USE AND CATEGORIZATION OF HOLOPHRASES IN CHILD SPEECH: A CASE STUDY IN TURKEY

ÇOCUK KONUŞMASINDA TÜMCE SÖZCÜKLERİN KULLANIMI VE SINIFLANDIRILMASI: TÜRKİYE'DE BİR VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

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Abstract

A holophrase is a single word that is used by young children to express a whole, meaningful thought. As it is defined by Rowe and Levine (2015), holophrases are utterances that are more than one word but are perceived by children as one word. Taking the widespread use of holophrases in child language into account, this case study aimed at finding out the differences between the quantities of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children who are between the ages of 16 and 19 months. Also, it is aimed to identify the functions of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children during the first language acquisition phase. Another objective was to investigate the most frequently used holophrases considering the different categories and functions in child language. In line with these purposes, the researchers employed a case study and a descriptive analysis technique was used in order to find answers to the research questions. Five children between the ages of 1;4 and 1;7 participated in the study. The data of these children were obtained through a child-directed interview, and numbers and frequencies of holophrases used by children at a specific time period were recorded and presented. The results of the study demonstrated that older children have more words in their lexicon and use more holophrases in quantity. It is also revealed that the children mostly use holophrases to define an object or the actions of the people.

Keywords: Holophrase, Recurrence, Child Language, Turkish Acquisition

Öz

Tümce sözcük, bir bütün olan anlamlı bir düşünceyi ifade etmek için küçük çocuklar tarafından kullanılan tek bir kelimedir. Rowe ve Levine (2015) tarafından tanımlandığı gibi, tümce sözcükler aslında birden fazla kelime ile ifade edilebilen ancak çocuklar tarafından tek kelime olarak algılanan ifadelerdir. Tümce sözcüklerin çocuk dilinde yaygın olarak kullanılmasını göz önünde bulundurarak, bu vaka çalışması, 16 ila 19 ay yaş aralığındaki anadili Türkçe olan ve sadece bu dili konuşabilen çocukların kullandığı tümce sözcük miktarları arasındaki farkları bulmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu çalışmada ayrıca anadil edinimi sırasında anadili Türkçe olan ve yine sadece bu dili konuşabilen çocuklar tarafından kullanılan tümce sözcüklerin işlevlerini tanımlamak amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın başka bir amacı ise çocuk dilindeki tümce sözcüklerin farklı kategori ve işlevlerini göz önünde bulundurarak

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en sık kullanılanlarını ortaya koymaktır. Bu amaçlar doğrultusunda, araştırma sorularına cevap bulmak için bir örnek olay çalışması ve betimsel analiz tekniği kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya 1;4 ve 1;7 yaşları arasındaki beş çocuk katılmış, bu çocukların verileri çocuğa yönelik kolaylaştırılmış bir görüşme yoluyla elde edilmiş ve belirli bir zaman aralığında çocuklar tarafından kullanılan tümce sözcüklerin sayıları ve frekansları kaydedilerek ve sunulmuştur. Çalışmanın sonuçları, yaşça daha büyük çocukların sözcük dağarcıklarında daha fazla tümce sözcüklere sahip olduklarını ve sayı olarak daha fazla tümce sözcük kullandıklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, çocukların çoğunlukla bir nesneyi veya insanların eylemlerini tanımlamak için tümce sözcükleri kullandıkları ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tümce Sözcük, Tekrarlanan, Çocuk Dili, Türkçe Edinimi

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are able to exchange knowledge, beliefs, opinions, wishes, threats, commands, thanks, promises, declarations, feelings thanks to the use of language. It is a fact that language which has an extremely complex system is an exclusively human property. In spite of the complexity and the vast amount of variation within the languages, children learn their mother tongue quickly and efficiently. A speaker of any language has the ability to use words and build an infinite number of phrases when communicating with others (Jackendoff 2006). The child subsequently develops from uttering words and phrases to interacting with its surroundings by formulating their own intended meanings to communicate (Foster-Cohen 2009). What is most remarkable is that children develop a complex system of language in a matter of two to five years (Jackendoff 1994). The first language acquisition of the children is a very astonishing process that is not fully understood by scientists. Many scientists tried to find out an explanation for the language acquisition process throughout history. For example, in 1957, Skinner wrote Verbal Behavior Analysis and suggested that children learn language through interaction with the environment (Skinner, 1957). In 1959, Noam Chomsky challenged B.F. Skinner's theory (Chomsky, 1959) and argued that children could not learn all they needed to learn about language without having an innate ability to acquire language. Chomsky (2004) argues that children's ability to learn a language is due to a genetically programmed organ that is located in the brain. However, the question of how children acquire language is still a subject of a hot dispute, and linguists still argue how much of language is learned and how much is innate.

