-getting devices. Monolingual participant used a variety of devices while bilinguals used only a few of them.

We can say that children develop conversational behaviors before school age and are able to start and maintain a conversation within a group. We can also foreground that conversational ability is yet to develop at school age since formal education develops both social and linguistic skills. This assumption calls for further studies in which a longitudinal analysis of the conversations are conducted in order to reveal the effect of school on the development of conversational ability for both monolinguals and bilinguals. Bilingual development invites further research as well since bilingual individuals will also benefit from being in a school environment where the second language is used and where the principles of a culture other than the native culture are imposed in order to reveal the effect of school on the development of conversational ability.

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