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Turkish Children’s Conversational Oppositions: Usage of Two Discourse Markers

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This study examined how Turkish-speaking preschoolers displayed oppositions in their peer interactions through two adversative discourse markers, ya and ki. These two markers differ in their syntactic mobility. The data came from seminaturalistic peer interactions of 78 preschoolers. The discursive properties of children’s utterances with ya and ki were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. The analyses suggested that due to the differences in their syntactic mobility, these two discourse markers flagged alternative types of oppositions. Ki, the less mobile marker, was more tightly linked to the propositional content and challenged the relevance of the prior utterance, rather than directly disagreeing with it. Such uses minimized opposition. On the other hand, ya, the more mobile marker, was semantically more independent of the proposition to which it was attached and marked opposition at a more global level. Ya-utterances were mostly in the form of counters, such as ‘Ya stop!’ – ‘Ya stop!’, which escalated conflicts.
Opposition is common in human interactions and constitutes a substantial part of children’s interactions with their caregivers as well as with their peers. Oppositional moves in conversations, by their very nature, react to prior acts and thus must effectively indicate their link to preceding turns. To mark their divergence from preceding utterances, speakers deploy various linguistic resources, such as discourse markers (i.e., but, well), which are “linguistic… elements that signal relations between units of talk” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 40). According to Schiffrin (1987), discourse markers have various functions such as marking speaker–hearer agreements (or disagreements) and conveying propositional/ideational relations between discourse units. Children use discourse markers such as but and well (Killen & Naigles, 1995; Kyratzis & Ervin-Tripp, 1999; Sprott, 1992) to flag their oppositional stances with their interlocutors (Du Bois, 2007). This study examined how Turkish preschoolers expressed opposition in their peer interactions by focusing on the discursive patterns of the utterances with two adversative discourse markers: ya and ki.

Opposition in Peer Interactions

Past social developmental work on how children build and resolve conflicts showed that conflict tactics such as simple negations and assertions are more likely to escalate conflicts, whereas indirect strategies such as explaining the reason for opposition or justifications are more likely to terminate conflicts (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997; Eisenberg & Garvey, 1981; Hartup, French, Laursen, Johnston, & Ogawa, 1993; Hartup, Laursen, Stewart, & Eastenson, 1988; Killen & Naigles, 1995; Shantz, 1987).

Complementing the social developmental framework, ethnographic studies using the peer language socialization paradigm focused more on conversational discourse and how children mobilize linguistic (syntactic, semantic, and prosodic) elements to build, maintain, and diffuse oppositions in peer interactions in various cultural settings (Farris, 2000; Goodwin, 1990, 2006; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Kyratzis & Guo, 2001; Kyratzis & Tarım, 2010; Nakamura, 2001; Sheldon, 1990; for reviews, see Goodwin & Kyratzis, 2007, 2011; Kyratzis, 2004). Children were observed to display their divergent stances on what is said earlier through strategically repeating some elements in the prior utterance. Goodwin (1990, 2006) demonstrated that such conversational repetitions, which she termed format tying, are powerful strategies in peer conflicts (see also Corsaro & Maynard, 1996; Ervin-Tripp, 1991; Evaldsson, 2005; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Köymen & Kyratzis, 2009). In her study with African American elementary school children, Goodwin (1990) presented aggravated uses of format tying. In response to the accusation, “Y’all just changed the whole game around!”, the second child recycles many elements in the prior utterance and reciprocates the accusation with “We didn’t change nothin’ around. Y’all changed it around”
by inserting the negation and pragmatically changing to whom the pronouns refer (Goodwin, 1990, p. 152). The fact that original speaker’s own words are used against him or her, as argued by Goodwin (1990), is a particularly effective strategy, which has a “boomerang effect” (p. 184) and escalates conflicts. Goodwin (1990) highlighted two ways of building opposition through repetitions and substitutions: returns and disclaimers.