In the acquisition of the first language, the children go through different stages such as phonological development stage, morphological development stage and syntactic development stage. Among these stages, syntactic development is significant for child language. According to Tomasello and Brooks (1999), children acquire linguistic competence in the particular language they are learning only gradually, beginning with more concrete linguistic structures based on specific words and morphemes, and then building up to more abstract and productive syntactic structures based on various types of linguistic categories, schemas, and constructions. The term construction is related to the formation of communication units in syntactic development. Although some theorists use the term construction to refer to linguistic structures on all levels of analysis, for current purposes a linguistic construction is a complete and coherent verbal expression associated in a relatively routinized manner with a complete and coherent communicative function (van Valin, 1993). According to Tomasello and Brooks (1999), there are four major steps in children's developing competence with the linguistic constructions of English through their syntactic development: (1) holophrases, in which they use a single linguistic symbol (often with a specific intonational contour) to communicate their intentions about an entire scene; (2) word combinations, in which they use multiple words to express their communicative intention, thus partitioning the scene into at least two component parts;

(3) verb Island constructions, in which they use syntactic marking such as word order or grammatical morphology to indicate explicitly some participant roles in a scene, but they lean to do this independently for different scenes; and (4) adult-like constructions, in which they express their communicative intentions through specific instantiations of relatively abstract and adult-like linguistic constructions that syntactically mark participants for whole classes of scenes. Considering the stages above, holophrases are important in terms of constituting the first meaningful phrases of the children. They are single words that are used to express a complete, meaningful thought. It is the reason why they are considered important in the language acquisition process. As it is stated by Bloom, Tinker, and Margulis (1993), most beginning language learners acquire a number of so-called relational holophrases such as more, gone, up, down, on, and off, and use those holophrases as the first steps for the adult-like communication.

Taking the significance of holophrase use by the children during the first language acquisition process, the quantities, frequencies and functions of these holophrases were concentrated by the researcher in this study.

1. Statement of the Problem

One of the most important stages of language acquisition is the holophrastic stage. A holophrase is a single word that is used to express a complete, meaningful thought. It is the time when comprehensible single units can be uttered such as 'milk', 'cookie' or 'cat'. Holophrases are used by the children at about 12-15 months of age (Tomasello and Brooks, 1999). The most common word classes to appear first seem to be nouns (ca.60%), verbs (ca.20%), adverbs and adjectives (Crystal,1997). Hence, a large number of these utterances are used in a sense to name objects however, some also attempt to make a statement which the child is not able to express yet. Tomasello and Brooks (1999) categorized the use of holophrases considering the different communication necessities. When these communicative goals and conceptual scenes are combined, they find that young children of all linguistic communities tend to use their early language, typically one word at a time, to do such things as; (1) request or indicate the existence of objects (e.g. by naming them with a requestive or neutral intonation); (2) request or describe the recurrence of objects or events (e.g. More, Again, Another); (3) request or describe dynamic events involving objects (e.g. as described by Up, Down, On, Off, In, Our, Open, Close); (4) request or describe the actions of people (e.g. Ear, Kick, Ride, Draw); (5) comment on the location of objects and people (e.g. Here, Outside); (6) ask some basic questions such as What's-that? or Where-go?; (7) attribute a property to an object (e.g. Pretty or Wet, and (8) use performatives to mark specific social events and situations (e.g. Hi, Bye, Thank You, and No). As it is clear that these holophrases may serve for different purposes in the communication pattern of the infants. However, despite the importance of holophrase use during the first language acquisition process, identifying the significance of them in terms of the quantity, frequency and function is a very rare technique within the literature. For these reasons, the present study aimed to find out the use and functions of holophrases in child speeches of Turkish monolingual children.