In **returns**, speakers assert and reassert their positions through adding/removing the grammatical negation as in the previous example: “Y’all just changed the whole game around!” – “We didn’t change nothin’ around” (Goodwin, 1990, p. 152). Or, speakers reciprocate the protest/accusation to one another and provide counters, as in “Y’all just changed the whole game around!” – “Y’all changed it around”. Similar uses of format tying were also observed in young preschoolers’ oppositional interactions within repetitive sequences of “It is” – “It is not” or “I am not” – “Yes you are” pairs through insertion and deletion of negation leading to escalation of conflicts (Corsaro & Maynard, 1996, p. 168).

In **disclaimers**, speakers comment on the relevance or the appropriateness of the prior action/utterance. In response to a statement “I can’t make you [fight]. Cuz it’s a free world”, the second speaker challenges the truthfulness of the statement by saying “I know it’s free world” (p. 154) and points out that the information delivered as news by the first speaker was in fact something she already knew. As compared with returns, disclaimers were characterized as a more “indirect” way of building opposition, in fact minimizing opposition, because they comment about the validity or truthfulness of what was said rather than directly disagreeing with it (Goodwin, 1990; see also Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Although Goodwin does not discuss negation within disclaimers, grammatical negation might also be relevant in disclaimer sequences, particularly to mark the irrelevant, inappropriate, or the nontruthful part of a prior utterance.

**Discourse Markers in Children’s Oppositional Interactions**

In addition to recycling elements from prior utterances, the use of discourse markers is a way that children highlight their oppositions or position themselves advantageously within their peer interactions (Goetz & Shatz, 1999; Killen & Naigles, 1995; Kyritzis, 2007; Kyritzis, Shuqum-Ross, & Köymen, 2010). Children aged 4 and younger were observed to begin their turns with discourse markers such as and, but, supporting their oppositions as in “But *that’s *mine” (Kyritzis & Ervin-Tripp, 1999, p. 1330; see also Pak et al., 1996; Sprott, 1992). As children get older, they use discourse markers with increasing frequency and complexity (Andersen, Brizuela, DuPuy, & Gonnerman, 1999; Hoyle, 1994). Kyritzis (2007) observed that preschool girls used discourse markers well, now, and so to signal the shifts in their pretend play of news reporting, such as “Well that’s the end of our news today” (p. 329). Through these shifts in play, the girls
assumed the stage-managing role, which gave them the decision-making power of removing a peer off the stage and determining whose turn it was next. Andersen et al. (1999) demonstrated that 6-year-olds, while enacting high-status roles of parents and teachers with puppets, marked their authority in relation to other roles by using various discourse markers together in successive utterances or in *stacks*, such as “Well I am the father, I have to ask you that question. Because you’re her mother and you take care of her the most” (p. 1343, emphasis added). Moreover, many studies showed that older children use conflict-motivated justifications with causal connectors (e.g., *because*, *so*) to provide reasons for their oppositions with peers (Goetz & Schatz, 1999; Killen & Naigles, 1995; Kyratzis et al., 2010).

Although the function of discourse markers is to signal various links between linguistic units, they are syntactically optional (Norrick, 2001). Research has shown that only less than half of children’s justifications were marked with the discourse marker *because* (Goetz & Shatz, 1999; Veneziano & Sinclair, 1995). Thus, discourse markers flag existing relationships between discourse units, although the absence of discourse markers can also be significant and flag functional meanings or contrasts (see Kyratzis et al., 2010). This study therefore compares the discursive properties of the utterances with *ya* and *ki* to see what oppositional links they flag by focusing on the textual overlap across the utterances, specifically in relation to Goodwin’s (1990) work on returns and disclaimers.

Oppositional Discourse Markers in Turkish: *Ya* and *Ki*

*Ya* and *ki* were the most frequent oppositional discourse markers in our corpus. They have no exact translations in English and function as *repudiators* to strengthen speakers’ opposition (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005). Although *ya* and *ki* have other nonconjunctive functions,1 we focus on the repudiative/oppositional discourse connective (or conjunctive) cases (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005).2 The major difference between these two discourse markers is their syntactic mobility. *Ki* is a clause-final clitic, which is an unstressed syllable immediately following the verb (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005), so it is not syntactically mobile. Example 13 shows an instance of *ki* from our corpus:

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1These excluded cases are discussed in the section on data reduction.

2The examples of Göksel & Kerslake (2005) were not based on empirical data but were hypothetical, describing Turkish grammar so a comparison between their examples and our examples is not possible.

3The excerpts presented henceforth are transcribed using the transcription system by Du Bois, Schuetze-Coburn, Cumming, and Paolino (1993). The transcription conventions are summarized in the Appendix.
In contrast to *ki*, *ya* is syntactically more flexible. It can be used by itself as a global marker of protest and as clause-initially (Example 2), clause-finally (Example 3) (Akar, 1988; Özbek, 2000), or in both positions simultaneously (Example 4).

*Ya* is considered to be quite informal (Özbek, 2000), and children’s use of *ya* is often discouraged. Nevertheless, it is frequently attested in children’s interactions.

We argue that the syntactic mobility of a discourse marker might affect the type of opposition displayed (e.g., returns or disclaimers). Because of its syntactic flexibility, *ya* would be semantically more independent of the proposition to which it is attached and mark opposition at a more global level (marking a negative affect). On the other hand, *ki*, the less mobile marker, would be more tightly linked to the propositional content and premises/truthfulness of the utterance to which it is objecting. If *ya-* and *ki-*utterances indeed take place in format-tying episodes, children might reserve *ya*-utterances in return sequences serving more direct oppositions, and *ki*-utterances for disclaimer sequences within more indirect oppositions.

In this study, we quantitatively compared the discursive properties of *ya-* and *ki*-utterances and explored if they have overlaps with prior utterances, as suggested in the literature on format tying (Goodwin, 1990, 2006; see also Corsaro & Maynard, 1996; Ervin-Tripp, 1991; Evaldsson, 2005; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Köymen & Kyratzis, 2009). We focused on whether (1) the linguistic content (referential terms, verbs, etc.) of the prior utterances and (2) the discourse markers themselves were recycled across speaker turns. The recycling of discourse markers would be informative about the length of the conflict episodes because it would suggest that the utterances with *ya* and *ki* occur

(1) (Children: Rana – Female, 4;6, Nida – Female, 4;7)
   41 RANA; *İşte kuyruğu burda.*
   There the tail is there,
   > 42 NİDA; *Bu kuyruk değil ki.*
   This is not a tail *ki*.

*Ya* is considered to be quite informal (Özbek, 2000), and children’s use of *ya* is often discouraged. Nevertheless, it is frequently attested in children’s interactions.

(2) *Ya dur.*
   *Ya* stop.
(3) *O benim ya.*
   It is mine *ya*.
(4) *Ya ver şunu ya.*
   *Ya* give (me) that *ya*.
successively and therefore extend conflicts. Further, we tagged the presence of grammatical negation in *ya*- and *ki*-utterances to see whether negation co-occurs in format tying episodes and qualitatively analyzed whether negation co-occurred with disclaimers or with returns.

**METHODS**

**Participants**

Seventy-eight monolingual Turkish-speaking children (42 boys and 36 girls) participated in this study. The children’s ages ranged between 43 and 65 months ($M = 54.44$, $SD = 6.22$). The children were recruited from a nursery school in a city in Turkey and had mostly middle socioeconomic backgrounds.

**Procedure**

The children were grouped into (same- and mixed-sex) triads of children who frequently played together and were formed based on the recommendations of their teachers. Each triad was instructed to play together doing the following four activities for 15 minutes per activity: drawing, block construction, and two board games. The video-recordings took place in a classroom at the nursery school. The researcher sat by a table in the corner of the room and pretended she was busy. The camera was located on a tripod in the peripheral area of the room. The researcher did not interfere with the children unless there was a risk for a physical injury. If the children initiated communication with her, she refused to be part of the play and told them that she was busy. Previous research (Crick et al., 1997) finds that preschoolers are less likely to be inhibited by the presence of adults than older children for engaging in confrontational behavior with peers. A corpus of 22 hours of spontaneous peer interactions was gathered and transcribed verbatim with contextual notes.