2. Aim and Scope of the Study

The aim of this study is to find out the differences between the quantities of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children who are 16 and 19 months old. Also, it is aimed to identify the functions of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children during the first language acquisition phrase. Another objective was to investigate the most frequently used holophrases considering the different categories and functions in child language.

3. Research Questions

1. Are there any significant differences between the quantities of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children who are 15 and 18 months old?
2. What are the most frequently used holophrase functions in child speech of Turkish monolingual children?
3. Which holophrases have the most common use in each category?

4. Limitations and Suggestions

There are certain limitations to be considered in this study. To start with, this study is a case study, and there are only 5 participants because of the fact that the use of holophrases is a limited duration that occurs between the ages of 1;2 and 1;6. However, in Turkey, the kindergartens do not accept the nurturing of children younger than 2 years old. This is the reason why the researcher could reach to a limited number of participants. This small sample size made it hard for the researchers to look for more statistically significant results and generalize the study. Also, the present study was conducted in Osmaniye, and during the study, the researcher used the child speeches recorded for 40 to 45 minutes for each participant. Therefore, it may be deceptive to generalize the results because of the restrictions on the sample size and research duration. For this reason, future longitudinal studies that will be conducted at a longer time with more participants can give more detailed information about the functions of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the related literature and previous studies are identified to clarify related areas such as 'Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar', 'The Emergence of Native Language and The Phenomena of Bootstrapping' and 'Holophrases and Their Use in Turkish'.

1. Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar

Language is an extremely complex system, which is unceasingly subject to change. Despite the complexity and the vast amount of variation, children learn their mother tongue quickly and efficiently. Although there are many debates and discussions about the issue of language acquisition, one of the most accepted ones in the literature was given by Noam Chomsky. Chomsky (2004) argues that children's ability to learn the language is due to a genetically programmed organ that is in the brain. When children are born and are involved in linguistic environments, they directly begin to develop a language. However, to do that, children need to make use of the only tool they have which is their inborn mental grammar. Chomsky (2004) defines this mental grammar as Universal Grammar. Through Universal Grammar, newborns have the grammar of any language existent in the world. For example, the language principles which account for the emergence of English account as well for Vietnamese, Portuguese, or any other language spoken in the world (McGilvray 2005). It means that human beings come to this world with a unique ability to learn a language. When children are born and are exposed to a particular language or various languages in the environment, they connect the language to Universal Grammar and that language becomes the native tongue. Chomsky (2004) states that Universal Grammar is available to newborns before their linguistic experience begins. As such, Universal Grammar is available to children at the initial state of their language learning, it leads children directly

to the term which Chomsky (2004) states as generative grammar. As it is stated by da Cruz (2015), with generative grammar, children unconsciously separate the speech threads they hear around them into grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. Furthermore, with generative grammar, children will also develop the ability to understand the structure and create infinite new language expressions. When children have reached the full potential of their generative grammar, they have reached full knowledge of the language and are able to use the language fluently (Chomsky 2004). Therefore, the acquisition of language is not a passive act by which children simply absorb the information they hear in the environment. As it is defined by Jackendoff (1994), it is an active act by which children construct unconscious principles that permit them to receive information, produce novel utterances, and use language in a variety of forms.

2. The Emergence of Native Language and The Phenomena of Bootstrapping

Children's language acquisition is thought to start when they say their first words. However, they have communication abilities when they are born. As it is stated by Guasti (2017), at birth infants start processing the speech stimuli of their linguistic environment, and they display a surprising sensitivity to the acoustic cues that express constructs of natural language (syllables, phonemes, words). Mehler et al. (1988) state that, even when they are in the first few days and months of life, they can make use of speech stimuli and discriminate their native language from a foreign language. As it is defined by da Cruz (2015), after a couple of months, the babbling strings of babies begin to be uttered with intonation patterns. Eventually, the baby language gradually starts to tune in to the language in the environment. According to Jackendoff (1994), when learning a language, the child selects certain speech sounds from the ones available in the universal grammar to match those in the environment which is called phonological bootstrapping. During this stage, the child selects the sounds correspondent to his/her native language and unconsciously knows how to sort them out.