**Data Reduction**

All instances of the markers *ya* and *ki* in the corpus were identified. A few ambiguous cases where it was not clear what the child meant were excluded from the analyses. As mentioned earlier, *ki* is a clause-final discourse marker, whereas *ya* is syntactically more flexible. To compare the uses of both discourse markers, only those instances where *ya* was attached to a clause were included. Children commonly used *ya* twice in an utterance such as *Ya ayağımı çek ya* ‘*Ya move your foot ya’*. These cases of *ya*’s were counted as one. There were some instances where *ya* and *ki* were used in the same utterance such as *Ya ben tavşan*
I am not drawing a bunny. These cases were counted as an instance of both ya and ki. Because we were interested in the overlap across discourse units, 10 utterances before each occurrence of ya and ki were included in the collection.

**Excluded cases of ya and ki.** Because of our focus on opposition, usage of ya and ki in question forms (i.e., informational questions) were not included in the analyses, unless they were rhetorical questions or permission requests. Rhetorical questions were included because, despite their question format, they were actually used for displays of opposition such as *Ya niye benden alıyorsun?* ‘Ya how come you are taking (this) from me?’ (meaning ‘Do not take this from me’). Permission requests as *Ya bi tane buraya takılan şeyi verebilir misiniz?* ‘Ya can you give me the piece that goes here?’ were included because they actually function as need/want statements ‘I want the piece that goes here’.

In addition to their oppositional conjunctive functions, both discourse markers have other nonconjunctive functions. *Ya* has two nonconjunctive functions (Özbek, 2000), which were excluded from the analyses: (1) the cases of ‘what if…’ (*Ya gelirse buraya?* ‘What if he/she comes here’) and (2) the memory prompt ‘remember when…’ (*Hani oynamıştı ya* ‘Remember we played once’). *Ki* has three other functions, which were also excluded from the analyses: (1) the locative *ki* as in *masadaki kitap* ‘the book on the table’; (2) the possessive *ki* as in *benimki* ‘(the one that is) mine’; and (3) the relativizer/complementizer uses of *ki* ‘that’ such as, *Dedim ki…* ‘I said that (ki)…’.

**Coding**

*Ya*- and *ki*-utterances were first coded for the repetition of the discourse marker. If the same discourse marker was used by the same or any other child within 10 utterances or less in the prior conversational discourse, it was coded as repeated. Second, the textual overlap of the utterances used with these two discourse markers was coded for whether any pieces of the utterances were mentioned within 10 utterances or less in the prior conversational discourse. If any verbs or any arguments of the verbs (any referents such as subject, direct/indirect object, as well as adverbs, adjectives) were recycled, that utterance was considered to have textual overlap. Finally, the utterances to which *ki* and *ya* were attached were coded for grammatical negation, which can be marked by the verbal suffix *-me/-ma* on the verb, by negation in nominal sentences *değil*, and by the negative existential marker *yok* (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005). If any of these three negation markers was present, the utterance was coded as including negation.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Analyses

There were a total of 278 instances of ki and of 1361 instances of ya. Table 1 presents the frequencies and percentages of ya and ki across the three factors.

To compare the discursive properties of the ya- and ki-utterances statistically, we used a generalized linear mixed model (Baayen, 2008), with the function `lmer` of the statistics package lme4 (Bates, Maechler, & Bolker, 2012) in R (version 2.15.1; R Development Core Team, 2012). The models were fit with binomial error structure and logit link function. The generalized linear mixed model analyzes how predictors (“fixed effects”) account for the probability of belonging to one of the categorical levels of an outcome variable and adjusts the differences in the outcome variable due to random factors, such as speakers, items, and tasks (Baayen, 2008; Jaeger, 2008).

To test the significance of the full model, we compared its fit with that of a null model using a likelihood ratio test. In both models, the response variable was the choice of the two discourse markers: ya and ki. The full model included three fixed factors: (1) repetition of the discourse marker (repeated vs. not repeated), (2) textual overlap (overlap vs. no overlap), and (3) grammatical negation (negation vs. no negation), and their interactions, as well as the two random factors: (1) speaker (n = 77) and (2) tasks (n = 4). The null model comprised only the two random factors.

The full model improved the fit as compared with the null model ($\chi^2 = 585.23, df = 7, p < .001$). The three-way interaction between the fixed factors was not significant ($B = -12.92, SE = 1122.64, z = -0.01, p = .99$), so it was dropped from the model to get interpretable tests of the main effects and two-way interactions. In this reduced model, the three fixed effects and one two-way interaction were significant (Table 2). When the discourse marker was repeated, it was more likely to be ya than ki ($B = -1.67, SE = 0.26, z = -6.44, p < .001$). When the utterance to which the discourse markers were attached displayed textual overlap, the discourse marker was more like to be ki than ya ($B = 1.35, SE = 0.46, z = 2.90, p = .004$). When the utterance included grammatical negation, the attached discourse marker was more likely to be ki than ya ($B = 4.12, SE = 0.64, z = 6.43, p < .001$). The significant interaction effect between the repetition of discourse markers and textual overlap suggested that in their ya-utterances, children repeated the discourse marker ya as well as

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4 Addition of the age, the gender of the child speaker, or the gender composition of the triad (same vs. mixed sex) as fixed factors did not improve the fit of the model (all $ps > .05$), so they were excluded from the final model for the sake of parsimony.

5 One child did not produce any of the discourse markers of interest.
other elements (e.g., referents, verbs) in the prior discourse. In their \( ki \)-utterances, children recycled some elements in the prior discourse but inserted the discourse marker \( ki \) as a new linguistic item (\( B = -1.14, SE = 0.53, z = -2.15, p = .032 \)) (Figure 1). Stated differently, \( ki \)-utterances had textual overlap with the prior discourse regardless of whether the prior discourse had other \( ki \)-utterances (as the main effect suggests), whereas \( ya \)-utterances had textual overlap with prior utterances mostly when the prior discourse had other \( ya \)-utterances.

The quantitative analyses revealed two major patterns. First, \( ya \) was more likely to be used than \( ki \) when there was textual overlap and when the discourse marker was repeated. This suggested that \( ya \)-utterances occurred in stacks or were closely spaced with one another in the discourse. The stacking indicated that

### Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of \( Ya \) and \( Ki \) by Repetition of Discourse Markers, Textual Overlap, and Grammatical Negation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Markers</th>
<th>Ki</th>
<th>Ya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repetition of the discourse marker</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not repeated</td>
<td>227 (81.65%)</td>
<td>511 (37.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated</td>
<td>51 (18.35%)</td>
<td>850 (62.45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>278 (100%)</td>
<td>1,361 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Textual overlap</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No overlap</td>
<td>87 (31.29%)</td>
<td>669 (49.16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap</td>
<td>191 (68.71%)</td>
<td>692 (50.84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>278 (100%)</td>
<td>1,361 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammatical negation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No negation</td>
<td>31 (11.15%)</td>
<td>1,094 (80.38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation</td>
<td>247 (88.85%)</td>
<td>267 (19.62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>278 (100%)</td>
<td>1,361 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

Reduced Model With the Main Effects and Two-Way Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.003***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of discourse markers</td>
<td>-1.67</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>-6.44</td>
<td>&lt;.001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual overlap</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.004***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>&lt;.001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of discourse markers × textual overlap</td>
<td>-1.14</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>-2.15</td>
<td>.032*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of discourse markers × negation</td>
<td>-0.98</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>-1.40</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual overlap × negation</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>.167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. \]
ya-utterances took place in extended sequences of conflicts or that ya-utterances tended to escalate the conflicts. Ki-utterances, on the other hand, had textual overlap with the previous utterances, but the discourse marker was not repeated. This suggested that after ki-utterances the conflict was less likely to continue, at least not with ki-utterances. It is still possible that the conflict might have continued with utterances without the discourse markers of interest. However, this discursive tendency that ki-utterances did not occur in stacks, like ya-utterances did, suggested they were less likely to escalate conflicts.

The other finding was that ki-utterances tended to have grammatical negation more than ya-utterances did. As it will be clearer with the qualitative analyses, ya-utterances tended to be mostly counters, resembling return sequences. Ki-utterances, on the other hand, tended to question the truthfulness or the premise of the prior utterances, resembling disclaimers and the negation highlighted the point of “irrelevance.”