As they grow older they develop new strategies and go through some stages to learn and produce their mother language. Acquisition of lexicon is one of these essential stages. Children learn the vocabulary of their language at a remarkable pace. At 10-12 months they produce and understand some words (Oviatt 1980). This is the result of a process that starts at around 6 months when infants display sensitivity to various phonological properties of native words. Children's vocabulary learning begins slowly, but rapidly increases – at the age of 16 months, children know around 40 words (Bates, Dale and Thal, 1995), yet by school-age children learn up to 3000 words each year (or just above 8 words every day) and a 17-year-old learns up to 10,000 words each year (or more than 27 words every day), mainly through reading (Nagy and Herman, 1987). It is clear that as they grow older they improve their lexicon by finding some connections. This improvement in vocabulary quantity is referred to as vocabulary spurt during which after having learned around 50 words, children suddenly and dramatically increase the rate at which they learn new words. This is an exciting process that raises the question of how these infants learn to produce their first words in other words holophrases. To give an answer to this question, the researchers put forward some ideas such as the semantic and syntactic bootstrapping. As it is stated by Pinker (1994), semantic bootstrapping hypothesis asserts that children use semantic features to get evidence for the grammatical entities in the input. In this hypothesis, a child acquiring words needs to map the semantic notions of the word on her/his mental representation of that concept. On the other hand, syntactic bootstrapping hypothesis argues that the meaning of some words, especially verbs, cannot be acquired through a general mechanism because of their complexity. Therefore, children must use constraints provided by the language itself, and they do so by exploiting the information

provided by syntax (Landau and Gleitman, 1985). As it is identified by Yılmaz and Başol (2017), the main difference between semantic bootstrapping and the syntactic bootstrapping hypothesis is the direction of the mapping process. That is, the way of acquisition being either from syntactic clues to semantic knowledge or from semantic notions to syntactic knowledge differentiates in these two hypotheses, and it remains as a matter of curiosity (Ketrez, 1999). Despite the difficulty in finding an accurate answer to this question, it is evident that children utter their first meaningful words, holophrases, at around their first birthdays to express complete and coherent communicative intentions after a long cognitive process.

3. Holophrases and Their Usage in Turkish Language

Language production is a complex process in which different phrases have been passed through by the children. Lightbown and Spada (2006) state that there are four different stages in the process of language production namely; pre-language, holophrastic, two-word and telegraphic speech. According to Thuresson (2011), language production begins with the pre-language stage where the child makes a lot of 'cooing' and 'babbling' and goes on with holophrastic and two-word phrases. Then, it finishes with the process of development when the child reaches the stage of telegraphic speech. One of the most significant stages of language acquisition is the holophrastic stage. A holophrase is a single word that is used to express a complete, meaningful thought. It is the time when comprehensible single units can be uttered such as 'milk', 'cookie' This kind of expressions have often been called a "holophrase" since it is a single linguistic symbol functioning as a whole utterance, for example, 'That!' meaning 'I want that' or 'Ball?' meaning 'Where's the ball?' (Barrett 1986).

It is a well-known fact that children are very good at word learning. From their first birthday on, they acquire hundreds of new words in quite a short time (Clark, 2009). This period is the time when they begin to use holophrases. As it is stated by Tomasello and Brooks (1999), those holophrases are used by the children at about 12-15 months of age. Hence, a large number of these utterances are utilized in a sense to name objects, and some others attempt to make a statement which the child is not able to express yet. Holophrases come in many forms; they do not just correspond to single adult words. To give an example, the child could use the word 'Sarah' to emphasize that Sarah's bed is empty. Although the child is in possession of the lexical items Sarah and bed in their mental lexicon, it is not ready to produce a more complicated combination with these (Yule, 1996). As stated by Dominey (2006), from the perspective of learning complexity, this means that rather than mastering the grammar used by an adult to generate or understand an utterance, the child can exploit more direct correspondences between fixed utterances and their meanings in the form of holophrases, and then progressively apply procedures for generalization in order to develop an abstract argument construction repertoire. In short, it can be stated that infants come to language acquisition at around their first birthdays with an understanding of various real-life scenes and some paralinguistic ways of communicating about them. They soon learn to talk about these scenes using conventional linguistic expressions, holophrases, taken from the relatively fully formed adult constructions they hear used for these scenes.

The Turkish language is among the world's major languages with the geography where the Turkish language is spoken and the number of individuals speaking Turkish. While the number of Turkish speaking individuals is approximately 150 million worldwide, the number of individuals speaking Turkish is approximately 70 million (Ercilasun, 1997). The Turkish language is an agglutinating language. This means that endings are added one by one to the root of a word to produce the desired meaning. In respect of structure, the

language is within the adjacency structure (agglutinative) group languages. Therefore, the stem remains without any changes. Thanks to affixes/ suffixes with various tasks given to the stem, new notions are met (Özkan, 2006). As it is stated by Aksan, (1995), the richness of meaning in the Turkish language depends on the functionality of the affixes/ suffixes. Affixes/ suffixes being brought to the stem and attributing various meanings through fulfilling their tasks separately supports the expression. This situation may be the most critical feature of the Turkish language. Like in every language, the use of holophrases in Turkish is a prevalent issue. However, there are some differences between the one-word acquisition and production time of the Turkish and English monolingual children. In Turkish, the words are typically composed of a sequence of morphs with each morph representing one morpheme. There is an unchanging root and one or more suffixes are used for a derivation; hence it has great word-building capacity. As stated by Aksu and Slobin (1985), in Turkish the inflectional system appears early, and the entire set of noun inflections and much of the verbal paradigm are mastered by 24 months of age or earlier. By this age, Turkish children inflect nouns for case (accusative, dative, ablative, possessive, instrumental) and number (plural), and verbs for tense-aspect (past result, ongoing process, intention), person, negation, and interrogation. However, before that age, the Turkish children use one-word utterances or holophrases as described by Tomasello and Brooks (1999), for specific communicational intentions.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology of data collection and analysis used in the study. The research design of the study, sampling and participants, data collection tools, data collection procedure and analysis of the data were also included so as to shed light on the research.

1. Research Design

This is a case study that involves finding out the differences between the quantities of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children who are 16 and 19 months old. Also, it is also required to identify the functions of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children during the first language acquisition phase. In addition, it investigated the most frequently used holophrases considering the different categories and types in child language. The researcher counted and tabulated the data provided by the participant children in order to find answers to the research questions.

2. Sampling and Participants

The participants of this study were 5 female monolingual children between the ages of 1;3 to 1;6. All of the children were monolingual Turkish speakers, and they all live in a monolingual environment. A purposive sampling strategy was used in this research in view of certain criteria such as age and native languages of the children. All of the participant children are nursed at home by their mothers due to the age restrictions at the kindergartens.

3. Data Collection Tools

Table 1. *Research Questions and Data Collection Tools*

1. Are there any significant differences between the quantities of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children who are 15 and 18 months old?	<i>Child-Directed Interview</i>
2. What are the most frequently used holophrase functions in child speech of Turkish monolingual children?	<i>Child-Directed Interview</i>
3. Which holophrases have the most common use in each category?	<i>Child-Directed Interview</i>

As it is evident in Table 1, the researcher used the data obtained through child-directed interviews with the participants so as to find answers to the research questions. At the same time, the researcher recorded the speeches of the children and transcribed them for future analysis. The interviews took nearly 40 to 45 minutes for each participant.

4. Data Collection Procedure

During the data collection procedure, the first step was to explain the process for the parents. Then, the researcher used some prompting questions for the children. The answers and speeches of the participants were recorded by using the voice recorder function of a smartphone. After recording, typescripts of child-directed interviews were scripted by the researcher, and they were again checked by a colleague so that the data could be put into categories easily.

5. Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, a descriptive analysis method was addressed in order to find answers to the research questions of the study. The data obtained through child-directed interviews were transcribed, counted and sorts of holophrases were categorized considering their frequencies and functions. Incomprehensible and uncompleted data produced by the participants were omitted and were not taken into consideration by the researcher.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter describes the findings and discussion of the data obtained from the data collection tool. These data were used so as to find answers to the research questions.

1. Findings and Discussion of the First Research Question

Research Question 1: *Are there any significant differences between the quantities of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children who are 16 and 19 months old?*

In order to answer the first research question, the data obtained through child-directed interviews were analyzed and tabulated by the researcher descriptively. After the data collection process, the researcher divided the participant children into two groups considering their ages. To this end, 3 participants were put into the age group of 1;4 while 2 participants were included in the age group of 1;7. The incomprehensible data was removed, and the results are given in Table 2.