Qualitative Analyses

When the examples of ya- and ki-utterances are qualitatively analyzed, the child speakers seem to reserve these two oppositional discourse markers in building and flagging different types of oppositions. Ya-utterances seem to resemble format tying episodes involving return sequences (e.g., “You cheat” – “You cheat”,...
Goodwin, 1990, p. 152), in which “a prior move is responded to with a reciprocal action . . . rather than contrasting features of the truth or falsehood of the action on the floor” (Goodwin, 1990, pp. 152–153). KI-utterances seem to resemble format tying episodes, which function as disclaimers, “an action that denies the relevance of a prior action rather than disagreeing” (Goodwin, 1990, p. 153).

In Example 5, Ceren and Tuna are having a conflict over whose turn it is to push the button. In line 250, Ceren produces an imperative with ya, _Ya ben basayım_ ‘Ya let me push (it)’. Tuna provides a counter and reciprocates the same imperative, including the discourse marker ya (in line 251). Through these ya-utterances Tuna and Ceren are trying to have access to the same action of button pushing in a format tying episode with “returns.” What ya adds to these repetitions is the negative affect and highlights the frustration of the speaker. As a syntactically mobile discourse marker, ya marks the opposition at a global level, without necessarily questioning the truthfulness of the propositional content of the prior utterance.

Excerpt 6 shows the similar pattern of ya-utterances. Arda and Haluk exchange the same ya-imperative in an extended “return” sequence.
In this episode, Arda and Haluk make up their own insult term *kaburga* ‘rib’, using a funny sounding word. In line 364, Arda refers to Haluk with this insult term. Haluk responds to this insult with an aggravated imperative with *ya*: *Ya sus* ‘Ya be quiet’ (line 365) as he tries to concentrate on the game. As Haluk moves his pawn, Arda stops him with another imperative with *ya*, *Ya dur* ‘Ya stop’, meaning it is his turn to play. In lines 367, 368, and 370, Haluk and Arda return the same *ya*-imperative, each insisting that it is their turn to play. In line 371, this time Haluk returns the insult *kaburga* ‘rib’ and Arda responds to this insult, with the exact same imperative Haluk used earlier, *Ya sus* ‘Ya be quiet’.

Similar to Example 5, Arda and Haluk reciprocate the same directive and provide counters over and over without backing down, so the conflict escalates. Again, *ya*, as the syntactically flexible discourse marker, flags the oppositions at a global level within “return” sequences, where “the truth value of a statement is not an issue” (Goodwin, 1990, p. 152).

Example 7 is another episode in which *ya*-utterances are stacked together in extended return sequences. There is a conflict between Deniz and Efe: Deniz wants to have the red pawns that Efe has. The episode shows how they provide counters to one another’s requests through *ya*-directives.

(7) (Children: Deniz – Female, 3;11, Cem – Male, 4;0, Efe – Male, 4;8)

145 DENIZ; *Hadi kırmızıyı ver*, ((TO EFE))
    Come on give me the red (pawn),

146 CEM; [Ü:: üç ıç.]
    [Three:: three.]

> 147 EFE; [Ya: kırmızıyı ^ben aldım.]
    [Ya: ^I took the red (pawn).]

> 148 DENIZ; *Ya:: kırmızıyı ^ben istiyorum*,
    *Ya*: ^I want the red (pawn),

149 *Ya:: ^ben*,

150 EFE; *Hayır kırmızıları ^ben almışım* ((LEANING ON HIS PAWNS))
    No ^I took the red ones.

151 ((DENIZ IS TRYING TO GRAB THE PAWNS))

152 DENIZ; *Ya:: ya ^Efe,*

> 153 EFE; *Ya: kırmızılarım ^ben almıştım.*
    *Ya: ^I took the red ones.

154 DENIZ; *Ya: ya*, ((DENIZ TRIES TO TAKE THE RED PAWN FROM EFE))

155 CEM; *Herkesin onla oyun başlamıyo mu?*
    Doesn’t everyone start with their pawns?

> 156 EFE; *Ya kırm- ee ben bunu- ben de bunları aldım.*
    *Ya re(d)- um this one- then I took these.* ((TAKES THE PAWNS))

157 DENIZ; *Ya sen --
    Ya you --

> 158 *Ya kırmızıyı ver,*
    *Ya give (me) the red (pawn),
In line 145, Deniz asks Efe for the red pawns, *Hadi kırmızıyı ver* ‘Come on give me the red (pawn)’. Efe explains to Deniz why he does not wish to give the red pawn with a *ya*-utterance *Ya: kırmızıyı ^ben aldım* ‘I took the red (pawn)’ in line 147. Efe and Deniz continue to provide counters to one another’s *ya*-utterances almost exactly in lines 148 (*Ya:: kırmızıyı ^ben istiyorum* ‘I want the red (pawn)’), 153 (*Ya: kırmızıları ^ben almıştım* ‘I took the red ones’), 156 (*Ya kırmız- ee ben bunu- ben de bunları aldım* – ‘I re(d)- then I took these’), 158 (*Ya kırmızıyı ver ^ya give (me) the red (pawn)’), and 162 (*Ya ver ^Ya give*).

Both Deniz and Efe assert their positions through simply providing counters and returning similar directives, so the conflict escalates. Deniz highlights her frustration to Efe by saying *Ya Efe* in lines 149, 152, 154, 157, and 160, which exemplifies how syntactically mobile this marker is (although such cases of individual *ya’s* were not included in the quantitative analyses). Because of its syntactic mobility, *ya* is not tightly related to the propositional content or the premises of the utterance. It almost functions like a negative affective stance marker: “I am frustrated and I want the red pawn.”

In general, *ya*-utterances occurred in stacks within extended oppositional return sequences. As Goodwin argues (1990), in these return sequences speakers are not concerned about the truthfulness or the appropriateness of the utterance, but they respond to one another’s actions with a reciprocal action (p. 152). In contrast, the following examples with *ki* demonstrate that *ki*-utterances tend to function as “disclaimers,” evaluating the truthfulness or the appropriateness of the prior utterance. This is argued to be an indirect way of opposing an action because it does not disagree with the statement/action per se but rather with its relevance.

In Example 8, Gizem announces in line 36 that she has found the matching card for the clock, *Ben saat buldum* ‘I found a clock’. In line 37, Levent objects to the validity of this announcement with a *ki*-utterance correcting the statement: *O saat değil ki çan* ‘That is not a clock *ki* it is a bell’. Here the *ki*-utterance minimizes the opposition because it does not oppose the fact that Gizem has found a matching pair of cards (which was the goal of the game), rather it opposes the truthfulness of the statement, in that the picture on the card is not a clock but a bell. The negation particle, *değil*, which co-occurs with *ki*, highlights the point of divergence from the prior utterance and highlights what is actually not true in the prior utterance. Thus, the opposition displayed through the *ki*-utterances is related
to the propositional content or the premises of the prior utterance. This link to the truthfulness of the propositional content could be explained by less syntactic flexibility of ki such that the more syntactically constrained a marker is, the more tightly it is related to the semantic content and the premises of the utterance to which it is attached.

In Example 9, in line 187, Feyza issues Avşar a directive Öbür tavsan da ver ‘Give me the other bunny as well’. Avşar opposes the appropriateness of this directive by stating that there is actually no other bunny with a ki-utterance: Öbür tavsan yok ki ‘There is no other bunny ki’. Flagging that this directive is based on a false assumption does not necessarily mean that he would withhold the bunny, if there were another bunny. The textual overlap is limited to the shared referent ‘the other bunny’ rather than a return, for example, “I won’t give you the other bunny” or “You give me the other bunny,” which actually acknowledges the relevance of the directive. Through the negation particle yok, he pinpoints the false assumption that there is another bunny. Thus, this is another example in which the syntactically less mobile marker ki is tightly linked to the propositional content of the discourse units it links.