Table 2. *Total and Average Numbers of Holophrases Produced by the Participants*

<i>Age of the Participants</i>	<i>Number of Participants</i>	<i>Total Number of Holophrases Produced by Participants</i>	<i>Average of Holophrases Produced by Participants</i>
1;4	3	50	16,66
1;7	2	72	34

It is clear from Table 2 that while the children who are at the age of 1;4 produced 50 holophrases, the children at the age of 1;7 produced 72 holophrases. The average holophrase production for the children at the age of 16 months is 16,66, however, the average number of the holophrases produced by 19 months old children are two times higher (34) than those of 17 months old children. It is evident from the study that older children gradually learn more phrases and expand their lexicon by improving both production and comprehension of the first language as they grow up. As it is defined by Dapretto and Bjork (2000) following the onset of expressive language, the rate of word acquisition is initially rather slow, with children learning only a few new words per month. Toward the end of the second year, children typically display a sudden spurt in vocabulary growth, roughly after their productive lexicons have reached 50–100 words. The results presented in the table have some common points with the study of Fenson et al. (1994) who demonstrated that there is a wide variation in children's holophrases scores, but that on average production vocabulary shows a rapid increase towards the end of the second year, while comprehension vocabulary increases in a more linear fashion.

4.2. Findings and Discussion of the Second Research Question

Research Question 2: *What are the most frequently used holophrase functions in child speech of Turkish monolingual children?*

In order to answer the second research question, the data obtained through Child-Directed Interviews were analyzed and tabulated by the researcher descriptively. Unlike the case for the first research question, the researcher put all participant children into the same group and obtained the data accordingly. The results are analyzed and presented as it is seen in Table 3.

Table 3. *Content Analysis of the Data Obtained Through Child-Directed Interviews*

<i>Type of The Holophrases</i>	<i>Beril (Femal e-1;4)</i>	<i>İnci (Femal e-1;4)</i>	<i>Seda (Femal e-1;4)</i>	<i>Suna (Femal e-1;7)</i>	<i>Gizem (Femal e-1;7)</i>	<i>TO TA L</i>	<i>%</i>
(1) request or indicate the existence of objects	7	8	9	14	14	<u>52</u>	42,62
(2) request or describe the recurrence of objects or events	0	0	1	3	2	<u>6</u>	4,91
(3) request or describe dynamic events involving objects	1	1	1	0	2	<u>5</u>	4,09
(4) request or describe the actions of people	3	4	5	8	9	<u>29</u>	23,77
(5) comment on the location of objects and people	1	1	0	2	3	<u>7</u>	5,73

(6) ask some basic questions	1	0	1	3	4	<u>9</u>	7,37
(7) attribute a property to an object	1	1	2	2	3	<u>9</u>	7,37
(8) use performatives to mark specific social events and situations	1	1	0	1	2	<u>5</u>	4,09

As can be observed in Table 3, there are eight types of holophrases being used to answer different communicational goals of the children. The information about the number and frequency of the holophrases obtained from the analysis of five participant children's data is presented in detail. When the researcher analyzed the participants' data, it can be observed that the participants of the study mostly use holophrases in order to request or indicate the existence of objects (42,62%). Other frequent uses of holophrases are to request or describe the actions of people (23,77%), asking some basic questions (7,37%) and attribute a property to an object (7,37%). However, the participants have less tendency to use holophrases so as to request or describe dynamic events involving objects (4,09%), to use performatives to mark specific social events and situations (4,09%), to request or describe the recurrence of objects or events (4,91%) and to comment on the location of objects and people (5,73%). It is clear that the children generally use holophrases to define an object or the actions of the people by producing nouns and verbs. The result of the first question goes in hand with the study of Crystal (1997) who found that the most common word classes and holophrases are nouns (ca.60%) and verbs (ca.20%). As it is also stated by Sofu (1995), the first acquired lexical items in the child's speech are nouns, and nouns are used more frequently by children as compared to verbs. The reason for the dominance of object and verb names lies in the difference between content and function words. It seems to be generally accepted that open class or content words appear earlier in children's speech than function words (Fernald & Marchman, 2006). As a result, the participants' frequent use of nouns and verbs that are under the category of content words might be the consequence of the early emergence of these open class words in Turkish monolingual children's speeches.