In Example 10, Arda claims that he is going to win the game by saying, Seni yenicem ‘I’m gonna beat you’ (line 223). Fulya contradicts Arda’s statement with a ki-utterance, by challenging its assumption that she is actually participating in the game, Ben oynamyorum ki ‘I’m not playing ki’ (line 224).
Similar to Examples 8 and 9, the ki-utterance is designed to minimize, rather than escalate, opposition. Instead of negating the implications of the utterance per se (e.g., who is winning and who is losing in the game), the ki-utterance functions as a disclaimer and challenges the presupposition on which the prior statement is based. Not playing the game rules out the possibility that Arda can beat her in the game. It does not disregard the possibility that the prior claim could have been true in different circumstances: if she had been playing the game, he could have won. Thus, instead of saying “you cannot win the game” or “I will not lose the game,” stating that the peer’s claim is based on false assumptions is an indirect form of opposition. The textual overlap is limited to the referent Fulya, which corresponds to sen-i ‘you-ACC’ in line 223 and is recycled as the first person pronoun ben ‘I’ in line 224. This ki-utterance includes a grammatical negation—mı in the verb oynamıyorum ‘I am not playing’, which contests the false assumption of participating in the game. Yet again, ki, as a less mobile marker, is used to flag the propositional relationship between the discourse units it links.

CONCLUSIONS

Discourse markers have been found in previous research to flag important discursive contrasts (Killen & Naigles, 1995; Kyratzis & Ervin-Tripp, 1999; Sprott, 1992). In this study, we have demonstrated quantitatively and qualitatively that children reserved the two most frequent adversative discourse markers in Turkish for different kinds of oppositions. They use ya mostly within extended return sequences with exact repetitions in which ya-utterances occurred in stacks, escalating opposition; whereas they used ki mostly within relatively shorter sequences of “disclaimers,” minimizing opposition. It should be noted here that these discursive patterns of the two discourse markers reported in this study are to be understood only as tendencies and discursive preferences rather than mutually exclusive categories.

We have argued that the functional differences between ya- and ki-utterances are potentially due to syntactic mobility of the marker. The more mobile marker ya mostly foregrounded a global opposition (“I am frustrated and . . .”). The less mobile marker ki was more tightly linked to the propositional content and co-occurred with utterances that challenge the relevance or the assumptions/premises of the prior utterance. The negation particles in ki-utterances pinpoint the irrelevant or inappropriate aspect in the prior utterance. Thus, our findings are in keeping with functional views of grammar (e.g., Budwig, 1995; Du Bois, 2003, 2007; Ervin-Tripp, 1991; Slobin, 1985; Thompson & Hopper, 2001) such that syntactic mobility of a marker has an effect on the scope of the opposition. The more mobile marker (ya) flags opposition at a broader level, whereas the less mobile marker (ki) flags more local and limited areas of opposition.
These findings are relevant for the understanding of children’s developing discourse competence and sociocognitive skills. In organizing their oppositional discourse, children not only recognize their peers’ stance on a topic but also contrast their own stance with that of their peers. According to Hobson, Hobson, García-Pérez, and Du Bois (2012), juxtaposition of one’s own stance with those of their interlocutors is an important indicator of sociocognitive ability manifested in interaction. Our results also supported this view such that children strategically repeated prior utterances and link their utterances to prior discourse and highlighted their oppositional stances through their use of discourse markers.

To conclude, oppositions are a substantial part of children’s peer interactions. In addressing social-cognitive developmental research questions about peer interactions such as conflicts, analyzing spontaneous interactions quantitatively and qualitatively is essential for understanding pragmatic organization of opposition in discourse. Such combined methodologies would shed light on the flux of children’s discursive and sociocognitive abilities manifested in early childhood peer interactions.

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REFERENCES


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## APPENDIX

Transcription Symbols per Du Bois et al. (1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker attribution</td>
<td><strong>JILL</strong>;</td>
<td>Semicolon follows name in CAPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lag/prosodic lengthening</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>Colon marks the stretched sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap (first pair)</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>Align left square brackets vertically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOUNDARY TONE/CLOSURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminative</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>Intonation signaling finality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuative</td>
<td>,</td>
<td>Intonation signaling continuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truncated intonation unit</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Aborting projected words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Rising intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truncated/cut-off word</td>
<td>wor—</td>
<td>Aborting projected word (en dash)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking (absence of break)</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>In rapid speech (underscore/low line)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>METATRANSCRIPTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td><strong>(WORDS)</strong></td>
<td>Analyst comment on any topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudograph</td>
<td>~ Jill</td>
<td>Name change to preserve anonymity (tilde)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>^</td>
<td>Primary accent on the syllable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>