4.2. Findings and Discussion of the Third Research Question

Research Question 3: *Which holophrases have the most common use in each category?*

To find an answer for the second research question, the researcher again made use of the data obtained through Child-Directed Interviews, and the results were examined and put into tables descriptively as it is demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4. *The Most Frequently Used Words within Type of the Holophrases*

Types of The Holophrases	The Holophrase	Total Holophrase Use	f	%
(1) request or indicate the existence of objects	MAMA (Food)	52	10	19,23
(2) request or describe the recurrence of objects or events	BAŞKA (Another)	6	3	50

(3) request or describe dynamic events involving objects	AÇ (Open)	5	2	40
(4) request or describe the actions of people	GEL (Come)	29	5	17,24
(5) comment on the location of objects and people	BURDA (Here)	7	5	71,42
(6) ask some basic questions	KAÇ? (How much?)	9	4	44,44
(7) attribute a property to an object	İYİ (Good)	9	4	44,44
(8) use performatives to mark specific social events and situations	BAYBAY (Bye)	5	3	60

Table 4 indicates the most frequently used holophrases as well as their numbers and frequencies. It is clear that for the first type of holophrases used to request or indicate the existence of objects, '*mama*' is the most recurrent word having a frequency of 19,23%. The most frequent holophrase for the second category is '*başka*' with the number of 3 and a frequency of 50%. When it comes to the third type which is related to the description of dynamic events involving objects, the most repeated holophrase is '*aç*' (40%). While the holophrase '*gel*' is the most frequent one for the fourth type (17,24%), '*burda*' is the most repeated holophrase within the fifth category dealing with the location of objects and people (71,42%). It is also apparent from the table that the most recurrent holophrase for the sixth type is '*kaç?*' (44,44%), and the most frequent one for the seventh type is the holophrase of '*iyi*' (44,44%). On the other hand, for the eighth type of holophrases involving the use of performatives to mark specific social events and situations, '*baybay*' has a frequency of 60%. Considering the numbers and the frequencies of the holophrases, it can be concluded that the children have more nouns and verbs in their vocabulary than the adjectives, prepositions and question words. It is also clear that the children between the ages of 1;4 and 1;7 can use holophrases to mark specific social events and situations, to attribute a property to an object and to ask some basic questions. The results of the third research question are consistent with the study of Tomasello and Brooks (1999) who found that the children at the age of 12-18 months old can use holophrases to voice various intentions.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to find out the differences between the quantities of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children who are 16 and 19 months old. In addition, it is aimed to identify the functions of holophrases used by Turkish monolingual children during the first language acquisition phase. Another objective is to examine the most frequently used holophrases considering the different categories and functions in child language. The results of the study demonstrated that older children (at the age of 1;7) have more words in their lexicon and use more holophrases in quantity. It is evident from the study that older children gradually learn more phrases and expand their lexicon by improving both production and comprehension of the first language as they grow up. As it is defined by Fenson et. Al. (1994), as the children get older, their vocabulary increases dramatically, and their rate of learning new words also increases up to 300 words by 24 months which is named 'vocabulary spurt'. There are some theories for this dramatic increase in holophrase use in child speech. One of the most influential claims about the vocabulary spurt is that it coincides with a significant cognitive change: the naming insight, which is the realization that words refer to things or that all things have names (Reznick and Goldfield, 1992). Once children have this insight, the theory holds, they begin to acquire

words at a rapid pace. Another theory is that the spurt marks a change in children's object concepts. Lifter and Bloom (1989) stated that infants begin to use words, then, show a vocabulary spurt as their object concepts become more detailed and differentiated.

Another striking result of the study is the fact that the children mostly use holophrases to define an object or the actions of the people. They also use them to request or describe the recurrence of objects or events, ask some basic questions, to mark specific social events and situations and comment on the location of objects and people. The results of the research go parallel with the study of Tomasello and Brooks (1999) who illustrated that the children at the age of 12-18 months old can use holophrases to voice various intentions. It is also revealed that the children at the age of 18 months old have more nouns and verbs in their vocabulary than the adjectives, prepositions and question words. This result is supported by the study of Crystal (1997) who found that the most common word classes and holophrases are nouns (ca.60%) and verbs (ca.20%) and by the study of Gentner (1978) who illustrated that children's first words are primarily nouns and verbs.

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